So I went and did this study, but did I “go” anywhere?

The Constructionalization of English Go and V

Robin Melnick
rmelnick@stanford.edu
20 September 2013
Grammaticalization

**Process:** Lexical items → grammatical markers
- nouns/verbs → aux, case, inflections, connectives
- content word → grammatical word → clitic → inflectional affix

**Examples**
- OE hād (‘state, quality’) → PDE –hood (derivational suffix)
- ‘back’: body part → spatial relationship → adverb → (prep?) → (case?)
Constructionalization
Construction

Definition

▪ “stored *pairing of form and function*, including … general linguistic patterns” (Goldberg 2009:94)

Examples

▪ *a lot of* = *many/much*
▪ *[S V IO DO] = X CAUSES Y TO RECEIVE Z*
GO AND V

Well Studied (Synchronically)

- “hendiadys”
  - from Greek *hen dia duonin* (‘one by means of two’)
  - “a single conceptual idea realized by two constituents” Hopper (2002:146)
- Frequently pejorative Quirk et al. (1985)
- Cross-linguistic cf. Svorou
GO AND V

Semantic cline Newman and Rice (2008)

- **go and tell** type
  - go and V2 occur in chronological sequence
  - *Let’s go and look at the damage.*

- **go and visit** type
  - definition of V2 includes the sense of go
  - *Sharon went and visited the flat.*

- **go and prove me wrong** type
  - sense of go is attenuated, even to the point of being effectively non-existent
  - *(N)ow different people have gone and sold their houses.*
Is this *Constructionalization*?

(H)er Husband some Years since, in a very melancholy Discontented humour upon I know not what provocations went and hang'd himself.

Proceedings of the Old Bailey
Trial of Mistris Ann Petty, Widdow
12th Dec 1674

*Unfortunately, I saved it to my computer … and my hard drive went and lost everything.*

Google search, 2011
Is this *Constructionalization*?

Hypotheses

1. Increasing % of *go* appear in-construction
2. Moving towards
   - single-event
   - no motion
3. Progression in the ordered distribution of types
4. More ambiguity earlier on
5. Majority negative and increasing
Method

Two-corpus study

- **EME:** *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (2011)
  - Selective reporting of trials in the English courts, 1674-1913

- **PDE:** *Fisher English Speech Training Transcripts*
  - (Cieri et al., 2004, 2005)
  - 25.5M words, colloquial American English, 11,700 short pseudo-natural telephone calls, 1990s and early 2000s
H1: Fixation of *go* in GO AND V construction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>POB</th>
<th>Fisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goes</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>going</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gone</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
<td>0.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>went</td>
<td>10.45%</td>
<td>1.81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H2: Towards single-event, no-motion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>POB</th>
<th>Fisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>single-event</td>
<td>32.26%</td>
<td>82.61%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without motion</td>
<td>25.81%</td>
<td>49.98%**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $z > 13, p < 0.0001$
** $z > 7, p < 0.0001$
H3: Progressive semantic cline?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># events</th>
<th>motion</th>
<th>POB</th>
<th>Fisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H4: Ambiguity triggers change?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ambiguity</th>
<th>POB</th>
<th>Fisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53.22%</td>
<td>50.02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$z < 1, p > 0.3$
H5: Pejorative, and increasingly so?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>POB</th>
<th>Fisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other parameters

- Gradience
- Gradualness
Conclusion

- Yes!
Thank You!