New Applications of Role and Reference Grammar
New Applications of Role and Reference Grammar: Diachrony, Grammaticalization, Romance Languages

Edited by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ........................................................................................................ vii
LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................... xi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ xii

INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. xiii
Rolf Kailuweit, Björn Wiemer, Eva Staudinger

PART I: DIACHRONY

Björn Wiemer ..................................................................................................................... 2
APPLICATIONS OF RRG IN DIACHRONIC SYNTAX: OVERVIEW AND
OPEN QUESTIONS

Ranko Matasović .................................................................................................................. 45
PATTERNS OF GRAMMATICALIZATION AND THE LAYERED
STRUCTURE OF THE CLAUSE

Steve Nicolle ....................................................................................................................... 58
SCOPE AND THE FUNCTIONS OF BE GOING TO

Rolf Kailuweit ..................................................................................................................... 69
SOME REMARKS ON RRG AND GRAMMATICALIZATION: FRENCH
VERBAL PERIPHRASES

Elke Diedrichsen ................................................................................................................. 87
THE GRAMMATICALIZATION OF THE BEKOMMEN-PASSIVE IN A
RRG-PERSPECTIVE

Maja Rupnik-Matasović ..................................................................................................... 146
CASE ASSIGNMENT IN CLASSICAL GREEK

Björn Wiemer ..................................................................................................................... 157
CHANGING RELATIONS BETWEEN PSA-SELECTION, MACROROLES
AND CASE ASSIGNMENT INSIGHTS FROM THE DIACHRONY OF
SLAVIC, BALTIC AND OTHER INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES
# PART II: ROMANCE LANGUAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacques François. Clusters of Non-predicative Verbs and Their Description in RRG</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatriz Pérez Cabello de Alba. Lexical Templates at the Core of a Semantics-Syntax Interface. The Contribution to RRG</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marta González Orta. From Lexical Templates to Syntactic Structures: A Lexico-Syntactic Approach to Order Verbs in Spanish</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marta Pino Moreno. Lexical Rules for Causative Alternation Verbs in Spanish</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolf Kailuweit. A RRG Description of Locative Alternation Verbs in English, French, German and Italian</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elena Felíu Arquiola. Spanish Middle Sentences: A Role and Reference Grammar Approach</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva Staudinger, Matthias Hartung, Rolf Kailuweit. Linking Syntax to Semantics: Template Selection and PP-Attachment Ambiguities</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valeriano Bellosta von Colbe. On the Role of Non-Macrorole Syntactic Arguments</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributors</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Index</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Index</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PART I: DIACHRONY

Björn Wiemer
APPLICATIONS OF RRG IN DIACHRONIC SYNTAX: OVERVIEW AND OPEN QUESTIONS

Figure 1: The overall linking algorithm 19
Figure 2: Interclausal Relations Hierarchy 33

Ranko Matasović
PATTERNS OF GRAMMATICALIZATION AND THE LAYERED STRUCTURE OF THE CLAUSE

Figure 1: Nuclear juncture with Latin habere 52
Figure 2: CENTRIFUGAL DIRECTION OF GRAMMATICALIZATION 53

Steve Nicolle
SCOPE AND THE FUNCTIONS OF BE GOING TO

Figure 1: From lexical constructions to grammatical markers 59
Figure 2: Core-cosubordination with going to 63
Figure 3: going to as future tense operator 64
Figure 4: Interpretation of an utterance with going to 67

Rolf Kailuweit
SOME REMARKS ON RRG AND GRAMMATICALIZATION: FRENCH VERBAL PERIPHRASES

Figure 1: Verbal periphrasis in French. Functional classes 72
Figure 2: Constituent and operator projection in RRG 74
Figure 3: French commencer à as CORE cosubordination 75
Figure 4: Interclausal Relations Hierarchy 80
Figure 5: French faire + infinitive as an instance of nuclear juncture 81
Figure 6: French laisser + infinitive as an instance of core juncture 82
Elke Diedrichsen
THE GRAMMATICALIZATION OF THE BEKOMMEN-PASSIVE
IN A RRG-PERSPECTIVE

Figure 1: Simplified semantics-to-syntax linking in 7. (nuclear-
juncture-reading) 97
Figure 2: Simplified semantics-to-syntax linking in 8. 99
Figure 3: The Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy 107
Figure 4: The Hierarchy of features and ergativity 112
Figure 5: Simplified linking from semantics to syntax in 1.c) 130
Figure 6: Simplified linking from semantics to syntax in 9.c) 135
Figure 7: Simplified linking from semantics to syntax in 28.f) 136
Figure 8: Simplified linking from semantics to syntax in 10.b) 137

Björn Wiemer
CHANGING RELATIONS BETWEEN PSA-SELECTION, MACROROLES AND CASE
ASSIGNMENT. INSIGHTS FROM THE DIACHRONY OF SLAVIC, BALTIC AND
OTHER INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Figure 1: Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy 160
Figure 2: The triangle of factors relevant for the linking 172

