

Grammaticalization parameters and the retrieval of alternatives: Latin *nec* from discourse connector to uninterpretable feature

By means of the study of Latin focus-sensitive negation *nec* ('furthermore'; 'neither... nor'; 'not even'), I address a more general question on the scope and the cyclicity of semantic change. I review Lehmann's syntagmatic parameters of grammaticalization (structural scope, bondedness, syntagmatic variability) with the aim to evaluate to what extent they are reflected in some types of semantic change. With *nec* we see, from Latin to Romance, the evolution of a discourse-structuring particle with an additive component into the building block of new emphatic (scalar) negative polarity items, which in turn are later reanalyzed as elements of Negative Concord (endowed with uninterpretable formal features). I will argue that an important aspect of this change concerns the way alternatives to the focused element are retrieved in the context. I will propose that increase in bondedness and decrease in syntagmatic variability correlate with a change in the form taken by alternatives, which decrease in scope from discourse units to individual alternatives.