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# Old English headed relatives between parataxis and hypotaxis

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# Introduction

- ▶ English relatives have developed from parataxis to hypotaxis.
- ▶ But parataxis and hypotaxis are multifaceted notions, and different types of embedding can be dissociated.
- ▶ Old English case study: semantic evidence for subordination predates syntactic evidence.
- ▶ This is compatible with accounts of grammaticalization as semantically-driven change.

## Section 1

### Syntactic preliminaries

## Hypotactic relatives

(1) [The food [that I ate \_\_\_]] was delicious

- ▶ The relative clause *that I ate* is clearly hypotactic:
  1. Sentence-medial position;
  2. Subordinating complementizer *that*;
  3. Interpreted within the scope of *the*.

## Paratactic constructions

- (2)
  - a. The food was delicious. I ate it greedily and noisily.
  - b. The food was delicious: asparagus and spam!
  
- ▶ No clear evidence of a hypotactic relation between *the food was delicious* and the following material:
  1. Sentence-final position (with prosodic break);
  2. No subordinator;
  3. Scopally independent of *the*.

# A partial typology of relative clauses

## Hypotactic constructions

- ▶ A free relative is a clause with the external distribution of an NP.
- ▶ A headed relative is a clause that modifies a noun.
- ▶ Both are syntactically subordinate and typically interpreted within the scope of the matrix (NRRCs aside).
- ▶ A headed relative can have a filled [Spec,CP] (a **relative specifier**), a filled C<sup>0</sup> (a **relative complementizer**), both or neither.

- (3) a. The food 

$\emptyset$	which
that	which that

 she ate
- b. What she ate

## Old English relatives

- ▶ Old English had distinct patterns of marking of free and headed relatives:
  - ▶ Demonstrative specifiers in headed relatives
  - ▶ *Wh*-specifiers in free relatives
  - ▶ Headed relative complementizer *þe* (also used in a range of subordinate environments)
  - ▶ Free relative complementizer *swa* ( $\approx$  *so*).
- ▶ Evidence for/against subordinate status is mixed:
  - ▶ Typically subordinate clause word order.
  - ▶ Complementizers (when present) occur in a range of subordinate constructions.
  - ▶ Typically not properly embedded within the matrix clause.



## Extraposition and clause-final position

- ▶ A clearly hypotactic relative may still be clause-final, by accident.

(4) I enjoyed [the food [that I ate \_\_\_]]

So linear order underdetermines embedding relations.

- ▶ A relative can also occur clause-finally with a nonadjacent antecedent.

(5) [The food<sub>i</sub> \_\_\_<sub>j</sub>] arrived [that I'd ordered \_\_\_]<sub>j</sub>

In (5), the relative is subordinate by many diagnostics, but in “the wrong place”. This is extraposition.

# A partial typology of relative clauses

## Varieties of adjoined relative

- ▶ Extraposed relatives look superficially like right-adjoined relatives.

(6)    ɲatjulu-!u  $\phi$ -ɲa yankiri pantu-ɲu,    kutja-lpa    ɲapa  
         I-ERG        AUX emu    spear-PAST COMP-AUX water  
         ɲa-ɲu  
         drink-PAST

“I speared the emu which was/while it was drinking water  
(Warlpiri, Hale 1976: 78)

The difference is that right-adjoined relatives don't have a clause-medial variant.

- ▶ The most common variety of left-adjoined relative is the correlative.

(7)    jo    laRkii khaRii    hai vo    lambii hai  
         REL girl    standing is    DEM tall    is

“The girl who is standing is tall”

(Hindi, Srivastav 1991: 639–40) 9 / 27

## Section 2

### Diachrony

## Early Indo-European

- ▶ Many scholars (e.g. Clackson 2007) argue that Proto-Indo-European did not have hypotactic relatives.
- ▶ Early IE languages (e.g. Hittite, Sanskrit) typically have correlatives and clause-final adjoined relatives, but few or no clause-medial examples (e.g. Hock 1989 on Sanskrit, Garrett 2008 on Anatolian).
- ▶ Part of the shared diachrony of IE languages is recurring innovation of embedded relatives.

