



## MultiLingYUFE Conference:

*Different approaches to the dynamics of language  
variation and change*

Sorbonne Nouvelle University, 9-10 June 2026

(Room BR06 120) 8 Avenue de Saint-Mandé, 75012 Paris, France

**Organisers:** Alessandro Basile, Astrid De Wit & Aliyah Morgenstern

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# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

## DAY 1 (09/06)

Time	Session	Presenter(s)	Title
09:00– 09:15	WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS		
<b>Session 1 chair: Mathilde Pinson</b>			
09:15– 09:45	Session 1	Marcus Callies	Conceptualising linguistic creativity in World Englishes
09:45– 10:15	Session 1	Alessandro Basile, Astrid de Wit & Philippe de Brabanter	The emergence of progressive performatives in English
10:15– 10:45	Session 1	Idaliia Fedotova	Grammaticalisation pathways in the Ket noun phrase
10:45– 11:15	COFFE BREAK		
<b>Session 2 chair: Julie Rouaud</b>			
11:15– 11:45	Session 2	Irene Taipale	Change in progress online: the adoption of <i>kind of</i> , <i>kinda</i> , and <i>towards</i> in Finnish social media
11:45– 12:15	Session 2	Joanna Bloore, Peter Petré & Hubert Cuyckens	<i>That/zero</i> alternation with <i>remember</i> , <i>forget</i> and <i>expect</i> : The impact of intra- and inter-individual variation on changing discourse cohesion
12:15– 12:45	Session 2	Solenn Delanoye	Timing the turn: Variations in multimodal pausing across adult-child interaction
12:45– 14:10	LUNCH BREAK		
<b>Session 3 chair: Astrid De Wit</b>			
14:10– 14:40	Session 3	Alicia Jay	“Really? Literally”: Stand-alone uses of <i>literally</i>
14:40– 15:10	Session 3	Christophe Lenoble	The over-extension of first-person habitual <i>will</i> in Singapore English
15:10– 15:40	Session 3	Kira Molina	Sociopragmatic and contact-induced language change in digital spaces
15:40– 16:10	COFFEE BREAK		
<b>Session 4 chair: Rafael Garcia Pérez</b>			
16:10– 16:40	Session 4	Tanja Mortelmans	Epistemic possibility in English, Dutch and German: On division of labour between epistemic adverbs and modal verbs
16:40– 17:10	Session 4	Julie Rouaud	Studying Frenghish in Montreal: the PAC(Montreal) corpus

17:10– 17:40	Session 4	Xiyin Zhou	The morphosyntactic emergence of inner sensibility: From polysemic experience to linguistic objectification (evidence from Chinese)
17:40– 21:00	<b>Welcome drinks</b>		

## DAY 2 (10/06)

Time	Session	Presenter(s)	Title
<b>Session 5 chair: Alessandro Basile</b>			
09:30– 10:00	Session 5	Anne-Sophie Bally & Emmanuelle Labeau	Horoscopes and expressions of the future in French: Diatopy and the effects of gender on temporal reference to the future
10:00– 10:30	Session 5	Mikko Laitinen	Linguistic diversity and social media networks
10:30– 11:20	<b>COFFEE BREAK</b>		
<b>Session 6 chair: Mikko Laitinen</b>			
11:20– 11:50	Session 6	Johan van der Auwera	Haspelmath’s semantic map for indefiniteness, with more semantics
11:50– 12:20	Session 6	Debra Ziegeler & Lijun Li	The recognitional demonstrative those in Singapore English: Frequency, substrate influence, and replica grammaticalization
12:20– 12:50	Session 6	Nicola Swinburne & Peter Petré	The changing meaning of ‘do’ in English <i>do</i> -support
12:50– 14:40	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>		
<b>Session 6 chair: Laurent Rouveyrol</b>			
14:40– 15:10	Session 7	Rafael Garcia Perez	Asymmetric paths of grammaticalization in Spanish inchoative periphrases: The case of <i>echar(se) a</i> and <i>romper a</i>
15:10– 15:40	Session 7	Reinhild Vandekerckhove	Social media writing as a breeding ground for discourse markers: the grammaticalization of ‘omg’
15:40– 17:00	<b>Round table: “The state of MultiLingYUFE and future publication directions”</b>		
17:00	<b>CLOSING REMARKS &amp; SNACKS</b>		



# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

**Horoscopes and expressions of the future in French:  
Diatopy and the effects of gender on temporal reference to the future**

Anne-Sophie Bally & Emmanuelle Labeau

(Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Québec, Canada & University of Antwerp, Belgium)

Cette étude analyse la référence temporelle au futur (RTF) dans les horoscopes publiés en France et au Québec, un genre propice à l'expression du futur mais marqué par des dimensions injonctives, en plus des dimensions prédictives. Elle s'inscrit dans la tradition variationniste qui examine la concurrence entre futur simple, futur périphrastique et présent à valeur de futur. Alors que le futur périphrastique domine dans l'oral québécois, il reste marginal dans les horoscopes même au Québec, où le futur simple domine. Globalement, l'indicatif présent prédomine, suivi du futur simple et de l'impératif, confirmant que l'horoscope « dit de faire » autant qu'il prédit. Les données (3584 formes verbales finies) montrent que la distance temporelle influence le choix des temps : le futur simple et le conditionnel sont favorisés pour des prédictions annuelles, tandis que le présent et l'impératif sont privilégiés dans les horoscopes à court terme. L'examen des quelques cas d'emploi du futur périphrastique montre qu'il semble lié à des choix stylistiques, notamment dans un magazine, où il marque la familiarité.

### The rise of progressive performatives in English

Alessandro Basile, Astrid De Wit & Philippe De Brabanter

(Sorbonne Nouvelle University, France, University of Antwerp, Belgium & Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium)

In English, performative utterances are typically constructed with a first-person singular subject and a verb in the simple present (e.g. *I promise, I order*), a pattern commonly attributed to constraints on aspectual compatibility (e.g. Austin 1962). However, De Wit and Michaelis (2023) demonstrate that progressive performatives exist as well in contemporary American English (e.g. *I'm warning/begging you*). They provide a unifying semantic, synchronic account for these special attestations in terms of epistemic contingency, yet the diachronic origins of these progressive performatives remain largely unexplored.

