

GRAMMATICALIZATION OF NOUNS IN JORDANIAN ARABIC: EVIDENCE FROM *ŒIKIL* AND *OMIR*

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ABSTRACT: The current study aims at exploring the grammaticalization of the nouns *Œikil* 'shape' and *omir* 'age' in Jordanian Arabic. The data were collected from Jordanian T.V. series and interviews with native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. The sample of the study consisted of 300 tokens of *Œikil* and 200 tokens of *omir*. The researcher collected the data, then he analysed the functions of these two words. The study found out that *Œikil* was used 100 times as a noun meaning 'shape', and 200 times as an evidential particle. Besides, *omir* was also used as a noun 60 times and 140 times as a negative polarity item. The findings of the study showed that *Œikil* has one lexical meaning 'shape', and it evolved by the process of grammaticalization into an evidential particle. *Œikil* underwent the process of semantic bleaching, since it lost its content meaning and developed to serve a grammatical function of evidentially. Besides, it was decategorized as it lost the grammatical features of nouns, i.e. it cannot be pluralized and cannot accept definite articles. Also *Œikil* lost its stress as part of phonetic reduction. Similarly, *omir* has one lexical meaning 'age' and developed into a negative polarity item. *Omir* was affected by the process of semantic bleaching and decategorization as it was developed from its original meaning as a noun meaning 'age' into a negative polarity item. Additionally, *omir* underwent the process of phonetic reduction as it lost stress. The study found out that *Œikil* and *omir* underwent three stages of grammaticalization: semantic bleaching, decategorization, and phonetic reduction.

KEYWORDS: grammaticalization; *Œikil*; *omir*; bleaching; decategorization; phonetic reduction, nouns

1. Introduction

Grammaticalization refers to "the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions" (Hopper & Traugott, 2003, p.1). In other words, lexical words change over time to indicate the grammatical function. Another definition was provided by Heine and Reh (1984, p.15), who defined grammaticalization "as an evolution whereby linguistic units lose in semantic complexity, pragmatic significance, syntactic freedom, and phonetic substance, respectively". Thus, through the process of grammaticalization, lexical words lose some of their grammatical, phonetic, and pragmatic features. Many linguists, such as Hopper and Traugott (2003) and Heine (2003) believed that this process does not occur at once, but it goes through a chain or a cline. Hopper and Traugott's famous pattern for the cline of grammaticalization illustrates the various stages of the form:

Content word → grammatical word → clitic → inflectional affix

According to this cline, the content word shifts gradually to a grammatical word that may evolve into an affix (Hopper and Traugott, 2003, p. 7). One example of grammaticalization is the English verb "go" which developed from a lexical verb indicating a motion (e.g. Ali goes to the university) to an auxiliary expressing futurity (e.g. "he is going to see a movie tonight"). Grammaticalization of lexical items undergoes four strategies: bleaching, extension, decategorization, and phonological reduction (Hopper and Traugott, 2003). The first stage is semantic bleaching or desemantization which refers to the process by which the content word loses its original semantic meaning. So the content word shifts its meaning from lexical to a grammatical meaning (Heine, Claudi & Hünemeyer 1991, and Hopper & Traugott, 1993, p. 88). In this process, the content word gains a very general meaning, as suggested by John Haiman (1991). He indicates that "semantic reduction, or bleaching, occurs as a morpheme loses its intention: From describing a narrow set of ideas, it comes to describe an ever broader range of them, and eventually may lose its meaning altogether" (Haiman, 1991, p. 154). For example, the lexical verb "go" undergoes the process of bleaching since it loses its original meaning of motion and grammaticalized as a future marker (Hopper and Traugott, 2003).

The second stage is extension, which refers to the process by which the lexical items extend their meaning to be used in new contexts where it could not be used previously. The third stage is decategorization: which refers to the loss of morphosyntactic features of a grammaticalized word.

