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Markedness and grammaticalization

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Abstract

Certain problems bound up with markedness as a static concept are clarified when put in the perspective of grammaticalization as a **dynamic concept**.

An important point in common between markedness and grammaticalization is this: If a linguistic sign A is marked as against B, then A contains a bit of meaning that B does not contain. Similarly, if element A is grammaticalized to B, it typically loses an element of meaning. In both cases, the difference in meaning is commonly matched by an analogous difference in expression. A typical example is the English pair *the* vs. *that*, whose first member developed from the second by grammaticalization and is, at the same time, the unmarked one in this opposition.

A controllable application of the concept of markedness to linguistic signs presupposes the concept of opposition and, thus, of **paradigm**. One of the effects of grammaticalization is **paradigmaticization**, the creation and consolidation of paradigms. This has two immediate consequences for markedness. First, the more a category is grammaticalized, the more pronounced will be the markedness relations among the subcategories in its paradigm. Cf., e.g., the category of aspect in Spanish and in Russian. Second, when a semantic field is grammaticalized to a paradigm of grammatical morphemes, it may come to contract a paradigmatic relation with an already existing grammatical category. For instance, the Ital. periphrastic passive with *venire* and *andare* enters into a paradigmatic relation to the older passive with *essere*.

At the start of this process, the elements more recently grammaticalized are marked as against the older, more strongly grammaticalized ones. However, in the process of grammaticalization, an element also becomes increasingly frequent, while the element substituted by it may become obsolete. If unmarkedness is conceived as tied up with higher **frequency**, increasing **obsolescence** leads to what has been termed **markedness shift**. Thus, the Lat. demonstrative *ille* used to be marked as against the personal pronoun *is*. However, it was grammaticalized to a simple personal pronoun which ended up as a substitute for *is*. While this happened, the obsolete *is* would appear to be marked as against the current *ille*.

An analysis in terms of grammaticalization thus argues for not basing markedness on text frequency, since this is influenced by factors not directly related to meaning. Instead, in a dynamic framework based on **language as an activity**, markedness should be seen as pertaining to the **choice of the speaker** within a paradigm, whereas grammaticalization pertains to the choice among different paradigms.

1. Introduction

In discussions of grammaticalization, the terminology of markedness has made repeated appearance. A sign affected by grammaticalization has been said to become less marked or to undergo demarking. Now, as is well known, the marking terminology has not always been used with strict definitional implications. It should therefore cause no wonderment that terms that have been on the linguistic market for a long time are used to express the relatively novel ideas that are behind grammaticalization. However, we do not need just another fashionable rephrasing of concepts for which there are precise terms available. If this were all that there is to the relation between grammaticalization and markedness, we might as well dismiss this issue without more ado.

On the other hand, given the grammar-theoretical environment to which both of these notions belong, one would in fact expect relations between them. Both grammaticalization and markedness relate to subsystems of linguistic signs, both in the grammar and in the lexicon. Their locus is in inflectional morphology; they are intimately connected with the notion of the paradigm. Given this shared background, it might seem worthwhile to investigate into the nature of their relationship.

2. Markedness

The notion of markedness presupposes the notion of **opposition**. If two linguistic elements A and B occur in identical contexts, contrasting in function or meaning, they are in opposition. Such elements may be composed of smaller constitutive elements. Given this, **markedness** may be defined as follows:

- D1. Let the set of elements constituting A include the set of elements constituting B plus an additional element e. Then the opposition between A and B is a **privative** or **markedness opposition**. A is **marked** as against B, e is its mark.

As E1 is meant to illustrate, the English *colt* contains all the semantic features of *horse* plus a feature [non-adult]; therefore *colt* is marked as against *horse*.

- E1. a. *horse*: [equine]
 b. *colt*: [equine] [non-adult]

While the above is a possible definition of markedness, it is not a methodological criterion, at least not a primary one. Obviously, given the opposition between *horse* and *colt* with the differentiating feature [\pm adult], there is no a priori way of deciding whether *colt* possesses an additional feature [non-adult] or rather *horse* possesses an additional feature [adult]. The chief **operational criterion** in establishing a marking relationship between two elements is an implicational one (cf. Zwicky 1978):

- D2. Let there be a binary feature [\pm f] and two corresponding categories of linguistic elements, defined by [α f] and [$-\alpha$ f]. Then [α f] constitutes a **mark** as against [$-\alpha$ f] if for any subcategory [β g] of [α f], there is a corresponding subcategory [β g] of [$-\alpha$ f], but not necessarily vice versa.

