Course title: Historical Pragmatics
Lecturer: Dr. Ruti Bardenstein
Office hours: Tuesdays, 16:30- 18:30. (zoom meetings can be arranged as well,
Sundays-Thursdays, by appointment).

Historical Pragmatics

Pragmatics is commonly known as the linguistic study of language use in context. Historical Pragmatics, accordingly, is the linguistic study of the language use in context down the course of history, from early to current periods. It includes the communicative motivations and 'universal' processes of language change. This course will give an overview of the most important terms, methods and mechanisms involved in historical pragmatics. We will look at language data from various historical periods of different languages and discuss the value of historical language corpora for pragmatic analyses. 'Language holds elaborate secrets waiting to be untangled'. In this course we will learn how to untangle at least some of those secrets.

Course Outline

1. Introduction

    a. A taste of historical pragmatic puzzles: French *pas*, Arabic *ishi/sh,* Italian *mica*, English *at least* and Hebrew *lefaxot*.
    b. *Langue* vs. *Parole* (de Saussure 1907)
    c. Synchrony vs. Diachrony.
       Discourse analysis vs. Historical Pragmatics.
       Corpora: spoken (/filmed) vs. written.
    d. The goals of historical pragmatics: solving the puzzles. "Universal Pragmatics"

2. Some Discursive-Pragmatic Motivators for historical change

    a. Politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987).
    b. Speaker's stance (Du-Bois 2007). Exclamatives (Rett 2011).
    c. Argumentation (Anscombre and Ducrot 1977, Mann and Thompson 1985), The 'persistence principle' (Bardenstein 2020b, Bardenstein and Ariel, in press).

3. Processes of linguistic change: Grammaticalization vs. Pragmaticalization

    a. Grammar as code, pragmatics as inference (Ariel 2010: 4.3)
    b. The history of Grammaticalization (Hopper and Traugott 2003:2).
    c. The history of Pragmaticalization (Bardenstein 2020b).

4. Cyclicity of Change

- a. The Jespersen Cycle (Jespersen 1907, Ladusaw 1993).
- b. The Croft Cycle (Croft 1991).
- c. Cycles of Constructionalization (Bardenstein, in press).

Course Duties

1. Attendance is mandatory (at least 80% of the lessons).
2. 3 written Assignments (45% of the final grade).
3. A take-home exam based on the readings and class discussions (55% of the final grade).
4. Class participation is encouraged and rewarded (**bonus** of up to 20% to the final grade).

Historical Pragmatics: Bibliography

Ariel, Mira. 2010. *Defining pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bardenstein, Ruti. 2020b. Persistent argumentative discourse markers. The case of Hebrew rectification-marker *be-ʕecem* ('actually') *Journal of Pragmatics*, 172, 254-269.

Bardenstein, Ruti. In press. Constructionalized Rhetorical Questions: From Negatively Biased to Negation Polarity The case of Hebrew *'lo mi yodea ma'*, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*.

Bardenstein Ruti and Ariel, Mira. In press. Hebrew *mamash*, truth-based intensifiers, and the missing link, *Studies in Language*.

Brown, Penelope and Stephen C. Levinson. 1978. Universals in language usage: politeness phenomena. Question and politeness, ed. by Esther N. Goody. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hopper, Paul, and Elizabeth-Closs Traugott. 2003. Grammaticalization. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ladusaw, William A. 1993. Negation, indefinites, and the Jespersen Cycle. BLS 19.437- 46.

Mann, William and Thompson, Sandra. 1985. Rhetorical Structure Theory: towards a functional theory of text organization. Text 8 (3), p. 243-281, 1988. This is an abridges version of Man & Thompson.