'Standard' grammaticalization and 'lateral' grammaticalization: weakening (or not) of functional elements- a revised view of co-evolution of meaning and form:

Roberts and Roussou (R&R) (2003) and van Gelderen (2011) argue that grammaticalization involves 'structural simplification' and 'upward feature analysis' in the Minimalist framework ('standard' grammaticalization (SG)). Simpson and Wu (2002) propose a case of 'lateral' grammaticalization (LG) (Chinese shi-de constructions) where one functional category (D) is 'laterally' re-analysed as another (T). In this paper, I compare SG (e.g. the Romance future (Latin infinitive + habere)) and LG (e.g. the Chinese copula shi) and argue that the former undergoes an expansion in collostructional range and rise in frequency (cf Stefanowitsch and Gries (2003)) and whereas the latter does not, which coincides with the fact that SG regularly gives rise to semantic and morphophonological weakening (R&R (2003:218-229)) whereas LG does not, since it is widely argued that frequency is the cause for weakening in grammaticalization (Bybee (2003, 2011), cf Bisang (2008)). As Latin habere 'to have' is re-analysed as a modal verb and subsequently a future tense marker, it displays 'upward feature analysis' in the universal cartography of functional heads (V > Mod > T(future)) (R&R (2003:chapter 2), Roberts (2010)). Furthermore, as it becomes compatible with an increasing number of infinitives, it undergoes rise in frequency and morphophonological weakening (cf Bybee (2003)). Chinese copula shi, on the other hand, displays 'lateral feature analysis' as it acquires new T features which create morphological subsets for tense and subject-agreement. There is hence a reduction in collostructional range and no rise in frequency, which pre-empts morphophonological weakening.

References:


