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PATHWAYS TO MARKING FUTURITY IN ENGLISH

ШЛЯХИ ПОЗНАЧЕННЯ ФУТУРАЛЬНОСТІ В АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ

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The conceptual notion of locating actions or states in time seems to be relevant to any human (= natural) language and presupposes an inventory of linguistic means to mark this location. These include lexicon units for expressing time location and measurement, i.e. time adverbials *tomorrow, later, usually*; lexically composite structures with time clauses, e.g. *a week after she called*; and a set of grammaticalised expressions represented by tense forms specific to a certain language. The exponents that signal the time when a predicated event takes place are referred to as tense markers [4, pp. 7–10; 6, p. 591]. Traditional grammars associate the category of tense with the verb, while some more recent interpretations assign tense to the whole sentence or, logically, the whole proposition. Still, regarding tense as a verb category remains topical, with new supporting arguments revealed [4, p. 12].

Situations are normally encoded by a predicate and located by tense in relation to some other event or time, e.g. a moment of speech. This relativity allows to identify tense as a deictic category with at least three potential relative orderings. One event may be past, simultaneous, or subsequent to another event, and this is marked by specific tense affixes of the verb or auxiliaries. Tense can be seen as a relation between time points or time spans or, alternatively, as a relation between two events or situations. The latter view somewhat blurs the temporal reference, making the event duration less relevant [6, pp. 591–596].

A language at different stages of its development produced different inventories of features and syntactic projections. In the Minimalist framework of generative grammar, the finite T (tense) head, or Infl (inflection), is defined as the locus of tense features (past / non-past) and of agreement features (person, number). It is also the place for pure modals to merge into the derivation [3, p. 49]. English modals developed from verbs to T (Infl) heads in Middle and Early Modern English, which means that modality entered the English T (Infl system) during these periods. Prior to this change, the pre-modals (preterite-present verbs) were verbs whose modal meaning was fully lexical, not grammatical, so they merged externally in *v*. This recategorisation is analysed as a gradual series of events and involves the demise of grammatical properties typical for lexical verbs (licensing objects, present / past correspondence) [3, pp. 50–56; 5, pp.1–2].

The grammatical features of pre-modals were restructured as inflectional elements inserted in T (Infl). Analysing the use of present to denote future meanings in Old English is quite puzzling due to the ambiguity of present / future interpretation of the structures, which is not always clearly derived from the contexts. Old English present tense was "merely non-past, not contrastively non-modal or non-future", so it frequently allowed future interpretations. In Early Modern English, modality has become a "contrastive feature of the English tense – mood – aspect system". The present simple tense is analysed as contrastively non-modal; hence, it cannot be used with T (Infl) including modality [5, pp. 3–7].

Old English present forms had a wider range of futurity meanings than they do in Early Modern English, where future is categorically expressed by modals with faded modal semantics. Middle English is regarded a transitional period between Old English marked by absence of modality and Early Modern English characterised by modality with a fully contrastive role. At this intermediate stage, modals optionally marked futurity, while present forms display the full range of future meanings. Old English does not possess modality in T (Infl) system; in Early Modern English, it becomes an integral part of T (Infl) "spelled out by modals" as a result of marking present forms as contrastively non-modal. Before the development of modality as the contrastive feature and the modal verbs as a morpho-syntactically distinct class of inflectional elements in English, there was no grammatical contrast between present and future-reference clauses, so present was used for both. Middle English is a period of competition, after which modality becomes fully contrastive in Early Modern English and determines the use of grammaticalised modals in clauses with future-time reference [5, pp. 8–10].

English has innovated the periphrastic future and further on, its derived subcategories, such as future perfect and future continuous [8, p. 293].

Alongside their designated future meaning, tense morphemes in various languages, including English, may indicate an array of other meanings that are not strictly temporal. Among those are "desire, intention, obligation, necessity, imminence, habitual, general truth, characteristic behaviour, command, polite request, supposition" [2, p. 109]. If viewed diachronically, these meanings pose a question of their emergence: are they the traces of older, practically extinct meanings or are they more recent derivations? Future morphemes express prediction by which a proposition is expected to be true in time succeeding the speech moment. In British English, verbs denoting desire (*will*), obligation (*shall*), and movement (*be going to*) are common lexical sources of future markers. These three primary semantic notions gradually develop into a new sense of prediction [1, pp. 30–37; 2, pp. 109–112; 7, pp. 12–13].

Since desire and obligation are psychological and motivational states based on personal wishes or social principles and commitments, the corresponding verbs originally license a willful and animate agent; movement verbs, in their turn, require a subject capable of movement. As the original lexical meanings are fading, the verbs begin to allow a wider scope of subjects. Still, the original senses are preserved in certain contexts adding shades to the core meaning of future. In other words, future morphemes partially retain the original lexical meaning of the verb they develop from; they do not create a secondary meaning from the future [2, p. 112].

Will in English is a future marker developed from a verb (OE form *willan*) that took an infinitival complement and expressed volition, a slightly weaker sense of willingness, sometimes in combination with intention or prediction. When inanimate subjects appear in Middle English structures, it signals the semantic shift of *will* from pure volition to more dominant prediction and the loss of modal meaning / flavour. The verb *shall* (OE form *sculan*) with original meaning "owe" combined with bare infinitives in Old English structures to express obligation and necessity. In Middle English, *shall* increasingly occurs with first-person subjects and denotes intention, gradually approaching the sense of prediction. Eventually, *shall* becomes restricted to first-person predications but expands its use to inanimate, non-agent subjects to mark future reference. Present-day English preserves modal nuances of *shall* and *will* traceable to their primary lexical meanings: obligation, addressee's volition and intention for *shall*; desire, willingness and intention for *will* [1, p. 39–40; 2, pp. 114–115].

The original meaning of the structure *to be going to* is directly and quite obviously traced to the sense of progressive movement in time and space toward a goal with marking the direction by means of *to*. In Early Modern English, the notion of movement toward the goal transformed into a more figurative sense and led to the loss of location change designation. Present-

day use of *to be going to* is described as making predictions on the basis of present indicators that something will happen [1, p.41; 2, pp. 116–117]. Having the common function of encoding future reference with a possible modal or motional flavour, *shall*, *will*, and *to be going to* are semantically and, hence, pragmatically, differentiated on the basis of their original, old lexical meanings [2, pp. 118].

All the above-described changes contribute to the overview of the theory of the overall analytic shift of the English language and grammaticalisation of once fully lexical units, which had a fundamental impact on the diachronic transformation of typological features of English.

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