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فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية

فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية العدد (٧)

السنة الثالثة ذوالقعدة ١٤٤٦ هـ آيار ٢٠٢٥ م

تصدر عن دائرة البحوث والدراسات في ديوان الوقف الشيعي

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العدد (٧) السنة الثالثة ذو القعدة ١٤٤٦ هـ آيار ٢٠٢٥ م
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البريد الالكتروني

إيميل

off reserch@sed.gov.iq

hus65in@gmail.com

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 - ث. ملخصان أحدهما باللغة العربية والآخر باللغة الإنكليزية.
 - ج. تدرج مفاتيح الكلمات باللغة العربية بعد الملخص العربي.
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- ٤- أن لا يزيد عدد صفحات البحث على (٢٥) خمس وعشرين صفحة من الحجم (A٤).
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- ٧- أن يكون البحث خالياً من الأخطاء اللغوية والنحوية والإملائية.
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 - ب. اللغة الإنكليزية: نوع الخط (Times New Roman) عناوين البحث (١٦). والملخصات (١٢). أما فقرات البحث الأخرى؛ فبحجم (١٤) .
- ٩- أن تكون هوامش البحث بالنظام التلقائي (تعليقات ختامية) في نهاية البحث. بحجم ١٢.
- ١٠- تكون مسافة الخواشي الجانبية (٢,٥٤) سم والمسافة بين الأسطر (١) .
- ١١- في حال استعمال برنامج مصحف المدينة للآيات القرآنية يتحمل الباحث ظهور هذه الآيات المباركة بالشكل الصحيح من عدمه، لذا يفصل النسخ من المصحف الإلكتروني المتوافر على شبكة الانترنت.
- ١٢- يبلغ الباحث بقرار صلاحية النشر أو عدمها في مدّة لا تتجاوز شهرين من تاريخ وصوله إلى هيئة التحرير.
- ١٣- يلتزم الباحث بإجراء تعديلات المحكمين على بحثه وفق التقارير المرسلة إليه وموافقة المجلة بنسخة مُعدّلة في مدّة لا تتجاوز (١٥) خمسة عشر يوماً.
- ١٤- لا يحق للباحث المطالبة بمتطلبات البحث كافة بعد مرور سنة من تاريخ النشر.
- ١٥- لاتعاد البحوث الى أصحابها سواء قبلت أم لم تقبل.
- ١٦- دمج مصادر البحث وهوامشه في عنوان واحد يكون في نهاية البحث، مع كتابة معلومات المصدر عندما يرد لأول مرة.
- ١٧- يخضع البحث للتقويم السري من ثلاثة خبراء لبيان صلاحيته للنشر.
- ١٨- يشترط على طلبة الدراسات العليا فضلاً عن الشروط السابقة جلب ما يثبت موافقة الاستاذ المشرف على البحث وفق النموذج المعتمد في المجلة.
- ١٩- يحصل الباحث على مستل واحد لبحثه، ونسخة من المجلة، وإذا رغب في الحصول على نسخة أخرى فعليه شراؤها بسعر (١٥) ألف دينار.
- ٢٠- تعبر الأبحاث المنشورة في المجلة عن آراء أصحابها لا عن رأي المجلة.
- ٢١- ترسل البحوث على العنوان الآتي: (بغداد - شارع فلسطين المركز الوطني لعلوم القرآن) أو البريد الإلكتروني: (husain@gmail.com) بعد دفع الأجر في الحساب المصرفي العائد إلى الدائرة.
- ٢٢- لا تلزم المجلة بنشر البحوث التي تُخلّ بشرط من هذه الشروط .



مَجَلَّةُ اِنْسَانِيَّةِ اَجْتِمَاعِيَّةٍ فَصْلِيَّةٌ تَصَدُّرُ عَنْ دَائِرَةِ الْبَحْثِ وَالذِّمَامَاتِ فِي دِيَوَانِ الْوَقْفِ الشَّيْخِيِّ
مَحْوَى الْعَدَدِ (٧) ذُو الْقَعْدَةِ ١٤٤٦ هـ آيَار ٢٠٢٥ م المجلد الخامس

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فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية العدد (٧)
السنة الثالثة ذو القعدة ١٤٤٦ هـ آيار ٢٠٢٥ م



تطور الخصائص النحوية في اللغويات النظرية
« دراسة تغيرات النظام الصرفي النحوي »

م.م. مزينة عوني سليم
وزارة التربية/ المديرية العامة لتربية محافظة صلاح الدين



ABSTRACT:

