Iteratives driving the wrong way? Limiting unidirectionality from Saarland to Semitic

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Synopsis: Our first goal is empirical, with consequences for theory: we show the class of **iterative adverbs** to be developmentally **bidirectional**. We suggest that the developments found are predicted in the simplest way, viz. by the principle of Constant Entailments (CE, Beck & Gergel 2015). They are partially reverse-compatible with a lexicalist approach (Zwarts 2019), but we (i) set restrictions on rich polysemy as a generalization from our data and (ii) emphasize the point (very clear from Zwart's overall thrust, but potentially misinterpretable from figures as (1)) that arrows in such maps have no meaning, if they are to be generalizations over the group of iteratives in the set of well-documented historical trajectories.

(1)   Semantic map of re-domain (cf. Zwarts 2019, simplified here):

   [...] → (RESPONSIVE) →RETURNATIVE → RESTITUTIVE → REPETITIVE

According to Zwarts, returnatives require inverse spatial paths, restitutives require inverse scalar paths (cf. also Pedersen 2014); a quick way to imagine responsives is as in 'write back'.

We use the graph-theoretic background of such a representation as an interesting testing ground for diachrony (without any directionality). Under this initial testing assumption, the developments we investigated go "right to left" on such a graph - they begin with REPETITIVE. Some basic contiguity requirements (quite in line with a graph) are observed: e.g. we find no development jumping directly to a RESPONSIVE reading. The Saarland trajectory we observed reaches the readings RETURNATIVE <u>and</u> RESTITUTIVE, but without significant distinction in acceptability. Hence the two labels can be collapsed in our view when broader generalizations are sought. The chronologically longer Arabic trajectory we investigated reaches further, to the RESPONSIVE (cf. e.g. Fabricius-Hansen's or Beck & Gergel's counterdirectionality). The Arabic development does equally not show a diachronically distinguishable sequencing of going first through a putative RESTITUTIVE (understood at the exclusion of RETURNATIVE) before reaching to, say, something like RETURNATIVE proper.

Motivation & methods: Inquiries with diachronic relevance (cf. Fabricius-Hansen 2001, Beck & Gergel 2015, Zwarts 2019 and others cited there) have noted that many iteratives develop from some sense that is restitutive/counterdirectional before becoming repetitive. We use this with Beck & Gergel's basic semantic entries in mind. We take the recent studies to be fully aware that there is no necessity of only going into this direction historically. But we are also not aware of widely documented diachronic studies going the opposite way. That is, while we take the basic prediction of CE and similar approaches to be correct, we think the work of systematically diachronically verifying it is still needed. This motivates our plot.

We present **two** diverse **studies** conducted on changes that both run <u>from repetitive into the direction of restitutive/counterdirectional</u>: one that has begun 14 centuries ago with the beginnings of Standard **Arabic** attestations, and that we follow up on also through the prism of Syrian Arabic for its more recent developments; a second one that is very recent in the **Saarland dialects** of German (Rhine- and Mosel-Franconian). We present in this abstract mostly attested data for quick reference. But while we have combined attested and experimental data in both studies, the foci have naturally been distinct: The Arabic data available on a long timeline are primarily attestations (and complemented by elicitation for modern stages). Conversely, the recent Saarland change is based primarily on data extracted through contextualized elicitation (complemented with fewer attestations due to the difficult documentation of the dialect).

The Saarland adverb _nochmal_ (SN, including forms like _nommo_, _nòmmòò_, originally/literally 'once more', 'yet once') has, first, the repetitive meaning that it has in any German variety:

(2)   _Wären ma nur schón   nòmmòò gutt dahämm!_
      were we only already again   well home 'If we could only safely be home again!'
      (M. Böhm, _Wenn et Ferien géfft_, Texte des Monats, 07/2016, via bosenergruppe.saar.de)

Unlike Standard German, however, SN has also gained restitutive/counterdirectional readings:

