

## REVIEWS

**The evolution of pragmatic markers in English:** Pathways of change. By LAUREL J. BRINTON. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp 344. ISBN 9781107129054. \$110 (Hb).

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Laurel Brinton's book *The evolution of pragmatic markers in English: Pathways of change* is the latest addition to her illustrious monographs on the history of pragmatic markers in English. B's research deals with the syntactic and semantic developments of pragmatic markers in the history of English within the grammaticalization framework. The new book, keeping up this tradition, begins with an overview chapter, which discusses the state of art in the study of pragmatic markers in historical pragmatics and functions as a stepping-stone to the discussion in the following chapters. Chs. 2–9 contain studies of individual pragmatic markers. The chapters are revised and updated versions of previously published articles as well as new research (Ch. 8). Ch. 10 wraps up the results from the discussion in the case studies.

Let us look at the chapters in more detail. The introductory chapter defines PRAGMATIC MARKERS (the term B prefers to 'discourse marker') by enumerating their phonological, syntactic, semantic, functional, sociolinguistic, and stylistic characteristics. The pragmatic markers dealt with range from *hwæt* in Old English (OE) to *whatever* in present-day American English (PDE). The study is based on present-day and historical corpora, the latter using speech-based sources such as dialogue from drama, trials, parliamentary proceedings, and so forth.

The major themes of the introductory chapter relate to the sources of pragmatic markers and their diachronic syntactic and semantic pathways. Semantically, pragmatic markers are assumed to develop procedural meanings from content meanings, change from nonsubjective to more subjective (and intersubjective) meaning, and broaden their scope from a lexical item to the whole proposition. Another issue is how the processes of change undergone by pragmatic markers should be analyzed. Pragmatic markers can be described with reference to Hopper's (1991) principles of grammaticalization and to the parameters suggested by Lehmann (2002). But in some respects, they 'do not seem to acquire the prototypical grammatical qualities that we expect in a fully grammaticalized inflection or clitic' (29) associated with grammaticalization. They are not integrated into the sentence as might be expected, and they have discourse or pragmatic functions. It has therefore been suggested that the process involved in their development should be described as PRAGMATICALIZATION. B argues, following Elizabeth Closs Traugott, that aspects of discourse pragmatics can be understood within a broad conception of grammar that encompasses discourse functions (35).

The remainder of the book is divided into two parts, based on whether the developmental source of the pragmatic marker is a lexical item or a clause. Part I (Chs. 2–4) focuses on pragmatic markers that developed via 'clear unilinear paths' from adverbs to pragmatic markers. Ch. 2 is concerned with what B describes as the exclamatory OE *hwæt* (traditionally regarded as an interjection). The chapter argues that, based on the contexts where it occurs, *hwæt* should be regarded as a pragmatic marker that is close in function to PDE *you know* in its function of expressing shared knowledge. It is distinguished from *hwæt þa* 'what then', which expresses foregrounded events in sequential plot development and is similar to PDE *so*. The exclamatory *what* is also used in the post-OE period as a marker of surprise (often followed by a question) (65), as an attention-calling marker (*what ho*) (68), and as a parenthetical before numerals (68). Given this multifunctionality, the derivation of the different functions of *hwæt* 'must be taken as, in part, speculative' (69). However, the developments are consonant with syntactic and semantic changes during grammaticalization. Syntactically, *hwæt* undergoes decategorialization to a pragmatic marker, and, semantically, the developments coincide with increased subjective and intersubjective meanings.

Ch. 3 argues, on the basis of the historical corpora, that *whilom* has undergone more complex pathways of change than *while*. It is shown that *whilom* was common in OE and Middle English as an adverb meaning ‘at times, sometimes’ but that its frequency drops around 1700. In Middle English *whilom* is also used with the temporal meaning ‘formerly, once’. The adverbial undergoes a change to a correlative conjunction (*sometimes ... other times*) and to a pragmatic marker with the textual function of denoting the initiation of a story via ‘a metonymic shift in scope from a single event viewed in isolation to an event viewed in its global context’ (84). After the loss of the adverbial and pragmatic marker meaning, *whilom* developed into an adjective meaning ‘former’ (typically used before titles and names of professions) in Modern English. The development of *whilom* to an attributive modifier is problematic from the point of view of the criteria for grammaticalization in that it exhibits a shift from adverb to adjective, and B discusses alternative explanations (degrammaticalization, lexicalization, word formation). She concludes that the best alternative is to account for the changes as a case of gradience, involving a series of intermediate steps between the categories.

Ch. 4 is a case study of *only* and its development from having adverbial and adjectival functions to being a conjunctive marker with textual meaning (*He’s a good student. Only he’s lazy*). It is argued that in its conjunctive use *only* is adversative or exceptive and can have interpersonal function as a pragmatic marker. The steps in the development from an exclusive focusing adverb to conjunction/pragmatic marker are shown to have similarities with Traugott’s (1982) postulated development from clause-internal adverb > conjunction > pragmatic marker, and the development seems to follow many of Hopper’s principles of grammaticalization.

