Antigrammaticalization, antimorphologization and the case of Tura

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1. Introduction

In recent years, various scholars have questioned the validity of the unidirectionality hypothesis (e.g. Newmeyer 1998; Lass 2000; Campbell 2001; Janda 2001). On the whole, Haspelmath (2004) offers a convincing response to this criticism. While acknowledging the existence of counterexamples to unidirectionality, he points out that the number of genuine cases of reversal of grammaticalization, referred to as examples of antigrammaticalization, is very small (he lists eight such cases) and, therefore, does not undermine the importance of unidirectionality for grammaticalization studies. Thus, he sees unidirectionality as “the most important constraint on morphosyntactic change” rather than as an “absolute universal.” However, given the concession that counterexamples exist, the terms tendency or statistical universal (Haspelmath 2004:23), may be more appropriate. In the present paper, I will show that cases of alleged antigrammaticalization represent at

1. The Tura data discussed in the present paper were gathered in Ivory Coast in February-April 2002. This field trip was conducted as part of the project Lexicology of Eastern Mande languages in the context of Mande linguistic comparison (http://www.unizh.ch/spw/afbranch/mandectcontext.htm) funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. Important assistance was also given by the Ivoriain branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. I also gratefully acknowledge the GOA (Geconcerteerde Onderzoeksactie) Mood and Modality project of the University of Antwerp and the project P6/44 (Belgian Federal Government, Interuniversity Attraction Poles) for financial support. Moreover, I would like to express here my gratitude to the Tura people with whom I worked for their valuable assistance and their time, particularly to Goh Soupou Mardoche from the village of Kpata, and Gilbert Bakayoko, from the village of Dio. With respect to the present paper, special thanks are due to Mark Van de Velde. Finally, I am grateful to two anonymous referees for their helpful comments. Any mistakes that remain are, of course, my own responsibility.
best nothing more than an evolution from less to more morphological bonding. I will call such an evolution antimorphologization and illustrate it using an unusual case from the Mande language Tura. Antigrammaticalization, meanwhile, will be defined in terms of loss of obligatoriness in the marking of a category.

In Section 2.1, I will examine the terms degrammaticalization, antigrammaticalization and grammaticalization as they are currently used. I will also address the notion of grammatical meaning, which is of paramount importance for any discussion of (de-, anti-)grammaticalization, and propose a stricter definition of (anti-)grammaticalization in terms of obligatoriness. In Section 2.2, I will take a closer look at the cases of antigrammaticalization proposed by Haspelmath (2004) and will introduce the notion of antimorphologization. This relates to the more usual term demorphologization in the same way as antigrammaticalization relates to degrammaticalization. Finally, in Section 3, I will present a case of antimorphologization from Tura (Niger-Congo, Mande, Eastern Mande; Ivory Coast).

2. Terminology

2.1 De-, anti- and simple grammaticalization.

In the conclusion of her paper on the history of the English s-genitive, Rosenbach (2004: 89) cautions the reader:

It should be stressed that the assessment of whether the s-genitive is a case of de-grammaticalization is interpretation which heavily depends on how (de)grammaticalization is defined in the first place. As the discussion […] has shown, however, the defining properties of what should constitute a genuine case of (de)grammaticalization are not yet agreed on, and various interpretations are possible.

To this caveat we can add that part of the problem lies in the terms themselves: they are often too vague and inconsistent to demand any consistency of interpretations from the users. Moreover, the terms are overused and downgraded to the level of common language words with prototype-like semantics. Consequently, the epistemological value of such terms as tools of linguistic analysis is low. The term degrammaticalization, for instance, has been used in the literature to refer to several different kinds of linguistic change. Heine (2003: 165) lists the following recurrent uses: (i) loss of grammatical meaning, (ii) mirror image reversal, (iii) lexicalization, (iv) euphemism, (v) exaptation, (vi) adaptation, (vii) replacement and (viii) upgrading. Haspelmath (2004) also mentions, among other processes, delocutive word formation, back-formation, conversion and retraction. In other words, the term degrammaticalization is extended to cover a number of quite heterogeneous phenomena, involving both “upgrading” and “downgrading.”
Haspelmath (2004: 27) goes even further and says that these processes do “not [. . .] have anything in common.”

Several attempts have been made to narrow the term degrammaticalization and thus increase its explanatory and predictive power. Quite logically, all of them reduce degrammaticalization to the reverse of grammaticalization. Thus, Bybee et al. (1994: 40) and Hopper and Traugott (2003: 134) see degrammaticalization as a term that refers to changes which violate schematic clines [phrases / words > non-bound grams > inflection]. Lehmann (forthcoming) defines degrammaticalization as “the reverse of grammaticalization [. . .] as a ness in which a linguistic sign gains in autonomy, i.e. it becomes relatively free from constraints of the linguistic system.” In keeping with the reversal idea of this narrower approach, Haspelmath (2004: 27–28) replaces degrammaticalization with antigrammaticalization, which he understands as “a change that leads from the endpoint to the starting point of a potential grammaticalization and also shows the same intermediate stages.” He emphasizes that the term antigrammaticalization “is intended to cover any type of change that goes against the general direction of grammaticalization (i.e. discourse > syntax > morphology).”