Correspondingly, an element A belonging to category [α f] is **marked** as against an element B belonging to category [$-\alpha$ f].

Speaking loosely, the unmarked term exhibits at least as much diversification in terms of subcategories as the marked one.

Take E1 again. The feature [f] in question is [\pm adult]. Within the category [+ adult], there is a subcategorization according to [\pm female] (instantiating [g] of the definition). In the case of *horse*, this yields *stallion* and *mare*. Within the category [- adult], there is no such corresponding subcategorization, i.e. there are no words for ‘female colt’ and ‘male colt’. Consequently, [- adult] constitutes a mark as against [+ adult]. This is shown in E2

- E2. a. *stallion*: [equine] [male]
 b. *mare*: [equine] [female]
 c. *colt*: [equine] [non-adult]

In the given context we are dealing with language signs, so we need not detain ourselves with phonological markedness. In morphology, the component elements are morphemes, the features are morphological categories and subcategories. On the morphological level, there is a tendency towards **iconicity** (cf. Haiman 1980) or, as the older term used to be, towards **isomorphism** (cf. Lehmann 1974) between the content and the expression sides. That is, if there is an extra semantic or functional unit in a given structure, it tends to have an extra expression unit associated with it, and vice versa. This is not the case in the pair *horse - colt*, which belongs to the lexicon. It is, however, the case in pairs such as *horse - horse-s*, *book - book-let* etc. Therefore D1 and D2 make reference to ‘constitutive elements’ or ‘features’, respectively, without differentiating between the content and expression sides. Again, to the degree that such iconicity fails, the definition does not provide an operational criterion of markedness.

In connection with our present objectives, it will be good to be aware that the above definition is essentially an inversion of what has come to be known as Brøndal's principle of **compensation**. The principle was named thus by the Danish linguist V. Brøndal (1940:107) and may be formulated as in D3:

- D3. Let there be a linguistic category with A as the marked and B as the unmarked subcategory. Then B will exhibit as much or more differentiation in terms of another linguistic category as A.

An example is provided by the tense and mood categories in Latin. Of the primary tenses, the future is most marked. Now the present, as an unmarked tense, is differentiated according to at least two moods, namely indicative and subjunctive. The future, however, only has an indicative. Another way of putting it would be: the mood paradigm is smaller within the future than within the present tense; or, more generally, the paradigm of a second category is smaller in the marked than in the unmarked subcategory of a first category.

We shall see below how this principle serves to put the relationship between markedness and grammaticalization straight.

3. Grammaticalization

Traditionally, grammaticalization has been conceived as a diachronic process transforming lexical into grammatical signs. Given that any diachronic change is mirrored in a preceding synchronic

variation, this notion is easily widened to comprise both synchronic and diachronic variation of a certain sort.

The notion of grammaticalization thus presupposes the notion of **variation**, as well as those of basic and derived variant. These are not easily defined, although the idea is clear enough: A linguistic element A is a **variant** of an element B if A and B are in some functional sense identical, but differ in aspects of their expression or their content or both. In this sense, Engl. *a* is a synchronic variant of *an*, and *the* is a diachronic variant of *that*.

On the diachronic axis, **basic and derived variant** are easily distinguished as the earlier and later one, respectively. On the synchronic axis, we will take that variant to be basic which presupposes the other one.¹ **Grammaticalization** can now be defined as follows:

D4. Let A and B be language signs. A is **grammaticalized** to B iff B is a synchronically or diachronically derived variant of A and more integrated into the grammatical system than A.

Two clear examples may be found in E3 and E4.

E3. *truwe-līko* 'in a true form' > *truly*

The English adverbial suffix *-ly* evolved from the Germanic noun **līka* 'body, shape' in the ablative, **līko* 'in a form', so that *tru-ly* derives from **truwe-līko* 'in a true form'.

