

On the typological characteristics of the evolution of English grammaticalization

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Abstract: When scholars at home and abroad discuss the mechanism of grammaticalization, few people discuss the role of language context in detail, which is generally the case in English and Chinese. Both English and Chinese scale structures have gone through a grammatical path with the lowest degree of obscurity, the higher degree of obscurity, and the higher degree of obscurity. The grammaticalization of scale structures in both English and Chinese involves the evolution of semantics, the cognitive way of metaphor and metonymy, the grammatical mechanism of analogy and reanalysis. In essence, the meaning and function of words are always realized in a certain context, and the virtualization of content words is realized due to the interaction of various factors in a certain language environment, and the language environment is one of them. an important factor. By comparing the degree of falsification of scale structures in English and Chinese, it can be concluded that there is a typical scale structure in Chinese, and its degree of futility is higher than that of English scale structures. The structure of the quantitative structure is more fixed, and the English scale structure has a tendency to develop to the structure of the Chinese scale structure. This paper provides a brief overview of the typological features of the evolution of English grammaticalization.

1. Introduction

Linguistic typology pioneered by Greenberg in the 1960s is an "explicit science" of contemporary linguistics, and its most fundamental idea is that any generalization of human language mechanisms and rules must be verified across languages, and any specific The study of language characteristics must also be based on the classification of language commonalities and types obtained from cross-language comparisons. Typological issues have always attracted the attention of English scholars[1]. The old English grammar system has the characteristics of synthesis and inflection in essence, while the modern English grammar system mainly has the characteristics of analysis, and it tends to be isolated. Chinese and English are very different. Many students feel distressed when they learn English[2]. The sentences they say or turn out often have grammatical errors or inappropriate expressions. The unique research object of typology is the commonalities and differences between human languages, and the insurmountable limit of the differences is the commonality of languages. With the vigorous development of disciplines such as typology, pragmatics and cognitive linguistics, the study of grammaticalization has become a hot topic in linguistics[3]. It will be noted that systems theory has been articulated in functionalist terms. Admittedly, it seems that the question of the value of linguistic typology, as well as the question of typology in general, is entirely meaningful only if these terms are systematically clarified. Generative grammar, also known as "transformative generative grammar", is a linguistic theory proposed by Chomsky in the mid-20th century. The theory holds that all languages are firstly limited by universal grammar, which is a priori stipulation, and it is possible to become a human language only if the constraints of universal grammar are satisfied[4]. Generative grammar provides us with a theoretical basis for analyzing these two languages, helps us systematically understand their syntactic structures, and guides us to sort out the specific manifestations of the differences between Chinese and English.

2. The Typological Characteristics of the Evolution of English Grammaticalization

2.1. English morphological markers are decreasing and inflectional changes are gradually disappearing

Cognitive linguistics emphasizes the relationship between language and human thinking. Language provides a window into cognitive functioning, allowing observation of the nature, structure, and organizational relationships of thoughts and ideas[5]. Through the comparative study of English and Chinese grammaticalization process, it can be found that the evolution of English grammaticalization has obvious typological characteristics: English grammatical morphological markers continue to decrease, inflectional changes gradually disappear, and there is a trend towards the development of isolated language types. Verbs play an important role in both English and Chinese, but English verbs are far more complex and changeable than Chinese verbs. English verbs have inflectional morphological inflections, including third-person verbs singular present tense marker -s/-es; verb past tense marker -ed; verb -ed participle and -ing participle markers. Linguists consider the degree to which a language is grammatical. From low to high, a "speechless slope" is formed: substantive items (substantial words) > grammatical words (function words) > attached form > inflectional form (affix). The most common phenomenon of conceptualization in language expressions and ubiquitous in language is the phenomenon of framing. The range of conceptualization processes, also called cognitive operations, is something that humans typically use in language[6]. Instead, every aspect of language expression involves a variety of conceptualization processes, including lexical derivation or inflectional changes and even basic parts of speech. Inflectional forms are the highest degree of grammaticalization. The concrete manifestations of inflectional morphological changes in English grammar are tense, voice, mood, participle structure and gerund structure[7]. However, there is no morphological change in Chinese. It mainly relies on the adhesion of morphological particles and the overlapping and combination of words to express morphological changes. When describing an actual experience, the language expression chosen depends mainly on four aspects: how to observe carefully, what observation point to choose, which aspect to focus on and where to look. From a broad categorization, these aspects are defined within the scope of cognitive operations[8]. The situation of internal inflection in modern English tends to be simplified, and only a few irregular nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs use internal inflection to express morphological changes. It can be said that from Old English to Modern English, the grammatical and morphological markers have been decreasing, and the inflectional changes have gradually disappeared.

