**Book Section:**

# Introduction: Analysing English Syntax Past and Present

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This book is an exploration of categories, constructions, and change in English syntax. A great many books are published on the syntax of English, both monographs and edited volumes, and yet another may seem unnecessary. However, we felt more than justified in adding to the sizeable literature here for two reasons. The first, to borrow from Richard M. Hogg and David Denison's justification for *A History of the English Language*, is that 'one of the beauties of the language is its ability to show continuous change and flexibility while in some sense remaining the same. And if that is true of the language, it is also true of the study of the language' (2006: xi). Central to our book is a focus on the syntax of the English language, through a wide variety of orientations that a collective work makes possible. Thus the volume aims to embrace the wide variety of approaches and methodologies in the current analysis of English syntactic structure, variation, and change, both past and present, through a careful curation of new case studies by established and emerging scholars in the field. Such breadth of scope, together with a specific focus on English syntax, sets the collection apart from most others.

The second reason is that this book is dedicated to David Denison, Professor Emeritus of English Linguistics at the University of Manchester, former Smith Professor of English Language and Medieval Literature, Honorary Doctor of Uppsala University, and Fellow of the British Academy, but above all, academic supervisor, colleague, and friend to the editors and contributors. This volume offers chapters based on original research and serves to celebrate David's rich, diverse, innovative, and inspiring work over the years as well as his legacy as supervisor, colleague, and greatly valued friend. Each of the editors was fortunate enough to be supervised by David. Our time at the University of Manchester coincided with the 'Langwidge Sandwidge', an informal lunchtime meeting where

staff and students met 'to socialise and to share interesting nuggets of data, perplexing questions of theory, or trial drafts of work-in-progress' (Sylvia Adamson, personal communication). Although David was never any less than very generous with his time, this gave his students and colleagues even more access to his kindness (manifested in the sharing of his chocolate biscuit tin) and his keen intellect (which was always worn lightly). Not all scholars are able to be both conscientious and convivial, but this combination has endured throughout his career. When we were writing this introduction, Bettelou Los reminded us of David's love of a 'shindig': occasions that were not just sociable – they often resulted in compelling and significant research outputs (see, for instance, Denison and Vincent 1997). David encouraged us to start with the data, to work with others to best understand it, and, in doing so, to continue inching the field forward. In the words of Olga Fischer (personal communication), he has always been 'good at the nitty gritty', with a 'keen eye for any new constructions arising in English'. Whilst not a Festschrift, we think that this volume reflects all of David's best characteristics.

The fourteen chapters herein, written by nineteen scholars, are grouped into three parts: (I) approaches to grammatical categories and categorial change (five chapters); (II) approaches to constructions and constructional change (five chapters); and (III) comparative and typological approaches (four chapters). The contributors in Part I all deal with the fuzzy status of different grammatical categories and explore syntactic change across categories: **John Payne** on the special status of pronouns in the *of*-PP of genitive constructions; **Bas Aarts** on the analysis of *for* as a preposition or as a subordinator/complementiser; **Dan McColm and Graeme Trousdale** on the recent development of *whatever*; **Elizabeth Closs Traugott** on the converging and diverging development of the comparative modals BETTER, RATHER, and SOONER; and **Cynthia L. Allen** on the existence of the definite article in Old English (OE). The chapters in Part II are concerned with factors involved in English syntax and syntactic change that often go beyond the strictly syntactic. Thus, **Bettelou Los** revisits the way in which patterns spread with regard to the *to*-infinitival complement as a case of analogy and diffusional change; **Ayumi Miura** explores the interface between syntax and lexico-semantics with regard to impersonal and non-impersonal constructions in OE and Middle English (ME); **Laurel J. Brinton** examines the rise of the intersubjective comment clause *if you ask me* in terms of its syntax and pragmatics; **Sylvia Adamson** addresses the role of misreading and prescriptivism in language change from the perspective of literary and textual criticism; and **Merja Kytö and**

**Erik Smitterberg** investigate the role of sociohistorical factors in the use of the conjunction *and* and its double function in phrasal and clausal structures. The shared focus in Part III is on the analysis of English syntax from a comparative and typological approach, comparing British English with other varieties of English and with other Germanic languages, as well as Romance. **Olga Fischer and Hella Olbertz** reconsider the role of analogy by comparing the case of English HAVE-*to* and Spanish TENER-*que*; **Kersti Börjars and Nigel Vincent** analyse the history of WILL-verbs in various Germanic languages in addition to English such as Danish, Dutch, German, Icelandic, and Swedish; **Benedikt Heller and Benedikt Szmrecsanyi** investigate genitive variation in nine varieties of English; and **Christian Mair** closes the volume with a corpus-based analysis of a number of variants in American and British English.