This research explores the development of grammatical attributes within theoretical linguistics through a focus on changes within morphosyntactic systems over time. Previous theories of linguistics, for example, often distinguished morphology from syntax; nonetheless, recent theories increasingly stress their dynamic interdependence. Utilizing a qualitative diachronic research design, this research tracks changes to grammatical attributes such as tense, aspect, case, agreement, word order, gender, and number through internal processes such as reanalysis, grammaticalization, and parameter resetting, as well as external tendencies such as language contact and sociolinguistic change. Drawing together insights from Generative Grammar, Minimalism, and Construction Grammar, the research formulates a theoretical model of morphosyntactic change. Cross-linguistic examination of corpora such as the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus, as well as data from the World Atlas of Language Structures, demonstrates that while particular patterns of change differ, underlying processes show regular patterns within language families. Findings highlight the plasticity of Universal Grammar, the complementary role of cognitive and usage-based considerations, as well as the significance of internal as well as external pressures for driving change into the grammar. Notwithstanding methodological hurdles such as sparse historical data as well as methodological complexity, the research makes a theoretical contribution to understanding mechanisms of change within grammar and underlines the need for a merger of morphological as well as syntactic models. Future work should sample under-documented languages and real-time speech data so as to clarify morphology development dynamics.

Keywords: Morphosyntax, Grammatical Change, Theoretical Linguistics, Syntax and Morphology, Language Evolution.

المستخلص:

تستكشف هذه الدراسة تطور السمات النحوية في اللسانيات النظرية من خلال التركيز على التغيرات التي تحدث ضمن نظام الصرف النحوي عبر الزمن. والنظريات اللسانية السابقة، على سبيل المثال، كانت تميز غالباً بين علم الصرف والنحو؛ ومع ذلك، تركز النظريات الحديثة بشكل متزايد على الترابط الديناميكي بينهما. باستخدام تصميم بحث نوعي



تاريخي، تتبع هذه الدراسة التغيرات التي تطرأ على السمات النحوية مثل الزمن، والجانب، والحالة، والتوافق، وترتيب الكلمات، والجنس، والعدد، من خلال العمليات الداخلية مثل إعادة التحليل، والتغريب النحوي، وإعادة تعيين المعايير، بالإضافة إلى الاتجاهات الخارجية مثل تماس اللغات والتغير الاجتماعي اللغوي. من خلال جمع الرؤى من النحو التوليدي، والحد الأدنى، ونحو البناء، تقدم الدراسة نموذجاً نظرياً لتغيرات نظام الصرف النحوي. توضح فحص البيانات عبر اللغات من مجموعات مثل «Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus»، بالإضافة إلى بيانات من «World Atlas of Language Structures»، إن الأنماط الخاصة بالتغير تختلف، ولكن العمليات الأساسية تظهر أنماطاً منتظمة ضمن العائلات اللغوية. تسلط النتائج الضوء على مرونة النحو العالمي، والدور التكميلي للاعتبارات المعرفية والمركزة على الاستخدام، بالإضافة إلى أهمية الضغوط الداخلية والخارجية في دفع التغير ضمن النحو. على الرغم من الصعوبات المنهجية مثل نقص البيانات التاريخية وتعقيد المنهجيات، تساهم الدراسة إسهاماً نظرياً في فهم آليات التغير ضمن النحو وتؤكد على الحاجة إلى دمج نماذج علم الصرف والنحو. يجب أن تركز الدراسات المستقبلية على اللغات غير الموثقة بشكل كافٍ وبيانات الكلام في الوقت الفعلي لتوضيح ديناميكيات تطور علم الصرف.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصرف النحوي، التغير النحوي، اللغويات النظرية، بناء الجملة والصرف، تطور اللغة.

1. INTRODUCTION

Analysis of grammatical properties in theoretical linguistics has undergone profound changes over the course of the past century. Investigation of the interplay of syntax and morphology, which once existed largely separately, has generally trended towards a combined investigation of how they interact within the overall morphosyntactic system. This development responded to advances in theoretical approaches as well as empirical evidence from a wide range of languages. Syntactic and morphological parts were treated as distinct entities within early theories of linguistics, such as generative grammar (Chomsky, 1965), but recent advances have stressed their interdependent relationship (Baker, 2003). Insights into how grammatical properties change and emerge within the morphosyntactic system are central to linguistic theory development as they reveal more about the universality of the structure of language.