In order to discuss degrammaticalization, therefore, we need to agree on the definition of grammaticalization. Here are some recent descriptions.

Grammaticalization is defined as the development from lexical to grammatical forms (or functional categories), and from grammatical to even more grammatical forms. (Heine 2003: 163)

Grammaticalization is a term referring to the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions. (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 231)

A grammaticalization is a diachronic change by which the parts of a constructional schema come to have stronger internal dependencies. (Haspelmath 2004: 26)

Grammaticalization of a linguistic sign is a process in which it loses in autonomy by becoming more subject to constraints of the linguistic system. (Lehmann forthcoming)

These definitions of grammaticalization differ in two main respects. The first point of difference is whether the definition explicitly makes use of the notion grammatical (and appeals explicitly to the notion of grammar, in general). The second is whether the definition allows for the inclusion of (i) syntactic change under the

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2. A more extensive overview of the extant definitions of grammaticalization can be found in Campbell and Janda (2001), for example.
notion of grammaticalization, such as the change from a freer to a more fixed word order, and / or (ii) discourse-oriented changes, like the development of discourse markers. A positive answer to these questions is often not spelled out in the definition itself, but becomes apparent only when concrete cases of alleged grammaticalization are discussed. The question of what the notion grammatical actually signifies is usually touched upon only briefly or simply passed over as something supposed obvious to everybody. Such equivocation leads to a proliferation of suggested types and tokens of grammaticalization.

Almost all interpretations of grammaticalization (and, consequently, of de- and antigrammaticalization) seem to have in common an inclination to a conscious or unconscious equation of being (more) grammatical with being (more) morphologically bound. Examples of this attitude abound, like, for instance, Hopper and Traugott’s (2003) cline of grammaticality [content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix] or a comparable one by Bybee et al. (1994) [phrases / words > non-bound grams > inflection]. However, it is not clear to me why a grammatical word or a non-bound gram is less grammatical (or less grammaticalized) than an affix with the same function. A less abstract example of this approach would be Haspelmath’s (2004) imaginary case of two related languages, one with a future-tense affix and another with a future-tense auxiliary, for which it is suggested that, in accordance with the unidirectionality principle, the future-tense affix has grammaticalized through a stage of a future-tense auxiliary, while the reverse development is rather unlikely. Here again, a question imposes itself: in what respect is a future-tense affix more grammatical than a full-fledged future-tense auxiliary? The difference lies in their morphological status on the bonding cline [free word > clitic > affix] rather than in their grammaticalization status. Both are linguistic signs which serve to express the same grammatical meaning.

Furthermore, it is preferable to restrict the term grammaticalization to changes affecting linguistic signs (morphemes as minimal linguistic signs and word-forms as maximally independent linguistic signs), thus excluding syntactic change. The latter is substantially different in that it affects relations between, and relative positions of, word-forms (in fact, not even concrete word-forms but their categories, such as nouns, verbs, etc.). Including syntactic change under the notion of grammaticalization significantly undermines the epistemological value of the unidirectionality generalization. Defreeze or repragmatization of word order is very different from regain of lost (lexical or derivational) information or deautomatization, which, according to Lehmann (forthcoming), are the main factors responsible for the unidirectionality of grammaticalization.

Note that this does not equate grammaticalization with morphologization because it does not exclude word-forms expressing grammatical meanings analytically, such as auxiliaries.
Definitions of (de-, anti-)grammaticalization which invoke the notion of grammatical meaning should be preferred. After all, the term at stake is grammaticalization. The notion of grammatical meaning is best defined via the notion of obligatoriness: a meaning is grammatical in a given language if the speaker cannot choose to leave it unexpressed.\footnote{The idea to use obligatoriness as a criterion for distinguishing grammatical meanings is not new. See, for example, Jakobson (1959–1971).} Strictly speaking, of course, it is not the meaning itself which is grammatical but a set of mutually exclusive meanings, a grammatical category, to which that meaning belongs (cf. Plungian 2000:107). In other words, obligatoriness necessarily implies paradigmaticity and equipollent oppositions. An important consequence of this is that a given meaning is grammatical or non-grammatical only with respect to a particular linguistic system. It cannot be grammatical a priori, universally.\footnote{That certain meanings are grammatical in any language (especially when expressed by affixes) often seems to be taken for granted. The following quote from Lass (2000:219) is particularly illustrative in this respect because of its straightforwardness: “One could imagine a case where a prefix meaning ‘motional’ and one meaning ‘directional’ (surely ‘grammatical items’) could fuse into a verb meaning ‘turn’ or ‘go’” (italics added).} Admittedly, crosslinguistically some meanings turn out to be grammatical much more frequently than others and can thus be described as prototypical grammatical meanings, but still prototypical is not the same as universal. It is also important to notice that the criterion of obligatoriness does not necessarily imply that the border between the domains of grammatical and non-grammatical meanings is always strict and clear. As Plungian (2000:105–106, 130) notes, obligatoriness can also be gradual. An interesting discussion of some often-cited counterexamples to the applicability of the obligatoriness criterion can be found in Plungian (2000:136–140).\footnote{Among other topics, Plungian discusses the Turkic and Iranian languages in which the markers of case and number have often been claimed to be facultative. He also examines some cases when obligatoriness is inappropriately used to refer to what can at best be described as lexical obligatoriness (Apresjan 1980:17–19). I discuss a similar example by van Marle (1996) in Footnote 7.} Note also that grammatical is not the same as inflectional (as it is, for instance, for Mel’čuk 1993). Grammatical meanings can also be of a classifying type, such as the substantival gender in languages like Russian. They can be subdivided into semantic (notional) and syntactic (relational) meanings (cf. Zaliznjak 1967:23–24; Plungian 2000:123–126). The main distinctive feature of the “syntactic grammemes” is that “strictly speaking, they do not express any meaning in the true sense. That is, they do not correspond to any properties of the real world (unlike grammemes of number, tense or aspect)” (Plungian 2000:124). However, it is not uncommon for a given grammeme to have both semantic and syntactic functions.

