

ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GRAMMATICALIZATION  
AND REANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to explain and exemplify the relationship between grammaticalization and reanalysis, two important processes of grammatical change which occur in language. The ultimate goal of this paper is to prove that whilst the two are crucially related, they are not mutually dependent and can extensively occur alone. The paper focuses on the shift of *for* from the thematic function and/or case realizer to the modern pure complementizer status.

1. Introduction

The concept of grammaticalization is arguably the most widely discussed concept of linguistic change. This paper seeks to explain and exemplify the relationship between grammaticalization and reanalysis, two important processes of grammatical change which occur in language. Its ultimate goal is to prove that whilst the two are crucially related, they are not mutually dependent and can extensively occur alone.

The paper is organized as follows: first I shall define what grammaticalization and reanalysis actually are, and then proceed and illustrate the relationship between them. Next, I consider the reanalysis of English *for* as a complementizer. Finally, the conclusion will wrap up the paper by considering the extent of the relationship between grammaticalization and reanalysis and their influence on grammatical change.

2. What is grammaticalization?

Grammaticalization is generally seen as a process whereby a lexical item, with full lexical (i.e. referential) meaning, develops grammatical meaning (i.e. it

becomes a functional; this is accompanied by a reduction in or loss of phonetic substance, loss of syntactic independence and of lexical (referential) meaning. In this sense, grammaticalization is an empirical phenomenon, studied historically; a process which was probably first described under this heading by Meillet (1912) even though the insights date from much earlier (for a detailed history of the development of the idea of grammaticalization, see Hopper and Traugott 1993 [2003]: 15).<sup>1</sup>

The research on grammaticalization distinguishes two different traditions: the traditional approach (for instance Abraham 1993, Lehmann 1995, and Hopper – Traugott 1993 [2003]) and the generative approach (see e.g. Lightfoot 1999). The generative tradition has viewed diachronic linguistic changes as changes in the way that parameters are set over time, rejecting the idea that there are tendencies or pathways in diachronic change, a common theme of grammaticalization studies (Hopper – Traugott 1993[2003]; Lehmann 1995). Roberts and Roussou attempt to reconcile these two approaches to change by saying that the properties of grammaticalization processes are keyed to the properties of functional categories (cf. Roberts – Roussou 2003; Fuß 2005; Van Gelderen 2004).

In the generative framework developed by Roberts and Roussou (2003), the emphasis is placed on how and why grammars can change in the process of acquisition by new generations of individuals. Roberts and Roussou treat grammaticalization as a regular case of parameter change. They highlight the importance of the properties of individual features to account for language change. In other words, it is the small differences in how features, with given values, relate to each other that results in diachronic change.

According to Roberts and Roussou (2003), variation among languages can be keyed to the way functional categories are phonetically realized cross-linguistically; that is, languages vary with respect to the visible exponents of functional categories. Change occurs when the trigger experience for a parameter setting is ambiguous or obscure. The significance of Roberts and Roussou's approach stems from the fact that it simplifies the specification of features, since, according to them, cross-linguistic variation results from differences regarding the features that have PF interpretation.

For Roberts and Roussou (2003), clause structure roughly conforms to the hierarchy CP-TP-VP, where CP dominates TP and VP, and TP dominates VP. The principal idea is that reanalysis of functional heads always involves reanalysis of movement; e.g., a functional head that was previously realized by

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<sup>1</sup> Some scholars have used it synonymously with “reanalysis”, but the definition this paper works with is that grammaticalization refers to the actual linguistic process whereby lexical items become more grammatical over time (Hopper – Traugott 1993: 1-2).

movement is realized by a morphophonological matrix provided by the lexicon. Reanalysis generates a categorial change in a subset of linguistic items that share certain properties and undergo semantic bleaching and phonological reduction. The procedure gives rise to a new exponent for a higher functional head (Roberts – Roussou 2003: 200). According to them, grammaticalization is a natural form of endogenous change and is consistent with the fact that it is the most common parameter setting mechanism. In view of this approach, parametric change will take place whenever language learners converge on a type of parameter setting which differs from the one adopted by adult grammars. Hence the phenomenon of grammaticalization highlights the relationship between parameter setting and syntactic change.

### 3. Reanalysis

Reanalysis is an abstract syntactic mechanism best defined by Langacker (1977: 58) as: “change in the structure of an expression or class of expressions that does not involve any immediate or intrinsic modification of its surface manifestation”. In other words what changes occur do not affect the output of a construction, although the reanalysis may later lead to changes in the surface level – “actualizations” – in which the consequences of the reanalysis gradually spread through the output.