In this paper, we present a two-step account of the historical emergence of progressive performatives. In a first step, we investigate the use of the progressive with a set of closely related communication verbs, namely *tell, say, and ask*. On the basis of samples of 200 progressive and minimally different simplex occurrences per verb in the COCA (Davies 2008-), we demonstrate that these verbs of communication are special in that they often do not appear in reports of concurrent events. Two such non-aspectual readings are particularly relevant for the present study. One consists of so-called interpretative uses (Ljung 1980), in which the progressive serves to “linger” on a situation that is presented as not-straightforward to interpret (e.g. *Are you telling me you're ill?*). Another comprises performative uses (with *tell* and *ask*), in which the progressive typically conveys a sense of emphasis (De Wit et al. 2020). A study of the evolution of first-person progressive uses of *tell* in COHA reveals a significant increase in performative uses at the expense of the interpretive uses across time (Kendall’s  $\tau = 0.41$ ;  $p$ -value =  $9.447e-15$ ; see Figure 1), which may suggest that progressive performatives have arisen as a result of reanalysis of interpretive uses.

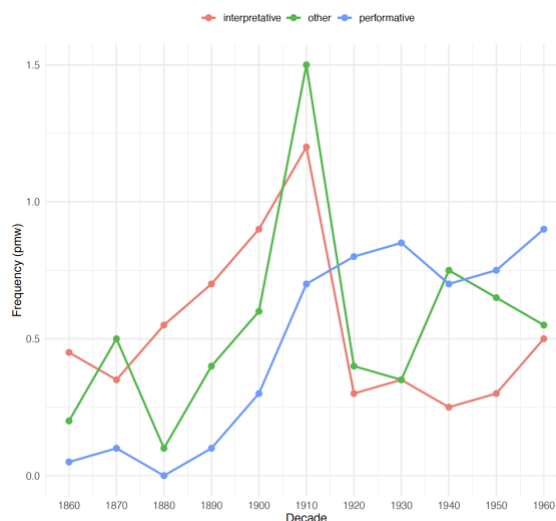


Figure 1: Evolution of meanings of first person progressive *tell* in COHA

However, COHA does not yield sufficient data for other progressive performatives (including *ask*) to determine whether the same interpretative > performative development can be generalized beyond *tell*. In order to assess the broader diachronic potential of this grammaticalization pathway, we therefore turn to British English, where a larger body of historical data is available. In this second step, we extracted a total of 933 first-person singular progressive tokens of progressive-prone performative verbs (including *beg*, *announce*, *advise*, among others; see De Wit & Michaelis 2023) from the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (CLMET, 1710–1920) and the *Hansard Corpus* (1802–present). All tokens were semantically annotated by two independent annotators. The diachronic evidence thus gathered shows that the cline characteristic of *tell* cannot be attested for the other performative verbs investigated: they do not instantiate a clearly identifiable interpretative stage and their progressive performative uses arise later in time. We therefore argue that these progressives have arisen by analogy with the already entrenched progressive usage of the verb *tell*. More generally, our study shows that, even if purely synchronic accounts can identify reuniting semantic factors, the full explanatory picture for these seemingly odd progressive uses requires a diachronic lens (Bybee 2010).

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***That/zero alternation with remember, forget and expect: The impact of intra- and inter-individual variation on changing discourse cohesion***

Joanna Bloore, Peter Petré & Hubert Cuyckens

(University of Antwerp, University of Antwerp, KU Leuven & University of Antwerp, Belgium)

This paper examines competition between zero vs *that* complementiser with *remember*, *forget* and *expect*, as in (1) and (2).

- (1) a. For he remembered **that** they were but flesh  
b. I remember  $\emptyset$  \_I jested with you about it
- (2) a. how could he expect  $\emptyset$  \_he should be his Friend?  
b. how can ye expect **that** God thould accept of the Offering dedicated by Impure Hands?

Work on finite complementation often charts community-level trends in overt *that* versus zero, but such curves compress two kinds of micro-variation: how grammars of individual language users drift across the lifespan (intra-individual variation) and how users differ from one another (inter-individual variation). Tracking writers individually can reveal how individual differences impact the spread of clausal complementation systems at population level (Petré & Anthonissen 2020). Here, we address this by modelling both community trajectories and within-author change.

Against that background, we analyse the work of 40 British authors (c. 1700–1920), with  $\geq 500,000$  words per author. Data come from the EMMA corpus and a later extension, the ELLI corpus. Using multifactorial classification models (Fonteyn & Nini 2020), we estimate how eleven language-internal factors constrain the alternation across authors, periods and lifespans.

Overall, both community change and within-author development shift strongly towards *that*. Variable-importance ranks vary considerably across authors, indicating substantial heterogeneity in the constraint profiles. At community level, zero declines and *that* rises for all three verbs, with an estimated loss for zero of about 14% per century. At lifespan level, nearly every author shows a drift towards *that*, even if most single-author effects are weak. Moreover, the average in-author decline in zero across the lifespan is faster than the community-level rate, suggesting age grading rather than mere alignment with the community flow.

We interpret the lifespan drift as a move towards more explicit coding of discourse cohesion in mature writing: *that* cues clause boundaries and supports coherence under higher processing load (Rohdenburg 1996). Discourse-pragmatically, it has also been argued that *that* foregrounds the complement in the joint-attentional frame (McGregor 2013: 1165–66). When writers drift in the same direction, their combined behaviour contributes to population-level change. Yet differences between individuals mean that variation persists. In some authors, complementiser choice is more closely tied to the choice of complement-

taking verb, with less sensitivity to variables that increase the pragmatic need for explicit marking. Interestingly, clause length also decreases over time. We argue that the lower processing cost of this ‘plainer’ style (which is well-documented for Late Modern English; see, e.g., Barber et al. 2009: 228) also supports a clearer demarcation of clausal complements. Taken together, the results show how aligned lifespan drift towards more explicit complement-clause marking can drive population-level change, while persistent individual differences in constraint profiles sustain variation.

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## Conceptualising linguistic creativity in World Englishes

Marcus Callies

(University of Bremen, Germany)

This talk takes a World Englishes (WEs) perspective on the theoretical definition and empirical operationalization of linguistic creativity. Given that “there is always a baseline against which creativity is determined ... and this baseline will necessarily shift when data from different varieties or different population groups are considered” (Vartiainen and Säily 2025: 231), a WEs perspective somewhat complicates the conceptual space of creativity. The WEs paradigm is subject to an interplay of different, sometimes competing norms (Peters 2022) as postcolonial second-language (L2) varieties of English are assumed to go through an evolutionary process by which they develop their own norms. These may diverge from “standard English” norms provided by inner-circle native-speaker varieties such as British or American English. Consequently, the judgment whether a certain linguistic structure is considered a creative innovation or an error depends on the norm against which it is measured. For example, phrasal/prepositional verbs in which semantically ‘redundant’ particles are used to explicitly mark the directionality that is implicit in the verb (as in *enter into the room* or *return back from their holidays*) may be considered non-standard or even erroneous according to inner-circle norms, but in the respective varieties of English, they might simply be analogy-driven productive extensions of an argument structure pattern.

