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FOLIA LINGUISTICA

Acta Societatis Linguisticae Europaeae

Cover design by Martin Zech, Bremen.

Printed on recycled paper by Plana Artes Gráficas, Santiago de Compostela.

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On parts-of-speech transcategorization[1]

Elisabetta Ježek[2] & Paolo Ramat[3]

In this paper we investigate the linguistic phenomenon of *transcategorization*, that is, the categorial shift of a lexical item with no superficial marking, resulting from its employment in a new (morpho)syntactic environment. Our overall aim is to contribute to the description of transcategorization processes from a typological perspective and to highlight their synchronic consequences on the structure of the lexicon. We analyse paradigmatic instances of transcategorization from typologically different languages and discuss the notion of transcategorization with reference to related notions such as conversion, precategoriality, flexibility and polifunctionality. We argue that transcategorization, understood as a diachronic shift from a *source* to a *target* category, is more characteristic of languages with clear-cut parts-of-speech distinctions, such as fusional languages. By contrast, isolating languages, where lexical categories are not clearly marked formally, are better characterized as languages with precategorial lexemes. Our main goal is to stress the role that transcategorization plays in shaping the parts-of-speech systems of languages and to highlight its relevance in parts-of-speech theories and models.

Keywords: trancategorization, parts of speech, lexical category, conversion, precategoriality, polyfunctionality

[2] University of Pavia.
[3] Istituto Universitario di Studi Superiori, Pavia.

1. Preliminary remarks on parts of speech and universals

Although it is generally recognized that the definition of the parts of speech (i.e. the translation of Gk. *mérē toû lógou,* Lat. *partes orationis*; henceforth, PoS) involves a cluster of morphological, syntactic and semantic parameters, PoS have been traditionally identified primarily on the basis of morphological properties of words (cf., among others, Robins 1990, Ramat 1999, Anward 2006). PoS definitions based exclusively or primarily on syntactic properties of words (as in Hengeveld 1992: 62–67) are more recent and stem from the extensive study of languages in which the distinctions between the different PoS are not marked by morphology and are consequently less clear-cut (see Chinese as a paradigmatic example of such a language). In this case, lacking distinctive morphology, the PoS of a lexical item is defined by its ability to fill syntactic slots (cf. Hengeveld et al. 2004).[4] By many scholars, this definition of PoS is regarded as the most useful one, in light of the fact that while all languages have at least a minimal syntactic organization, there exist languages that lack a morphology almost entirely.

The view we take here is that the two definitions of PoS outlined above (syntax-oriented and morphology-oriented) are not mutually exclusive but rather represent two different layers at which lexical categorization can occur. In this respect, by studying *transcategorization* (henceforth, TC) processes, we hope to help clarifying how the two levels interact and how languages differ with respect to the role that morphology and syntax play in word classification: think for instance of fusional languages, which are generally considered as typical examples of languages with morphology-oriented PoS systems, but which at the same time, as we will show, make extensive use of syntactic means, alongside 'classical' morphological rules, in the domain of word formation.

With respect to the universality of the notion of PoS (Bossong 1992), we can generally say that one should distinguish between 'constitutive, ontological universals' and 'universally valid definitions'. No language can lack universal entities such as phoneme, word, or sentence. By contrast,

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[4] In Hengeveld's model (cf. Hengeveld et al. 2004: 530), syntactic slots are defined with respect to the function their heads play in the sentence. In this way, four main syntactic slots are identified, corresponding to the four main PoS: head of a referential phrase (N), head of a predicate phrase (V), modifier of a referential phrase (ADJ), modifier of a predicate phrase (ADV).

notions such as noun (N), adjective (ADJ), or adverb (ADV), especially if they are interpreted as grammatical categories, are not in themselves strictly necessary in any concept of a 'possible human language'. A language may lack adjectives (and there exist examples of this) and have other tools for expressing qualitative attributions. In a sense, PoS are the result of the analysis of the linguist. As such, their definition has to be universally (i.e. cross-linguistically) valid: an adverb *must* have certain definitional properties, and certain morphosyntactic behaviour; but this does not mean that adverbs must be present in all languages, though languages must have some way to modify the verb. The implementation of the category (part-of-speech) adverb needs not be universal: what we assume to be universal is the possibility of modifying a predication.

Evans & Osada (2005) have recently argued that, as far as we know, there are no languages without at least a 'weak' distinction (either grammatical or syntactic) between verbs (VBs) and nouns. In the present article we are interested in the discussion between *monocategorialists*, that is, those who maintain the existence of languages with no classes of lexemes, and *antimonocategorialists*, inasmuch as transcategorization entails the existence of at least two different categories.

2. Defining transcategorization

It is well-known that lexical items can be used in different syntactic functions without modifying their superficial form, but rather by employing them in different syntagmatic contexts. In this way, verbs may be used as adpositions (ADPs) (as Chin. *yong* 'to use' > 'with'), or complementizers (Ewe *bé* 'to say', also used as a complementizer), adjectives may be used as adverbs (as Germ. *schön*: *sie ist schön* 'she is good looking' and *sie singt schön* 'she sings in a nice way', or It. *forte*: *una voce forte* 'a loud voice' and *parlare forte* 'speak loudly'),[5] verbs may be used as nouns (as Engl. *he likes to run* and *he went for a run*), etc.

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[5] It should be noted that although German has dedicated morphs for forming adverbs (-*lich* and -(*er*)*weise*), the word *schön*, which primarily expresses a property and not a modality (as shown by the fact that it usually behaves as an adjective and agrees with its head noun: *ein schönes Haus* 'a beautiful house') can occasionally be used

Robert (2004: 138) has spoken of "categorial flexibility" and "transcategorial morphemes" (*ibid*.: 120) and given the example of Wolof (Niger-Congo family) *ginnaaw* meaning 'the back', and then, according to the well-known use of body parts as adpositions, 'behind', 'after' ─ and finally 'since', i.e. a subordinating conjunction. Note that also Engl. *back,* originally the name of a body part, may be used as an adjective (*the back door*), as an adverb (*please call me back*; *don't look back*), and finally also as a verb (*to back a claim*).

In ancient Indo-European fusional languages, adjectives used as adverbs did not need a case mark when they modified the verb: cf. Gk. *âdu phōneísas* (Sapph. 31 VOIGT, vv. 3–4) = Lat. *dulce loquentem*, both without the expected agreement in feminine gender.[6] It is usually thought that *âdu, dulce* are the neuter accusative singular of the adjective; but actually they simply correspond to the adjectival stem without any morphological mark of their grammatical status.