Langacker (1977: 62-63) emphasizes how reanalysis occurs at several levels, principally the phonemic surface output with information on morpheme boundary placement, and a more abstract level encoding the syntactic or semantic properties of the morphemes. “Reanalysis typically hinges on the interplay between the two”, he tells us (Langacker 1977: 62-63). The type of reanalysis affecting boundary placement is “resegmentation”, and the one applying to underlying syntactic or semantic structures is “reformulation”. These are independent of each other and so can occur alone or together (Langacker 1977: 64).

Reanalysis within the generative theory is generally accounted for by assigning a structural description both to the old construction and to the new, reanalyzed structure, using the principles and constraints of the theory as an “explanatory” tool. In this account, only discrete word-class categories are allowed; gradience of word-class membership (see Haspelmath 1998: 330) is not possible. For this reason, generative studies cannot account for the gradual aspects of grammaticalization processes, but can only capture abrupt, categorical changes. Haspelmath (1998: 330) even argues that “thinking in discrete terms where the phenomena are gradient means that clear instances of grammaticalization are erroneously attributed to reanalysis because grossly oversimplified tree diagrams (...) do not reflect the gradualness of the change”. Generative models of change also have severe difficulty in dealing with the availability of two struc-

tures at one and the same time (as in synchronic variation, or, “layering” phenomena). Can one speaker have access to both the old and the new structure? For a positive conclusion, see Abraham (1993: 21-22), who also refers to Pintzuk (1991) and the possibility that speakers may have access to more than one grammar simultaneously (the so-called double-base hypothesis); for a negative one, see Haspelmath (1998: 341). Language change according to the generative model takes place between successive generations during the process of language acquisition and is manifested either in a change in the structural configuration, a change in movement operations, or in the evolution of or change in functional categories (see also below). Representative for early diachronic generative studies on syntactic re-analysis is the work by Lightfoot (1979) on “catastrophic change” within the English modal auxiliaries.<sup>2</sup>

Recently, with the introduction of functional categories in generative grammar, another kind of reasoning has been introduced into generative accounts of grammaticalization. Elements from functional categories, such as determiners, complementizers or AGR, are taken to serve as heads of constructions (= DP, CP, AGR-P, etc.). Diachronically, functional heads are assumed to evolve out of lexical elements/heads, and it is in this respect that diachronic generative studies can capture grammaticalization phenomena (see e.g. Roberts 1993a, 1993b).

#### 4. The relationship between grammaticalization and reanalysis

Harris and Campbell (1995: 92) see reanalysis as intrinsically linked to grammaticalization: “it illustrates the semantic aspect of grammaticalization,” they write, pointing to semantic bleaching in grammaticalization as the result of reanalysis: “the essence of reanalysis itself”.

Certainly grammaticalization and reanalysis often go hand in hand; frequently reanalysis is a method by which lexical elements become grammaticalized, such as with *go*. They may work together in this way, or in turns, as with *cantare habeo* first being reanalyzed as the ordinary Latin future, then being grammaticalized without reanalysis as it is reduced on its surface level to the Spanish *cantaré* and its Romance cognates (cf. Lehmann 1995: 13); and finally *go* is brought into this continuum, reanalyzed as the ordinary future (cf. Abra-

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<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot (1991) tries to incorporate aspects of graduality in his accounts of language change (according to Harris – Campbell 1995: §§2.2-2.3, this is not very successful). In 1999, Lightfoot “solves” the problem of gradualism by pointing to two different lenses through which we may view change: “languages (...) change gradually; grammars are a different matter” (Lightfoot 1999: 83). By concentrating on the purely grammatical and on the individual’s competence, and by following a strictly modular approach to grammar, it is indeed possible to ignore the gradual aspects of change.

ham 1993; Hopper – Traugott 1993: 2-3). This tendency in the Romance future for forms to become grammaticalized first with and then without reanalysis seems to be a general trend; we might expect the French *je vais chanter* ‘I’m going to sing’ to be reanalyzed in future as simply ‘I will sing’ and then to collapse to an ordinary inflectional surface form through grammaticalization, as has happened several times before in the history of this construction.

