

On the grammaticalization of the habitual verb *pflegen* ‘used to’ in the history of German

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Abstract In this talk, I will examine the distributional properties, the emergence conditions, and the development of the habitual verbal head *pflegen* ‘use(d) to’ in the history of German. Its present-day German use is illustrated in the example given in (1):

- (1) Simon Blumə pflegt zu spionieren.
 Simon Blumə maintain.3SG to spy.INF
 ‘Simon Blumə usually spies.’

Synchronically, I argue, contrary to Haider (1989) and Haider (2009), that Present-day German possesses subject to subject raising verbs and that they can all be brought down to a common denominator: They allow promotion of the embedded subject into the subject matrix position (= A-movement). However, at the same time I argue that German subject to subject raising verbs differ and that their heterogeneity follows from their semantics. What all this boils down to is that German subject to subject raising verbs do not form a uniform class, neither semantically nor syntactically, as pointed out by Reis & Sternefeld (2004). As for *pflegen*, I account for its syntactic peculiarities referring to its functional status, i.e. the status of being a habitual head. Diachronically, I show that *pflegen* grammaticalized into an Asp_{HAB}-head in the transition from Old High German (750-1050) to Middle High German (1050-1350) and that this grammaticalization process restricted the way as it behaves in Present-day German.

References

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