In the Hittite periphrastic construction *hark-* 'hold, have' + *-an* participle (e.g. *dammišhan harkánzi* 'they damaged (me)', lit. 'they hold me damagedly'), the *-an* participle does not agree with anything: "En hittite le participe est traité comme un *adverbe*; en latin comme un *adjective*" (Benveniste 1962: 63; cf. Dardano 2005).

Categorial changes of the kind illustrated above (i.e. without superficial marking) have often been referred to in the literature as (*zero*) *conversions*.[7] According to Valera (2006: 172) "[c]onversion is a word-formation *process* [our italics] that changes the word class of existing words but not their form, for example *water* versus *to water something*". This definition is very much in keeping with the notion of TC we propose here. Froschauer (2005) has spoken of *Konversion* using examples such as Germ. *tief*_{ADJ} 'deep' > *das Tief*_N 'depth' and *laufen*_{VB} 'to run' > *das Laufen*_N 'the act of running, the run'. In these last cases, the lexemes do not undergo any formal change, so that we can speak of 'reanalysis' of the same form: it is just the syntax that enables us to establish the difference in PoS, whereas other examples such as

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in adverbial function with no formal modification. Similar obervations hold for It. *forte*.

[6] In Hor. *Odes* I,22,24ff: *dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo, / dulce loquentem* 'I will love sweetly laughing and sweetly speaking Lalage'.

[7] The term 'conversion' is used by many linguists instead of transcategorization. We prefer transcategorization since it is more transparent than conversion, which does not make clear that one is referring to the notion of *category*.

*werfen*_{VB} 'to throw' > *der Wurf*_N 'the act of throwing' or *rufen*_{VB} 'to call' > *der Ruf*_N 'the act of calling' exhibit more than a simple functional reanalysis, since the nominal form differs from the verbal one.[8] For this reason, these last examples cannot be labelled as TCs, at least according to the definition we adopt here, in which TC is *a diachronic process consisting in a categorial shift of a lexical item without any superficial marking*. It is a functional reanalysis resulting from the employment of a lexical item associated to a *source* category into a (morpho)syntactic context which is typical of a *target* category.[9]

Taking this definition of TC as our point of departure, the overall aim of this paper is to improve the description of TC processes and explore their synchronic consequences on the structure of the lexicon. In particular, we are interested in contributing to the identification of different types of TC phenomena; to help characterize the relation between TC processes and language types (such as isolating or fusional languages); to explore the question of whether there exist preferred kinds of categorial shifts; to help identifying the morphosyntactic and semantic constraints to TC operations. Also, we would like to work towards clarifying the correlations, if any, between TC processes and the PoS hierarchy advanced in Hengeveld (1992) and Hengeveld et al. (2004), reported in (1):

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[8] The question whether conversion operates on words or stems is a controversial issue: see note 10 below.

[9] It has to be noted, however, that not all reanalyses are TCs: think for instance of the creation of new synthetic forms in Late Latin and ProtoRomance such as *laudabo*_{VB.FUT} → *laudare*_{VB.INF} *habeo*_{AUX.VB} → *loderò*_{VB.FUT} 'I shall praise'. The development remains internal to the category verb. It does not produce any categorical change and simply entails a superficial change of form. Another case of reanalysis without TC was presented by Conradie at the Third Conference 'New Reflections on Grammaticalization' (Santiago de Compostela, July 2005): Afrikaans *het*, which replaced *heb, hebt, heeft* and *hebben*, has become the unmarked infinitive form of the verb 'have' (e.g. *om die deur te gesluit*_{PAST PART} *het* 'to have locked the door', *kon gesien*_{PAST PART} *het* 'could have seen', where the perfect is analytically formed by PAST PART + *het*_{INF}). Conradie observes that, from a diachronic point of view, this structural change is strictly reminiscent of the development of the future tense in Romance languages.

(1)   PoS Hierarchy:
Head of predicate phrase (V) > Head of referential phrase (N) > Modifier of referential phrase (ADJ) > Modifier of predicate phrase (ADV)

According to its authors, this hierarchy is able to predict the PoS system of a language depending on the degree of *flexibility* or *rigidity* exhibited by its lexical items (i.e. if they can occupy one or more syntactic slots of the hierarchy). The hierarchy may be interpreted in the following way: the more to the left a syntactic slot is positioned, the more likely it is for a language to have a separate class of lexemes for that syntactic slot (Hengeveld et al. 2004: 533). Following this hierarchy, if a rigid language lacks ADJ, it will also lack ADV; if a flexible language has a word class which can be used both as N and as ADJ, this same class will most likely also be used as ADV. Finally, if a language lacks one or more PoS, it is predicted that those PoS situated on the left of the hierarchy are the least likely to be absent. With respect to TC phenomena, one might assume that categories situated on the left of the hierarchy (i.e. more universal categories) are better candidates for TC phenomena, since they are the most attested in languages and the most represented from a quantitative point of view. At the same time, one might expect that categories situated in the lowest part of the hierarchy will not easily function as a source for TCs mapping higher slots.

3. What is not TC?

In order to pursue the goals outlined in §2, in this section we discuss instances of what in our opinion are not TCs, since there exists a variety of phenomena that share some features with TCs, but which cannot be considered as such.

First, any process that results in a bound morpheme becoming a free morpheme belonging to a lexical category (or viceversa), as in the case of Lat. *mente* (abl. sg.) 'mind' → Span. *-mente* (e.g. *precisamente* 'precisely') (N→SUFF), is not properly speaking a PoS TC, since by definition TCs have a full autonomous word both as input and as output, while *mente* has become an adverbial suffix (*-mente*). These cases are best interpreted as typical instances of grammaticalization processes (Lehmann 2004).

For the same reason, the creation of autonomous pronominal forms from verbal endings we find in Irish (see Roma 2000: 226–230), or the opposite

phenomenon of pronouns becoming inflectional markers as *nos* 'we' in Mexican Span. *cantába-nos* instead of *cantába-mos*, are not TC. In this last case, for instance, there is a functional reinterpretation of a free morph to a bound morph without any phonetic change – though not without morphological reinterpretation.

