DISCOURSE AND COGNITIVE RESOURCES FOR GRAMMATICALIZATION IN THAI

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In this paper, I will discuss some processes of grammaticalization found in Thai. I will do it in three steps. First, I will introduce an emerging theoretical framework for functional linguistics known as the “usage-based model of language.” This will properly situate the grammaticalization processes which I will investigate. Second, I will draw our attention to the synchronic grammatical phenomenon which I refer to as the “bi-polar distribution of a word,” whereby the same word appears at two opposite positions in a sentence. Third, I will focus on one particular Thai word, háy ‘give,’ to illustrate how grammaticalization proceeds to produce the bipolarization pattern.

1. Usage-based Model of Language

The “Usage-based Model of Language” was first proposed by Langacker in his 1987 book on Cognitive Grammar. This model of language, according to him, gives “substantial importance (...) to the actual use of the linguistic system and a speaker’s knowledge of this use.” (p.494). More recently Barlow and Kemmer in their edited book published in 2000 extended the range of this model and suggest diverse areas of linguistic research which can be fruitfully examined under this model. According to them “the speaker’s linguistic system is fundamentally grounded in ‘usage events.’” This means, among others, that the usage events provide the foundation for forming the abstract linguistic systems (or schemas), and that the linguistic structure is highly fluid and is subject to constant restructuring.

The usage-based model of language, thus, provides an ideal theoretical framework for the study of language change and grammaticalization, since it is in the actual use of language where language change takes place. Methodologically, this model allows us to examine the synchronic data to achieve a better understanding of how grammar may change. I will investigate one interesting synchronic grammatical
phenomenon found in Thai, which I refer to as the bipolar distribution of a word, and suggest how it has developed its current pattern.

2. Bipolar distribution of a word

The bipolar distribution of a word, as I already mentioned, refers to a phenomenon whereby the same word appears at the opposite ends of a linguistic unit with different functions. In (1-a) X is a word, and it appears at the beginning of a unit as X1, and at the end of a unit as X2. As shown in (1-b), X1 and X2 may appear at the two poles of the same unit. When X1 and X2 have the identical shape (which is often the case), the different functions ascribed to them are defined exclusively by their positions.

(1-a) X1 .......... X2
(1-b) X1 .......... X2

I will discuss four words which show the bipolar distribution. They are, háy, léeaw, ləəy, and dāy. These words are function words of various sorts when they appear at the periphery, but they may also appear as verbs. Their meaning as verbs are: háy = give; léeaw = finish, ləəy = pass, go beyond; and dāy. = get, obtain. What this means, in light of the general pattern of grammaticalization, is that bipolarization is a consequence of the process whereby a lexical verb changes into a function word.

Let’s look at some examples of the bipolarization pattern. Most of the examples are from a data set consisting of 38 telephone conversations provided to me by Supa Chotchoey. The telephone conversations were recorded at one household for some period of time, during which one female member of the family was expecting a baby and finally delivered a baby boy. Thus many people called in to check if she had delivered her baby yet. I have supplemented this data with earthquake conversation data which I collected in Los Angeles in 1994.
(2) 
**hây** “give” (TC #114:163)

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hây mọc trùat hây chây mái
CAU doctor examine BEN right Q
“You had the doctor examine you, right?”
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**lêew** “finish” (TC #57:11)

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lêew khuân níi pay lêew lâ
CONJ evening this go ASP Q
“And, did you already go (there) tonight?”
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**lêay** “pass” (TC #90:45)

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lêay hây kháw tohnán leay
CONJ give he there D.MOD
“So, I gave (mangostins) to him there.”
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**dây** “get/obtain”

(TC #105:45)

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kê-lêay [ may dây fàak phií nom pay ]
so NEG AUX leave o.sister (name) go
“So I didn’t get to leave it with Sister Nom”
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(TC #97:35)

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[ fàak phií nom mây dây ] lâ
leave o.sister (name) NEG POT SFP
“Can’t you leave (it) with Sister Nom?.”
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As noted earlier, the words used in the above examples are not lexical verbs. In light of a general tendency of grammaticalization, we can assume that the words appearing here are later developments from full-fledged verbs. What we are encountering is, of course, a common phenomenon of what Hopper (1991) calls the “layering” of older and newer functions of words. But the functions associated with some words are extremely diverse, as we will see shortly, and thus requires us to examine in detail exactly how they have come about.

