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Developments in English historical morpho-syntax (Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 346) / Claudia Claridge and Birte Bös (eds.): Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2019

Claudia Claridge and **Birte Bös** (eds.). *Developments in English historical morpho-syntax* (Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 346). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Publishing Company, 2019. vi. 312 pp. ISBN: 9789027203236(HB). Reviewed by **Julia Schlüter**, University of Bamberg.

The volume *Developments in English historical morpho-syntax*, edited by **Claudia Claridge** and **Birte Bös**, is one of two thematically organized collections of selected papers from the *19th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics* (ICEHL19), which took place at the University of Essen in August 2016. Besides their soundly corpus-based approaches, what unites all contributions and endows them with a common perspective is their focus on morpho-syntactic changes, lined up in a progression that combines chronological as well as thematic considerations. Thus, major topic areas are the syncretism of inflectional forms, the increasing differentiation and grammaticalization of verbal and predicative structures, syntactic shifts and fixations, and the complexification of clause structures. From the present reviewer's perspective, a synopsis of the contributions does not only demonstrate considerable divergences that exist between current trends in historical English linguistics, especially with regard to methodologies, but also how it is possible to bridge the gaps and maintain communication between practitioners of different approaches.

In the first contribution to the volume, **Elżbieta Adamczyk** surveys the reduction of nominal declensions in Old English, based on an exhaustive large-scale study of the Dictionary of Old English Corpus (Adamczyk 2018). She offers a systematic and illuminating exposition of the key developments of minor nominal paradigms and their attraction into the major classes, arguably moderated by functional factors such as the amount of overlap between original and innovative paradigms and the frequency and salience of inflections, favouring retention in the case of etymological markers but facilitating analogical levelling in the case of incoming markers. The discussion is a convincing illustration of a painstaking and fine-grained parametrization of multiple factors applied to a large number of tokens and a manual isolation of interacting factors. Correlations that are found are described with the apposite caution. It seems

only a small step from this analysis to a multifactorial statistical model, which would even more effectively tease apart the synergies and antagonisms between factors and could in addition take into account the differences between individual nouns and noun classes in this important area of Old English morphology.

In her chapter, **Kirsten Middeke** addresses another consequential problem spanning various component elements of noun phrases: the loss of the common Germanic instrumental case and its vestiges in Old English (as represented by the York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose). The author provides an instructive outline of the etymological sources for the instrumental case and subsequently takes stock of the determiners, quantifiers, other adjectives and interrogative pronouns displaying instrumental case marking. In addition to type and token counts of noun collocates, she conducts a collostructional analysis distinguishing between instrumental and dative marked noun phrases, showing that the former mostly revolve around temporal nouns and include other nouns semantically associated with the instrumental case (designating place, manner or instrument). In conclusion, Middeke finds that the instrumental is not entirely fossilized and unproductive, though evidently limited to certain noun classes which form a distinct 'epicentre' within the semantic web of the superordinate category of datives. The study is also commendable for the attention that it draws to distributions across texts, which are appropriately conceptualized as units with internal consistency rather than as sources of mutually independent instances of the structures under consideration.

Moving on to Middle English, **Jerzy Nykiel** deals with a foursome of pre- or pronominal expressions based on *one* and *other* that display contracted unetymological consonantal onsets. Based on the OED, the MED and two Middle English corpora, the article encompasses the origins of *tone*, *thone*, *tother* and *thother* in collocations with determiners *the* or *that*, as well as their chronological trajectories in terms of normalized frequencies, while no information is provided about their proportions relative to the uncoalesced variants or related issues, such as the item *another* or the appearance of the prothetic consonantal onset of *one*. The phenomenon provides further evidence of a strong preference for filled onsets and flexible phonological word boundaries (cf. Minkova 2000; Schlüter 2009), but the most unexpected finding (at least from a present-day perspective) is that the *t*-forms were not infrequently preceded by what appears to be a definite article and can be explained as a word boundary reanalysis of the demonstrative *that > the t-*. Corpus examples like these are cited by Nykiel as the most convincing exponents of the double articulation of definiteness along the lines of Lyons's (1999) DP cycle.