PART II: ROMANCE LANGUAGES

Jacques François
CLUSTERS OF NON-PREDICATIVE VERBS AND THEIR DESCRIPTION
IN RRG

Figure 1: Tense & Aspect 214
Figure 2: Status (high degree of probability) & Tense 215
Figure 3: Status (average degree of probability) & Tense 216
Figure 4: Root modality & Tense 217
Figure 5: Aspectual perspective & Tense 219
Figure 6: Core juncture (final phase) 221
Figure 7: Core juncture (event-ordering) 222
Figure 8: Core juncture (involvement) 223
Figure 9: Nuclear juncture (causative voice) 225
Figure 10: Passive voice 227
Figure 11: Status & Tense (indirect) 239
Figure 12: Tense & Root modality/Status 240
Beatriz Pérez Cabello de Alba
LEXICAL TEMPLATES AT THE CORE OF A SEMANTICS-SYNTAX INTERFACE. THE CONTRIBUTION TO RRG

- **Figure 1**: Paradigmatic organization of cooking verbs 245
- **Figure 2**: Lexical template for Spanish cooking verbs 246
- **Figure 3**: The Lexical Template Modeling Process Revisited 247
- **Figure 4**: Syntactic constructions with verbs of cooking 248
- **Figure 5**: Causative transitive construction 250
- **Figure 6**: Anticausative construction 250
- **Figure 7**: Middle construction 251
- **Figure 8**: Actor-Undergoer hierarchy 251
- **Figure 9**: Macrorole assignment principles 252
- **Figure 10**: Logical structure of *Yo he cocido castañas* 252
- **Figure 11**: Linking algorithm from semantics to syntax 252
- **Figure 12**: Syntactic template selection principle 253
- **Figure 13**: Linking of syntax and semantics 254

Marta Pino Moreno
LEXICAL RULES FOR CAUSATIVE ALTERNATION VERBS IN SPANISH

- **Figure 1**: The Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy 286
- **Figure 2**: Typology of change of state events. 290
- **Figure 3**: Typology of change of state events for verbs of non-pronominal causative alternation. 294
- **Figure 4**: Grammaticality of transitive constructions of causative alternation verbs of EMOTION with an inanimate PSA. 312
- **Figure 5**: Grammaticality of transitive constructions of causative alternation verbs of EMOTION with an animate PSA. 314
- **Figure 6**: Transitivity/intransitivity in double-meaning verbs, PSA [+agentive] 317
- **Figure 7**: Transitivity/intransitivity in double-meaning verbs, PSA [–agentive] 318

Rolf Kailuweit
A RRG DESCRIPTION OF LOCATIVE ALTERNATION VERBS IN ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN AND ITALIAN

- **Figure 1**: Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy 342

Elena Feliu Arquiola
SPANISH MIDDLE SENTENCES: A ROLE AND REFERENCE GRAMMAR APPROACH

- **Figure 1**: Linking diagram 381
List of Illustrations

Eva Staudinger, Matthias Hartung, Rolf Kailuweit
LINKING SYNTAX TO SEMANTICS: TEMPLATE SELECTION AND PP-ATTACHMENT AMBIGUITIES

Figure 1: One-place construction 392
Figure 2: Two-place construction with TOPIC (DE-ARG) 393
Figure 3: Two-place construction with ADDRESSEE (À/AVEC-ARG) 393
Figure 4: Three-place construction with ADDRESSEE (À/AVEC-ARG) and TOPIC (de-ARG) 394
Figure 5: One-place construction with de-ADJ 395
Figure 6: Precore-slot-construction with Actor-wh-element 396
Figure 7: Precore-slot-construction with de-ARG-wh-element 397
Figure 8: Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy 402
Figure 9: Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy redefined 403
Figure 10: Lexical entry for parler 405
Figure 11: Lexical entry for mère 405
Figure 12: Lexical entry for allemand 406

Valeriano Bellosta von Colbe
ON THE ROLE OF NON-MACROROLE SYNTACTIC ARGUMENTS

Figure 1: Macrorole hierarchy for Spanish 417
Figure 2: Macrorole ARGUMENTS in m-intransitive and m-transitive predicates 419
LIST OF TABLES

Elke Diedrichsen
THE GRAMMATICALIZATION OF THE *BEKOMMEN*-PASSIVE IN A RRG-PERSPECTIVE
Table 1: Constructional schema for the German *bekommen*-passive 131

Jacques François
CLUSTERS OF NON-PREDICATIVE VERBS AND THEIR DESCRIPTION IN RRG
Table 1: 9 classes of non-predicative verbs 209
Table 2: The respective scope of non-predicative verbs in French 232
Table 3: Epistemic and root modality readings of modal verb and tense auxiliary clusters 233

Marta Orta
FROM LEXICAL TEMPLATES TO SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES: A LEXICO-SYNTACTIC APPROACH TO ORDER VERBS IN SPANISH
Table 1: Syntactic patterning of *ordenar, mandar, conminar, prescribir* 273
Table 2: Syntactic patterning of *disponer, determiner, establecer, preceptuar* 274
Table 3: Lexical hierarchy 274

Rolf Kailuweit
A RRG DESCRIPTION OF LOCATIVE ALTERNATION VERBS IN ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN AND ITALIAN
Table 1: Synopsis of locative alternation for six verbs of putting and four verbs of removal in English, French, German and Italian 333

