Degrammaticalization, though less frequent than grammaticalization, is an important linguistic phenomenon. After reviewing ongoing discussions on this topic, the article gives various examples of degrammaticalization and locates them along a spiral path leading from lexicon to syntax to grammar and back to lexicon. The principle underlying degrammaticalization is the tendency to have symbolic labels to be stored in the linguistic memory of the speakers. In the final analysis the flux between lexicon and grammar is amenable to the constantly shifting balance between the least-effort principle, leading to opaque labels, and the transparency principle, which strives toward an optimal one-to-one relation between form and function. 1. There exists a rather widespread view that language evolution only admits of grammaticalization, to the exclusion of its contrary, degrammaticalization, as stated by some outstanding linguists such as, say, Talmy Givon, Nigel Vincent, Ronald Langacker, Theodora Bynon, Christian Lehmann (references in Lehmann 1982: 16; see also Greenberg forthcoming). In his important "Thoughts on grammaticalization," Lehmann writes, "No cogent examples of degrammaticalization have been found" (1982: 20), while Bynon, dealing with the evolution that demotes full lexical verbs to the status of auxiliaries, underlines "the unidirectional character of the grammaticalization process" (Bynon 1983: 252). \*

In this paper I want to prove that degrammaticalization processes -- though certainly less frequent and pervasive than grammaticalization -- really exist and that they are caused by a very basic principle of linguistic functions. I shall enlarge on some remarks I made in a 1987 paper. First there are clear examples of processes leading linguistic elements out of morphology: one of the more convincing [Linguistics 30 (1992), 549-560 0024-3949/92/0030-0549 $2.00 © Walter de Gruyter 550 P. Ramat] is represented by the substantivization of nominal suffixes like -ism in such cases as commun-ism, socialism, fasc-ism, generativ-ism, etc. From bases of very different shape and origin a word-formation rule (WFR) may derive an abstract noun via the suffix -ism. Now this -ism, which is diagrammatically iconic, transparent, has been substantivized: the isms, die Ismen, gli ismi, etc.; meaning, with a slightly pejorative nuance, abstract and possibly abstruse philosophical, political, sociological speculations. After reviewing well-known cases of substantives acquiring suffix value, such as -dom in king-dom or -ly in certain-ly, von Wartburg (1946: 76) hinted at the reverse process, in which suffixes may acquire noun value: American ade from orangeade or lemonade with the meaning of 'fruit juice'; whence gatorade, a pop drink endorsed by the eponymous Florida football team (see also ology, onomy, itis 'sickness', etc.; also from native materials, as in teenager, teens 'boys and girls between thirteen and nineteen\* [Anttila 1989: 151]; on German itis, "eine suffixale Ableitung, [die] zu einem Quasi-Nominalkompositum [wird]": Telefonitis, see Schlerath 1987: 75f.). Misinterpretations certainly play a role in this lexicalization process: in the wake of the Watergate affair, we experienced also an Irangate and a petrolgate. Shall we some day get a full-fledged noun gate with the meaning 'scandal, dirty affair', much in the way we got bus 'public transport vehicle' from omnibus (< Lat. omnibus 'for all, for everyone')?2 And will this gate in its turn undergo the grammatical rules for plural (like buses) and compound formation (like schoolbus, minibus, etc.)? After all, the extraction of gate already conforms to the English compounding model wherein N t is the modifier and N 2 the head (which may occur also in isolation).3 Lehmann begins his highly stimulating article with the following preliminary characterization that the reader is asked to accept as definition: "Grammaticalization is a process leading from lexemes to grammatical formatives [....] A sign is grammaticalized to the extent that it is devoid of concrete lexical meaning and takes part in obligatory grammatical rules" (Lehmann 1982: vi). Later, other properties of grammaticalization are specified: it is said that grammaticalization is a process of gradual change (1982: 13); that it starts from a free collocation of isolating lexemes in discourse (1982: 14); the basic definition, however, remains unchanged. We may now apply the same criteria for defining degrammaticalization: bus, ism, ade are grammatical formatives that