

Introduction

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This special issue of the *Nordic Journal of Linguistics* is devoted to grammaticalization. In our call for papers, we emphasized that the term should be understood in a broad sense, inviting empirically as well as theoretically based papers. Almost all aspects of language may be studied from a grammaticalization perspective, and the concept is generally also understood as including diachronic as well as synchronic linguistic studies. The three selected papers reflect some of the richness of the field of grammaticalization.

Martin Hilpert offers a study of Swedish future tense-constructions based on the Stockholm–Umeå Corpus, within the framework of Construction Grammar. By using Collexeme Analysis and the Fischer Exact Test, Hilpert is able to demonstrate that the five most frequent auxiliaries found in future constructions (*ska*, *skall*, *skulle*, *komma* and *tänka*) tend to occur with different types of main verbs. Thus, *ska* often appears with general verbs and is used as a fully grammaticalized marker of futurity, while *tänka* retains more of its lexical meaning, favoring main verbs that express conscious and deliberate actions.

Leelo Keevallik uses not only corpora, but also data from the internet, in her paper on the Estonian epistemic marker (*ei*) *tea*. However, the corpora contain spoken language – the development of (*ei*) *tea* is recent and hence it cannot be found in standard written language. Keevallik proposes that the current use of (*ei*) *tea* is due to speakers' wish to avoid putting pressure on the interlocutor. By using (*ei*) *tea* in a question, and thereby dropping the subject pronoun, the interlocutor is free to interpret the utterance as a question or as a statement, directed to either one person or to many. Hence, Keevallik argues, interactional analysis is a necessary tool when studying this type of grammaticalization.

Muriel Norde addresses degrammaticalization, and especially the diachronic development of the Swedish *s*-genitive (a topic that has been discussed in some

depth). She asserts that the *s*-genitive in Modern Swedish is a clitic, and by testing the cliticness of the *s*-ending in Old Swedish and onwards she finds that it has gone through three stages, becoming increasingly less morphologically bound. Norde also discusses previous suggestions concerning the morphosyntactic status of the *s*-genitive.