While speakers of L2 varieties are recognized as creative users of the language, the concept of creativity as discussed in the WEs paradigm to date has typically been framed in terms of bilingual creativity with a view to innovations/coinages and code-mixing (Bhatia 2026, Moody 2026), or literary creativity (Bolton 2010, Webster 2026). However, it appears that the field still lacks a firm grounding and operationalisation of creativity in view of the latest theoretical advances in the study of linguistic creativity. Recent studies on the intersection of WEs and Construction Grammar have used constructional productivity as a diagnostic of the evolution of postcolonial Englishes in terms of Schneider’s (2007) Dynamic Model (see, e.g., Hoffmann 2021). While in this view creativity seems to be largely understood as F-creativity, i.e. the conventional, productive use of an existing pattern to form new expressions, it remains unclear how to deal with E-creativity, i.e. unconventional, intentional norm-breaching forms of creative language use.

We will discuss how creativity in WEs can be operationalised and measured by means of large-scale comparative corpus data. We will do so by drawing on a case study of selected instantiations (aka micro-constructions) of the Complex Modifier Construction as exemplified in (1). The construction has been shown to be productive in WEs but to varying degrees (Vartiainen et al. 2025).

- (1) a. The US Kobe Ribeye Steak was an excellent cut of the steak and it has a **melt-in-the-mouth texture**. (GloWbE: Singapore, Blog)
- b. The fish was unbelievably **melt-in-your-mouth tender and tasty**. (GloWbE: Philippines, General)

We address the following questions: Where are the boundaries between productivity and creativity in view of the different norms that exist across varieties of English? How can creativity be theoretically defined and operationalised in WEs research? In what (sub-)registers do creative innovations in WEs occur and who are its users? We propose that in a WEs context, linguistic creativity can be operationalized as low-frequency, contextually motivated, and constructionally non-routine uses of linguistic forms relative to the norms of a given variety, which are nonetheless interpretable and interactionally licensed by speakers of that variety. Our findings suggest that the creative use of the micro-construction at hand in Southeast-Asian varieties of English is driven by the expressive quality of the micro-construction as well as, perhaps even more importantly, a sub-register effect: almost all occurrences can be found in lifestyle writing such as food blogs and restaurant reviews that are characterised by a high tolerance for novelty and positive evaluation.

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## Timing the turn: Variations in multimodal pausing across adult-child interaction

Solenn Delannoye

(Sorbonne Nouvelle University, France)

Pauses are a universal feature of turn-taking, yet in early interaction, they have most often been treated as developmental by-products of immature processing capacities (Casillas, 2014). This study adopts a different perspective and approaches pauses as part of a multimodal system in which timing, gesture, gaze and speech jointly contribute to the emergence of recurrent interactional formats. In line with usage-based and functionalist approaches to language development, we argue that early conversational skills can be described as the progressive routinization of form–function pairings in interaction (Tomasello, 2003; Bybee, 2010). From this viewpoint, temporal patterns are not merely “delays”, but observable traces of how children learn to participate in socially organized practices.

Drawing on a multimodal approach of family interactions (Morgenstern, 2024), and work on gesture-speech coordination in development (Goldin-Meadow, 2003), this case-study asks how response timing is systematically distributed across verbal, gestural and multimodal responses, thereby reflecting the semiotic and interactional demands the child must manage. We ask: (i) which factors best predict response latency in early interaction; (ii) how multimodal resources participate in the shaping of response formats; and (iii) how recurrent timing patterns can be understood as early conventionalization processes within interaction.

Our data is part of the CHILDES Forrester Corpus (Forrester, 2002), and consists of the longitudinal recordings of Ella, a British child who was recorded from 1;00 to 3;09 during spontaneous family interactions. Response latencies were coded manually and analysed using an analysis of variance (ANOVA) including factors such as response modality (verbal, gestural, multimodal), question type and context, response relevance, gaze and posture. This quantitative analysis is complemented by Conversation Analytic examination of interactional sequences.

Preliminary results (N=642 questions addressed to Ella between 2;0 and 4;0) show that response modality and question type account for the largest share of variation in response latency. Gestural turns are produced 23 % faster and multimodal turns 17 % faster than purely verbal turns, while echo and single-constituent questions elicit responses that are 55–68% faster than closed- and open-ended questions. By contrast, within this restricted age range, no substantial variation is attributable to age, suggesting that response timing is primarily shaped by interactional organization rather than maturation alone.

These findings challenge accounts that primarily interpret children's longer pauses as reflecting age-related processing limitations (Chafe, 1987). Instead, they show that pauses are accountable and embedded in multimodal trajectories that form a central component of question-answer practice (Forrester, 2013). We argue that these recurrent timing patterns provide a micro-developmental window onto processes of conventionalization: through repeated use, multimodal cues (gesture, gaze, prosody and silence) become increasingly

integrated and stabilized into interactional response formats. In this sense, response timing can be approached as part of an emergent multimodal construction, where form–function pairings progressively shift from local interactional solutions to routinized resources. This supports current accounts of grammaticalization and constructional change that emphasize the gradual integration and reorganization of semiotic material into conventionalized patterns of meaning and action (Traugott & Trousdale, 2013; Gildea & Barðdal, 2023).

## Grammaticalisation Pathways in the Ket Noun Phrase

Idaliia Fedotova

(University of Eastern Finland, Finland)

This paper examines grammaticalisation processes within the noun phrase (NP) of Ket, an endangered language of the Yeniseian family in Siberia. Ket is typologically unusual: it combines polysynthesis, phonemic tone, prefixing verb morphology and a rigid head-final NP structure. These features set Ket sharply apart from the agglutinative, suffixing, non-tonal languages surrounding it in Siberia. While previous research has mostly concentrated on Ket verbal morphology, my study focuses on the NP domain. Drawing on published grammar descriptions and dictionary data in the absence of any corpora, I identify the principal grammaticalisation pathways shaping NP structure in Ket.