I will analyze the process of bipolarization with two notions: reanalysis and the layered structure of a language unit. Reanalysis, involved in many cases of grammaticalization in
general, especially at the beginning stage of grammaticalization, is a process which manipulates word boundaries; it may delete, add, or shift boundaries, and, as a consequence, a new word may be formed. It should be emphasized that reanalyses take place during actual usage events.¹

Our second notion, the layered structure, needs some discussion. I assume that a sentence has several internal layers, represented in (3).

\[(3) \quad [\quad [\quad ]\quad ]\quad ]\]

The most internal layer contains the semantic core of the unit. It may take the simple form consisting of a verb and its associated arguments, or the complex form consisting, for example, of serialized core units. In the mid layer lies sentence modality and discourse salient information, represented by such words as sentence modals and left- and right-dislocated words. With these two layers a sentence expresses a discourse sensitive complete proposition, simple or complex. The most external layer contains elements outside of the proposition. In particular, it hosts discourse markers, speech act related sentence final particles, and other discourse modality expressions.

A reanalysis may take within the most internal layer, or may cross the boundaries between different layers. Sometimes a word falls out of one layer, and acquires an even more grammatical status. For example, /compiler\ moved out of the core and settled in the posterior mid layer to become the completive aspect marker, and as it moved to the most external layer it further grammaticalized as a sentence final particle. What is interesting in the case of the conjunctive /compiler\ is that it reached the sentence initial position from the sentence final position of the aspectual /compiler\ In other words, the conjunctive /compiler\ was grammaticalized in the context where two sentences are juxtaposed in discourse, and the final element of the prior sentence is reanalyzed as the initial element of the following sentence. Although /compiler\ also has the conjunctive function, it has arrived at its position from within. This is shown by the fact that /compiler\ appears after the subject and the highlighting particle /compiler\ as in “\textit{kháw kó łąay ...}” This contrasts with the case of /compiler\ which appears before the subject “\textit{1éew kháw kó ...}” As it has moved toward the extreme posterior of a
sentence, *ləəy* has also acquired the discourse modality function, or an emphatic marker. *Dəy* also shows bipolarization, but it took different routes from any of the others mentioned above. The anterior *dəy* is a consequence of the expansion of the possible constituents that *dəy* takes. That is, when it became possible to have a verb phrase instead of a noun phrase after *dəy*, it came to mean ‘obtaining a situation’ rather than ‘obtaining an object.’ The posterior *dəy* is probably a consequence of the resultative construction, but I will not go into details here.

3. The case of *həy*

I will now provide a detailed analysis of how different functions of *həy* have emerged. I have identified eleven different uses of *həy* in the data. Their relationship to each other is summarized in Diagram shown in (5) on the next page. Most of these instances of *həy* appear within the most inner layer, either at the anterior, posterior, or internal position, but two appears in the mid layer.

Different functions along the vertical axis have different structural characteristics, as indicated at the left or right side of each horizontal line. Functions lined up on the same horizontal line are identical structurally, but have different semantic characteristics.

Following a very general pattern of grammaticalization, we assume that all grammatical *həy* are derived from the lexical verb *həy*. When it is used as a lexical verb, *həy* is followed by either a Patient or Recipient NP, as shown in (4).

(4) VERB (NP hay NP)

(həy + PAT) **həy nəmklua ləəy ná ná (TC #106:12)**
give saline.solus.tion SAdv SFP SFP
(They should) give you saline solus.tion.

(həy + REC) **həy cháŋ ləə (TC #108:65)**
give me Q
(Are you going to) give (it) to me.
In the development of the functions of háy, there are two distinct branches. One is the benefactive branch and the other the causative branch. The benefactive branch will develop the posterior háy, while the causative branch will develop the anterior hay via the centrally located háy.

