A RENAISSANCE FOR HISTORICAL SEMANTICS

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1. Introduction

In a recent German book on historical semantics, the author observed that around 1880–1910, and then the 1930s were productive periods for historical semantics, but after that a dry spell came (cf. Fritz (1998: 7–8)). According to him, only in recent years has historical semantics made an impressive comeback. This positive assessment of the current situation has proven to be very much to the point as witnessed by the publication of two other major volumes on historical semantics shortly afterwards, namely the one by Traugott and Dasher under review, and another one by Keller and Kirschbaum (2003), as well as the foundation of the Journal of Historical Pragmatics in 2000, and, of course, numerous research articles. Compared to the preceding decades, this has become a golden age for historical semantics. The reason for the long neglect of the field, as presumably perceived by many linguists, was formulated succinctly by Hock and Joseph (1996: 216) as follows: “Linguists [...] find lexical semantics extremely elusive and therefore difficult to deal with, because meaning is inherently fuzzy and non-systematic [...]. They greatly prefer to deal with the much more “orderly” structure of language.” The reason, on the other hand, for the resurgence of interest in historical semantics lies in broader developments in the field of linguistics. It is connected to the rise of cognitive...
and functional linguistics in the 1970s, and supported by the enormous growth in the fields of pragmatics and discourse analysis since about the same time. The offshoot of this development that has led directly into research in historical semantics, particularly in the vein of the book under review, is grammaticalization theory. Conspicuously, the whole development, including grammaticalization theory, has been mainly instigated by synchronic language research and only marginally from within historical linguistics.

The first author of the book under review, Elizabeth Traugott, however, has excellent credentials working historically. Her name will be well known to many readers as one of the main exponents of grammaticalization theory (e.g. Hopper and Traugott (2003)), and through numerous publications on semantic change based on actual historical data, mainly from English (e.g. Traugott (1985, 1989, 1995)). The co-author, Richard Dasher, is a multi-talent, who is currently a director at US-Asia Technology Management Center of Stanford University, and, with relation to Japan, serves on the Management Steering Council of Tohoku University and as Special Advisor to its president. Crucially for his participation in this book, he wrote a doctoral dissertation in 1995 about diachronic change in Japanese honorifics (Dasher (1995)). Due to his contribution, at least about a third of the examples given in the book are from Japanese language history.

The main claim of Traugott and Dasher's (T&D's) book is already hidden in the title. Contrary to common perceptions about historical semantics, such as the one quoted from Hock and Joseph above, semantic change is subject to regularities, and there are "prototypical types of change that can be replicated across times and languages" (p. 1). Furthermore, they are bound up with two specific mechanisms, namely "invited inferencing"\(^1\) and "subjectification." If this claim proves to be successful, it could contribute greatly to rescuing historical semantics as a field from the abyss of alleged chaos, and restitute it to its proper place as an interesting and rewarding area of research.

The next section of this review article gives a synopsis of the contents of the book. In section 3 some issues raised in the book will be

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\(^1\) As an anonymous reviewer has pointed out, T&D's term "invited inferencing" is different from Geis and Zwicky's (1971) original notion, which denotes the inference of "if and only if" from "if."
discussed, before an overall evaluation is given in the last section.

2. Overview

The book is made up of seven chapters, two introductory ones, a conclusion, and four case study chapters in between. Chapter 1 introduces the framework of the study and contains sections on the aims of the book, on the theory of grammar and language use, on semantic change, on child vs. adult acquisition in semantic change, on the hypothesis that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, on the nature of evidence of semantic change, and a summary and an outline of later chapters. From the beginning, those pieces of linguistic theory are emphasized that are particularly related to the approach to language study advocated in this book. These include cognitive concepts of semantics such as metaphor and metonymy, and their dynamic role in meaning change, called “metaphorization” and “metonymization.” Even more characteristic for T&D’s approach to semantic change, however, are the concepts of “subjectivity” and “intersubjectivity,” and, first and foremost, the emphasis on pragmatic mechanisms. These concepts are bundled to an “Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change,” which is arguably at the core of the study, and accordingly allotted more space to in the introduction than any other single topic.