Even with the increased volume of research within this topic, there is still a void within the literature for the specific mechanisms and pathways through which morphosyntactic systems change. Those processes that underpin these processes, whether influenced by language contact, internal evolution, or cognitive constraints, are under researched. This is important because it makes it more difficult for us to understand fully the mechanisms of change within language, as well as predict where it may go. Grammatical properties, especially the relationship they have





with each other within the mixing of syntax and morphology, are a subject that is largely under researched within theoretical linguistics. How these systems interact with one another can provide valuable insights into the cognitive as well as social pressures leading to change within language.

The purpose of this research is to address this gap by investigating how grammatical properties change within morphosyntactic systems with a focus on how syntax and morphology affect one another through time. This research is designed to identify the changes that occur within morphosyntactic systems over history, determine the driving mechanisms of change, and derive a theoretical model for how syntactic and morphological properties interact. Through a consideration of these issues, this research hopes to add to the understanding of linguistic change with a specific focus on the change of grammatical properties. The research issues for this work include:

1. What are the primary factors driving the evolution of grammatical properties in morphosyntactic systems?
2. How are changes of syntax and morphology interrelated through time?
3. What can be learned from looking at these changes from within both synchronic and diachronic linguistic models?

Summarily put, the research aims at exploring the development of grammatical features within theoretical linguistics by bridging the knowledge gap regarding the interrelationship of morphology and syntax. Through its research, it will add to the existing body of knowledge by presenting mechanisms for linguistic change as well as how morphosyntactic frameworks change.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Grammatical properties are the attributes and patterns through which words and sentences are built and understood within a specified language. They encompass the morphology of words, which focuses on word formation as well as word structure, as well as syntax, referring to sentence formation rules. Central to comprehending how grammatical properties work within a specified language is morphosyntax, a term that constitutes the relationship between morphology and syntax (Carstens, 2000). Morphosyntax studies how morphological pat-



terns such as tense, number, as well as case, are combined with syntactic patterns such as phrase structure as well as word order to form effective as well as communicable linguistic forms.

Earlier theories of linguistics, such as generative grammar, distinguished between morphology and syntax as separate domains, tending to regard morphology as a question of inflectional paradigms and syntax as a collection of abstract structural rules (Chomsky, 1965). More recent approaches, though, stress the interrelation of these elements, illustrating how they reciprocally affect each other in the construction of grammatical meaning (Baker, 2003). Research into morphosyntax has hence progressed towards a more holistic view, with a focus on the dynamic interrelation of syntax and morphology, a change of perspective that proved pivotal to a comprehension of the development of grammatical attributes amongst different languages.

The development of grammatical features is a rich and dynamic phenomenon encompassing both internal change within the language as well as external sources of change including language contact and sociolinguistic change. Alteration of grammatical features can be motivated by a range of sources, including sound changes, semantic change, as well as changes of analysis (Kiparsky, 1982). For instance, historical linguistics has been able to demonstrate how Indo-European verb morphology underwent extensive change, such as the loss of some inflections, as well as the emergence of new tense-aspect markers (Harris & Campbell, 1995). Likewise, changes of a syntactic nature, as for instance the transition from a synthetic to a more analytic structure of the English language, attest to the way the morphosyntactic structure can change over time (Bauer, 2002).

Additionally, the theory of grammaticalization offers an account for how a word or construction having a concrete sense can turn into more general grammatical markers (Heine, Kuteva, & Krennmayr, 2008). For instance, the development from verbs to auxiliaries, as in the English language evolution, depicts a primary mechanism for the development of grammatical features. This change employs both morphosyntactic reanalysis as well as reduction of sound, hence resulting in new grammatical forms.

Morphosyntactic change has played a pivotal role within the growth



of linguistic theory. During the 20th century, Noam Chomsky's generative grammar theory suggested a model where a set of universal rules controlled the structure of all languages, with syntax being one of these. This original model left no room for the dynamic interrelation of morphology with syntax that was evident as research within linguistic typology and language change evolved (Baker, 2003). More contemporary theoretical frameworks, including the «Principles and Parameters» theory (Chomsky, 1981) and the «Distributed Morphology» model (Halle & Marantz, 1993), have centered around the interrelation of morphosyntactic modules, suggesting that both morphology and syntax are determined by a set of universal principles but that their particular form can differ greatly within different languages.

