

Grammaticalization in South Asia? Weighing areal, genetic, and typological factors

New version:

Next year will mark 40 years since the publication of Colin Masica's comparative study of the typologies of the languages of Eurasia in which he shows that South Asia is just one part of the Indo-Turanian linguistic area covering South, Central, and Northeast Asia. In our paper we present historically attested evidence for positing grammaticalization [emergence of verb-verb complexes and use of 'say' as complementizer] for parts of two of the language families [IE and ST] included in the South Asian lobe of Masica's macro linguistic area. However, the very size of this linguistic area casts doubt on common assumptions about how linguistic areas arise. Rather than cross-linguistic calquing on structures by bilinguals the more plausible explanation for grammatical convergence within the Indo-Turanian linguistic area is through the working out of basic typological similarities in adjacent areas that happen to be contiguous.