

## History vs. theory: The grammaticalization of the Uzbek “say” complementizer

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Among the controversial aspects of grammaticalization, the notion of unilinear change is one which is rarely critically examined. On the one hand it is worth noting certain crosslinguistic trends that characterize grammaticalization phenomena: verbs meaning “go” or “want” becoming markers of future tense or spacial nouns becoming pre- and postpositions. On the other hand, strong claims are often made regarding the exact details of how these forms grammaticalize. Saxena, for one, proposes the following cline for the grammaticalization of “say” verbs into complementizers, supporting her claim with Givón's hierarchy of complement binding, as well as a good deal of crosslinguistic evidence:

(1) quote → say → know → believe → want → purpose/reason → conditional → comparison

As broad as Saxena's data is, however, it is primarily synchronic; her claims about diachrony are based on the presence or absence of forms in modern languages.

Uzbek possesses a complementizer which developed from a “say” verb, and at first glance Uzbek appears to conform to Saxena's cline. However, once historical data is considered, it is clear that Saxena's cline does not hold. Data from Uzbek's ancestral languages, Old Turkic and Chagatay, force us to conclude that the path followed by the Uzbek complementizer is much more complex:

(2) Serial Verb → Purpose/Reason → Complementizer (want, hope) → Ø

↳ Quote → Complementizer (tell, think, believe, hope) → Raising (know, consider)

The long written history of Uzbek allows us to reconstruct the development of the complementizer in a way that is impossible for most other languages. Moreover, Uzbek's non-conformity with Saxena's cline suggests that, where possible, historical data should be used to supplement claims made on purely synchronic data.

Despite Uzbek's complex history and it's non-conformity with Saxena's cline, it still manages to conform to Givón's typology of complement binding. Under Givón's theory, complements that fall lower on a scale of manipulation, emotion, and epistemic attitude will be loosely “bound” to the matrix verb, whereas those which fall higher on this scale will be tightly bound. His scale is summarized here:

(3) say/tell < know/think/believe < decide/agree < like/hope < want < plan/order/allow < begin/finish/make/cause

In short, it is possible to account for the behavior of the Uzbek complementizer with respect to Givón's hierarchy. However, this hierarchy is only useful in explaining what is already known; it cannot be used to predict a cline of grammaticalization. The crosslinguistic comparison of languages allows for certain diachronic claims to be made, but it is no substitute for historical data.

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