The contribution by **Rebecca Colleran** reverts in time to the beginnings of Old English as a branch of the West Germanic language family, and it differs from other chapters in that it backgrounds English in favour of the closely related Frisian language. The data come from the Old Frisian corpus (1275–1550), and the degrees to which different layers of two grammaticalizing constructions are represented in this corpus are compared to Old English data (which are however not quoted in quantitative detail). Taking a clue from population genealogy (but disregarding the historically well-founded dialectal division of Old English and its reflection in the sources), Colleran hypothesizes that Old English and Old Frisian are similar to a point that can only be explained by an immediate shared ancestor exclusive to these two languages. The article extracts the main arguments from a book-length study (Colleran 2017), which may account for the observation that some of the central diagnostics of shared grammaticalization paths remain fragmentary or lack plausibility. The two test cases adduced as evidence are particularly problematic: For one, the grammaticalization cline postulated for complements of *aga(n)*, placing *to*-infinitives and strong infinitival endings at the most grammaticalized end, runs counter to what is generally accepted for English; for another, the constructional type *see someone doing something* competing with older *see someone do something* does not entail a further grammaticalization of the participial ending as a bound morpheme, which is moreover largely indistinct in form from the Old Frisian infinitive itself.

Taking up the topic of verb phrases, **Ilse Wischer** presents a compelling, near-exhaustive study of a total of almost 500 hits for the pre-modals *wolde* and *sceolde* (the past-tense-marked counterparts of the better-researched *willan* and **sculan*) in the Dictionary of Old English Corpus. The analysis is preceded by an informative exposition of different kinds of modality realized by auxiliaries, including a survey of grammaticalization pathways in general and those taken by *wolde* and *sceolde* in particular. The analysis proceeds to disentangle the different modal meanings, providing a convincing and amply exemplified discussion. As a result, Wischer establishes an advanced degree of grammaticalization characterizing both verbs in Old English: While the original main verb uses were already reduced to a small (for *sceolde*, a negligible) minority of cases, *wolde* indicated dynamic modality in more than half of its occurrences, and *sceolde* was most frequent as a deontic modal. Epistemic and aspectual uses are shown to exist for both, and future-in-the past meanings are well established, especially for *sceolde*. A relatively low percentage of instances (compared to Present-Day English) have non-past-time reference. What rightly remains on the

author's to-do list is a breakdown of the data according to individual texts and a more fine-grained period division.

Still within the area of modal auxiliaries, the study by **Sofia Bemposta-Rivas** focuses on the marginal modal *dare*. Unlike earlier studies, this one includes the modal *tharf* (already obsolescent in Middle English) and the former full verb *need*, which participate in a particularly intricate picture. The author provides support for several cross-influences and confusions having led up to the ambiguous categorical status of *dare*. Previously described inflectional, syntactic and semantic features of the verbs are used to derive six criteria along which the three verbs are compared. The evidence comes from three Middle and Early Modern English corpora of the Penn family, divided into seven subperiods. In a nutshell, Bemposta-Rivas argues that *dare* took over various modal meanings (necessity, obligation, possibility and ability) from *tharf* due to phonological similarity and orthographic variability, while *th*-spellings were phased out. Further, the former lexical verb *need* developed similar modal meanings during Middle English and began to compete with *tharf/dare*, as a consequence of which the latter took on some functions of a full verb. While the formal, collocational, semantic and syntactic classification criteria are, as a rule, convincingly applied to a notoriously messy historical dataset, they can at best be interpreted as circumstantial evidence for the causal relationships proposed in this article. Ideally, the criteria should not be viewed separately, but collectively for each example, which might reveal interactions and degrees of similarity or divergence between the three verbs and across time.