The first major pathway concerns the genitive clitic *-d*, which has extended its function from encoding possession to subordinating finite verb phrases. Thus, in addition to marking NP-internal relations (case), *-d* introduces prenominal relative clauses and functions as a clausal linker.

The second process is the expansion of the nominaliser *-s* into a generalised nominalisation device. This suffix forms nouns from adjectives, as well as derives headless relative clauses from verb stems and action nominals. Its distribution across lexical classes illustrates the grammaticalisation of a derivational suffix into a productive mechanism for modification and participant reference.

Thirdly, Ket displays a set of grammaticalised relativisers. Interrogative stems such as *bitse*, *ases* and *biseŋ* function in postnominal relative clauses, while *qode/qod*, likely of demonstrative origin, appears as a specialised relativising particle. These examples reflect a diachronic pathway from interrogatives and demonstratives toward specialised relativisers.

Finally, measure-noun constructions exhibit structural variation. Container and measure nouns ('cup', 'sack', 'kilogram') behave as quantificational formatives, undergoing semantic bleaching and developing fixed structures. The measure noun may show optional plural marking, while the measured noun remains unmarked, pointing to a special pattern in Ket quantification.

Overall, these developments show the Ket NP as an important testing ground for theories of grammaticalisation and morphosyntactic change. The co-existence of multiple relativisation strategies, applying possessive and derivational morphology in other functions, and the rise of a special quantification structure offer rare evidence for how grammatical categories evolve in systems that diverge sharply from well-studied Indo-European, Uralic, or Turkic models. By documenting these pathways in an insufficiently described language, this study contributes to broader typological debates on the sources of relativisers, the expansion of nominalisation, and the emergence of quantificational morphology.

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**Asymmetric Paths of Grammaticalization in Spanish Inchoative Periphrases:  
The Case of *echar(se) a* and *romper a***

Rafael Garcia Pérez

(Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain)

This paper investigates the processes of grammaticalization of the Spanish verbal periphrases *echar(se) a* and *romper a*, both commonly classified as inchoative constructions. The analysis adopts a diachronic perspective to identify the evolutionary patterns shared by these periphrases and to account for the differences observed in their historical development. While previous studies have described these constructions as instantiations of a semi-productive phraseological schema, approaching lexicalization, the present research argues that such a characterization obscures significant asymmetries in their degrees of productivity: one periphrasis displays sustained productivity over time, whereas the other shows a more discontinuous profile, a contrast that remains clearly visible in present-day Spanish.

Drawing on historical data from the *Real Academia Española* (RAE) CDH, CORDE, CREA, and CORPES XXI databases, the study shows that these differences are closely linked to the distinct points at which grammaticalization is initiated. They also reflect the subsequent reorganization and restructuring of the elements that the auxiliary verb governs. Importantly, these elements are not restricted to verbs, but have also included predicative nouns, a factor insufficiently addressed in earlier research.

The findings suggest that productivity should not be treated as a uniform or static property, measured solely by the total number of lexical items selected by the auxiliary verb, but rather as a dynamic property, resulting from the constructions' entire historical development. By highlighting the non-equivalence of these apparently similar semi-productive constructions, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of grammaticalization processes in Spanish and underscores the importance of historical corpus evidence for the analysis of verbal periphrases and phraseological patterns.

## “Really? Literally”: Stand-alone uses of *literally*

Alicia Jay

(Université Bordeaux Montaigne & Sorbonne Nouvelle University, France)

The purpose of this study is to investigate free-standing occurrences of “literally”, also called stand-alone uses, in contemporary spoken British English from a grammaticalization perspective.

*Literally* has been widely discussed in recent studies due to the development of new meanings and discourse functions, from manner adverb to intensifier and stance or discourse marker (eg. Aijmer, 2023; Bonilla et al., 2025; Calhoun, 2015; Kostadinova, 2018; Park, 2016). Most accounts focus on clause-internal uses of *literally*, and on its behaviour in literal and non-literal contexts, where it is used to intensify a referent or to mark emphasis. In comparison, stand-alone uses have received little attention, despite the fact that the occurrence of *literally*

as an independent element is a sign of a shift from propositional meaning towards more pragmatic, interpersonal meaning. Stand-alone uses of *literally* can be seen as reflecting the mechanism of intersubjectification, whereby meaning is “recruited to encode meanings centered on the addressee” (Traugott, 2010: 6). Indeed, stand-alone *literally* encodes speaker’s stance but also manages discourse interactions. In this respect, *literally* is comparable to other intensifiers such as *totally* or *absolutely* which have attested uses as response markers (McManus, 2012) and seem to have followed similar paths of grammaticalization.

This phenomenon is commonly associated with young speakers and occurs predominantly in conversational settings. Thus, this study focuses on authentic spoken data produced by young adult speakers, drawn from a corpus of orthographic transcriptions of the British reality TV programme *Love Island UK*. This corpus constitutes a source of authentic, spontaneous and interactional British English as used by young adults. It also allows for an investigation of potential sociolinguistic factors, such as the role of gender, in the use of stand-alone *literally*.

Adopting a synchronic approach, this study suggests that the interpretation of stand-alone *literally* depends on its syntactic environment. In the corpus, *literally* occurs as an affirmative answer after a confirmation request, a marker of agreement after an assertion, and a follow-up after an assertion by the same speaker, where *literally* is used for self-emphasis. The analysis will also explore the occurrences where *literally* appears in collocation with other markers of agreement such as “yeah”. This may point towards a continuity with its function as an emphaser and its stance meaning in which it was already syntactically independent. These patterns will be considered from a grammaticalization perspective, in an attempt to offer insights into the emerging pragmatic functions of stand-alone *literally*.

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## Linguistic diversity and social media networks

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Large-scale social media data have been widely used to study linguistic diversity in areal (Eisenstein 2017), spatiotemporal (Grieve et al. 2016, 2018), and socio-demographic variation (Gonzales 2024). Yet, the full potential of social media remains underutilized, since most studies overlook its role in community formation and network building. Research across disciplines highlights the fundamental importance of social networks for humans (Granovetter 1973; Dunbar 2020; Waldinger & Schultz 2023) and for understanding linguistic variation (Milroy 1987), making it timely to integrate network evidence into the study of linguistic diversity on social media

One possible reason for not including network information lies in methodological challenges: using complex social media data to construct networks is difficult (Eisenstein et al. 2014). This presentation addresses this challenge by introducing methods for building networks from interactional metadata in social media. We propose a framework for quantifying ego networks, applicable to any social media application where interactions form a directed graph (e.g. Bluesky, Twitter, etc.). Developed within a large digital infrastructure project, this methodology combines expertise from sociolinguistics and computer science.