\footnote{The idea to use obligatoriness as a criterion for distinguishing grammatical meanings is not new. See, for example, Jakobson (1959–1971).}
When defined in terms of the criterion of obligatoriness, grammatical meanings are opposed to non-grammatical meanings as obligatory meanings vs. non-obligatory meanings. As has already been pointed out, the way in which the two kinds of meanings are expressed formally is of little relevance, since both can be expressed with either root morphemes or non-root morphemes (affixes or non-segmental morphemes). Phrased in more traditional terms, for the non-grammatical meanings this formal distinction results in a division into lexical meanings and derivational meanings respectively.\(^7\) Note that in the Anglo-Saxon linguistic tradition derivational meanings are often also subsumed under grammatical meanings. However, this makes the notion of grammatical meaning inconsistent with that of grammatical category, because certain kinds of allegedly grammatical meanings, i.e. those involved in derivation, then happen to be unable to form a grammatical category (Plungian 2000:126–127). Consequently, I view the difference between inflection and derivation as one between grammatical and non-grammatical meanings, since \textit{grammatical} is defined in terms of obligatoriness.

In accordance with the foregoing discussion, the following definition of grammaticalization can be proposed:

**Grammaticalization is a term referring to the change whereby linguistic signs with non-grammatical meanings come in certain linguistic contexts to encode grammatical meanings; grammatical being defined by means of the criterion of obligatoriness.**

The definition of grammatical in terms of obligatoriness has several consequences for the notion of grammaticalization. First, it excludes the development of derivational affixes.\(^8\) Second, it excludes those cases in which words from open part-of-speech categories, such as nouns or verbs, acquire the status of a closed part-

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\(^7\) Plungian (2000:120) notes that the difference between lexical and derivational meanings is "purely formal," that is, "lexical meanings are expressed with root morphemes, while derivational with non-root morphemes (i.e. non-segmental morphemes or, more frequently, affixes)." Of course, a root morpheme may form a word by itself.

\(^8\) One anonymous reviewer argues that "derivational affixes have been shown to be obligatory in specific contexts," referring to van Marle’s (1996) discussion of Dutch inhabitatives, such as \textit{Amsterdamm-er ‘Amsterdamer (male inhabitant of Amsterdam)’} vs. \textit{Amsterdam-se ‘Amsterdamer (female inhabitant of Amsterdam).’} In particular, van Marle (1996:72) notes that in Dutch "if a person in question is a woman, the female inhabitative \textit{must} be used," although it would probably be more correct to say \textit{inhabitative of feminine (grammatical) gender}. Thus, you can only say \textit{Marie is een echte Amsterdam-se ‘Mary is a real Amsterdamer (feminine gender, female sex)} but not \textit{Marie is een echte Amsterrdamm-er ‘Mary is a real Amsterdamer (masculine gender, male sex).’ At the same time, this is held to be possible with other kinds of personal derivatives, where the distinction is said to be between female sex vs. male / neutral to sex. Thus, you can say both \textit{Marie is een goede vertel-ster ‘Mary is a good story-teller (feminine gender, fe-
of-speech category, such as adverbs, adpositions, conjunctions, etc., since they do not form a paradigm sensu stricto (even an analytic one). For similar reasons, it excludes the so-called modal auxiliaries of the Germanic languages and the development of discourse markers. Among other things, it bars such alleged cases of antigrammaticalization as the preposition out becoming the verb to out in English or må ‘may’ to må ‘feel’ in Swedish (cf. Andersson this volume).

