Variation and change in the Hebrew dative

Tal Linzen

We argue that the dative is an ideal vehicle for grammaticization: its affinity with pronominalizables enables it to take noun phrases that are not clearly thematically related to the verb, such as onlookers and affectees, because of their high accessibility. Frequent use may then promote such datives to argument status. In the process, the original semantic content (e.g., affectedness) may be bleached. We illustrate this claim using a series of quantitative corpus studies, focusing in particular on the Possessive Dative (the use of the Hebrew equivalent of "he broke her the arm" to mean "he broke her arm").

The presentation will be based on the following articles:

