

Grammatical complexity and affix ordering.
A typological and diachronic approach to the theory of word structure
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Our starting point is the hypothesis that words and clauses are structured differently. Word units are structured according to the *Principle of Growing Cognitive Complexity*, whereas clauses are not. According to this principle what has come to be called TMA-complex is constructed as ATM-serialization. However, this serialization, where aspect grams precede tense grams and where tense grams precede modal grams, holds only for word internal morpheme ordering (contrary to assumptions in Bybee 1985). The serialization of the same complex differs completely in clausal syntax (word-external structuring). There is a good deal of evidence that different principles of morpheme ordering are at work in syntax (word-external structure) as opposed to word internal structure. Only word internal serialization is subject to growth in complexity. Any violation of this principle of word structuring leads to splitting up words into a sequence of single grams. The ordering of these grams contradicts the principle of growing complexity such that their fusion is impossible. The necessary precondition of a later fusion is a fundamental change of word order. Words are not units which are anchored in material reality (substance). They have the status of mental representations. Their units are organized by principles of language processing (form). It is well known that there are no such units materialized as entities of sound waves. The relevant principle organizing words is the processing from elementary grams to more complex grams. Thus, those grams which arise early in language development and in grammaticalization are the same which come early in the serialization of word internal ordering of grammatical morphemes.

The principle of growing complexity is the law which regulates the domain of word structure. Our hypothetical approach explains why languages differ as to the average 'length' of their words. On the one side, there are the incorporating languages with sentence-long words, while, on the other end of the continuum, there are languages where words coincide with single morphemes. In the history of languages, the length of words may change permanently. There are telling examples, e.g., the well-documented cycles of analyticity and syntheticity in the Romance languages (see Schwegler 1900: Vulgar Latin analytic *habēre*-future tense > French synthetic future tense > analytic *aller*-future tense). The present paper aims at demonstrating that the principle of growing complexity remains the same in all these cycles. The cycles of syntheticity to analyticity guarantee the inflexible laws of word-structuring. The material presented as illustration for the thesis that word-internal morphemes are ordered according to the principle of growing complexity are the diachronic developments of analytical vs. synthetic perfects, light verb constructions vs. their non-analytical counterparts. Especially the TAM-complex and its serialization inside and outside of word boundaries is at the center of our discussion. The recent literature will be discussed with respect to its contribution on word-internal affix ordering versus word-external ordering of non-bound grammatical morphemes.

References:

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