were devoid of any grammatical function, that is, separated from their grammatical rules (noun declension and, respectively, WFR), and acquired concrete lexeme status with their own autonomous lexical meaning. LEXICALIZATION is THUS AN ASPECT OF DEGRAMMATICALIZATION -- or more exactly: degrammaticalization processes may lead to new lexemes. In fact lexicalization has to be seen as a process whereby linguistic signs formed by rules of grammar are no longer perceived (parsed) in this way but simply as lexical entries. Such lexicalized formants represent the exact converse of the already quoted cases of -dorn (<OE döm 'state, judgment') or -ly ( Fr. seigneur, It. signore > 'sire', 'sir'; OEngl. eldra (brother) > Engl. elder 'dean of the Presbyterian church', Lat. maior > Engl. mayor, Fr. maire; Gk. presbyteros > OFr. prestre, Germ. priesler 'priest' (examples from Dressier 1986: 536f.). Hereto also belong the participles that are no longer felt to be part of a verbal paradigm: see for example Germ, die Verwandten 'relatives', die erkorenen 'the chosen', It. // defunto 'the deceased', etc., where today the corresponding verbs either are used in a very different sense (verwenden 'to use') or are practically no longer in use (erkiesen 'to choose', defungere 'to die'). Note also that isolated participial forms having substantive or adjective value often have as counterpart a regular participle that strictly belongs to the verbal paradigm: compare Engl. shorn 'deprived' vs. sheared', cloven only in rigid syntagms like cloven-footed, cloven hoof vs. cleft', Fr. tarte 'cake' (originally 'twisted [bread]' < torquere 'to twist') vs. tordu 'twisted' (see Ramat 1987b: 325). We are faced with a second instance of degrammaticalization when an entire morphological category disappears or a class-formation system ceases to be productive. A good example of a grammatical category on the way to fading out has been presented by Comrie (1991). In Ancient Greek (already in Homer) we find clear signs of the crisis of this category: we have cases like no lyomen 'we two loose' with pronoun in the dual and verb in the plural, or to ophthalmo 'both eyes' (dual) near hoi ophthalmoi (plural), and even hoi hippoi (plural) drameten (dual) 'the (two) mares ran'. The dual is marked either on the NP or on the verb; and number agreement, a typical feature of strongly inflectional languages, is not observed. It should be evident from these contradictory examples that dual is heading toward losing its grammatical function, or -- in other words -- of moving out of grammar, as also happened in Latin where a form like ambö 'both' is isolated and does not belong to any morphological paradigm. As for class-formation systems ceasing to be productive, consider the 552 P. Ramat PIE \*-sk- building inchoative and/or intensive verbs: compare Lat. rubesco, pallesco 'to go red' and 'to turn pale' vs. rubeo, palleo 'to be red' and 'to be pale'. This WFR is no longer productive, and forms like Engl. to wash, Germ, forschen 'to search, to investigate', or heischen 'to demand, to expect' are no longer recognized as inchoatives; rather they are stored in the lexicon as nonanalyzed items (see Ramat 1987a: 458; Simone 1990: 271). Similarly, the morphological class of causatives no longer exists in English, which has recourse to periphrastic forms with let or make (to let start, to make repeat)', thus the verb to drench 'make wet all over' (<\*drank-jari) is isolated in the morphological system of today's English. Turkish, on the contrary, has the possibility of building causatives from (almost) every verb by inserting the morphological mark -dVR- (for example -dir-: et- mek 'to make' > et-tir-mek 'to let make'). Whenever a linguistic form drifts outside the productive rules of grammar, it becomes lexicalized (see Anttila 1989: 151). Particularly interesting from this point of view are Ital. verbs likefinisco finish',capisco understand', etc.: they do not contrast with nonexistent \*finio, \*capio and show an irregular conjugation: \SGfinisco, 2SGfinisci, but \PLfiniamo, 2PL finite -- and not \*finisciamo, \*finiscete\ [isk] and [ij] are in allomorphic variation with 0 (fini-amo, fini-te); see Simone (1990: 271). The -sk- suffix was originally an option for (at least) all forms of the present tense and was applicable to every verbal base whose meaning could bear inchoative and/or intensive sense. It represented therefore a real WFR belonging to the grammar and endowed with diagrammatic transparency; when the functional opposition -sk-/$ (or other marker[s]) disappeared, the suffix was downgraded to a particular subsector of the paradigm (only in singular and third plural) and, at the same time, "promoted" to allomorphic variation of some particular lexical entries. The derivational suffix has thus been incorporated (but just as a relic!) into the inflectional system. Thus, in a sense, we can say that forms \\\LZ finire-+finisco, finiscono in opposition to morire 'to die' (but not \*morisco\) do really represent a stage linking grammar and lexicon (see Greenberg 1991: 311). Furthermore, lexicalization involves more than the shifting status of grammatical morphemes or "wrong" word divisions: there are in fact instances where full words belonging to grammar enter the lexicon. I am thinking of cases like Gk. philos, originally 'suus, proprius', according to Benveniste (probably for inalienable possession: compare Homeric, moi philagounata 'my (own) knees', and certainly not \*'my dear knees'!) from the stem of the reflexive \*swe-bhi-l (compare Lyd. bilis Own, suus': Frisk 1970: 1020; Hamp 1982). The same seems to hold also for OInd. p ti'possessor, owner, lord' but originally 'ipse' (compare Lat. ipsimusj-a as 'master, mistress1; references in Ramat 1987a: 458 ). The name of the Aryans, Ärya-, may also have a pronominal origin: according to Bader (1990: 30) the name would designate "those arriving from another (compare Lat. alius, Gk. allos, etc.) country" like Gmc. aljamarkir, Celt. Allobroges, Gk. allodapos. Bader speaks of "lexicalisations pronominales/' adducing also many ethnics from the already mentioned reflexive stem \*swe-, like \*Swef>oz, > Lat. Suebi, or Suithiod (see also Ramat 1988: 532). Still, these ethnic names contain derivational suffixes and one could maintain that the lexicalization of the pronominal stems was simply realized via the suffixes. More convincing, then, are cases of lexicalization where no derivational processes are involved. Rather, we could enlarge our perspective from a functional point of view. Case markers, like prepositions, certainly belong to the grammar of a language. However, one cannot predict, much less explain why in German we have to say er begegnet w/r (dalt) "he meets me' but er trifft w/c/z (acc) (\*mir\) (same meaning), or er interessiert sich für/an... 'he has interest in...' but er ist interessiert an (\*/&>!)... 'he is interested in...'. In this example prepositions have to a large extent lost their grammatical or syntactic function and form part, so to say, of the verbal lexical entry (compare Schlerath 1987: 73f.). 2. It may be that degrammaticalization is statistically insignificant when compared with the large number of grammaticalization processes (Heine et al. 1991: 4f.; see also Joseph and Janda 1988: 196), but its examples are by no means uninteresting, and not as scanty as one would prima facie incline to admit. The question we have to deal with is therefore, why is it that grammaticalization and degrammaticalization coexist in natural languages?6 Here again Lehmann (1988: 6) offers a good starting point with his observation that "phraseology is at work in grammaticalization." The English prepositions between, among derive from OEngl. prepositional phrases with autonomous meaning: be tweonum (dat.plur.) 'by twain', on gemang 4 in(to) a crowd'. The PP instead of is still analyzable as in + stead+of 'in place of, but instead has acquired the grammatical function of an adverb (as in The water here is not good, so I'm drinking beer instead). Also MEngl. be sidan was a PP, with case marking on the noun; Engl. beside(s) is now a preposition in itself, which, according to Givon's well-known formula that "today's morphology is yesterday's syntax," has moved from syntax to grammar and may in its turn enter into syntactic environments ('.beside the church, beside the point, etc.). On gemang and be sidan were analytic constructs, and they surely cannot be 554 P, Ramat considered to be one-word forms. Prepositions are predicates whose argument positions must be implemented; they have no self-sufficient meaning. The synthetic forms among and beside (s) certainly belong to the grammatical words of English; they are, however, part of the English lexicon and cannot be considered on a par with other grammatical means like affixes, ablaut, vowel harmony, etc. (compare also the grammaticalization scale for nominal case role marking in Lehmann 1985b: 304; on top of, at the back of represent the first stage in the gradient grammaticalization process). In