The idea behind this theory is that language speakers2 have “acquired a grammar (i.e. a linguistic system) and pragmatic heuristics such as the R-, M-, Q-heuristics” (p. 34; R = relevance, M = manner, Q = quantity; named so based on Grice’s maxims and Horn’s principles). These heuristics, together with metaphors, metonymies and (inter)subjectivity, which work as cognitive constraints, are used by speakers in semantic innovation. Speakers can ad hoc exploit conversational implicatures and use them innovatively in a new linguistic environment. If certain implicatures acquire social value, and hence become salient in linguistic communities, they may spread to new contexts and other speakers. If this happens they gain the status of “generalized invited inferences (GIIN).” In order to become semanticized as a new coded meaning, a

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2 T&D throughout the book use the term “SP/W” (speaker or writer). I will use here the simpler term “speaker” to tacitly include writers.
further step is necessary, that is that the new meaning becomes dominant, and the old meaning weakens or disappears. Importantly for this pragmatic view of language change, "change does not originate within language (grammars do not change by themselves), but in language use, i.e. in factors external to language structure" (pp. 35-36).

Subjectivity in language, for T&D, is broadly concerned with the expression of the speaker's point of view, and thus contrasts with Ronald Langacker's more traditional and narrower concept, which identifies subjectivity with implicit, off-stage expression of the speaking subject (Langacker (1990, 1998)). Thus, for T&D, the following features are characteristic for subjective meanings: (i) Overt spatial, and temporal deixis, (ii) explicit marking of the speakers' attitude to what is said (e.g. epistemic markers), (iii) explicit marking of speakers' attitude to the discourse structure, and (iv), predominant use of the R-heuristic. Intersubjective meanings, in contrast, are characterized by social deixis. Their features thus include (i) overt social deixis, (ii) explicit marking of speakers' attention to hearers, and (iii), again, the predominance of the R-heuristic (p. 23). Now, T&D's claim in this book is that there is an overarching tendency for meanings to undergo subjectification (that is, to become more subjective\(^3\)), and furthermore intersubjectification (pp. 6, 279). Subjectification necessarily precedes intersubjectification (p. 31).

Compared to invited inferences and subjectification, the cognitive linguistic concepts of metonymy (metonymization) and metaphor (metaphorization) take a back seat in T&D's model by providing a conceptual background, or, to be more precise, constraints on inferencing and subjectification. Remarkably, T&D identify inferencing primarily with metonymy rather than with metaphor (pp. 28, 29, 33). This is in the first place an empirical question. Actual language data reveal that inferences, and consequently, meaning change do not take place in big (metaphoric) jumps, but in small (metonymic) steps. Also, "subjectification can be understood as a type of metonymy—association with

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\(^3\) The following definition is given: "Subjectification is the semasiological process whereby sp[eakers]/w[riters] come over time to develop meanings for l[exeme]s that encode or externalize their perspectives and attitudes as constrained by the communicative world of the speech event, rather than by the so-called "real-world" characteristics of the event or situation referred to" (p. 30).
sp[eaker]/w[riter] in the strategic course of speaking/writing” (p. 81). This is a theme that also recurs in the case study sections.

The issue of metonymy and metaphor is taken up again in chapter 2, as are subjectification and intersubjectification. Chapter 2 deals with “prior and current work on semantic change,” but as the sections on “current” work resume topics already discussed in chapter 1, the reader might wish these issues had been kept together in one chapter. T&D credit the increasing focus on metonymy (in contrast to metaphor) mainly to Barcelona (2000: 29, 78), but I think in this context Heine et al. (1991: 70–76) had deserved a mention. They already state relatively early with respect to the development of abstract grammatical meaning from lexical meaning that “[c]onceivably metonymy is the more basic component of this process in that metaphor is grounded in metonymy” (p. 74).

