Surface degrammaticalisation as an effect of grammaticalisation within functional categories

1. This paper investigates the introduction of an epenthetic vowel in specific grammatical contexts in Catalan that is usually explained by phonological rules only (Wheeler 1979, DeCesaris 1987). Looking at the historical distribution, it can be observed that this vowel starts to appear only in the 14th century and at first it appears in contexts that are mostly dependent on syntax and not on phonology or phonetics. I will propose that what looks like degrammaticalisation - the change from [m], [t] to [em], [et] etc. - is better accounted for in terms of grammaticalisation within the functional categories. The analysis is couched within the framework of D(istributed) M(orphology) (Halle/Marantz 1993, Embick/Noyer 2001).

2. Three different stages can be identified with respect to clitic forms (see table 1, 2 and 3). In all stages clitic forms and phonological liaison behave alike in postverbal positions. In these contexts the clitics phonologically cliticize onto verbs if these end in vowels. Moreover, they never undergo proclisis to the following constituent irrespective of whether it starts with a vowel which strongly suggests that it is a syntactic constraint that forbids proclisis in postverbal position. In a preverbal position clitics behave differently in all three stages. In stage one they lean to the left as well as to the right, only depending on whether a vowel is found immediately adjacent. In stage two the clitics phonologically incline to the left and right when the immediately adjacent vowel belongs to a verb, if however a non-verbal constituent on the clitic's left ends in a vowel, the clitic reacts by appearing for the first time with the form [em]. In stage three clitics phonologically incline onto verbs only. If phonological liaison onto the verb is not possible they either appear with the form [em] in pre-verbal or [me] in postverbal position. The observed allomorphy of all three stages can be accounted for by introducing VIs after Spell-Out by phonological operations applying on the way to PF.

3. Comparing the three stages of clitic allomophy to clitic placement we see that the syntactic placement of the clitics changed accordingly. In stage one they appear pre- and postverbally on finite verbs in main and embedded contexts, in stage two (14th-19th) postverbal clitics on finite verbs are only possible in matrix contexts. In stage three (20th-now) postverbal clitics disappear altogether with finite verbs (Fischer 2002). Due to an additional active functional category, namely [ΣP], postverbal clitics in embedded contexts were possible. ΣP was active until the 14th century, hosting negation, S(tylistically) F(ronted) elements and finite verbs, in the latter case resulting in postverbal clitics. From the 14th century onwards postverbal clitics in embedded contexts are no longer attested, neither are SF elements. This can be explained as the result of grammaticalisation within the functional categories, i.e. ΣP can no longer host verbal elements (Fischer 2004).

4. I will argue that grammaticalisation within the functional categories did not only change clitic placement but also affected their form. I propose that the introduction of the "autonomous" epenthetic form, i.e. the apparent degrammaticalisation, is in fact the result of grammaticalisation within the functional categories. For all stages it is assumed that preverbal clitics and verb end up under one terminal node. Ending up under one terminal node defines within a DM framework the immediate neighbourhood which is important for the constraints on phonological liaison, i.e. Catalan clitics are only allowed to phonologically incline towards constituents under the same terminal node with which they form a phonological unit. During stage one where ΣP was active, it is either filled via merge by negation or via move by a verbal element in overt syntax. At the postsyntactic level M(orphological) S(tructure) the clitic-verb complex was allowed to be either merged via raising onto Σ° or onto C° (cf. Embick/Noyer 2001) forming a phonological unit either with Σ° or C°. The terminal node under which the clitic usually ended up was thus enlarged. That is why clitics phonologically incline to the left and right in preverbal position but only to the left onto the finite verb in postverbal position. In stage two (postverbal clitics in subordinate contexts are no longer possible), the additional functional category is no longer active, i.e. can no longer be filled via move by verbal elements in overt syntax. Since this category is no longer active the clitic verb complex is no longer allowed to be merged onto it at MS. However, as long as the verb could still move in overt syntax to C° (in narrative inversion contexts) the clitic-verb complex was still sensitive to its left, introducing autonomous clitic forms whenever following a vowel, e.g. [em], and clitics are still allowed to be merged onto C° whenever C° hosts verbal elements. This is exactly what is corroborated by the attested data. From the end of 14th until the end of the 19th century we find the autonomous form with the epenthetic vowel in preverbal position only when following a vowel. In stage three postverbal clitics are no longer possible in finite sentences. They only form a phonological unit with verbal elements, either under T° or in C° (the host for imperatives cf. Rivero, 1991). This is why clitics nowadays cliticize onto the verb when the verb starts or ends in a vowel. But if the verb doesn't start or end in a vowel, the clitic uses the so-called epenthetic vowel, the form [em] in a preverbal position, whereas in a postverbal position the form [me] is used.

Thus, by assuming grammaticalisation within the functional categories we can explain the apparent degrammaticalisation with respect to morphological forms.

1. *Clitic attachment and form (13th)*

preverbally   postverbally
a. [XP]V'**m** C[v]   d. [v]V'**m** C[XP]   ]
b. [XP]C **me** C[v]   e. [v]C **me** C[XP]   ]
c. [XP]C **m**'V[v]   f. [v] C **me** V[XP]

2. *Clitic attachment and form (14th - 19th)*
          preverbally   postverbally
a. [XP]V **em** C[v]   d. [v]V'**m** C[XP
b. [XP]C **me** C[v]   e. [v]C **me** C[XP
c. [XP]C **m**'V[v]   f. [v] C **me** V[XP]

3. *Clitic attachment and form (19th- 21st century)*
          preverbally   postverbally
a. [XP]V **em** C[v]   d. [v]V'**m** C[XP]
b. [XP]C **em** C[v]   e. [v]C **me** C[XP]
c. [XP]C **m**'V[v]   f. [v] C **me** V[XP]

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