A new grammaticalization path from Sáliban: Postural verbs > deictic roots

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The grammaticalization of place deictics—defined here as including both place adverbs and nominal demonstratives—into different grammatical items (e.g., third person pronouns, definite articles, temporal adverbs, among others) is a widely-spread and widely-known phenomenon (see examples and sources in Diessel (1999:115-155)). However, there is no available evidence for place deictics having grammaticalized from some other (lexical) item, which has led Diessel (1999, 2011) to posit that place deictics constitute an exceptional closed (i.e., grammatical) word class. In this presentation, I focus on the Mako deictic roots *b-*, *ʤ-* and *h-* and show that they have a lexical (more specifically verbal) origin. Support for this claim comes from 1) the function of the second component of the place adverbs as adverbial-clause markers, 2) the nominalizing function of classifiers, and 3) the use of two of these three roots as lexical verbs. All the data comes from the author's primary fieldwork.

The deictic roots *b-* 'PROX', *ʤ-* 'DIST1' and *h-* 'DIST2' are used in Mako, a Sáliban language spoken in Venezuela by ~1,200 people, to form both place adverbs and nominal demonstratives: place adverbs are formed by adding one of four endings to a deictic root (see Table 1). Nominal demonstratives are formed by adding a classifier to a deictic root (see Table 2).

TABLE 1 Place adverbs

ENDING→	-ena	-emi	-ai	-elɨ
ROOT↓				
b- 'PROX'	bena	bemi	bai	belɨ
ʤ- 'DIST1'	ʤena	ʤemi	ʤai	ʤelɨ
h- 'DIST2'	hena	hemi	#hai	helɨ

TABLE 2 Sample of Nominal Demonstratives

CLASSIFIER	DEMONSTRATIVES			SAMPLE NOUNS
	PROX	DIST1	DIST2	
-idɨ	b-idɨ	ʤ-idɨ	h-idɨ	ohʷe ʦ-idɨ 'small river'
-ʔwo	b-iʔwo	ʤ-iʔwo	h-aʔwo	ukʷa-ʔwo 'belly'

Given that *-ena, -emi, -ai,* or *-elɨ* are verb suffixes that serve to form adverbial clauses (see (1)), the place adverbs can be analyzed as adverbial clauses and the deictic roots as verb roots. The use of classifiers as deverbal nominalizers as in (2) also support the analysis of the deictic roots as verb roots. But can these deictic roots occur with verbal morphology? Two of these roots, namely *b-* and *h-,* do in fact take verbal morphology and have the meanings 'sit' (3) and 'stand' (4).

(1) *dokʷa   iha   atabapo-be   ahaʤi-nɨ   kʷĩ-ʔʤ-ĩn-ena-ma*
HOW1   COP.PST Atabapo-ALL   first-NON.SUBJ   2SG-go-PST-ADV1-TOP?
'how was it when you went to Atabapo for the first time?'

(2) *ile*   *pʰuʦ-aw-ã̃ʔʤ̃ũ*
manioc   sweep-MID-CL
'broom for cassava-making'

(3) *awiɾi-ma*   *apʰude-nɨ*   **b**-*ãn-ɨ*   *Ø-ed-an-in-obe*
dog-TOP?   door-NON.SUBJ   sit-DUR-NON.FIN 3SG.MASC-see-DUR-PROG-TAM
'the dog is watching sitting by the door'

(4) *iʦ-uhu*   **h**-*ãn-ɨ*   *h-ed-an-in-obe*
DUMMY_ROOT-CL:FEM   stand-DUR-NON.FIN   3SG.FEM-see-DUR-PROG-TAM
'the woman is looking standing'

The above suggests that the Mako deictic roots have a lexical source and that place deictics in this language are the result of a grammaticalization process. Using Piaroa and Sáliba data, I show that this grammaticalization process must have taken place at the Proto-Sáliban stage. This presentation contributes to our understanding of how place deictics may originate by providing evidence in favour of place deictics having lexical origins in the same way that other grammatical elements do—a phenomenon thus far unattested (Diessel, 1999:150).

References

Diessel, Holger. 1999. *Demonstratives: form, function, and grammaticalization.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

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