

Introduction

The Symposium on the Mechanisms of Syntactic Change was held at the University of California, Santa Barbara, May 7-May 9, 1976. A total of twenty-three papers were prepared for the Symposium. They were circulated among the participants prior to the Symposium and a discussion session was held for each of the papers. The outgrowth of the Symposium is this volume consisting of fourteen articles revised from their original versions on the basis of the discussions and input by the participants. The articles are grouped into six chapters. The first chapter concerns the nature of syntactic change. Chung provides for this chapter a lucid presentation of three exciting cases of syntactic change: the passive-to-ergative reanalysis in Pukapukan, the spread of the ergative case marking in Samoan, and the extension of the domain of application of certain movement rules in Bahasa Indonesian. The theoretical implication of her case studies is significant: syntactic change is gradual and the gradual nature of certain changes is characterized by a hierarchy of sentence types governing the actualization of change. It is particularly rewarding that this hierarchy corresponds exactly to our understanding of sentence and rule types in synchronic studies. The second article in this chapter is a carefully argued and well documented (based on Uto-Aztecan data) study of reanalysis by Langacker: the types of reanalysis, its effects, and its causes. Although this study is by no means exhaustive, it represents the first theoretical attempt to investigate the general nature rather than a specific case, of reanalysis. The third article in Chapter I deals with the two aspects of syn-

tactic change: reanalysis and actualization. Using two case studies--the loss of subject-to-object raising in the complement of verbs of cognition in Finnish and the replacement of the genitive by accusative marking for objects in Russian--as illustration, Timberlake argues convincingly that actualization is a consequence of reanalysis and actualization is gradual, occurring first in "unmarked" contexts before proceeding to "marked" contexts. Thus, Timberlake's study complements Chung's. The difference is that in the cases of syntactic change discussed by Chung, the markedness of the contexts for gradual actualization is synchronically definable. Timberlake also implicitly claims that reanalysis typically occurs during language acquisition by children. This is a point with which others (including Stockwell in this volume) may disagree.

Chapter II deals with word order change. Word order change is probably the most drastic and complex category of syntactic changes. It affects the fundamental syntactic organization of a language. A word order change, for instance SOV to SVO, usually represents a series of parallel or sequential syntactic changes acting in a coordinated manner to push the language from one typological category to another. Its ramification, therefore, extends far beyond a mere reorganization of the order of the basic sentential constituents: subject, object, verb. Thus, the actualization of word change inevitably spans centuries or even millennia, further complicating the task of the researcher to recapture the interplay of diachronic processes that initiate and propel the language to drift from one word order type to another. With the exception of the Chinese case which has developed certain verb-final constructions while the language is still SVO (See Li, C.

N. and S. A. Thompson, 1975, "Historical change of word order: a case study in Chinese and its implications", in Historical Linguistics, ed. by J. M. Anderson and C. Jones, Vol. 1, 199-217.) the only documented types of word order changes that are not due to language contact are SOV to (VSO) to SVO. Yet we are far from understanding the precise mechanism and process of actualization of the change from SOV to VSO. The comment focusing rule is proposed by Stockwell as a mechanism for developing VSO constructions in SOV languages. It is conceivable that comment focusing might have sparked the change. But the actualization of the change is completely unknown. In other words, how does a comment focusing construction which must be highly marked and serving a specific pragmatic function in a verb-final language, become unmarked and lose its function as a focusing construction? Could it be a case of reanalysis? What causes the reanalysis? A series of questions confronts us squarely. But the answers continue to elude us.

With regard to the VSO to SVO drift, Givón contributed a commendable study to this chapter with statistics and documentation painstakingly gathered from Biblical Hebrew text. The primary driving force of the VS to SV drift, according to Givón, is the principle of discourse topicality, and he provides us with a number of hierarchies describing the various contexts through which the drift is gradually actualized. It is particularly interesting to see that at least in the case of Hebrew, the change in the tense-aspect system went hand in hand with the principle of discourse topicality in propelling the language to drift from VS to SV.

Langdon's comparative study of constituent ordering in both the VP and NP of Yuman languages should have a lasting

salutary effect on those who might blindly infer word order change on the basis of the tentative findings of word order typologies. The basic word order in Yuman languages is SOV. But they have certain non-SOV characteristics: adjective follows the head noun; headless relative clauses; an elaborate prefix system. For each of these characteristics which is allegedly incongruent with the SOV word order, Langdon convincingly demonstrated with historical and comparative evidence that the characteristic is perfectly natural for Yuman languages. Thus the non-SOV characteristics are not the relic of an older variant word order typology, but part and parcel of a sub-category of the SOV typology. The valuable lesson to be drawn from Langdon's study is that we must determine for each specific language family "how much of today's morphology (and constituent ordering of NPs) is still today's syntax and, conversely, how much of yesterday's morphology (and constituent ordering of NPs) is still yesterday's morphology (and constituent ordering of NPs)." It has become increasingly clear that the word order typology put forth by Greenberg over a decade ago, though invaluable as a pioneering source of stimulation in modern studies of language typologies, does not constitute an unshakable foundation for diachronic syntax. The SVO, SOV, VSO typology does not provide a trichotomy of the vast majority of languages in the world. At best, it represents three points of idealization in the continuum of word orders and a wide array of ancillary grammatical properties. The precise nature of this continuum remains somewhat of a mystery to date.