According to Bybee (2003, p. 4) decategorization "is applied to the set of processes by which a noun or verb loses its morphosyntactic properties in the process of becoming a grammatical element" (Bybee, 2003, p. 4). For example, when verbs are grammaticalized as auxiliaries, they lose the argument structure. The last stage is phonological reduction, which refers to the process by which the grammaticalized word undergoes phonetic reduction. For example, the English word "will" lost its original meaning of "desire" to indicate a future marker. At the last stage, this word is reduced to "ll" as in "we'll". Grammaticalization is a universal process in all languages. Thus, the present study aims to investigate the grammaticalization of two nouns in Jordanian Arabic /shikik/'shape' and /omir/'age'. It explores how these words undergo different stages of grammaticalization.

2. Literature review

A large body of literature investigated the grammaticalization of lexical items to indicate a grammatical function in different languages (Heine & Reh, 1984; Traugott & Heine, 1991; Lehmann, 1995; Bybee, Pagliuca, and Perkins, 1991; Heine and Narrog, 2011; Traugott and Dasher, 2002; Traugott and Trousdale, 2010).

In the Arabic context, many studies examined the phenomenon of grammaticalization; for example, Jarad (2017) investigated the grammaticalization of some lexical words in Emirati Arabic and how they change in form and function. The data were collected from different sources: interviews and personal communication with native speakers of Emirati Arabic, fieldwork, and television series. The study found out that the verb *abgi* (want) developed to serve future marker and reduced to a prefix /ba/. Moreover, the lexical meaning (day, time), *yom* also underwent grammaticalization, and it is used as subordinate conjunction introducing time clauses. The noun /*rūh*/ (soul) also developed into a reflexive pronoun in Emirati Arabic. The lexical words /*ḥagg*/ (right, property) and /*māl*/ (wealth) developed to serve possessive function. In another study, Jarad (2015) examined the grammaticalization of the active posture participle "yālis" (sitting) in Emirati Arabic. He suggested that "yālis" (sitting) plus imperfective verb developed into an auxiliary marking the progressive aspect in Emirati Arabic. He found out that "yālis" (sitting) undergoes three stages of grammaticalization: desemanticization, extension, and decategorialization. However, this construction kept its phonetic form.

Jarad (2014) investigated the development of the motion verb /rah/ "go" from classical Arabic to a prospective future prefix /b/ in Syrian Arabic. The article found out that the verb /rah/ undergoes all stages of grammaticalization: semantic bleaching (desemanticization), morphosyntactic shift (decategorialization), phonetic shift (erosion), and phonological reduction (cliticization).

Alotaibi (2016) investigated the grammaticalization of the posture verbs /gaam/ 'get up' and /gaṣad/ 'sit' in Kuwaiti Arabic. The study proposed that in addition to the lexical meaning of the verb /gaam/ 'get up' in Kuwaiti Arabic, it also serves as an inceptive aspect. The verb /gaṣad/ 'sit' also is used to mark a continuous/progressive aspect. Al-Najjar (1991) examined the grammaticalization of the lexical verb *ʔabi* 'I want' in Kuwaiti Arabic. He suggested that the lexical verb *ʔabi* 'I want' developed to a future marker /b/. He noticed that both the lexical verb *ʔabi*, which expresses desire, and the reduced future marker /b/ are still used in Kuwaiti Arabic.

Eifan (2017) examined the phenomenon of grammaticalization in Urban Hijazi Arabic (a Saudi dialect) by adopting a synchronic and diachronic approach. The study collected the data using a dialectal Arabic questionnaire. The study found out that many words (verbs, nouns, and prepositions) evolved to serve grammatical functions. For example, the preposition *maṣ* 'with' developed a grammatical function indicating possession in addition to its basic propositional meaning. Camilleri & Sadler (2017) discussed the grammaticalization found in contemporary Arabic vernaculars. The study suggested that the posture verb /qaad/ "sitting" developed to indicate an aspectual marker (progressive aspect). This process was found across many dialects of vernacular Arabic.

Woidich (1995) studies the grammaticalization of some words in Egyptian Arabic. He argued that many linguistic items in Egyptian Arabic go through grammaticalization processes such as decategorization, phonetic reduction, semantic bleaching, autonomy, and reanalysis. For example, the adjective /*ʔahsan*/ "better" developed into an adverb meaning "because", then it evolved to the conjunction.