the same way the periphrastic, syntagmatic, German expressions demzufolge, infolgedessen 'consequently', which incorporate a deictic proform, are now rubricated in the dictionaries as conjunctions under D and /, respectively, not under F: that is, they are considered as autonomous entries. Consequently, we are faced with the possibility of a spiral movement from lexicon! (via syntax) to grammar and thence back to Iexicon2, either immediately (as was the case for teen, ade) or passing again through syntax (as in the case of während 'during', to be treated in a moment); see Figure 1. Were it possible to use Zufolge (which is autonomously rubricated under Z as preposition) as a substantive with the meaning of, say, 'consequence, effect', then this word would have accomplished an entire spiral movement and could finally eliminate Folge 'consequence, effect' from lexicon x . The clearest example of a complete cycle I am aware of is perhaps represented by motion verbs in Tibeto-Burman languages, where lexicalized systems constantly tend toward grammaticalization and morphologized systems constantly tend toward relexicalization (I draw my data from DeLancey 1985).7 Lahu has a verb la 'to come' ( = lexiconlst slage); this la may enter serial syntactic sequences with the meaning of 'come and/to + Vb' as in naPu te la 'conversation do come > come to chat'. Note that other motion verbs like qay 'to go' or tap 'to ascend' when used in such serial constructions can add deictic/orientational specification (much in the sense of German hin- and her-): jü qay 'walk-go > walk away', pu tä? 'carry-ascend > carry up' ( = second stage: syntax). Morphologization sets in as a third further stage when la becomes the deictic particle la 'hither', which cannot occur as a verb in its own right: phola 'to flee hither'. Finally relexicalization (Iexicon2nd stage) is shown in Newari wal 'to come', synchronically unanalyzable and opaque, but etymologically bimorphemic: < \*wa-la < \*wa la. Along this spiral path there are of course many intermediate stages. Periphrastic forms like etre en train de + Inf., or even venir ofe + Inf., are clearly nearer to the lexicon than the Russian imperfective and perfective aspects expressed via fully grammatical means, although, as Comrie Thoughts on degrammaticalization 555 Syntax (dem) (zufolge) (be sidan) (on gemang) (instead of) (I shall go) Lexicon lststage (folge) (side) (men(i)gu) (stead) (Watergate) (orangeade, lemonade) Grammar (zufolge) (beside(s)) (among) (instead) (I'll go) (-gate)\* (-ade)\* (four-teen ...)a (ipsus)b Lexicon2nd stage (ade) (ipsimus) (during, während ...) -- Syntax a. These terms belong to the grammatical domain of the WFRs from whence they have then been substantivized in Iexicon2 (see Ramat 1987a: 458). b. Old Latin for Classical ipse '-self \ Hence the superlative ipsimus with the lexical meaning 'master'. c. Of course to be here understood in the new possible meaning of 'scandal1; see above. Figure 1. From lexicon, to grammar to lexicon^ warned (1976: 9), "it is not clear exactly where the boundary-line would be drawn between [the free syntactic French construction etre en train de] and the English or Spanish Progressives, which are usually considered as grammatical categories".8 By the same token also the boundary between lexical and grammatical units is not neat, as we have seen in the case of zufolge or among; and the dichotomy itself is partly influenced by the typological character of the given language: thus, the personal pronouns (me, you, etc.) are clearly lexical units in analytic languages, whereas in agglutinating or inflectional languages the corresponding functions are conveyed largely by verb forms. 556 P. Ramat The notion of syntactical, grammatical, or lexical categories as having a core with prototypical instances and a periphery with less prototypical, and even fuzzy, instances comes once more to the fore (see for instance Dahl 1985: 184 concerning tense-aspect systems; Kortmann forthcoming concerning the gradual process of reanalysis of participles as prepositions [see immediately below]; Lehmann 1985a: 37 with further references; etc.). Categorization in grammar, and more generally in all domains of language, may often be applied not in terms of sharp boundaries between adjacent areas but rather in terms of well-defined foci with more or less hazy boundaries. For example, one would certainly think twice before citing adverbs like instead or time prepositions like during, während, durante, pendant, etc., as