We answer two research questions:

1. To what extent can we quantify the structure of ego networks?
2. What research potential emerges from combining social networks with large-scale social media data?

To illustrate the potential of networks, we examine lexical innovation in English. Prior work shows that new lexis originates in urban centers (Grieve et al. 2018), but little is known about the innovators or their social settings. Using three large datasets (3.42 billion words, 2020–2022) from American, Australian, and British English, we trace emerging lexis (e.g., *rizz*, *oomfies*, *girlies*) across networks. Our analysis demonstrates how social network information enriches accounts of areal variation in lexical emergence. The presentation offers methodological insights on how large-scale social media data can be accompanied by interaction-based social information.

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## The over-extension of first-person habitual *will* in Singapore English

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The semantic domain of habituality is a field of linguistic research that is on the cusp between the domains of aspect and modality, many scholars viewing it as being part of a continuum between the two poles. With regard to the aspectual affiliation of habituality, a great many of them (Bybee et al. (1994), among others) consider habituality as a subdomain of imperfectivity - in line with Comrie (1976). However, not all accounts are in agreement. For instance, Brinton (1987: 203, 207; 1988) posits that habituality is an aspectual category in its own right, as it turns events into a separate category of situations, i.e., habits. Another view is that habituality is essentially a modal category which can only be indirectly described in aspectual terms (Boneh & Doron (2010)).

The modal *will* carries future meanings in Present-Day English (PDE) but it encodes residual senses of habituality too. PDE *will* is generally taken to result from gradual processes of grammaticalization since Old English (OE) times. The lexical source along the grammaticalization cline of the habitual *will* is still a debatable issue, though. Indeed, most authors posit that the in PDE the function of future *will* finds its origin in the original lexical meaning of volition of the OE *willan* form (Bybee et al. (1994), to name but a few). However, Ziegeler (2006) postulates a different account which assumes that PDE future *will* developed out of generic/habitual environments instead (see also La Roi (2020)).

Further, variation in the domain of habituality is particularly salient in Outer Circle Varieties of English such as Singapore English (SgE) (see Ziegeler 2014; 2024). Building on the creole studies of Deuber et al. (2012), Smith (2018), and McWhorter (2018), the over-extension of habitual-*will* - in particular with the first-person subject *I* in Colloquial Singapore English (CSE) or Singlish - will be examined from both variationist and typological perspectives, since a brief survey of the APICS Atlas online (Michaelis et al. 2013) reveals that many overt markers of habituality also function as future grams in many creoles spoken around the world.

The purpose of the present paper is to demonstrate that the over-extension of the habitual-*will* with the first-person subject *I* may be explained along the lines of universal pathways of grammaticalization in situations of contact (Heine & Kuteva 2005; Kuteva et al. 2019).

Quantitative data is retrieved from various ICE-sub-corpora (ICE-Britain, ICE-Singapore, ICE-India, ICE-Philippines), the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBCSAE), a recent personal corpus of Colloquial Singapore English called the *Flowerpod Extension Corpus* (FEC), and the APICS online. The exploration of the corpora, which span more than three decades, gives a short diachronic outlook on the use of the habitual *will* in CSE. Multiple Correspondence Analyses (MCAs) are performed on R to obtain a fine-grained analysis on the type of person-subjects and forms used (non-reduced, cliticized or negated) depending on the varieties.

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## **Sociopragmatic and contact-induced language change in digital spaces**

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Mobility, migration and digitalisation are important keywords for adequately characterising contemporary societies. Especially in diasporic communities, which often float between worlds (supposedly placeless), digital media play a key role as a means of contact for simultaneous exchange with both the home country and the host society, and thus as a tool for digital placemaking. This leads to the fundamental assumption that new and specific language practices are emerging in digital spaces, enabling the negotiation of a place of cohesion, social space construction and exchange.

Using the example of the Mexican community, which is already relatively well researched in terms of face-to-face interaction, this study examines digital interactions within the community from the perspective of variation pragmatics, among other things, face-to-face interaction, this study examines the community's digital interactions from the perspective of variation pragmatics, among other things, in order to specifically analyse the negotiation of specific language practices in digital diasporic contexts in the sense of digital placemaking and thus answer the question of how language practices can create digital belonging for a diasporic community.

With the help of a two-level corpus (I: face-to-face communication, II: digital communication of the community in the German diaspora), the study approaches the respective questions on several levels and links the investigation of relevant aspects of variation pragmatics with desiderata for the exploration of contact-related language change under current conditions of migration and diaspora in digital societies.

The project focuses on various methodological challenges: access to non-automatically collected digital data, the representativeness of the data, and the ethical implications of data collection and processing. In particular, it emphasises the need to address these challenges in accordance with the FAIR principles in order to ensure transparent, traceable, and sustainable data processing. Another focus is on corpus cleaning and annotation, for which in-depth knowledge of Python and MAXQDA is currently being acquired. In addition, the aim is to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches in the sense of a corpus-pragmatic approach in order to enable a more comprehensive understanding of digital communication practices.

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## Epistemic possibility in English, Dutch and German: On division of labour between epistemic adverbs and modal verbs.

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In my presentation, I will address linguistic variation, more in particular the ‘competition’ or ‘division of labour’ between modal verbs and modal adverbs in English, Dutch and German, on the basis of a self-compiled ENG-DUT-GER translation corpus. More specifically, I will focus on (ad)verbs of epistemic possibility: the English modals *might* and *may*, German *können* and Dutch *kunnen* and the adverbs *maybe/perhaps*, German *vielleicht/womöglich* and Dutch *misschien*. As is well-known, the English modal verb system is strongly grammaticalized, with the modal verbs qualifying as ‘grounding predications’ according to Langacker (1991). The Dutch and German modals, by contrast, do not possess an equally high degree of formal grammaticalization (they still allow non-finite forms, for instance, see Mortelmans et al. 2009), which is semantically reflected by the fact that their epistemic use is not as well-developed as the epistemic use of the English modals. So, whereas the modal meanings of the German and Dutch modals predominantly express dynamic and deontic values (Diewald 1999, Nuyts 2001) the English modals feature highly frequent, strongly (inter)subjective epistemic uses (the very different distribution of epistemic uses of *müssen/moeten* and *must* is a case in point, Mortelmans 2023).