Elena Felíu
SPANISH MIDDLE SENTENCES: A ROLE AND REFERENCE GRAMMAR APPROACH
Table 1: Spanish middle construction 379
Table 2: Lexical classes of eventive transitive verbs 383
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What is the aim of a theory of grammar? Most likely, it is the description of regularities found in different kinds of languages and in processes of language change without resorting to a host of exceptions. Role&Reference Grammar (RRG), which has been developed since the 1970s,\(^1\) is intended as a framework for a unified account of the lexicon-syntax interface that does not assume any intermediate levels of syntactic representation:

As a P[arallel] C[orrespondence] T[heory]\(^2\), RRG does not build grammatical representations up serially via a recipe of derivational steps (as in, say, Chomsky's (1995) Minimalist Program), but it instead simultaneously generates separate structures, viz. the components of the Layered Structure of the Clause, the lexico-logical representation (lexical semantics), the operator projection (tense, aspect, mood, definiteness, etc.), focus structure (discourse and interactional salience and scope relations) […] These parallel structures are connected via a set of Linking Rules – an algorithm connecting the structures, as the name implies… (Everett 2005: 12s).

Unlike LFG (cf. Bresnan 2000), which only combines two layers of representation, namely constituent structure (c-structure) and a structure of functional features (f-structure), RRG allots four layers: Constituent Projection (LSC),\(^3\) Operator Projection, a conceptual-semantic structure (Logical Structure) and Information Structure (cf. Figure 1).\(^4\)

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\(^2\) Cf. Bresnan (2000) who considers RRG, in addition to LFG and some other theories of grammar, an instance of a “Parallel Correspondence Theory”

\(^3\) The formalization of constituency (Layered Structure of the Clause, LSC) permits representing the ordering of predicates, arguments and adjuncts that build simple and complex sentences.

Although belonging to functionalist theories, RRG seeks to formalize assumptions and findings in a way that combines relational with non-relational aspects of the (morpho)syntactic organization of languages. Lexical entries are described on the basis of logical decomposition; information provided by them is thus as much generalized as possible and, to this extent, poorly; as a consequence, the theory must try to maximally account for morphosyntactic variation on the interface between argument selection and morphosyntactic coding. One of the strengths of the lexicon, however, lies in the logical structures (LS) associated with the verbs. The Aktionsart of the verb is encoded in the LS, so we can conclude from the lexical entry to which group the verb belongs and how the verb behaves syntactically.

RRG provides general algorithms that formalize the relational part of grammar, i.e. the mapping of semantic relations onto the syntax (and vice versa). It also provides a theory of nexus and linkage types, which in turn cooperates with the LSC and the information structure (topic-focus) and operator projection to be separated from one another. RRG rests on a theory of grammatical relations for which the syntactic-semantic hybrid notion of macrorole (Actor-Undergoer) and the selection of the privileged syntactic argument (PSA) are crucial. The language-specific behavior of syntactic structures and grammatical constructions is reflected in templates that, as it were, resume the properties of utterances on the different levels just mentioned. In a sense, RRG claims that a language’s grammar can be captured as an inventory of constructional templates. Thus, RRG combines a lexicalist approach to syntax, which is based on semantic and pragmatic motivation, with construction-based assumptions.

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5 Cf. Wiemer (this volume) for a more detailed evaluation of these components with respect to diachronic syntax.
6 While syntactic templates contain information on the number and ordering of constituents, constructional templates contain not only information about the structure, i.e. morphology and syntax, but also about the pragmatic value of the construction.
The volume at hand is a collection of papers on synchronic and diachronic research conducted within the framework of Role and Reference Grammar. By applying the theory to actual data from a variety of languages and by focusing on various linguistic phenomena, RRG is put to the test.

The first part of the volume is comprised of six articles on problems related to diachronic syntax and/or grammaticalization. They are preceded by B. Wiemer’s comprehensive survey of research that has been done so far in this domain within a RRG framework (or at least from perspectives close to it). Apart from this, Wiemer’s article aims at showing to which...
kinds of phenomena in language change RRG can make valuable contributions, inter alia to which kind of grammaticalization phenomena RRG can be fruitfully applied. This article is thus meant as an introduction to issues that RRG has hitherto approached to a very limited extent. This is a rather deplorable fact, since RRG puts special stress on constructional properties of grammatical phenomena (see above), and among its strengths one should, first of all, mention the separation of different levels of projection that occur in parallel in actual language use but should be distinguished in linguistic analysis (see Figure 1). Consequently, RRG allows to better determine at which “locus” morphosyntactic change occurs and what it is that leads to diachronically conditioned variation.

Matasović (2002) addressed exactly this point. His paper included into this volume continues, in a sense, the reasoning of his 2002 paper. Using a wide range of data from languages all over the world, he demonstrates how syntactic representation in the LSC and the operator projection can be made appropriate tools that are able to capture what frequently happens to grammatical operators. His findings show that operators, as a rule, widen their functional scope. He wonders how this empirical observation should be explained without contradicting assumptions that are generally made for grammaticalization, namely that morphemes narrow their scope the more grammaticalized they become. This seeming contradiction, however, can be solved as soon as we distinguish syntactic and functional (semantic) scope, as explained by Wiemer in his introductory paper (end of section 1) mentioned above.

