

Multiple source explanation in syntactic change

In a workshop convened at the 2010 conference of the *Societas Linguistica Europaea*, the concept of ‘multiple source construction’ as an explanatory factor in language change was introduced (De Smet et al. 2015). Traditionally, language change is discussed in terms of one element or construction developing into a new element or construction, even when it is recognised that the linguistic context must be taken into account (Lehmann 1992: 406, Bybee et al. 1994: 11, Traugott 2003: 266-267). Multiple source accounts, on the other hand, recognise that more than one source may have contributed to the outcome of the change, in short, it is assumed that $A > B$ does not capture the change, but rather $A + B > C$. In many cases, multiple sources explain elements that are synchronically odd or unexpected in a language or diachronic developments that have eluded explanation. The aim of the 2010 workshop was to show that multiple source accounts have explanatory force in all domains of language: phonology, lexicon, semantics, morphology and syntax, and this was exemplified with a broad range of phenomena, including phonological mergers, lexical blends, suppletion, syncretism and syntactic amalgams.

Multiple source explanations are less well-explored in syntax, so now, ten years after De Smet et al. (2015) was published, the time seems right to pull together work done in this area. We are particularly interested in cases where some other dimension of linguistic information plays a role. Examples of well-worked analyses in which both syntax and semantics play a role, such as Trousdale (2015) and Fanego (2015), describe very different types of change, suggesting considerable and interesting diversity in multiple source explanations. One aim of the workshop is to expand the inventory and typology of multiple source explanations in syntactic change. We therefore invite papers which provide a multiple source account of a syntactic change, and we are especially interested in cases where, for instance, the semantics or phonology of the sources play a role in the analysis. We also welcome papers that deal at a more abstract level with the nature of multiple source construction as an explanatory factor in syntactic change. Particular questions to consider, at the level of individual case studies or at a more abstract level, include:

- How do the source constructions contribute to and combine in multiple source explanations?
- How can the interaction of dimensions of linguistic information be accounted for in terms of multiple source explanations?
- How does the concept of multiple source explanation enhance our understanding of (this) syntactic change?
- How do multiple source explanations relate to well-established mechanisms of (syntactic) change such as reanalysis and analogy (see De Smet 2013 on the latter)?
- What are the conditions for and constraints on multiple source explanations?

References

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