In English, not only the modal verbs *might/may*, but also the modal adverbs *perhaps* and *maybe* can be shown to be highly grammaticalized and subjective, albeit in different ways (Rozumko 2022, Suzuki 2018a-b, Pic & Furmaniak 2012). According to Pic and Furmaniak 2012: 35, English *perhaps/maybe* differ from *might/may* in that the former express a strongly speaker-oriented, in many cases purely conjectural “spontaneous” epistemic evaluation, whereas *might/may* feature an evidential meaning component such that the speaker’s evaluation is based on some evidence.

The lower degree of grammaticalization and subjectification of the Dutch and German modal verbs (*kunnen, können*) is reflected by the fact that they do not function as default translation equivalents of epistemic *might*. In practice, the modal adverbs (DUT *misschien*, GER *vielleicht*) often take over, as in (1):

(1) ENG She said this new man **might** be joining us. (ENG, NF)

(1') DUT Ze zei dat er **misschien** nog iemand **zou** komen, die ze pas kende.

(1“) GER Sie hat gesagt, ihr neuer Bekannter komme **vielleicht** vorbei.

Other equivalence strategies include the use of the non-realis marker *zou* (in Dutch, ex. 1' above features a combination of *misschien* with *zou*) or the past subjunctive (*würde*) in German, on the one hand, or simple non-realization of the epistemic possibility value, on the other, as in (2).

(2) ENG 'You don't think . . . he **might have** something to do with Tom?' asked Gillian (GER, CL)

(2') DUT 'Maar je denkt toch niet dat hij iets met... Tom te maken **heeft**?' vroeg Gillian.

(2'') GER »Du denkst aber nicht, dass er etwas mit ... Tom zu tun **hat**?«, fragte Gillian.

In fact, the notion of epistemic possibility is most often expressed in English, but often left unexpressed in Dutch and German, which might (also) have to do with different preferences in communicative styles between (more indirect, intersubjective) English on the one hand and (more direct, content-oriented) German (and Dutch?) on the other (see Becher et al. 2009). My presentation will thus shed light on the expression of epistemic possibility in three strongly related languages, addressing factors like degree of grammaticalization, subjectification, the influence of subordination, scope and word order as well as sociopragmatic features to account for the variation found.

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## Studying Frenglish in Montreal: the PAC[Montreal] corpus

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From the end of the 18th century onwards, English and French have been in contact in Montreal, leading to the development of widespread bilingualism. The term *Frenglish* is defined by Roberts as “English (including integrated French borrowings) containing or spoken with non-integrated borrowings called gallicisms” (Roberts 1982, p. 205). Apart from Poplack *et al.* (2006), most studies on Frenglish in Quebec English were lexical and relied on written corpora (McArthur 1992; Fee 2008; Grant 2010).

The current paper focuses on the study of Frenglish in Montreal English, from a lexical as well as a phonological point of view, thanks to a sociolinguistic spoken corpus following a Labovian methodological framework. The aim is to find out how and to what extent Montreal English can be considered as a Frenglish. We will therefore focus on the linguistic outcomes of contact in Montreal, such as borrowing and code-switching in the PAC[Montreal] corpus (Rouaud 2016).

PAC[Montreal] is a spoken corpus which is part of the international research program PAC, *Phonologie de l'Anglais Contemporain: usages, variétés, structure* (Durand and Przewozny-Desriaux 2012; Przewozny-Desriaux *et al.* 2020). This corpus consists in a Labovian sociolinguistic survey of 14 Anglophone Montrealers, displaying various degrees of bilingualism with French, so as to study Montreal English as a variety of Canadian English in contact, from a lexical as well as a phonological point of view. The common PAC protocol, originally designed to study native varieties of English, was adapted so as to elicit contact-induced linguistic phenomena through different speech styles. Therefore, a text “Come and taste the joie de vivre of Montreal for a weekend” was added, containing different types of borrowings (i.e. local and non-local loanwords and semantic loans). Moreover, the formal conversation with the fieldworker was adapted with questions related to the specific contact situation in Montreal. Metadata from the sociolinguistic questionnaires allowed us to design a scoring system so as to measure degrees of bilingualism.

Relying on this methodological framework can present some limitations, since the use of Frenglish in conversation tasks depends entirely on the participants. Quantitatively speaking, the number of occurrences in conversations remained limited. Factors potentially discouraging participants from using more Frenglish in the interviews will be explored (Bower 2013). Analyses of our available data and comparisons with French Canadian production, whenever available, reveal several results that show that Frenglish constitutes a specificity of Montreal English: (i) code-switching is present and mostly used among bilingual speakers, although not necessarily the most proficient ones; (ii) correlations are to be found between the rate of francization (i.e. use of (Canadian) French phonological features in borrowings & code-switches) and the degree of bilingualism; (iii) Anglophone bilinguals and Francophone monolinguals display similarities and differences, in terms of segmental as well as suprasegmental features (Rouaud 2020).

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## The changing meaning of ‘do’ in English do-support

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Despite centuries of literature, our current understanding of the origin of English ‘do’-support is still confused, and myths abound. This research starts afresh, taking guidance from the best of these studies but grounded in today's understanding of how innovations arise and changes are adopted in the language. It supports the hypothesis that people often innovate for expressive reasons (Haspelmath 1999), resulting in considerable variation. When successful, these innovations spread and become conventionalized as coded grammatical distinctions.

Analysed here are works by four authors writing persuasive religious texts, with different dialectal influences and representing a 40-year time interval, 1529-1569. From these, we have extracted for analysis 70-200 tokens each of *do*-support (DS), modal-support (modS), and comparable non-supported uses (nDS). The time interval was chosen because (acc. Ellegård, 1953) it is when affirmative uses, which are the uses most strongly associated with rich meaning/functions, are nearing a peak.

Of the 26 factors investigated connected with the syntax and semantics of the DS construction, the following have been found most relevant in distinguishing the uses of DS: 1. nominal vs pronominal subject; 2. subject specificity; 3. tense; 4. V<sub>fin</sub>-subj inversion; 5. conjunction of the lexical verb.

The conclusion reached is that affirmative DS is being preferred in this early stage of its development for semantic-pragmatic rather than syntactic reasons. Writers are using DS to make stronger, more expressive statements about the world, which are often contrastive as well as more verbose (Stein, 1990). Such statements favour a nominal over pronominal subject. They may also be associated with a clause-initial modifier (e.g. *now*, *neither*, etc.), which resulted in V-S inversion in the earlier part of the period when there was a lingering use of V2.

