

SUMMARY OF PHD THESIS

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**INITIAL STAGE OF GRAMMATICALIZATION OF CATALAN “ANAR + INFINITIVE”
CONSTRUCTION – A HISTORICAL PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Aims of the study

Grammaticalization studies in the last few decades have been characterized by a growing interest in the discursive and pragmatic nature of semantic change in grammaticalization (cf. Hopper and Traugott 1993; Traugott 1999; Kearns 2002; Traugott and Dasher 2004 [2002]; Bybee 2002 and 2005 [2003]; Fitzmaurice and Taavitsainen 2007, among others). According to this pragmatically oriented approach, semantic change does not follow structural changes, but it should be conceived as present from the beginning and grammaticalization is a pragmatically motivated process.

The study presented in the dissertation aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the initial stage of grammaticalization of Catalan “*anar* ‘go’ + infinitive” (*infinitive* hereafter abbreviated as *Inf*) construction, investigating it from a historical pragmatic perspective. The evolution of this medieval Catalan construction is worth investigating, because the result is different from what can be detected in various languages around the world in grammaticalization of similar purposive constructions with motion verbs. The aim of my research was to provide a pragmatic analysis of the process, relying on a detailed contextual analysis of historical occurrences. I expected that such an analysis would offer new pieces of information concerning not only the semantic change of this medieval Catalan GO-construction, but also theoretical findings on universal tendencies of semantic change of motion verbs.

Beyond the problem presented above, the dissertation had a second aim, too. Issues concerning data, methods and argumentation in linguistic studies are central topics in contemporary linguistics and current metalinguistic discussion, and this is reflected also in historical pragmatics (cf. Fischer 2004; Lehmann 2004; Penke and Rosenbach 2007 [2004]; Kepser and Reis 2005; Fitzmaurice and Taavitsainen 2007; Kertész and Rákosi 2008a, 2008b and 2012, among others). My dissertation aimed to be a contribution to this line of inquiry. I considered some central problems of historical pragmatics methodology and showed the usefulness of metalinguistic awareness in linguistic research. Using the metalinguistic framework presented in Kertész and Rákosi (2012), some characteristics of historical linguistics argumentation were examined through the methodological analysis of the research process presented in the first part of the dissertation. The utility of taking into account metalinguistic considerations when we decide between rival hypotheses in linguistic research and judge the reliability of certain claims was also revealed.

1.2 Methodology

The study presented in the dissertation was carried out relying on data and methods traditionally accepted in historical pragmatics, and especially on a historical corpus Catalan and Spanish texts from 13th to 16th centuries. The similarity of contexts, functions, semantic nuances and morphological characteristics of the Catalan “*anar* ‘go’ + Inf” and the Spanish “*ir* ‘go’ (*a*) + Inf” constructions in medieval texts suggest that they have a common origin and prompted me to compare both constructions. Such a comparison seemed to be useful, because the evolution of the Spanish GO-construction fits one of the universal tendencies of semantic change of motion verb constructions. The formation of the Spanish immediate future tense from the GO-construction “*ir* ‘go’ (*a*) + Inf” is a typical representative of a well-documented process with various typological parallelisms. In contrast, the development of the Catalan construction has not follow this typical pathway of purposive constructions, moreover it lacks well-documented typological parallelisms.

In addition to the two above mentioned GO-constructions, I included in the analysis medieval Catalan and Spanish occurrences of the periphrases “*començar a/de* ‘begin to/of’ + Inf” and “*pensar de* ‘think of’ + Inf” as well, because of the similarity of their contexts and functions in medieval texts (cf. Fischer 2007: 15). The corpus of the study contained a total of 1,903 occurrences, namely, 814 occurrences of the medieval Spanish and Catalan “GO + Inf” periphrases, 221 examples of the “THINK OF + Inf” periphrases and 868 of the “BEGIN TO/OF + Inf” constructions. The research relies primarily on qualitative analysis of the occurrences in its broad contexts, although I applied quantitative methods also (cf. Navarro 2008).