Another current issue discussed in Chapter 2 is the advent of Historical Pragmatics as a field in the 1990s. With respect to prior work, most attention is given to Bréal (1964 [1900]). His classification of meaning changes has been reproduced in many other works on semantic change since, but besides its immense merits, it has also contributed to the wide-spread impression that meaning change is random and chaotic. Prominence is furthermore given to research on semantic fields reaching from Jost Trier (1931) to Louis Goossens (1985).

Overall, Chapter 2 is highly informative and delightful, as is the whole book, but it contributes to a mixed textbook-and-study character (the book is published in Cambridge’s “studies” series) because the major part of the discussion here refers to lexical semantics. This is informative, but it is difficult to make a direct connection to the discussion in the main part, which is chiefly concerned with grammatical meaning. However, this is not at all a negative aspect of this publication. Quite the contrary, the diversity in contents contributes to the value and versatility of this book. For example, I am sure that besides its undeniable status as a research publication it would be very well suited as a textbook for graduate or advanced undergraduate classes with an appropriate topic.

Chapter 3 presents the first of the four case studies, namely the development of modal verbs. Overall, a unidirectional development is posited from pre-modal meaning to deontic modal meaning, and finally, epistemic modal meanings. A concomitant factor is the development from narrower scope (“range over which the modal applies,” p. 112) to
wider scope. The former is typical for deontic modals, while the latter is typical for, but not confined to, epistemic modals. Further, within each type of modality there are more objective and more subjective uses, but diachronically it is the more subjective ones that develop out of the more objective ones. A number of cross-linguistic data are presented before the case of English must is discussed, which comes from an Proto-Indo-European root meaning 'be fitting,' and then gradually acquired ability and permission meaning (stage I), obligation/deontic meaning (stage II), and epistemic meaning (stage III). For the presentation of the development T&D adopted the cross-linguistic model proposed in Van der Auwera and Plungian (1998). An interesting side issue that is given some attention is why the past form of must has generalized to present use at the expense of the present form. T&D suggest that the past tense form “evolved in situations that replicated the old preterite-present inchoative contexts” (p. 137). Discussions of ought to and the Chinese possibility marker dé follow. They demonstrably all have in common a development from deontic or root possibility/necessity/epistemic meaning to epistemic meaning, the development of wider scope and of subjectification within each domain (p. 147).

The topic of chapter 4 is the development of adverbials with discourse marker function. For English, first three closely related markers signaling local connectivity, namely indeed, actually, and in fact, are discussed, and after that well and let's are presented to illustrate the development of intersubjective meaning. This is followed by a 10-page subsection outlining the historical development of Japanese sate, which started out as a deictic marker denoting manner, and has come to signal connectivity on text scale. In the case of indeed, in fact, and actually, a strikingly parallel development can be found, with markers starting out with concrete meanings, then acquiring epistemic meanings, and finally becoming discourse markers, signaling relationships across utterances. Indeed, in fact, and actually are hard to tease apart for the non-native speaker, and thus T&D's explanation how they differ in contrast to each other might also benefit the reader with a general interest in the English language beyond historical change. In their conclusion, T&D relate the findings of this chapter to Guglielmo Cinque’s (1999) adverb hierarchy, of which they present an expanded version, and suggest a unidirectional diachronic dimension for this hierarchy. Thus, for instance, discourse-marking adverbials are higher in the hierarchy and wider in scope than epistemic modal adverbs. At the same time, the
direction of change will always be from the lower (and, according to T&D, less subjective) position in the hierarchy, i.e. epistemic modal, to the higher position, i.e. discourse-marking (pp. 187-188).