E4. **nasjan dēdum* 'we did save' > *nasi-d(ed)um* 'we saved'

The English past tense suffix *-d* derives from **-dē*, a form of Germanic **dōn* 'do'. In Gothic, we find forms such as *nasi-dēdum* 'we saved', apparently derived from the combination of the infinitive *nasjan* 'save' with *dēdum* 'we did'.

Just as in the case of markedness, the nominal definition of grammaticalization offered in D4 may appear to beg the important problems since we do not know how to verify whether A is more integrated into the grammatical system than B. Therefore this definition, too, has to be associated with a set of operational criteria which afford just this. In this sense, grammaticalization is a cover term for a number of constitutive processes that tend to go hand in hand. As the examples show, three processes may be recognized, each of which may be split up into a pair according to its paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects:

1. The sign itself – both its expression and its content – shrinks, and its syntagmatic scope, i.e. the grammatical level and construction on which it operates, is reduced.
**līko* forfeits both concrete semantic features and part of its expression on its way to *-ly*. Also, while the noun could take a complex prenominal modifier, the suffix can only be preceded by a single adjective. Similarly, the Germanic verb form **dē* meant 'did'. On its way towards *-d*, it lost all its non-grammatical features and half of its expression.
2. The sign is integrated into a grammatical paradigm and into its syntagmatic context.

¹ Within a theory of grammar, the notions of basic and derived variant may be defined with respect to the functioning of the grammar, in particular to a derivational rule type in the grammar. However, in our context, such a definition would beg the question since we are not concerned with theory of grammar, but with theory of language. Any theory of grammar presupposes a theory of language. Thus, any rule type in a grammar must reflect some language operation.

While *līka* was not part of any paradigm, the suffix *-ly* is integrated into the paradigm of adjectival suffixes. It is an affix of the adjective, while *līka* was an independent word. Again, while the form **dē* may have been part of an open semantic field of semi-aspectual verbs, *-d* is tightly integrated into the small paradigm of verbal endings. And while the verb form is an independent verb, the past tense marker is an affix.

3. The sign and its paradigm become increasingly obligatory, and its position in the syntagm becomes fixed.

While in Germanic, one was free to combine an adjective with any noun that made sense, in English one has to append the adverbial suffix according to rules of syntax. Also, Germanic allowed both for prenominal and postnominal position of adjectives; but in the adverb, the adjective has to precede the suffix. While **dē* and similar verbs could be chosen according to semantic demands, the choice of the past tense suffix and its whole paradigm is subject to rules of grammar. The same goes for the position of these elements, which was comparatively variable for the Germanic verb form, but fixed for the past tense affix.

From these three pairs of processes, we may abstract three pairs of criteria – each having a paradigmatic and a syntagmatic member –, by which we may compare two signs which are variants of each other. Our operational definition may then run as follows:

- D5. Let A and B be two language signs, A being a derived variant of B.
Then A is more grammaticalized than B iff it differs from B by the following set of criteria:
1. A displays less phonological and semantic integrity and less syntagmatic scope than B.
 2. A displays greater paradigmaticity and syntagmatic bondedness than B.
 3. A displays less paradigmatic and syntagmatic variability than B.
- These criteria correlate at least to the degree of yielding compatible results.

As in the case of markedness, the criteria rely on a certain amount of iconicity in grammar. None of them makes exclusive reference to either the expression or the content side of the language sign; instead, they refer to the sign as a whole.

4. Markedness and grammaticalization

4.1. Static and dynamic concepts

Before we can go into the content of the two concepts, a methodological problem must be eliminated. The notion of markedness has evolved in the structuralist context and thus reflects an essentially static view of language. The notion of grammaticalization has evolved in the traditions of historical linguistics and evolutive typology and is thus grounded in an essentially dynamic view of language. Markedness designates a certain state of affairs, while grammaticalization designates a process. The two concepts might therefore appear to be incommensurable from start.