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Pragmatics of grammaticalization

The research presented in the dissertation was carried out within grammaticalization theoretical framework. In historical pragmatics, the role of pragmatic factors in grammaticalization has recently been the focus of considerable attention and the subject of several studies. Contexts where semantic change occurs are characterized by semantic ambiguity, which triggers inference mechanisms. These studies emphasize that the regularity of semantic change cannot be accounted for without paying attention to the implicatures and inferences that arise in language use. These inferential contents later can attach to a certain construction by a process of conventionalization in the course of language change. Grice (1989 [1975]) and later Levinson (2000) allude to the possibility of generalization and

subsequent conventionalization of particular conversational implicatures, but they have not described the process in detail. Traugott (1999) adds that conventional implicatures can become semanticized.

2.2 Semantic change of motion verb constructions

GO-constructions are starting points of formation of several different abstract, grammatical meanings in several languages of the world. Catalan and Spanish, two Romance languages, close to each other from both geographical and linguistic points of view, use several GO-constructions some of which were already in use in the medieval language state. One of them is a combination of the verb meaning ‘go’ with an infinitive. In its origin, it was a purposive construction, which referred to a motion with the aim of carrying out a certain act: ‘go in order to do sg’. During the grammaticalization of this periphrasis, the verb meaning ‘go’ lost its full lexical meaning of motion and became an auxiliary. In the Spanish construction “*ir (a) + Inf*” the verb *ir* ‘go’ grammaticalized into a future marker. In contrast, the Catalan GO-construction, “*anar* ‘go’ + Inf”, evolved into a preterit tense. The Catalan construction “*anar* + Inf” is used to express a perfective past meaning in modern Catalan. The evolution of the Catalan GO-construction has not followed the typical pathway: verbs meaning ‘go’ in such purposive constructions are typical sources of future markers in languages of the world, as exemplified by the Spanish construction. The initial stage of the unique evolution of this Catalan construction is considered in the present study.

3 Object theoretical findings of the study

3.1 Morphological analysis

As mentioned above, the GO-constructions considered in the present study originally were purposive constructions, which referred to a motion with the aim of carrying out a certain act: ‘go in order to do something’. Some morphological characteristics of the medieval constructions are different from the properties of the modern ones. First, in some medieval occurrences the verb ‘go’ and the infinitive are linked together with the preposition *a* ‘to’. Second, the verb ‘go’ can appear in the medieval Spanish and Catalan texts conjugated in either past or present tense. As a first step, I investigated the distribution of these versions of the constructions.

The study concerning the use of the preposition *a* ‘to’ in historical texts provided the following results. Occurrences in which the purposive preposition *a* ‘to’ appears between the finite verb ‘go’ and the infinitive are very rare at the beginning, but later their use is extended.

The prepositional version of the construction seems to have a more restricted use in the medieval language state than the use of the construction without preposition, and the former one tends to appear in the earlier texts. It may be hypothesized that the original version of the construction under study was without any preposition. Therefore, when investigating the semantic change we have to take into account the non-prepositional occurrences. On the basis of the results of my study and those of other authors it may be supposed that the prepositional version was proliferated in Catalan in the course of time in order to differentiate those cases where the verb *anar* appears as a main verb, with the meaning ‘go’. Therefore, the spread of the prepositional form reflects the ongoing grammaticalization of the construction without preposition.

As regard the verbal tense in which the verb ‘go’ is conjugated, the following results were obtained. Differences in the evolution of the Catalan and the Spanish constructions could already be detected in the medieval language state, as manifested in the distribution of the present and perfective past tense versions of the Catalan and the Spanish constructions. The analysis of the occurrences in their contexts revealed that the present tense version of the Catalan GO-construction in a preterit context is a later development, which proliferated in consequence of the ongoing grammaticalization of the construction and the earliest occurrences had the verb *anar* ‘go’ in the perfective past tense (see Juge 2006, 2008). It can be argued that the present tense occurrences do not reflect a historical present use, rather they can be interpreted as grammaticalized forms. The Spanish texts of the corpus did not reflect the same propagation of the present tense occurrences.

