

## Auxiliary, light or lexical: the history of GO verbs

The development of lexical verbs into auxiliaries and light verbs is a well studied topic (for an excellent summary of the literature, see Butt (2010)). It has been assumed that light verb is an intermediate diachronic stage in the development from lexical to auxiliary verb (see Hook (1991) and Hopper and Traugott (1993: 108–112), though the latter uses the more restricted term ‘vector verb’). This view has been challenged by Butt (2010), Butt and Geuder (2001), Butt and Lahiri (2013), who argue that the light verb and the auxiliary are independent developments from the lexical original (the challenge is recognised by Hopper and Traugott (2003: 111–114)).

We agree that cross-linguistic data do not support an analysis of the development in terms of a linear trajectory from lexical to light verb to auxiliary. However, in this paper, we use the GO verbs of Germanic and Romance to show that the picture that emerges is more complex than a bifurcation from the lexical verb into an auxiliary and a light verb use.

With the term GO verb we understand a motion verb that is neutral in the sense that it does not make reference to path or manner of motion (Fanego 2012). It is important to recognise that these verbs in the two language families have a range of origins. The English *go* comes from a verb meaning ‘walk’, as does the French *aller*, but the Romance *v*-forms go back to Latin *vadere* ‘rush, advance’, cognate with English *wade*, and the *i*-forms to Latin *ire*, cognate with the Old Eng past *eode*. In most modern varieties of Romance and Germanic there is a (suppletive) GO verb which has developed auxiliary and/or light uses, but there are interesting similarities and differences in use both between and within the two language families. For instance, we show that Dutch, French and Catalan have developed both an auxiliary and a light verb use, whereas Swedish has a light GO verb, but no auxiliary use and the Romanian GO verb *merge* has not developed any non-lexical uses. In French and Dutch the auxiliary use with an infinitive is future oriented, whereas in Catalan GO + INF indicates past. In Italian, GO + PAST PARTICIPLE can be used for a type of passive, though with special semantic restrictions, and in both Swedish and Sicilian mirative uses have developed.

In this paper, we use the GO verbs of the two language families to argue that the data is best captured in terms of a network of uses, which can in turn be represented in a semantic map (compare Lichtenberk 1991).

## References

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