

WS 6: Categorizers in diachrony

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Convenors:

Laura Grestenberger, Austrian Academy of Sciences (laura.grestenberger@oeaw.ac.at)

Iris Kamil, University of Edinburgh (iris.kamil@ed.ac.uk)

Viktoria Reiter, University of Vienna (viktoria.reiter@univie.ac.at)

Description:

Although the form, meaning, and ontological status of “categorizing” (“stem-forming”) morphology have received some attention in the typological and theoretical literature on word classes (e.g., Vogel & Comrie 2000, Baker 2003, Knobloch & Schaefer 2005, Panagiotidis 2011), its diachrony remains understudied: It is unclear how and why new categorizers arise historically and what “mechanisms” of change are responsible for the rise of new categorization devices. Do new categorizers arise due to semantic bleaching/grammaticalization (e.g., nominal diminutives > nominalizers), reanalysis of functional heads in the context of decategorial (“secondary”) derivation (nominalizers > verbalizers, e.g., Grestenberger forthcoming), the need for “compensation of phonological reduction” (Haspelmath 1995), or is there no uniform diachronic path that gives rise to these grammatical categories?

The goal of this workshop is to discuss the diachrony of categorizing morphology with the aim of establishing cross-linguistic regularities and generalizations concerning the rise, function, and development of nominal, verbal, and adjectival stem-forming morphology. Examples include the reanalysis of nominalizers as verbalizers, (1), of adjectivizers as verbalizers, (2), or of adjectivizers as participial affixes, (3), but also a variety of phenomena usually classified as “grammaticalization” (e.g., the reanalysis of nominal second compound members as nominal or adjectival suffixes).

1. $n \rightarrow v$: Ancient Greek [*basil-eú*]_{n-s} ‘king’: [[**basil-eú*]_{n-j}]_{v-ō} ‘am/act as king’ → Modern Greek *stóx-os* ‘target’ [[*stox*]_{n-év}]_{v-o} ‘to aim at’; Pre-Proto-Algonquian [**api*]_{v-hm}]_n ‘sitting place, seat’, [**net*-[[*api*]_{v-hm}]_{n-ena-n} ‘where we sit; our sitting place’ → Proto-Algonquian [**net*-[[*api*]_{v-hm}]_{v?}-*ena-n* (*ma-hi*) ‘we sit over there’ (Oxford 2014: 14-15)
2. $a \rightarrow v$: Gm. *Kraft* ‘strength’: [[*kräft*]_{n-ig}]_a ‘with strength, strong’; [[[*kräft*]_{n-ig}]_{a-en}]_{v/T[-fin]} ‘to strengthen’ → *Pein* ‘pain’: [[[*pein*]_{n-ig}]_{v-en}]_{T[-fin]} ‘to torture’ (**pein-ig* ‘painful’)
3. $a \rightarrow v/ptcp$: Sanskrit *ásva-* ‘horse’: [[*asv*]_{n-ín}]_{a-} ‘possessing horses’ → √*yaj* ‘sacrifice’: [*yāj-ín*]_{ptcp-} ‘sacrificing’

The papers in this workshop bring specific predictions from different theoretical approaches to bear on these issues and adduce novel empirical arguments from a variety of different language families to the debate. The contributions will address (and go beyond) the following issues:

- What role do morphological reanalysis and resegmentation, especially mechanisms such as “**affix telescoping**” (Haspelmath 1995) play in the establishment of new categorizers, and what is the role of “phonological erosion” or loss of phonological material in these processes?
- How does categorization interact with morphosyntactic features such as number or classifier morphology and gender (on *n*) or Aktionsart on *v*? Which diachronic generalizations as to these interactions are possible? For example, in Distributed Morphology, roots only receive their categorization in the course of the syntactic derivation by combining with the categorizing heads *v* (verbalizers), *n* (nominalizers), and *a* (adjectivizers or “stativizers”). Categorization is thus fundamentally syntactic, and the extent to which categorizers are also associated with syntactico-semantic “content” such as definiteness (in the nominal domain) or Aktionsart (in the verbal domain) is debated (Panagiotidis et al. 2017). In (broadly) lexicalist approaches, on

the other hand, “stem classes” or “conjugational classes” are treated as properties of words and hence, the lexicon. These approaches also differ in how conjugational class elements such as “theme vowels” are treated both from a synchronic and from a diachronic perspective (cf., e.g., Calabrese 2019, Bertocci & Pinzin 2020), and with respect to the analysis of change in classifier systems and their connection to (noun class) categorization (e.g., Craig 1986).

- Are there unambiguous diagnostics for distinguishing between categorizing morphology and derivational morphology in the more technical sense, that is, category-changing morphology with specific (argument- and event-structure changing) functions, e.g., agent noun- and verbal abstract-forming morphology in the nominal domain or causativizing and applicativizing morphology in the verbal domain? Empirical and conceptual arguments in favor of separating “low” categorizing morphology from “higher” functional, category-changing projections (e.g., Himmelmann 2005, Marantz 1997, Borer 2015; Panagiotidis et al. 2017) have not yet been connected to the diachrony of these entities in a systematic way.
- What role does language acquisition play in the diachronic development of categorizing morphology? For example, syntactic change has been argued to proceed via “**upwards reanalysis**” (Roberts & Roussou 2003) of lexical projections as higher functional projections, and this is compatible with L1 acquisition evidence of how children acquire, for example, epistemic modal verbs by overextending their functional domain “upwards” (Cournane 2014). Does this overextension parallel the changes we see in the historical record? That is, is categorizer change inherently directional?

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