Here I will take the following view: To the degree that a conception of language is static, it is inadequate and has to be substituted by a dynamic one. However, the concepts that it incorporates may nevertheless be valuable and then have to be reinterpreted on the basis of the dynamic conception. Consequently, concepts such as opposition and markedness have to be seen as constraints that the speaker imposes on his choice of elements. He may contrast two elements by confining

them to the same class of contexts, and he may oppose a marked term to an unmarked one by adding a mark to it.

4.2. Demarking

4.2.1. Desemanticization and demarking

Our definition of markedness makes reference to an additional component in the marked term, which may be a semantic feature. The opposition of an unmarked to a marked term might therefore be conceived as the subtraction of a semantic feature. Our definition of grammaticalization involves, among other things, the semantic integrity of the language sign. A grammaticalized sign contains fewer semantic features than the sign it derives from (criterion 1 in D5). So here we seem to have a close parallel between markedness and grammaticalization.

Consider the opposition between *the* and *that* as an example (cf. Traugott 1982:250). This might be analyzed as a markedness opposition, based on the common feature of definiteness. *That* would be marked by containing an additional feature of non-proximal deixis, which is mirrored by its somewhat fuller expression.

Now it so happens that *the* derived from *that* by grammaticalization in Middle English, as shown in E5. Clearly, *that* lost some of its phonological substance and precisely that semantic feature which makes it a non-proximal demonstrative, so that only the definiteness remained.

E5. *that* [definite] [deictic] > *the* [definite]

On the basis of such examples, it seems understandable that grammaticalization has been described as demarking. However, once we widen our perspective a bit, we start to see the problems behind this conception. First of all, the application of the notion of markedness to a pair of elements A and B presupposes that they be in a binary opposition. This is not true for *the* and *that*. *The* forms the paradigm of the articles together with *a*, while *that* forms the paradigm of the demonstratives together with *this* and *yonder*. The two paradigms are in opposition. The markedness opposition of two selected elements of them is a derivative, contingent fact.

Take again the example of Gothic *nasidēdum*. There is supposed to have been a stage where this was in synchronic variation with something like **nasjan dēdum* ‘we did save’. Here, I think, it is clearer that while the grammaticalization of **nasjan dēdum* to *nasidēdum* did in fact involve desemanticization, **nasjan dēdum* and *nasidēdum* do not form a markedness opposition. It is hard to speak of demarking in any terminologically precise sense if there is no unmarked counterpart to the term being demarked. In fact, if demarking were understood to mean ‘loss of a mark, i.e. transformation of a marked term into its unmarked counterpart’, and if grammaticalization involved demarking in this sense, it would consist in the reduction of oppositions to their unmarked members. This is not at all what grammaticalization does; quite on the contrary, it creates new paradigms, as we shall see in 4.3.

4.2.2. Selection restrictions and demarking

There is a distinct, but related sense in which one might speak of demarking as a factor in grammaticalization. Obligatoriness of a term increases with grammaticalization. Now this is intimately tied up with the loosening of **selection restrictions** which the grammaticalized item imposes on its context. One example of this would be the extension of object agreement on the verb, which moves down the animacy hierarchy: first the verb agrees only with human, definite objects, then the object may be either definite or human, then it suffices for it to be an animal, then it need only be an individual, and in the end the verb agrees with every object. This process can currently be observed in Amharic and, to a certain degree, in Spanish.

A similar example is provided by the extension of the preposition *a* for the expression of the object relation in Spanish. This takes exactly the same course, as is illustrated in E6.

- E6. a. *Conozco *(a) ese hombre.* 'I know that man.'
 b. *Conozco (?a) ese bicho.* 'I know that creature.'
 c. *Conozco (*a) esa tarea.* 'I know this task.'

Here, grammaticalization may be conceived as demarking if the selection restrictions inherent in the grammaticalized item are subsumed under its semantic features and conceived of as marks. However, it still does not correspond to D2, which relies on the implicational relationship between the marked and the unmarked term. Applying this to the example at hand, we would rather say that the use of an originally dative preposition with direct objects on a low position of the animacy hierarchy implies its use with direct object higher up on the hierarchy (cf. Bossong 1985). This is correct as far as it goes. On this basis, however, the use of *a* would be least marked in E6.a and most marked in E6.c, so that the movement from a to c would be marking instead of demarking, if anything. I therefore conclude that this talk of demarking in grammaticalization is not useful either.