prototypical instances for lexical entries. Nevertheless these forms are of course to be found in the dictionaries 9 (and only seldom in descriptive grammars!). During, pendant, etc., abandoned the verbal paradigm they originally belonged to and are now frozen items that even changed their morphological status (gerunds and participles) to prepositions 10 (see Braunmuller's [1985: 303] "Rekategorisierung"; note also that a verb \*to dure no longer exists in Contemporary English, nor does a French \*pendre with the meaning 'to last'! Conversely, French has kept durer, but durant is now a rude provincialism -- further illustrating the preposition's distance from the verbal paradigm). Doubtless they are nearer to the lexicon than, say, inflectional forms such as / like, she likes, liked.11 The descriptive, iconic function -- which in the realm of grammar has been called diagrammatic -- is but one of the functions of language in the complex dynamic process of communicating. Sometimes the functional principle "one form: one meaning," which represents the basis of the diagrammatic strategy, may result in noneconomic bundles of forms, not easy to process and to memorize. Wolfgang Dressier quotes from Ferenc Kiefer the following Hungarian example: meg - szent- seg - lelen- it - he t -t -etek PREFIX- saint- ABSTR N- NEC- DENOM Vb- MOD -PRET -2PL 'you may have made (it) unholy.' And he adds, "With all due respect for our Hungarian colleagues I venture to say that such long word forms are not morphologically ideal [though they completely conform to the parameters of (a) constructional iconicity, (b) uniformity, and (c) transparency]. (...) I have" -- Dressier goes on -- "high respect for native speakers of Hungarian who can easily produce and process [such long agglutinating word forms]" (Dressier 1985: 4f.). An exceedingly diagrammatic structure may come to represent a growing burden for the (short-term) memory and thus ultimately violate the principle of economy. All this is tantamount to saying that the grammar is not the final stage of any and every linguistic evolution and that, conversely, lexicalization processes may cause grammatical elements to go beyond the limits of grammar. As I said in concluding the 1987 paper quoted at the beginning, Givon's slogan that "today's morphology is yesterday's syntax" might well be completed with the addendum "...and today's grammar may become tomorrow's lexicon" (see Ramat 1987a: 461). In its turn, a large number of opaque labels cannot represent an optimal broadscale strategy since it would be conducive to an inordinate burden for speakers who cannot have recourse to seriated, analogic strategies of expression. Symbolism and iconism are the contrasting strategies always at work and always in tension in language and thus in linguistic evolution. Lexemes like bus and isms or ade, derived from diagrammatically iconic forms that belonged to the realm of grammar, are reduced labels, unanalyzable symbols stored in the memory of the speaker. They are economically motivated (compare bus with its transparent counterpart public transportation vehicle): see Seller's final analysis (1975); all this tension and flux between grammar and lexicon is amenable to the constantly shifting balance along a spiral path (the \*Spirallauf der Sprachgeschichte" already alluded to by von der Gabelentz [1901: 255fT.]) between the leasteffort principle, leading to phonetically reduced and opaque labels, and the transparency principle, which strives toward an optimal one-to-one relation between form and meaning (see Ramat 1987b). Received 21 January 1992 Revised version received 2 April 1992 University of Pavia Notes This is a revised and enlarged version of my contribution to the Grammaticalization Session of the First Plenary Conference of the European Science Foundation Program in Language Typology (EUROTYP), "II Ciocco," Lucca, May 1991. I wish to thank my friend Edward F. Tuttle for many valuable comments on a first draft of this paper. Correspondence address: Dipartimento di Scienze delFAntichita, glottologia, Universita di Pavia, Strada Nuova 65,1-27100 Pavia, Italy. See also Kortmann (forthcoming: section 6), who, though admitting that degrammaticalization, if much less frequent than grammaticalization, may exist, alludes to "the general agreement on the unidirectionality of grammaticalization." On Heine and Reh (1984), who admit of exceptions to the unidirectional movement, see note 5. The most 558 P. Ramat recent discussion concerning the (alleged) unidirectionality