The pathway for the benefactive meaning, especially from (a) to (b) is a common development across languages. In Thai, this process can be understood as a consequence of clause serialization, which involves a boundary loss, as schematically shown below.
(6)
(Clause serialization)

\[
\text{[ [ [ I bought a book ] [ ( ) gave ( ) Sue] ] ]}
\]

(Reanalysis: boundary loss)

\[
\text{[ [ [ I bought a book gave ( ) Sue] ] ]}
\]

Notice that the position of \textit{hay}, is now closer to the posterior periphery within the inner core. As this process proceeds, two things happen. First, the lexical meaning of \textit{hay}, i.e. object transfer, becomes weakened, leading to a semantic extension of \textit{hay}, for a more abstract situation, as shown in (7).

(7) BENEFACTIVE (1)
(S \textit{hay} NP: \textit{hay} as a “preposition-like” word) (TC #59:31)

\[
\text{[ [ thambun hay khun taa ] ]}
\]
\makeooment{make merit give grandfather}
\[(We will) perform merit making for our grandfather.\]

The other development is ellipsis of the Recipient NP after \textit{hay}, leading to a reanalysis, which pushes \textit{hay}, out of the inner core into the mid layer to become a sentence modal.

(8) BENEFACTIVE (2) (S \textit{hay}: hay as a sentence modal)
(TC #93:38)

\[
\text{[ [ diaw că [ bōck ] hay ] ná ]}
\]
\makeooment{soon MOD tell give SFP}
\[(I’ll) tell you in a moment.\]

Incidentally, the structure represented by (8) has also acquired a different function with a malfactive meaning.

In the causative branch, we first encounter the purposive \textit{hay}, which has developed via the process of amalgamation. Amalgamation is like serialization, but combines two clauses with one common element as a pivot. For example, two clauses “I bought a book for my friend (phŏm sū mānhshū māa hay phēan)” and “My friend read it (phēan āan)” will be amalgamated with “my friend” as a pivot to produce “I bought a book for my friend (to) read,” or “phŏm sū mānhshū māa hay phēan āan.”
(9)  
[ [ I bought a book give my friend ] [ my friend read (it) ] ]

(Reanalysis: Boundary loss + Amaglamation)

[ [ I bought a book give my friend read (it) ] ]

Examine an actual example of purposive *hây* in (10).

(10) PURPOSIVE (*S* hây *S*)

(TC #90:169)

[ [ fâak thùrian pay hây cûw tûan kin ] ] nêy ]  
leave durian go give PFX (nick.name) eat SFE  
May I leave a durian (with you) for the Fat boy to eat?

(#90:169)

[ [ fâak thurian pay hây cûw tûan kin ] ] nêy ]  
{ V hay NP }  
{ NP V }

In this example, *cûw tûan* is the pivot, around which two clauses are amalgamated. *Hây* in this sentence still retains good part of the meaning associated with the lexical verb *hây* ‘give,’ because this sentence means essentially that “I leave a durian with you for the purpose of giving it to the Fat boy.” However, as the grammaticalization process proceeds, the literal sense of giving will be weakened. Examples (11) and (12) are such cases.

(11) PURPOSIVE/INDUCIVE (*S* hây *S*)

[ [ shoo hây khâw duu ] ] (Earthquake)

show give he see

“I will show them to see”

(12) PURPOSIVE/INDUCIVE (*S* hây *S*)

[ mûâ-khâw [ lûw hây fañ ] ] (TC #114:170)

doctor-he tell give listen

‘The doctor told (something for me) to listen.’

In these examples, the first event (‘show’ and ‘tell’) is done for the purpose of the second event, and *hây* does not have the
literal sense of giving some object to someone. It should be also noticed that when the lexical meaning of háy gets weakened, the purposive meaning also gets weakened, and in some cases háy can be also interpreted as the inductive marker. So the examples above may be interpreted in the inductive sense: ‘I will show something, and this action will induce an event of your seeing it’ and ‘the doctor told me something, and this action induced an event of my listening to it.’ The next example of háy indicates the inductive meaning more strongly.

(13) INDUCIVE (S háy S)

(TC #115:48)

[ [ diaω phôm cà peklîŋ háy phîi-cît-khâw pek ] háy ] ná ]
soon I MOD phone give PFX-(name)-he phone give SFP
I will call (him) so that Brother Cit will call you, okay?