One of the (many) strengths in David Denison's work is his artful ability to explore the syntax of English by combining synchrony and diachrony. Back in 1993, he observed that a 'renewed interest' in historical change brought together the two traditions of diachronic and synchronic linguistics, and that '[t]he explicitness of current linguistic theory should provide better explanations of historical change, while historical facts can play their part in testing and shaping linguistic theory' (Denison 1993: ix). Both synchronic and diachronic work on English syntax are currently thriving, and the range of research being done in this field would not be adequately reflected if we were to restrict the volume to either Present-day English (PDE) syntax or to historical work. In an attempt to remain faithful to Denison's core approach, we offer a number of case studies concerning the syntax of English that are synchronic (Aarts, Heller and Szmrecsanyi, Payne), that trace the recent history of English (Brinton, Mair, McColm and Trousdale), and that deal with the earlier history of English (Adamson, Allen, Fischer and Olbertz, Kytö and Smitterberg, Miura). In this way we also adhere to one of the guiding principles of *The Cambridge History of the English Language* series of volumes in that 'a satisfactory understanding of English (or any other language) cannot be achieved on the basis of one of these [i.e. synchrony or diachrony] alone' (Hogg 1992: xvi).

A second major strength in Denison's work is his dexterity in combining theoretical considerations with traditional philology, and, furthermore, combining these with meticulous analyses of data made possible by methodological advances in recent corpus linguistics. As he himself put it, before the 1970s '[h]istorical syntax was largely synchronic, concerned as it often was with the description of patterns in one author or text or period', but increasingly, as new and more corpora became available, these resources

'were mined for the relative frequency of rival [syntactic] patterns' (Denison 2012: 247). Denison himself comments on his 'eclectic' methodology in his 1993 book: '[n]o linguistic discussion is ever wholly value- or theory-free, of course, but my choice of an eclectic approach is deliberate' (1993: x). Similarly, our aim has not been to present a volume that focuses on a specific theoretical approach; rather, we aim to show the wealth and breadth of the study of syntax (including morphosyntax where relevant), both theoretically and empirically. So, chapters concerned with theory address the state of the art in the study of English syntax from the perspective of grammaticalisation and intersubjectivity (Börjars and Vincent, Brinton, Mair, Traugott), gradualness (Allen, Los), Lexical-Functional Grammar (Börjars and Vincent, Payne), Construction Grammar (McColm and Trousdale, Traugott), analogy and diffusional change (Fischer and Olbertz, Los), historical sociolinguistics (Kytö and Smitterberg), and literary and textual criticism (Adamson). Comparative and typological approaches also feature prominently, including analyses of (morpho)syntactic features in national and regional varieties of English (Heller and Szmrecsanyi, Mair) and in other Germanic (Börjars and Vincent) and Romance languages (Fischer and Olbertz). Methodologically, this volume includes studies conducted using traditional methods such as conscientious philological work (Adamson, Allen), thorough work based on large corpora (Brinton, Kytö and Smitterberg, Mair, McColm and Trousdale), alongside work with newly applied methods such as conditional inference trees in probabilistic grammar (Heller and Szmrecsanyi), and dictionaries for the study of historical syntax (Miura). All in all, the chapters provide materials for investigating some of the central topics currently under discussion in English syntax, relating to both data and analysis (see Denison 1993: ix).