These findings are in agreement with Juge’s (2006) following claims. The morphologically present tense forms in the current paradigm of the Catalan perfective past “*anar* + Inf” resulted from analogy, and this process only took place later when the past meaning of the whole construction had already consolidated. The syncretism of the most current forms of past vs. present of *anar* ‘go’ (*anam* ‘we go/we are going/we went’ and the second person plural *anats*) made it possible to reanalyse the periphrasis as a construction with a present tense auxiliary. As a consequence, the use of present tense auxiliaries extended to the rest of the paradigm.

3.2 Comparison with functionally similar constructions

Taking into account the above presented morphological findings, I based my analysis on occurrences without preposition, with the finite verb conjugated in perfective past. I aimed to investigate whether the initial stage of the semantic change of the Catalan construction

followed the typical grammaticalization cline from motion verbs to future markers observed in various languages in the world, where the meaning ‘intention’ is the intermediary stage of the process (cf. Bybee and Pagliuca 1987; Bybee et al. 1994; Bybee 2002: 181; Heine and Kuteva 2002: 161–163). In addition to the Catalan and the Spanish GO-constructions, I included medieval Catalan and Spanish occurrences of the periphrasis “*pensar de* ‘think of’ + Inf” in the analysis as well. I also considered the hypothesis in the relevant literature according to which the Catalan construction under study was an inchoative periphrasis in the medieval language state. In order to test this hypothesis, I included occurrences of the inchoative construction “*començar a/de* ‘begin to/of’ + Inf” in medieval Catalan and Spanish. Although the THINK OF-periphrasis has an intentional meaning and the BEGIN TO/OFF-periphrasis has an inchoative meaning, both seem to be used in similar contexts. Therefore, the integration of these data seems to be justified by the similarity of the contexts and functions these periphrases have in medieval texts (cf. Fischer 2007: 15).

I presented the types of infinitive which appeared in these three constructions in the medieval language state through analyzing entrenched local schemas, because I supposed that the semantic change of the Catalan motion verb construction might have emerged from these very frequent uses. The comparison of the use of these three periphrases revealed a certain type of functional similarity: all three constructions were used in order to attract the listeners’ attention. However, a more detailed qualitative analysis of the contexts made a closer similarity obvious between the uses of “*ir/anar* ‘go’ + Inf” and “*pensar de* ‘think of’ + Inf”, and a difference of both from the use of “*començar a/de* ‘begin to/of’ + Inf”. The verbs *començar* ‘begin’, *pensar* ‘think’ and *ir/anar* ‘go’ all occurred with similar types of infinitive, but they added different nuances to the description of the event. In the case of the BEGIN TO/OFF-construction the event in the infinitive was described as a durative one, but which was interrupted as soon as it had begun. With this strategy the subsequent wedged-in-events were emphasized. In contrast, in the case of the GO- and THINK OF-periphrases the event described in the infinitive was highlighted, which was referred to as a whole, a completed, perfective event with considerable consequences.

These findings throw a different light on the history of the Catalan Go-construction under study and relate its origins to the salience of the meaning component ‘intention’, suggesting that Detges’s (2004) inchoative aspect hypothesis concerning the origin of the Catalan GO-past is mistaken. The historical analysis suggests that occurrences of the Catalan “*anar* ‘go’ + Inf” refer to completed actions and not to their beginning. “GO + Inf” in medieval texts describes the action as a whole, and the occurrences often are followed by a

description of the consequences. The perfectivity in most contexts of use might have played a decisive role in the semantic development of the Catalan “*anar* + Inf” construction.

