

Causal markers derived from speech act verbs in the languages of the world¹

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Standing apart from other types of adverbial clauses in many respects, causal clauses remain understudied from a cross-linguistic point of view [Diessel & Hetterle 2011]. One commonly recognized source for the development of markers of causal relations is generic speech act verbs [Heine & Kuteva 2002: 261-262; Güldemann 2008: 464-467; Martowicz 2011: 131], cf. (1):

(1) Kolyma Yukaghir [Nikolaeva 2004: 15.45]

Tabun-gələ pulun-de: ta:t ibil'e:-l'əl tude terikə-gələ
that- ACC old.man-DIM thus cry-EV(3SG) he. POSS old.woman- ACC
kude-de-gə mon-u-t.
kill-TR-DS.CVB say-0-IPF.CVB

'The old man started crying because they had killed his wife.'

Based on a survey of complement and adverbial constructions in a sample of more than 120 languages of the world, I argue that two broad grammaticalization scenarios must be distinguished.

On the one hand, speech act verbs commonly grammaticalize into complementizers, first with other predicates of speech, then extending to a broader range of matrix verbs. From there they may evolve into general subordinators covering cause-effect among other adverbial relations or come to be employed in causal clauses built on the basis of complement clauses.

On the other hand, speech act verbs may develop directly into markers of causal relations, as suggested by the data from languages where other subordination types are introduced by markers that bear no affinity to speech act verbs. A distinctive subtype of this scenario is the strategy of causal clause formation characteristic of the Caucasus as a linguistic area. It involves conventionalization of conditional clauses of the type "If you say/ask why P, Q":

(2) Adyghe [own fieldwork]

...*səd-a p-ʔ^we-me qə-ze-χ^wə-m ə-ne-me α-λeβ^wə-š'təβe-p.*
what-Q 2SG.A-say-DYN DIR-REL.TMP-become-OBL 3POSS-eye-PL.OBL 3PL.A-see-IPF-NEG
'...because when she was born, she was blind'.

(3) Ingush [Nichols 2011: 530]

Earzii eanna c'i tyllai hana ealcha ciga=chy earzii daaxandea.
(name) say.CVANT name bestow.NW why say.CVTEMP there=in eagle live.CVREAS
'It's was named "Earzii" ('eagle') because an eagle lived there.'

Grammaticalization of speech act verbs into causal markers "bypassing" complementation and other subordination types, which has not yet received much attention in the literature, testifies to the special affinity between speech act situations and causal clauses. This appears natural given the latter's typical communicative function in speaker-hearer interaction [Ford & Mori 1994; Diessel & Hetterle 2011].

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