Empirically, in addition to the types of change dependent on internal factors and factors below the level of conscious awareness, there are changes brought about or influenced by external and social factors, including the speaker's conscious choice of competing variants. As Barbara Strang has noted, 'the possibilities of variation, the matrix of change, in grammar, are very great indeed' (1970: 69), and in Hogg and Denison's words, '[f]rom the continual, dynamic interaction of internal and external factors comes what is by any standards a richly varied language' (2006: xii). Hence the present volume includes contributions that consider some of these latter kinds of factors, namely gender and social class (Kytö and Smitterberg), prescriptive norms (Adamson), and the role of standardisation (Mair). Overall, the emphasis is laid naturally on the syntax of written language,

but an attempt has also been made to consider speech-based or speech-like data in some of the chapters, both in earlier historical periods (Kytö and Smitterberg, Traugott) and in recent English (McColm and Trousdale). Rissanen observed that '[i]t is a constant source of frustration for the language historian that all observations and analyses of early periods have to be based on written evidence only, while the importance of speech in the development of the language is self-evident' (1999: 188). Yet Rissanen also pointed out that 'by a careful comparison of texts which stand at different distances from spoken language [. . .] it is possible to present hypotheses about whether a certain construction is favoured or avoided in the spoken language of the period' (1999: 188).

As previously mentioned, the contributions in each part share a focus on syntax from a similar angle, yet they vary in terms of the feature(s) examined, the theoretical perspective, and the methodology adopted. Our ultimate aim is to maintain and stimulate interest in a widely investigated subject in which much work has been done and yet much more remains to be done; the varied range of perspectives within each part allows us to achieve this. We believe that the result is a body of research which substantially adds to the current study of the syntax of the English language.

What follows is an outline of each chapter in the volume, summarising the main objectives, methods, and results.

## Part I

Part I concerns approaches to grammatical categories and categorial change, with contributions addressing the 'fuzzy' status of various grammatical categories and exploring syntactic change across categories.

**John Payne** opens the volume with research into PDE which questions old categorial distinctions. He raises the issue of what is special about pronouns, in particular (the restrictions in) the use of personal pronouns in the genitive construction with *of*-PP, which contrasts with the alternative patterns *s*-genitive and oblique genitive, as in *\*the brother of him*, *his brother*, *that brother of his*, respectively. More precisely, he provides a new corpus-based study of 'the semantic relations permitted to the *of*-PP construction as a totality' which offers an innovative approach: the restriction lies not in the head of the construction, as is common in previous work (see Heller and Szmrecsanyi this volume), but in the personal pronoun dependent. This approach, it is argued, allows us to identify semantic relations between the head and the dependent where the genitive

alternation is not possible, whereas recent studies based on sophisticated regression models naturally exclude truly categorical contexts and contexts in which variation is not attested. The data are drawn from the *British National Corpus* (BNC*web*), both spoken and written material (1960–1993). In terms of relative token frequency, the results show that three semantic relations predominate: (i) quantity, as in *And there was a rare lot of them*; (ii) theme, as in *Some even had photographs of it on their walls*; and (iii) location, as in *she had fallen on top of him*. A further two are relatively frequent: (iv) part-whole, as in *You are that part of me that I cut off*; and (v) property, as in *too stunned by the sheer beauty of it all*. The remainder are 'a diverse residue of other examples', including sixteen different subsets, some of which are attested with just a single example. The analysis provides new insights not only with regard to the semantic relations participating in the genitive alternation between *of*-PP and *s*-genitive (e.g. theme, location, part-whole, property), but it also sheds new light on the behaviour of semantic relations in which there is no alternation and only the *of*-PP is attested (e.g. quantity, subset, collection, container). Thus, this case study qualitatively confirms claims made in previous research that 'the set of semantic relations available to the *of*-PP construction is a superset of those available to the *s*-genitive'. As far as the status of pronouns is concerned, Payne's data argue against Lyons' (1986) intuitive judgement that personal pronouns only reluctantly occur as dependents in *of*-PP constructions, showing rather that they can occur in a wide range of semantic relations, including those in which the *s*-genitive is prone to occur.

Like Payne, **Bas Aarts** deals with PDE and also revisits old categories, in this case taking the range of functions of English *for* as the basis of his study. He proposes an analysis of the lexical item *for* as always being a preposition, which can then take part in constructions with phrase complements or clausal complements. He does not find previous analyses of *for* as a subordinator or complementiser convincing, and considers some of the labels used in the literature ambiguous. The chapter first offers a detailed account of the guises of *for* in a wide array of constructions: (i) [*for* + NP], the traditional conception of the item as a preposition, whether as a complement, as in *You can't blame her for that really, can you?*, or as an adjunct, as in *Hold it for a moment*; (ii) *for* + finite clause, commonly seen as a formal subordinating conjunction, as in *'I'm afraid I've always been bad at names,' she told him for she'd no recollection of him*; (iii) [*for* [NP *to* VP]], which can occur syntactically as a subject or subject predicative, as in *The idea was for me to see the material*; as the complement or modifier of