2.2. The expression of English grammatical meaning gradually relies on word order and lexical means

After the complete conversion to the SVO type around the 15th century, the English morphological system was greatly simplified and did not produce any new forms. Word order is one of the structural features of every language. When we learn foreign languages, in addition to word meanings, we must be familiar with their inflections and word order. In both English and Chinese, there are "regular word order" and "variant word order". Whether the same semantic content is expressed in conventional word order or variant word order has different effects or thematic meanings. Because of changing the syntactic structure or word order of sentences, different thematic meanings can be expressed; that is to say, different emphases of sentence meanings can be expressed in this way, thereby obtaining different communicative values. The disappearance of the inflectional form necessarily affects the syntactic structure. The important feature of Old English in syntax is that the grammatical function of words is represented by the morphological changes of their case, and the word order is not as important as the word order of modern English. In general grammar books or rhetoric, when referring to word order, they often start from the conventional inverted word order, and point out that the inverted word order is to strengthen the tone. Language is a communication tool[9]. When people use language to communicate and transmit information, there is a problem of arranging word order. A classic example is the Old English expression "This

man killed the king", which had six different word orders, but all were grammatically correct and did not cause confusion because the grammatical relationship between words was determined by them. morphological changes. In sentences that start with a negative or only, the auxiliary verb usually goes before the subject. The so-called word order refers to the order in which the elements of a sentence are arranged. Under normal circumstances, the arrangement order of sentence components cannot be changed at will. Because the syntactic form of word order plays a grammatical role as well as an ideographic role[10]. With the disappearance of inflectional forms, modern English grammatical expressions mainly depend on word order, and the semantic functions of prepositions, conjunctions and relative pronouns become more and more important. The great change from Old English to expressing semantics by inflectional forms of words to modern English mainly relying on word order to express semantics has changed English from a comprehensive language to an analytical language.

3. The typological differences in the evolution of English and Chinese grammaticalization

3.1. The evolution path of Chinese grammaticalization

Chinese is an isolated language. Compared with English, it lacks the morphological changes of words. Although there are a lot of internal inflections in ancient Chinese, including vowel inflection, consonant inflection and tone inflection. Grammaticalization is a universally visible evolutionary phenomenon in human languages. Grammaticalization research in recent years has revealed a large number of grammaticalization patterns and paths with cross-linguistic validity, showing that the grammaticalization evolution of human languages has strong common characteristics. Grammaticalization studies from words to phrases, to pragmatics, discourse and cognitive structures. Regarding grammaticalized language forms, Western languages mainly refer to: grammatical words, derived forms, attached forms and temple-folded forms that are relatively independent in phonetics and syntax[11]. Due to the underdeveloped form of Chinese, scholars have summed up the manifestations of Chinese grammaticalization in language form: syntactic position, combination function, reanalysis, syntactic environment, valence ability, syntactic structure and so on. According to the relationship between the subject and the psychological time (state), the paths of the Chinese extreme constructions are divided into three categories: subject in front, subject behind, and subject in the middle, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Three distribution tables of the main body

Subject first	Self-comparison	Pan ratio	Incomparable
Subject centered			Extreme X, that A and A, extremely X, extremely A
Subject behind	More/x more Nothing is more/more X than X Never had such an A A can't get any more A		
Subject first		Most A, most X, most X	A is the best, A is extreme, X is extreme, A is home, A is not good, A is dead