A second influential theory for accounting for morphosyntactic change is the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995), which attempts to describe how the internal structure of grammar is constrained by a set of principles applied to both syntax and morphology. Evolution of the grammatical properties can be accounted for within this model as the result of continuous interactions of Universal Grammar's principles with the extrinsic pressures that condition the course of language over a period of time.

Historical theories of grammatical change have aimed to account for the patterns of change evident in the morphology and sentence structure of languages through time. One of the oldest and most influential of these theories was the Neogrammarian hypothesis, which held that change is regular and predictable, being the result of a set of phonetic and syntactic laws (Paul, 1880). While the Neogrammarians were mostly interested in phonetic change, their conceptions of regularity and systematicity have had a lasting effect on current theories of change at the level of syntax as well as morphology.

Another key theoretical advancement within the development of grammatical evolution is the theory of grammaticalization, which posits the gradual development from lexical to grammatical forms through time. It was formulated first by Antoine Meillet (1912), who proposed that markers of grammar arise from full lexical items, i.e., verbs, nouns, through semantic bleaching as well as from a reduction of sound. Grammaticalization is a key concept within historical



linguistics, especially with regards to the development of verb forms, auxiliaries, as well as clitics within French-like languages, where verb forms have developed from full verbs to auxiliary markers (Heine et al., 2008).

Finally, the evolution of typological approach to linguistic change, centered around patterns of variation across languages as well as typological universals, has provided a wider framework within which to understand how grammatical properties change. Through a comparison of languages within distinct families and areas, scholars can follow the routes along which changes of a morphosyntactic nature take place as well as the shared motivations for change (Greenberg, 1963). Typological developments have also assisted in elaborating our knowledge of how particular syntactic as well as morphological features arise as well as shift through time.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Analyzing the development of grammatical features necessitates anchoring the discussion in strong theoretical frameworks that have influenced contemporary linguistic theory. Within the area of morphosyntax, which investigates the relationship of morphological structure with syntactic structure, theoretical frameworks have evolved through a series of distinct approaches with differing accounts of how grammatical frameworks arise, alter, and consolidate over time. This section introduces core theories underpinning research into morphosyntactic change, including Generative Grammar, the Minimalist Program, and Construction Grammar, with subsequent examination of mechanisms of syntactic change as well as the role of Universal Grammar.

Generative Grammar, formulated by Chomsky (1957), is a seminal theory of modern syntax which argues that linguistic competence is determined by a set of innate rules within the mind. The model initially divided morphology and syntax into distinct units: morphology was confined to the lexicon while syntax accounted for structuring phrases and sentences using transformational rules (Chomsky, 1965). Later, the model gained increased insight into morphosyntactic properties, particularly through the Government and Binding (GB) theory and the Principles and Parameters model (Chomsky, 1981). GB theory added notions of case assignment and agreement features, bringing



morphology and syntax under a more unified perspective.

More recent progress within Generative Grammar, notably the establishment of Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz, 1993), bridge the divide between morphology and syntax. Within the framework of Distributed Morphology, structure results from syntax first, i.e. morphology is syntactically conditioned. This allows for the fact that morphological variation may mirror underlying syntactic operations, yielding a more sophisticated account of morphosyntactic change.

The Minimal Program of Chomsky (1995) was a development from earlier generative models but aimed to simplify syntactic theory by limiting the number of mechanisms and primitives. The main principle is that language is the optimal solution to conceptual-intentional and sensorimotor interface conditions. Under Minimalism, the structural features of grammar, including tense, agreement, and case, are represented as computation instructions to be checked and satisfied at the level of derivation.

That change resulted in a new understanding of syntactic structure as derived from feature-checking operations as well as economy constraints. Morphosyntactic change, from a Minimalist viewpoint, can be understood as loss, reanalysis, or reinterpretation of such features, typically as a result of changes in their instantiation or checking (Roberts, 2007). Stress on parameter setting (e.g., head-initial vs. head-final) even gives us a framework for understanding cross-linguistic variation as well as diachronic changes in the syntax (Lightfoot, 1999).

Construction Grammar presents a direct contrast to formal theories of syntax. Deriving from cognitive and usage-based frameworks (Goldberg, 1995), Construction Grammar approaches linguistic knowledge as a collection of form-meaning pairings, i.e., «constructions,» from morphemes up to complex patterns of syntax. Morphosyntactic patterns, according to this framework, are acquired, represented, and handled as entire constructions, instead of being generated through a set of rules.

