Lexicalization and Language Change

Lexicalization, a process of language change, has been conceptualized in a variety of ways. Broadly defined as the adoption of words into the lexicon, it has been viewed by some as the reverse process of grammaticalization, by others as a routine process of word formation, and by others as the development of concrete meanings. In this up-to-date survey, Laurel Brinton and Elizabeth Traugott examine the various conceptualizations of lexicalization that have been presented in the literature. In light of contemporary work on grammaticalization, they then propose a new, unified model of lexicalization and grammaticalization. Their approach is illustrated with a variety of case studies from the history of English, including present participles, multi-word verbs, adverbs, and discourse markers, as well as some examples from other Indo-European languages. As a first overview of the various approaches to lexicalization, this book will be invaluable to students and scholars of historical linguistics and language change.

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Research Surveys in Linguistics

In large domains of theoretical and empirical linguistics, the needs of scholarly communication are directly comparable to those in analytical and natural sciences. Conspicuously lacking in the inventory of publications for linguists, compared to those in the sciences, are concise, single-authored, non-textbook reviews of rapidly evolving areas of inquiry. The series Research Surveys in Linguistics is intended to fill this gap. It consists of well-indexed volumes that survey topics of significant theoretical interest on which there has been a proliferation of research in the last two decades. The goal is to provide an efficient overview and entry into the primary literature for linguists – both advanced students and researchers – who wish to move into, or stay literate in, the areas covered. Series authors are recognized authorities on the subject matter as well as clear, highly organized writers. Each book offers the reader relatively tight structuring in sections and subsections and a detailed index for ease of orientation.

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Lexicalization and Language Change

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Preface

In the 1990s as historical studies of grammaticalization proliferated and questions arose about the relationship between it and lexicalization, we independently sought to understand better to what extent efforts to maximize the distinctions between the two were justified. At the International Conference on English Historical Linguistics in Santiago de Compostela, September 2000, we discovered that we had somewhat similar concerns and similar ideas, most especially that we were both embracing the realization that what we had polarized (see Hopper and Traugott 1993, 2003; Traugott 1994; Brinton 2002, and, to a lesser extent, Traugott 2005) were in fact very similar in certain respects. Having taken criticisms in Cowie (1995) to heart, Traugott was also concerned about the status of derivation in grammaticalization and lexicalization. Meanwhile, it became clear that many others were making similar efforts to account for the similarities as well as differences between the two processes (e.g., Lehmann 1989, 2002; Ramat 1992, 2001; Wischer 2000; Heine 2003b). The diversity of points of view on the two topics has been a matter of frustration to some, but we view it as an inevitable step in the development of relatively new subfields of linguistics, much as has occurred in the study of syntax or morphology.

Consistent with the aims of this series, Cambridge Research Surveys in Linguistics, our purpose in this book is to bring together a variety of scholarly debates concerning the relationship between lexicalization and grammaticalization in language change, with focus on the former. For this reason, the first three chapters present reviews of the literature, which in the case of lexicalization especially contains varied and often conflicting views on how this process is to be conceived. In the last three chapters, we suggest some ways in which these views may be reconciled and present one possible unified approach to lexicalization and grammaticalization. This book is addressed in the first instance to graduate students and established scholars in the field and assumes a general understanding of issues related to diachronic linguistics, and to grammaticalization studies in particular. However, we believe that it could also be used by advanced undergraduates who have a solid grounding in basic linguistics.

In a comparative work on lexicalization and grammaticalization of this nature, it has been necessary to omit a number of aspects of both phenomena...
that are of potential interest. For example, we have had little space to discuss
the phonological dimension of lexicalization. Moreover, although we have
attempted to cover recent research on lexicalization and grammaticalization,
we realize that much else may have been done that has not come to our
attention. No doubt far more is currently in progress. In particular, we have,
for reasons of time and resources, restricted our coverage primarily to work
on and in English, with passing reference to other European languages.
Therefore, a general understanding of the historical development of English
is assumed in the work. Much of relevance has, no doubt, been written on
other languages and in other languages. We hope that, despite these limita-
tions of coverage, this volume will provide guidance and inspiration for those
who wish to pursue the matter further, especially with reference to non-
European languages.

In writing this book we have had to let go of old preconceptions and
revise our thinking about lexicalization and grammaticalization; we would
like to think we have encouraged others to do so too. We are grateful to Paul
J. Hopper, Anette Rosenbach, Scott Schwenter, and Jacqueline Visconti for
comments on an earlier draft as well as to three anonymous reviewers of our
initial proposal. Isla Reynolds provided careful editorial attention to the
manuscript. We would also like to thank Christina Bartels and Kate Brett at
Cambridge University Press, who initially conceived of this project with us,
and Helen Barton and Alison Powell, who carried the project through, as
well as Jacqueline French for copy-editing.

Laurel J. Brinton, Vancouver
Elizabeth Closs Traugott, Berkeley
August 2004
List of abbreviations

ABL ablative case
ACC accusative case
Adj adjective
Adv adverb
Aux auxiliary verb
COMP comparative
Conj conjunction
Dan. Danish
dat. dative case
Det determiner
Du. Dutch
EME Early Middle English
EModE Early Modern English
Eng. English
F feminine
Fr. French
FUT future tense
GEN genitive case
Gk. Greek
Gm. German
Gmc. Germanic
GRAM grammatical morpheme
HCET Helsinki Corpus of English Texts
Hit. Hittite
ICAME International Computer Archives of Modern English
IE Indo-European
INF infinitive
It. Italian
Lat. Latin
LModE Late Modern English
M masculine
ME Middle English
MFr. Middle French
## List of abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>MHG</td>
<td>Middle High German</td>
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<tr>
<td>ModE</td>
<td>Modern English</td>
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<td>ModGm.</td>
<td>Modern German</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>noun</td>
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<td>NP</td>
<td>noun phrase</td>
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<td>OE</td>
<td>Old English</td>
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<td>OED</td>
<td><em>Oxford English Dictionary</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>OFr.</td>
<td>Old French</td>
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<td>OHG</td>
<td>Old High German</td>
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<td>ON</td>
<td>Old Norse</td>
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<td>PAST</td>
<td>past tense</td>
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<td>PDE</td>
<td>Present-day English</td>
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<td>PGmc</td>
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<td>PL</td>
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<td>prepositional phrase</td>
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<td>present participial adjective</td>
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<td>PrP Prep</td>
<td>present participial preposition</td>
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<td>SG</td>
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<td>V</td>
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<td>second person</td>
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Abbreviations of OE texts follow the conventions of the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*; abbreviations of ME texts follow the conventions of the *Middle English Dictionary*. When citing Old English and Latin we have omitted length marks. In the case of citations from other languages, we have retained them.