## Early correlatives

- (8) paprizzi huiš 3 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR pāi  
is impure WH 3 shekels of silver he gives  
“The one who is impure, he gives three shekels of silver”  
(Hittite, 2nd millennium BC, Garrett 2008)
- (9) yás tán ná véda kím  
REL-NOM that.ACC not know.PRES.3SG what.INT.ACC  
rcl kari?yati  
verses.INST do.FUT.3SG  
“The one who does not know this, what will (he) do with  
the Verses?” (Sanskrit, 2nd millennium BC, Davison 2009)

## Other early relatives

- (10) ná mr̥a srantam yád avanti  
not useless pain REL-ACC favour.PRES.3PL  
deva?  
gods.NOM.PL  
“The pain is not useless which the gods favour.”  
(Sanskrit, right-adjoined, 2nd millennium BC, Davison 2009)
- (11) nu a-pé-<sup>⌈</sup>e<sup>⌋</sup>-[el É-SÚ] [<sup>⌈</sup>ku-e-la<sup>⌋</sup>  
CONJ him.GEN house.NOM=his REL.GEN  
GÍŠ<sup>̂</sup>e-ja-an a-aš-ki-iš-ši ša-<sup>⌈</sup>ku-wa<sup>⌋</sup>-a-an]  
ejan-tree.NOM gate-LOC=his.LOC visible.NOM  
<sup>⌈</sup>a<sup>⌋</sup>-[pé-ni-iš-ša-an]  
likewise  
‘the house of him at whose gate an ejan-tree is visible is  
li[kewise exempt]’  
(Hittite, embedded, c.1500BC, Probert 2006: 53)

## Fairytales diachrony

- ▶ Right-adjoined relatives could be reanalysed as (possibly extraposed) clause-final embedded relatives.
- ▶ This reanalysis could be entirely concerned with the lexical specification of the relativizer.
  - ▶ In an adjoined relative, the relativizer is basically an anaphor.
  - ▶ In a restrictive relative, the relativizer is closely tied to  $\lambda$ -abstraction (e.g. Heim & Kratzer 1998).
- ▶ Post-reanalysis, we would see simultaneous emergence of restrictive relatives and clause-medial relatives.
- ▶ In English, this would concern *wh*-relatives (< OE *hw*- < PIE *k<sup>w</sup> i-/k<sup>w</sup> o-*).
- ▶ Only problem is, it didn't happen that way.
- ▶ With both headed *wh*-relatives and *be*-relatives, semantic subordination predates syntactic subordination.
- ▶ The structural ambiguity between right-adjoined and extraposed doesn't seem to have triggered the emergence of embedded relatives.

## Two problems from Old English

1. Clause-final examples with subordinating *þe* and restrictive interpretation, that have a nonadjacent antecedent in a position from which extraposition is impossible.
2. Evidence for semantic subordination of *wh*-relatives precedes evidence for syntactic subordination by centuries.



## Section 3

### Old English data

## Early embedded *þe*-relatives

- ▶ Clause-medial restrictive relatives with *þe* are already attested in early OE.

(12) Aec ic bebeode minum aefterfylgendum ðe ðæt  
But I ask my.DAT followers.DAT that the  
lond hebben aet Burnan ðæt hiae simle ...  
land have at Burnan that they always  
“But I ask of my followers that have the land at  
Burnan that they always ...”  
(c.806AD, codocu1,Ch\_1188\_[HarmD\_1]:31.13)

## Possibly extraposed *þe*-relatives

- ▶ Clause-final examples with clause-medial antecedents are also common.

(13) & gif mine broðar ærfeward gestrionen ðe  
and if my brothers heir beget that  
londes weorðe sie, ...  
land.GEN worth be.SBJ  
“And if my brothers beget an heir that is worthy of  
the land” (c.833AD, Ch\_1482\_[HarmD\_2:39.39])

- ▶ However, not all of these are straightforwardly analysed as extraposition.

## Constraints on extraposition

- ▶ Extraposition is generally subject to the Right Roof Constraint: no extraposition out of a containing NP or S (Akmajian 1975).

(14) #I met [[a woman \_\_]'s father] who is called Julia.

- ▶ OE *þe*-relatives frequently violate this constraint.

(15) ærest on [[þæs hwales \_\_] innoðe] þe is  
first in the.GEN whale.GEN belly that is  
cweden Leuiathan  
called Leviathan  
“First in the belly of the whale called Leviathan”  
(*Adrian and Ritheus*, mic 10th c., coadrian, Ad:6.2.17)

## Interim summary

- ▶ Extraposition is a common device for describing cases in which an apparently subordinate constituent nevertheless appears in a peripheral (apparently unembedded) position.
- ▶ It works by positing a syntactic movement relation between relative and antecedent.
- ▶ Constraints like the Right Roof Constraint give extraposition teeth: without them, extraposition amounts to a statement that clausal position is not informative w.r.t. subordination.
- ▶ Although the relation between relative and antecedent in (15) is *like* extraposition, it does not match extraposition in the fine details.
- ▶ Conclusion: that relation isn't mediated by extraposition.
- ▶ In early English texts, we find restrictive *be*-relatives apparently base-generated in adjoined position: semantic subordination without syntactic subordination.