In the Jordanian Arabic context, Alshboul, Alshboul & Asassfeh (2010) examined how some lexical words developed to serve future markers in Jordanian Arabic. The study proposed that the lexical word *bad(di)* evolved into the future marker *b(a)-*. Similarly, the lexical word */ra(a)Ha/* "went" and */rayih/* "to go" underwent grammaticalization process and developed to the future prefix */Ha-*. The study suggested that the lexical word */Hatta-/* "to+ future form" evolved to */ta-/* "to+ future form". In another study, Al-Shawashreh, et al. (2020) examined the grammaticalization of the verb */gaal/* in the Jordanian Arabic dialect of Irbid (JADI). The study suggests that this verb developed from a lexical verb used to introduce speech into an epistemic verb, an evidentiality verb, and an incredulity marker. As an incredulity marker, the verb *gaal* undergoes three processes of grammaticalization: semantic bleaching, phonological reduction, and de-categorization.

As it is clear from the previous studies, grammaticalization is an under-researched topic in the Jordanian Arabic context. Besides, the researcher did not find any research that examined the grammaticalization of *ʃikil* "shape" and *omir* "age" in the Arabic dialects. Thus, the present study aims to fill this gap by investigating the grammaticalization of *ʃikil* "shape" and *omir* "age" to serve as an evidential particle and a negative polarity item, respectively.

3. Methods

The data for the present study were collected from Jordanian T.V. series, and interviews with native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. The researcher is a native speaker of Jordanian Arabic, and he can explore the uses of *ʃikil* and *omir* in Jordanian Arabic based on his intuitions. However, he uses interviews and T.V. series to gather a large amount of data, which enables him to reach for frequencies. The participants in the interviews were 48 participants living in Amman (the capital of Jordan) who belong to different social backgrounds (see table 1). The researcher asked the participants different questions about various topics that interest them, such as coronavirus, politics, religion, divorce, marriage, memories, economy, education, war, etc. The researcher recorded these interviews and asked the permission of the participants to use these recordings in the research.

Table 1: The distribution of speakers according to their age and gender

	Male	Female	Total
Young	12	12	24
Old	12	12	24
total	24	24	48

The data were also collected from the Jordanian Comedy series *Jaltah* 'stroke' part 1 and 2, which was broadcasted in 2018 and 2019. The total number of episodes that were selected were 50. The researcher extracted the occurrences of *ʃikil* and *omir*, transcribed them using IPA phonetic transcription, and analyzed them with respect to their functions. The distribution of *ʃikil* and *omir* in the data were represented in Table 2 &3:

Table 2. Distribution of *ʃikil* in the data

	A noun meaning 'shape.'	An Evidential Particle	total
<i>ʃikil</i>	100	200	300
%	33.3%	66.7%	100%

Table 3. Distribution of *omir* in the data

	A noun meaning of 'age'	A Negative polarity item	total
<i>omir</i>	60	140	200
%	30%	70%	100%

As shown in table 2&3, *fikil* was used 100 times as a noun meaning 'shape', and 200 times as an evidential particle. Besides, *Omir* was also used as a noun 60 times and 140 times as a negative polarity item.

4. Results and discussion

The results of the study showed that *fikil* in Jordanian Arabic has one primary content meaning 'shape' and it was used 100 times (33.3%) in the corpus. It was used as an evidential particle 200 times (66.7%). The findings revealed that *omir* has one basic lexical meaning 'age' used 60 times (30%) and it developed into a negative polarity item used 140 times (70%).

4.1. Noun > evidentiality particle

The noun *fikil* in Jordanian Arabic has a lexical meaning of "shape" or "format", as shown in the following examples:

- (1) Ma: baʕrif /fikil-uh
 NEG. know 1 S.G. shape-GEN.M
 'I do not know his shape'
- (2) ʕajab-ni: /fikil al-ʕajdʒarah
 Like. past-I shape ART-tree
 I liked the shape of the tree
- (3) /fikil-uh muxi:f
 Shape-3SG.M scary
 'He looks scary'