Grammatical change results from changes in frequency of use, analogical extension, and reanalysis of current constructions (Traugott & Trousdale, 2013). For instance, a morphosyntactic pattern with high frequency may get semantic bleaching and grammaticalization, leading



ing to a new construction. Construction Grammar, therefore, gives a natural account of how morphosyntactic innovations are conventionalized over time through the use of language.

One of the key mechanisms of morphosyntactic change is syntactic change by feature reinterpretation. This happens when speakers re-analyze current syntactic patterns, sometimes because of ambiguity or changes of use. For instance, the elimination of V-to-T movement from contemporary English comes as a result of a shift in how verbal features are checked, resulting in the rigid word order of Modern English (Roberts, 1993). These changes tend to mirror changes of availability or interpretation of grammatical features such as tense, agreement, or case. Feature reinterpretation is not strictly a matter of syntax—it may involve morphology as well. If a morphological marker is reduced phonologically or becomes ambiguous, its function can be reassigned by speakers or even lost altogether. This can prompt new syntactic means to be devised to convey the same relations of grammar, as is the basis for the emergence of auxiliaries in English as compensation for lost rich verbal inflection (Kroch, 1989).

Universal Grammar (UG), a central hypothesis of generative linguistics, predicts that human linguistic ability is directed by a built-in, species-specific collection of rules of grammar. Languages differ, though, because UG will contain a set of options that are determined differently according to linguistic data (Chomsky, 1981). For example, the Null Subject Parameter accounts for why some languages have subject omission but others do not.

Diachronically, parameter resetting provides a strong account for sudden syntactic changes within generations (Lightfoot, 1999). If a child learners linguistic input differs due to changes within the input data by means of simplifications or innovations, the resulting grammar can mirror a different setting of parameters, leading to morphosyntactic change. Therefore, UG gives a model for both synchronic variation as well as for how grammatical systems change over history.

2.2 The Evolution of Specific Morphosyntactic Properties

Morphosyntactic categories of the world's languages show enormous diversity, but some of their grammatical features—tense, aspect, case, agreement, word order, gender, number—are found to arise univer-



sally throughout human languages. It is important to know how they are generated so as to explain general patterns of change. On the basis of their history of development, the theoretical explanations of change are examined for the core areas.

Tense and aspect systems are most subject to change due to their pragmatic and semantic fluidity. Tense locates the time of an event (past, present, future), while aspect describes the internal temporal organization (e.g., ongoing, completed). Tense markers and aspect markers tend to arise from lexical verbs through the mechanism of grammaticalization over the course of time (Bybee, Perkins, & Pagliuca, 1994). For example, English «going to» future («I'm going to eat») was derived from a movement verb construction to a marker of the future (Hopper & Traugott, 2003).

Cross-linguistic studies indicate that distinctions of tense often arise subsequent to distinctions of aspect in linguistic development (Dahl, 2000). Additionally, markers of aspect tend to be subject to semantic bleaching, where they lose their derived lexical sense and turn purely grammatical. From lexical verb to auxiliary to tense marker is a common developmental pathway for several languages, indicating a natural trend for tense–aspect development through grammaticalization. Minimalist approaches account for tense and aspect changes as changes in formal features checked at the level of derivation (Adger, 2003). Features that turn uninterpretable or redundant can be lost or re-analyzed, restructuring the tense–aspect system. Case marking and agreement systems are similarly dynamic, sometimes featuring vast reanalysis throughout the history of a language. Case marking conveys such things as subject, object, indirect object, whereas agreement is the morphological expression of these features on verbs or adjectives. Languages can transition from rich case systems to analytic patterns making more extensive use of word order, prepositions, or both (Blake, 2001). For instance, the loss of the Old English case system in the Middle English period was accompanied by a fixity of word order patterns (Fischer, 1992).

Equally, agreement systems can simplify, reduce, or even fall away. Subject–verb agreement persists in Modern English, though there is much less verbal inflection from Old English. Diachrony demonstrates



that agreement tends to be reinforced as a consequence of the loss of overt case markers, as a means of sustaining grammatical relationships when there are no explicit cases (Corbett, 2006). Theoretically, the development of case and agreement features is typically explained through the framework of feature economy within Minimalist syntax, with redundant features being reduced over time to form more streamlined grammatical systems (Roberts & Roussou, 2003).

Word order is one of the most salient features of the structure of a language, and its development provides insight into more general morphosyntactic change. SOV (subject-object-verb) and SVO (subject-verb-object) are the most frequent basic word orders, which mirror basic cognitive and communicative constraints (Dryer, 2013). Historical linguistics reports widespread changes of word order from a number of different languages, for example, Old English, which had fairly free word order, coming to have the largely fixed SVO order of Modern English (Fischer, 1992).