## Early headed *wh*-relatives

- ▶ The first headed *wh*-relatives occur in late OE and early ME.

(16) þæt se ungesewena wulf infær ne gemete, [hwanon he in  
that the unseen wolf entrance NE find whence he in  
to Godes eowde cume & þær ænig scep of abrede]  
to God's herd come.SBJ and there any sheep off snatch  
“that the unseen wolf may not find an entrance from where he  
might come into God's herd and snatch any sheep.”  
(c.1000AD, cochdrul, ChrodR\_1:11.1.232)

- ▶ They are exclusively clause-final for centuries: (17) is one of the first clause-medial examples.

(17) þe eareste Pilunge [hwer of al þis uel is] nis buten of  
the first stripping where of all this evil is NEG.is but of  
prude.  
pride  
“The first stripping, from where all this evil comes, is nothing  
but pride” (early 13th c., cmancriw-1, II.119.1506)

## Semantic subordination

- ▶ An easy way to capture a restriction to clause-final position is to stipulate that early examples like (16) are adjoined to the clause, and that genuinely subordinate examples like (17) are a subsequent innovation.
- ▶ But even early clause-final examples show evidence of semantic subordination.
- ▶ Certain operators block cross-sentential anaphora

- (18) a. #I told him everything<sub>i</sub>. It<sub>i</sub> happened here.  
b. #I didn't have any friends<sub>i</sub>. I could stay with them<sub>i</sub>.

So in (19), the relative clause must be interpreted within the scope of those operators.

- (19) a. I told him everything that happened here.  
b. I didn't have any friends that I could stay with.

Similar examples are among the first OE headed *wh*-relatives.

## Semantic subordination in early headed *wh*-relatives

- (20) & mytte þe hie comon to þære ceastre, hie nænigne  
and with that they came to the town they NEG.any  
cuðne næfdon mid hwam hie wunian meahton.  
friend NEG.had with whom they live might  
“and when they came to the town, they had no friend with  
whom they might live.”  
(c.1000AD, coverhom, HomU\_10\_[ScraggVerc\_6]:69.1026)
- (21) & him cydde eall hwæt þær gelumpen wæs.  
and him said all what there happened was  
“and told him everything that had happened there”  
(12th c., coneot, LS\_28\_[Neot]:78.69)



# Comments

- ▶ Two similar cases combining:
  - ▶ robust clause-peripheral position (suggests parataxis);
  - ▶ “clause-internal” interpretation (suggests hypotaxis).
- ▶ Right Roof Constraint violations also attested with headed *wh*-relatives once frequency increases (14th c.).
- ▶ Two plausible lines of investigation, neither unproblematic:
  1. Cross-linguistic variation in strength of RRC effects.
    - ▶ Differences in the distribution of extraposition between e.g. English and German have been suggested (Meinunger, Strunk), but not in this particular configuration.
    - ▶ Also no solid understanding of such differences.
  2. Semantic subordination without syntactic subordination.
    - ▶ Well-understood in some cases (e.g. modal subordination).
    - ▶ Not all our examples immediately amenable to such treatment.

## Implications for diachrony, implications for synchrony

- ▶ Much of the above is compatible with classical accounts positing parataxis → hypotaxis (e.g. Haudry 1973).
- ▶ But the details show that those two configurations are multifaceted.
- ▶ Changes in different dimensions (e.g. semantic integration vs. syntactic integration) may be dissociable.
- ▶ More case studies would be needed to see if there are any generalizations about where change is seen first.
- ▶ Theoretical apparatus for dealing with the dissociations is limited in scope (and rightly so), and struggles with these dissociations as a result.

## Conclusions

- ▶ On first inspection, the process that takes interrogative pronouns and recycles them as relative pronouns looks tangential to processes of grammaticalization.
- ▶ This is because it looks as though the syntactic reanalysis just happens.
- ▶ However, it isn't the case that it just happens: syntactic reanalysis follows a precursor process of semantic reanalysis.
- ▶ This locates the above dissociations between parataxis and hypotaxis in the middle of a diachronic process.
- ▶ It also brings the diachrony of *wh*-forms in headed relatives into line with other kinds of grammaticalization process.
- ▶ So the story is not just consistent with parataxis → hypotaxis, but what we understand about processes of semantically-led grammaticalization processes more generally.

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