

## **Grammaticalization in the languages of Europe**

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The question what is characteristic of grammaticalization processes in European languages, as opposed to languages in general, is not easily answered. To start with, Europe, physically an appendix to the Eurasian continent, does not necessarily correspond to any linguistic area: typological generalizations will generally concern areas that are either smaller or larger than Europe. Furthermore, we have a much better grasp of the synchronic properties and diachronic developments of European languages than of languages in the rest of the world, and many of the standard examples of grammaticalization come from European languages. It is therefore unlikely that we would be able to answer the question by a deeper study of European languages themselves; rather, what we need is more information about grammaticalization processes in non-European languages.

Typologists have been able to single out a number of grammatical phenomena that seem to be more or less restricted to parts of Europe. Some of these are not obviously connected with grammaticalization in the narrow sense. One example of a grammaticalization process that comes close to be "European only" is the development of question words into relative clause markers. Another one is the genesis of perfects from possessive constructions, discussed by among other Heine & Kuteva and Bridget Drinka. The broad typological study of perfects that Bernhard Wälchli and I have recently undertaken makes it possible for me to put possessive perfects in a more global perspective, comparing them to perfects and perfect-like constructions from other sources such as non-possessive resultatives and words meaning 'already' or 'finish'. Some relevant questions here include 1) to which extent is the rise of possessive perfects is contingent on the existence of a transitive verb like 'have'?; 2) do possessive perfects differ in their semantic and pragmatic properties from perfects from other sources?