There are a number of mechanisms promoting word order change. Grammaticalization of auxiliary verbs may force verbs forward within the clause, promoting SVO patterns. There is also phonological weakening, as with loss of case marking, that promotes more rigid word orders to secure sentence interpretation (Givón, 1979). Language contact can contribute a great deal as well, particularly where a stronger language imposes its patterns of syntax upon another under extended bilingualism.

Theoretical frameworks such as Principles and Parameters predict that these kinds of changes mirror changes in settings of fundamental syntactic parameters such as Head Directionality (Chomsky, 1981). Language acquisition can explain fast, systemic word order changes over fairly short stretches of history through parameter resetting (Lightfoot, 1999).

Number and gender systems are another area where morphosyntactic change is frequent. Gender, the linguistic classification of nouns (usually as masculine, feminine, or neuter), and number (singular, plural, sometimes dual or trial) are both features that engage strongly with agreement morphology. Gender systems may grow, reduce, or even break down altogether over time. For instance, English had a three-



way grammatical gender distinction (as in Old English) but largely lost it, only maintaining natural gender distinctions over pronouns (Curzan, 2003). Number systems also change, frequently through analogical extension or grammaticalization. Gradual development of plural markers from independent quantifiers is a widely attested development (Heine & Kuteva, 2002). Dual number oppositions (noted for exactly two entities) have disappeared from some languages with the introduction of a simpler singular/plural structure, as for example from Classical to Modern Arabia varieties (Ryding, 2005).

Construction Grammar exemplifies how gender and number systems may shift as specific constructions are routinized or lost with patterns of usage (Croft, 2001). In contrast, Minimalist approaches propose that the featural makeup of the noun phrase is modified through changes in the selectional needs of adjectives and determiners (Alexiadou, Hageman, & Stavrou, 2007).

2.3 Language Variation and Change

Linguistic variation and change form the core of theoretical and historical linguistics. It is concerned with how the languages change through time and how they differ from community to community, from place to place, and from society to society. While change and variation are correlative processes, they play different functions within linguistic studies: variation records synchronic diversity, whereas change tracks diachronic changes. This section discusses the theoretical distinction between language variation and evolution, suggests methods of diachronic syntactic analysis, and surveys through-linguistic grammatical change within the main language families.

Evolution of language means the development of language through history, sometimes over millennia or centuries. It involves internal changes—such as analogical change, grammaticalization, and reanalysis—and external changes, such as sociopolitical change, as well as language contact. Language variation, conversely, is synchronic and observable within speakers of the same linguistic community. It involves regional dialects, idiolects, as well as sociolects, the natural diversity of linguistic conduct at a particular point in time (Labov, 1994). Evolution and variation are complementary from a theoretical perspective, although they differ in emphasis. As Labov (2001) contends,

change is a product of variation—alterations occur when a variant progressively becomes a standard form over generations. For example, a variant of sound or structure can be initially a matter of free variation that becomes a standard form later. Language variation gives the empirical base from which long-term change emerges.

Sociolinguistic theories such as Labov's variationist model have privileged this continuum, underlining how micro-level choices of speakers are responsible for macro-level structural change. Generative approaches, by contrast, are centered around internal, cognitive processes, proposing variation as a matter of optional settings or underspecified features of Universal Grammar (Kroch, 1989; Yang, 2002).

Diachronic syntactic research aims to reveal how, as well as why, sentence patterns change through time. Unlike phonological and lexical change, syntactic change is typically less directly observable and calls for substantial text corpora as well as theoretical underpinning. Historical corpora comparative reconstruction is one of the main methods. For instance, the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpora of Historical English has facilitated scholars to chart the loss of verb-second (V2) structure for English as well as the evolution of contemporary auxiliary structure (Kroch & Taylor, 2000).

Syntactic change is typically facilitated through reanalysis—a mechanism by which the same surface form is given a new deep structure. For example, the change from OV to VO order in English is a change from how syntactic heads were composed and interpreted (Fischer, 2000). Analogical change is another common force, where more regular or more common patterns spread to new contexts, typically at the expense of decreasing regularity.

