

if a domain is to be divided up such that each of the subcategories can be rapidly accessed online, by speaker and hearer, there cannot be too many divisions in the domain, nor can the deciding factors be infrequent or idiosyncratic. Typically, as forms become highly grammaticized, they divide up a domain exhaustively into a very small number of options: *singular* vs. *plural* (with possible additions of *dual*), *perfective* vs. *imperfective*, the six cases and three genders of Russian. Markers such as these are obligatory, which means they must be accessed in almost every utterance. The facts of language processing work against ambiguities of online access. The notions that evolve into such very small and obligatory sets must (1) unambiguously divide the domain, and (2) use criteria that are generally relevant to that domain. Thus it is no mystery that grammatical inflections do not indicate color or rate or ambient temperature: these are not aspects of experience that are universally applicable or memorable with regard to all of the event types that we talk about. That is, they are not aspects that are relevant to how we interpret and store events IN GENERAL. In order, for example, to grammaticize a temperature marker or a color marker, it would be necessary, first, to have a speech community in which lexical items of temperature or color occurred frequently in discourse, and in which there were a few general terms that marked readily agreed-upon distinctions, such as *cold* –

*cool* – *warm* – *hot*, or *black* – *white* – *red* – *yellow* – *blue/green*. Such scenarios are unlikely for several reasons. For one, these distinctions are not relevant to most of human discourse. The things that we care to communicate about, by and large, are true on cool and warm days; the things we act upon are important regardless of their color. Because we don't tend to store such information in memory, such a language would place terrible burdens on deciding which linguistic form to use in referring to a situation. For example, if I wanted to tell you a juicy bit of gossip, I would have to remember whether the reported event (or the time of my hearing about it) occurred on a warm or cool day. Or when a newscaster reports a bomb explosion in the Paris Metro, he would have to know the color of the bomb, or the Metro, or the explosion. We do not grammaticize such notions because we do not think or talk in such terms.