Consider also the more complex case of Old High Germ. *fragês dû* (with postposed pronoun when the verb was in 'verb second' constructs), which became *fragest* [*dû*] by assimilation, and finally *du fragst* 'you (2nd sg.) ask' (with regular anteposition of the personal pronoun to the new verb form), or the form *hamir < ham wir < haben wir* lit. 'have we' in some Frankish and Bavarian dialects (with assimilation of -*w*- to the preceding -*m*. Subsequently, a new 1st pl. pronoun *mir*: *mir ham*(*mer*/*mər*) was created. Can we speak here of TC? There is no doubt that in these German dialects we have a '*falsche Trennung*', which substitutes a pronominal form (i.e. the cliticized -*mir*) for the original *wir*. However, according to the definition of TC we adopt here, the German case cannot be considered as TC. The output of the wrong division is not a form belonging to a different category but simply a new pronominal form.

Our definition of TC also excludes inflectional processes (such as the already quoted Germ. *rufen* 'to call' / *der Ruf* 'the act of calling', or French *nager* 'swim' / *la nage* 'a swim'),[10] morphological processes based on apophony (as Germ. *werfen* / *Wurf*; see again above, §2), and classical word formation processes which may derive a verb from a noun (as in Engl. *economy* → *economize*), or an adverb from an adjective (as in Engl. *nice* → *nicely*), etc.[11]

Our definition also leaves out the numerous cases of 'mixed forms', such as verbal nouns which may show case marking patterns that are either typical of verbal constructions or of nominal constructions, as It. *presidente*

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[10] This is a controversial point: categorization and conversion have sometimes been applied to stems instead of words (see for discussion Valera 2006: 174 and Lehmann 2008).

[11] Contrary to Gaeta's views on TC; see, for instance, Gaeta (2002: 20): "[la] nominalizzazione [...] deve essere intesa come una transcategorizzazione o trasposizione da una qualunque classe lessicale a quella di nome" ['nominalization must be understood as a transcategorization or transposition from any lexical class to the class of nouns']. According to our restricted definition, the noun *travaso* 'pouring' is not the transcategorization of the verb *travasare* 'to pour', although we may agree to call it a *transposition*.

'president' (< Lat. *praesidĕntem*, present participle of *praesidēre* 'to govern, to protect'); cf. It. *il presidente la*OBJ *commissione* vs. *il presidente della*GEN *commissione*. See also the following example from Japanese:

(2) a.   [*Taroo-ga*   *piza-o*   **haitatsu**-*tyuu*]-*ni,*
            Taroo–NOM   pizza –ACC   delivery-while-at
            jising-ga   *okotta*
            earthquake-NOM   occurred

     b.   [*Taroo-no*   *piza-o*   **haitatsu**-*tyuu*]-*ni,*
            Taroo–GEN   pizza -ACC   delivery-while-at
            jising-ga   *okotta*
            earthquake-NOM   occurred

     'an earthquake occurred while Taro was delivering pizzas' (ex. from Ohara 2000)

In (2a) *Taroo* is marked for the nominative case and *piza* is marked as the object of *haitatsu*; in (2b) *Taroo* is marked for the genitive case ('the pizza-delivery of [i.e. by] Taro'). Note that in both Italian and Japanese the concerned items do not change their meaning.

A further example here will clarify what in our opinion does not count as TC: shiftings as in It. *una bottiglia mezzo piena* <=> *una bottiglia mezza piena*, lit. 'a bottle half full' (ADV <=> ADJ), which are possible in some Italian varieties, do not represent TC, since in this case a formal differentiation is at stake (*mezzo* vs. *mezza*).

Even full reduplications such as Turk. *sinirli sinirli* 'nervously' (adverb), from *sinirli* 'nervous' (adjective), Mor. Arab. *saʃa saʃa* 'from time to time' (lit. 'hour hour'; cf. Maas 2005: 405), or Indon. *tiba-tiba* 'suddenly' (*tiba* 'to arrive'; cf. Rubino 2005: 21), do not belong to TC, though the reduplication does not alter the base form – exactly as in Chin. *yong* 'to use' / 'with'; cf. §2 – and the meaning is very different from that of the base; yet there is a change in the form as a whole, namely the reduplication.

Finally, TC also has to be neatly distinguished from instances of reanalysis that lead to lexicalisation, such as the creation of new lexemes originating in syntactic constructions, which are no longer transparent, via a process of univerbation. We allude to lexemes such as Engl. *perhaps* (originally a prepositional phrase *per haps,* with the plural of a disappeared noun *hap* we may still recognize in *happening*), It. *forse* (< Lat. *fors sit* 'be the chance'), Dutch *misschien* 'perhaps, possibly' (< *mag schien*, lit. 'it may happen'). We even find transparent formations that may still retain the form

of a main clause as Fr. *peut-être (que)*; cf. also Engl. *maybe* − and (*it*) *may be that* −, Russ. *možet byt' (čto)*, Lith. *galbūt*, Latv. *varbūt*, etc.[12]

4. A typology of TCs

In the previous section, we analysed several instances of processes which resemble TC but are not such. In this section, we provide additional examples of TC phenomena, with the aim of further clarifying what TC is and how it operates, as well as identifying different sorts of TCs.

We start by clarifying that in fusional languages, when the source category is an inflected category, TC necessarily involves a form belonging to a morphological paradigm. Although TCs involving inflected forms should be kept apart from TCs involving non-inflected forms, in that some of the properties they exhibit are different, they both count as TCs since they both involve a shift between two free morphemes. In what follows, however, we will limit our discussion to the first case.

Consider for instance deverbal adpositions like Engl. *during*, *excepting*, *bar* or Fr. *hormis* 'except': we may observe that TC processes from verb to adposition are frequent with forms which are remnants of verbs which have disappeared, like Engl. *to dure* and Fr. *hormettre,* or are irregular in the paradigm they belong(ed) to: cf. It. *presso* 'near to', etymologically the past participle of Lat. *premere*, whose form has been replaced in Italian by the more regular *premuto* 'pressed'. We may also notice that many deverbal adpositions underwent dramatic changes of meaning, such as Fr. *pendant* 'during', the present participle of *pendre* 'to hang', which may be used also as a noun: *les pendants d'oreilles* 'earrings'.