In the text from 1529, there is furthermore a positive association between DS and the specificity of the subject. This could be because the ‘reality’ semantics associated with lexical *do* persist in its auxiliary uses and the writer has some direct evidence from specific instances. A similar result has been found previously in a northern Italian dialect, where use of DS with certain non-referential subjects is disallowed in the primitive, but not in the more advanced, stages of the construction (Swinburne 2021). Overall DS appears to be associated with the writer's expression of their perception of the truth of the proposition and their wish that the reader take note of this.

In texts written after 1529, the meaning of DS has broadened so that it is increasingly used to make generic statements describing timeless truths. This gives rise to an aspectual association such as found in (later) southwestern and Irish dialects (e.g. Klemola 1994; Fanego et al. 2025), further enhanced by the incoming of progressive to take over non-generic/habitual meanings. It is proposed that it is the expansion in uses, and so loss of the

unique, evidence-based, referential properties of DS, that eventually lead to its demise in the affirmative and paved the way for its further grammaticalization.

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**Change in progress online: the adoption of *kind of*, *kinda*,  
and *towards* in Finnish social media**

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This study investigates how network properties influence advanced L2 users of English based in Finland and their networks on a social media platform. It revisits the classic strength-of-weak-ties hypothesis (Granovetter 1973; Milroy & Milroy 1985) by examining whether linguistic innovations are more strongly associated with weak-tie than strong-tie networks in large-scale social media data.

The analysis focuses on two variables that represent opposing trends in the global spread of American English: (i) *kind of* / *kinda* vs. *sort of* / *sorta*, where the American variants dominate (Rohdenburg and Schlüter 2009), and (ii) *toward* vs. *towards*, where the originally British form has been gaining ground (Franco and Tagliamonte 2020). For the first variable, type noun uses are distinguished from more pragmatically oriented adverbial uses, which offers a window onto grammaticalization in progress (cf. Margerie 2010).

The study draws from a corpus of over 400 million words covering over 2,500 Finnish users in one social media application. Variation is examined in the repertoires of egos and the other users in the network (alters), allowing user's alignment with their network to be assessed. The analysis combines descriptive statistics with advanced statistical modelling. Descriptive summaries illustrate the distribution of variants and alignment patterns, and the models test how these patterns are connected to network strength, size, and the ego's location type (urban vs. rural).

The results show that users overwhelmingly favor all of the incoming variants. *Kind of* and *kinda* are far more frequent than *sort of* and *sorta*. In the case of adverbial constructions, the reduced form *kinda* is almost exclusively preferred over the full form *kind of*. Conversely, the full form *kind of* is mainly used in noun phrases that retain meanings closer to the original type noun meaning. These results suggest that Americanization, grammaticalization and reduction may proceed in tandem.

Network strength does not substantially affect which variant is chosen, but it strongly predicts internal uniformity: loosely connected networks display more internal variation than tightly knit networks. The size at which this effect is most visible differs between variables, but users in smaller networks tend to align more closely with their alters. Correlation analyses reveal that the two otherwise unrelated innovations pattern together: users who favor *kind of* / *kinda* over *sort of* / *sorta* tend also to favor *towards* over *toward*.

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**Social media writing as a breeding ground for discourse markers:  
The grammaticalization of 'omg'**

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In informal interactive social media communication, adolescent chatters tend to use a wide range of expressive markers for establishing rapport (e.g., Hilte et al. 2018). The present paper does not focus on these 'classical' expressive markers (e.g., emoji, all caps), but rather on a well-known exclamatory interjection whose meaning has evolved to serve functions complementary to those of the prototypical markers of the genre.

We examined the use of *omg* (*oh my god*) in an anonymized corpus of private social media conversations on WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, produced by Flemish teenagers aged 13-20 (> 450 000 posts, with 2179 tokens of the target form). Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses reveal that *omg* has 'bleached' and grammaticalized from an interjection expressing strong surprise or shock into a discourse marker with a primarily metatextual function. In this respect, it mirrors the evolution of the acronym *lol* (*laughing out loud*), for which a similar grammaticalization process was observed (McWhorter, 2016, 128, 218). *omg* appears to serve both the interpersonal connection between the interlocutors, by highlighting (mainly positive) confirmation and engagement with (the messages of) the other(s), and the organization of the conversation, by signaling one is elaborating on the preceding discourse and by marking the turn-taking (see also Degand & Van Bergen 2018). Regarding the latter function, its predominantly post-initial position is clearly helpful in that respect (Onodera 2011, Aijmer 2013). It is argued that interactive social media writing provides a fertile ground for the transformation of interjections into discourse markers that perform functions highly comparable to those of emoji. Apart from their functional parallels, the female preference for *omg* emerges as another striking similarity between this particular discourse marker and the use of emoticons.

Taken together, these observations indicate that *omg*, like *lol*, has evolved into a discourse marker well-suited to the demands of interactive social media writing and that, consequently, other interjections or similar expressions may follow a similar path, stimulated by the dynamics of written online communication.

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## Haspelmath's semantic map for indefiniteness, with more semantics

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Semantic map models have shown their value in the analysis of the synchronic variation in the use of both grammatical and lexical markers. Of these models, the 'classical' ones have also shown their value in the analysis of diachronic change (see e.g. Georgakopoulos & Polis 2018). In this presentation I will revisit what is probably the most influential classical map to date, viz. the indefiniteness map presented by Haspelmath (1997). The map embodies a strong and falsifiable hypothesis about the indefinite pronouns of the world's languages. Synchronically: if any indefinite pronoun in any language has more than two functions, these functions have to be connected to each other, shown with lines on the map. This is illustrated for English *somebody*, *anybody* and *nobody* in Figure 1.

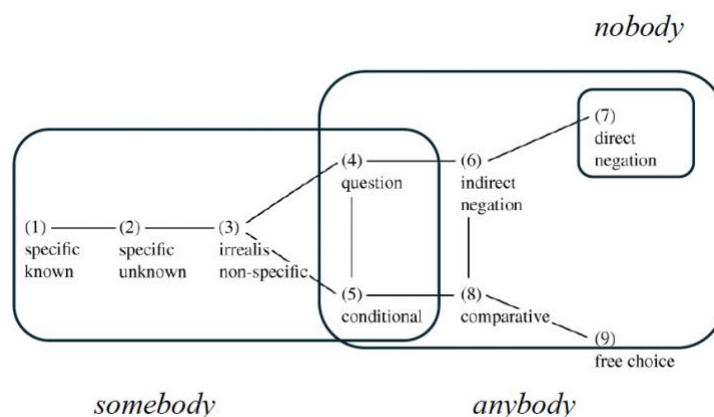


Figure 1. English *somebody*, *anybody* and *nobody* on Haspelmath's indefiniteness map

Diachronically: if any indefinite pronoun in a any language acquires a new function, this will have to be connected to an old function. French *quelque*, for instance has been claimed to have started from the bottom right and to have reached the 'specific known' function on the left.