#### 4.1. Reanalysis as a lexical process

Hopper and Traugott (1993: 49) point out that reanalysis may not necessarily involve elements becoming more grammatical. In “compounding” there is a weakening or loss of word or morpheme boundaries. Often this reanalysis leads to affixes, which are grammatical forms.

Sometimes, however, reanalysis acts on the lexicon alone, producing new lexical forms instead. One example is *sweetmeat*, which has been formed from compounding *sweet* and *meat* to mean ‘food’. Another good example is *housewife*, formed from *house* plus *wife*.

Grammaticalization is often thought of as “unidirectional” – moving in one direction only. With reanalysis, this can be seen on rare occasions to be happening in reverse through the process of “lexicalization”. Grammatical elements become part of the lexicon, becoming more independent. This is illustrated in such cases as the directional forms *up* and *down* which have developed in certain contexts as nouns or verbs:

- 1) a. He upped the ante (i.e. he raised the bet). verb
- b. He downed ten pints (i.e. he drank ten pints). verb
- c. What a downer! (i.e. drug or depressing person). noun

Unsurprisingly given the tendency for meaning to shift rather than be lost altogether in reanalysis, directional elements carry semantic connotations of motion; as such they are more likely to become verbs rather than nouns, denoting actions rather than objects. (1c) is thus a rare example, but even rarer is when a lexical form is derived from an inflection. The English noun *bus* has been derived from the Latin ablative plural suffix that became detached from *omnibus* ‘for all’ and gained a nominal role. Hopper and Traugott (1993: 49) insist however that this example is unique because it is part of “borrowing”, rather than a new type of change. Such statements are dangerous to make because the fact that this form has clearly occurred and survived would imply that it is very possible that a similar thing could have happened in some other language, as yet untouched by linguistic study.

## 4.2. Ambiguity

Timberlake (1977: 148) sees ambiguity as an absolutely necessary “weak” precondition of reanalysis; by contrast, pure grammaticalization does not need lexical forms to have ambiguous meanings in order to grammaticalize them.

Timberlake has difficulty in defining exactly how much surface ambiguity is needed to trigger reanalysis, but Harris and Campbell (1995: 70) point out that it helps to have possible readings of a structure that are otherwise unambiguously available in the language:

- 2) a. Visiting relatives can be boring.
- b. Singing children can be boring.
- c. Doing homework can be boring.

In this set of examples (2a) has two potential readings, similar to (2b) and (2c). *visiting* can be either a verb or an adjective, and there is no way of knowing which meaning is intended without extra-linguistic contextual information. In other cases an entirely new structure is created in this way, as is the case with *be going (to...)* which for no apparent reason became grammaticalized through reanalysis as a future marker.

## 5. The case of English *for*

Complementizers originate from various categories. The English complementizer *that*, for instance, has developed from a demonstrative pronoun (cf. Hopper – Traugott 2003: 191), while the complementizer *for* is historically related to a preposition. This section investigates the source of *for* in the [for NP to VP] construction. In order to set the stage, let us consider the patterns in (3):

- 3) a. Matrix predicate [PP [P' for] NP<sub>i</sub>] [TP PRO<sub>i</sub> to VP]
- b. Matrix predicate [CP [C' for] [TP NP to VP]]

The pattern of (3b) is of a relatively recent occurrence in English. It did not exist in Middle English. It developed out of (3a) in the course of the 16th century. Further, it is well-known that the pattern in (3a) was very common in Middle English, as may be ascertained from data collected by Visser (1963-1973: §§913-914). However, instances of this pattern did not occur at all in Old English. This suggests that benefactive *for* is a new development in Middle English.<sup>3</sup> The question arises here as to what caused this innovation. It is

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<sup>3</sup> Traditional grammarians distinguish two types of *for*: organic and inorganic. Organic *for* is

standardly hypothesised that the loss of morphological case can have syntactic consequences. If this hypothesis is true, then this innovation, i.e. the introduction of *for* before infinitival clauses is related to the change in the morphological case system of Middle English. As is well-known, Old and Early Middle English predicates may subcategorize for a dative object, and a sentential complement, as in (4):

4)

- a. hit is earmlic & sorhlic eallum mannun [dat.pl] to gehyrenne  
 it is miserable & sorrowful all men to hear  
 'it is miserable and sorrowful for all men to hear'

(Wulfstan *Polity* P. 245 §: Visser 1963-1973: §911)

- b. hit is swiðe earfoðe ænnyum [dat.pl.] to ðeowienne twam hlafordum  
 it is very difficult anyone to serve two lords  
 'it is very difficult for anyone to serve two lords'