Antigrammaticalization, as the reverse of grammaticalization, refers then to the change whereby grammatical linguistic signs come in certain linguistic contexts to encode non-grammatical meanings.9 This kind of reverse change is easier to conceive of for semantic grammatical meanings (for instance, plural and singular of the category number), than for purely syntactic ones (see above). The main reason is that semantic grammatical meanings are notionally quite similar to meanings typically expressed by derivational methods, as, for instance, the plural and the singular are similar to the collective and the singulative respectively. Furthermore, semantic grammatical meanings are far more likely to come into conflict with the meaning of the lexeme with which they have to combine, as, for instance, the plural with mass nouns and the singular with collective and “corporate” (Corbett 2000: 188–191) nouns. These two factors may give rise to derivational uses of grammemes. For example, the form drops can refer not only to the plural of the word drop, but also to a (dose of) medicine measured by drops (e.g. eye drops). Similarly, beads can refer both to the plural of bead and to a string of beads used for counting prayers (especially the Roman Catholic rosary). The important thing, however, is that in the latter uses drops and beads are still grammatically plural. Therefore, this particular derivational use of the plural grammeme hardly qualifies as antigrammaticalization. The situation would be somewhat different, however, if drops-medicine and beads-rosary had become grammatically singular. We would then obtain a perfect proportion drop-Øsg:drop-s-Øsg=bead-Øsg:bead-s-Øsg, (the so-called Greenberg square), which would imply that -s here is a collective

male sex’ and Marie is een goede verpleeg-ster ‘Mary is a good story-teller (masculine gender, neutral to sex).’ Note, however, that, in the case of the inhabitative derivational morphology, obligatoriness is of a rather different kind from the grammatical meanings. It occurs at the level of lexical nomination, in the same way as is the difference between verpleeg-ster ‘nurse (only female)’ vs. verpleg-er ‘nurse (only male)’ (from the verb verpleg-en ‘to nurse’), or, to make things even more obvious, moeder ‘mother’ vs. vader ‘father.’ As with inhabitatives, in the latter two cases you can only say Marie is een goede verpleeg-ster / moeder ‘Mary is a good nurse / mother,’ but not Marie is een goede verpleg-er / vader ‘Mary is a good (male) nurse / father.’

9. For the same reasons as those discussed by Haspelmath (2004), this excludes delocutive word formation, back-formation, conversion and phonogenesis with a grammeme as the source, as well as developments from semantically empty parts of morphemes to full-fledged morphemes.
derivational affix homophonous to, and originating in, the plural grammeme -s. In other words, this would be an example of branching antigrammaticalization. I call it branching because, in this case, the original grammeme is preserved intact in the language.

If, on the other hand, the grammeme is lost, the antigrammaticalization appears as non-branching or linear.\footnote{In principle, I would anticipate that a change appearing as a linear antigrammaticalization (always?) presupposes a branching antigrammaticalization at an earlier stage, although more research is surely needed here. Note, however, that there is an important potential pitfall: it is too easy to explain away the absence of a branching antigrammaticalization at an earlier stage as being due to the lack of evidence needed to reconstruct it.} As an example of this kind of antigrammaticalization, the Swedish property-bearer suffix -er, as in dum\textsuperscript{m}er 'stupid person' vs. dum 'stupid,' which, according to Norde (1997: 230), goes back to the Old Norse nominative suffix, seems to present a good case.\footnote{In Modern Swedish, nouns have preserved only one overtly marked case, the genitive.} This example is cited by Haspelmath (2004: 32) under the rubric “loss of an inflectional category with traces,” but dismissed because for Haspelmath derivation is as grammatical as inflection. Note, however, that not all traces count as antigrammaticalization, but only those which are non-grammatical morphemes at the same time. A subsequent decrease in morphological bonding in such an antigrammaticalized linguistic sign is also possible as well, but would require some rather fortuitous concourse of circumstances (cf. Section 2.2 below). A direct change from a linguistic sign with a grammatical meaning to a linguistic sign with a lexical meaning without any intermediate derivational stage is somewhat more difficult to imagine, but it should not be excluded a priori. In my view, the chances of a process of this kind occurring are highest when the grammeme is expressed by a clitic or an autonomous word.

Given that derivational uses of grammemes are relatively common and that grammemes are far from immune to becoming obsolete, it would not be surprising to find a relatively high incidence of antigrammaticalization from grammemes to derivational linguistic signs in the languages of the world. Nevertheless, unlike grammaticalization, antigrammaticalization appears to be much more a matter of chance than of tendency, because the processes which presumably contribute to it most, such as reanalysis and, particularly, loss of grammemes, are rather accidental themselves.

2.2 Antigrammaticalization and antimorphologization

As noted in Section 2.1 above, there is a tendency in the literature to identify grammaticalization to a great extent with morphologization, that is, a change from an autonomous word-form to an affix (usually via the stage of a clitic). A parallel
trend of identifying de- or antigrantammatization with the reverse of morphologization seems to be even stronger. Consider, for instance, the various definitions given in Section 2.1, as well as Haspelmath’s (2004: 29) “real exceptions” to the unidirectionality generalization cited below:

a. English and Mainland Scandinavian genitive suffix -s > clitic =s.
b. Irish first person plural subject suffix -muid > independent pronoun muid.
c. Japanese adverbial subordinator -ga ‘although’ > free linker ga ‘but.’
d. Saami abessive suffix *-ptaken > clitic =taga > free postposition taga.
e. Estonian question marker -s > clitic =es > free particle es.
f. English infinitive prefix to- > proclitic to=.
g. Modern Greek prefix ksaqa- ‘again’ > free adverb ksaqa ‘again.’
h. Latin rigid prefix re- ‘again’ > Italian flexible prefix ri- (e.g. ridevo fare ‘I must do again’).