Nicolle’s article is another contribution to the book dealing with scope. It takes at issue one of the paradigm examples in works on grammaticalization, namely: the rise of the English *going to*-future (cf. Kuteva 2001: 10, 19f., 117-121 for discussion and references). On the basis of contemporary English, Nicolle deliberates which kind of pragmatic inference and reanalysis are responsible for narrow vs. wide scope readings of *going to* (+ infinitive) as an operator. It is only with wide scope that this morpheme functions like a tense operator. The author argues that with narrow scope, *going to* remains close to the earlier, aspectual meaning, so that for the contemporary speaker its earlier function is retained. Nicolle’s notion of ‘semantic retention’ is thus reminiscent of what Hopper called ‘divergence’ and ‘persistence’ (cf. Hopper 1991). Different readings, which correlate with varying scope, can be understood as synchronic reflections of stages in the diachronic evolution of this construction. A similar remark holds for the next two papers written by Kailuweit and Diedrichsen.
Kailuweit raises a topic closely related to Nicolle’s. His article concerns French periphrastic predicates. This issue has likewise been among the favorite examples of grammaticalization studies. Kailuweit demonstrates how the evolution of verbal periphrasis can be tackled by the aid of RRG’s operator projection and the LSC. In other words: he shows how RRG can handle the description of the rise of TAM-categories, at least in Romance. He makes a distinction between operator+predicate constructions and predicate+predicate constructions and, on this basis, comes to the conclusion that it is only operator+predicate constructions in which the operator widens its scope, whereas with predicate+predicate constructions the scope of one of the involved elements becomes narrower. This result is consistent with Matasović’s (see above) as far as operator+predicate constructions are concerned. As to predicate+predicate constructions, Kailuweit claims that here a different kind of process is at work, namely the development of bound morphemes as word formation devices.

Diedrichsen’s contribution deals with the theory-internal consequences of assuming that in the so-called “recipient passive” in German, the verb bekommen ‘to get, receive’ has acquired auxiliary status. This verb is ditransitive. Thus, one of the central questions is how to link a non-macrorole core argument to the PSA in that marked voice construction. The author discusses various related problems with respect to three-place predicates that continue to be of focal interest for RRG and any theory dealing with the lexicon-syntax interface (dative shift etc.). It turns out that an important factor in explaining this kind of passive is topicality and the referential status of the syntactically promoted argument. In a sense, Diedrichen’s article, though examining ongoing processes in contemporary German, leads into the two remaining contributions of the second part. These are devoted to diachronic syntax in the traditional sense, and they can be united with Diedrichen’s article under the heading of Undergoer choice and PSA-selection in marked voice constructions.

Both Rupnik-Matasić and Wiemer ask how variable Undergoer-assignment with ditransitive verbs in some ancient Indo-European languages can be handled by RRG. Rupnik-Matasić’s article focuses on just one Greek verb, while Wiemer’s takes the question further. Wiemer inquires whether macroroles might not be understood as a concept that very much hinges on the existence of stabilized behavior and coding properties of arguments. The general question arising for diachronic syntax is whether there might have been stages in which Indo-European

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7 For a systematic (non-RRG) account of this type of grammaticalization in Romance cf. Squartini (1998).
languages could have done without a reliable concept of macroroles. In other words: macroroles can eventually turn out as a concept that arose due to the tightening of the morphosyntactic behavior of core arguments. As a linguistic “litmus test” of this behavior, marked voice constructions (passives) supply a field for investigating crucial cases. In addition, there remains a metatheoretical problem: how can circular formulations of case assignment rules and the way macroroles are established be avoided?

The second part of the book is dedicated to synchronic applications of RRG, mostly focusing on one of the central points of interest in RRG: the relation between syntactic functions and semantic roles. The authors address different issues related to the syntax and semantics of verbs and/or of predicate-argument structures in a variety of Romance languages. Although the papers do shed light on the fact that RRG has much to offer for linguists, their results also stress that there is still work to be done.

François’ analysis and classification of non-predicative verbs - functioning as tense, aspect and different kinds of modal operators - shows that in the case of clusters it is not trivial to account for the layering of the elements. The problems arise due to the fact that semantic, syntactic and morphemic criteria are taken into account for the classification of operators, which can lead to conflicts.

The other contributions dealing with verbal syntax concentrate on predicative verbs and their syntactic behavior. Much of the work is dedicated to the question of how to avoid multiple lexical entries in order to explain the behavior of verbs occurring in different syntactic constructions.

Orta shows in her analysis of jussive verbs in Spanish that the morphosyntax and semantics of these verbs are interrelated. The syntactic and morphological behavior of lexical classes of verbs can be accounted for by means of lexical rules. Her analysis exemplifies that the higher a verb ranges in the hierarchy of hyponymical relations, i.e. the more ‘general’ its meaning is, the more syntactic patterns occur with this verb as a predicate.

Pérez also focuses on the interface between lexicon and syntax. She combines a refined semantic analysis of the predicates of a lexical domain with a description of the syntactic properties of those predicates. The information is integrated in a lexical template that captures the commonalities and hierarchical relations of the predicates. These templates serve as a basis for semantics-to-syntax linking. The linking of the different syntactic constructions to the lexical template is achieved by applying lexical mapping rules.