(c. 1000 Hexameron *St. Basil* 36; Visser 1963-1973: §911)

- c. nis me [dat.sg.] nan need fæder þe to secgenne hwanon ic come  
 isn't me no need father you to tell when I come  
 'There is no need for me, father, to tell you when I come'

(Ælfric *Lives of Saints* XXIIIB, 71; Skeat 1881: 6)

- d. Ic bide ðæt ðu me [dat.sg.] alyfe ofer ðin land to ferrene  
 I ask that you me allow over your land to go  
 'I ask you to allow me to travel across your land'

(Ælfric *Numbers* XXI, 22; Crawford 1922: 326)

- e. hie sealdon anum unwisum cynninges þegne [dat.sg.] Miercna rice  
 they gave a foolish king's thane Mercia kingdom  
 to haldanne  
 to rule

'they gave Mercia to a foolish king's thane to rule'

(*Chron.* 874; Bosworth et al. 1898)

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a pure dative case realizer; inorganic *for* is a prepositional complementizer. As far as the origin of organic *for* is concerned, the views of traditional grammarians vary considerably (cf. Zandvoort 1949). Zeitlin (1908) believes that organic *for* which appeared before the [NP to VP] construction is an equivalent of the old dative of person in impersonal constructions. Mustanoja (1960: 383) points out that the whole [for DP to VP] construction owes something to Celtic influence and in particular to modern Welsh.

The crucial question is what syntactic and semantic relationship holds between the italicised NPs and the matrix predicates on the one hand and between these NPs and the infinitives on the other. One relationship can be postulated. That is, the italicised NPs function only as the indirect objects of the matrix predicates, and not as constituents of the infinitival clauses. On this assumption, (4a-b) would have the structures given in (5a-b), respectively:

5)

- a. hit is [<sup>AP</sup> [<sup>A'</sup> *earmlic & sorhlic* [<sup>NP</sup> *eallum mannumi*][<sup>TP</sup> PRO<sub>i</sub> to *gehyrenne*]]]]
- b. hit is *swiðe* [<sup>AP</sup> [<sup>A'</sup> *earfoðe* [<sup>NP</sup> *æniyumi*][<sup>TP</sup> PRO<sub>i</sub> to *ðeowienne twam hlafordum*]]]]

In (5a-b) the reference of PRO is controlled by the indirect object and consequently is coreferential with it.

I postulate that *eallum mannum* and *æniyumi* in (4a-b) function as the indirect objects of the matrix predicates. We can say that this kind of relationship is actually a reflection of an idiosyncratic property of the matrix predicate, i.e. the property of being a dative case assigner. Within the theoretical framework (cf. Chomsky 1993, 1995, and subsequent work) adopted in this paper, dative case is not a well-studied phenomenon. Chomsky (1981, 1986) observes that dative (or oblique) case, which he calls inherent case, is closely linked to theta marking (theta-marking). Given that, the matrix predicate in (4a) assigns dative case and experiencer theta-role to *eallum mannum*, while that of (4b) assigns dative case and benefactive theta-role to *æniyumi*. Once dative case was lost, it became possible for such arguments to have neither dative case marking (especially in the case of non-pronominals) nor prepositional marking. Compare (4) above with (6) below:

6)

- a. it is *vncuth & vnwon ðe fader to becum ðe sun*  
 it is *uncouth & unwanted the father to become the Son*  
 ‘it is uncouth & unwonted for the father to become the son’  
 (13. *Curs. M.* 10139; Visser 1963-1973: §911)
- b. it is *good & resonable men to haue chirches in mesure*  
 it is *good & resonable men to have churches enough*  
 ‘it is good and resonable for men to have enough churches’  
 (1400 Wyclif *Pseudo-Freris* 121; Visser 1963-1973: §911)



- c. it seemeth evil a dede man to go about and beg  
 it seems evil a dead man to go about and beg  
 ‘it seems harmful for a dead man to go about and beg’  
 (c.1400 *Political Poems & Songs* II, 20, 20; Visser 1963-1973: §911)

- d. perilous is it a man his feithe to breke  
 perilous is it a man his faith to break  
 ‘it is perilous for a man to break his faith’  
 (c. 1412 Hoccleve, *De Reg. Pr.* 80; Visser 1963-1973: §911)

At the same time, we find examples with prepositions like *for* or *to* assuming the roles played by the (benefactive) dative case ending in Old and Early Middle English. The following illustrate:

