Periphrastic perfects reflect the lexical semantic distinctions of their auxiliaries

Compound perfect constructions commonly develop from resultative constructions, often with auxiliaries glossed as 'be' or 'have'. Some formally similar constructions, however, exhibit important features not typically associated with perfects. In Portuguese, for instance, the 'have' + participle construction with a present tense auxiliary marks recent habitual action: *Tenho lido muitos artigos* 'I have been reading many articles' (not 'I have read many articles').

This paper contrasts the Portuguese periphrasis with *ter* (< Latin TENĒRE) + perfective participle with other Romance compound perfects formed with reflexes of Latin HABĒRE (cf. Harris 1982) and contextualizes it with regard to the effects lexical semantics on grammaticalization patterns involving semantically similar source material. I argue that previous analyses of auxiliaries have erroneously equated lexical verbs of similar meanings and consequently overlooked certain inference patterns that contribute to semantic change in grammaticalization (cf. Traugott & Dasher 2002). I also address the ongoing need for greater terminological care in this area.

While scholars such as Bybee et al. (1994) tend to treat sources of auxiliaries as equivalents if they can be glossed with a single English verb, Juge has argued (2002) that such an approach incorrectly predicts nearly identical outcomes of the grammaticalization of seemingly similar constructions that in fact result in significantly different structures. In the case of the Portuguese resultative construction, the key factor is the distinction between Latin HABĒRE and TENĒRE, both commonly glossed 'have'.

These two verbs were not exact synonyms in Latin and did not yield exact synonyms in the Romance languages (cf. Harre 1991). While both indicate possession, TENĒRE and its reflexes also mean 'hold' and 'keep'. The latter sense is a key factor in the development of Portuguese *ter* as an auxiliary. Certain predicates, when paired with a verb meaning 'keep', favor an iterative reading. If I assert that I keep my grass cut, for example, someone may conclude that I mow it periodically. For this reason, the label 'iterative' fits Portuguese *ter* + participle better than 'perfect'.

Indeed, the term 'perfect' itself presents certain complications. First, it is often conflated with the aspectual term 'perfective', although some languages, such as Catalan, clearly show that these are orthogonal categories. Therefore in many cases the term 'anterior' is preferable to 'perfect' (cf. Bybee et al. (1994), among others; e.g., English future anterior *She will have arrived*).

Cruse (1986) suggests analyzing what he calls a lexeme's sense-spectrum, or the collection of senses it encodes. For example, Spanish *mismo* has a range of senses that correspond to some of the senses of the English lexemes *same, very, right, oneself*, and *exactly*. This approach facilitates the identification of more fine-grained semantic relations that shape patterns of lexicalization and grammaticalization and discourages treating similar lexemes in different languages as being more similar than they are, which is an especially common problem in cases involving verbs of motion (cf. Juge 2007).

A widely recognized characteristic of verbs that become grammaticalized is that such lexemes are often highly polysemous before becoming grammaticalized and that they then show greater polysemy as a result of undergoing grammaticalization. The nature of the polysemy patterns shown by such lexemes, however, is still not well understood. Close analysis of the lexical semantics of grammaticalization—including interactions with factors like pragmatic inferencing—in familiar languages with well-attested histories allows typologists and historical linguists to more accurately apply insights gained from the examination of constructions in these languages to those in more poorly documented languages.

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