Several remarks are in order here. First, for some of the cases of antigrantammatization, the existence of an upgrading is still disputed (see Traugott 2001; Heine 2003; Lehmann, forthcoming). Second, for another segment of them, it has still to be shown that the original affix did express a grammatical meaning. For instance, the Latin rigid prefix re- ‘again’ is at best a derivational affix: its meaning is not a grammatical one. Finally, the semantics of the antigrantammatized elements hardly differs from that of their predecessors or is at least not less grammatical than that of their predecessors. Importantly, this is the case no matter how the notion of grammatical meaning is understood, unless one equates having grammatical meaning with being an affix, which hardly anybody has done explicitly yet. In other words, the difference between the modern elements and their predecessors in (a) to (h) above lies in their morphological status on the bonding cline [free word > clitic > affix] and, in a few cases, perhaps in some minor semantic developments along the way. Therefore, I believe that it is more correct to refer to the alleged antigrantammatizations listed in (a) to (h) as cases of antimorphologization, or decrease in morphological bonding.

12. For instance, a shift from ‘although’ to ‘but’ in the case of Japanese ga or the development of a restriction on the ‘s-marked possessors to the preposed position, which has matched the restriction on co-occurrence of articles with noun phrases containing a referential / definite preposed modifier / specifier (cf. [*the] my house, [*the] this house, [*the] John, [*the] John’s house, etc.).

13. I am somewhat reluctant to call the change in (h), the development of the Italian flexible prefix ri-, a case of antimorphologization. Firstly, however flexible it may be, ri- is still a prefix. Secondly, I wonder whether ridevo fare and devo rifare really mean exactly the same thing. In other words, I wonder whether in the first case the idea of repetition does not rather relate to the obligation (i.e. one was obliged to do the action the first time and now one is again obliged
thus understood as increase in morphological bonding on the cline [free word > clitic > affix].

Reanalysis appears to be an important factor in antimorphologization and, since “there are no limits on reanalysis itself” (Detges & Waltereit 2002:191), there should in principle be no limits on antimorphologization either. However, it is clear that possibility is not the same as necessity, let alone predisposition. What is more, as a rather accidental process, reanalysis as such is not the best candidate for creating predispositions. Interestingly, however, the linguistic signs involved in the changes in (a) to (h) do seem to have something in common. The first observation, which admittedly may be somewhat trivial, is that they all lie along the outer border of their host, making it easier for them to split away. The second observation concerns semantics rather than form, although it is indirectly related to the first observation. In the majority of cases, the meanings of the elements involved in the changes in (a) to (h) could be characterized as being of low relevance to the lexical meanings of their hosts, in the sense of Bybee (1985). Thus, case marking, as the genitive in (a) and the abessive in (d), is assigned to the noun phrase as a whole in a given syntactic context with usually little impact on the semantics of the noun itself. Nominalization marking, as the adverbial subordinator in (c) and the infinitive marker in (f) can be broadly defined, would normally just give the verbal phrase the syntactic possibilities of an adverbial or a nominal without having much influence on the meaning of the verb itself. Similarly, the interrogative marker in (e), the subject marker in (b) and ‘again’ in (g) and (h) would not usually be expected to have much impact on the lexical meaning of their hosts. In other words, even if antimorphologization on the whole is indeed a matter of chance rather than a tendency, bound linguistic signs with less relevant kinds of meanings may, all things being equal, be more likely to undergo antimorphologization. Furthermore, when the antimorphologization of a given linguistic sign is accompanied by the acquisition of a radically new meaning, it is the low relevance of the target meaning that may prove decisive, rather than the degree of relevance of the original meaning. This appears to be the case with the (partial) antimorphologization of the verbal derivational suffix |-LÁ| from the Eastern Mande language Tura described in Section 3 below. The original, valence-decreasing meaning of |-LÁ| is clearly much more relevant to the meaning of the verb than its new focalizing / nominalizing function. Admittedly, the notion of relevance is not unproblematic, but it seems to be a step in the right direction.

to do the same action), while in the second case it relates to the action but not necessarily to the obligation (i.e. there was no obligation to do the action when one did it for the first time, but now one is obliged to do the same action again).
3. A case of antimorphologization in Tura

3.1 Tura verbs in [-LÁ]: Preliminaries

In Tura, 24 verbs from a total of about some 200 end in [-LÁ]. The notation [-LÁ] here stands for (i) -l after a nasal vowel, as in dɔl ‘stop’ (related to the verb dɔ ‘stand; wait; stop’); (ii) for -ná after a nasal vowel, as in zînná ‘put down; come/go down, descend’ (related to an intransitive verb zîn ‘touch’); and (iii) for -lá elsewhere, as in seelá ‘turn’. In example (1) [-LÁ] behaves like a suffix in that the verbal TAM-marking attaches to its right before any postverbal constituents.

(1) Tura

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
{\text{yáálé}} & \text{yesterday} \\
\end{array}
\]

Tura 

\[
\text{òô}
\]

\[
\text{dɔ-} \text{LÁ-} \text{TAM-TAM}
\]

3SG.SBJ.NEG.TAM stand-LÁ-TAM-TAM 'He did not stop (yesterday).'