- 7) a. hyt ys gret perel to an vncouþ man  
 it is great peril to an uncouth man  
 a mayde chyld for to holde  
 a maid child to hold  
 ‘it is a great danger for an uncouth man to hold a maid’s child’  
 (c. 1303 R. of Brunne *Handlyng Synne* 9880; Sullens 1983: 246)

- b. bot elles it is hard & wonderful to þee for to do  
 but else it is hard & wonderful to you to do  
 ‘otherwise it is hard & wonderful to you to do’  
 (c.1360 *The Cloud of Unknowing* 24b, 18; Hodgson 1944: 16)

- c. if it is leeful to me for to speke ony thing to thee  
 if it is lawful to me to speak any thing to you  
 ‘if it is lawful to me to say anything to you’  
 (c. 1384 *WBible* 1 *Deeds* 21, 37; *MED*)

- d. It is a great shame to a man to have a povere herte and a riche purs  
 It is a great shame to a man to have a poor heart and a rich purse  
 ‘it is great shame to a man to have a poor heart and purse full of money’  
 (c. 1386 Chaucer *Cant. T.* VII 1603; Benson 1987: 233)

- e. it were bettre for yow to lese so muchel good  
 it were better for you to lose so much good  
 of youre owene than forto taken of hir in this manere  
 of your own than to consider of her in this manner

‘it was better for you to lose so much goodness of your own than to consider her goodness in this way’

(c. 1386 Chaucer *Cant. T.* VII 1840; Benson 1987: 238)

- f. hit is no synne *for such men forto seggen* as thei seen  
 it is no sin for such men to say as they See  
 ‘it is no sin for such men to say what they see’

(c.1392 Langland *P. Plowman.* c 13.29; Visser 1963-1973: §914)

The examples in (7) highlight the fact that the preposition *for/to* realises the benefactive dative function used in Old and Early Middle English. They also highlight the “newness” of the construction with *for* in Middle English. We can account for this by saying that *for* is a realisation of the inherent dative case feature which belonged to the matrix lexical head in Old English.

Many scholars postulate that the rise of *for* before the [NP to VP] construction is in no way associated with the rise of *for* before the *to*-infinitive. It is true that the introduction of both *for*’s before the infinitive resulted from the loss of dative case, but what is crucial to note is their contrasting syntactic function. The latter *for* is part of the infinitival marking, as the examples in (8) illustrate:

8)

- a. hie lið al abuten itrand, and hire  
 it lies all down rolled and its  
 heued on midden, *for to bergen* ðat heued  
 head in middle to save the head

‘it lies down all rolled up, and its head in the middle, in order to save the head’

(c. 1200 *Vices & Virtues* 101, 21; Holthausen 1921: 101)

- b. & better þee were *for to haue* it & *for to fele*  
 & better you were to have it & to feel  
 it in þin affeccion gostly  
 it in your disposition spiritually

‘it was better for you to have it and to feel it spiritually in your disposition’

(c. 1360 *The Cloud of Unknowing* 34b, 10; Hodgson 1944: 34)

- c. this is to seyn, that *thee* is bettre *to*  
 this is to say that you is better *to*  
*hold* thy tonge stille than *for to speke*  
 hold your tongue still than to speak

‘this is to say that it is better for you to hold your tongue than to speak’

(c. 1386 Chaucer *Cant. T.* VII1218; Benson 1987: 224)

- d. wiste I what, good freend, tell on what is  
 knew I what, good friend, tell on what is  
 best *me for to make* and folwe it  
 best me to make and follow it  
 ‘what did I know? Good friend: tell me what is best for me to make and follow it’

(c. 1422 Hoccleve *The Dialogue with a Friend* 553; Seymour 1981: 88)

- e. therefore it is no nede *me forto* as here  
 therefore it is no need me to as here  
 in this book *encerche* the writingis of Doctouris Sowynge  
 in this book study the writings of doctors disagreeing  
 agens mi present entent  
 with my present intent  
 ‘therefore it is not necessary for me to study the writings of doctors disagreeing with my present intent’

(c. 1449 Pecoock *Repressor* XIII; Babington 1860:71)

