

Grammaticization paths of discourse markers within rectification constructions

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Abstract

The preferred discursal step in natural interaction is one where the speaker's assertion is accepted by the interlocutors and smoothly added onto the common ground. In this way, the common platform for speakers is gradually co-constructed by the participants. Still, the speaker does not always agree with the previous speaker's claim, nor with a hidden contextual assumption accessible to the other participants. In these cases, the speaker is forced to reject these assumptions. However, discourse rejection is a marked discursive step and may be considered less than fully acceptable, if not backed up by some support. I here focus on a prominent means of justification for rejecting some claim: the speaker's need to offer an alternative argument for some "wrong" assumption. This thesis focuses on the constructions dedicated for such discursive situations. These are discursive constructions of the type: "The Gazans are beginning to understand that the enemy is not Israel, but Hamas" (originally in Hebrew: <http://www.vmk.co.il/>), which bear a dual discursive role. First, they are used by speakers to reject a false assumption that "the enemy is Israel." But in most cases, speakers are not content with just rejecting such "wrong" claims. They tend to add an alternative to the erroneous claim - in this case- that "the enemy is Hamas".

An in-depth study of the constructions dedicated to such discursive purposes has revealed two recurrent patterns, which are even seemingly contradictory. On the one hand, the classical rectification construction is "maximalist", in that it explicitly mentions all the necessary components needed for the correction (an overt rejection of the erroneous assumption, an overt specification of the corrective assertion, as well as a dedicated connective relating these two, outlining the relevant rhetorical relation between them). In fact, only a small part of the study describes such a "maximalist" construction, the basic [*Not X ela Y*] construction and the concessive rectification construction '*Not X, but at least Y*'. These are constructions that do not settle (at least in the initial stage of their formation) for one essential component of the rectification and include both the rejected and the alternative claims. In addition, they consistently add some discourse markers that reinforce the argument used for rejection and/or the argument used to replace the argument that corrects the rejected argument. These discourse markers come from a variety of grammatical sources: prepositions phrases (such as English *at least* and its Hebrew equivalent *lefaxot*), conditional phrases (such as: Hebrew *ela* 'if not'='but' and Hebrew *afilu* 'even if if'='even') and more, which are recruited by speakers to serve as pragmatic goals Various conversations (such as: strengthening or down-toning the rectification). However, the majority of the work is dedicated to "minimalist" discursive constructions and patterns, which fail to overtly mention at least one of the essential components of the construction (the rejection component or the alternative component). In these cases, it is contextual inferencing that fills the gap, producing the full conversion argument. Cases of this kind are discussed in virtually all the chapters.

These chapters explain how the addressee can infer a complete conversion argument even in the absence of an explicit rejection of a particular claim, or even an explicit offering of an alternative claim. My argument has been that the means used by speakers for this

purpose constitute prominent discourse patterns that recipients identify through formal cues that the speaker provides them with.

I argue that these constructions quite consistently include additional discourse markers which modify the argument rejected, the substituting argument, or the whole utterance. I classify such discourse markers into two categories: Utterance markers and adverbial markers. Utterance markers are external to the rectification construction itself. They are independent both syntactically and prosodically, and their goal is to cue the addressee about the upcoming rectification (e.g. Hebrew *bo* 'come on'). Such markers are not at all unique to rectification. They serve discursive purposes such as hedging or saving face (see Brown and Levinson, 1987). Adverbial discourse markers, on the other hand, form an integral part of the rectification construction, both prosodically and syntactically. Their discursive role is twofold. First, just like utterance discourse markers, they signal the upcoming rectification. But in addition, they actually modify components within the rectification itself (e.g. widen the gap between the rejected claim and its substitute).

Both varieties of rectification markers evolve out of numerous different grammatical origins, such as questions, often idiomatic ones (e.g. *ma pit'om* 'what all of a sudden='no way', *ela ma* 'but what='what else' etc.), expressions of apology (e.g. Hebrew *slixa* 'sorry'/'excuse me' etc.), verbs and verb phrases used for interpersonal engagement (such as English *come on* and its Hebrew equivalent *bo*), and more.

I here investigate very many different discourse markers that are intrinsically linked to discursive constructions of rectification. I argue that all the discourse patterns I identify have evolved gradually over time. They first only constituted discourse patterns, ones (unconsciously) salient to interlocutors, but later on, they became fixed constructions through a grammaticization process (a historical linguistic change whereby a piece of grammar has emerged). Based on both diachronic and synchronic corpora, I provide detailed analyses of their grammaticization paths into, within, and even out of rectification constructions.