In chapter 5, the development of performative verbs and constructions is discussed. Performative verbs are a subclass of speech act verbs which under certain conditions, in particular first person present tense, indicative, active, can have the force of a doing (p. 190). After an introduction to the topic, a number of pages is devoted to the difficulty of studying such verbs historically. For instance, performative acts are mostly recorded in institutional texts, which unfortunately do not happen to favor first person present tense indicative forms. This point may stand here as representative for the attention that is paid to methodological issues throughout the book. Readers familiar with the many pitfalls of historical studies, particularly when working with actual historical text data, will appreciate the careful and conscientious approach of the authors. The examples analyzed subsequently in some detail include English *promise*, Chinese *bao* ‘defend,’ and Japanese *aisatu* ‘greet.’ It is correctly noted that the use of performative verbs is rare in Japanese, especially in comparison to English, presumably due to social and cultural differences. A subsection on the recruitment of modals for performative uses precedes the conclusion of the chapter. According to T&D, overall a unidirectional development from pre-speech act verb to speech act verb and further to performative, and finally (in some cases), to parenthetical can be observed, accompanied by increasing subjectification and intersubjectification.

The last case study, in chapter 6, is concerned with the development of social deictics. Social deictics are defined as “directly encoding within their semantic structures the conceptualized relative social standing [...] of a participant either in the CDE [conceptualized described event] or in the CSE [conceptualized speech event] ...” (p. 226). This is an area traditionally known in Japanese as *taiguu hyoogen* (honorific speech). Accordingly, examples from Japanese, particularly *kudasaru*, and *saburau/sooroo* are at the core, garnished with discussion of *pray* and *please*. Especially *saburau/sooroo* is allotted a full 14 pages, the most of any item in this book except for English *must* in chapter 3. *Saborau/sooroo* is representative for a path of change from contents verb to referent honorific and then addressee honorific. On a broad level, T&D divide honorifics into just these two classes, referent and addressee. While the former “point[s] to the social position [...] of a
participant in the CDE, relative to the deictic ground in the CSE,” the latter “point[s] to social relationships or relative social positions among participants in the CSE, independently of their roles in the CDE” (p. 227). Now, between those two classes, there is a clear unidirectional change from referent to addressee honorifics. Both the classification of honorifics into two major groups and the diachronic directionality between them have already been noticed in prior research. T&D suggest a four-stage model involving change from non-honorific (stage I) to referent honorific (stage II), to LexADHON (lexical addressee honorific) (stage III), and finally, AffADHON (affixal addressee honorific) (stage IV) (pp. 235, 276), and point out how this change accords with the overall tendencies claimed in the book. For instance, while referent honorifics exhibit increased subjectification, the development of addressee honorifics, with their display of attention to the addressee, epitomizes intersubjectification (cf. pp. 269, 277).

This chapter is very welcome in many respects. It raises awareness of the issue of social deictics in Japanese to a non-Japanese readership, and may potentially lead to related issues in languages where they have not been noticed yet. As a stand-alone, it may even serve as an introduction to the issue of honorifics in Japanese, particularly from an historical perspective. Gratefully, the chapter is virtually free from idiosyncratic Japanese grammar-specific terms, and concepts are explained in a very clear manner.

Chapter 7 is a short conclusion of seven pages. The results of the book are wrapped up in a figure which brings together the findings from the four previous chapters (p. 281). The role of subjectification and pragmatic mechanisms for meaning change is restated, and some issues for future research are raised.

3. Discussion

At the time this review article will appear, four years will already have passed since the publication of the book. Since then, at least five other reviews of this volume have already been published (Fortson IV (2004), Goossens (2004), Hansen (2003), Lewis (2004), Visconti (2004)). This is an important book in the field, which has already been cited numerous times and has inspired numerous researchers. Furthermore, some readers will have already read the book before reading the review, and may have skipped the synopsis section. In this sit-
evaluation, it might be questioned what this review might further contribute to the discussion and evaluation of this volume.