As is well-known in the traditional literature on Middle English infinitives, this *for* appeared before the *to*-infinitive in Early Middle English. Under traditional assumptions, the appearance of *for* is assumed to have been motivated either by (i) the fading away of the prepositional meaning of *to* or (ii) the demise of the dative ending *-ne* which was part of the infinitival verb. I argue that the Old English *to*-infinitive should be treated as a single (morphological and) syntactic unit which can not be broken up by intervening elements like adverbs, negation, or objects. As result of the break-up of the Old English case system, the internal structure of the *to*-infinitive went through an across-the-board change such that the demise of *-ne* (which resulted from the weakening of *to* as a dative case assigner) led to the disintegration of the syntactic unity of the *to*-infinitive. In fact, the demise of *-ne* was the major factor in the disintegration of the (morphological and) syntactic unity of the internal structure of the Old English *to*-infinitive, and the consequent appearance of *for* before *to*. In other words, when *to* stopped being a preposition, *for* moved in and “took over” as P (and then – perhaps! – got reanalysed as an infinitival marker as well, giving *forto*).

The *for* in the [for NP to VP] construction, which replaced the dative case in realising the benefactive dative function (which was a property of the matrix predicate), is the head of a matrix PP. This state of affairs is best illustrated in (9):

9)

- a. I      wol    conclude    that      it      is      bet      *for*  
 I      will    conclude    that      it      is      better    for  
*me    to    sleen      myself    than    ben    suffered    thus*  
 me    to    kill      myself    than    been    suffered    thus  
 ‘summarising: better the thought to kill myself at once than suffer thus’  
 (c. 1386 *Cant. T.* V 1422; Benson 1987: 186)
- b. she    was      a    prymerole,    a      piggensye    *for any lord*  
 she    was      a    daisy,      a      lollipop    for any lord  
*to    leggen    in    his      bedde    or      yet    for any*  
 to    lie      in    his      bed    or      yet    *for any*  
*good yeman    to    wedde*  
 good yeoman    to    wed  
 ‘she was a daisy, a lollipop lady for any lord to take to bed or some good man of yeoman stock to wed’  
 (c. 1386 Chaucer *Cant. T.* I 3268; Benson 1987: 69)
- c. hit    bycometh    *for clerkes Crist forto serv*  
 it    becomes    for clerks    Christ    to    serve  
 ‘it becomes fitting for clerks to serve Christ’  
 (c. 1392 Langland *P. Pl.* 7a, 61; Burrow – Turville 1992: 144)
- d. it    shall    be      lefful    *for every man to ship*  
 it    shall    be      lawful    for every man to ship  
 &    carry    all      maner    of    Cornes    &    Greynes    out  
 &    carry    all      kinds    of    corns    &    grains    out  
 of    this    Rioalme  
 of    this    kingdom  
 ‘it will be lawful for every man to ship and carry all kinds of corns and grains out of this kingdom’  
 (1436 *R Parl.* 4.500a; *MED*)

The *for* in (8) is closely linked to the infinitival marking, and is much older than that in (9). The *for* in (9) is the preposition *for* and is linked to the matrix predicate. Observe that both *for*’s appear side by side in (9c). This clearly shows that they are different morphological and syntactic elements.

The purpose of the preceding discussion was to provide an explanation for the introduction of *for* before the *to*-infinitive. We saw that the introduction of *for* as a benefactive before the [NP to VP] constructions is related to the loss of

dative case in general, and within the infinitive in particular. The question to be addressed next is when and why the diachronic reanalysis of *for* as a complementizer took place.

#### 6. The diachronic reanalysis of *for*

Throughout the Middle English period *for* was undoubtedly a pure preposition. Then, some kind of diachronic reanalysis of the preposition *for* seems to have taken place. Put another way, as a result of the diachronic reanalysis by which the C-position developed as a potential accusative Case licenser, the reanalysis of the preposition *for* as a complementizer took place, as in (10). This *for* came to take on the function of a complementizer (cf. Fischer 1988).

10)

- a. *for us to levy power Proportionate to th'enemy is all possible*  
(1594 Shakespeare *Rich III*, III, ii, 2)
- b. *too light for such a swaine as you to catch*  
(1596 Shakesp. *Taming Shrew* II, i, 205; Visser 1963-1973: §961)
- c. *she is now coming to town in order for me to make my addresses to her*  
(1749 Fielding *Tom Jones* XIV,IV; Visser 1963-1973: §952)
- d. *Elizabeth saw that he was anxious for her sister and herself to get acquainted*  
(1797 J. Austin *Pride & Prej.* 233; Visser 1963-1973: §945)