It is a well known fact that the range of classes of words co-occurring with the target word in grammaticalization will increase over time. Thus in a later development, háy can be preceded by a complement taking verb such as bók ‘tell’, nát ‘make an appointment’, yóm ‘allow’, sàŋ ‘order’, etc. It is also a well known fact that it is the complement rather than the complement taking verb which is pragmatically more salient in this type of sentence, since complement taking verbs simply classify the type of communication process, while the complement informs the content of communication. In this structure with a complement taking verb, what follows háy is no longer a purpose for some other event, but rather a significant event which is, or will be, induced by an inducing event coded by a complement taking verb. In other words, the act of telling something will induce a certain result. Some examples of complement taking verbs preceding háy follow.

(14) INDUCIVE (S háy S)

khâw bók háy thoo-pay thâam (TC #117:14)
he tell give phone-go ask
He told me to call and ask.

cà yóm háy klàp-pay (Earthquake)
ASP allow give return-go
(They) would allow (us) to go back (to our rooms).
m冗 n脳t 稷y pay 稳k 1脗w l脗 (TC #114:11)
doctor make.appointment give go again ASP Q
Did the doctor make an appointment for you to go (to see her) again?

There are two minor extensions of the inductive type of 稷y: non-interventive and adverbial 稷y. With the noninterventive 稷y, the second event has a propensity to occur, and the first event is simply a process leading to the second event, as shown in (15) below. With the adverbial 稷y, the second part is a state which will be induced.

(15) NONINTERVENTIVE (S 稷y S)

t脷n 脣c 稷y p脭ut 脨脽 (TC #94:23)
must wait give hurt stomach
“(You) have to wait till you have a contraction.”

(16) ADVERBIAL (S 稷y V)

du脵 稷y 脠pr脡 (TC #58:14)
see give complete
“(After) you finish seeing her, ...”

A more significant development of 稷y is the development of the causative and emphatic 稷y. Both types of 稷y appears at the beginning of the inner layer. I will only discuss the causative 稷y in the remainder of this paper.

(17) CAUSATIVE (NP 稷y S)

空y 脣脨 kh脌w th脢脮脰 (TC #114:115)
give worker-he work
“(I will) have workers work.”

(18) EMPHATIC (NP 稷y S)

空y 脣脨 脌脧 m脗 (TC #114:183)
give send news come
“Send us the news.”

The causative meaning of 稷y is already detectable in some cases of inductive 稷y. I would claim that the importance of the inducing event becomes substantially weak as the saliency
of the induced event becomes stronger to the extent that it is no longer expressed. In the next excerpt, *hây* appears in two speakers’ turns.

(19) INDUCIVE/CAUSATIVE (S *hây* S) (#TC106:34)

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34 A: khâw bôk *hây* laa khûn wan [...] 
          she  tell  give  leave  half  day
       She told me to leave my work early.
--->
35 B: ?ô chây *hây* maa yûu ka nọɔy (#TC106:35)
         oh   yes    give   come   stay   with  (name)
      Oh, yes. So that you can stay with Noy.
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Speakers A and B are sisters and they have another sister C. In line 34, A uses the inducive *hây* with the complement taking *bôk*. This sentence means that C told A to leave her work early so that she can assist Speaker B when she goes to deliver her baby. Now on line 35, Speaker B reports that C also said that if A leaves her work early she can come to take care of a child at home when B goes to the hospital. Notice that line 35 conceptually includes Sister C as the producer of the sentence *maa yûu ka nọɔy* ‘(you) can stay with Noy,’ but the noun phrase referring to C didn’t appear. That is, structurally *hây* appears at the beginning of a sentence, and simply signals that what follows is some event that is induced.

Another clue for the process of obtaining the causative *hây* may be found in example (20). In this utterance, the inducing event of ordering is first expressed in a separate sentence, *khâw sàng ?aw-wây* ‘he ordered me,’ and then the complement headed by *hây* is added as an independent segment. It is possible to analyze this *hây* as the inducive *hây*, or as the causative *hây*. These two possibilities for analysis are important not only for the analysts, but also for the users of the language. This type of ambiguous situation will bring about a change in grammatical structure, and the birth of new functions.