The semantics of [-LÁ] often appears to be rather vague. Thus, Bearth (1971:170) analysed it, for lack of a better term, as a derivational suffix with an intensive meaning (‘valeur intensive’). However, in many instances [-LÁ] can be analysed as a special kind of valence-decreasing morpheme. For the purposes of the present paper it suffices to characterize it broadly as a derivational morpheme meaning 'somewhere, anywhere,' as illustrated in (2) and (3) with the verb yaa and its derivative yalaÉ, both meaning 'to sit down.' Roughly speaking, [-LÁ] marks deletion (or sometimes facultativity) of the location adverbial which is normally obligatorily expressed with the base verb as an indirect object or circumstantial. Usually, this derivation concerns motion verbs and (change of) posture verbs (for a discussion, see Idiatov 2003). A comparable derivation affecting a direct object has been described in the literature as deobjective, indefinite object deletion or absolutive (cf. Haspelmath & Müller-Bardey 2004:1131). By analogy, a few labels could be suggested for the derivation at issue here, for instance, delocative, indefinite location adverbial deletion or locative absolutive.

(2) Tura

a. *yaa!

sit.down

‘Sit down!’

b. *yaa!

sit.down

14. In conformity with the practical orthography, tones in the examples are marked as follows: ā (high tone), ā (mid-high tone), a (mid-low tone), ă (low tone) and a high or mid-high toned morpheme consisting of a copy of the preceding vowel.)
Historically, the demonstrative root *tá ‘there’ which evolved into the demonstrative láà ‘that’ in Present-day Tura. Cognates of this affix are represented throughout Eastern Mande, both in its Southern branch, where it typically has the form |-LÁ|, and in its Eastern branch, where it often has the form |-LÉ|. The latter element goes back to another demonstrative *t¢7 ‘there,’ which evolved into the demonstrative t¢7/l¢7 ‘there (not far)’ in Present-day Tura.

3.2 Tura verbs in |-LÁ|: A case of antimorphologization

The suffix |-LÁ| has undergone partial antimorphologization in Tura. This manifests itself in the development of the possibility for a verbs ending in |-LÁ| to be split up by adnominal modifiers. In such cases |-LÁ| is analysed as a weakly autonomous word, as illustrated in (4), which contains the verb d¢f ‘stop’ as in (1) above. This construction is used primarily for the purpose of predicate focus and in order to give a predicate the combinatorial possibilities of a noun. The same results can be achieved by placing the verb in direct object position relative to the auxiliary verb wô ‘accomplish, do,’ which in turn takes all the tense-aspect-modality marking of the verb, as in (5). Following Bearth (1971: 171–176), this construction is called wô-transposition (“transposition en wô”) and the former – |LÁ|-transposition (“transposition en -lá”).

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‘He did not stop again.’

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<td>3sg.sbj.neg.tam stand-LÁ new a.certain do [= trns</td>
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<td>d¢f</td>
<td>d¢f wô-</td>
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‘He did not stop again.’

|-LÁ|-transposition exists as an alternative to the regular wô-transposition. The two kinds of verb-transposing construction are functionally identical, except in one case. According to Bearth (1971: 174–175), in one type of subordinate clauses the wô-transposition of a verb ending in |-LÁ| implies a causal ‘since’-reading of the subordinate clause in question, as in (6), whereas the|-LÁ|-transposition of
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the same verb implies a temporal ‘when’-reading, as in (7). Note that [-LÁ] of ɒsło ‘stop’ in (4) and (7) preserves its form ɪs even when separated from the verb root.

(6) é 3sg.sbj.tam dɔ-s-lɔ-’ stand-LÁ-foclz wɔ-’ do[=trns]-tam-tam tm15 ‘since he stopped’

(7) é 3sg.sbj.tam dɔ-s-lɔ-’ stand-LÁ-foclz LÁ[trnx]-tam-tam tm-tm ‘when he stopped’

The morphological status of [-LÁ] in examples like (4) and (7) is exceptional: it is a derivational morpheme, which is an integral part of the verb ɒsło ‘stop,’ and at the same time it is a word used to transpose the verbal word of which it is part. The situation is even stranger in (8), where the transposed verb is gbála ‘thunder; roar, shout.’ The element [-LÁ] in gbála (and several other verbs) is not, and, as comparative evidence seems to confirm, has never been, an affix. In (8), [-LÁ] does not have any meaning of its own. Thus, it is a necessary, but meaningless part of the verb gbála (which is indicated by a Ø-sign as one of its possible glosses) and, at the same time, it is a word which is used to transpose the verbal word of which it is part.16 Idiatov (2003, 2005) proposes the terms quasi- or pseudo-word(form) to characterize the morphological status of such elements.17,18

(8) lâ-’ rain-predm gbá déé kè new a.certain gbála-dâ-’ thunder3[=Ø=trns]-tam-tam19 ‘It thundered again.’