Pino analyzes Aktionsart alternations of selected Spanish verbs and their treatment in the lexicon. Separate lexical entries for the different
structures of the same verb are one possible solution. They do not, however, reflect the relations existing between those verbs. By postulating lexical rules for Aktionsart alternations, those relations become evident. In addition, this generalization leads to a more economic representation in the lexicon. Aktionsart alternation is a widespread phenomenon in Spanish; thus a reduplication of entries is not desirable.

Alternation is also the subject of Kailuweit’s second paper. He analyzes locative alternation and compares a lexicalist approach with a linking-based approach. Like Pino, Kailuweit looks for a way to account for alternation without having to use separate lexical entries for each construction of the verb. However, Kailuweit favors a twofold solution: the relatedness of three-place and two-place locative constructions (i.e. constructions with three and with two arguments) is captured in the LS, while locative alternation itself is handled during the linking procedure by means of Marked-Undergoer-Choice. Marked-Undergoer-Choice is not only an economical way of describing locative alternation, but it also seems more adequate as far as semantics are concerned. The semantic effect of Marked-Undergoer-Choice is corroborated by the semantics of verbs of emotion.

Feliu deals with medio-passive sentences, a phenomenon that some linguists explain via the postulation of separate lexical entries underlying the passive and the medio-passive construction. Feliu, however, shows that at least for Spanish verbs used in medio-passive sentences it makes more sense to define a constructional schema.

The other papers focus on arguments and/or predicate-argument structures. Staudinger, Hartung & Kailuweit illustrate which information is required for the identification of core arguments of a verb occurring in a variety of constructions. This is a prerequisite for the linking algorithm. As the identification of core arguments does not pose a problem for competent human speakers, linguistic theory has neglected this point.

Last but not least, Bellosta focuses on non-macrorole arguments. His examples show that the notion non-macrorole argument is actually a cover term for different types of semantic arguments. According to Bellosta, we have to distinguish referential and non-referential non-macrorole arguments depending on the values that the features [+/-control] and [+/-affectedness] assume.

Hence, the volume comprises a selection of papers proving that RRG is a powerful tool to deal with a wide range of problems that contemporary linguistics is concerned with. It shows that a constantly growing international community has been developing RRG to be a central framework of functional linguistics’ research.
References


Wiemer, B. (this volume): “Changing relations between PSA-Selection, Macroroles and case assignment. Insights from the diachrony of Slavic, Baltic and other Indo-European languages”. 
PART I:

DIACHRONY
APPLICATIONS OF RRG IN DIACHRONIC SYNTAX: OVERVIEW AND OPEN QUESTIONS

BJÖRN WIEMER

1. Introduction

This paper intends not only to provide an overview of research on issues related to diachronic syntax which has been conducted in a RRG-framework, but also to demonstrate in several representative examples which morphosyntactic phenomena are promising issues for an application of RRG to diachronic change. For this purpose I will try to survey as systematically as possible the theoretical premises of RRG with respect to their relevance to the evolution of morphosyntactic patterns of languages. More particularly, I will ask whether and to which degree RRG tools and assumptions are, in principle, able to render sensible answers to phenomena that have been subsumed under the rubric of grammaticalization, namely in a narrower sense (going back to Meillet 1948 [1912] and reformulated within a coherent theory by C. Lehmann 1995 [1982]). By and large, difficulties, but also perspectives, in tackling diachronic matters in a RRG framework have hitherto evaded the attention of researchers interested in functional syntax; notable exceptions are referred to in section 2. In this sense the present survey is probably the first that has been done at all, and it should rather formulate questions and directions of potential research than supply tidy and empirically proven answers. I have deliberately refrained from more extensive references to the relevant literature.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 contains a survey of research on diachronic syntax that has hitherto been conducted within RRG. Section 3 specifies the notion of grammaticalization and distinguishes it from other kinds of morphosyntactic change. Section 4, being the central part of this contribution, narrows down the type of diachronic phenomena for the investigation of which RRG promises to render viable tools and useful assumptions. It is an attempt to give a comprehensive, though probably not exhaustive, assessment of RRG
notions on the background of diachronic syntax. The discussion refers back to the survey and distinctions given in sections 2-3. The concluding section 5 summarizes the findings.

I will assume that the reader is familiar with the basics of the theory, which have most comprehensively been laid out in Van Valin/LaPolla (VVLP, 1997) and Van Valin (2005). Nonetheless, I will refer to these basics in order to inquire into the impact that the fundamental assumptions and notional distinctions of RRG bear for a theory of diachronic change and for grammaticalization (in a narrower sense).

2. RRG-oriented research on diachronic syntax done so far

Apart from Matasović (2002; see below), articles dealing with diachronic morphosyntax that took RRG notions and tools into account have basically been devoted to four aspects of a RRG-related framework:

(a) voice constructions and PSA-selection:
(b) deviant case assignment (“quirky” case), PSA-selection and lexical templates:
(c) clause linkage, in particular switch reference:
   Ohori (1994)
(d) complex verb formation (operator projection, clause linkage):

Beside this, several papers relevant for diachronic syntax were delivered at conferences but, as far as I can see, have remained unpublished. The present volume contains papers dealing with (a+b) – cf. Rupnik-Matasović, Wiemer – and with problems concerning changes in the operator projection (d) (cf. Kailuweit’s, Matasović’s and Nicolle’s contributions).