As we can see from these last examples, a TC involving a form of a paradigm clearly produces (at least in fusional languages) a new autonomous lexeme. The transcategorized lexeme gradually loses its paradigmatic connection. Less regular or irregular forms are progressively no longer felt

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[12] There is however a clear formal difference between the *forse, misschien*-type and the *peut-être*, *maybe*-type inasmuch as the latter has not undergone any phonetic transformation. Moreover, when used with verbal function, *peut-être*, *maybe* can still be interrupted by intervening linguistic material as in *il peut bien être* (*que*…), *it may well be* (*that* …): the univerbation process is not complete.

to belong to a verbal paradigm ─ and from this point of view they can be considered as non-morphological forms.

From the diachronic point of view, inflected forms such as Old Fr. *hors mise la terre Saint-Magloire* 'excepting the country of Saint-Magloire' (see Kortmann & König 1992: 681), or It. *tutti gli uffici* […] *eccetti quegli pochi che* [...] 'all the charges […] excepting the few ones that […]' (Guicciardini, 16th cent.; see Molinelli 2001) clearly show what happened: there has certainly been a phase where these lexemes had two values, namely a participial one showing agreement of the participles with their head nouns and an adpositional one, without agreement.

If we now consider denominal adpositions such as Engl. *instead* [*of* +N], Germ. *anstatt* [+N$_{GEN}$] and compare them with deverbal adpositions like *during,* we may observe an important formal difference: adpositions created on a nominal base (*stead, Statt* 'place') seem to be syntactically more complex than those created on a verbal base. The former have first to build a PP (*in* + *stead, an* + *statt*) which is then expanded by a noun endowed with case. The latter maintain their verbal construction, which for transitive verbs means an object case: Engl. *all the people excepting one*; *all the people bar one*; Fr. *tout est perdu hormis l'honneur.* Thus, it seems that transitive verbs such as *to except* may rather easily give birth to adpositions (or even adverbs) via TC.

We can also speak of TC when a simple form of a verbal paradigm acquires an adverbial meaning: in many cases the verb 'can:3sg' alone can mean 'perhaps' as in Lith. *gal* (alongside the already quoted *galbūt*), Pol. *może* (along with Russ. *može byt′*), Rom. *poate* (alongside *poate că*, lit. '(it) may that' > 'perhaps'; cf. Ramat & Ricca 1994: 297f). This, it seems, was already the case in ancient languages, such as Hittite, where the present participle of the verb *aš* 'to be', i.e. *ašant*, may mean 'truly' (cf. e.g. KBo IV 14 11 58f), with a rather diffused metaphoric use of the verb *to be*: what 'is there, exists' is 'true'.

Finally, another type of TC is the one we might call *recessive* TC. Old Italian had an indefinite pronoun (*u*)*om* corresponding almost exactly to Fr. *on*. This was a clear case of TC from noun to pronoun: (*u*)*om*(*o*) < Lat. *homo* 'man'. Nowadays, however, the indefinite use of *uomo* no longer exists: it has been replaced by the *si*-construct as in It. *si parla italiano* (Fr. *on parle italien*, Germ. *man spricht Italienisch*) and *(u)omo* has kept only its nominal meaning.

Note that all the examples discussed above involve a shift from a content (or lexical) word to a function (or grammatical) word. Although these shifts exhibit particular properties with respect to the shifts occurring between two content words, they both count as TCs because they both involve autonomous lexemes. On this view, when Engl. *while*, originally a N meaning 'moment, period of time', acquired the meaning of a temporal conjunction and shifted from a content category characterized by grammatical features such as gender and number (N) to a function category which is closed and invariable (CONJ), it underwent a process of both grammaticalization and transcategorization.

To summarize, what has been said thus far leads to the conclusion that a lexical category may be seen as including more prototypical and less prototypical members. There are items which belong to the core of the category and items which are more peripheral, in that they either take on different categories easily or they belong originally to a different category (say, ADP *with*, prototypical, versus ADP *during*, non prototypical). Categorial implementations need not be discrete and clear-cut.[13] This confirms what we noted at the beginning of this paper and consequently posited as a definitional property of TC: lexical items may change their categorial status without changing their form. From this perspective, TC represents a device which is an alternative to morphology-based word formation rules such as derivation and compounding, to create new words out of existing ones.

5. TC and the structure of the lexicon

When investigating TCs, an important aspect to consider is the status of the outputs of TC processes in the system of the language. In this respect, two main issues are at stake: first, the question of whether TC processes produce new lexical items; second, whether different degrees of lexicalization may be identified. In this section, we will briefly address these two related problems.

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[13] We prefer this formulation rather than speaking of 'mixed categories lying in between two different categories': categories have to be clear-cut concepts, defined by a series of properties. By contrast, there may exist items whose definition in categorial terms may be dubious, since some properties may be shared by more than one category (e.g. gender and number may be common to VB and N).

With respect to the first point, we should note that a new 'use' of an existing word may result in two different situations concerning the structure of the lexicon: a single lexical item which can be used in different ways (i.e. a polyfunctional word) or a pair of homonymous lexical items which belong to two different classes. The two cases have sometimes been referred to as *partial* vs. *full conversion* (Valera 2006: 174). It is generally assumed that situation 2 entails situation 1 (i.e. autonomous lexicalization entails a former phase of polyfunctionality, as with It. *eccetto* in §4: "tutti gli uffici […] eccet̲t̲i̲ quegl̲i̲ poch̲i̲ che [...]"). Note that in principle, only situation 2 is strictly speaking a word formation process, since in the first case no new lexeme is produced. As an example of a polyfunctional use of a word we might cite the adverbial use of adjectives (German *schön* in §2 above) or the nominal use of verbal infinitives (It. *il mangiare*, from 'to eat'), which, in principle, is available to any verb (but see §6 for further remarks on this topic). In these examples, it is generally assumed that the two uses still constitute a single word. As for the second case (autonomous lexicalization), we might consider deverbal adpositions such as *during*, and more generally all cases of TCs where the source form is a form of a verbal paradigm. By definition, TC processes involving a form of a paradigm are more likely to produce separate lexicalizations.

