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# Modality as Identity in Text Interpretation and Creation

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## Abstract

A question we try to answer in this study is: How are expressions indicating identity conventionally routinized in language? We will approach this problem from the point of view of grammaticalization in the sense originally developed in Meillet (1912) and arrive at a conclusion that at least some examples of such expressions gradually acquire forms of routinization through subjectification, and then are eventually incorporated into modality.

Mood is a grammatical category which is associated with a speaker-writer's way, manner or fashion of saying, thinking, believing, and feeling when he or she uses a language. Interestingly, mood has an etymological connection with 'mind' in Old English and, as in Jespersen (1924), it has been used as a grammatical term in the area of grammatical theory to refer to verbal forms such as indicative, subjunctive and imperative. Thus, it should be noticed that mood is expressed in conventionally routinized ways, i.e., inflections on verbs, at least in some languages, typically Latin or Classical Greek, and probably English. This kind of routinization is often referred to as grammaticalization in many studies, including Hopper and Traugott (2003), since it is realized by means of morphological alternation. Here we take grammaticalization as a more advanced stage of routinization, probably a final stage of diachronic language change.

Closely related to mood is modality. As discussed in Palmer (1986), among others, modality is a notional category which is expressed in various ways, including verbal morphology. There are modal adverbs, modal adjectives, or parenthetical clauses which are frequently discussed in the literature in connection with modality. It might be possible to characterize modality as a speaker-writer's subjective attitudes or opinions toward what is being said in texts, or 'the contents of texts.' Thus, modality is often captured in terms of the opposition with the proposition; all that is semantically distinguished from proposition is modality. Linguistic forms, which originally have concrete meanings, gradually assume modality through subjectification, one of whose definitions is given in the following:

### Subjectification

It is a gradient phenomenon, whereby forms and constructions that at first express primarily concrete, lexical objective meanings come through repeated use in local syntactic contexts to serve increasingly abstract, pragmatic, interpersonal and speaker-

based functions. (Traugott, 1995: 32)

It is said that subjectification is a semantic motivation for routinization, and finally grammaticalization.

In this study, we will show that linguistic forms expressing identity are also diachronically developed through subjectification, strongly suggesting that identity could be an essential part of modality and thus routinization is playing a role in derivation of identity expressions. It is unclear, however, whether or not identity expressions arrive at the stage of routinization, i.e., grammaticalization.

To motivate the claim above, we will examine a variety of Japanese and English expressions which may be associated with a Japanese and English identity, and conclude that our claim here is certainly verified. There are a large number of routinized expressions which cannot be interpreted appropriately without having identity deeply embedded in them through subjectification. If a speaker-writer is able to use routinized forms efficiently and appropriately, he or she is more likely to be recognized as possessors of an identity common in a speech community and his or her social acceptance in that society will be enhanced. We will refer to this kind of identity as linguistic identity, and no one will raise any objection for an idea that seriously affects your interpretation of the creation of texts.

## 1. Introduction

### (1) The Basic Question in this Study

How are linguistic expressions indicating identity conventionally routinized or even grammaticalized in language?

### (2) Grammaticalization

content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix

内容語                      文法語                      接辞                      屈折接辞

(Hopper and Traugott, 2003: 7)

### (3) Routinization

A process in which linguistic expressions are gradually frozen and then acquire fixed forms to be spoken by many speakers of a language in a certain sense understandable only for native or advanced speakers of the language.

## 2. Mood and Modality

- (4) a. Indicative: I *am* a linguist.  
 b. Subjunctive: If I *were* a bird, ...  
 c. Imperative: *Forget* about this.

### (5) Variety of Modality

法性 (modality)	法助動詞 (modal auxiliary)	準法助動詞 (semi-modal auxiliary)
予測 (predication)	will/would/shall	be going to

義務 (obligation)	shall/should/ought to	
必要性 (necessity)	must	have to/have got to
能力 (ability)	can/could	be able to
差し迫った行為 (imminent activity)		be about to
予定された行為 (scheduled activity)	be to	
可能性 (possibility)	may/might	
達成 (achievement)		get to
不可避性 (inevitability)		be bound to

## (6) 態度離接辞 (Attitudinal Disjuncts)

*Clearly*, he is behaving badly.

