Identity, Persistence and Differentiation in Periphrastic Verbal Forms

Peter Öhl

Bergische Universität Wuppertal

peter.oehl@uni-wuppertal.de

Many periphrastic constructions are conventionalised without being fully grammaticalised. Their purpose is the filling of gaps in inflectional paradigms, where there may be a lack of rule based forms to represent specific inflectional features. Even though they may constitute schemata, they are neither paradigmatic nor productive in the sense of inflectional forms. As a representative example from German, one may consider the progressive periphrasis formed by the preposition *am* ('at') + infinitive (or also *beim* + infinitive), which can in fact be used in order to translate English or French progressive forms. As soon as one tries to add an object, this results in ungrammaticality at least in Standard German, and it becomes evident that this periphrastic surrogate form does not belong to a fully productive paradigm: *(Er ist) *am/*beim ein Buch lesen/ein Buch am Lesen*. The surrogate also resists to the application of grammatical operations like the passivisation, which moreover shows that the restriction in (1a) is more profound than a simple adjacency constraint on the preposition and the infinitive. Thus, Standard German does not have a regular progressive form. However, suitable linguistic means at the speakers' disposal according to the rules of grammar may be used in order to express progressivity in a periphrastic way, making use of the lexical prepositions (which indeed have been grammaticalised to inflectional particles in Dutch and German varieties, cf. Pottelberge 2005).

A comparable Modern German example may be the periphrasis with the full verb *kommen*, as opposed to the apparently parallel paradigmatic close future form in English: since only English has in fact an auxiliary grammaticalised from the full verb, two occurrences of *come* can be combined only there. Similarly, Old High German had neither regular future tense nor fully developed paradigms of perfect tense or passive voice. In Modern Standard German, those analytic forms are not only fully productive; it is also true that the periphrastic forms that were the source of their grammaticalisation are still quite transparent (cf. Öhl 2015).

What all these combinatory forms have in common is that they make use of lexical items in order to express grammatical features associated with inflection. The central claim of this paper is that as long as periphrases are not fully grammaticalised to analytic inflectional paradigms, the utilised lexical items are identical to those in autonomous use, even though possibly semantically bleached with only some abstract properties persisting (like *haben* in German functional verb constructions, e.g. *zur Verfügung haben*; cf. Businger 2011). Differentiation comes about as a result of the loss of the categorial lexical features, which completes the grammaticalisation process. This I suggest to analyse as recategorisation as functional heads.

References: Businger, Martin (2011). <Haben> als Vollverb. Berlin: de Gruyter. Öhl, Peter (2015). Periphrasis as precursor of analytic inflection. In Kailuweit & Rosemeyer (eds.), Auxiliary Selection Revisited. Berlin: de Gruyter,181–205. Pottelberge, Jeroen van (2005). Ist jedes grammatische Verfahren Ergebnis eines Grammatikalisierungsprozesses? In Leuschner et al. (eds.), Grammatikalisierung im Deutschen. Berlin: de Gruyter, 169–192.