



Semantic Shifts: From lexicon to grammar. Diachronic and typological perspectives

Semantic Shifts

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Areal Semantic Shifts in Southeast Asia

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This paper considers patterns of semantic shift for mainland Southeast Asia, for which there appears to be strong areal evidence that contact-induced borrowing is the underlying mechanism rather than internal development of Sapir's *parallel drift* kind. The aim of this talk will be thus to specifically investigate polysemy sharing within the mainland Southeast Asian linguistic area (cf. Kopftjevskaja-Tamm & Liljegren 2017), extending this concept to contexts which involve polygrammaticalization and change in grammatical category (Craig 1991).

After providing an overview of some of the defining semantic shifts that together form the typological profile for mainland Southeast Asia – such as patterns for predicative possession, extended uses of classifiers as possessive and relative clause markers, causative uses of *give* and *do* (*for*) verbs or locative uses of postural and *dwell* verbs – a case study will be presented on *say* verbs as the ‘epicentre’ from which both semantic and grammatical change spread along several fault lines, and whose patterns of polysemy can clearly be seen to diffuse across language family boundaries in Asia.

Say verbs may (but do not necessarily) evolve into quotatives in many languages of the world, and subsequently into subordinating complementizers along one particular chain of grammaticalization; into conditional conjunctions and topic markers along another, or even into discourse functions such as mirative, hearsay and obviousness markers in yet another chain of grammaticalization (Chappell 2008, 2017 on Sinitic). All of these pathways are typical of mainland Southeast Asia, with the caveat that individual languages will show different degrees of development in this process.

To identify the areal extent of replication patterns for the radial polysemy of *say*, and to show what these specific areal features may be, data will be presented from a corpus of representative languages from Sinitic, Tibeto-Burman, Tai-Kadai, Hmong-Mien, Austroasiatic and Austronesian families

References :

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