To sum up, I argued that despite the different endpoints of development of the two Romance GO-constructions under study, their histories run parallel for a time. Both the Catalan “*anar* ‘go’+ Inf” and the Spanish “*ir (a)* ‘go (to)’ + Inf” had a stage in their history when the meaning component ‘intention’ was salient within the semantic structure of the verb ‘go’. At this stage the construction expressed the intention of the subject and not an ‘abrupt start’ (i.e. inchoative aspect, the adjective *abrupt* is added by Detges 2004).

3.3 Contextual analysis

Regarding the topic of the text, descriptions of battle scenes contain most of the utterances with these GO-periphrases, where they seem to fulfill a function of dynamification, intensifying and drawing the addressees’ attention to the event which the speaker considers to be the most important one. However, taking further criteria into account, various types of context could be differentiated. Within the group of contexts where the verb *anar* occurred in its literal ‘motion’ meaning, I differentiated between two main types. In the first type the motion meaning could be assigned exclusively, while in the second type a semantic ambiguity could be revealed. Semantic ambiguity is one of the most important characteristics of contexts in semantic change, because it triggers pragmatic inference mechanisms. Thus, I concentrated on these semantically ambiguous contexts, where both the original meaning and another meaning could be assigned. Some of the earliest occurrences already suggested that the construction might have possessed another function beyond conveying motion in space. Those contexts should also be mentioned, where, although the literal interpretation of the verb *anar* was possible, expressing motion in space seemed to be redundant. In other contexts the discourse would have remained coherent and meaningful with the omission of the verb *anar*, that is, it was possible that the addressee interpreted the verbal construction in another way. These types of contexts may have triggered semantic change.

However, grammaticalization may have been supported by other factors, too. Occurrences with a possible literal meaning could be grouped in another way. In some contexts the utterance which contained the occurrence of the GO-construction continued in a way that allowed to conclude that the goal of the motion expressed in the infinitive was thoroughly performed, while in other contexts this conclusion was not possible. In the former contexts, although the perfectivity of the action was not explicitly expressed, it had to be inferred in order to have a coherent discourse. The frequent use of the construction in this type

of context might have established a strong associative link between the use of the periphrasis and this inferential content. Finally, another type of context should be mentioned: where the motion described by the verb *anar* presumably was performed in a very narrow space. Moreover, some of these contexts gave rise to the question whether it was reasonable to suppose the literal meaning at all. In those cases, the discourse remained meaningful without supposition of any motion. These contexts differ in this sense from those where the motion covers long distances and leads to a different scene.

3.4 Deciding between rival hypotheses

At this point of the research, I had to decide between competing hypotheses concerning the tense of the finite verb of the periphrasis: whether we have to take the present or the past tense GO-verb as the starting point in the description of the semantic change. I relied on methodological considerations and used the so-called p-model as presented in Kertész and Rákosi (2012). The findings of this part of the research made the hypothesis plausible according to which the occurrences with a past tense auxiliary should be the starting point in the description of the grammaticalization process. In contrast, the historical present hypothesis, which emphasized the role of present tense auxiliary versions, turned out to be implausible.

Taking everything into consideration, I characterized the initial stage of the evolution of the Catalan “*anar* + Inf” construction in the following way. At the initial stage of their evolution both the Catalan and the Spanish medieval GO-constructions instantiated the grammaticalization of a motion verb into a marker of intention. Their later semantic divergence, namely, in Spanish to an immediate future and in Catalan to a past tense, can be attributed to the tense and aspect of the verb ‘go’ in most frequent contexts of use, which induced different inferences (see Nagy C. 2010 for more details, cf. also Pérez Saldanya 1996). The preterit context in which the grammaticalization of the Catalan construction took place was different from that one in which future tense markers usually evolve. In a past reference context, the use of the Catalan periphrasis suggested that the action had been completely performed and that the performance of the action was more dynamic and intentional than usually. Because of the frequent co-occurrence, a strong associative link formed between the use of the periphrasis and the perfectivity of the action, and, at the end, this perfectivity integrated in the coded meaning of this verbal construction.

