

The Tense Marker in Chaucer's *The Romaunt of the Rose-A*

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It is frequently mentioned that *gan* was a metrical filler to arrange rhyme. Brinton suggests that *gan* should appear regularly in some measure when it is used as the metrical filler in *Pragmatic Markers in English* (1996). However, the lines containing *gan* are arranged sporadically in *The Romaunt of the Rose-A*. Furthermore she claims that *gan* has a textual function. Mainly based on her observation, I have looked at the distribution and the use of *gan* in *The Romaunt of the Rose-A*.

Initially I have examined whether *gan* + *inf.* is the inceptive aspect or the preterit marker. Firstly, there has proved to be difference between *biginne* which clearly has the ingressive meaning and *ginne* in *The Romaunt of the Rose-A*. Secondly, comparing the original Old French lines including the inceptive aspect clearly with Chaucer's lines including *gan*, I have made it clear that only a few *gans* can be affirmed to have the ingressive meaning clearly as the original, whereas, mainly interpreting *gan* from Chaucer's text, I have demonstrated that most *gans* have a nuance of the inceptive meaning more or less when they occur with a verb of action and motion when *gan* is presumed to be the preterit marker. Moreover, it is concluded from these facts that *gan* has a double emphatic effect by the frequent use of action and motion verbs with *gan* because *gan* itself, containing the ingressive meaning, has a kind of intensive functions.

Furthermore, from the survey of the distribution of *gan* in the whole text, it is concluded that the distribution of *gan* is irregular and *gans* are arranged as we understand the story, linked the places where it appears. Concerning this, it is apparent that *gan* has the narrative function as Brinton suggests. In addition, it has become clear that *gan* has a function for foregrounding the clause including it because it occurs at the important scenes and at turning points in the narrative. In addition, I have examined Weinrich's argument in *Le Temps* (1971) that the simple past has a function of including the foreground in a frame story and the combination of the simple past and the imperfect tense has a narrative effect in Old French. Comparing the lines including *gan* with the corresponding Old French lines, I have proved that 85 percent of the *gans*

in Chaucer's text correspond to the simple past in the Old French text. In this respect, I have showed that many Old French lines corresponding to *gan* are foregrounded. Concerning this, there is a high possibility that Chaucer would substitute the combination of *gan* + *inf.* and the preterit tense for the combination of the simple past and the imperfect tense in Old French. By comparing Chaucer's text with the original text, it has become evident that *gan* is used as one of the devices for translation in that *gan* is placed in the foreground in the narrative.

Lastly, as stated above, I have concluded that *gan* has the functions of emphasizing the infinitive following it, of creating a narrative effect and of foregrounding, and at the same time it is a preterit marker. However, it should be concluded that each function exists not singly but compositely as an elements of *gan*. It is obvious that Chaucer effectively uses the tense marker *gan* which works in multiple ways in *The Romaunt of the Rose-A*.