Turning to a different facet of Middle English verb phrases, **Judith Huber** addresses another major topic in diachronic grammatical change: the variation between BE and HAVE as auxiliaries in periphrastic perfects. Focussing on the eight most frequent manner-of-motion verbs (*run*, *ride*, *walk*, etc.) in the Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse, she describes and visualizes the effects of counterfactuality (which almost categorically favours HAVE), aktionsart (showing that foregrounding the change of location strongly favours BE, whereas foregrounding the process of motion strongly favours HAVE) and form of auxiliary (with the present tense preserving BE and the past tense attracting HAVE). Furthermore, a mixed-effects logistic regression model controlling for the substantial differences found between the eight verbs confirms the robustness of these effects, with only a minor diachronic shift towards higher use of HAVE. The article strikes a sensible balance between systematic description of the corpus data and statistical verification of the observed effects, which takes account of specific lexical profiles and could usefully be extended to include author-/text-specific profiles in the future. The findings shed further light on the theoretical

debate about whether BE- and HAVE-perfects were equally grammaticalized in Middle English or whether we are observing a single grammaticalization process of HAVE across successive stages.

The study by **Nuria Calvo Cortés** concentrates on the same perfect auxiliary choice but selects a different set of motion verbs (*go*, *pass*, *come*, etc.) and is limited to only one author and two genres: Jane Austen's novels and letters. A clear result of the genre-specific counts (which the author for some reason fails to point out) is that Austen uses BE more often in letters and HAVE more often in novels. An interpretation of this finding is however hampered by uncertain background information as to an alleged conservativeness of the author, her doubtful familiarity with prescriptive grammar and unverifiable editorial interference with her published writings. The subsequent division of the data according to individual verbs and cognitive semantic components of figure, ground and path is intended to uncover effects on auxiliary choice, but turns out rather unenlightening, not only due to small numbers of instances per category but owing to a representation of the binary choice BE vs. HAVE that does not serve the purpose of the analysis well. In view of these problems, there is room for improvement of this study, and, for the moment, its conclusions ought to be phrased more tentatively.

Moving on to Late Modern and Present-Day English, **Sarah Schwarz** explores a different verbal category where auxiliary BE is joined by another grammaticalizing verb: passive verb phrases formed with GET. Resisting the temptation of the easily accessible Corpus of Historical American English to take at face value the striking increase in normalized frequencies of GET followed by items tagged as past participles, Schwarz applies careful sampling and extrapolation, manual exclusion of non-passives and categorization into central passives and ambiguous semi-passives, to assemble a tidy dataset that falls into four genres and four subperiods spanning the 1870s to 1990s. Additionally, she cross-validates her findings against an equally controlled set of BE-passives. In addition to the observation that the impressive frequency increase is shared unevenly between the registers (pointing to different degrees of colloquialization), Schwarz applies three measures to convincingly demonstrate changes indicative of increasing grammaticalization: the GET-passive spreads from conclusive (e.g. *get built*, *get transferred*) to non-conclusive situation types (e.g. *get exercised*, *get referred to*), from personal to impersonal grammatical subjects (indicating semantic bleaching) and to a larger set of lexical verbs.

Susanne Chrambach's contribution is extracted from a larger project investigating the gradual shift in the ordering of time and place adverbials from Old English (where time tended to be mentioned before place) to Early Modern

English (where the tendency was reversed). The entire study includes data from Old English, but the evidence presented here comes from the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpora of Middle and Early Modern English. The chapter reviews only two binary regression models out of a larger set and highlights only two factors out of a total of 13 that have been annotated and fed into the original model. Thus, details of the model and the impact of other factors in the set cannot be fully gauged on the basis of Chrambach's summary, but the two central factors of obligatoriness (complement/adjunct status) and realization form (single adverb/noun phrase/prepositional phrase/adverbial clause) are contextualized, elucidated and discussed in great depth, affording numerous insights into their contiguities and amenability to general syntactic principles. The author convincingly shows that the observed effects are due to the general preference for keeping verbs and their obligatory complements (typically locatives) in close proximity, for short adverbials to come before long ones and for old information to precede new, all pinned against an underlying syntactic shift of verbs towards earlier placement and clusters of adverbials towards late placement.

