

The grammaticalization of Mainland Scandinavian MAYBE

This paper is concerned with epistemic adverbs of the MAYBE type (deriving from a modal auxiliary ‘can’ or ‘may’ + a verb meaning ‘happen’ or ‘be’) in Mainland Scandinavian. Swedish *kanske* is an epistemic adverb with special syntactic status (cf. Andréasson 2002; Platzack 1998), because it does not always adhere to standard Swedish word order in declarative main clauses. That is, *kanske* may violate the Verb Second (V2) principle, according to which the finite verb must always be the second constituent in a declarative main clause. As the examples in (1) show, both V2 and non V2 word orders are possible in the declarative main clause "Maybe Olle did not sleep last night" (cf. Andréasson 2002:1):

- (1) a. *Olle har kanske inte sovit inatt*
Olle has maybe not slept last.night
b. *Kanske har Olle inte sovit inatt*
Maybe has Olle not slept last.night
c. *Olle kanske inte har sovit inatt*
Olle maybe not has slept last.night
d. *Kanske Olle inte har sovit inatt*
Maybe Olle not has slept last.night

There are three different clause types containing *kanske*. The first type is a V2 clause in which MAYBE can be any constituent except the second one ((1a,b)); the second type is a non V2 clause which has MAYBE as its second constituent, that is, it occupies the position of the finite verb ((1c)); and the third type is a non V2 clause with MAYBE as its first constituent followed by a clause which has subordinate word order ((1d)).

The number of syntactic positions for a linguistic item is a useful criterion in determining the degree of grammaticalization. Since grammaticalization generally involves syntactic fixation, a decrease in syntactic freedom would imply advanced grammaticalization of MAYBE. Corpus data of MAYBE is analyzed and compared for Danish, Norwegian and Swedish in order to determine the degree of grammaticalization for MAYBE in the Mainland Scandinavian languages. When comparing the degree of multipositionality of MAYBE, one might find different stages of grammaticalization. That is, MAYBE can be more grammaticalized (=less syntactic freedom) in one language than in another (=more syntactic freedom).

I will outline the etymology, development and grammaticalization path of Mainland Scandinavian MAYBE and show that the coexistence of three different clause types is due to different stages within one and the same grammaticalization process instead of separate grammaticalization paths (cf. Andréasson 2002:46; Lundin 1997).

References

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