

1. ACCELERATED GRAMMATICALIZATION. The diachronic pathway *lexical verb* > *auxiliary* > *clitic* > *affix* is generally conceived of as a gradual change, which takes place over an extended period of time (Hopper & Closs Traugott 2003). When analyzed in formal terms (Roberts & Roussou 2003), the verb-to-affix cline involves the loss of movement and positional freezing of the lexical verb in Tense, with subsequent reanalysis as a semi-lexical auxiliary. Semantic erosion and phonological reduction may then feed into the reanalysis of the auxiliary into a particle. The theory just outlined abstracts away from factors such as speed of change. Based on a case study of the Coptic particle system, I explore the syntax of accelerated grammaticalization. The central claim is that the accelerated grammaticalization processes are responsible for typologically atypical properties of the analytic particle system. The more specific claim is that irregular grammatical features are acquired as auxiliaries are reanalyzed as tense/aspect particles, which are merged in the lower C-domain (Rizzi 1997, Cinque 1999 a.o.).

2. ANALYTICIZATION. Coptic (c. 250–1300 CE) emerged from Late (Roman) Demotic (c. 30 BCE–452 CE) in probably less than three generations. The situation is basically one of competing grammars where following a gradual decline of Demotic, large parts of the urban population move towards a hybrid Egyptian-Greek system with massive superstratum influx from Greek. In terms of the analytic-synthetic dimension, Coptic falls near the isolating pole, while Demotic can still be considered a largely synthetic-agglutinative language. The drift towards a maximally general pattern of analyticity gives rise to a diversified system of word-like tense, aspect, and modal-evidential (TAM) particles, which are both morphologically and syntactically divorced from the lexical verb. In **(1)** the Perfect tense particle *a* and the verb stem *ket* ‘to build’ appear on either side of the subject DP *tə-sophia* ‘Wisdom’. TAM particles have been grammaticalized from a mixed bag of auxiliaries, complementizers, prepositions, and nominal linkers, with various particles being derived from two or more different sources, than from a single source alone. The formation of the particle system has to it a chaotic grab-what-you-can flavor, which lies beneath its irregular grammatical features.

3. OBSERVABLE PARTICLE MOVEMENT. One such irregular feature of the analytic functional system is the possibility for TAM particle to move from their base position to a higher functional head in the left-periphery. In a variant of clitic left-dislocation (CLLD) **(2)**, we have two occurrences of one and the perfect particle *a*: the lower copy surfaces in the regular presubject position (which corresponds in structural height to the Fin(iteness) head of the Rizzian (1997) cartography; the higher copy appears in a Foc(us) position above the Aboutness-ness Shift Topic projection (Frascarelli 2007), which hosts the CLLD subject DP, as schematically represented in diagram **(3)**. The Coptic particle movement construction bears a striking resemblance to the predicate doubling structures in such diverse languages as Gungbe and Russian (Aboh & Dyakonova 2009), with which it also shares its special pragmatic flavor. It differs from cases of predicate fronting in that the category being moved is a functional head and the move-and-copy operation is contingent on a prior application of CLLD. For Cinque (1999: 189 note 22), particles are distinguished from auxiliaries in “being less prone to movement (perhaps as a consequence of their being poorer in features)”. The situation at hand is diametrically opposite insofar as auxiliary verbs in previous stages of Egyptian could neither be moved nor be copied. The syntactically observable particle movement that we see in Coptic is also remarkable from a diachronic perspective insofar as the analyticization of the functional entails the loss of movement in the normal course of events (Roberts & Holmberg 2010: 43). In undergoing focus-driven movement, Coptic particles actually pattern with finite main verbs, entailing that they have active verbal features. The applicability of movement is evidence that particles were either directly grammaticalized from main verbs (verb > particle), skipping an intermediate auxiliarization stage, or that auxiliarization did not last long enough as to remove from the grammaticalized item the relevant formal features that drive movement.

4. PARTICLE INFLECTION. In connection with analytic languages, Greenberg (1963: 85) acknowledges a category of *uninflected* auxiliaries. Dryer (1992: 99) and Cinque (1999: 189, note 22), on the other hand, consider the presence of inflection to be a decisive factor for separating auxiliaries from particles. Once again, the situation is different with Coptic TAM particles, which display context-dependent allomorphy between a shorter base form **(4a)** and a longer allomorph, where the latter contains the semantically vacuous segment *-re* **(4b)**: *ne* vs. *nere* (preterit). By virtue of *-re* epenthesis, the particle gains sufficient prosodic weight so that it can be a well-formed foot on its own. The analytical challenge that this special kind of inflection poses is that the contrast between long and short forms, although phonologically conditioned, is part of the pronominal paradigm of these particle: the long form *nere* **(4c)** resurfaces as the 2nd FEM. SING. allomorph of the preterit tense particle. From a diachronic perspective, particle inflection is all the more surprising, since neither the finite verb of VSO nor the auxiliary of Aux-SVO structures show any form of agreement with the following subject.