Adverbial clauses of concession provide the focus of **Ole Schützler**'s chapter, based on samples drawn from the Corpus of Historical American English. This contribution moves from an initial descriptive thrust over to a highly sophisticated inferential statistical model employing multivariate Bayesian regression. Its structural and argumentative complexity demonstrates the limitations of a book chapter when it comes to the full explication of advanced statistical techniques, their prior assumptions, parameter specifications and adjustments. Schützler does not only use semantic type (content/epistemic/speech-act concessive), internal syntactic features, complement length and subperiod as factors, but the three conjunctions are somewhat unexpectedly modelled as predictors that interact with the semantic types (*though* and *although* associating with speech acts and *even though* with content concessives). The insights gained from the analysis primarily revolve around the placement of concessive clauses in sentence-final or non-final position, which is slightly more common in the later corpus sample (1960–2009) than in the earlier one (1860–1909). Eventually, the author manages to unite latest statistical modelling techniques with fruitful linguistic discussion, showing that the more recent data favour speech-act concessives at the expense of content-oriented ones (which suggests subjectification), finite over non-finite clauses, and tend to have longer complements, especially with *even though*, which prefers final position.

Focusing on the long tail of the establishment of the adverbial suffix -*ly*, **Günter Rohdenburg** investigates intensifiers like *exceeding(ly)*, *monstrous(ly)* and *mighty/mightily* in a set of (chiefly British) corpora and large text collec-

tions across the entire Modern English period. In an engaging narrative, the author compellingly argues that the different grammatical categories intensified by the adverbs in question can be arranged on a cline of verbality (in order of closeness to the prototypical category of predicates). The findings boil down to four partial hierarchies distinguishing between cases that are more or less likely to receive adverbial marking (verb phrases above predicative past participles; past participles above adjectives and present participles; predicative above attributive elements; predicatives with complements above such without). In various constellations, these tendencies yield a fine-grained implicational scale, which provides a worthwhile starting point for future work. Two avenues for further testing of the hypothesized hierarchy suggest themselves: Despite the sizeable database, some numbers turn out insufficient for statistical tests, and the comparison of manner adverbs to adjectives with regard to intensifier marking awaits further study.

In the final chapter, **Uwe Vosberg** and **Günter Rohdenburg** present a multifaceted study of one out of a small set of metaphorically used expressions of distance: the type *far from* followed by an adjective phrase, noun phrase or prepositional phrase. Each of these used to be introduced by the explicit predicative marker *being*, which is increasingly given up in the course of the Modern English era (e.g. *far from (being) happy/a loner/at ease*). Drawing attention to the different levels of frequency, contextual givenness and morpho-syntactic complexity of the adjectival expressions, the grammatical complexity of the noun phrases and prepositional phrases, the authors suggest that the explicit gerundial link with *being* is retained where it is most needed to clarify structural relationships. This complexity scale is shown to cut across another cline of complexity differentiating between clause types in which predicative *far from* occurs. Despite being a highly specific study drawing its support from a large and variegated set of corpora and databases, the study ties in with numerous well-known tendencies in English grammar, such as the loss of semantically empty function words, delayed and then accelerated change in American as opposed to British English and grammatical support strategies finely tuned to degrees of cognitive processing load.

All in all, the collection of studies lives up to the editors' aim of "shedding new light on [phenomena and issues in the morpho-syntactic history of English] with the help of more or innovatively combined data, by applying new methods to data, or by taking a fresh theoretical perspective" (p. 6), with data and methods certainly taking centre stage in the volume. While an ideal research setting will remain wishful thinking when it comes to historical linguistics, the contributions are apt to point the way forward in many different respects: Increasingly

large databases will allow us to accumulate sufficient hits for low-frequency items, to compose tidy datasets and cross-validate them against control sets, to apply stringent exclusion criteria and careful manual coding. Good corpus metadata will allow us to control for author- or text-internal consistency as well as genre effects. The latest multivariate statistical modelling techniques can help us take care of individual lexical profiles and isolate synergies and antagonisms between factors, which will allow us to go beyond simple correlations and integrate previous knowledge. And last not least, all of this can serve to advance insightful linguistic discussion and theoretical implications.

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