Although it is evident that both options (polyfunctionality and autonomous lexicalization) should be accounted for, the question remains as to how we distinguish between them precisely, given that intermediate cases exist which are not clear cut. Consider for instance the Engl. adjective *green*, which may be metonymically used as a noun in the sense of 'an area planted with grass'. Are we talking about two words here, or about a single word with both adjectival and nominal function? As has been noted in the literature, what seems to be significant in such cases is the proximity in meaning between the two uses and the possibility of establishing or reconstructing a relation between them synchronically. If the meanings are close, the word is understood as polyfunctional. If they are not close, it is assumed that there are two words in our lexicon. The dividing line is rather fuzzy, and dictionaries differ in considering words like *green* as two separate words or as a single polyfunctional word. Note that the difference between

polyfunctional lexeme and autonomous lexicalization parallels the difference between polysemy and homonymy.[14]

With respect to the existence of different degrees of lexicalization, various factors may play a role in determining how advanced a lexicalization process may be. If we start from the assumption that changes first happen in discourse and then enter the system through a diachronic process, we should distinguish between *faits de discours* and *faits de système*. Consider the following Italian examples: *non capisco i suoi aspettiamo* (lit. 'I do not understand his "Let's wait"') and *i perché di un bambino* (lit. 'the~PL~ why of a child')*. The first example refers to an utterance: someone has repeatedly accomplished a speech act by saying "Let's wait" (1st pers. pl. of a regular verbal paradigm) and this utterance is occasionally used as a nominal object of the verbal predication 'I don't understand'. This case should be regarded as a *fait de discours*, which has no impact on the lexicon. However, the second example refers to a usual interrogative word (*perché* 'why'), again used in a nominal function. In contrast to the previous example, this use is not occasional anymore, it has been picked up by various users and has become a norm in the language. This is a *fait de système*. It is listed together with the other uses of *perché* in monolingual dictionaries.

A second factor which is assumed to play a role in determining the degree of lexicalisation is paradigmatic motivation, although it is not completely clear how this criterion should be evaluated. Language histories are full of such dubious cases. Consider the differences between *atto* and *fatto* in Italian. It. *atto* 'act, action, deed, feat' comes from Lat. *ac-tum*, the past participle of the verb *agere* 'to do'. No Italian speaker, however, recognizes in this noun the original verb form, because the verb *agere* has disappeared and the assimilation -*ct*-➔-*tt*- has cancelled the ancient morpheme boundary. On the other hand, It. *fatto* (Lat. *fac-tum*) is still the past participle of the verb *fare* (< Lat. *facere*): *Ho fatto il mio lavoro* 'I did my job', but at the same time it has nominal value, with singular/plural opposition: *Mi ha riferito il fatto* 'He has reported the fact to me', *I fatti parlano chiaro* 'The facts speak for themselves'. In conclusion, we could say that the degree of transcategorization of *atto* is higher than that of *fatto*

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[14] Hengeveld et al. (2004: 540) note that in flexible languages polyfunctional lexemes should be regarded as semantically vague (or underspecified) rather than polysemous, both as concerns their meaning and their category (VB, N, etc). We will come back to this point in §6.

though both can behave completely as nouns, inasmuch as synchronically *atto* has no verbal link at all.

6. Where is TC more operative?

According to Robert (2004: 136–138), TC as defined in §2 is related to linguistic type: in languages with heavy morphology (e.g. fusional languages) the category change is rather limited, while in languages with light morphology (e.g. isolating languages) TC is much more pervasive. In languages using analytical strategies it is easier for grammatical markers to undergo TC since they are often autonomous morphemes. Monosyllabic Mandarin Chinese is usually said to be a standard example of transcategorizing language. However, as we will see in the Chinese examples (3) and (4), one might wonder whether the term transcategorization, which refers to a diachronic process, is the most appropriate for highly flexible languages (in Hengeveld's terminology; cf. §2 and below in this section), where the syntactic distribution is crucial in assigning a lexeme to a specific PoS (see also the case of Polynesian languages discussed by Moyse-Faurie 2005). In fact, a Chinese monosyllable can have many different functions and the syntactic and pragmatic contexts are very much necessary to understand its value, so that in such cases the terms *precategorization* (Sasse 1993) and *precategorial* (suggested by Bisang) are preferable to transcategorization. The following Late Archaic Chinese example is quoted by Bisang (2000):

(3) a.   *xìn* is interpreted as a N ('trustworthiness, confidence'):
           *wú   dào   dé   xiǎo rén   zhī   **xìn**   yǐ*
           not.have way   get/reach small man ATTR confidence   PERF
           '(he) has no way of achieving the confidence of the commoners'
     b.   *xìn* is interpreted as an intransitive VB in the predicate position
           ('to be trustworthy'):
           xiū   shì   zhě   wèi   bì   zhì,
           cultivated knight NML/TOP not.yet must be.wise
           zhì   shì   zhě
           be.wise   knight NML/TOP

> *wèi   bi   **xìn***
> not.yet   must   trustworthy
> 'a cultivated knight is not necessarily wise, a wise knight is not
> necessarily trustworthy'

   c.   *xìn* is interpreted as a transitive VB ('to believe' = 'to consider
        someone as trustworthy'):
        *rén   jiē   **xìn**   zhī*
        man   all   believe3.SG   OBJ:3
        'people all believed him'

   d.   *xìn* is interpreted as a sentence ADV ('certainly'):
        *shuǐ **xìn**   wú   fēn   yú   dōng   xī*
        water   certainly   NEG   make_a_distinction   PREP east   west
        'the water is certainly indifferent to the east and west' (i.e. it does
        not care whether it flows to the east or to the west)

In the Chinese sentences in (3) the same word **xìn** shows an impressive
distributional versatility, according to the syntactic slot it occupies. At the
end of his examples Bisang writes as follows: "One has to make a distinction
between lexical classes and syntactic constructions […]. [In Late Archaic
Chinese] lexical items are precategorial. They do not belong to one
particular syntactic category".[15] We may add that apparent equivalent
instances of polyfunctionality may have different origins. Lexemes that are
synchronically polyfunctional may be the result of diachronic TC processes
or they may be lexically underspecified (= precategorial) as far as their PoS
is concerned (as in Late Archaic Chinese).

   Lepschy (1981: 447) reports four different translations, given by
competent specialists, of the first two sentences of the *Dao De Jing* ('The
Canon of Virtue', by Lao-Tze):

   (4)   *Dào kě dào fēi cháng dào. Míng kě míng fēi cháng míng*
         a.   'The Tao which one can follow is not the permanent and invariable
              Tao. The name one can name is not the permanent and invariable
              name.'
         b.   'The Way one can speak of is not an invariable Way. The names
              one can name are not invariable names.'