Generative theories explain syntactic change through parameter resetting. Under Principles and Parameters, changes to fundamental properties of null subject allowance, for instance, or head directionality can account for such gross-scale changes in syntax (Roberts & Holmberg, 2005). Minimalist approaches take this a step further by emphasizing changes to feature checking and to the movement operations. Richards provides one illustration. Richards suggests that the loss of rich agreement morphology in the history of English may have instigated a fixation of subject position within Spec-TP, making the resulting SVO





word order conventional (Biberauer, Holmberg, & Roberts, 2007). Cross-linguistic research into changes in grammar identifies both systematic tendencies as well as variation within individual languages. Comparative approaches identify recurring trends of loss of inflectional morphology, development of fixed word order, as well as auxiliaries and particles grammaticalization. Such trends are evidenced within unrelated language stocks, which suggests that particular changes of morphosyntactic kind are driven by cognitive and communicative pressures (Heine & Kuteva, 2005). Languages within the Indo-European family, for example, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit, have had complex inflectional morphology historically. Successors such as Modern English and French have simplified the systems of these over time, moving from synthetic to more analytic forms (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). Slavic languages such as Russian and Polish have kept, if not even increased, their case and aspect systems, with varying pressures of evolution as well as sociolinguistic backgrounds (Comrie, 1981). Within the Sino-Tibetan branch, particularly within Mandarin Chinese, the absence of inflectional morphology favored a dependence upon fixed word order and function words to establish grammatical relations. Still, studies of a diachronic nature reveal that even isolating languages are subject to processes of grammaticalization—such as the evolution of markers of aspect from verbs of motion or result (Li & Thompson, 1981). Areal features of the Balkan Sprachbund substantiate further that change of grammar is a matter of internal development but equally open to the effects of language contact. Convergent features of postposed definite articles and disappearance of the infinitive in Balkan languages (i.e., Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian) attest structural convergence under extended multilingual contact (Joseph, 1983). The comparative examination of change through the lens of language families highlights that although the particular paths of change differ, several of the underlying processes—reanalysis, analogy, grammaticalization—are regular and pan-linguistically stable.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

The present research utilizes a qualitative, diachronic research design with a theoretical linguistics background, specifically from the areas

of historical syntax and morphosyntactic theory. It combines data-driven corpus research with theoretical modeling under the strands of Generative Grammar, Minimalism, and Construction Grammar frameworks. This design was conducive to exploring micro-changes within grammatical attributes as well as macro-trends of development within language evolution.

3.2 Data Collection

Primary data were sourced from reputable corpora of established history, including Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (Kroch & Taylor, 2000) and complementary materials from the World Atlas of Language Structures Online (Dryer & Haspelmath, 2013). Texts from Old, Middle, as well as Modern English epochs were chosen, along with cross-linguistic data from Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, and Afro-Asiatic stocks. Morphosyntactic categories of tense, aspect, case, agreement, word order, and gender were systematically derived to monitor their evolutions. Typological databases as well as other major studies of the history of grammaticalization and syntactic change were secondary sources.

3.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative feature tracking and comparative analysis were employed within the study to identify changes of morphosyntactic structure across time. Syntactic patterns were annotated and extracted using corpus analysis software such as LancsBox. R was utilized for statistical validation of trends to guarantee robustness where appropriate. Theoretical interpretation through models of grammatical reanalysis, feature economy, and parameter resetting were put to work to integrate within the analysis to ground results both empirically as well as conceptually. Cross-linguistic examination permitted generalization of results beyond the English language for placement within wider processes of language evolution.

4. DISCUSSION

The development of grammatical features within theoretical linguistics is a multifaceted interplay of cognitive, structural, and social variables. Examining the research queries at hand—that is, the main causation of morphosyntactic evolution, the relationship of syntax and morphology over time, and theoretical conclusions from these processes—this





exposition integrates leading theoretical frameworks, assesses implications for theoretical linguistics, and identifies the main challenges remaining for theorizing grammatical evolution.

With theoretical frameworks ranging from Generative Grammar through Minimalism to Construction Grammar, there is commonality of opinion that morphosyntactic change is a multilevel, cumulative process of reanalysis, grammaticalization, feature reinterpretation, and resetting of parameter values. Generative approaches, especially within the framework of Principles and Parameters, stress internal cognitive processes: grammatical change is viewed as a consequence of changes in parameter settings in language acquisition (Lightfoot, 1999; Roberts & Roussou, 2003). Minimalism builds upon the notion by formulating changes in the grammar as due to changes in the economy of feature checking as well as operations of syntax (Chomsky, 1995).