a head (typically verb, adjective, noun), as in *where the Mayor has given permission for them to sleep*; or as the focus element in a pseudocleft construction, as in *What I want is for it to continue the way it is at the moment*. Before presenting his own analysis, Aarts discusses the labels and arguments put forward in the literature and critically reviews a number of works. He takes issue in particular with Huddleston and Pullum *et al.* (2002) and Radford (2004) for considering *for* to be a subordinator, questioning each of their arguments on syntactic and/or semantic grounds. In his view, there are strong reasons in favour of categorising *for* as a preposition instead of a subordinator. Aarts' analysis simplifies the lexicon entries for a number of verbs, as illustrated with *long* and *prefer*, and the treatment of the constructions [*for* [NP *to* VP]] and [*for* [(NP) V-*ing*]], solving the close parallelism in the syntactic role of *for* and *that* in sentences such as *That's the best course for you to take* and *That's the best course that you can take*. Furthermore, it simplifies the historical account of *for … to* constructions without resorting to theories of reanalysis from preposition-*for* to subordinator-*for*.

**Dan McColm and Graeme Trousdale** study the fuzzy category of interjections; in particular, the development of *whatever* as a new interjection and discourse marker in the recent history of English, within a Construction Grammar framework. Methodologically, the authors offer a quantitative and qualitative analysis of data drawn from the *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA, 1810–present) and the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA, 1990–2017); the qualitative analysis is supplemented with data from the ENCOW16A subcorpus of *Corpora from the Web* (2012–2014). The three corpora were searched for *whatever* plus a number of additional variants, such as *wev* and *whatev(s)*. In addition, in ENCOW16A the authors observe forms such as *whoevs*, *howev*, *whenev*, and *wherev* which also function as discourse markers. This study has two main aims: first, to complement previous work by Brinton (2017) on the pathways of change in the evolution of pragmatic markers, and, second, to extend the discussion by means of a quantitative analysis of the patterns identified which can help us distinguish interjections from other word classes.

Theoretically, the authors argue that the form and function of *whatever* in contemporary English is not satisfactorily explained by the processes of grammaticalisation, lexicalisation, or intersubjectification alone, since the diachronic path followed from *whatever > whatevs > wevs* is atypical, and, besides, according to Brinton (2017), there are two potential syntactic sources for the development of its pragmatic function – a type of general

extender and a clause of the type *whatever you say/think*. Instead, McColm and Trousdale carry out a closer inspection of this fuzziness from the perspective of constructionalisation, looking at aspects of the nature of directionality in language change and considering what the authors here refer to as *bolstering*. The study is thus driven by research questions highlighting the central quantitative and qualitative aspects of developments in the recent history of the forms.

Before dealing with the data and the results, the chapter offers an account of the forms and functions of *whatever* in PDE. The authors classify the use of *whatever* into nine different types. The diachronic trends and the synchronic distribution of the item and its variants reveal that some functions of *whatever* have decreased in frequency (e.g. exhaustive conditional, as in *Whatever was the purpose of his visit, it was not long continued*); some have increased their use (especially the reduced forms, as in *No one ever made the argument you just summarized there, so whatevs*); while some others have remained frequent (relative determinative, as in *I will partake of whatever you have for supper*). All in all, McColm and Trousdale argue for 'an approach to grammatical change which privileges a view of language as a conceptual network of constructions at various levels of generality, and change as a change to the links between nodes in that network'.

**Elizabeth Closs Traugott** focuses on categorial change of the comparative modals BETTER/RATHER/SOONER. Her chapter explores the historical syntax of each form and complements accounts of the development of these from a grammaticalisation perspective (reported in the literature) with a constructionalisation perspective. The former approach suggests that by means of reduction and erosion the three comparative modals have converged overall, that is, they have evolved in the same direction and thus are part of the same category in PDE, taking discrete micro-steps and changing one feature at a time. The Construction Grammar approach, however, points to a different perspective on directionality, in particular that BETTER has diverged from the path followed by RATHER and SOONER. The theoretical question raised and addressed by Traugott is thus how to conceptualise these diachronic syntactic changes. The underlying argument is that historically each of these changes is considered a 'constructional change', and that the accumulation of these constructional changes 'may lead to constructionalisation', that is, 'the development of a form$_{new}$-meaning$_{new}$ construction'. The three research questions raised in the chapter evolve around the evidence for the emergence of the three micro-constructions under consideration, the type of

subschema relationship between the three constructions, and the kind of contribution added by a constructional approach to a grammaticalisation approach to the data.