Although the research on Chinese affixes has become a relatively lively topic in the academic circles in recent years, it has been fruitful, but the theory that Chinese has no form has become widely recognized in the academic circles. Since the structural types of human languages are not the same, and since the "common patterns" of human languages also have a large number of variation types in addition to common features, the attention to the grammaticalization patterns and paths of human languages, in addition to the common features of evolution, is far more than that. A focus on evolving type characteristics[12]. High frequency has always been considered an important condition for grammaticalization. However, among the linguistic phenomena we have observed,

there are the same semantic sources, the degree and direction of grammaticalization are different, and the words that are grammaticalized at the same time are not necessarily the most frequently used words. The phenomenon of Chinese grammaticalization and its process are very long, and the study of grammaticalization has a history of nearly a thousand years. What types of features exist in the grammaticalization patterns and grammaticalization path spaces of human languages, what are the main factors that form these types of characteristics, and how should we interpret these types of characteristics. These issues have not been adequately studied in the current grammatical chemistry community of general linguistics[13]. There are three major trends in the evolution of Chinese function words: from vagueness to clarity, from indeterminate to stereotyped, the higher the frequency of use of content words, the easier it is to blur, and the result of blurring increases the frequency of use; from more part-time jobs to fewer part-time jobs; from The evolution from monophonic to dual-phonetic. According to the different construction meanings, we interpret the subjectivity of the three constructions as the subjectivity of "have", "conform to", "achieve", as shown in Figure 1.

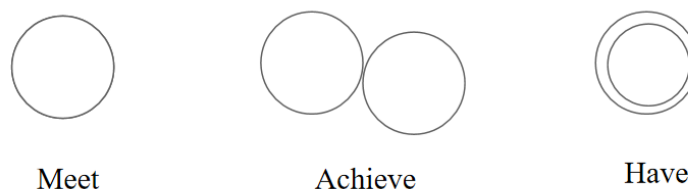


Figure 1 Subjectivity of the three constructions

3.2. A comparative analysis of the evolution of English and Chinese grammaticalization

English and Chinese belong to the Indo-European language family and the Sino-Tibetan language family respectively. In terms of historical origin, the two have nothing in common, but after their independent evolution, these two completely different languages eventually formed a relatively fixed basic word order: Subject-predicate-object structure (SVO type). Many scholars at home and abroad have conducted in-depth discussions on the mechanism of grammaticalization, in general terms. The main grammaticalization mechanisms include generalization, differentiation, fusion, metaphor, reinforcement, superposition, analogy, automation, reanalysis, weakening, harmony, inducement, and reasoning. For a long time, in traditional grammar, people thought that English did not have the word class of quantifiers, but Chinese had typical quantifier word classes. With the development of grammaticalization research, people began to realize that grammatical concepts are not static, but evolving and emerging. English is also developing and changing, and the word class of quantifiers has also emerged. Most scholars believe that the reason for this phenomenon is mainly due to the similarity of human cognitive thinking patterns and the continuous blending and mutual influence of various languages and cultures. The thinking habit of the Chinese nation is "behavior-behavior-sign-behavior-behavior object". In the study of grammaticalization, English existential quantifier parts of speech have been accepted by scholars. But the research is not deep enough. g) Compared with Chinese, which has typical quantifier parts of speech, English scale structure is less grammatical. Because from the essence, the meaning and function of words are always reflected in a certain context, and the virtualization of real words is finally realized due to the interaction of various factors in a certain language expression environment. Different from the English word formation process, the Chinese lexicalization process is also analogous and productive, but it always uses a specific syntactic structure or lexical sequence as the etymology of new terms.

4. Conclusions

The development trend of modern linguistics is that the analysis and research of language is

gradually changing from a single angle and a single method to a multi-angle and multi-method, and the understanding of language is closer to the objective ontology. Through the comparison of the grammaticalization degree of English and Chinese scale structures, it is proved that both English and Chinese scale structures have experienced similar grammatical mechanisms, cognitive methods and grammatical paths; The degree of falsification is very high, the typicality of the scale structure of English is not enough, and the degree of falsification is not as good as that of the scale structure of Chinese. The essential function of context is to influence the meaning of words. Of course, it will lead to changes, weakening, and abstraction of word meanings. The influence of lexical context on English and Chinese grammar is basically the same, but the influence of grammatical context on English and Chinese grammaticalization is different. Along with the diachronic and synchronic evolution of language and the mechanism of language contact and infection, English grammatical morphological markers are decreasing, inflectional changes are gradually disappearing, and there is a tendency to develop into an isolated language type; the expression of English grammatical meaning is increasingly dependent on word order and vocabulary. Means, this continuous and gradual process, is the development trend of English. The scale structure of Chinese is more fixed than that of English. Therefore, the grammaticalization degree of Chinese scale structure is higher than that of English scale structure.

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