One task, however, is apparent. As already mentioned, to a large extent T&D draw on data from Japanese language history. Unlike the reviewers that have already published their point of view, I presume that the present reviewer is in a good position to check on these data. Fortunately, it turns out that this is an easy and grateful task. T&D have worked diligently, not only in the correct transcription and translation of the Japanese example sentences, but also in the explanation of their context and background, including background on social situation and writing traditions throughout history. In short, whatever Japanese data are provided, they are accurate and reliable. As someone working in the same field of Japanese historical linguistics as co-author Richard Dasher, the apparent source of the Japanese data, did, I can only bow my head in acknowledgement of this hard and fruitful work. The only obvious mistake arose when the authors strayed away from textual sources and relied on intuition. On p.193 it is suggested that “Yameru? will [%] often be understood as a request from sp[eker] to ad[ressee] of the sort ‘Will you (please) quit (it)?’.” Surely, without context it is always hard to make a definite interpretation, but in my mind (and this is cross-checked with native speakers), yameru? is clearly a “real,” un-biased question for a decision (if zya were added, zya, yameru? the expression would come closer to a weak suggestion). In order to get to a request, the form would have to be negated: yamenai?, or even stronger yamenai-ka? ‘won’t you quit?’. A somewhat problematic interpretation is found on p.180, where sate in a passage from the Taketori Monogatari is interpreted by the authors as causal ‘for that reason,’ instead of the more basic manner reading ‘in this way; like that.’ The Shōgakkan and Kōdansha editions confirmed my reservations, as they also suggested a manner reading ‘like that.’ A causal reading is certainly available as an inference in the background, but it would be too far-reaching to see it as the main reading. A further issue concerns the transcription of the Japanese data. With a few exceptions, a static graphematic transcription is chosen over a phonological or phonetic transcription reflecting historical change. For example, the honorific saburau/sooroo is referred to throughout as “sburahu,” a phonetic form this item probably never had at any stage of its history. Graphematic transcriptions are the easiest to do, and they are therefore found not infrequently when Japanese historical data are presented in English.
On the other hand, they obscure the actual morphophonological structure, especially the change in it. However, the kind of transcription chosen has little or no impact at all on the semantic issues at stake in this volume. Overall, to repeat it, the Japanese data are excellent.

The rest of this section is devoted to the main task of any review, namely trying to call attention to important issues and possible problems of the reviewed item content-wise, pointing to areas that need (or deserve) further investigation. A few issues were already indicated in the overview section.

The salient elements on which T&D build their theory and the historical analysis, first and foremost subjectification and the role of pragmatics, secondarily cognitive processes, were already well-known from prior research not only by Traugott and associates but also by other scholars in the field. However, the way in which they are combined and related to a hypothesis that semantic change is regular is unique to T&D. One point that deserves emphasis is that while in the 1980s and partly the 1990s metaphor had taken the center stage, also in thinking about semantic change (cf. Sweetser (1990) and her theory of change in modal markers building on Talmy's "force-dynamics" metaphor (Talmy (1985, 1988)), T&D emphatically credit metonymy, in connection with invited inferences as the major conceptual player in semantic change. On p. 111, T&D state that "there are reasons to doubt that the forces and barriers metaphor is a key to the semantic development of either deontics or epistemics. For one, the lexical sources of the modals show little evidence of the semantics of forces and barriers." And further, "metaphorization does not appear to be crucial to an understanding of the processes behind semantic change as revealed by textual evidence" (similarly on p. 132; quotations favoring metonymy have already been given). The emphasis here should be "as revealed by textual evidence." A metaphorical analysis suggests itself if one compares synchronic meanings in isolated sentences at the extremes of polysemous items. Thus, the relation between a typical synchronic deontic use of must and a typical epistemic use can be reasonably viewed in terms of metaphor. As soon as one looks into the actual textual evidence the most likely environments where the semantic change took place are such of indeterminacy and vagueness, and, accordingly, small incremental (metonymic) steps towards the new meaning. The data in the modal verb section of T&D are mainly from English, but exactly the same situation can be found in Japanese. At the same time that this
book appeared, I analyzed the polysemy of Old Japanese -besi, and also found from the textual data that the explanation for it has to be sought in conversational implicature and indeterminacies (Narrog (2002)), while the working of metaphor is at least not evident. This is despite the fact that some synchronic examples may indeed be profitably analyzed in terms of metaphor. It is therefore intriguing to see that while the actual mechanisms of change are pragmatic in nature and cognitively based on metonymy, part of the long-term outcome of change lends itself to a metaphorical interpretation.

