

GRAMMATICALIZATION IN SPATIAL TERMS AND DIRECTIONAL LEXEMES: A Comparison of Nagamese with Assamese

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ABSTRACT

The following paper investigates the process of Grammaticalization in Spatial terms and Directional lexemes of Nagamese language. The paper also compares the Assamese spatial terms and directional lexemes to Nagamese spatial terms and directional lexemes to show the etymology of the lexemes. Nagamese is basically a Creole formed by Assamese, Hindi, English, and other Naga languages spoken in Nagaland. The term Grammaticalization refers to the process where any lexical term become the part of grammar or change in Grammatical functions by fulfilling some parameters. For example: The lexemes like /par/ (Above,) is getting grammaticalized to imply /par/ (Edges) as spatial term and the lexeme /pic^he/ (Back, Body Part) is getting grammaticalized to /pic^he/ (Behind) as Directional lexeme.

Keywords: Grammaticalization, Semantic Extention, Phonetic Erosion, Lexemes, Nagamese, Assamese Grammatical categories.

1. INTRODUCTION

Grammaticalization refers to the development from lexical to grammatical forms and from grammatical to even more grammatical forms. Since the development of grammatical forms is not independent of the constructions to which they belong, the study of grammaticalization is also concerned with constructions and with even larger discourse segments.

Grammaticalization theory is concerned with the genesis and development of grammatical forms. Its primary goal is to describe how grammatical forms and constructions arise and develop through space and time, and to explain why they are structured the way they are.

- (a) Desemanticization or Semantic Bleaching (loss in meaning content)
- (b) Extension or Context Generalization (use in new contexts)
- (c) Decategorialization (loss in morphosyntactic properties characteristic of lexical or other less grammaticalized forms)
- (d) Erosion or phonetic reduction – loss in phonetic substance.

While three of these mechanisms involve a loss in properties, there are also gains. In the same way that linguistic items undergoing grammaticalization lose in semantic, morpho-syntactic, and phonetic substance, they also gain in properties characteristic of their uses in new contexts.

2. NAGAMESE AS A LANGUAGE

The following paper discusses the Nagamese language. Nagamese Creole is a Creole based on Assamese, Hindi, English and Bengali. It is spoken by about 300,000 people and used in Nagaland, a small state in the north east of India. Nagamese is used as a lingua franca in schools, markets, hospitals, the legislative assembly and churches by the peoples of Nagaland, who speak more than 20 other mutually unintelligible languages and Nagamese stabilised as a creole in about 1936.

Ingo Plag in his paper called *On the Role of Grammaticalization in Creolizations* said while research on grammaticalization has also inspired a growing number of investigations of creole development, there seems to be a consensus that grammatical expansion and restructuring play an important role in this process. In other words, creolization involves the creation of new grammatical categories and the development or acquisition of the formatives to express them. It is therefore not surprising that some authors (Mühlhäusler 1980, Romaine 1988, Plag 1994, Mufwene 1996) have argued that the evolution of grammatical categories and structures in creolization can be explained by universal principles of grammaticalization that are operative in creoles and non-creoles alike.

3. ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS:

Since, Nagamese is primarily based on Assamese, the origins of many of the lexemes have their roots in Assamese. Thus, the paper tries to look upon some of the origins of the words through an etymological dictionary to diachronically at Grammaticalization and at a synchronic perspective of it at the same time. The following stages have been considered as the general process of Grammaticalisation taken from 'The Outline of Grammatical Evolution' (Heine and Kuteva, 2002):

Stage 1: Noun

Stage 2: Noun to Verb

Stage 3: Noun to Adjective and Adverb, Verb to Adverb

Stage 4: Verb to Aspect and Negative, Adverb to Adposition, Aspect and Demonstrative

The table given below shows the spatial lexemes and directional lexemes getting grammaticalized by fulfilling the above mentioned parameters.

par	Boundary, Edge N
para	From, POST-POSITION
par	Cross/ across ADV
pic ^h e	Back(body-part) N
pic ^h e	Behind (spatial) POST POSITION
pic ^h e	After POST- POSITION

Table no.1: List of lexemes showing Grammaticalization.

1. Mor laqag^hor nōdɪ /par/ kəna ase.
I.GEN house.N river edge.N in is.AUX.PRS.
'my house is at the edge of the river'

2. d^hobi-la g^hor-tu nala /**par**/ kəna asɛ.
 washerman-GEN house-CLS drain edge in is.AUX.PRS.

‘The washer man’s house is at the boundary/ edge of the drain’.

3. Moi nagalænd /**para**/asɛ
 I.NOM Nagaland from is.AUX.PRS.
 ‘I come from Nagaland’.

4. tai rum /**para**/ bahar ulai-ʃɛ.
 He.3P.NOM room from outside exit-PRS.
 He came outside from the room

5. Moi rasta /**par**/ kori- ʃɛ.
 I.NOM road cross.ADV do - PST.
 ‘I crossed the road’.

Here, the word /par/ which initially was a noun got grammaticalized to form a spatial post-position/ para/ from.