As shown in the previous examples, *fikil* has a content meaning of shape. The content word *fikil* "shape" undergoes semantic bleaching in Jordanian Arabic and evolves to indicate a grammatical meaning of "evidentially". Both uses of *fikil* as a lexical item and an evidential particle were used in Jordanian Arabic. Evidentiality is a grammatical category whose primary meaning is the source of information (Aikhenvald, 2004: 3) whether the speaker gets it directly by seeing the event described or indirectly by being told about the event, or creating inferences based on some information. Boas (1938, p. 133) proposed that "while for us definiteness, number, and time are obligatory aspects, we find in another language location near the speaker or somewhere else, source of information – whether seen, heard, or inferred – as obligatory aspects." Jarrah & Alshamari (2017) indicated in their study that the word *fikil* is used in Jordanian Arabic as an evidential particle to express indirect evidentiality. The particle *fikil* expresses the speaker's dependence on indirect evidence, such as third party reports, inferences, and background and experiential knowledge, etc., as the source of information. Consider the following examples:

- (4) /fikil-ak kasart ʕi: bi-l-matʕbax
 Shape-you break. Past something in-ART-kitchen
 'Evidentially, you broke something in the kitchen.'

In this example, the speaker depends on his experiences (i.e., hearing the sound of broken glass in the kitchen) to assume that the hearer broke something in the kitchen.

- (5) A: Sjarit il-diktor miʕ mawju:d-ah
 Car of-doctor NEG exist-it
 'The doctor's car is not here.'
- B: /fikil-uh il-diktor miʕ dʒaj
 Shape-him ART-doctor NEG come
 'Evidentially, the doctor is not coming.'

Speaker A tells speaker B that he did not see the car of the doctor, so B assumed that the doctor is absent. In this example, the speaker depends on inference as a source of information.

- (6) /fikil-ik kayn-ah tibki
 Shape-you be. Past-you.F cry
 'Evidentially, you have been crying.'

The speaker in 6 sees that her friend's eyes are red, so she assumed that her friend has been crying. Thus, *fikil* is used to indicate a source of information.

The word *fikil* also undergoes the process of decategorization. It is developed from a noun to serve the grammatical function of an evidential particle. It also loses its nominal features. As an evidential particle, it cannot accept determiners and cannot be pluralized, as shown from the following ill-formed structures:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----|----------|
| (7) | *al- <i>fikil</i> -na | raḥ | ni-taʔxar | ʕan | il-dawam |
| | ART-evidentially-we | future particle | we-late | to | ART-work |
| (8) | *ʔikalna: | raḥ | ni-taʔxar | ʕan | il-dawam |
| | Evidentially. P | future particle | we-late | to | ART-work |

As it is shown in the previous examples, the evidential particle *fikil* cannot accept the definite article in 7 and cannot be pluralized in 8. This proves that *fikil* as an evidential particle loses the grammatical features of nouns.

Concerning the position of the noun *fikil* in utterances, it occurs initially, medially, and finally as a subject, object, or complement. Consider the following examples:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|---------------------|------------------|
| (9) | Ma: | ʃuft | <i>fikil</i> -uh |
| | NEG | see. 1 S.G. | shape-GEN |
| | | 'I did not see him' | |

In this example, *fikil* 'shape' comes finally as the complement of the verb /ʃuft/ 'see'.

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| (10) | <i>fikil</i> | il-saʕah | daʕri: |
| | Shape | ART-clock | circle |
| | 'The shape of the clock is a circle' | | |

In 10, *fikil* 'shape' as a noun occurs initially as a subject of the clause.

However, it is unmarked that the evidential particle *fikil* occurs at the beginning of the utterance. The data showed that 70% of *fikil* tokens as an evidential particle occur initially. Thus, there is a change in the position of *fikil* when it is developed into a particle.

The last process of grammaticalization is the phonological reduction in which the particle *fikil* loses stress. Consider the following example:

- | | | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|-----|-------|--------|
| (11) | <i>fikil</i> | il | maḥal | msakir |
| | Evidentially, | ART | shop | closed |
| | 'Evidentially, the shop is closed' | | | |

In the previous example, the evidential particle *fikil* does not carry stress.