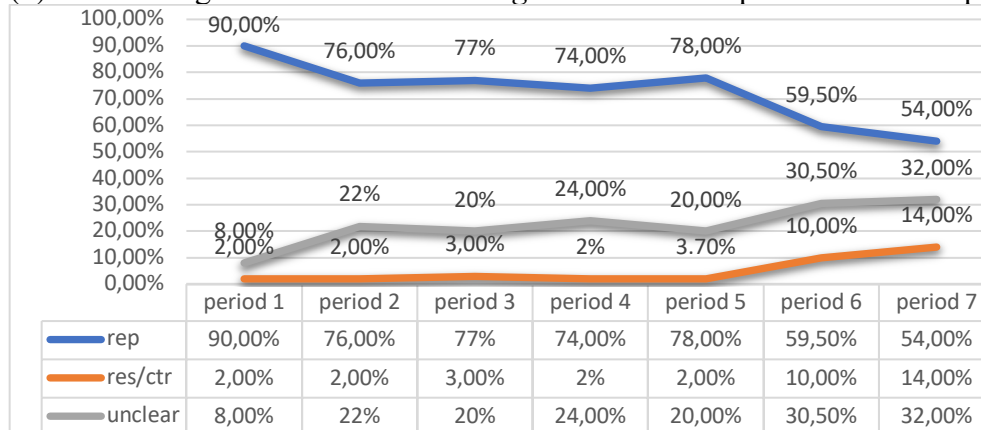(3)   *Datt Land [...] hat sisch verirrt on hat sisch nommo fonn*.
       the country.   has itself lost   and has itself again found
       'The country lost its way and found it again.' (J. Brill, 1995, *Us Land*, ‚Our country')

An experiment confirmed that counterdirectional/restitutive readings are acceptable to dialect speakers also under controlled contextualization; accomplishments fared better in acceptability compared to achievements on restitutive/counterdirectional readings (for reasons not entirely clear to us). More relevantly for now, we could thus far identify no evidence for returnative or restituvive being differently acceptable in SN. Responsives are unacceptable with SN.

The Arabic adverb *thaniyaten* (and variants), 'again', is repetitive from its earliest attestations. Due to the lack of a standard Arabic corpus that would fit the purpose, we base our claims on a corpus consisting of 140 books ranging from earliest attestations to the present. If we divide the history of Arabic into seven periods, the result is 20 books per period (we discuss further criteria in the full version of our contribution). The quantitative observations can be summarized as follows, with an increase in counterdirectional/restitutive readings in the two most recent periods (and still a predominantly repetitive profile, even if a quantitatively decreasing one):

(4)   Percentages of Standard Arabic *again* in the seven periods of the corpus

	period 1	period 2	period 3	period 4	period 5	period 6	period 7
rep	90,00%	76,00%	77%	74,00%	78,00%	59,50%	54,00%
res/ctr	2,00%	2,00%	3,00%	2%	2,00%	10,00%	14,00%
unclear	8,00%	22%	20%	24,00%	20,00%	30,50%	32,00%

Arabic varieties currently also allow responsives, but we did not find them in the corpus:

(5)   Mahmood itasala bi-i   lake-ni lem istateʕ in   ujibu-hu fa lama
       Mahmood called with-me but-me not could that answer-him then when
         farghetu   men shuʔun-i itasaletu   bi-hi   thaniyan
         finished(1SG-NOM) from affairs-my called(1SG-NOM) with-him again
'Mahmood called me but I couldn't answer. When I finished my chores, I called him back'

Discussion: While the Germanic trajectories from counterdirectional/restitutive to repetitive are well-known, Semitic languages also have such trajectories in interestingly distinguishable shapes. E.g. the case of Hebrew from the perspective of the returnative auxiliary (e.g. Gamliel & Mar'i 2016 and references) marking iterative meaning. Arabic has a cognate which has encroached on repetitive territory coming from a meaning such as 'return', as well. Our emphasis here, however, has been on developments that point in the other direction in the same groups of languages, as a necessary exercise when it comes to the verification of CE.

        Eckardt (2006) has shown that semantic change doesn't parallel grammaticalization. This is in line with our finding: While grammaticalization paths may be unidirectional, semantic change can go either way, as long as somewhat haphazard recruitment is joined by appropriate contextual bridges. One such bridge in the case of Arabic is the interplay of multiple antecedents that can be anaphorically linked to the originally repetitive presupposition trigger. E.g. in the first historical period, we find a multitude of such priming contexts in which, even though a clear repetitive antecedent is available, an intervening potential restitutive/counterdirectional one also appears. In a similar fashion, we will discuss the potential facilitating factors for SN.

Selected references

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