(20) INDUCIVE/CAUSATIVE (S *hây* S) (TC #114:47)

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[ [ khâw sàng ?aw-wây ] ] [ [ *hây* bôk kàp phayaabaaŋ yan n̂ii ] ]
          he         order  ASP give    tell  with  nurse    way  this
     He ordered me to tell the nurse this way.
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I will show a more extended discourse segment to trace the process of developing the causative *hay*.
16:B lêw ton-nîi pay trùat thîi khipnik
CON now go examine at clinick

khaw nîi kô trùat ūk thîi nûŋ
time this HP examine again CLS one

khâw kô ləey bôk wâa nía diaw khûn nía hay pay
he HP CONJ tell say DM ADV evening this give go

sàam thûm
three hour

17:A pay nçon ləey
go sleep SAdv

18:B sàam thûm kwà kwàa hay pay nçon
three hour over over give go sleep

lêw hay bôk pûat thóon pen târay yannîa
CONJ give tell hurt stomach be what SFE

tè cîng cîng tém yarî pûat ləey
but real real (name) yet NEG hurt SAdv

lakhoon lakhoon sônsây
act act I.think

19A hay ... hay bôk pûat thóon
give give tell hurt stomach

20:B têe hay bôk (wâ) pûat thóon târay yannîa
INJ give tell (say) hurt stomach what SFE

khâw ca hay tôk phrûŋ-nîi
he MOD give deliver tomorrow

21A khâw ca hay tôk phrûŋ nîi
he MOD give deliver tomorrow

22:B têe
INJ
23A  kʰáw  ca  ṭaw  ṭók  lá
    he  MOD  take  deliver Q

24:B  ṭəə  kʰáw  háy  ṭem  ṭók  phrûŋ-níi  ṭay
    INJ  he  give  (name)  deliver  tomorrow  SFP

25A  ṭəə
    INJ

(English translation)
16  Then I went to the clinic to have them check me.
   Now they checked it again.
   So they said I would go there tonight at 9 PM.
17  To stay there.
18  Around 9 PM (they told me) to stay there
    and (they told me) to say I am having contractions, or
    something like that.
    but actually I am not having any contractions yet
    Fake, fake, I think.
19  (They told you) to say that you are having contractions?
20  Yeah.  (They told me) to tell them I am having
    contractions, or something like that.
    They would have me deliver-(the baby) tomorrow.
21  They will make you deliver tomorrow?
22  Yeah.
23  Will they induce the labor?
24  Yes.
25  They will make me deliver the baby tomorrow, you
    see?

In the last line of 16, Speaker B sets up a speech quotation
environment with ṭók ‘tell.’ We understand that the doctor’s
act of ‘telling’ will induce an event of the speaker’s ‘going
there at 9 PM.’ Notice, however, that in the subsequent
discourse other induced events are expressed, ‘going to sleep
there’ (line 18) and ‘telling the nurse that you are having
contractions’ (lines 18-20). What needs to be emphasized here
in these subsequent cases is that there is no explicit verb
indicating an inducing event of ‘telling,’ making háy the first
element in the sentence. Conceptually, each event can be
understood as an event induced by the doctor’s act of telling
(i.e. the doctor told me to do ...), but structurally the act of
telling is not expressed, and thus takes the form of a causative
sentence. Such ambiguous context is required for the structure to change.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I situated my study of grammaticalization within the framework of the usage-based model of language. I drew our attention to the phenomenon of the bi-polar distribution of a word, and analyzed it with the notions of reanalysis and layered structure of a sentence. Then I examined in detail how different functions of  hay may have emerged. With no actual examination of texts, my claim remains as a hypothesis. However, the process I proposed is a reasonable one in light of the general pattern of grammaticalization. The most significant aspect of this paper, however, has been an actual examination of a discourse event. It is only through discourse analysis of the sort attempted in this paper that we attain our understanding of the on-going process of grammaticalization. And I hope I was succeeded in explaining that grammaticalization is a synchronic phenomenon as well as a diachronic phenomenon.

Note

1. Langacker (1977:65) mentions that boundary shift is less common than boundary loss (but more common than boundary creation). But many instances of grammaticalization described here are cases of boundary shift.

References