

**Peripheral significance: a phasal perspective on the grammaticalisation of speaker perspective**  
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Generative understanding of how grammaticalisation can give rise to new grammatical (functional) material has advanced significantly during this millennium (cf. i.a. Roberts & Roussou 2003, van Gelderen 2004, Roberts 2010, among many others). The purpose of this talk is to consider a sub-type of grammaticalisation that seems to me to be ripe for more detailed diachronic generative investigation: the grammaticalisation of speaker-hearer-oriented meaning, sometimes referred to as *pragmaticalisation* (cf. i.a. Traugott 1995, Diewald 2011, 2012).

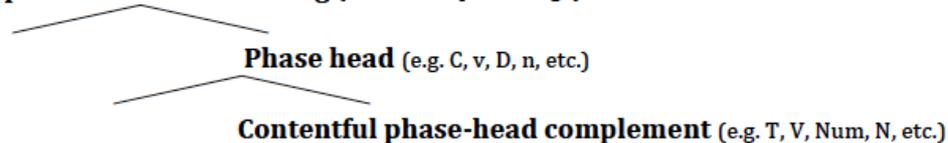
My theoretical point of departure is the wealth of generative research from the past 15-20 years that builds, in different ways, on Ross's (1970) Performative Hypothesis. In terms of this Hypothesis, speakers and hearers - speech act participants - should be formally represented as part of clausal structure. From an empirical perspective, there would seem to be good arguments, a selection of which I will present, to extend this formal representation of speech act participants beyond the clause to sub- and non-clausal domains; and there also appear to be conceptual arguments to make this move, which I will briefly touch on. Against this backdrop and that of existing proposals suggesting cross-phasal parallelisms (cf. i.a. Butler 2004, Richards 2007, Poletto 2012), I introduce a formal hypothesis about the structural locus of speaker-hearer perspective that also highlights one of the respects in which human language can be said to exhibit fractal structure (cf. Biberauer 2017). This is given in (1):

(1) **The Peripheral Speaker-Hearer Hypothesis**

Speaker-hearer perspective is formally encoded at the edges of phasal domains, where phasal domains are independently signalled, realizationally (PF) and interpretively (LF) privileged structural domains, the precise identity of which differs from language to language.

Simplifying grossly - in a way to be refined in the talk - (1) entails the basic structural design template in (2):

(2) **Speaker-Hearer encoding** (outermost phase edge)



The key proposal here, then, is that **phase edges are domains specifically reserved for the integration of elements marking speaker-/hearer-related perspective.**

As such, phase edges, are expected to constitute the “grammaticalisation target” for pragmaticalisation-oriented processes. In the main body of the talk, I present 4 case studies centring on innovative speaker-hearer-oriented grammatical elements in Afrikaans and South African English that appear to support this prediction. More specifically, they demonstrate, among other things:

- (i) that it is meaningful to identify specific domain edges as speaker-hearer-oriented, and, moreover, to distinguish these edges from “regular” information-structural edges, i.e. those associated with topics and foci of various kinds;
- (ii) that these speaker-hearer edges do indeed seem to arise not just at the clausal edge, but also at vP-, DP-, and a range of word-level edges;
- (iii) that we see both “regular” upwards (and, sometimes, in part lateral) grammaticalisation and, to date, less commonly discussed downwards integration of linguistic elements to create novel speaker-hearer items; and
- (iv) that free variation (“true optionality”) scenarios may arise under certain tightly constrained circumstances where a novel speaker-hearer-oriented item has not been fully formally integrated.

Importantly, if (1) is on the right track, speaker-hearer elements and (the colloquial and contact) data that showcase these deserve the kind of central place in modern diachronic generative investigation that they have, for the most part, not received to date. In other words, there is a very real sense in which some of what was at one stage relegated to the “periphery” in generative research more generally may be absolutely “core”; and a no less real sense in which carefully targeted diachronic work may offer a unique window on aspects of this core phenomenon that may be (partially) obscured if one does not take variation and change into account.

## References

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