Grammaticalization in Hindi and its dialects. Verb, adpositions.

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Modern Indo-Aryan can be considered to have evolved from a flexional system to a highly analytical system (Chatterji 1926, Bubenik 2006), whether in the same process shifting from non-configurational to configurational syntax as suggested by Bubenik or retaining certain non-configurational properties as suggested by Butt, Dayal, Mohanan). This change has involved the grammaticalization of lexical words (less often of grammatical words) as new case markers, resulting in the new category of adpositions in the nominal group, and in the verbal domain, resulting in the renewal of inherited categories such as present, past or future tenses, passive voice, ability and deontic modalities, and also in new (mainly Aktionsart) categories such as progressive, continuative, frequentative, terminative, inchoative, perfective, evidential, not all of these categories being grammaticalized in all IA languages nor even in all the dialects of Hindi, and not all of them being grammaticalized to the same degree in a given language.

Whereas the role re-analysis in the process seems relatively weak, and attested with relative certitude only in the case of passive (example 1) and possibly ergative/de-ergativized alignments, contact has undoubtedly played an important role, yet not always easy to disintiricate from internal evolution and convergence: Chatterji, who accounts for the general remodelling of the verbal IA paradigm by the Dravidian influence, is generally not followed on this point. Yet the appearance of quotatives with evidential functions in Garhwali and Kumaoni (northern dialects of Hindi) seems more uncontroversially to be contact-induced (example 2), as well as the agreement pattern of Maithili and Magahi (Eastern dialects of Hindi), with possibly borrowed forms as well as functions (cf. Matras 2011) (example 3). My contribution, focused on Hindi and its ‘dialects’ will first deal with the verbal category and case in the nominal category, leaving aside for further study the emergence of classifiers, number (from class markers in dialects which lost inflexional markers), pronouns (grammaticalization of a three-fold honorific distinction for 2nd and 3rd person) and subordination.

Within the verb, markers for tense and aspect mainly originate from auxiliarized verbs (be, stay, do, go, touch/stick and other motion verbs). The degree of obligatorification and paradigmatization (Lamiroy & Mulder 2011) varies in the various dialects of Hindi and for some categories such as perfectivity (the so called ‘vector’ constructions) is low in all. In addition, different markers may grammaticalize in the same function, ie progressive in those Hindi dialects which have grammaticalized the distinction habitual/progressive: ‘be’ (cha/h-) marks the progressive in those languages which maintained a synthetic present, whereas the semantically more specific ‘stay’ marks it in those languages which developed a complex form for present (V be). Reversely the same original form may evolve into different functional markers: rah “stay” in modern Hindi < rakshati “preserve, keep” marks the past in Bhojpuri (eastern dialect of Hindi) and the progressive in Standard Hindi, as well as the continuous, in different constructions: V rahā (past participle) hai (be-present) is progressive, V-tā (imperfective participle) rah+TA endings is continuous (‘keep V-ing’) in Standard Hindi and the function of rah as a past tense marker (Eastern dialects) corresponds to a still different
construction (V + inflected rah-). Constructions, as well as the semantic map of the concerned domain at the relevant time, are to be taken into account in order to understand how the form itself came to grammaticalize in a given function – future in this respect is problematic since it grammaticize ‘go’ as a tense marker in Western Hindi dialects but in a non-usual construction (V-irrealis + go-past participle).

This is all the more obvious when the whole sentence construction is at stake (Lehmann 2002:7; Delancey 2011: 376-7): the raise of ergative patterns in past transitive clauses is both the result of the grammaticalization of a passive participle as TA marker and of the reinterpretation of a nominal sentence with instrumental agent (by A P done) as a tense marked finite active sentence. The fact that a parallel construction evolved from modal nominal statements (by A P to be done) to future in Eastern Hindi dialects argues against the isolated rise of ergative alignments in IA and in favour of a common development path for non-processual TA, oriented towards result or aim (Kurylowicz 1965, 1931; Benveniste 1965, 1952, 1960). The fact that these futures (developed from modal passive participles) and the transitive past (developed from past passive participles) in Eastern languages further shifted back into nominative alignments with new personal endings emphasizes (at least in Bengali and related languages) the grammaticalization of person pronouns in the renewal of person endings.

**Within the nominal domain**, the most striking facts are the development of genitive markers evolved from a past participle of ‘do’, resulting in a postposition which agrees with the head noun, and the semantic content of other markers as well as the diversity of functions which they grammaticize into in various dialects, and sometimes in the same language (example 4), blurring the usual relation with sources (Heine & Kuteva 2002).

