

# Against a metaphoricist approach to grammaticalisation

Nick Nicholas (n.nicholas@linguistics.unimelb.edu.au)

Linguistics & Applied Linguistics Seminar Series,  
University of Melbourne; 1998–10–28

## 1. Grammaticalisation

Grammaticalisation: tracing development of grammatical forms;

Persistence: e.g. will, shall, going to

Meaning Retention:	ab	>	b						Bleaching
	ab	>	bc						Loss-and-gain
	ab	>	bc	>	cd				Implicature

Metaphor: Isomorphic transfer from one semantic domain to another  
“The essence of metaphor is understanding one thing in terms of another”  
(Lakoff & Johnson)

Grammaticalisation chain (Heine):

PERSON > OBJECT > PROCESS > SPACE > TIME > QUALITY

Metonymy: Context-Induced Reinterpretation

e.g. I am going to get married > I intend to marry > I will marry

Counterexample: Moving-World vs. Moving-Ego tenses:

French: I come from marrying = I have just married

Chagga: I come to marry = I will marry

## 2. *pu*

Relativiser (includes cleft, pseudo-relativiser)

Realis Adjuncts: causal, temporal, circumstance, resultative, contrastive, concessive

Nominaliser: *mexri pu* ‘until that’, *para pu* ‘than that’, *mono pu* ‘it’s just that’

Complementary distribution with irrealis marker *na*: *mexri pu* ~ *mexri na*

Irrealis versions of *pu*-functions covered by *pu na*: intensional relativisations, irrealis results, unrealisable concessives, optatives

Complementiser: *pu*      *oti/pos*      *na*

*na* irrealis (cf. English infinitive); e.g. *arxizo* ‘start’, *thelo* ‘want’, *anagazo* ‘force’

*oti/pos* unmarked realis (cf. English that); e.g. *leo* ‘say’, *elpizo* ‘hope’, *nomizo* ‘think’, *ksero* ‘know’

*pu* factive (cf. English participle); e.g. *metaniono* ‘regret’, *vlepo* ‘see’, *ksero* ‘know’

Factivity: presuppose truth of complements

Classical test—preserves truth under negation: I do not regret telling you +> I told you

True factives (emotives) preserve truth under negation: Do you regret telling him? +> You told him

Semi-factives (cognitive, perception) do not: Did you know that he arrived? Did you see him arrive?

Standard Modern Greek: *pu* obligatory with true factives:

*metaniono pu su to pa* 'I regret telling you'

Encodes direct vs. indirect perception:

*ton ida pu exotan* 'I saw him coming'

*ida oti exotan* 'I saw that he was coming'

Marked for givenness with semi-factives:

*thimame pu epine kaθe vradι* 'I recall how he used to drink every night'

*thimame oti epine kaθe vradι* 'I remember the fact that he drank every night'

*ksexase pu epine kaθe vradι* 'he's (conveniently) forgotten that he used to drink every night'

*pu* is factive in Greek.

Christidis: *pu* < *hópou* 'where'; *na* < *hína* 'whither'

so conceptual metaphor:

stationary in space > 'static', given in discourse

directional in space > 'dynamic', hypothetical in discourse

*pu* and *na* conscripted as a SPACE > DISCOURSE conceptual metaphor

### 3. Counterevidence

#### I. MACEDONIAN SLAVONIC COMPLEMENTATION

*sto deka, oti da* corresponding to *pu pos, oti na*

*deka* is locative; *sto* is relativiser

∴ Relativisers, not locatives, become factive complementisers

#### II. *hína*

Already in Homeric Greek, *hína* is purposive

Purposive is itself adequate to account for subsequent development:

I tell you in order for you to go > I tell you to go > I want you to go

∴ Not ultimate etymon, but first salient function steers development

Homeric *hína* stationary (16:1)

Attic *hína* directional, but obsolescent (literary); purposive *hína* colloquial

∴ Directionality irrelevant to development of *hína*

Closest cognate to *hína* is Sanskrit instrumental *yéna* 'by which'

Instrumental as plausible an origin of a purposive as an allative (English so; to)