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[15] We can conclude that difference of form entails difference in categorization (e.g.
Engl. *fun* vs. *funny*), but identity of forms does not entail categorial identity (e.g.
Engl. *clean*, VB and ADJ).

c.   'The Way one can truly consider the Way is different from a permanent Way. The terms one can truly consider terms are different from invariable terms.'

d.   'One can speak about the Tao, but not about the Eternal Tao. Names can be named, not the Eternal Name.'

In (4) the syntactic position of the lexeme is decisive: Chinese does not know gender and number opposition and the second *dào* following *kě* (which indicates possibility in *a*, *b* and *d*, but has an asseverative function in *c*) appears in verbal position, though with two different possible meanings: 'to follow' in *a* and *c* or 'to speak of' in *b* and *d*. It is the syntactic slot it occupies that assigns *dào* its verbal function, different from its first nominal occurrence at the beginning of the sentence.

Again, this additional example supports the view that it is not appropriate to consider *xìn* a good example of TC on a par with, say, Pol. *może* or Rom. *poate*, since it does not *per se* belong to any particular word class. Note that a similar, even though not identical, situation holds for so-called *omnipredicative* languages (a term introduced by Launey in 1994 for Nahuatl), such as Straits Salish, Classical Aztec and Samoan, i.e. languages in which all (major-class) lexical items can function directly as predicate without derivational markers, according to the syntactic slots they are placed in; see the target article on Mundari (Munda, Austroasiatic) by Evans & Osada (2005) and its discussion by Peterson, Hengeveld & Rijkhoff, and Croft in *Linguistic Typology* 9.3. A good example of 'omnipredicativity' is offered by Peterson (2005: 394f) from Kharia (a South Munda language):

(5)   a.   *lebu   Del=ki*
            man   come=MIDDLE PAST
            'the/a man came'

       b.   *bhagwan   lebu=ki   ro   Del=ki*
             God   man=MIDDLE PAST   and   come=MIDDLE PAST
             'God became a man and came [to earth]'

The lexeme *lebu* 'person, man' can be the semantic head of either a NP as in (5a) or be used directly as a verb as in (5b). Note that languages such as German, Italian, Russian will on the contrary use derivational morphemes to transform the noun into a verb (e.g. *vermenschlichen, umanizzare, očelovečivat'* 'to become a man').

We may then expect that the more flexible (in Hengeveld's terminology) a language is, the less TCs it will exhibit, since, as we have already seen, lexemes in these languages are often unspecified for lexical category, and it is therefore more appropriate to consider their polyfunctionality as a result of precategoriality. At the other end of the continuum (rigid languages) we can expect to find the most telling TCs, since every PoS in these languages has its own phonetic shape, which ties them to a specific syntactic slot (e.g. the *-ly* adverbs in English). Bisang (2008) confirms this state of affairs by showing that morphological affixes in Old and Late Archaic Chinese, as **m-*, **-r-*, **-s*, reduce or even cancel the transcategoriality[16] of the word they are attached to: "Once a word is marked by the suffix **-s*, it seems to lose its transcategoriality, ie., it exclusively belongs to the word class it is conventionally associated with." We may conclude that TCs will prove to be more characteristic of languages with clear-cut PoS divisions, such as fusional languages.

But different fusional languages may be more or less fusional in nature. As we know, less fusional languages like English may easily transform a noun into a verb, which thus acquires verbal morphology: cf. *to ship* ("I shipped"), *to bottle* ("I bottled"), etc.[17] Here again it is the syntactic context which disambiguates the functional value of the lexeme: *I bottle my wine in the cave* vs. *I took a bottle of wine out of my cave*. More fusional languages, such as the Romance languages, do not admit this: *to bottle* corresponds to Fr. *embouteiller*, It. *imbottigliare,* Span. *embotellar*. These languages are more bound to word formation rules and to paradigmatic patterns: an Italian infinitive must end in *-are/-ere/-ire* and a German infinitive always has the ending *-en* (cf. It. *ballo, danza* 'dance' > *ballare, danzare* 'to dance'; Germ. *Tanz > tanzen*). In Shakespeare's *Richard II*, Act 2.3.85 we find *Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncle*, i.e. another N→VB shift. It would be impossible to make a literal translation of this word play into a Romance or a Slavic language.[18]

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[16] Note that Bisang uses the term 'transcategoriality' to refer to what we call here 'polyfunctionality'.

[17] In English the same holds for ADJ→VB shifts: cf. *a clear sky* vs. *to clear the table*.

[18] Note that in the first phases of spontaneous second language learning processes we rather frequently find nouns used as verbs (e.g. a Cantonese adult learner of Italian narrating his activities during the day says: *sonno^ io sonno yeah*, where *io sonno* instead of *io dormo* means 'I sleep' (*sonno* is just a noun in Italian; cf. Bernini

The converse TC process (VB→N shift) is widely attested not only in Germanic but also in Romance languages by the syntactic possibility of nominalizing a verb, generally by means of a preposed article (see §2 above): Fr. *le dire* (from 'to say')*, le faire* (from 'to do'); It. *il dire, il fare*; Germ. *das Laufen* (from 'to run')*, das Trinken* (from 'to drink'); Dutch *het bestaan* (from 'to exist')*, het bewustzijn* (from 'to be conscious'); Engl. *a call, a run.* In the Scandinavian languages the use of prepositions before the infinitive marker *å* + infinitive makes the nominal function of the verb more evident: see Norw. *dei lever <u>av</u> å fiske* 'they live on fishing'.[19] It has to be noted, however, that not all the theoretically possible VB→N TCs are attested in languages. There is no doubt that the Fr. verb *pouvoir* 'can' may become a noun (*j'ai perdu beaucoup de mon pouvoir* 'I have lost a great deal of my power') and It. *avere* 'to have' may even get a plural (*perse tutti i suoi averi* '(s)he lost all her/his wealth'), but the rules of nominalizing by adding an article and especially by admitting the plural do not apply to every verb: it is impossible to have **les comprendres* or **i comprenderi* (from Fr. *comprendre*, It. *comprendere* 'to understand'). In fact, we find in French and Italian dictionaries two different entries (namely verb and noun) just for those verbs, such as *pouvoir* and *avere*, which allow a plural when used in nominal function.