of grammaticalization is to be found in Closs Traugott and Heine (1991, vol. 1: 4ff.). See Matisoff (1991: 445); bus is dubbed there as perhaps the best-known instance of "where an 'empty morpheme\* has filled itself up and acquired a true lexical rootmeaning." Interesting enough, the reverse Romance structure (Nl head + N2 modifier) has led to the creation of new lexemes from Germanic borrowings: Ital. smoking 'tuxedo' (< smoking-jacket), go(f'jumper, cardigan1 (< golf-sweater), etc. A wrong analysis of an English WFR has led to the same results -- and this is not without importance for the notion of "degrammaticalization" itself! I must confess that I do not understand why the evolution of OHG haidus 'Gestalt' > MHG -heit, suffix for abstract nouns, should be considered as an example of lexicalization (see Lehmann 1989: 12f.). In my eyes haidus > -heit is a fine example of grammaticalization: "Entstehung von Derivationssuffixen [...] aus ehemaligen Substantiven" (Lehmann 1989: 12). A similar case is reported by Heine and Reh (1984: 74f.) from Somali, where the "adjectival kale 'another', which is a lexical morpheme, appears to be derived from a combination of three non-lexical morphemes through Merger: the preverbal case markers ka- (ablative) and la (comitative), and the de-nominal derivative suffix -leh ('being, having')". Joseph and Janda (1988: 200) mention the Enontekiö (Northern Saame Lappish) clitic abessive morpheme -taga, which has acquired the status of an independent word, in a stressless position. Examples could be adduced also from other linguistic traditions: see Campbell (1991: 200ff.) on Estonian "decliticization" creating a new "affirmative adverb" as an independent word. I am not concerned here with the phenomenon of "regrammaticalization," which, according to Heine et al. (1991: 262, note 11) might be defined as the process undergone by forms that, after having lost their grammatical function, regain that or another grammatical function. However, in the general spiral movement of language drift we will allude to immediately hereafter, these forms will also, of course, have to be taken into consideration. Thanks are due to Davide Ricca for having called my attention to this phenomenon. "Lexicalization of inflectional morphology" was also appealed to -- with a perhaps too wide extension of the term -- in the shifting from synthetic to analytic procedures, as in the case of Creoles where tense, mood, and aspect are expressed via analytic constructions: see Markey (1986: 515). In the above scheme we have in fact rubricated instead under the heading "grammar," but it could have been subsumed under Iexicon2 as well. Every English dictionary has an entry "instead"! (On the contrary, syntactic phrases such as instead of are not autonomous entries in the dictionary.) For the different layers of prepositions that can be distinguished in English see König and Kortmann (1991). The authors remind us, among other things, that prepositions are regarded as major lexical categories like nouns, verbs, and adjectives in X-bar theory. Consequently there would be no status difference concerning the lexicality of prepositions in front of the other typically lexical categories. Probably via absolute constructions, which may still remain as frozen phraseologisms: It. vita natural durante 'during his life' (never \*durante vita natural(e]), Engl. his objections notwithstanding; see König and Kortmann (1991: section 2.1). Note that not only nominal forms of the verbal paradigm (participles, gerunds) may acquire adpositional value: It. un anno fa (fa 3sg. pres.indic. of fare 'to do') One year ago', Engl. bar 'except' (as in bar none, originally a 2sg. imperat. of bar 'to prohibit'), etc. 11. Compare the case of Hung, täjban lit. 'in einer Gegend', inessive of täj 'Gegend, Region, Landschaft' in phrases like az idö tajban die Zeit 'etwa um diese Zeit' where the inessive form has assumed the function of a postposition in a PP with "Lexikalisierung einzelner Kasusformen" (Stolz 1990: 346); "eine der potentiellen Hauptquellen der Renovation adpositioneller Systeme [ist] ganz eindeutig im nominalen Bereich des Lexikons angesiedelt" (Stolz 1990: 347). References Anttila, Raimo (1989). Historical and Comparative Linguistics, 2nd ed. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins. Bader, Franchise (1990). Les pronoms dans les langues indoeuropeennes. Memoires de la Societe de Linguistique de Paris (n.s.) l, 23-35. 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