

From verb to particle: the process of grammaticalization (on the example of Macedonian “nemoj”, with parallels in other South Slavic languages)

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Grammaticalization refers to a process in which “x is grammaticalized in language L only if x is a semantic category which is represented by a grammatical category in L” (Lyons in Lehman 2015, 14). Particle is a “word that does not change its form through inflection and does not fit easily into the established system of parts of speech” (McArthur 1992, 753); “function word[s] that must be associated with another word or phrase to impart meaning” (...) Grammaticalization of the verb “hotjati/hteti” as particle for future tense is a well-known example in South Slavic languages (especially in Macedonian and, partly, in Bulgarian): *ќе одам*, *ќе одиши*, *ќе оди* etc. vs BCS: *ići će*, *ići ćeš*, *ići će...* etc. The disparity between the non-paradigmatic word “ќе” vis-à-vis the paradigmatic “ће/ћеши/ће” delineates a clear formal condition requisite for identifying a word as a particle in this context (Конески 1999; Плунгян 2003; Плунгян 2003).

In examples such as:

Nemoj da doagjas.
'You shouldn't come.'

Nemoj(te) da zboruvate.
'You shouldn't talk.'

Nemoj da ti napravis takvo nesto.
'Don't you dare do something like that.'

nemoj, which, from a diachronic perspective, originated as a verb (from the combination of ne + imp. *motjь > *moštъ > moć(i) > *moj), functions as a prohibitive particle. However, some scholars question the definitive classification of *nemoj* viewing it as a (defective) verb (Tosovic in Ивић 2005). This uncertainty arises not only from historical analysis but also due to its conjugation possibilities in the second person singular and plural imperative mood (*nemoj* – *nemojte*). Similar instances occur in Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian, where there's the additional conjugation possibility in the first person plural (*nemojmo*) and in Bulgarian with *nedey* – *nedeyte*. Given the ongoing debate regarding the part of speech to which "nemoj" belongs, it is imperative to explore the South Slavic linguistic literature, examining its frequency of usage, the various forms it assumes within linguistic corpora, and its functional significance within utterances. Subsequently, a resolution for classifying this linguistic entity should be proposed, considering its morphological, functional, and semantic attributes. By analyzing *nemoj* as a case study and applying established criteria for grammaticalization, a framework can be established for classifying words originating from diverse word classes as particles (e.g., "ajde"), i.e. we will show that

nemoj is no longer functioning as a verb and that there are other ongoing examples where parts of speech are becoming particles.

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