Wilkins (1991) describes the functioning and diachronic background of verb complexes denoting ‘associated motion’ in the Central Australian language Mparntwe Arrente. In this language, suffixes may be added to the verb root from a closed set. Wilkins (1991: 252) finds that “the

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1 One can check this by looking through the list of references on RRG-related work accessible on the URL http://linguistics.buffalo.edu/research/rrg/RRGBibliography022703.pdf.
Applications of RRG in diachronic syntax

proposed historical development of the category of associated motion in Mparntwe Arrernte supports suggested pathways of grammaticalization through verb compounding. Whether the involved process amounts to compounding or the relevant morphemes should rather be considered as inflections does not ultimately become clear. Nonetheless, phonetic reduction and morphological coalescence have occurred, i.e. phenomena associated with “canonical” grammaticalization. Instead of one there are several pathways for this development; older forms appear to have paved the way as “an analogical basis, or a template, for the development of newer associated motion inflection” (1991: 249).

Wilkins’ recourse to RRG remains implicit; obviously no formalization in terms of RRG was intended. Instead, the author gives a rich taxonomy of the marking and functions of associated motion (see the figure on p. 219), and he supplies the typological background of this and related phenomena, to which RRG tools have been being applied.

Ohori (1994) appears to be the only study that hitherto has taken up issues of linkage and nexus types from a diachronic viewpoint and with reference to RRG. Ohori investigated the discourse functions of the Old Japanese connectors te and ba, which had usually been considered to mark switch-reference (te for ‘same subject’ SS, ba for ‘different subject’ DS), and he argues that “what appear to be switch-reference markers in Old Japanese are not switch-reference markers per se, but clause-linking particles which have switch-reference functions” (1994: 141; emphasis by the author). To show this, he analyzed changes in the operator projection and the level of linkage applied as well as changes in the semantic interpretation of the conjoined units in terms of RRG (together with its distinctions belonging to the Layered Structure of the Clause). Ohori’s conclusion from his diachronic analysis of both connectors amounts to saying that te indicated a stronger linkage (core juncture) from the start, whereas ba marked wider scope (clause juncture only). The switch-reference properties of both markers were simply a byproduct of their different syntactic scope. When ba later began to lose its property of marking DS, this should be interpreted as a consequence of its looser linkage type (1994: 138-142).

Ohori’s insights also allow the assessment of his results from the perspective of grammaticalization. He showed that te tightened its linkage by evolving into a marker of Nucleus juncture. This narrowing of structural scope can be regarded as a central process involved in grammaticalization (C. Lehmann 1995: 143-147). Furthermore, because at the beginning, in Old Japanese, both markers had to be understood as connecting devices on a rather loose discourse level and only later became
connectors with strongly associated scopes, their development likewise demonstrates an increase of semantic and/or morphosyntactic integration: juxtaposition > incorporation. Both findings demonstrate an increase in dependency (Ohori 1994: 142).

Notice that, in this context, Ohori (1994: 145) also mentions Traugott’s notion of ‘pragmatic strengthening’, due to which linguistic units acquire stable, non-detachable meaning components that were formerly only associated with them by sort of implicature (for instance, ‘post hoc, ergo propter hoc’). Ironically, Traugott’s treatment of these processes is usually accompanied by a (syntactic) widening of scope. It may thus seem that there is a contradiction in terms inherent to Ohori’s argument. However, this contradiction evaporates as soon as we realize that pragmatic strengthening rests on a semantic (pragmatic) notion of scope, for which decrease (or increase) of structural integration does not play any role. On the contrary, Lehmann’s notion of scope is a properly structural (morphosyntactic) one. Therefore, Ohori’s conclusions do confirm processes generally subsumed under grammaticalization, and they would only seemingly contradict findings like those of Matasović (this volume), who concluded that the scope of operators in the course of their diachronic evolution regularly increases and who is surprised that this would contradict general assumptions made by grammaticalization theorists (see below).

Wiemer (2004) supplies a construction-oriented survey of the evolution of PSA-modulation passives in Northern Slavic and Baltic languages. This account is based on RR G insofar as it abides by a strict division between macroroles and specific argument functions. Particular scrutiny is given to the distinction between Actor vs. agents, or effectors, and instrumental or mediator functions (2004: 305-310). Furthermore, a fundamental question rises from a basic theory-internal assumption concerning the LSC, namely: in the development of passives the Actor is originally demoted not only syntactically from the core, but more often than not also semantically from the LS of the predicate (this is the rule, e.g., with passives deriving from constructions marked by a reflexive morpheme); later many PSA-modulation passives again integrate an Actor into the verb’s logical structure as its highest-ranking argument, although the Actor remains in the periphery, i.e. outside of the core. How does this come about in real language history (cf. Wiemer 2004: 274f.)?

Wiemer (to appear) can be considered as a complement to the 2004 paper, since it concentrates on argument-modulation voice (otherwise known as ‘backgrounding passives’ or ‘subject impersonals’) in the same

2 Later this notion more often began to be called ‘subjectification’.
Applications of RRG in diachronic syntax

To my knowledge, so far there have been only four articles that integrated RRG-tools into a diachronic account of the syntactic and semantic behavior of some particular verbs. These are Michaelis (1993), Roberts (1995), Cennamo (2001) and González Orta (2002). A RRG-oriented description of the syntax of Old English verbs that specifically bears on their Aktionsarten and the process of transitivization can also be found in Martin Arista (2001a,b).