While even lexemes having ADV, ADP or CONJ function may be nominalized via the anteposition of an article (Engl. *the ups and downs*, *the ifs and buts*, It. *i su e giù*, *i se e i ma*),[20] it is much more difficult to find examples of such lexemes used as verbs, though Engl. *up* and *down* have in fact become verbs: *to up his own wealth*, *to down a whiskey*. Again, this seems more feasible in English than in more fusional languages. The English

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2005: 123f). A Turkish adult native speaker says in Dutch: *dan ik in de knie pijn* 'then my knee aches' (lit. 'then I in the knee pain'), where *pijn*, properly a noun (the corresponding verb would be **ik pijne*) has to be understood as a verb. In Dutch the use of *pijn* as a noun would have as its output the sentence *dan ik heb pijn in de knie* (Starren 2001: 216).

[19] Note that the noun is *fisk*: *-e* is the ending of the infinitive (contrary to English, where both the noun and the verb have the form *fish*). Inasmuch as *å* is an obligatory marker in the citation form of a verb (just as Engl. *to*) we could say that there is no TC Inf. → N. But in the dictionaries we find *fiske* and not *å fiske* (just as in Engl. we find the entry *fish* and not *to fish*).

[20] On the problem of distinguishing between ADV and ADP function, see Cuzzolin, Putzu & Ramat (2006).

literary style may even build a verb *to but* (as in Walter Scott's well-known word play *But me no buts* 'don't make excuses to me', *The Antiquary* [1816], I.11). This would be impossible in French, Spanish, Portuguese, or Italian.[21]

The ADJ➔N shift is very frequent both in Romance and Germanic languages (but see note 22). Fr. *Le rouge et le noir* is a famous example of it, always via a syntactic construction (namely an NP), which does not alter the phonetic shape of the adjectives. The same holds for It. *il/un dolce* 'the/a cake', *un/l'amaro* 'a/the bitter' vs. *dolce* 'sweet', *amaro* 'bitter'; for Germ. *das Tief* 'the depth' vs. *tief* 'deep' and for Engl. *the green* vs. *green*, etc. Note that if we say It. *voglio quella dolce, non quella amara* 'I want the sweet one, not the bitter one', we cannot speak of TC, since the deictic anaphora assigns to *dolce* and *amara* a referent (e.g. a lemonade) which has been previously introduced in the discourse: *dolce* and *amara* maintain their adjectival status.

Even in Russian, a language without an article, the boundary between noun and adjective is not strict: adjectives may have independent referential function and be used as nouns (cf. Rusakova & Sai 2000).

The case of participial forms (present or past) aquiring adjectival and/or nominal function is rather common:[22] see It. N *abitante* (present participle of 'to inhabit'), ADJ *sorridente* (past participle of 'to smile'), ADJ *rotto* (past participle of 'to break'), ADJ and N *perdente* (present participle of 'to lose').

Finally, we have many examples of adjectives used as adverbs, such as It. *forte* 'loud, loudly', *piano* 'soft, softly'; Germ. *schön* 'beautiful, beutifully', *schnell* 'quick, quickly'; Dutch *mooi* 'beautiful, beutifully'; Engl. *fast*, and less frequent examples (at least in Romance languages) of adverbs used as adjectives, such as Engl. *up*, *down* (*the system is up*, *click on the down*

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[21] Notice that Maltese, which does not have a verb equivalent to Engl. *to have,* has a preposition *għand* 'at, to' (e.g. *għand tal-ħanut* 'at the shop') which is used as a verb when followed by the personal pronouns: *għandi* 'I have' (lit. 'to me'), *għandu* 'he has', etc.; cf., for instance, *għandi tlitt itfal* 'I have three children'. Of course this is not an example of TC, as the preposition gets a suffixed pronoun. We quote the Maltese case here to show that even the relatively rare shift ADP➔VB is attested, although it is attained by different grammatical means.

[22] Nominal uses of adjectives have often been interpreted as instances of ellipsis of the head of the NP of which the adjective is a modifier (for a discussion focused on Italian data, see Thornton 2004). In this view, ADJ→N shifts do not count as TCs.

arrow) or It. *bene* 'well' (*la Milano bene*, *i quartieri bene* lit. 'the well Milano', 'the well neighbourhoods').

7. Concluding remarks

We have seen many examples and various types of TCs: some of them are frequent, others are less so, and of further, possible TCs we have no or very few examples (see the Appendix for an overview of TCs with noun, verb, adjective and adverb as source categories discussed in this paper). In general, we can observe that TC operates mainly between the three major categories noun, verb and adjective, as in the very common N→V or V→N shifts (see Vogel 2000). This is understandable if one considers that these categories are, so to say, 'open categories', in the sense that they easily admit new entries as these become useful/necessary for new cultural situations.[23] Also, from a quantitative perspective, these categories tend to be the most represented in the lexicon. Note, however, that TC between major categories does not operate equally in all possible directions.

TC between members of other PoS is possible, but less productive. Categories such as adposition, pronoun and conjunction tend to be less permeable to new entries and to TC phenomena.[24]

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[23] Malchukov (2004: 3) has analysed the transcategorial operations which lead a verb or a noun to lose its features and argued that features ('categories', in his terminology) which are "less relevant to the meaning of the stem", such as Agreement, Tense/Aspect/Mood, Valency, are more "'affected' by transcategorial operations". There is a cline in both TC processes, though a deverbalization does not necessarily end up in a nominalization or vice versa, and it is possible to establish a hierarchy in the process: for instance in deverbalization Agreement will disappear earlier than Tense/Aspect/Mood markers.

[24] This is not to say that these categories are blocked and completely impermeable to new entries. For instance, new personal pronouns may arise from nouns or noun phrases by reanalysis and univerbation, as for instance Span. *Usted* 'you' (2nd sg.), *Ustedes* 'you' (2nd pl.) < *Vuestra(s) Merced(es)*; Sicilian *Vossìa* < *Vostra Signorìa* and *Voscenza* < *Vostra Eccellenza* 'you' (2nd sg., high respect forms); Port. *(o) senhor* 'you'. Also Fr. *monsieur* (< *mon seigneur* 'my lord') was on the way of becoming a respect form for the 2nd pers. pronoun. The case of Japanese personal pronouns is well-known: *boku* 'servant' > 1st sg; *watakusi* 'humble person' > 1st sg.; *anata* 'far away' > 2nd sg.; *kimi* 'lord' > 2nd sg., etc.

