Synopsis

MAIN TOPIC: identifying the different stages in the grammaticalization of verbs into discourse markers

CENTRAL DATA: • imperatives of ECM-verbs in Dutch dialects can be perception verbs and causative verbs.

(1) Hoor hem es lachen! hear him PRET laugh

(2) Let him PRET come

(3) ECM-verbs in Dutch (dialects) can show up in three imperative-like contexts:

(3) a. Kijk die koeien es gek doen. look those cows PRET crazy do

(4) Kijk die koeien es gek doen. look those cows PRET crazy do

(5) Kijk, die koeien es gek doen. ‘Look, those cows are going crazy.’

MAIN GIST OF THE ANALYSIS:

1. If there is no pro-subject in inflected imperatives, how does the EPP get satisfied? When a DP other than the subject of the imperative raises to specTP (as in the case of inflected ECM-imperatives), it must bear an [AGENT]-theta role → it must be the external argument of a lower predicate + this external argument must be allowed to undergo A-movement → agentic ECM-subjects are the only DPs that can partake in this construction.

2. Where do the agreement endings come from?

3. Functional items permit only one complement, which is generally not an argument.

4. Functional items form a closed class

5. Functional items can be morphologically defective

6. Functional elements merged in functional positions (imperative as discourse marker)

7. Proposition: multiple Merge positions: the three imperative-like contexts in which ECM-verbs appear in Dutch dialects reflect three possible merge positions for these verbs:

(a) the regular imperative is merged in V and raises to C (full argument structure, full morphological paradigm, open class, ...) → the inflected imperative is merged directly in C (properties of the lexical ECM-verb (secondary theta-role, basic lexical semantics), properties of being merged in a functional head (morphological deficiency, closed class, no argument structure)) → the imperative used as a discourse marker is merged in a functional head higher than C (no argument structure, no morphological paradigm, closed class, no lexical meaning, ...) (see also Flaeckenberg (2009))

8. Zooming in on Inflected imperatives:

1. If there is no pro-subject in inflected imperatives, how does the EPP get satisfied?

2. The lexical verb is inserted in its lexical position (cf. 1).

3. If there is no external theta-role, there is no case for the external argument of a lower predicate + this external argument must be allowed to undergo A-movement → agentic ECM-subjects are the only DPs that can partake in this construction.

4. If a DP other than the subject of the imperative raises to specTP (as in the case of inflected ECM-imperatives), it must bear an [AGENT]-theta role → it must be the external argument of a lower predicate + this external argument must be allowed to undergo A-movement → agentic ECM-subjects are the only DPs that can partake in this construction.

5. Functional elements merged in functional positions (imperative as discourse marker)

6. Each of these stages has its own characteristic syntactic, morphological and lexical properties, which stage 2 occupies an intermediate position between the other two microstructural data from Dutch provide crucial insight into the middle stage of the development.

Conclusion:

Three main stages of grammaticalization in Dutch ECM-imperatives:

1. Lexical verbs merged in lexical positions (regular imperatives)

2. Lexical verbs merged in functional positions (inflected imperatives)

3. Functional elements merged in functional positions (imperatives as discourse markers)

Why only ECM-verbs?

11. Let me tell you, those stories → let tell you those stories → vertel die verhalen → vertel (*-e) die verhalen es Pete kommen. 

12. Convince those boys to come. → convince those boys PRET for to come → convince(*-e) die jongens om te komen. (cf. (2012))

References:


van Craenenbroeck, Jeroen, and Marjo van Koppen. 2009. Lexical items moving up the tree: Grammaticalization of ECM-verbs in Dutch. Lexical items moving up the tree: Grammaticalization of ECM-verbs in Dutch.