

Cascading Parameter Changes: Internally-Driven Change in Middle and Early Modern English

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Thórhallur Eythórsson [ed.]

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- 🍏 AIM OF THE PAPER: *A syntax-internal cause for syntactic change arises when an initial, extra-syntactically induced parameter change creates a system which has a propensity to further parametric change.*
✂️ CASCADES OF PARAMETER CHANGES OVER SEVERAL CENTURIES = TYPOLOGICAL DRIFT

1. INTRODUCTION

[I] BASIC ASSUMPTION ON SYNTACTIC CHANGE

Syntactic change is a consequence of abductive reanalysis leading to parameter-resetting in first-language acquisition.

✂️ *restriction = Inertia Principle* ---> (1)&(2)

(1) KEENAN'S (2002) VERSION OF THE INERTIA PRINCIPLE

Things stay as they are unless acted on by an outside force or decay. [cf. DECAY: Things wear out. (Keenan (2002: 325))]

(2) LONGOBARDI'S (2001) VERSION OF THE INERTIA PRINCIPLE (IN MINIMALIST TERMS)

Syntactic change should not arise, unless it can be shown to be **caused**.

✂️ *syntactic change = a well motivated-consequence of other types of change*

(i) *extra-grammatical factors such as contact*

(ii) *independent phonological/morphological/lexical changes*

(iii) other syntactic changes ⇒ RECURSIVE SYNTACTIC CHANGE ---> [II]

[II] CLAIM OF THE PAPER

A system which has a propensity to further parametric change may lead to cascades of parameter changes over several centuries, giving rise ultimately to a major typological shift and the illusion of 'typological drift' in the sense of Sapir (1921).

✂️ A SERIES OF CHANGES WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH BETWEEN 1100 AND 1700

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| ① | shift from OV to VO | [12th and early 13th centuries] |
| ② | loss of residual 'residual' OV orders | [c.1400] |
| ③ | development of clause-internal expletives and of systematic raising of subjects | [15th century] |
| ④ | loss of V2 | [c.1450] |
| ⑤ | development of the auxiliary system (modals and <i>do</i>) | [c.1525] |
| ⑥ | loss of 'short' verb movement | [c.1575] |
| ⑦ | contraction of negation | [c.1600] |
| ⑧ | development of negative auxiliaries | [1630s] |
| ⑨ | development of <i>do</i> -support | [later 17th century] |

[III] ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER:

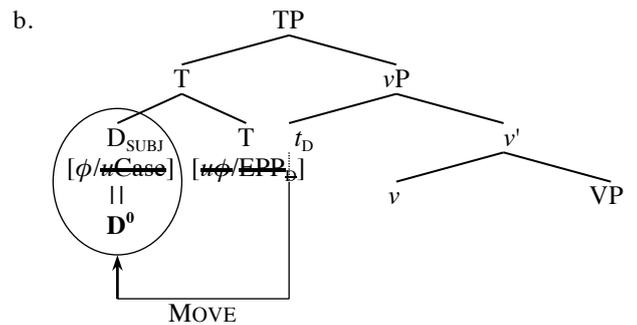
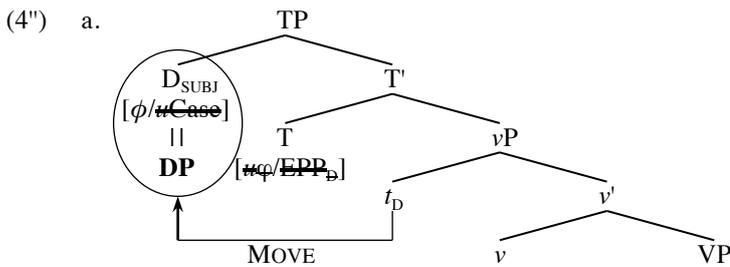
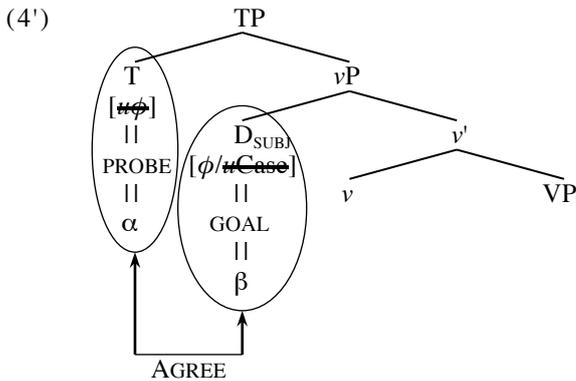
- §2 ✂️ general theoretical background of the analyses: Biberauer & Roberts (2005a; henceforth, B&R)
§3 ✂️ analysis of word order change in Middle English (①-③): Biberauer & Roberts (2005a, 2006a)
§4 ✂️ analysis of the loss of V2 and related changes (④-⑨): Biberauer & Roberts (2005b, 2006a)
§5 ✂️ conclusion

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: AGREE, EPP-FEATURES AND PIED-PIPING