Major categories tend to feed the minor ones (such as adposition): however, instances of the reverse development are attested, i.e. a TC from a minor to a major category (such as ADP→VB). Less frequent seems to be the shift ADV/ADP→ADJ, as in Engl. *off* in *I am having an off day today* (but we do not have for instance *without* → **without* 'lacking', 'absent'; cf. Ramat 2005: 105).

Shifts are clearly influenced by the language type: in isolating languages, the formal integrity of lexical items, i.e. their being poorly dependent on morphological markers, increases their applicability in various syntactic uses (see also Hengeveld's notion of *non-specialized* languages: Hengeveld 1992, Hengeveld & Rijkhoff 2005; cf. also Ježek 2005: 138–144; Moyse-Faurie 2005; Ramat 2005: 74–76). However, in these languages, the notion of precategoriality instead of transcategorization seems to be more appropriate to characterize this phenomenon. By contrast, in fusional languages, shifts are constrained by the different inflectional schemes of the source and target category and TCs often involve a form of a paradigm. As we argued above (§2), this leads to the conclusion that TCs understood as a diachronic shift from a source to a target category are more characteristic of languages with clear-cut PoS divisions.

It remains an open issue for further research whether the preferred directions exhibited by TC processes can be predicted from the hierarchy of PoS advanced by Hengeveld (1992); if, for example, starting from this hierarchy it is possible to build an implicational hierarchy of TC processes (say, e.g., if a language knows ADJ→ADV it will also have VB→N shifts). To solve such problems we need extensive empirical research, and reasons as to why some shifts are more frequent than others will have to be sought through the study of cognitive speech strategies. This is an extremely difficult task, but we do not see any way of answering these questions other than to collect empirical evidence from as large as possible a sample of (preferably) spoken texts, where the outputs of TC processes are on the way to be lexicalised.

Appendix: Some examples of TCs discussed in this paper, with VB, N, ADJ and ADV as source categories

VB as source	Source	Target
VB (inf.) → N	Engl. *run, call*	*a run, a call*
	Germ. *laufen, trinken*	*das Laufen, das Trinken*
	Dutch *bestaan, bewust zijn*	*het bestaan, het bewustzijn*
	Fr. *dire, faire, pouvoir*	*le dire, le faire, le pouvoir*
	It. *dire, fare, avere*	*il dire, il fare, gli averi*$_{PL}$
VB (pres. part.) → N	It. *abitante*	*abitante*
VB (past part.) → N	It. *atto* (Lat. *agere*)	*atto*
	It. *fatto* (inf. *fare*)	*fatto*
VB (pres. part.) → ADJ	It. *abbondante, sorridente*	*abbondante, sorridente*
VB (pres. part.) → ADJ → N	It. *perdente*	*perdente*$_{ADJ}$ → *perdente*$_N$
VB (past part.) → ADJ	It. *rotto*	*rotto*
VB (pres. part.) → ADV	Hitt. *ašant* (inf. *aš*)	*ašant*
VB (3sg) → ADV	Rom. *poate*	*poate*
	Pol. *może*	*może*
	Lith. *gal*	*gal*
VB (pres. part.) → ADP	Engl. *during* (*to dure*)	*during*
	Engl. *excepting* (*to except*)	*excepting*
VB (pres. part.) → ADP → NOUN	Fr. *pendant* (inf. *pendre*)	*pendant*$_{ADP}$ → *pendant*$_N$
VB (past part.) → ADP	Fr. *hormis* (Lat. *hormettre)	*hormis*
	It. *presso* (Lat. *premere*)	*presso*
	It. *eccetto* (Lat. *excipĕre*)	*eccetto*
N as source	**Source**	**Target**
N → V	Engl. *water, ship, bottle*	*to water, to ship, to bottle*
N → ADJ → ADV → VB	Engl. *back*	*back*$_{ADJ}$ → *back*$_{ADV}$ → *back*$_{VB}$
N → CONJ	Engl. *while*	*while*
ADJ as source	**Source**	**Target**
ADJ → VB	Engl. *clear*	*to clear*
ADJ → N	Germ. *tief*	*das Tief*
	Engl. *green*	*green*
	Fr. *rouge, noir*	*le rouge et le noir*
	It. *dolce, amaro*	*dolce, amaro*
ADJ → ADV	Germ. *schön, schnell*	*schön, schnell*
	Dutch *mooi*	*mooi*
	Engl. *fast*	*fast*
	It. *forte, piano*	*forte, piano*
	Gk. *âdu*	*âdu*
	Lat. *dulce*	*dulce*

ADV as source	Source	Target
ADV → N	It. *perché*	*il perché*
ADV → ADP → N	It. *su, giù*	*i su*$_N$ *e i giù*$_N$
ADV → ADP → ADJ → N → VB	Engl. *up, down*	*up*$_{ADP}$, *down*$_{ADP}$ → *the ups*$_N$ *and down*$_N$ → *to up*$_{VB}$, *to down*$_{VB}$
ADV → ADJ	It. *bene*	*bene*

Abbreviations

ABL = ablative; ACC = accusative; ADJ = adjective; ADP = adposition; ADV = adverb; ATTR = attributive; CHIN = Chinese; CONJ = conjunction; ENGL = English; FR = French; FUT = future; GEN = genitive; GERM = German; GK = Greek; INDON = Indonesian; INF = infinitive; IT = Italian; LAT = Latin; LATV = Latvian; LITH = Lithuanian; MOR. ARAB = Moroccan Arabic; N = noun; NEG = negation; NML = nominalizer; NOM = nominative; NP = noun phrase; OBJ = object; PERF = perfect; PERS = person; PL = plural; POL = Polish; PORT = Portuguese; POS = part(s) of speech; PRES. PART = present participle; PAST PART = past participle; PL = plural; PP = prepositional phrase; PREP = preposition; ROM = Romanian; RUSS = Russian; SG = singular; SPAN = Spanish; SUFF = suffix; TC = transcategorization; TOP = topic; TURK = Turkish; VB = verb.

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Authors' addresses
Elisabetta Ježek
Università di Pavia
Dipartimento di Linguistica
Strada Nuova 65
27100 Pavia, Italy
e-mail: jezek@unipv.it

Paolo Ramat
Istituto Universitario di Studi Superiori (IUSS)
V.le Lungo Ticino Sforza 56
27100 Pavia, Italy
e-mail: paoram@unipv.it

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