The second grammaticalisation seen here from the above lexeme is that, the word for *across* has also formed. Thus, from the notion of boundary, the semantic extension has led to its formation of a post-position *from* and later to the adverb *par/ across*.

6. Moi laga **pic^he -te** kiba as-ɛ.
 I.NOM back-LOC some is.AUX.PRS.
 ‘There is something on my back’.

7. Moi-la **pic^he -te** bik^h-ai as-ɛ.
 My- GEN back- LOC pain-CONT is.AUX.PRS.
 ‘My back is paining’.

8. bəket-la **pic^he-te** mug as-ɛ.
 Bucket-GEN behind-LOC mug is.AUX.PRS
 ‘The mug is behind the bucket’.

9. tai dædlam karne **pic^he** as-ɛ.
 She.3P.NOM deadline for behind is.AUX.PRS.
 ‘She is lagging behind her deadlines’.

10. moi b^hat **pic^he-te** k^ha-b-o.
 I.NOM food after eat-IstP-FUT
 ‘I will eat dinner afterwards’.

11. moi-la **pic^he** tai-la tərɲ as-ɛ.
 I.1P-GEN after her.2P-GEN turn is.AUX.PRS
 ‘her turn comes after me.’

In the above sentences, we can see how back has been grammaticalized to imply both a spatial term *behind* and a temporal term *after*. As the data has been compared to Assamese, a similar process seems to have taken place there too. The lexeme for *after* has been derived from **back** just as *behind*.

12. moi b^hat **pas-ɔt** kɛ k^ha-m.
 I.NOM food after-LOC PP eat-FUT.
 ‘I will eat dinner afterwards’.

Another important observation made from the above sentences is that both *behind* and *after* have extended their meanings from their spatial domain to a metaphorical sense. **Sentence no. 8** *behind* no longer remains in the spatial domain; rather it denotes a metaphorical extension.

upor	Above (locative)
uth ¹	Rise (Verb)

Table no.2 List of spatial lexemes getting Grammaticalized

As it has been mentioned above, many lexemes of Nagamese are derived from Assamese, and *above* /upor/ and *rise* /uth¹/ have also come from Assamese. Etymologically, /uth¹/ also meant *above* in Old Assamese, and therefore, both /upor/ and /uth¹/ were used together to mean upward movement. Here the deduction could be made that, /uth¹/ was grammaticalized to /uth¹/ to mean *rise* as it is fulfilling the parameters of Grammaticalization.

13. gərom pani-tə n b^hap uth¹-fə.
hot water-LOC steam rise-PRS.
‘Steam is rising from the boiling water’.
14. ġiriġa g^has upor-tə b^ho-1 aŋe.
bird tree up-LOC sit-PRS is.AUX.PRS.
‘The bird is sitting on the tree branch’.
15. tai pahar-tə uth¹-fə.
He.NOM mountain up-PRS.
‘He climbed up the mountain’.

Here, in the sentence no15, the notion of climbing is understood in the verb /uth¹/ which has been grammaticalized to mean *rise* now.

log	Contact, meet N
logtə	Towards, with

Table no.3 List of Directional lexemes getting Grammaticalized

16. tai moi logtə ahi-se.
He.NOM I.NOM with come.PRS.
‘He came with me’.
17. moi logtə ahi-b-1.
I.NOM to/towards come.-1stP-PRS.
‘Come to me’/ ‘Come towards me’.

Here, the lexeme /log/ which is a noun gets semantically extended from *contact* to imply meeting and thus, being *with* the subject of the sentence. It gets further grammaticalized to mean direction of going towards the Subject of the sentence.

4. CONCLUSION

Spatial terms in Nagamese have so far reached till the 3rd stage of grammaticalisation under the consideration of the stages of Grammatical Evolution. Thus, so far, grammaticalisation process in Nagamese, is in different stages of it. Creoles have a grammaticalisation process different from other Contact-induced languages. In Spatial terms, Nagamese has processes similar to Assamese and Hindi, the two Base languages, from which it has borrowed the lexemes. It is a little difficult to historically analyse the language as there is no archival data available. Nagamese, being a contact language, is evolving continually, depending on the communities contact with Assamese.

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ABBREVIATION USED

HON honorific
INTER interrogative
IMP imperative
INDF indefinite
INF infinitive
IPFV imperfective
LOC locative
NOM Nominative
ADJ adjective
ADV adverb(ial)
ART article
AUX auxiliary
CP conjunctive participle
ERG ergative
FUT future
GEN genitive
OBJ object
OBL oblique
PASP passive perfective
PSTP past participle
PASS passive
PFV perfective
POSS possessive
PPTCP passive participle
PRF perfect
PRS present
PROG progressive
PST past
SG singular