[IV] GENERAL THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

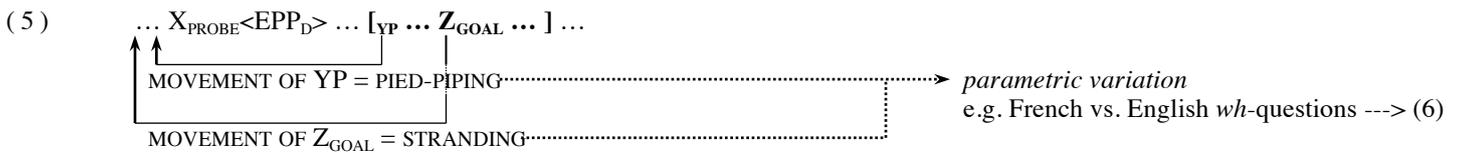
- (i) system of feature-valuing = Agree ---> (3)&(4')
- (ii) system of movement = EPP_D ---> (4'')

- (3) Agree is a relation between two heads α and β , where the following conditions hold:
 - a. α asymmetrically c-commands β ;
 - b. α and β are non-distinct in formal features;
 - c. there is no third head γ which intervenes between α and β which would be able to Agree with α (i.e. there is no head γ bearing feature of the relevant type which asymmetrically c-commands β but not α).



QUESTION: WHAT DETERMINES WHETHER A HEAD OR AN XP UNDERGOES MOVEMENT?
 ANSWER: PIED-PIPING!

A CATEGORY LARGER THAN THE GOAL, BUT CONTAINING THE GOAL, MAY BE MOVED. ---> (5)



3. WORD-ORDER CHANGES IN MIDDLE ENGLISH

[V] BASIC ASSUMPTION ON WORD ORDER

The underlying word order throughout the history of English is head-initial. [cf. Kayne's (1994) LCA]

[VI] DERIVATION OF WEST GERMANIC-LIKE OE WORD ORDERS: SOVAUX IN SUBORDINATE CLAUSES ---> (7)

application of two types of 'large XP' movement:

- (i) VP-raising to Spec vP
- (ii) vP-raising to Spec TP

(7) SOVAUX IN SUBORDINATE CLAUSES ---> (8')

Ða se Wisdom þa þis fitte asungen hæfde ...
 when the Wisdom then this poem sung had
 'When Wisdom had sung thus poem...'

(Boethius 30.68.6; Fischer et al. (2000: 143, (25)))

[XVII] (23') RECONSIDERED: The modals and *do* are merged in *v* and raised to T in the new structure.

[TP **Subj** [_T **V**_{R-v-T} [_{VP} *t*_{Subj} [_{v'} *t*_v [_{VP} **V** **Obj**]]]]



BY THE END OF THE 16TH CENTURY: V-to-*v*-to-T movement lost / obligatory *v*-to-T movement remained: $v_{(NULL)}$ -to-T
 17TH CENTURY: obligatory *v*-to-T movement \Rightarrow optional *v*-to-T movement: Aux+*v*-to-T
 present-day English verbal system

5. CONCLUSION

[XVIII] RESULT OF THE CHANGE DESCRIBED IN THIS PAPER

OE SYSTEM	
OV	
V2	
no syntactically distinct auxiliaries	
no V-movement in non-V2 clauses	

\Rightarrow

PDE SYSTEM	
VO	
non-V2	
syntactically distinct positive/negative auxiliaries	
<i>do</i> -support	

(29)&(30)

(29)&(30)

	TIMING	INTERMEDIATE CHANGES	CASCADE OF PARAMETRIC CHANGES
a.	late 12th century or early 13th century	Loss of VP-movement to Spec <i>v</i> P	Loss of pied-piping to satisfy <i>v</i> 's EPP _D feature, which may have been optional throughout the attested OE period
b.	1400	Restriction of object shift to negative and quantified objects	Loss of <i>v</i> 's optional EPP _D feature, but retention of specialized EPP _D on D
c.	early 15th century	Loss of <i>v</i> P-movement to Spec TP	Loss of pied-piping to satisfy T's EPP _D feature
d.	1450	Loss of V2	(Matrix) C loses EPP-feature triggering T-to-C movement
e.	1525	Development of lexical T (modals and <i>do</i>)	Modal features of T realized by Merge
f.	1575	Loss of V-to-T movement	<i>v</i> loses EPP-feature triggering V-movement
g.	1600	Contraction of negation	(POSSIBLY NOT A SYNTACTIC CHANGE)
h.	1630s	Development of negative auxiliaries	Negative features of clause realized by Merge in T
i.	later 17th century	Development of <i>do</i> -support	T loses obligatory feature triggering <i>v</i> -movement



NET EFFECT OF TRANSFORMING ENGLISH FROM A TYPOLOGICALLY 'STANDARD' WEST GERMANIC LANGUAGE INTO THE UNUSUAL SYSTEM OF MODERN ENGLISH