*Interestingly*, he is behaving badly.

- a. apparently, certainly, clearly, conceivably, decidedly, definitely, evidently, outwardly, possibly, presumably, seemingly, superficially, surely, undoubtedly, etc.  
 b. annoyingly, astonishingly, foolishly, fortunately, interestingly, luckily, naturally, oddly, regrettably, significantly, surprisingly, unbelievably, unluckily, wisely, etc.

## (7) Routinized and Grammaticalized Forms for Modality

Meaning to be conveyed	Routinized forms	Grammaticalized forms
modality	Semi-modal auxiliaries	Modal auxiliaries (often called modal-marker)
	Attitudinal disjuncts	

## (8) Why are modal expressions routinized or grammaticalized?

## (9) What motivates the routinization or grammaticalization of modal expressions?

(10) Metaphor: A process to understand and experience one kind of thing in terms of another across conceptual boundaries, and directionality of transfer is from a basic, usually concrete, meaning to one more abstract.

(11) Metonymy: A process by which one conceptual entity provides access to another conceptual entity within the same domain.

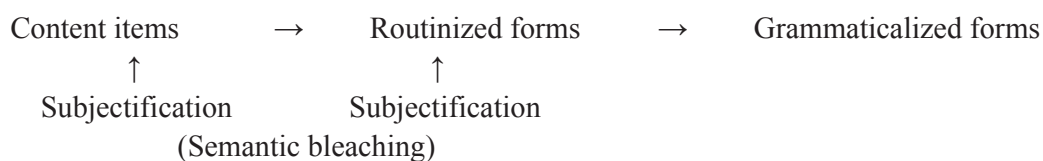
## (12) Answers to (8) and (9)

H & T's answer to (8)	Modality should be conveyed informatively and the use of routinized and/or grammaticalized forms enhances speaker-writer's social acceptance.
H & T's answer to (9)	Metaphor and metonymy are major processes that motivate grammaticalization.

## (13) Subjectification

It is a gradient phenomenon, whereby forms and constructions that at first express primarily concrete, lexical objective meanings come through repeated use in local syntactic contexts to serve increasingly abstract, pragmatic, interpersonal and speaker-based functions. (Traugott, 1995: 32)

## (14) The Process of Routinization and Grammaticalization of Modality



## 3. Identity and Modality

(15) Why are identity expressions routinized and/or grammaticalized?

(16) What motivates the routinization and/or grammaticalization of identity expressions?

(17) Japanese Routinized Identity Expressions

Examples	Direct translations	Actual meanings	Processes
どうも、どうも	Thank you, thank you.	Why, hello there!/Goodbye, then.	?
お陰様で	Thanks to someone behind me.	Fortunately, ...	metaphor
失礼します	Excuse me.	Let me do it./Goodbye.	?
済みません	I am sorry.	I am sorry./Thank you./Please	?
結構です	That's fine.	I don't need it.	?
前向きに	Look forward ...	cannot promise.	?
どう出る	How will (s)he come out?	How will (s)he response?	metonymy
泥棒	twist a rope after catching a burglar	very delayed/unorganized	metaphor
頭が真白になる	My head became white	I had no idea.	metonymy
頭が固い	have a hard head	Inflexible/stupid/stubborn	metaphor
頭でっかち	have a big head	think too much	metaphor
頭を使え	Use your head.	Think more.	metaphor
頭が弱い	have a weak head	Stupid	metaphor
両巨頭	two big heads	two great persons	metonymy
寝耳に水	pour water into one's ears	be awfully surprised	metaphor
耳にたこ	have a callosity in one's ears	Enough is enough.	metaphor
目障りだ	obstruction to seeing through	I hate it.	metonymy
見る目がある	You have an eye to seeing things.	You can appreciate the true value of things.	metaphor
お目が高い	You have high-raised eyes.	You can appreciate the true value of things.	metaphor
目が離せない	cannot take away one's eyes	extremely interested	metaphor
目に余る	cannot keep it in one's eyes	cannot accept	metaphor
目の保養	recuperate one's eyes	watch a pretty woman	metonymy
目一杯頑張る	work until one's eyes are filled.	work very hard	metaphor
目からうろこ	Scales dropped from one's eyes.	understand clearly suddenly	metaphor
手が離せない	cannot take away one's hands	awfully busy	metaphor
手を離れる	leave one's hands	become independent	metaphor
手を引く	pull one's hand	withdraw	metaphor
手びかえる	hold back one's hands	hesitate	metaphor
手を切る	cut one's hand	break up with someone	metaphor
私の片腕だ	one of my hands.	an indispensable person	metonymy
私の右腕だ	my right hand.	an indispensable person	metonymy