The other three issues that I wish to bring up here are supposed to point to areas where further investigation might be needed. First, there is an issue that can be kept short here because it is discussed in more detail by myself elsewhere (Narrog (2005)). Based on the data mainly from English, T&D repeatedly present the change from deontic to epistemic as the representative change in modal markers (e.g. pp. 147–148, 281). While this might be true for English and other languages of Europe, there is reason to doubt that this is a strong cross-linguistic tendency (at least quantitatively). Japanese language history does not reveal a single instance of such a development, and a look at the cross-linguistic data on modality in Bybee et al. (1994) reveals that some other changes within the field of modality are far more frequent. On the other hand, I suggest that in every case of meaning change in modal markers, be it from deontic to epistemic or not, the development of modal markers goes towards more speaker-orientation. Thus, the findings presented in Narrog (2005) ultimately support T&D’s theory of language change on a deeper level.

Two minor critical points with respect to modality should be mentioned here also. The first is that T&D adopt Cinque’s (1999) adverb hierarchy (e.g. pp. 187–188) perhaps too uncritically. Cinque, although working within a minimalist framework, is very attractive to non-formalist researchers because he bases his work on an impressive range of cross-linguistic data. However, his functional category hierarchy is a puzzle put together with pieces from different languages, and it is unclear if it would actually cleanly apply to whole systems in a single language (apart from the fact that naturally not every category in the hierarchy might be available in every language). Cinque’s theory is not uncontroversial in formal grammar itself and the validity of his results for specific languages, such as English and Middle Dutch, has already been challenged (cf. Cormack and Smith (2002)). T&D only discuss a
small part of the categories in the hierarchy with their own data. Since no evidence is presented for the relative position of the other categories, those categories should not appear in the revised hierarchy. The second point is that in adopting Van der Auwera and Plungian’s (1998) map, T&D chose to merge participant-external necessity and possibility (p. 121), two categories between which Van der Auwera and Plungian see bidirectional change (Van der Auwera and Plungian’s (1998: 100)). This alteration of the map is certainly convenient for a theory of unidirectionality of meaning change as it eliminates the bidirectionality in this area, but it seems to me that a closer investigation of diachronic shifts between participant-external necessity and possibility cross-linguistically is in place, in order to convincingly justify the merging. This issue, in fact, would make an interesting research topic.

The second point that might emerge as an area of further discussion is the relationship between subjectification and intersubjectification. While the concept of intersubjectivity in Western linguistics is about as old as the concept of subjectivity (although much less discussed), intersubjectification is a new concept coined by Traugott (1999, 2003), and only in the beginning stages of its investigation. While the examples brought up in the book, and some later research based on T&D (cf. Onodera (2005: 189–191)) do suggest that subjectification precedes intersubjectification, further empirical study is necessary in order to determine if this is indeed universally true. A challenge has come from Bert Cornillie (2004, 2005) who, analyzing the Spanish verbs parecer ‘seem’ and resultar ‘turn out’ claims that intersubjective use is possible parallel to, and not an extension of, subjectivity. Moreover, in his view it is the less grammaticalized constructions with these verbs (parece que, resulta que) which are used intersubjectively, and the more grammaticalized constructions (parecer/resultar + infinitive) which are used exclusively subjectively (Cornillie (2004), ch. 4 and 5; Cornillie (2005)). It remains to be seen if these examples constitute genuine counterexamples to T&D’s theory, or whether we mainly face here a divergence in the use of concepts and terms. Notably, Cornillie leans on Nuyts (2001) for the use of the term intersubjectivity, and Nuyts understands the concept more narrowly than Traugott, namely as the sharing of evidence between speaker and hearer for an epistemic judgment.