On the basis of such examples, I postulate that the C-position is an accusative Case-licensing position and that one overt morpheme can realise the Case properties of this position, i.e. the complementizer *for*. While Modern English has this property, Middle English lacks it. The parameter responsible for this difference is the potentiality of the C-parameter: C is a potential Case-licensing position in Modern English but not in Middle English. This reasoning parallels Kayne's (1981) account of the differences between French *de* and ModEng *for* in terms of the inability of the former versus the ability of the latter to govern and Case-mark a lexical DP in the lower clause. Given the significant occurrence of *for* as a complementizer in Early Modern English (i.e. from 1600 onwards) I take this period to be the date of the establishment of C as a potential accusative Case-licensing position. I will return to this point below where I provide further empirical evidence supporting it.

The change from preposition to complementizer is represented in (11):

- 11) a. Matrix predicate [<sub>PP</sub> [<sub>P'</sub> for] NP<sub>i</sub>] [<sub>TP</sub> PRO<sub>i</sub> to VP] ==>  
 b. Matrix predicate [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>C'</sub> for] [<sub>TP</sub> NP to VP]]

The complementizer status of *for* in (11b) is strongly supported by the attestation of constructions like (12) and (13) where *for* is followed by existential *there*, expletive *it* and inanimate NPs, i.e. NPs whose reference is not to living things like persons and animals. Inanimate NPs cannot bear benefactive theta-roles, and hence cannot occur in structures like (11a).

12)

- a. it is impossible *for there to be* a conflict between our two Countries  
 (1931 *Curme*, p. 191; Visser 1963-1973: §914)
- b. he made arrangements *for it to happen*  
 (1984 Irwin Shaw *The Young Lions* 418; Visser 1963-1973: §953)
- c. it looks bad, first, to omit to mention  
 having been on the scene a few hours  
 before a murder is committed; and then *for*  
*it to be* discovered that you had had  
 some sort of dispute with the dead Man  
 (1952 Bingham *My Name is Sibley* (penguin) 167; Visser 1963-1973: §914)

13)

- a. *ffor clerer vundirstonding to be had of our*  
 for clearer understanding to be had of our  
 soulis powers now spoken of þis firste trouþe  
 soul's powers now spoken of this first truth  
 good it is reede in þis part of  
 good it is read in this part of  
 þis book  
 this book  
 (c. 1443 Pecock *Reule of Crysten Religioun* 88b; Greet 1927: 230)
- b. it was the Custom *for every great House*  
 in England *to keep a tame fool*  
 (1711 Adison Spec. Iý no. 47; Visser 1963-1973: §914)

- c. the Chieftain made a signal *for the pipes to cease*  
(1814 W. Scott. *Waverly (tauchn)* 142; Visser 1963-1973: §952)
- d. it is impossible *for such a catastrophe to overtake us*  
(1886 Baring Gould *Court Royal I, III*; Visser 1963-1973: §914)

It is evident that the only possible structure for these examples is (11b), i.e. where the diachronic reanalysis of *for* has taken place. In (13a), for example, the string *ffor clerer vndirstonding* occupies the subject position and hence cannot be a PP. (13a) also shows that *clerer vndirstonding*, which is the passivised object of *to have*, is the subject of the lower clause, and that *for* is not a preposition but a complementizer. Now we can turn to further empirical evidence supporting the proposal that the C-position emerged as a potential Case-licensing position.

The proposal that the C-position emerged as an accusative Case-licensing position is independently supported by the emergence of ECM constructions in the 15th century, as the examples in (14) illustrate:

14)

- a. *y bileeue his holy vniuersal or general chirche*  
I believe his holy universal or general church  
*to be; y bileeue forgeuenes of beleeue euerlasting*  
to be; I believe forgiveness of belief everlasting  
*liif to be or to come*  
life to be or to come  
(c. 1445 Pecock *The Donet* 48a, 5-7; Hitchcock 1924: 104)

- b. *those...whome he belieueth to belieue* wrongly  
those whom he believes to believe wrongly  
(1533 St. T. More *Wks* 886 G5; Visser 1963-1973: §2079)
- c. *wea... aucht to belief dame to be* plege of oure resurrection  
We ought to believe them to be guarantor of our resurrection  
'we ought to believe them to be guarantor of our resurrection'  
(c. 1561 Kennedy *Ane Compendious Resoning* 169, 7; Visser 1963-1973: §2079)
- d. I cannot *believe this crack to be* in my dread mistress  
(1611 Shakesp. *Winter's T. I*, ii, 321; Visser 1963-1973: §2079)

