

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

Boban Karapejovski
University of Skopje

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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 одиш, ќе оду etc.* vs BCS: *ići ću, ići ćes, ići će...* etc. The disparity between the non-paradigmatic word “*ќе*” vis-à-vis the paradigmatic “*ću/ćeš/će*” 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. **motъ* > **mošť* > *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 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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