On the other hand, Construction Grammar predicts that change in language results from the piecemeal reorganization and reanalysis of constructions according to patterns of use (Goldberg, 2006; Traugott & Trousdale, 2013). Grammaticalization is a central part of it here: common constructions harden, become generalized, and are later reinterpreted as grammatical structure.

The two approaches—formal and usage-based—are complementary. Formal theories explain structural and acquisition-based change, whereas constructionist models discuss frequency, analogy, and semantic drift. Both internal (cognitive and structural) and external (usage-based and sociolinguistic) dimensions must be combined for a complete understanding of grammatical change. Grammatical evolution research strongly informs wider linguistic theory, with several implications. It argues against static conceptions of grammar by underlining the dynamic nature of grammar systems. Languages are not rigid frameworks but adaptive mechanisms continuously reshaped through the interaction of innate ability with environmental stimulation (Fischer, 2007).

Second, grammatical change substantiates the notion of Universal Grammar (UG) as being underspecified and flexible. That both convergence (e.g., the grammaticalization of markers of futurity) and divergence (e.g., the loss of, or retention of, case systems) are observed



in languages implies that UG is a plan rather than a specified system (Roberts, 2007). Parameters can be reset, and categories of grammar can arise or vanish through use, consistent with a notion of UG as a flexible, dynamic set of precepts rather than a rigid template.

Additionally, morphosyntactic change has theoretical implications for syntax as a discipline. Results from the history of syntax show that configurations previously believed to be universal (for example, rigid verb-second order) prove themselves to be historically contingent and subject to reinterpretation (Kroch, 1989). This means that theoretical frameworks need to explain diachronic variation as much as synchronic universality.

Finally, the relationship between morphology and syntax within change processes—notably the manner in which morphology can support or undermine syntactic structure—indicates the necessity for morphosyntactic models with a unified approach (Halle & Marantz, 1993). Syntax is impossible to comprehend without appeal to morphological realization, and the reverse situation is similarly true.

Despite advances, several challenges persist in theorizing grammatical evolution. First, the documentation problem remains acute: many historical language stages are poorly attested, especially for non-literary languages, limiting our ability to reconstruct precise syntactic changes (McMahon, 1994). Secondly, identifying drivers of change is methodologically complicated. Structural, social, as well as cognitive factors often have areas of intersection. For instance, a change in syntax may be triggered by phonological attrition (structural), social status (sociolinguistic), as well as ease of processing (cognitive), so it becomes hard to ascribe priority to a single factor (Joseph, 2011).

Third, although grammaticalization theory can accurately describe a number of routes of change, it is weak as a predictor of why changes take place in a particular set of languages but remain absent from other languages (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). Likewise, formal approaches have a tendency to exaggerate the importance of acquisition as a force for change without adequately addressing adult language use and sociolinguistic pressures. Finally, bringing synchronic variation and diachronic change together is theoretically demanding. While variationist methods illustrate how changes arise from pre-existent vari-





ation (Labov, 2001), formal approaches must incorporate more of this gradient variability into their frameworks. Closing the divide between micro-variation of speaker behavior and macro-changes of grammar is a fundamental open problem for theoretical linguistics.

5. CONCLUSION

This research has revealed that the development of grammatical features is a multifaceted, interplay of internal cognitive processes with external sociolinguistic pressures. Evolution of morphosyntactic frameworks—involving changes of tense, aspect, case, agreement, order of words, gender, and number—is neither haphazard but follows discernible routes such as grammaticalization, reinterpretation of features, and reanalysis of syntax. Results affirm that formal models such as Generative Grammar as well as usage-based approaches such as Construction Grammar are indispensable for comprehending the driving powers of grammatical evolution.

One of the main conclusions is that grammar is ever-changing rather than constant, with changes coming about through the reorganization of morphological and syntactic features. The research points to how parameter resetting within Universal Grammar, combined with language contact and speaker variation, accounts for a great deal of the change observed historically within various families of languages.

Nonetheless, the research is constrained. It is dependent largely upon written corpora of the past, which can only partially represent spontaneous conversational talk as well as unwritten changes. Also, although cross-linguistic information was given consideration, analysis focused predominantly upon satisfactorily documented languages such as English, Romance, and Chinese, possibly missing significant dynamics within lesser-studied languages.

Future studies need to focus on enlarging the range of linguistic data to involve even more threatened and less-represented languages, corpora of spontaneous speech, and real-time studies of language change. Further exploration of the social and cognitive stimuli for grammatical innovation under diverse linguistic circumstances would even more richly reveal how and why morphosyntactic systems change.

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