4.2.3. Paradigmaticization and demarking

Finally, consider the conceptual interaction of the compensation principle and the parameter of paradigmaticization. As we saw above, the compensation principle says that the paradigmatic differentiation of an unmarked subcategory is greater than or at least equal to the differentiation of the marked subcategory. Paradigmaticization, on the other hand, means that a more grammaticalized paradigm is more tightly integrated than a less grammaticalized one. Integration of a paradigm implies, among other things, a relatively small number of members. For instance, the English demonstratives outnumber the articles; the paradigm of the French object agreement clitics is larger than that of the more grammaticalized subject agreement suffixes. Cf. also 4.4 on the consolidation of paradigms.

Now suppose the relation of a less grammaticalized to a more grammaticalized item were, at the same time, one of a marked to an unmarked item. Then the paradigm of the latter item would have to be, according to paradigmaticization, smaller than the one of the former, but, according to the compensation principle, larger than the paradigm of the former. Thus, paradigmaticization and compensation would contradict each other. Since both principles are empirically well founded as

long as we deal with clear, prototypical cases of grammaticalization and markedness, respectively, we may conclude preliminarily that the interpretation of a grammaticalizational relationship as a markedness relationship introduces incoherence into the overall theoretical framework.

4.3. Markedness reversal

When a grammatical category is renewed, the successor necessarily takes some of the field formerly occupied only by the more traditional category. Take the Latin personal and demonstrative pronouns of E7 as an example.

- E7. a. *is* 'he'
 b. *hic* 'this one' (D1)
 iste 'that one' (D2)
 ille 'that one' (D3)

In Classical Latin, *is* belongs into a paradigm with the other personal pronouns *ego* 'I' and *tu* 'you', while *ille* is the deictically least marked member of the demonstrative set. The relation of *is* to *ille* is thus rather similar to the relation between English *the* and *that*.

However, in contradistinction to the English personal pronoun, *is* could not be used deictically. This function was regularly fulfilled by *ille* (cf. Pinkster 1986). In colloquial Latin, the whole pronominal system was restructured. For one thing, the demonstrative *hic* was lost, probably in connection with the utter irregularity of its paradigm. For another, *ille* gradually took on all the functions of *is*, becoming the normal 3. ps. pronoun. Given that grammaticalization involves, among other things, increasing obligatoriness of the item in question, it follows that it also normally involves an increase in **frequency**. While the original 3. ps. pronoun *is* was ousted, it became old-fashioned, high-styled and obsolete. Its use instead of *ille* increasingly acquired a striking quality.

Consequently, *is* might now be called marked as against *ille*. Thus, the relationship between the two terms seems to be exactly reversed. Consequently, some authors speak of **markedness shift** or **markedness reversal** in this connection (e.g. Dik 1978:111f; cf. also Givón 1979:75f).

A parallel example from German is offered by the genitive and its successor, the *von*-phrase, as in E8.

- E8. a. *der Chef meines Mannes* 'my husband's boss'
 b. *der Chef von meinem Mann* 'the boss of my husband'

Originally, only the genitive was admissible in nominal attributes. Later, the preposition *von* 'from' was grammaticalized and acquired the function of Engl. *of*, being used in nominal attribution instead of the genitive. At first, *von* was more expressive in attribution than the mere genitive. Nowadays, the genitive becomes increasingly old-fashioned, and we might again speak of markedness reversal.

The idea of markedness reversal as a switch occurring inside a paradigm and, thus, as a leap in linguistic history is in itself not very attractive. Moreover, we easily recognize here the loose usage of marking terminology. It is true that markedness has been associated with frequency, and

justifiably so. However, mere frequency in itself is never a sufficient criterion for a certain structural analysis. There is an obvious difference between the pair *horse - colt*, whose second term is less frequent because it contains an additional semantic feature and which is, therefore, marked in the strict terminological sense, and the pair *ille - is* in Vulgar Latin, whose second term is less frequent because it is obsolete, but which otherwise does not conform to any of the markedness criteria.