As for the typical pathways of semantic change, on the basis of the above considerations, it may be hypothesized that the evolution of the Catalan GO-construction

reflects a universal tendency, inasmuch as it followed the following cline until the stage “intention”:

‘the motion path’: motion with the aim of doing something > intention > (future).

The further evolution of the Catalan construction can also be related to a universal tendency: the grammaticalization of some motion verbs into sequential markers and, more generally, into textual connectives (cf. Bourdin 2008). The idiosyncrasy of the evolution of the Catalan GO-construction can be attributed to constraints imposed by the grammar of Catalan language.

4 Methodological findings of the study

4.1 The notion and status of ‘historical data’

This chapter of my dissertation discusses the topic of linguistic data and methods in historical pragmatics research. There is no doubt that the problem of dealing with data is especially relevant for historical research, which moreover adopts a pragmatic point of view. Both historical linguistics and pragmatics have their own methodological difficulties, namely, how to obtain enough and reliable data. On the one hand, historical linguists often have to cope with the scarcity of historical sources, the question of data indirectness and unreliability and the non-accessibility of several data source types. Historical linguistics lacks data from discourse completion tests and experiments, has only indirect access to native speakers’ linguistic judgments, and written sources offer approximate evidence. On the other hand, pragmatics research aims at investigating procedures of production and interpretation that cannot be formalized entirely. In addition, it focuses on hardly accessible levels of meaning, concerning to which data collection is very difficult. In any case, it is of primary importance that such studies use various data sources and never stop broadening their data base.

During the research presented in the dissertation I combined different data sources and tried to incorporate as many types of data as possible. Although I primarily relied on data constructed on the basis of written historical corpus, in the context of my research several other data types were present (e.g. data gained from the contemporary language system, typological data, data based on the integration of encyclopaedic and metalinguistic information, etc.). In order to supplement my data sources, I also considered data regarding functionally and formally similar linguistic units that were in use in the same language state, as Fischer (2004, 2007) suggested.

I also tried to answer the question of what a historical corpus datum really is and how it could be integrated in the research process. I showed the problems concerning the

traditional notion of *historical datum*, used as a synonym of *occurrence of a linguistic unit in a historical document*. The p-model, as presented in Kertész and Rákosi (2012) served as a basis for investigating the difficulties concerning corpus based data. These difficulties can have their origin in the very characteristics of historical sources and in the use of the linguistic intuition during interpretation alike. The p-model offers a novel notion of *data* with which relevant methodological problems can be treated. According to the p-model, data are plausible statements originating from some direct source. Data have a double structure: they combine an informational content and a plausibility value, which is assigned on the basis on some direct source. I presented Kertész and Rákosi's (2012) methodological findings concerning corpus data complementing them with my own observations and adapting them to historical corpus data. I placed emphasis on the question of positive and negative evidence, the phenomenon of using a "substitutional competence" in historical research (cf. the term *acquired intuition* in Dömötör 2012: 45), and the problem of indirectness of data.

On the basis of all these considerations, corpus and, naturally, historical corpus too, cannot be considered to be a fully reliable data source, which would serve as a source of certainly true statements. In the case of corpus data we have to refer in all cases to the linguistic intuition of the researcher as an additional data source, and during the research the plausibility value of the corpus data is influenced by that of data from other sources, too. Consequently, a corpus datum should be considered a datum originated from an integrated data source. In addition to the historical corpus as primary data source, further data sources play a role, among others the followings: the linguistic intuition of the researcher, the results of previous studies on the same topic, and the theoretical framework in which we are working. Thus corpus data should be considered as data based on integration of a corpus and other sources. The right term would be *corpus-based data* or *data constructed on the basis of a corpus*, because they are created starting from occurrences in a corpus. However, when constructing a historical datum, along with the occurrence detected in a historical document, we take further pieces of information into account concerning the followings: further occurrences of the same linguistic unit in the same or other historical documents, the place of the occurrence, the broad context of the occurrence, other similar contexts, the full language state, earlier and later language states, the actual state of the language, the historical document itself and its other potential manuscripts or translations, the writing traditions of the period, pieces of typological information, etc.