揚げ足を取る	take someone's raised foot		metaphor
足を引っ張る	pull someone's leg	hinder	metaphor
横車を押す	push a side wheel	act perversely	metaphor
骨を折る	break one's bones	work very hard	metaphor
骨身にしみる	percolate into one's bones and flesh	deeply moved	metonymy
屈指の	count on one's fingers	excellent	metonymy
喉から手が出る	A hand comes out of one's throat		metonymy
鳥肌が立つ	have a chicken's skin	very moved	?
自分を曲げる	vend oneself	unwillingly change one's opinion	metaphor
ごぼう抜き	extract burdocks	overtake other runners	metonymy
たらい回し	pass a washtub to others	do not take responsibilities	metaphor
青田刈り	harvest green young rice	hiring future graduates too early	metonymy
お愛想	Say nice things to me.	I want to pay and leave.	metonymy
三行半	three-line letter	letter of divorce	metonymy
雨後の竹の子	bamboo shoots after raining	grow vigorously and quickly	metonymy

#### 4. “Chara-Copular” and “Chara-Joshi” as Identity Markers

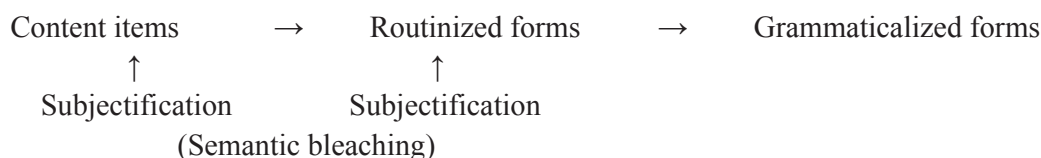
##### (18) Chara-copulars in Japanese

- a. おいどん、もともとバックプリント重視の人間でござす。  
I am inherently a person who puts emphasis on backprinting.
- b. 拙者ドライブに行ってきたでござる。  
I am just back from a drive.
- c. はじめましてでおじゃる。 (Sadanobu, 2007)  
How do you do?

##### (19) Chara-joshi in Japanese

- a. ナニーッ ワシはなにもいっとらんゴホン [ゴホン is not a cough.]  
What! I haven't yet said anything.
- b. ぼくらはフェレット、いたち科だひょーん。  
We are ferrets, we belong to the family of weasel.
- c. 申し訳ありませんですふう。  
I am awfully sorry. (Ibid.)

##### (20) A Process of Routinization and Grammaticalization of Identity



##### (21) Answers to (15) to (16)

My answer to (15)	Identity should be expressed informatively and the use of routinized and/or forms enhances speaker-writer's social acceptance.
My answer to (16)	Metaphor and metonymy are major processes that motivate the Routinization and/or grammaticalization of identity expressions.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

- \* This is the edited version of the handout and abstract distributed by Professor Amano at the February conference. Regrettably, we were unable to establish if Professor Amano had written a revised full version of this paper before his passing. Even so, we thought that we would like to give readers an insight to some of this great scholar's ideas.

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