I would like to propose that infinitival complements of accusative subjects not introduced by an overt complementizer are nonetheless headed by a phonologically null complementizer [ $\emptyset$ ]. This proposal was made by Kayne (1981) who postulated an abstract preposition in Comp which transmits Case to the infinitival lexical subjects after undergoing a (successful) process of reanalysis with the matrix verb. Under the present proposal, *believe*-type verbs take a null complementizer which shares with ModEng *for* the ability to realise the Case property of the C-position but differs from it in having no phonetic content. This means that the accusative Case realised on the embedded infinitival lexical subject is a property of the C-position and not of the matrix predicate. This fact rules out Kayne's (1981) extra requirement on the null complementizer to undergo a process of reanalysis with the matrix verb and then transmit the Case features of that verb. Notice that the infinitival subjects in (14) are lexical and therefore must check their accusative Case features in order for the constructions to converge. Assuming that C has the Case-licensing feature as an intrinsic property (listed in the lexical entry) and that the null complementizer in (14) realises this property of C, the natural assumption is that the lexical subjects raise at LF to the [Spec,CP] position to check their accusative features. (This presupposes that [Spec, CP] is an A-position. I have nothing to say about this here).

I would like to point out that constructions like (14) did not occur in Old and Middle English. They appeared in Modern English. One crucial question arises in connection with this: (i) why did ECM constructions not exist in Old and Middle English? In order to answer this question, I would like to propose that ECM constructions could not have existed because C would not license Case. This proposal provides a straightforward account of the Old and Middle English facts. Once C became activated as an accusative Case-licensing position, ECM constructions started to appear in the grammar of Modern English.

One question remains, how the language learner can have enough evidence to fix the parameter for the new interpretation of the [for NP to VP] construction. Under the theory of language change developed in Roberts and Roussou (2003) and adopted in this paper, I make the following suggestions. Firstly, the appearance of *for* before the [NP to VP] infinitival constructions can be taken to be a step towards diachronic change. Secondly, the reanalysis of *for* from preposition (11a) to complementizer (11b) is an example of diachronic reanalysis. We can think of diachronic reanalyses as relations between the E-language of one generation and the I-language of a subsequent generation, i.e. the parents' E-language and the child's I-language. Thirdly, there is the notion of parametric change. I suggest that the change from (11a) to (11b) is a change in the value of the C-parameter. The C-parameter can be formulated in the following way:



15) (Nonfinite) C is a potential accusative Case-licensing position. (True/False)

Assuming that parameters are binary (i.e. they have different values), a child acquiring Modern English will have to fix the relevant value for the C-parameter indicated above on the basis of his/her trigger experience. The child's triggering experience consists of positive data about the ability of *for* and [Ø] to realise the intrinsic Case property of the C-position. The difference between Middle and Modern English can then be captured by the changed value assigned to the parameter in (15).

To sum up this section: we saw that there is compelling evidence for the diachronic reanalysis of *for* as a complementizer, and, consequently, the C-position became a potential accusative Case licenser.

## 7. Conclusion

There are a number of differences between reanalysis and grammaticalization, principally where and how they operate. Whilst reanalysis seems to require ambiguity as a prerequisite (or at least find it highly desirable), grammaticalization has no such constraint because it is motivated as much by phonological and syntactic factors as semantic ones. Furthermore, it is possible to see grammaticalization as a general tendency of language which universally occurs, whereas reanalysis is dependent on semantic ambiguity as confined to certain restricted constructions like *visiting relatives*, plus the quirky nature of hearer interpretation.

On the other hand, reanalysis is not predictable whereas grammaticalization is; even when structural principles are at work, it does not follow a set pattern (Timberlake 1977: 150) and is dependent on many grammatical forces.

On the basis of morphological and syntactic evidence I gave an explanation for the rise of the [for NP to VP] construction both as a complement of matrix predicates and as a subject of the infinitive. It was shown that the rise of *for* before the [NP to VP] construction was triggered by the loss of dative case. It was also shown that the subject construction, which appeared in the 16th century, was made possible by the development of the C-position as a potential accusative Case-licensing position. The C-position has an intrinsic Case-licensing feature which can be realised either overtly by *for* or covertly by the null complementizer [Ø]. Independent evidence was drawn from ECM constructions which, we have proposed, are headed by the null complementizer [Ø].

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