Workshop

# Diachrony and Subordination.
# Links between Theory and Corpus-based Analysis

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WORKSHOP CONVENORS

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WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Since the end of the 1980s, interest in historical discourse pragmatics and in the rise and change of clause connection has been intensifying, partly due to the interest in subjectification (following Traugott 1989 and subsequent work), partly because of interest in the rise of subordinating connectives (complementizers, conjunctions) and subordination patterns (clausal complementation and adverbial subordination; e.g. Deutscher 2000 or Axel 2012), but also because of purported inverse developments subsumed under insubordination (Evans 2007). However, typological accounts and diachronic in-depth studies devoted to specific languages have seldom, to date, experienced cross-fertilization. Proposals as to how to treat subordination cross-linguistically have either been largely restricted to synchronic typology (e.g., Givón 1980; Dixon & Aikhenvald 2006; 2009; Noonan 2007[2]; van Lier 2009; Bril 2010; Schmidtke-Bode 2014), or they have been formulated only in cognitive-communicative terms (e.g., Cristofaro 2003), so that they usually do not tell us how to establish and analyze structural change and, ironically, have only occasionally proved useful in diachronic investigations (Ganenkov 2015). In addition, in light of Haspelmath's recent work on 'comparative concepts' (Haspelmath 2010), we should ask what criteria are cross-linguistically and panchronically most important for gauging subordination across languages and periods. Beyond that, a need is felt for annotation in historical corpora that allows analysts to handle variation and that does not force them to make decisions based on preconceived categories (cf. Curzan 2009 for an overview of selected issues).

    In the following we comment on these issues.

    First, two recent lines of inquiry concerning subordination are particularly noteworthy: on the one hand, an increasing body of case studies has been assembled examining complementizers in the light of ir/realis-distinctions (following Frajzyngier 1991; Frajzyngier & Jasper-

son 1991). On the other hand, there is ample literature dedicated to so-called discourse markers, their rise as well as their diachronic and functional connection with epistemic or evidential particles (e.g., Degand et al. 2013; Cruschina & Remberger, forthcoming). These two lines of research have, by and large, not much profited from one another.

Second, a similar point can be made for the relation between typology and diachronic in-depth studies on particular languages. Insights from typology in epistemic and evidential marking (or the marking of ir/realis-distinctions) have been restricted mostly to a synchronic "stock-taking" (for instance, Boye et al. 2015), while the diachronic background of propositional and illocutionary modifiers has remained seriously understudied (with the possible exception of discourse particles; e.g., Diewald & Ferraresi 2008 for German, and lately López-Couso & Méndez-Naya 2015 on the development of complementizers in English). By the same token, we do not have many empirical studies pinpointing the processes that participate in the formation of clause linking devices, first of all of complementizers and conjunctions, but also with respect to complementizer-less patterns. In particular, we need to better understand under which conditions so-called particles coalesce with each other and attach to lexical heads (or other 'function words'), or how much morphologization depends, for instance, on the proneness to cliticization for a language in some of its historical stages. Moreover, syntactic tightening (in the sense of Lehmann 1995) can be understood properly only on the broader background of a language's syntactic system at some given historical stage, and one often wonders whether structures of modern languages have been projected into earlier stages.

The workshop, thus, will take the innovative approach of uniting the aforementioned issues and seek a link between a theory of clause combining in diachronic change and the preparation of corpora that help linguists to interpret variation. As the most significant questions to be addressed, we see the following:

1. Which processes are involved in the formation of subordination in clause combining? In particular, how do reanalysis, exaptation (i.e. exploitation of fossilized relic forms), analogy (first of all, in paradigmatic tightening), and morphological coalescence interact? How is (micro-)variation in historical stages to be evaluated? To what extent do structural changes and differences in syntactic status (i.e. heterosemy) correlate with semantic changes, both in the sense of conventionalization of invited inferences (inferred > coded meaning) and in types of polysemy and difference of meaning ranges?

2. How should corpora be annotated in order to optimize an analysis of the processes mentioned in 1.? In general, how should corpora be annotated so that the analyst is not forced to make decisions concerning syntactic structures and category membership of particular units (particle vs. complementizer or cliticized vs. agglutinated vs. no longer transparent?) or their functions if the primary data allow for different decisions? That is, syntactically or se-

mantically ambiguous (or vague) structures and status should be annotated as such, variation should not be artificially diminished by forced coding decisions which would skew further analyses, especially if frequency counts are involved and results are quantified. How, in general, should corpora be annotated to allow for multivariate statistical analyses? How should vagueness and ambiguity in the syntax and in the meaning/function of connectives be annotated?

These two groups of questions connect theoretical questions related to diachronic morphosyntax and the semantics-pragmatics interface with methodological challenges whose solution is crucial for an adequate approach to the empirical basis (namely, corpora) necessary to test hypotheses and for data-mining. Any annotation implies at least some theoretical premises. The challenge thus lies in finding an annotation that, on the one hand, is flexible enough to enable linguists to conduct research on different structural phenomena but which is, on the other hand, not liable to skew results by utilizing categorical decisions which are too narrowly conceived. Ambiguity and vagueness as such should be integrated into the annotation system, rather than treated as "noise". Syntactic and semantic vagueness/ambiguity are motors of change, and research should make use of variation that provides the locus of change.

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