

**From complementizing to modifying status:
On the grammaticalization of the CTP-clause *odds are***

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Complementation structures in which the complement-taking-predicate clause is downgraded to a parenthetical represent a common developmental pathway for epistemic markers. This is, for example, the origin that has been proposed for widely studied first person epistemic parentheticals like *I think*, *I guess*, and *I gather* (cf., e.g., Thompson & Mulac 1991) and for impersonal parenthetical clauses with a third person singular subject, such as *it may be* and *it looks like* (cf. López-Couso & Méndez-Naya 2014, 2016). In the parenthetical use of such constructions, the matrix-subordinate relation is reversed, the parenthetical clause becomes syntactically and prosodically independent, shows greater positional mobility, and typically conveys the speaker's stance. Interestingly, some third person parentheticals have moved a step further, losing their clausal status and becoming adverbs (e.g. *maybe*; cf. López-Couso & Méndez-Naya 2016) or quasi-adverbs (e.g. *looks like*; cf. López-Couso & Méndez-Naya 2014).

The inventory of complementation structures serving as the source for clausal parentheticals also includes sequences like those in bold in examples (1) and (2), which feature the noun *odds* (OED s.v. *odds* n.):

- (1) If you go in tired, burdened and concerned, **the odds are** that life will look decidedly different when you emerge. (OED s.v. *odds*, n. 6.a; 2001 *Nat. Health* Oct. 62/3)
- (2) With the Jerries rocking on their heels the way they were **the odds were** they'd have taken the count before he got back. (OED s.v. *odds*, n. 6.a; 1947 D.M. Davin *Gorse blooms Pale* 204)

Structures of this type, which are used to convey the meaning of probability, are recorded in the OED since the late 16th century and seem to be at the origin of examples such as (3) and (4), where the *odds are*-clause has modifying, rather than complementizing status (Boye & Harder 2007: 568). This is especially conspicuous in the case of (4), where the *odds are*-string occurs in medial position.

- (3) **Odds are** you're going to be wrong half the time -- especially when it comes to technology. (COCA, 2017, MAG)
- (4) And now, night having fallen, he's come alive, the way he always has and, **odds are**, always will. (COCA, 2005, MAG)

Drawing on data from COHA and COCA, this paper explores the development of *odds are*-parentheticals, paying attention to (i) the types of complementation structures in which the noun *odds* occurs, taking into account, among other issues, complementizer selection and its relevance for the emergence of the parenthetical; (ii) the formal indications of on-going grammaticalization, such as morphosyntactic fixation of the parenthetical clause (loss of variability in the *odds*-NP; TAM restrictions in the VP); (iii) the acquisition of subjective and intersubjective functions of the *odds are*-parenthetical; and (iv) the distribution of the construction at issue across time and register.

References

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