15. TM stands for terminal marker, which serves the function of marking certain types of clauses.

16. A reviewer has suggested a parallel with the change in colloquial American English of the verb hiccup, “in which the -up part is etymologically just a part of the root [...] but is treated by some speakers as if it were the particle up,” as in He was hiccupping, He was hicking up. Although, admittedly, the two cases considerably resemble each other, there is at least one important difference as well. The “liberation” of -up from hiccup creates a new lexical entry, hick up (instead of, or for some speakers probably side by side with, the original hiccup), while this is hardly the case with gbi ... lá, which is just a form of gbála under transposition (cf. also the paragraph preceding examples (13) and (14)).

17. The notion of pseudo-words is related to a more general discussion of the so-called sub- or quasi-morphemic entities. A good introduction to this topic can be found in Kubrajkova (2000).

18. Idiatov (2005) also discusses a comparable phenomenon in Tura numerals and gives some typological parallels of pseudo-words.

19. PREDM stands for predicative marker, which is here understood as an auxiliary-like morpheme with a sentence-constituting function.
The [-LÁ]-transposition must have appeared as a result of the development of a possibility for an alternative structural analysis of the verbs ending in [-LÁ] as consisting of an ordinary verb and its transposer. A prerequisite for such a development would have been the existence of an ordinary wô-transposition, particularly of its bare variety, that is, a wô-transposition where the verb transposed by wô is not modified by anything (e.g. a focalizer or an adnominal modifier). Since the semantic difference between a verb ending in [-LÁ] and its base verb is subtle, the verb ending in [-LÁ] may well appear to be structurally identical to such a construction. Only the transposer varies, [-LÁ] instead of wô. Furthermore, the development of [-LÁ]-transposition must have been facilitated by a certain bleaching of the original semantics of [-LÁ]. The process just described is illustrated by examples (9) to (12).

(9) òô 3sg.sbj.neg.tam gw | 77 stone bân-’ drop- TAM-TAM wash-place on ‘He did not drop the stones in the washing place.’

(10) òô 3sg.sbj.neg.tam gw | 77 stone wô-’ do[=trns]- TAM-TAM wash-place on ‘He did not drop the stones in the washing place.’

(11) òô 3sg.sbj.neg.tam gw | 77 stone bân-nâ-’ drop-LÁ- TAM-TAM ground (séé tâ) on ‘He did not drop the stones (on the ground).’

(12) òô 3sg.sbj.neg.tam gw | 77 stone bân nâ-’ (séé tâ) drop’ LÁ- TAM-TAM ground on ‘He did not drop the stones (on the ground).’

Examples (9) and (10) illustrate the use of the verb bân ‘drop’ (or ‘fall,’ when used intransitively) without and with the wô-transposition, respectively. The verb bân has a [-LÁ]-derivative bâná ‘drop’ (or ‘fall,’ when used intransitively), as in (11). The semantic difference between these two verbs is subtle, just as between most other base and [-LÁ]-derived verbs. Speakers are usually unaware of any difference and will claim that they mean the same. Yet, these verbs are far from being freely interchangeable. Generally speaking, bâná usually implies that there are several objects falling and, in contrast to bân, accentuates the idea that the exact end-point of their falling is not relevant. This tends to translate into the idea of dispersion of the falling objects. The washing place referred to in (9) and (10) is a small, clearly defined site in the Tura village which is covered with stones and where a Tura man washes himself. Consequently, the stones are conceived of as being dropped all together in a single clearly defined place, whereas in (11) the stones are dropped somewhere on the ground, for instance, just to get rid of them.

Being quite similar semantically, examples (10) and (11) may also easily appear to be structurally identical as far as their predicates are concerned. Thus, a
further step allowing for an alternative analysis of (11) as (12) is very easy to con-
ceive. Once such a choice becomes available, there is nothing to restrain the first
part of a |-LÁ|-derived verb from being modified by any kind of adnominal mod-
ifiers, as is possible for their wô-transposed base verbs. It should be mentioned in
this respect that, strictly speaking, there is no way to decide for the verbs ending
in |-LÁ| whether one is dealing with a transposition or not when the first part of
such a verb is not modified by anything. Only indirect arguments indicate that, at
least in the modern language, the analysis in (11) should be preferred to that in
(12). Firstly, the transposition has a clear functional load in Tura. It pertains to the
domain of focalization, which is very prominent in this language. Consequently, it
would be somewhat strange for a whole class of verbs to be permanently ambigu-
ous between focalized and non-focalized forms. Secondly and most importantly,
for most Tura verbs which do not end in |-LÁ|, the wô-transposition without even
a focalizer modifying the verb, as in (10), is not very natural, though not impossible.
In addition, there are a few largely idiomatized exceptions. For instance, for the
verb kuan ‘steal’ a bare wô-transposition, as in (13), is very common, in fact even
more common than the use of the verb kuan on its own, as in (14). Note in this
respect that kuan is also one of the few verbs which can be used as a noun (mean-
ing ‘theft’) outside of the wô-transposition without any additional morphology.
In other words, a construction like (13) could also be glossed as 3pl + ‘theft’ (i.e.
‘theft of them’) + ‘do.’

(13) òô 3sg.sbj,NEG.TAM à 3pl wô- ₃NG.TRNS TAM-TAM
  ‘He did not steal them.’