- ∴ *hína* not localist in origin
- ∴ *na/pu* opposition not localist in origin

### 3. HEBREW

'athar 'place' > 'asher/she:

relativiser, causal connective, complementiser

General complementiser: appears in non-factive and even irrealis contexts

∴ Grammaticalisation with same starting point as *pu* can have different endpoint

### 4. DIALECTAL COMPLEMENTATION

Dialects in which *pu* independently introduces non-factive realis complements (e.g. hope, think, say that...): Tsakonian, Corfiot, Thracian, Livisiot, Italiot, Macedonian Greek (latter under Macedonian Slavonic influence)

Italiot: also introduces event complements: *èftasa pu 'in essiànosa/ ti χχari ttu Teù* 'I managed to bring together God's grace' (Palumbo)

RELATIVISER > FACTIVE COMPLEMENTISER > GENERAL COMPLEMENTISER

∴ Relativiser the salient function, and factivity not inevitable

### 5. TEMPORAL > CONDITIONAL

Infrequent counterexamples to factivity within Greek.

One strand: TEMPORAL > FUTURE TEMPORAL > CONDITIONAL

*opo rθi* tu stavru θa teliose ikosi xrono. 'When the Feast of the Holy Cross comes, it will have been twenty years.' (Apiranthos, Naxos)

*''opu* pjaso tuto apu kiniyo ki ala ença ke kano ðeka 'When I catch this one that I'm hunting and with another nine, and that makes ten.' (Cythera)

*opu* to vris inda xo mesa sti fuxta mu 'If you find it what I have in my fist = guess if you can what I am hiding in my palm' (Çeşme)

Cross-linguistically common path (cf. German wenn); prevented in Greek by persistence of factivity of relativiser

### 6. ANTI-FACTIVES

Semanticised pragmatic implicatures:

*sopa pu pires medalio* 'Be silent that you have won a medal = Be silent! You have not won a medal!'

Accretion onto factive-*pu*. Yet why is factive-*pu* any less of an accretion?

∴ Distribution of *pu* a result of contingent developments, kept in some order by persistence and subsequent analogical levelling, but not intrinsic

∴ Distribution of *pu* cannot be the result of deliberate problem-solving

## 7. GRADUALISM

Different functions of *pu* permeate language to differing extents

e.g. Temporal: Main exponent in Ulagaç, one of two main exponents in Tsakonian (1.8‰); cf. 0.2‰ for Makriyannis' *Memoirs* (1828–1850), 0.02‰ for Taktsis' *The Third Wedding* (1963)—2 instances; cf. 386 instances of *otan*.

e.g. Concessive: 2 instances of *ke pu* 'even given that' in ca. 8 million words of text (Hellas-L mailing list, Nov. 1995–Jan. 1998)—cf. 812 for *an ke* 'even though'.

∴ Distribution of *pu* cannot be the result of a single deliberate metaphoricist move; all semantic fields encompassed by the metaphor should be served equally

## 8. DISCOURSE CONNECTIVE

No evidence, phonological or semantic, of LOCATIVE > COMPLEMENTISER

Complementisers have good pedigree in *pu* (cf. Givón on 'asher):

CAUSAL > EMOTIVE 'I regret, because I saw' > 'I regret that I saw' (*metaniono pu ida*)

RELATIVE > PERCEPTION 'I saw the student that wrote' > 'I saw the student writing' (*ida ton mathiti pu eyrafe*)

temporal > cognitive 'I remember (the time) when you came' > 'I recall you coming' (*thimame pu irthes*)

Much evidence of locative > discourse connective, including phonological (*''opu*); cf. English whereupon

exasa ti yineka mu; opios ti vri tha tu ðoso meyalò riyalo. *''opu* tote lipo treksane oli... 'I have lost my wife; whoever finds her, I will give him a great reward. So then they all ran...' (Kythnos)

This conceptual metaphor is obvious; the putative metaphor for discourse givenness in complementisers is not

∴ Metaphoricist effects in the lexeme are distinct from most of what happened to *pu*

## 4. Conclusion

*pu* is non-prototypical grammaticalisation: ABSTRACT > MORE ABSTRACT, not CONCRETE > ABSTRACT

Metaphoricism does not apply; more profitably viewed as series of contingent, metonymic (contextual) reanalyses, smoothed over analogically.