
Grammaticalization and phi-features

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This paper studies the interaction between the different grammaticalization routes and phi-feature economy seen in the Indo-Aryan language/ IA family in its diachrony which influences the alignment system of this language family. The Old Indo-Aryan language/ OIA (1200-600 BC) has rich set of case markers with nominative-accusative alignment and person agreement all across the board. However, in the subsequent eras of Middle Indo-Aryan/MIA (600 BC-600 AD) and Old Eastern IA/ OEIA (900-1200 AD), the number of case markers diminishes. This change is accompanied by the change of alignment altogether to ergative from nominative-accusative alignment. I claim that creative grammaticalization path and routine phi-feature economy together bring in such language change. For example:

- (1) pura devayug ca eva drs-**tam**
formerly god.age-Loc.Sg and PTCL see-Perf.N.Sg
sarv-am maya vibho
everything-Nom.N.Sg I-Ins.Sg lord-Voc.Sg
'lord, formerly, in the age of the Deva (Gods), everything was seen by me' OIA
- (2) sa ...ekka-m pavvayaguha-m pat-to
he.Nom.Sg one-Acc.Sg cave-Acc.Sg arrive-Perf.M.Sg
'he reached a cave' Deo (2006,2012) MIA

This grammaticalization pattern of *-ta/-na* proves to be vital for case and agreement system of IA. This is because the *-ta/-na* marker (see 2), being initially a participial (see 1) in OIA, does not have person features. Therefore, even after being grammaticalized, it remains personless, i.e. [-person]. When it is merged inside the finite paradigm, it has long-term repercussions, such as person agreement being blocked. This change in MIA pushes the whole system to reorganize itself and causes for the rise of ergativity. This change is significant because if any other marker were chosen to be grammaticalized, the person agreement would not have been blocked. Thus, grammaticalization and phi-feature interaction can decide the direction of language change bringing innovation and economy in the system.

References: • Chatterji, S. K. (1926). *Origin and Development of Bengali*. Calcutta: University Press. • Deo, A (2007). *Tense and Aspect in Indo-Aryan languages: Variation and Diachrony*. Unpublished dissertation, Stanford University. • Deo, A. (2012). The imperfective-perfective contrast in Middle Indo-Aryan. *Journal of South Asian Linguistics*, 5, 3–33.