The development of future-referring constructions
(in Indo-European languages)

Abstract

The investigation of the evolution of grams encoding futurity both in individual languages or language families (cf., e.g., Fleischman 1982, Botne 1998, Whaley 2000) and in typological comparison (e.g., Ultan 1978, Dahl 1985, Bybee & Dahl 1989, Heine & Kuteva 2002: 331) has focused on their grammaticalization from various source constructions with etyma such as 'will', 'have', 'become' and motion verbs ('go', 'come'). According to the "source determination" hypothesis, the origin of a gram determines its syntactic and semantic restrictions in its further development. Another frequent source for future-referring verb forms is hypoanalysis, i.e., a process by which peripheral and/or contextually conditioned functions of a construction, or a categorial opposition, become its inherent property due to a reduction in the inherited functional range (Croft 2000: 126f.); typical cases are North Slavic perfective present (PFV.PRS) > pfv. future (Wiemer 2020: 275f.) and the Latin futures in -$\bar{e}$- (e.g., *legēs* 'you will say'), and -*b*- (continuing the SBJV of the root *bʰuH- 'be', e.g., 3SG *amā-bit* 'will love') and the future of the copula (*erō*, *eris*, *erit* etc.), which are based on a preceding subjunctive (Meiser 2006: 199, Weiss 2020: 441f.). This raises the question whether these two types of futures show systematic differences in their grammatical behaviour, e.g., regarding the frequent function of futures to also encode deontic, epistemic and other kinds of modality.

Using a dataset from Indo-European languages comprehensive over time and space, the paper will discuss the following hypotheses: (a) Contrary to the assumption of source determination, morpho-syntactic and semantic/pragmatic restrictions related to the source construction only pertain at an intermediate stage of the development of futures, whereas fully developed futures overcome these and display a characteristic range of functions (first of all, modal and illocutionary functions) independent of their source; (b) Futures arisen from hypoanalysis differ from futures based on grammaticalization in that they are stable with respect to their initial restrictions (e.g., regarding aspect); (c) The diachronic relation between future meaning and modal, especially epistemic, function is not unidirectional, i.e., either may precede the other. This applies to both types of futures; (d) Futures either stay what they are, or they disappear, but they do not develop into anything else (a "post-future" stage). In particular, if epistemic readings develop as a "sub-function" of futures, they do not oust the future reading as the default meaning.

Assumption (a) is largely confirmed by our dataset. Hypothesis (b) is motivated from parallel observations concerning, e.g., English futures (*going to* contracts to *gonna*, the latter is no longer available as reference to physical movement; *will* no longer codes volition, apart from archaic formula) and PFV.PRS > pfv. future in North Slavic: while the future reading is salient (as a default), non-deontic modal readings are still widely available. The latter, in turn, are among the dominant readings of PFV.PRS in South Slavic, while South Slavic futures based on WANT no longer code volition (see Engl. *will*) and are now morphonologically or lexically distinct from WANT (see (1)). Concerning (c), languages differ as for whether their well-established futures are used for epistemic judgment referring to the moment of speech or not, regardless of the diachronic pathway of the future: for instance, Germ. *werden* and Span. *tener* do allow for such usage (see (2)), while Engl. *will*, futures in North Slavic and in Lithuanian do not. Moreover, Balkan Slavic has epistemic uses of future markers (see above), also in combination with *da*-clauses (= irrealis marking; see (3)), but the chronological relation to future meaning requires clarification, also in comparison to Engl. *will* (cf. Ziegeler 2006) and High Alemannic (vs Standard German) *werden* (*Schweiz. Idiotikon* 16, 1344, 1346-7, cf. https://www.id-iotikon.ch/woerterbuch/idiotikon-digital). As for (d), no IE language shows a "post-future" stage for a "surviving" future, unless as a suppletive form in another paradigm (e.g., Span. 2SG.PRS *eres* 'you are' continuing Latin *eris* 'you will be'; Lausberg 1972: 3.251, Penny 1993: 181; 2014: 191). We also discuss whether the lack of post-future stages might be an IE. feature.

Examples

(1)   South Slavic futures based on WANT: Bulg. *šte*, Mac. *ќe*, Srb.-Cr. inflected *ć-u, ć-eš, ć-e…* –
        distinct from contemporary WANT: Bulg. *iskam*, Mac. *sakam*, Srb.-Cr. *hoć-u, hoć-eš, hoć-e…*

(2)   Germ. *Er wird gerade seinen Vortrag halten* 'He must be having his lecture right now'
           (personal knowledge)

(3)   Bulg.   *Šte da ima poveče ot pedeset.* 'S/He must be older than fifty.'
           (Tomić 2006: 476)

References

Botne, Robert. 1998. The evolution of future tenses from serial 'say' constructions in Central Eastern Bantu. *Diachronica* 15-2, 207-230.

Bybee, Joan L. & Östen Dahl. 1989. The creation of tense and aspect systems in the languages of the world. *Studies in Language* 13, 51-103.

Dahl, Östen. 1985. *Tense and Aspect Systems*. Oxford, New York: Basil Blackwell.

Fleischman, Suzanne. 1982. *The Future in Thought and Language. Diachronic evidence from Romance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haspelmath, Martin. 1998. The semantic development of old presents: new futures and subjunctives without grammaticalization. *Diachronica* 15-1, 29-62.

Heine, Bernd & Tania Kuteva. 2002. *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lausberg, Heinrich. 1972. *Romanische Sprachwissenschaft. III. Formenlehre*. 2nd ed. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Meiser, Gerhard. 2006. *Historische Laut- und Formenlehre der lateinischen Sprache*. 2. Aufl. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Penny, Ralph. 1993. *Gramática histórica del Español*. Barcelona: Editorial Ariel.

Penny, Ralph. 2002[2014]. *A History of the Spanish Language*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tomić, Olga Mišeska. 2006. *Balkan Sprachbund Morpho-syntactic Features*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Ultan, Russell. 1978. The nature of future tenses. In: Greenberg, Joseph H., Charles A. Ferguson & Edith Moravcsik (eds.). *Universals of Human Language. Vol. 3. Word Structure*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 83-123.

Weiss, Michael L. 2009. *Outline of the Historical and Comparative Grammar of Latin*. Ann Arbor: Beech Stave Press.

Whaley, Maryka Lynn. 2000. *The evolution of the Slavic 'be(come)'-type compound future*. Ohio: The Ohio State University (PhD thesis).

Wiemer, Björn. Grammaticalization in Slavic. In: Bisang, Walter & Andrej Malchukov (eds.): *Grammaticalization Scenarios: Cross-linguistic Variation and Universal Tendencies. Vol. 1: Grammaticalization scenarios from Europe and Asia*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 249-307.

Ziegeler, Debra. 2006. Omnitemporal *will. Language Sciences* 28, 76-119.