4.2 Notion of 'context' in historical research

In the methodological part of my dissertation I also discussed another pivot of historical pragmatics methodology, namely, contextual analysis. Semantic change can be conceived as a change of contexts in which a certain linguistic construction can be used, so the description of grammaticalization is intimately linked to the description of contexts in which it takes place. The nature of contexts in which particular stages of semantic change processes can be detected has been the topic of some papers on grammaticalization (Diewald 2002; Heine 2002). I presented Diewald's (2002) and Heine's (2002) context typologies in detail and I made a distinction between two main types of context. The first group includes Heine's bridging context and Diewald's untypical and critical contexts. These contexts trigger grammaticalization, because the old meaning is only one of the possible interpretations in them and a new meaning can also be assigned. Ambiguity, which characterizes these contexts is always a necessary stage of meaning change. The other type contains Heine's switch and conventionalization contexts and some of Diewald's isolating contexts, which favor the new reading and exclude the old, lexical meaning. This latter group is more important from a methodological point of view, because the occurrence of the lexical item in one of these contexts can serve as evidence for a previous meaning change. In other words, it presupposes a previous reorganization in the semantic structure of the grammaticalizing lexical item.

4.3 Assigning meanings to historical utterances

Contextual analysis in historical pragmatics should be used to gain not only quantitative, but qualitative data as well. This is possible by considering the broad context of historical occurrences, apart from investigating their distributional properties and combinational possibilities with other lexical units. The analysis of the broad context of the occurrences provides valuable data about the semantic nuances expressed by a linguistic unit, and as a consequence, about the ongoing process of grammaticalization. So I made a distinction between two types of contexts: the narrow and the broad context.

In order to avoid interpretations based on our subjective linguistic intuitions and our knowledge about the current language state, we should find some linguistic clues which may help us to reveal what shades of meaning historical occurrences express. Context may contain several linguistic clues which direct us in assigning meaning to utterances in historical documents, and help us to minimize subjectivity. Linguistic clues which serve as points of orientation in assigning meanings may already occur in the narrow context. In case of some occurrences of the construction, the infinitive itself and the nouns or adverbs which appear with it, the grammatical person of the verb or the semantic properties of the subject were

semantically irreconcilable with the literal meaning of the finite verb. In other cases, the context had to be broadened in order to be able to find the most plausible reading of a historical occurrence. In the broad context, the content of the preceding or subsequent clauses and, in some cases grammatical characteristics (e.g. verb tense or verbal mood) as well could help us. In other cases the even further broadened part of the discourse had to be taken into account, or some encyclopedic information should be activated, which influenced the interpretation of the construction and excluded the literal meaning.

4.4 Argumentation in diachronic research

In the last part of the dissertation I discuss some characteristics of historical pragmatics argumentation, with special regard to the notions and phenomena of frequency and analogy. I present three hypotheses concerning the morphological aspect of the history of the Catalan “*anar* ‘go’ + infinitive” construction: Colon’s (1978a, b), Detges’s (2004) and Juge’s (2006). I intended to show how metalinguistic considerations can aid decision making between competing hypotheses in linguistic research. There were hypotheses in the starting context of the research which supposed a historical present use in those cases where the finite verb of the “*anar* + Inf” construction was conjugated morphologically in present tense. Other authors supposed the opposite, thus, the starting context of the research was inconsistent. The extension of the context with new pieces of information concerning historical present use, and modifying the plausibility values of these hypotheses relying on methodological considerations helped to eliminate the inconsistency. The claim according to which it is about a historical present use in relevant historical texts turned out to be implausible, while the negation of this claim was given a higher plausibility value.

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