The last issue concerns systems of social deixis (chapter 6). Before broaching the issue, I must confess, however, that I had difficulties to
understand T&D’s four stage model of the development of Japanese predicate honorifics. The first and foremost reason is that it is introduced without examples (p. 235; similarly on p. 276 where there are no concrete examples aligned to the table). Particularly, the division of addressee honorifics into two stages (III and IV) with the distinction of lexical and affixal status remained unclear to me. Content-wise, the difference appears to be that LexADHON retains a link to CDE, which is lost in AffADHON. There, the problem arises if morphological development can be directly linked to the semantic stages. Do lexical items always retain a link to CDE, and is this link always lost in affixes? The situation is at least ambiguous. One can point here on the one hand to referent honorifics which never had lexical status, but were affixal from the beginning (e.g. -sase-, cf. Narrog (1999:50)). On the other hand, if a (still) lexical item has acquired addressee honorific marking (e.g. maras-, a preceding stage of -mas-; cf. Narrog (1997:691)), how do we deal with uses which are exclusively addressee-(and not referent-)oriented? These are issues which may deserve further investigation. In the meantime, it appears to me that stage III should be profitably understood simply as a transitional stage between stages II and IV, which perhaps does not have the same status as the other stages. If we “downgraded” stage III in this manner, we would arrive at a simpler three-stage model which is rather uncontroversial in the light of prior research. Positing stage III also raises the question if a transitional stage between stage I and stage II wouldn’t be needed in a similar manner. Kudasaru ‘send down,’ ‘give’ in ex. (7) (pp. 247–248) might be such an example of a stage I item in transition to stage II, social deixis being already present.

Putting aside for now the problem of adequacy of T&D’s four stage model, another intriguing question about the paths and directionality of change arises. Given that addressee honorifics are (presumably) unidirectionally derived from referent honorifics, and addressee honorifics are also rare in comparison with languages with referent honorifics (pp. 258, 261), languages which only have addressee honorifics are a potential challenge to the claim of unidirectionality in the domain of honorifics. But they do exist, if we follow Martin Haase’s claim in his book on the “grammaticalization of politeness” (Haase (1994)). Haase also refers to Japanese, but besides that, to a different set of languages from T&D, namely Basque, Modern Greek, Rumanian, Korean and German. In his view, Basque and Modern Greek represent a language type which only
has addressee honorifics (Haase (1994: 34, 107-108)). These honorifics are so to speak highly grammaticalized vocatives, which are spread also across other languages of the Balkan Sprachbund. The following is an example from Modern Greek:

(1) (V)re, de θέλω na to káno
   REL not I.want but it I.do
   ‘But I don’t want to do it’ (Haase (1994: 39); translation and adjustments in the transcription and the glosses by reviewer)

The “relating form” REL, of which Greek has quite a few, refers to the addressee, in order to demonstrate the speaker’s concern with the addressee’s involvement in the conversation. It is thus specialized on expressing positive politeness. Possible translations in English or German like “you” or “dear” come close but would sound unnatural.

An interesting phenomenon in a language where Haase dubiously (see below) does not recognize grammaticalized politeness elsewhere, namely German, demonstrates what range politeness phenomena may have if one looks for them, even in familiar European languages. The following is an example for the so-called ethical dative:

(2) Der fährt dir in drei Tagen mit dem Fahrrad
    that.guy rides to you in three days with the bicycle
    from Berlin to Paris
   (Haase (1994: 44); example originally from Heide Wegener)
   ‘This guy rides with his bicycle from Berlin to Paris in three days’

The dative (highlighted in bold letters) originally signals affectedness of the referent. In a case like this, however, this affectedness is bleached to a point where the speaker uses the dative simply to engage the hearer in the conversation. No affectedness, or deixis on the CDE level, to refer to T&D’s terms, is implied anymore. Crucially, if we recognize this phenomenon as addressee honorification, it is likely that there was never a stage of referent honorification, because the dative signaling “real” affectedness can hardly be called a referent honorific.