I therefore conclude that the term ‘markedness reversal’ is not well applied in grammaticalization. While it is true that the frequency relationship between the traditional and the innovated term is reversed during the historical change in question, their paradigmatic relation is not directly affected by this in the sense that the traditional term acquired a mark formerly possessed by the innovated term.

4.4. The consolidation of paradigms

A set of oppositions involving the same elements in the same contexts constitutes a paradigm. Consider again Proto-Gothic **nasjan dēdum* > Gothic *nasi-dēdum* (E4). At the time where only the former variant existed, this was a periphrastic locution which may have been in loose association with other verbal periphrases. At the Gothic stage, *nasidēdum* is integrated into the inflectional paradigm and forms a markedness opposition with *nasjam* ‘we save’.

The same goes for the Germanic **articles**. The numeral ‘one’, the source of the indefinite article, and the demonstrative ‘that’, the source of the definite article, were just two words that could appear in the same position, but did not form a paradigm. In the course of their grammaticalization, first the demonstrative, then the numeral started to form a privative opposition with the absence of determination. Cf., for the definite article, E9 (from Ramat 1980:120f), and for the indefinite article, E10, all from the Old Saxon Heliand (ca. 830 AD).

- E9. a. Thar ina thiu modar fand (Hel. 818)
‘there the mother found him’
- b. fand thar _ barn gesund (Hel. 2160 M)
‘(he) found there the son healthy’
- E10. a. ina antleddun thanen drohtines engilos endi is dohter twa an enan berg uppen
(Hel., *Die letzten Dinge*)
‘him and his two daughters led thence god's angels up to a mountain’
- b. Thuo sia thar an griete _ galgon rihtun (Hel., *Aus der Kreuzigung*)
‘Then they set up gallows there on the sand.’

At this stage, grammaticalization has created two markedness oppositions. Together they form a paradigm of three terms, namely ‘definite determiner vs. zero vs. indefinite determiner’. From there, grammaticalization continues, and the result is an equipollent opposition between the definite and the indefinite article. This paradigm becomes increasingly obligatory and can only be left out under well-defined conditions.

As another example, we may consider briefly the category of **aspect** in some languages. In several Romance languages, periphrastic aspects have been formed, as illustrated by Spanish in E11.

- E11. a. voy a cantar 'I will sing'
Lat. *ire* 'go' > Span. *ir* FUTURE
- b. estoy cantando 'I am singing'
Lat. *stare* 'stand' > Span. *estar* PROGRESSIVE
- c. he cantado 'I have sung'
Lat. *habere* 'have' > Span. *haber* PERFECT
- d. acabo de cantar 'I have just sung'
Span. *acabar* 'finish' > COMPLETIVE

This system is not yet very tightly integrated, and the oppositions do not seem to be binary. We will come in a moment to the possibility of assuming a privative opposition between each of the forms in E11 and the simple present tense *canto* 'I sing'.

In Russian, there is a paradigm of two aspects, the perfective and the imperfective, as illustrated in E12.

- E12. *Čto že delal Bel'tov v prodolženie etikh desjati let? Vsjo ili počti vsjo. Čto on sdelal? Ničevo, ili počti ničevo?*
'What then did Beltov do(IMPF) in the course of these ten years? Everything or almost everything. What did he achieve [do(PERF)]? Nothing, or almost nothing.' (Unbegaun 1969:212)

By all the criteria introduced in 3, this system is more grammaticalized than the Spanish one. Here there is a clear privative opposition with, in this case at least,² 'perfective' as the marked term.²

The point here is that grammaticalization leads to the creation and integration of paradigms. In its course, the chances for two formerly unrelated terms to enter into a markedness opposition are furthered. With grammaticalization going on, more terms are moved into direct oppositions to each other, and former markedness oppositions may give way to equipollent oppositions.

4.5. The stratification of paradigms

When a semantic field of lexical items is grammaticalized to a loosely integrated paradigm of grammatical words, such as prepositions, auxiliaries, determiners and the like, there may exist, at the same time, an older, more grammaticalized paradigm representing a semantically related category. This is the case of the Spanish aspectuals, which hit upon the synthetic tense system that has been in existence for long. Another example are the passive auxiliaries in Italian. Traditionally, the passive was formed with *essere* 'to be', as in E13.a. This verbal form is in a paradigm with the other verbal voices, namely the active *dice* 'says' and the reflexive *si dice* 'is said'.