5. EXAPTATION. The *-re* ending originates from a lexical split of the light verb *jrj* ‘to do’ into a fully inflectable (5) and a non-inflected form (6) (Gardiner 1930). The inflected form is productively used in periphrastic tense constructions. As a light verb, *jrj* is merged in little *v* and subsequently raises to T, as exemplified in diagram (7a). To derive the uninflected variant *jr*, the light verb is merged higher up in the clause structure (presumably Fin), while the finite T node is left vacant. The reanalysis auxiliary > particle involves both *de*-inflection and *de*-semanticization of the former light verb; see diagram (7b). The uninflected particle *jr* reappears in Late Demotic, but it has lost its morphologically independent status. This can be seen from the fact that *jr* is sandwiched between the conjunctive particle *nə* and the enclitic subject pronoun (8)—a situation that is already quite close to the Coptic one. I will argue that the historical evolution of Coptic particle inflection out of a periphrastic DO-verb represents a case of *exaptation* where obsolescent morphology is reassigned to productive functions (cf. also Willis 2010).

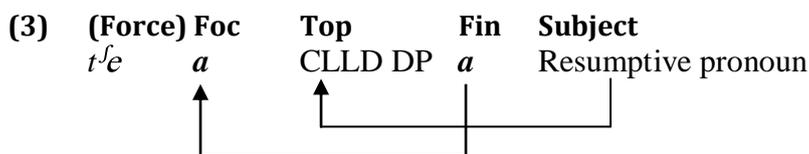
Data Sheet

(1) *Coptic AUX SVO order*

a tə-sophia ket u-ε:i na=s
 PERF DEF.F.SG-wisdom build INDEF.SG-house for=3F.SG
 ‘Wisdom has built a house for herself.’ (Proverbs 9, 1)

(2) *Coptic particle movement + copying construction*

tʰe a pə-hikanos əm-pə-dynatos a=f ti si:fe na-i emate
 COMP PERF DEF.M.SG-almighty LINK-DEF.M.SG-almighty PERF-3M.SG give grief to=1SG much
 ‘Since the Almighty One has given me a lot of grief’ (Ruth 1, 20)



(CLDD of the subject DP)
 (Particle movement + copying)

(4) *Inflected preterit particle ne*

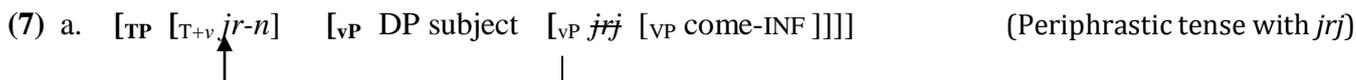
- a. *ne=s hmoos gar pe etʰəm pe-thronos ən-elephantinon* (short form 3 MASC.SG.)
 PRET=3F.SG sit PCL COP.M.SG on DEF.M.SG-throne LINK-ivory
 ‘Since she (Eudoxia) was sitting on her ivory throne’ (Eudoxia 54, 23)
- b. *nere pə-rəme na ənəh an e-oik mawaa-f* (long form, DP subject)
 PRET DEF.M.SG-man FUT live not PREP-bread alone=3M.SG
 ‘(It is written that) man would not live from bread alone.’ (Matthew 4, 4)
- c. *ən-te-he gar e nere na meste pai* (long form, 2 FEM. SG.)
 in-DEF.F.SG-manner PCL REL PRET.2.F.SG FUT hate DEM.M.SG
 ‘Even if you (woman) were going to hate this...’ (Shenoute, Amélineau I 1,112, 11)

(5) *Inflectable light verb jrj ‘to do’ in periphrastic tenses*

jr-n hm=f iy-t r tʰʔ-t pʔjj=f-tʰrm
 do-PERF majesty=POSS.3M.SG come-INF to take-INF DEF.M.SG-POSS3M.SG-helmet
 ‘His Majesty came (lit. did coming) to seize his helmet’ (Rammesside Inscriptions 2, 175, 8)

(6) *Uninflected particle jr*

jr pʔ-jj-nb r dj-t jn-tw nʔ-bʔk-w
 IR DEF.M.SG-POSS.1SG-lord to give-INF bring-PASS DEF.PL-worker-M.PL
 ‘Let my lord cause to be brought the workers ...’ (pap. Anastasi VI, 48-40)



(8) *Particle jr in verbal cluster*

ḥr imi n-jr-k wnm
 Horus come.IMP CONJ-IR=2M.SG eat.INF
 ‘Horus, come and eat!’ (London/Leiden Magical Papyrus V33, 3)

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