Part II (Chs. 5–9) focuses on individual pragmatic markers that developed along the alternative pathway from clausal construction to pragmatic marker.

Ch. 5 is an extended and detailed study of first-person pragmatic parentheticals building on verbs such as *believe, deem, guess, know* (first-person KNOW-constructions) and, for comparison, epistemic adverbials. It is shown that the first-person parentheticals were already found in Middle English as markers of epistemic modality (139). They were, for example, used by Chaucer in many different contexts and functions.

The development of first-person epistemic parentheticals provides a crucial test case for the hypothesis that the synchronic correspondence between *I believe (that) the world is flat* and *the world is flat, I believe* can be assumed to mirror a historical development. Although the ‘matrix-clause hypothesis’ (generally ascribed to Thompson & Mulac 1991) is intuitively appealing, the historical evidence shows that structures with first-person pronouns and epistemic verbs with deletion of the *that*-complementizer were infrequent in Middle English and that the synchronic correlations therefore cannot explain the diachronic data. It is argued that the rise of epistemic parentheticals is influenced by the existence of adverbial clauses with *as* or *so* (*the world is flat, as I believe*), which can be traced back to OE.

By contrast, the diachronic developments of the parenthetical *I admit* can be accounted for by the matrix-clause hypothesis since it is shown that the construction with a matrix clause antedates the adverbial construction with *as* (Ch. 6). In the case of *admittedly*, the synchronic correspondence with the passive construction of the verb (*it is admitted that*) may be important for the further development to an adverb.

The chapters in Part II also deal with recent pragmatic markers, which are here studied diachronically. Ch. 7 investigates the pragmatic markers *that said* (with the variations *that/this (having been/being) said*) and *I’m just saying*. *That said* has increased in frequency in the 2000s, and its use has elicited critical commentaries. Taking a long-term view of its developments, B shows that the longer forms occur later than the short ones, which suggests that the short clause is expanding to *that/this being said* and *that/this having been said*. *I’m just saying* is found when the speaker wants to distance herself from an opinion by not taking responsibility for it. The full development of the form is seen to depend on the rise of the adverbial *just* with a down-toning meaning and the subjective function of the progressive (220). In contrast, *what I’m saying (is)* and *all I’m saying (is)* can be traced back to WH- and *all*-pseudo-cleft constructions.

We can also learn a great deal from studying the developmental paths of pragmatic markers that have been little studied due to their low frequency, such as the hedging *if I may say so* and *for what it's worth* (Ch. 8). Synchronically these are similar to 'indirect conditions', since they are dependent on an implicit verb of communication (e.g. *If I may, I will tell you ...*). However, B did not find any historical evidence for the existence of an explicit apodosis, and uses with an explicit verb of communication were rare. Semantically, both *if I may say so* and *for what it's worth* undergo the change from content to procedural meaning and the increase of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity associated with grammaticalization.

Ch. 9 discusses *what's more* and *whatever*. *What's more* has several synchronic parallels suggestive of historical derivations. However, the diachronic evidence does not support any of the developments proposed. The pragmatic marker *whatever*, with its function of denying responsibility for what is said, arose in the 1960s and has been described as '“the most annoying word” among Americans from 2008 to 2014' (270). Its diachrony presents 'a conundrum' because several possible sources present themselves, a situation that would be described as 'a case of multiple inheritance' within a constructional framework (283).

Ch. 10 summarizes the preceding chapters and discusses the consequences of the results for the description of the syntactic and semantic developments of pragmatic markers in general. The individual studies show how each pragmatic marker 'has its own history' (287) and how the historical data are messier and more complex than the proposed pathways can account for. The focus on the history of individual pragmatic markers is compatible with the approach in diachronic CONSTRUCTION GRAMMAR where pragmatic markers are treated as constructions appearing in recurrent form-function patterns.

B's monograph can be highly recommended to scholars and students interested in the history of pragmatic markers in English. The book contributes to our knowledge of the pathways and sources of pragmatic markers and to the ongoing debate about the role of grammaticalization or pragmatization in explaining the developments. It covers many different pragmatic markers, including the newcomers *whatever* and *I'm just saying*. The merits of the study particularly relate to the careful and detailed testing of different hypotheses for the syntactic and semantic developments undergone by the pragmatic markers. The picture that emerges from B's study is that pragmatic markers have a complex history. They may have multiple sources contributing to their grammaticalization; there is also much uncertainty about the syntactic and semantic pathways, and the account must sometimes be taken as partly speculative or as possible only on the basis of the available evidence. The analyses proposed by the proponents of the matrix-clause hypothesis and the traditional views on 'insubordinated' structures are challenged because they are not compatible with the historical evidence. B's analyses, by contrast, are based on what the empirical data tell us about the uses of pragmatic markers and the order in which different constructions appear, and show how they are accounted for within the grammaticalization framework.

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