Michaelis’ (1993) account of quirky case marking in Latin is still the most comprehensive one from a RRG-perspective to date. The author argues for the treatment of dative case “as the means by which non-macrorole core arguments are typically coded”, whereas she proposes to approach ablative and genitive case as manifestations of variable Undergoer assignment (1993: 312). Both assumptions have been incorporated into standard RRG-analyses because they prove to be valid in general typological terms (cf. VVLP 1997: 355-362, Van Valin 2005: 107-115). These assumptions are based, in turn, on a further tenet, namely that only macroroles can be chosen as PSA. This tenet is internally required by the theory, and the problems that this might raise are discussed in Wiemer (this volume).

Roberts (1995) does not deal with specific verbs (or lexical groups) as such; her proper concern is choice of pivots in voice constructions and macrorole assignment. However, she devotes a smaller part of her paper to non-macrorole choice of pivots in Old English (1995: 176-183) and analyzes verbs of a low degree of transitivity (in terms of Hopper/Thompson 1980; compare Eng. to like, to desire, to belong, to

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1 This has happened, for instance, in Lithuanian (cf. Wiemer, to appear1).
condemn) and atransitive (or zero-place) verbs (compare Eng. to rain). Her attention paid to these verbs is subordinate to a comparison of case marking and pivot choice in Germanic, Bantu, Dyirbal and Balinese. The impact of her analysis for RRG has been assessed by Wiemer (this volume: section 4), so that here I refrain from further comments.

Apart from Michaelis (1993) and Roberts (1995), research on historical stages of argument linking, macrorole assignment and PSA-selection has been conducted by Cennamo on the basis of Latin. In Cennamo (2001) she takes up central issues of late Latin morphosyntax: the reorganization of voice distinctions (from the \{r\}-morpheme inherited from earlier IE. toward voice distinctions resulting from an enormous functional extension of the reflexive marker) and increasing lack of distinctiveness of syntactic function by morphological cases (compare, e.g., the so-called ‘extended accusative’, i.e. the use of the accusative as pivot). These processes taken together raised the impression that late Latin lost its ability to mark grammatical relations. Cennamo argues for a change of alignment from the former NOM-ACC-system to an active/inactive-system, which, however, did not evolve further into an ergative system4, probably because morphological cases had become indistinctive (and subsequently were lost altogether) (2001: 59).

According to Cennamo (2001: 60f.), the observed changes in morphosyntax can be captured elegantly on the basis of RRG’s general linking algorithm. It then turns out that Latin never ceased to mark grammatical relations. Instead, what changed was the markedness relation between the devices indicating marked voice constructions (i.e. the passive and morphologically marked impersonals, i.e. ‘PSA-modulation voice’ and ‘argument modulation’), “so that with the ‘passive’ R-form we find an Actor in subject [i.e. pivot] position [e.g., a quo loco commeatur sanguis.NOM(=A) per totum corpus ‘at this spot, blood flows together from the entire body’], and with active morphology we have an Undergoer in subject position [e.g., ut consummatio.NOM(=U) dabit (= dabitur) ‘that the debt will be settled’]” (2001: 61). Cennamo concludes: “When, however, case marking (and later agreement) no longer operates on a nominative-accusative basis, but patterns on an active basis (…), one could argue that it is the whole system of argument marking that gets restructured, not just the rules governing the assignment of grammatical functions to Macroroles. (…) since it is not clear what the logical structure of the verb is (due to the ambiguity of the verb morphology), it is not clear

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4 This type of change in alignment systems seems to be typologically not unusual (cf. Plank 1995: 1195-1198).
what Macrorole is assigned to the verbal argument, whether Actor or Undergoer” (2001: 61).

However, Cennamo’s optimistic view regarding RRG leaves us with the question of how the change from NOM-ACC-alignment to an active/inactive system occurred. It goes without saying that this must have happened gradually. Cennamo herself refers to case studies that showed that Latin writers at least sometimes “confused” the syntactic functions and that the onset of the development that led to a transition to another alignment pattern was already detectable in writings of classical authors (e.g., Cicero’s) (2001: 59). One therefore wonders whether this process did not start with particular verbs (probably those situated low on transitivity scales like Hopper/Thompson’s 1980), from which it expanded in the lexicon. On the other hand, Cennamo’s assumption that it was the loss of the distinctiveness of morphological cases that was, to a large extent, responsible for the known changes from late Latin to early Romance, sounds convincing. If her assumption is correct this raises the additional question of what happens (or can happen) in languages with elaborate case systems that do not “decay” but in which we observe more or less systematic deviations from the canonical pattern in the marking of macroroles. Together with this, we have to ask whether it is coding or behavior properties of PSAs that change first. These questions concern, first of all, languages like most Slavic ones, Lithuanian and, to some degree, “conservative” Germanic languages like Icelandic or German (cf. Wiemer, this volume). After all, can we infer a rule saying that non-canonical marking of Actor or Undergoer diachronically decreases, if otherwise the NOM-ACC-system and case marking remain intact?