(14) òô 3sg.sbj,NEG.TAM à 3pl kuan- TAM-TAM
  ‘He did not steal them.’

At the same time, it seems reasonable to suppose that “bare” wô-transpositions,
as in (10), were more common previously. In other words, the use of a modifier
(especially a focalizer) within this construction must have become more or less
conventionalized for most verbs only at a later stage. At first, the predicate was fo-
calized using only the ‘do’-periphrasis (wô-transposition). Over the course of time,
the emphatic nature of this structure became somewhat bleached. In fact, it is not
unlikely that this natural process of _attrition_ was hastened by the aforementioned
ambiguity. As a result, the structure in question needed to be reinforced by an ex-
plicit focalizer for it to have a clear emphatic reading. The same bleaching favoured
the use of all kinds of adnominal modifiers with the transposed verb when no
special emphasis on the predicate itself but rather on its modifying property was
implied. This path of development seems to me to be most plausible because of its
iconicity.
Once \(|-LÁ|\)-transposition became fully established alongside with the \(wó\)-transposition, it became available to verbs like \(\text{qbaLálaÉ} \) ‘thunder; roar, shout,’ where \(|-LÁ|\) is not a suffix, by analogy with the other verbs ending in \(|-LÁ|\) where \(|-LÁ|\) is a suffix, a development which no doubt further contributed to the blurring of the original semantics of \(|-LÁ|\).

On the functional level, the partial antimorphologization of \(|-LÁ|\) described above can be viewed as an instance of adaptation (Heine 2003) or, maybe more accurately, reparadigmatization (Vincent 1995).20 In other words, in addition to its original valence-decreasing derivational meaning, \(|-LÁ|\) has acquired the possibility of acting simultaneously as a transposer, a function which used to be the preserve of the regular transposer \(wó\).

4. Conclusion

In the present paper I have scrutinized the terms grammaticalization, degrammaticalization and antigrammaticalization. It has been shown that, in their current use, these terms often suffer from vagueness and internal inconsistency, which translates into a proliferation of extensions, undermines their epistemological value as tools of linguistic categorization and makes the unidirectionality tendency look weaker than it really is. For these terms to remain viable and meaningful, more restrictive definitions are desirable. Since it is grammaticalization that is at stake, I have advocated a definition based on the notion of grammatical meaning, the latter being best defined in terms of obligatoriness. This excludes from the scope of grammaticalization, among other things, the development of derivational affixes. I also believe that grammaticalization should be restricted to changes affecting linguistic signs, because syntactic change is substantially different. A definition of grammaticalization which encompasses both types of change is, I fear, bound to be too abstract to remain sufficiently valuable from an epistemological point of view.

In turn, antigrammaticalization, as the reverse of grammaticalization, refers to the change whereby grammatical linguistic signs come in certain linguistic contexts to encode non-grammatical meanings. It is also possible to distinguish between branching antigrammaticalization (when a grammeme undergoes antigrammaticalization in certain linguistic contexts but, on the whole, is preserved by the language) and linear antigrammaticalization (when the grammeme as such disappears from the language). This distinction may prove to be epiphenomenal.

20. Note, however, that in the case of Tura the reparadigmatization has been driven by formal and not by functional matching of the two structures, \(wó\)-transposition and a simple verb ending in \(|-LÁ|\). For Vincent (1995:439), the two structures match when they have “the same morphosyntactic dimensions – be they number, person, case or whatever.”
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in the end, since a linear antigrammaticalization is likely to presuppose a branching antigrammaticalization at an earlier stage. Still, it may be useful to have this distinction for descriptive purposes.

Reasoning on the basis of the proposed definition of antigrammaticalization, I have argued that the few alleged cases of antigrammaticalization, which Haspelmath (2004) qualifies as the only real antigrammaticalizations discovered until now, are at best only cases of what I proposed to call antimorphologization or decrease in morphological bonding. Finally, I also presented in detail an interesting case of (partial) antimorphologization of the verbal derivational suffix where |-LÁ| from the Eastern Mande language Tura.

Although Haspelmath's (2004) cases of antigrammaticalization are better described as cases of antimorphologization, this does not mean that antigrammaticalization is not possible at all. In principle, nothing seems to preclude antigrammaticalization, and in all probability it does occur here and there in the languages of the world. However, unlike grammaticalization and morphologization, both antigrammaticalization and antimorphologization appear to be much more a matter of chance rather than of tendency. To a large extent, this seems to be due to the accidental nature of the processes which contribute to them most, such as re-analysis and obsolescence. It would also appear that linguistic signs of certain kinds of meanings may be more likely than others, all things being equal, to become involved in antigrammaticalization or antimorphologization. Thus, antigrammaticalization is most easy to conceive of for semantic grammatical meanings than for purely syntactic ones, while antimorphologization seems to prefer linguistic signs whose meanings have low relevance to the lexical meanings of their hosts.

Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>third person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foclz</td>
<td>focalizer</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>grammatical low tone</td>
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<td>terminal marker</td>
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<td>transposer</td>
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Dmitry Idiatov

References