Based on this use of the ethical dative, Haase suggests that German is a language which has only very marginal, or weakly grammaticalized addressee honorification, and nothing else. He thereby ignores, however, that German has the grammaticalized du-Sie distinction, which T&D convincingly identify as referent honorification (pp. 226–227). Haase’s study is a nice example for the interesting challenges that T&D’s theory
of social deixis might face once it covers new ground in a range of phenomena in languages where social deixis is grammaticalized in a more marginal, or quirky, manner than in Japanese.

4. Evaluation

T&D set out to challenge the wide-spread perception that semantic change is random and chaotic. They claim that there is cross-linguistic regularity, based on basic mechanisms of human cognition and communication, such as subjectification, intersubjectification, and pragmatic heuristics. This claim is backed with historical case studies in four areas of grammatical meaning (modality, discourse markers, performative verbs, social deixis) in English, Japanese, and, more marginally, a number of other languages.

In doing so, they convincingly achieve their goal. The historical data are treated with great care and attention, and are analyzed thoroughly. The results of the analyses support the authors’ hypothesis. The four area-specific chapters have excellent succinct overviews and background information over their respective fields, and each of them could serve as a stand-alone introduction into the topic from an historical point of view. In reference to the “dry spell” from which historical semantics suffered until recently, figuratively speaking there is no dry spell in this book. Every single page is informative and contains original thinking. Something can be learned from this book throughout. It is therefore doubtlessly of relevance beyond specialized interests.

Clearly, the present volume is a continuation not only of Traugott’s work on semantic change but also on grammaticalization. The characteristic of her work in these areas lies in the fact that unlike other leading scholars in this field (Bernd Heine, Joan Bybee, Tom Givón, Paul Hopper, Christian Lehmann, to mention just some of the most influential names) her work is to a great extent based on work with actual historical data. The careful work with historical texts has led her to a strong leaning towards pragmatics and discourse analysis, which gives her work a unique value and quality.

An apparent caveat that remains is that while T&D in this book are successful in showing regularity in change in grammatical meaning, the traditional chaotic impression of meaning change is derived mainly from change in lexical meaning. Besides research issues already mentioned in the book itself and in this and other reviews, it will be important to
show in more detail that the regularities also hold in the domain of lexical semantic change. For interested readers with some proficiency in German I would recommend Fritz (1998), who was already cited in the introduction, for a modern book about language change with plenty of examples in the area of lexical semantics.

Lastly, a word about the more superficial aspects of the book. The quality of proofreading and editing is almost flawless. In fact, throughout the book I only found two typographical and stylistic errors. One is that Cinque (1999) is referred to throughout as “Cinque (1998)” except for the references section, where the dating is correct. The sentence “what is said implies more is meant” on p. 23 is difficult to parse, and perhaps a stylistic error. Some other errors that escaped my attention were already mentioned in the reviews of Fortson IV (2004) and Goossens (2004), but as Goossens (2004:265) states they are rare. Lewis in her review (2002) mentioned mismatches between the index and the main text, but I could not find any.

T&D at various places cite the classics of the field, such as Bréal (1964 [1900/1897]), Stern (1968 [1931]), Trier (1931) and Ullmann (1957). I have little doubt that if in 50 or 100 years from now scholars still pursue the study of meaning change, this book will have its place among the classics then cited.

REFERENCES


Trier, Jost (1931) *Der deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes* (The German Lexicon in the Area of “Mind”), Winter, Heidelberg.


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