



The Grammaticalization of the English to-infinitive

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Linguistics, grade: 1,7, RWTH Aachen University (Anglistische
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English, abstract: Grammaticalization means the transition of a
lexical, autonomous form to a grammatical, dependent form. It
is a process in which syntactic structures develop out of free
discourse structures and that extends over long time periods (cf.
Diewald 1997: 11). Hardly any phenomenon of linguistics has
raised as many questions as the grammaticalization of the
infinitive. The English language differentiates between two
infinitive types: The bare infinitive, which is only left in certain
constructions, is sometimes described as a sort of grammatical
fossil (Curme 1931: 456, quoted in Duffley 1992: 12) and the to-
infinitive, on the other hand, demonstrates the widely-used form
of the infinitive. Haspelmath (1989: 287) gives a glimpse into the
prevalent view, that the [to-] infinitive is the basic and unmarked
form of the verb, which carries no meaning of its own. The
influential linguist Roman Jakobson states the definition as
follows: Among all...



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