The genitive so-called postposition is in fact an adjectivizer (origin: participle of verb kar“do”, krita, or kera by analogy with other modern past participles), with various degrees of phonetic erosion (ker in Eastern dialects, kā in standard Hindi, ko, in old Hindi, ro in Western dialects), but always agreeing with the head noun and governing the oblique form of the complement noun. It occurs in the same construction as the derivative –vālā “related to” (bound or unbound) < Sk pāla “protector”, not (yet) fully grammaticalized.

Other case markers come partly from locational nouns: this is true for dative (originally allative) secondarily used for marked accusative and experiencer: modern hindi ko, old Hindi kau (kaũ, kũ, kũ), which comes from the Sanskrit kakṣa “side, place”, with alternate forms in Northern dialects kakh, kakh, kakhyā. Dative other forms include khus (Garhwal/Kumaoni) from the Sk noun ‘ear’ (karna in the locative: *karnasmin <karne) “at the hear”, “aside, close to”, with alternate forms nai/ne (<kaňhaĩ/kannai in old Rajasthani), giving the ergative markers in almost all IA languages. But the locative some may stem from the case only of the unit grammaticalized, as in tai/tāũ (Garhwal) < tāvati, a locative form of the resumptive indefinite tāvat (tāvahĩ, tāmhi *taũ, *tannĩ, tũ) “so long, so far, up to, till”. Other sources are the verb “touch, stick” lag ( >lai, lagi, lag) for allative, beneficiary and dative, also at the origin of future tense in Eastern languages. Less usual is the grammaticalization of comitative nouns in the function of dative/accusative, like saṇī (haṇi) in northern dialects, from the Sk noun sanga “society, company”, then “with”.


Ablative instrumental (Modern Hindi se) is now traced from sama “equal, even” (Tiwari 1955, Chatak 1966) in the instrumental sam.ena (saẽ > saĩ > sẽ), but has long been derived from a verb (Hoernle), sunto “being”. Other ablative markers also derived from existential verbs include te/tī (northern dialects) < hunti < hontai < hontako, present participle, “being, staying”, thaï from the past participle of stha “stand, stay”, or bāṭī, baĩ in Garhwali/Kumaoni from the verbal noun vartamana (< vṛt “turn, expand”).

Questions: does the extension in functional range, eventually resulting in new categories (dative, then marked accusative, and experiencer, or instrumental then incapacitated or inhibited agent, inadvertent agent) pertain to grammaticalization? Can the experiential alignment be considered a case of grammaticalization (obligatorification of a given argument structure, parallel to the ergative alignment but with no reanalyse of the nominal predicate as a finite verb, since lexical semantics of the predicate only is responsible)

(1) kī.j.ai kī.ja.ai (Old Hindi)
do.passive.3s do.go.3s ‘is done’
inherited passive : -ya- > iy/i/ ijja > ja > j, vs modern analytical passive : V.past-participle go

(2)a mantrī-jī tumrā gaũmā ayā bal (Garhwali)
minister-HON POS2 village.OBL come.PFV bal[speak.CV]
[I heard / it’s said that] the minister came to your village

(2)b baɾī sundar dikhī hai bal (Kumaoni Hindi)
great beautiful seem.FSG PRES bal[speak.CV]
‘It is said / I heard that she looks very beautiful

(2)c baɾī sundar dikhī hai kahā (Kumaoni Hindi)
great beautiful seem.FSG PRES kahā[say.ms]
‘I say/believe me, she really looks very beautiful’

(3) u dekh-al-k-ain (Magahi, Eastern Hindi)
3 see.past-3-3Honorific ‘he saw him[Honor]’
2 participants indexed in the verb, replicating the Mundari (Austro-Asiatic language) pattern, may-be form: -k-

(4)a rupay ō us-ō le lo (Bangru Western Hindi/Panjabi)
money ACC 3S.ABL take take.IMPER
‘take the money from him’ (from Tiwari 1956: 177)

b. kutte nae dande nae mārya (Central Bangaru, Singh 1970)
dog.ACC stick.INSTR beat.IMPER
(1) ‘Strike the dog with a stick’

c. balkā nae toriyā honge (children.ERG break.MP PRESuMPTive give.IMPER
d. ghor nae pānī pyā de horse.DAT water drink.CAUS
References (general)

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