The impact of the hypothesis has been exceptional, much of it remains valid, even though there have been proposals to improve it, some along lines that Haspelmath (1997) himself suggested.

In this presentation I will also suggest improvements. I will argue that it is possible and useful to make the map reflect both the meanings of the indefinite pronouns by themselves and the meanings that result from the interaction of these inherent meanings with the context. This will be shown to imply that the map points have to be split. I will show this for direct negation, conditionals and questions. The specific function is already split in Haspelmath but I will argue that we should split it more. I will also argue that so-called 'anti-depreciative' uses, such as shown in (1), can be positioned on the map and I will plead for a notion of 'irrealis', which functions in a three-way constellation with 'realis' and 'potentialis'.

(1) I don't drink any Chardonnay. I only drink a Chevalier-Montrachet.

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**The morphosyntactic emergence of *inner sensibility*:  
From polysemic experience to linguistic objectification (evidence from Chinese)**

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Research on language change has long focused on grammaticalization and, more recently, on constructionalization as key mechanisms through which linguistic forms acquire new grammatical or discourse-functional values. While these frameworks offer powerful tools to describe morphosyntactic evolution, they often presuppose the availability of certain experiential domains — such as inner states, feelings, or subjective stances — as pre-existing objects of linguistic encoding. This paper challenges that assumption by arguing that *inner sensibility* itself constitutes a historically emergent domain, whose morphosyntactic autonomy cannot be taken for granted.

Building on Benveniste’s conception of subjectivity as an effect of enunciation rather than a pre-linguistic psychological given, inner sensibility is treated here as a linguistic object that becomes available only through specific morphosyntactic and discursive configurations. The central issue is therefore not how languages express inner states, but when and through which formal resources inner sensibility becomes isolable and referable in discourse.

From a historical perspective, early and premodern Chinese offers a revealing illustration of the non-autonomy of inner sensibility. In classical and early vernacular texts, perceptual and contact-based sensory verbs such as *cháng* 尝 ‘taste’ or *mō* 摸 ‘touch’ participate in dense polysemic networks, where sensory perception, action, evaluation, and situational involvement remain tightly intertwined. In these configurations, perceptual meaning is not dissociated from event structure or pragmatic context: sensory verbs do not primarily encode an inner state detached from action, but function instead as part of a holistic representation of engagement with the world. As a result, inner sensibility is not morphosyntactically isolable as an object of discourse, nor can it be straightforwardly foregrounded as an independent stance toward a propositional content.

In modern and contemporary Chinese, by contrast, inner sensibility becomes increasingly accessible through newly stabilized lexical and syntactic configurations. Contact-based sensory verbs progressively develop constructions in which their perceptual value is isolated from their broader polysemic network and reanalyzed as markers of subjective positioning. Patterns such as reduplicative or delimitative forms (verb-verb: *cháng-chang* 尝尝; verb-one-verb: *cháng-yì-cháng* 尝一尝), as well as related stance frames, illustrate how perceptual predicates come to function as routinized morphosyntactic devices for anchoring propositions to the speaker’s inner experience. From a usage-based perspective, the recurrent use of these patterns leads to their conventionalization and stabilization, allowing inner sensibility to be construed as a dissociable experiential domain. This shift does not merely involve semantic bleaching or pragmatic extension, but a

reorganization of the relation between perception, subjectivity, and discourse structure, through which inner sensibility becomes linguistically objectified.

The Chinese case is particularly instructive from a semantico-typological and theoretical perspective. Because the morphosyntactic encoding of inner sensibility develops in a relatively late and empirically observable manner, it makes explicit a process taken for granted in linguistic traditions largely based on languages with early-entrenched subject-oriented constructions. By using Chinese as an epistemic lever rather than as exotic data, this paper aims to re-problematize the emergence of subject-oriented constructions and to contribute to a broader understanding of language change as the historical constitution of new domains of experience.

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**The recognitional demonstrative *those* in Singapore English:  
Frequency, substrate influence, and replica grammaticalization.**

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This paper investigates the frequency and functions of the demonstrative *those* in Colloquial Singapore English (CSE), with a specific focus on recognitional uses. Demonstratives are well-attested across English varieties, yet quantitative evidence shows that recognitional *those* is more frequent in CSE than in Standard English, and is often found in contexts where a definite article or zero determiner could be expected instead.

The study first considers three data sources. In the first instance, we examine the Oral History Interviews (OHI) collection from the National Archives of Singapore, focusing on 35 speakers born between 1899–1921. This sample reflects a formative period of intensive language contact in colonial Singapore. Second, we compare contemporary corpora (e.g. ICE-SG and ICE-GB) to establish present-day contrasts. Initial observations using a web-based corpus, the *Flowerpod* Corpus, suggest that the Singapore data shows a stronger tendency toward recognitional uses, i.e. those introducing referents not previously anchored in discourse, but understood as identifiable by shared knowledge and experiences of the interlocutors (Himmelman 1996).

On the surface, these patterns appear to involve ‘replica grammaticalization as recapitulation’ (Ziegeler 2010, 2014). In such cases the recognitional demonstrative in CSE would appear to have undergone a partial re-activation of earlier stages in the grammaticalisation path of definiteness. Studies of the development of definite articles from demonstratives in contact languages have often referred to an overlap stage where definite articles appear ambiguously as adnominal demonstratives, expressed by the same form (e.g. Gil 2003, Nicholls 2016, Siemund 2013). However, other possibilities may explain the tendencies: substrate influence from the Chinese vernaculars (e.g. *nàxiē* as a plural marker and *nà* as a topic introducer in Mandarin could also suggest a partial, contact-induced degrammaticalization, as Mandarin gains increasingly more prominence as a local language of contact in Singapore.

By correlating quantitative corpus findings with models of grammaticalisation, this study highlights how high-contact ecologies appear to foster the replication of earlier stages in developing functional categories. Our results offer new insights into the way in which substrate influence and diachronic “recycling” interact and complement each other in contact varieties.

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