4.2. Noun > negative polarity item:

The noun *omir* in Jordanian Arabic has the semantic meaning of "age", as shown in the following examples:

- | | | | | |
|------|----------------------------|----------|----|-------|
| (12) | Omir | Mohammad | 20 | sanah |
| | Age | Mohammad | 20 | years |
| | 'Mohammed is 20 years old' | | | |

- | | | |
|------|--------------------|-------------|
| (13) | Kam | omir-ak? |
| | How | age-you. M? |
| | 'How old are you?' | |

In Jordanian Arabic, *omir* 'age' underwent the process of grammaticalization. The first process is semantic bleaching in which it developed its original meaning as a noun meaning 'age' to indicate a negative polarity item. Negative polarity items (NPIs) refer to linguistic expressions that must occur in negative, conditional, or interrogative syntactic structures (Fauconnier, 1975; Ladusaw, 1979; Zwarts, 1981). Consider the following example:

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|--|-----|------|---------|------|-----|-----------|
| (14) | Omir-ak | ma: | raḥ | tindzaḥ | iḏa: | ma: | daras-at |
| | Never-you | NEG | will | succeed | if | NEG | study-you |
| | 'You will never succeed if you do not study' | | | | | | |

It is clear from the previous examples that *omir* 'age' developed to serve as a polarity item 'never'.

- | | | | | |
|------|--------|-----|---------|---------------|
| (15) | Omir-i | ma: | fiḥimit | i-lrja:dʕja:t |
|------|--------|-----|---------|---------------|

- Ever-I NEG understand ART-math
 'I did not ever understand math'
 (16) Mi:n omir-uh simiʕ la Eminem ?
 Who ever-GEN listen to Eminem
 'Whoever listens to Eminem?'

In examples 15 and 16, *Omir* was used in a negative structure and an interrogative structure functioning, respectively, as the negative polarity item 'ever'. It is worth noting that Jordanians used *omir* as a lexical meaning 'age' and as a negative polarity item.

Omir also undergoes the process of decategorization as it loses the syntactic and morphological features of nouns and is used as a negative polarity item that occurs in restrictive structures: negative, yes-no question, and conditional constructions, as shown in the following examples:

- (17) Ma: omir-i sa:fart ila alsʕi:n
 NEG ever-I travel. 1. S.G. to China
 'I have never traveled to China'
 (18) Omir-ak ruht ala il-sinema?
 Ever-you go. Past to ART-cinema?
 'Have you ever went to the cinema?'
 (19) iða: omir-ak txabi: ʕan-ha: raḥ Tizʕal min-ak
 If ever-you hide from-her will become angry. 3SG.F from-you
 'If you ever keep anything from her, she will be angry with you.'

When the noun *omir* 'age' evolved into a negative polarity item, it lost the stress. The results of the study showed that the nouns *fikil* 'shape' and *omir* 'age' underwent the process of grammaticalization. Their development is in line with a chain or a cline of grammaticalization suggested by Hopper and Traugott (2003). *Omir* and *fikil* underwent the first stage of this path as they develop from lexical words into grammatical words. While /ʕikil/ is developed into an evidential particle, *omir* developed into a negative polarity item. However, these words did not develop yet to a clitic or an affix. Besides, the development of these words agree with the stages of grammaticalization proposed by Bybee (2003), and Hopper and Traugott (2003). Both words underwent the processes of semantic bleaching, decategorization, and phonetic reduction. The results are in line with all the previous studies in the sense that content words evolved into grammatical words.

5. Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating the grammaticalization of the nouns *fikil* 'shape' and *omir* 'age' in Jordanian Arabic. The analysis of the data showed that both nouns evolved from nouns to serve grammatical words through the process of grammaticalization. The findings showed that the noun *fikil* developed through the process of semantic bleaching into an evidential particle. Additionally, it loses the morphosyntactic features of a noun by the process of decategorization. At the final stage, *fikil* as an evidential particle lost stress. The findings also showed that the noun *omir* underwent the process of semantic bleaching, decategorization, and phonetic reduction. It evolved into a negative polarity item, lost the morphosyntactic features of a noun, and stress. The study also found out that Jordanians used *fikil* and *omir* as lexical items and as grammatical words in their utterances. The study recommends that researchers investigate the grammaticalization of *omir* and *fikil* in different Arabic vernacular dialects.

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