Clusters of change: an interactive database

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This micro-demo marks the launch of an interactive database containing case studies of complex processes of change, such as (de)grammaticalization and lexicalization. Since these terms have given rise to much confusion, we decided that it would be more useful to reduce these composite changes to their primitive changes, i.e. changes on the level of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. We will argue that these primitive changes are parametric, in the sense that on each linguistic level, there may be either reduction, expansion, or no change. Phonological-prosodic substance, for instance, can be reduced (*going to* > *gonna*), expanded (suffixal *ish* > free adverb *ish,* which is always stressed), or remain unaltered (*supposing* as a conjunction). For each entry in the database, the parametric values of the primitive changes have been entered, enriched with information such as morphological status and part-of-speech of the input and output, the language in which the change occurred and references to secondary literature. The database is free to use and, after registration, researchers may submit their own case studies. Collectively, the case studies in this database can be used to identify "clusters" of change. Some of these clusters may coincide with changes traditionally labelled ‘grammaticalization’, ‘degrammaticalization’, or ‘lexicalization’, but it will be seen that changes may also cluster in alternative ways. In our presentation, we will briefly introduce the basics of the clustering approach, and demonstrate how it can be queried and how data can be entered.