

Grammaticalization and Infinitival Complements in Dutch

Grammaticalization and infinitival complements in Dutch investigates some basic insights of grammaticalization from the point of view of generative grammar.

The first chapter discusses the process of grammaticalization in general. It is argued that the semantic bleaching of grammaticalizing elements is always the result of the raising of functional morphemes in a hierarchy of (adverbial) functional projections. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on historical developments in the domain of infinitival complements in Dutch. In chapter 2 it is proposed that the fact that grammaticalization invariably involves raising accounts for both synchronic and diachronic variation in the semantics of Dutch modal verbs. In chapter 3, the grammaticalization process of the Dutch infinitival marker *te* 'to' is described. It is shown that *te* is a grammaticalized morpheme which developed from a marker of irrealis mood into a tense marker. As such, it raises from a lower to a higher functional head. The diachronic development of the morphosyntax of Dutch infinitival complements further supports the hypothesis that meaning changes of lexical and functional items can be derived from head movement in a hierarchy of functional projections.

This book is of relevance to anyone interested in historical syntax and grammaticalization theory.

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