

Abstract

In my Ph.D. thesis, I examine the use of referential devices in spoken narrative discourse with predominant anaphoric reference. Special attention is paid to the relationship between two competing forms: lexical phrases containing the lexeme *ten* (*ten*-MARKED NPs) and lexical phrases not containing it (UNMARKED NPs) in repeated mentions. A primary aim of the work is (i) to identify factors favouring the use of *ten*-marked NPs at the expense of unmarked NPs and (ii) to explore the possibility of the lexeme *ten* grammaticalizing from its anaphoric use. Theoretically and methodologically I benefit mostly from the conception of discourse anaphora and the theory of grammaticalization.

The referential devices are systematically explored in terms of their distribution into different classes according to a set of parameters and their values. These parameters reflect the conceptual (animacy), grammatical (syntactic function, type of clause etc.) as well as discourse characteristics of the forms and their referents (informational status of the NP in the clause, activation and persistence of the referent, etc.).

The data consist of 45 short narratives produced by 15 speakers. The speakers' task was to retell three short silent-movie sketches which they had seen immediately before the recording. The design of the corpus reflects the need for maximizing the number of repeated mentions.

The distribution of the referential forms is primarily driven by discourse activation of their referents but other factors also play a part. Concerning the competition between *ten*-marked NPs and unmarked NPs in repeated mentions, it is the *ten*-marked NPs which prevail; the speakers used them in more than 60 % of all cases. Two distinct functions have been identified in the anaphoric use of *ten*: *demonstrative* (reference to a weakly activated, discourse-prominent entity) and *contextualizing* (reference to a strongly activated, non-prominent entity constituting a part of the informational background). However, none of these seem to be a plausible source for the potential grammaticalization of *ten* into a definite article, for none of them can account for its functional transition to other domains characteristic of the definite article.

A promising explanatory factor as to the use of *ten*-marked NPs in the analysed corpus turned out to be the persistence of the referent (measured by the number of clauses in which the referent persists in the subsequent discourse). The persistence corresponds to the local importance of the referent in the narrative, as evaluated by the speaker. The *ten*-marked items show consistently higher persistence values than the unmarked ones. Given that strengthening pragmatic aspects of the communicated information is regarded as the starting point of any grammaticalization process, the persistence represents a plausible source for the potential grammaticalization of *ten* into a definite article.

Kew words: lexeme *ten* – adnominal demonstrative – grammaticalization – spoken Czech – discourse anaphora – definite article – pronominal demonstrative – persistence – activation – anaphoric distance – narrative – deixis – recognitional use – discourse prominence – situational use – topic & comment – theme & rheme