Chapter III concerns syntactic change involving ergative languages. Two questions immediately come to mind: (1) how

does an accusative language become ergative? (2) how does an ergative language become accusative? The primary attested mechanism by which a language becomes ergative is reanalysis through passivization, i.e., ergative morphology arises by generalizing the morphology of a passive construction as the passive/active distinction is lost. Viewed in terms of rule change, this mechanism amounts to the replacement of the passive rule by an obligatory ergative case marking rule applying to active sentences. A consequence of such a development of ergative morphology in a language is that the syntactic properties of the language generally remain to be those of active sentences in an accusative language. Chung's paper in Chapter I provides a detailed account of the passive-to-ergative change in a number of Polynesian languages. Anderson, in his article in this chapter, traces the development of the ergative morphology in perfect tense among Indic and Iranian languages to the same mechanism: passive-to-ergative reanalysis. While the passive-to-ergative reanalysis appears to be an important mechanism for the development of ergative languages and thus constitutes an answer to question (1), we have not yet come to grips with question (2). Anderson reported Braithwaite's account of the origin of the accusative morphology in the present tense series among the Kartvelian (South Caucasian) family, and further provided an alternative suggestion. It is also known that the ergative-to-accusative change has taken place among a number of Tibeto-Burman languages (see J. Bauman, Pronouns and Pronominal Morphology in Tibeto-Burman, Ph.D. dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1975). But we are on less firm ground in those cases than we are in the cases of change from accusative to ergative.

Among the ergative languages, the Australian languages are distinct. They are ergative both morphologically and syntactically as Dixon demonstrates in his paper with data from Dyirbal and Yidin. Dixon postulates an ergative-prone system in Proto-Australian nominal and pronominal morphology and suggests that both morphology and syntax change in a direction to avoid disparity between the two. Anderson, however, citing Hale, disagrees with Dixon's reconstruction for Proto-Australian. It is clear that the nature of the Australian languages, namely syntactic ergativity, bestows on them a special importance in both the diachronic and synchronic study of ergativity. Further research and studies in the Australian language area will undoubtedly result in significant contributions to our understanding of ergative languages and their diachronic origins.

Any investigation into the diachronic development of the copula will reveal that the copula is extremely susceptible to change. It can be easily lost, borrowed or redeveloped. This is probably due to the fact that copula is typically unstressed and has little or no semantic content other than serving as a tense bearer. In many languages, the investigators can easily uncover evidence supporting both the loss and the emergence of the copula without reaching a great time depth. However, the diachronic cycle is complex and the processes of decline and emergence (or borrowing) often overlap, creating a mesh that is difficult to untangle. Chapter IV presents two sources and pathways for the development of the copula: from anaphoric pronoun through reanalysis to copula in Chinese, Hebrew, Palestinian Arabic and Wappo presented by Li and Thompson; from existential to copula through reanalysis in Yuman

presented by Munro. They represent a small step forward in the study of the rise and decline of the copula in many languages of the world.

Many scholars of American Indian languages have jokingly declared on one occasion or another that there is only morphology and semantics but no syntax in American Indian languages. While it might be wrong to impugn the claim that there is syntax in every language, it is a fact that most American Indian languages have extremely rich and complex morphological systems that manifest and signal a huge array of semantic and pragmatic functions, thus eliminating the need of certain syntactic rules (particularly movement rules) for displaying those functions. It is probably uncontroversial to say that in most American Indian languages morphology constitutes the primary surface codification for both meaning and structure. Thus, in Chapter V, the three articles are concerned with change involving morphology and all three draw their data from American Indian languages. Haas' paper traces the development of subject pronominal suffixes on verb systems in Hitchiti and Creek from an old conjugated auxiliary used with intransitive verbs. Steele's paper examines the development of the second position clitic pronouns and the prefixal subject pronouns on verbs in Uto-Aztecan languages. Finally, Chafe presents a significant case of the evolution of verb agreement in the Iroquoian languages. One significant aspect of this evolution lies in the unusual origin of the third person verb agreement markers in the Iroquoian languages. They evolved from existing verb morphology through reinterpretation rather than from independent pronouns through cliticization. Another significant aspect of the evolution lies in the dir-

ection and the nature of the drift. It moved toward greater complexity through extensions from one semantic category to another rather than toward greater simplicity through phonological leveling. Thus, the Iroquoian case unfolds a refreshing picture of the diachronic development of verb morphology.

Chapter VI strictly speaking is not a study of mechanisms of syntactic change. As the title, 'Multiple Analysis', indicates, Hankamer's paper argues for the hypothesis that given a body of data, it is possible to have two or more conflicting analyses that are simultaneously correct. The hypothesis is highly provocative and has serious theoretical ramifications in both synchronic and diachronic studies. Diachronically, multiple analyses may constitute the motivating force inducing syntactic change. In other words, the existence of multiple analyses for a construction probably immediately precedes the stage of reanalysis of that construction. Thus, if Hankamer's hypothesis proves correct, the synchronic description of a language may yield important clues to the nature and direction of syntactic changes in the language, opening up new possibilities for the investigation of syntactic changes that are actively at work in present day languages. One may disagree with the specific analyses proposed by Hankamer for some of the constructions cited in his study. But his basic thesis that multiple analysis exists is intuitively appealing.

To sum up, this collection of studies covers a wide range of topics in diachronic syntax, and their conclusions and hypotheses are documented with a large array of data drawn from a great variety of language families. There is

no doubt that the field of diachronic syntax is still very much in its embryonic stage. Yet if the Santa Barbara symposia can be used as a yardstick, one cannot fail to notice the significant advances that have been made in the field since the 1974 symposium on Word Order and Word Order Change. At this stage, the study of diachronic syntax shows all the promises of an exciting and bountiful future. It is clear if we are to reap the harvest, we must be prepared to devote much more time to empirical investigation. Generative mechanisms do not explain diachronic processes in syntax. It is only through the unbiased analysis of data collected from either historical documents or comparative studies that mechanisms of syntactic change may be discovered.

Charles N. Li
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