- E13. a. Questo è detto senza ulteriori implicazioni.
'This is said without further implications.'
- b. Questo va detto senza ulteriori implicazioni.
'I say this without further implications.'

² Other verbs have the imperfective formally marked. The details of the analysis of the Russian aspects are of no concern in the present context.

- c. Questo viene detto senza ulteriori implicazioni.
 ‘They say this without further implications.’

More recently, another way of forming the passive has spread in the language, which involves *andare* and *venire* as auxiliaries, as illustrated in E13.b and c. This periphrasis exploits the deictic potential of these verbs: *andare* designates a movement originating at the speakers site, *venire* designates a movement directed towards the speaker. Thus, the two analytic forms in E13.b and c come to mean ‘it is said by me’ vs. ‘it is said by somebody else’. They form a binary opposition, whose exact nature is yet to be analyzed. It may be equipollent, or it may be privative, with *andare* as the unmarked term.

The situation is thus similar to the Spanish aspectuals: By the grammaticalization of the verbs *andare* and *venire*, a paradigm based on a binary opposition is formed, which as a whole contrasts with an already existing category, the passive with *essere*, which is slightly more grammaticalized. The effect is the same in both cases: we get a **stratification** of paradigms representing functionally similar grammatical categories.

As a last example, we may again consider the English articles and demonstratives. These are two paradigms of forms which are functionally similar, occur in the same position and therefore contrast with each other. Although here it is not the case that the demonstratives were grammaticalized chronologically after the articles, it is still true that they are on a less advanced stage of grammaticalization.

In all of the examples, the problem is the same. Given the presupposition that the paradigms are semantically similar and contrast with each other, they contract a paradigmatic relationship among each other. As a consequence, a term belonging to one paradigm enters into a mediate opposition to a term belonging to the other paradigm. Now this mediate opposition may be reinterpreted as a direct one, so that not only the paradigms as a whole, but also the single forms may appear to contract oppositions. That is, not only the demonstratives and the articles as two groups are in opposition, but also the demonstrative *that* and the article *the*. Not only the standard Italian voices are in opposition with the deictic passives, but also the auxiliary *venire* with the auxiliary *essere*.

Furthermore, since the paradigms exhibit different stages of grammaticalization, it follows that the forms of the less grammaticalized paradigm are richer in semantic features than those of the more grammaticalized paradigm. This means that the direct cross-paradigm oppositions may be interpreted as markedness oppositions. I suppose that this is why some people conceive of grammaticalizational relationships as markedness relationships.

At the same time, it is clear how we may gain precision here. There is a difference between the choice that a speaker makes among the different forms within a paradigm, on the one hand, and the choice among different paradigms, on the other. Obviously, the latter is a choice on a higher level, it is presupposed by the former choice. The freedom that the speaker enjoys in his choice is greater on the higher level than on the lower level. For instance, he has some freedom to choose, according to his semantic exigencies, either a demonstrative or an article. However, once he has chosen a category, the selection of the correct subcategory is less free and more subject to rules of grammar, this again differing according to the degree of grammaticalization of the paradigm in question.

If we make this distinction between the **intraparadigmatic** and the **interparadigmatic** levels, we may speak of different degrees of grammaticalization on the interparadigmatic level and restrict the use of markedness terminology to the intraparadigmatic level. The riddles posed by the combination of grammaticalization with markedness then dissolve. In particular, the contradiction emerging from the combination of Brøndal's compensation principle with paradigmaticization disappears: the compensation principle is not applicable to paradigms of different degrees of grammaticalization.

5. Conclusion

Consideration of the facts of grammaticalization strongly argues for a restricted use of markedness terminology. In particular, nothing is gained if markedness is based on text frequency, since this is influenced by factors not directly related to meaning. Also, markedness should not be applied to any two terms one of which gives more information than the other. Instead, in a dynamic framework based on **language as an activity**, markedness should be seen as pertaining to the **choice of the speaker** within a paradigm, whereas grammaticalization pertains to the choice among different paradigms.

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