The evidence discussed by Traugott is rich and varied, including the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*), *A Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760* (CED), the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler* (CEECS), and the *Old Bailey Corpus* (OBC). On the rise of the comparative modals, Traugott argues that RATHER was constructionalised as a modal by Shakespeare's time, and that its use often involved negative semantic prosody. Similarly, SOONER seems to be well established as a modal in the sixteenth century and also shows a tendency for being used with negative semantics. Slightly different is the emergence of *had better*: its comparative modal meaning is not entrenched until the early eighteenth century, when the new meaning is paired with the new form (i.e. a case of constructionalisation). In a second step, the author considers the late Modern English (lModE) period, a crucial era for exploring the directionality of change and how the micro-constructions were organised. A clear picture emerges here, in that *had* occurs with the three modals, but the differences observed in their historical distribution point to RATHER and SOONER forming a subschema together, vis-à-vis BETTER. In the course of their development, the three comparative modals have become more similar in terms of their formal reduction but distinct in terms of their semantics. Regarding the analytical frameworks, constructionalisation has the added value of considering semantics as well as a formal analysis. Crucially, this leads to different clines: BETTER > SOONER > RATHER in the grammaticalisation approach; BETTER > RATHER > SOONER in the constructionalisation approach.

The final chapter in Part I is also diachronic in nature, but focuses on OE. Like Payne, **Cynthia L. Allen** is concerned with categories within the noun phrase, and, like Payne and Aarts, she revisits old labels with new data and from a new theoretical angle. The category involved here is the 'definite article'. More precisely, this chapter addresses the question whether this category already existed in OE by considering new evidence on the use of SE. A crucial point is made by the author at the start: the fact that surviving OE texts do not document an element which behaves exactly like what in PDE is labelled 'definite article' does not necessarily imply that OE did not have this category. The two inspiring sources for Allen's research are Crisma (2011) and Denison (2006). According to the former study, the definite article was in regular use in OE prose from the late ninth century

onwards, consistently in some syntactic positions, variably in others. The latter study is relevant for the pathway of change of this category. In Denison's re-examination of the similarities and differences in OE between a number of categories such as pronouns, adjectives, and determiners, he argues that the boundaries across categories are blurred in OE, and that in ME they continue to be so, developing not through sudden reanalysis but through incremental change.

In her chapter Allen turns to Ælfric's *Grammar*, a late OE text which is not often used for evidence on syntax, given that it is a grammar of Latin, not of English. Allen meticulously checked the English translations of Latin sentences in the *Grammar* that lacked any determiner, arguing that Ælfric's use of SE in such cases gives evidence that can help us to identify contexts in which he considered its use to be essential. This method contributes to previous work in early English by presenting negative evidence that cannot be retrieved in corpus studies. The qualitative analysis, based on a careful philological study of each instance documented in Ælfric's *Grammar*, supplementary data from Ælfric's homilies, and a case study of the noun *cyning*, corroborate Crisma's (2011) claims. On the one hand, definiteness was marked obligatorily for subjects and objects ('direct arguments') in the *Grammar*. Allen thus argues that the reverse can also hold true, that is, the absence of SE is likely to imply that 'Ælfric intended his readers to understand an indefinite interpretation'. On the other hand, the use of the definite article SE was optional and variable in the context of prepositional objects (PObj), which in some ways behave differently from PDE; their use is difficult to pin down to one particular reason or context, be it lexical or grammatical. A search for the definite count noun *cyning* indicates that definiteness marking of *cyning* was more or less the rule at a time when such marking exhibited more variation with other nouns as PObj. Thus Allen recalls and supports Denison's argument that the increasing use of definite articles in this kind of construction may have developed through gradience rather than through an abrupt change in the use of the definite determiner in general.

