

## **Host-class expansion in grammaticalization. Towards a cognitive prototype account**

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Grammaticalization research has traditionally been interested in the reduction of meaning that accompanies the grammaticalization of a lexical item. Recent grammaticalization studies however have stressed the role of the construction in which an item grammaticalizes. Himmelmann (2004:32) in particular stresses the fact that grammaticalization is accompanied by an expansion within the open class of elements the grammaticalizing item is in construction with. It is well-known within historical linguistics that this host-class expansion is gradual. However, little is known on how these open slots in constructions are organized and how new members are integrated into them.

Bybee (2010:83-90) provides an interesting cognitive perspective on this issue based on an empirical study presented in Bybee & Eddington (2006) studying the categorization of adjectives combining with verbs of becoming in Spanish. Bybee argues that the central members in open slots are exemplars with a high frequency. Less frequent items cluster around these central exemplars if they are semantically similar. Bybee (2010:90) extrapolates these findings to diachrony and expects historical change “to emanate outwardly of the central member of a category”. This diachronic hypothesis is yet to be tested on empirical data.

This contribution presents new data on the grammaticalization of the *have* and *be* perfect in Dutch. This historical change is considered to be accompanied by an expansion of the past participles occurring in both constructions. This contribution investigates a sample of 1344 *have* perfects and 499 *be* perfects taken from a corpus of legal texts dating from the period 1250-1800. Statistical analysis uncovers that both perfect constructions are increasingly combined with new classes of past participles over time and thus show evidence of lexical expansion.

The observed lexical expansion is subsequently analyzed using a model of perfect auxiliary selection developed by Shannon (1995) within the framework of prototype theory. Shannon claims that the *have* perfect is found with prototypical transitive events whereas the *be* perfect combines with prototypical mutative events. He relates these two prototypical event types to the concept of transitivity developed by Hopper & Thompson (1980). Applying this prototype model to the data reveals that *have* perfect is initially restricted to prototypical transitive events and the *be* perfect to prototypical mutative events. The grammaticalization of both constructions is accompanied by a gradual expansion away from these prototypes, confirming the hypothesis of Bybee (2010).

### **References**

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