González Orta (2002) presented lexical templates of the Old English speech act verb secgan. Her endeavor is to provide unified analyses of verbs in connection with an onomasiological classification of lexemes “within domains and subdomains, which will reflect the organization of our mental lexicon and will give evidence of the close relationship between syntax and semantics” (2002: 281). Her analysis is inspired by ‘Stepwise Lexical Decomposition’ (cf. Dik 1978), and she abides by the ‘Lexical Iconicity Principle’ proposed by Faber/Mairal Usón (1999: 187). It states: the greater the semantic scope of a lexeme, the greater its syntactic variation. This principle (in its inverse reading, see f. 6) is

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5 As far as I know, RRG does not make any predictions concerning conditions, mechanisms and the probability of alignment systems to change.

6 This principle can be applied reversely: The greater the syntactic coverage of a lexical unit, the higher its position in the semantic hierarchy within a given subdomain (cf. González Orta 2002: 289).
important for the analysis of earlier stages of languages for which no reliable and verifiable information on lexical meaning is available.

Now, in González Orta’s approach, RRG is applied for the purpose of rendering a representation only of the syntactic part of lexical templates, i.e. of predicate frames. Following Mairal Usón (1997), she admits that predicate frames, which are wholly based on logical decomposition, do not suffice to mirror “the semantic information characteristic of the different lexical (sub-)domains” (2002: 284). With this restriction in mind, she follows the assumption made in VVLP (1997: 116-118) due to which verbs of saying should be considered as being basically Activity verbs but often change into Active accomplishments. These two aspectual classes correspond to two basic lexical templates of Old English secgan. For all alternations and the changing syntactic frames undergone by this unit she supplies specific logical structures in a RRG format (2002: 289-294).

Interestingly, González Orta also pays special attention to the fact that speech acts also vary with respect to the epistemic value ascribed to the content argument (… \[\text{express}.(\alpha).\ ...\]), but she does not show how different degrees of speaker’s commitment to the truth of the proposition represented by the $gamma$-argument of speech act verbs would correlate with projections in RRG. Apart from this, it should be stressed that when speaking of “speaker’s personal commitment to the truth of the proposition” (2002: 291ff.), it is usually not the referent of the $alpha$-argument who assesses the truth (or trustworthiness) of the proposition but the actual speaker of the utterance that, as a rule, remains unexpressed. The question thus arises whether these aspects of meaning can be represented at all by RRG (or any similar model based on logical decomposition and the accepted level of operators).

Until now Matasović (2002) is the only contribution within a RRG framework in which a comprehensive account of diachronic changes in the syntax is attempted. Matasović seems to be the first to advance a set of predictions concerning the likeliness of syntactic changes based on some basic RRG assumptions. Namely, he argued for a ‘Principle of Diachronic Stability’ (PDS), due to which semantically motivated syntactic features are assumed to be diachronically stable, whereas pragmatically motivated features are unstable (cf. also Matasović 2001). For instance, clause alignment and the distinction between semantic and pragmatic pivots are remarkably stable most probably because both features can be based on the notions of macroroles. By contrast, basic word order easily becomes prone to change, since in most languages it is conditioned by discourse syntax to a large extent. A similar remark holds for the syntax of questions

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7 In an appendix these are illustrated with examples from her corpus.
Applications of RRG in diachronic syntax

The distinction between semantically and pragmatically motivated features is crucial for the justification of some theoretical assumptions made by RRG (see section 4).

The other main purpose of Matasović’s paper is a rather programmatic one, because his discussion is designed as a comparison between functionalist theories (to which RRG belongs) and generative theories. RRG does not assume any intermediate levels of syntactic representation; instead it assumes that syntactic structure is motivated by semantic and pragmatic factors, i.e. by cognitive and communicative underpinnings. As a consequence, the predictions that can be made with respect to diachronic morphosyntactic changes do not rest on rather arbitrary features of some autonomous syntax but on semantic and pragmatic principles. Matasović further emphasizes that among the criteria that decide about the adequacy of a theory there are (i) simplicity (descriptive economy), (ii) typological adequacy and (iii) predictive power. Actually, the first two criteria together implicitly lead to a kind of iconicity principle in linguistic representation: more widespread types of syntactic change should have simpler representations (e.g., valency changes of verbs), typologically less common changes should be represented by more complex structures (e.g., a global change from head- to dependent-marking). On the other hand, since in RRG information concerning different levels of morphosyntax is split up into different algorithms, inventories and projections, notions crucial for diachronic syntax such as reanalysis and extension do not have uniform correlates in the theory. Instead, the theory forces increased precision as for, e.g., whether a given change affects the operator projection or the level of constituency (the LSC). We may then further ask whether elements that are initially understood as units on one level can be reanalyzed into elements on another level; compare, for instance, the reanalysis of full verbs into auxiliaries in the history of English, which corresponds to a change from constituent to operator projection. One might then ask (and describe) whether and under which conditions this process could occur in reverse direction (Matasović 2002: 61). This type of question reflects standard examples from grammaticalization studies.

On this basis, different types of syntactic change can be distinguished according to the components of which RRG consists. Changes may affect (a) the inventory of syntactic templates, (b) the inventory and arrangement of operators, (c) the focus structure projection, in particular the potential focus domain, (d) the lexical representation of verbs, and/or (e) the linking algorithm (Matasović 2002: 63). This enumeration more or less corresponds to the structure of section 4.3. One wonders, however, whether the lexical representation of verbs should be included into...