Development of ‘say’-derived constructions

The case of tote and totemo

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Tote in contemporary Japanese is a degree adverb (intensifier). Previous studies have reported that totemo derived from the adverb totemo kakutemo, which means ‘either way’ (and hence is a bipolar item) in classical Japanese. These studies also reported that totemo became a negative polarity item (an adverb modifying words for negative evaluation), but then shifted to a positive polarity item (an adverb modifying words for positive evaluation), and that counter-expectation factors played an important role in this shift. It is reported that the ‘say’-derived complementizer develops into a hearsay evidential marker, counter-expectation marker, and in some cases an intensifier (e.g. Wang et al. 2003) in some languages. Tote in classical Japanese is known as a ‘say’-derived complementizer, but it does not grammaticalize into an intensifier. This study maintains that the intensifier totemo also derived from the verb ‘say’ and the entire process of grammaticalization of totemo may be chronologized as follows: concessive use of quotative > concessive use of hearsay evidential > counter-expectation marker > intensifier. Thus, this study reveals the language-specific development of grammaticalization of the intensifier totemo. We also reveal that a reanalysis of the concessive subordinator and the elision of the complement clause preceding totemo as a sentence initial counter-expectation marker further gave rise to the sentence-medial parenthetical phrase (intensifier) totemo.

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