## Part II

Part II in this volume concerns approaches to constructions and constructional change; more precisely, the chapters here consider diverse factors involved in English syntax and syntactic change that often go beyond the strictly syntactic.

Starting with the *to*-infinitive construction, **Bettelou Los** investigates how different types of analogy can account for the diffusional change of the *to*-infinitival complement in the early stages of English. Although some of the stages are not directly observable because they occurred before the recorded period of OE, Los argues that the distribution of the construction in OE makes it possible to identify the niche in which it had originated and to construct a scenario for its spread. In essence, this chapter revisits previous work by Los (2005) in light of new insights from De Smet's (2013) recent study of the spread of complementation patterns in the gerund construction during the early Modern English (eModE) period. Los claims that the four successive stages proposed by De Smet can be applied to the spread of the *to*-infinitive. Furthermore, Los postulates that this account of change by means of analogy may also shed new light on the rise of the *to*-infinitival Exceptional Case-Marking (ECM) construction, which is here presented as Stage V.

The account in this chapter explains how patterns of complementation spread through gradual diffusion from (I) *narrow paradigmatic analogy*, to (II) *semantic analogy*, to (III) *indirect paradigmatic analogy*, and to (IV) *broad paradigmatic analogy*. According to Los, the process included 'abrupt gearshifts' when new classes of verbs started to appear with the *to*-infinitive complement. The author notes a number of parallelisms with the gerund, notably that both involved nominalisations and developed into clauses. Unlike the gerund, however, the initial niche for the *to*-infinitive involved an adjunct rather than a complement, so Los first accounts for the development from adverbial clause to complement clause through a process of pragmatic implicature. Embarking on the analysis of the pathway of diffusional change, Stage I involves verbs of spatial manipulation in a development parallel to the categorisation of bare abstract nouns in the account of gerund complementation. Stage II involves verbs of 'firing up' through an extension of the meaning of these verbs in a metaphorical manner. Stage III is somewhat more complex, as it involves the gradual extension of the *to*-infinitive as a complement of verbs that share the semantics with verbs of directive meaning but that did not collocate with a *to*-PP in OE; this stage involves in particular verbs of Commanding and Permitting. Stage IV is another gearshift with an extension to the expression of 'dependent desires'. Los identifies here a case of broad paradigmatic analogy which involves taking the *to*-PP and the *to*-infinitive to the domain of the subjunctive clause characteristic of the complementation pattern of verbs such as fearing, promising, ordering, hoping, expecting, or insisting. Finally, in her account Los

adds one more stage in the development of the *to*-infinitive construction, also involving analogy. This is the ECM construction which emerged in late ME, involving verbs of Thinking and Declaring.

**Ayumi Miura**'s chapter sheds new light on the extensively studied topic of impersonal constructions in the early history of English. Her approach is innovative in that it focuses on the interface between syntax and semantics, and it considers impersonal and non-impersonal verbs as well as near-synonymous phrasal impersonal counterparts. Under investigation here are the verbs *like*, *loathe*, which are impersonal, *love*, *hate*, which are non-impersonal, and the phrasal impersonals *have lief*, *be lief*, *be loath*. Miura's aim is to assess the role of four factors previously identified as playing a determining role in establishing boundaries between impersonals and non-impersonals in ME (Miura 2015), and to assess how they interact for a particular verb to occur or not in an impersonal construction. The four factors under examination are causation, transitivity, duration of emotion, and animacy of the Target of Emotion, and the scope in the present investigation extends back in time to the OE period in order to determine whether the same principles can be generalised for OE and ME, and whether they can be generalised to near-synonymous phrasal impersonals which emerged in ME. The data are drawn from various historical sources, namely the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (DOEC), the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose* (YCOE), the second edition of the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English* (PPCME2), and the *MED*.

According to Miura, causation is the most important factor, a second relevant factor being the animacy of the Target of Emotion, for drawing the boundaries between impersonal and non-impersonal predicates. The other two factors, transitivity and duration of emotion, may be understood as secondary, yet they do play a role in the semantic-syntactic distribution of impersonal verbs and phrases. According to Miura, the parameter 'duration of emotion' correlates particularly with causation because causative psych-verbs are normally relatively punctual whereas non-causative ones typically involve long-term states; the role of this factor is examined in relation to the co-occurrence of the verbs and phrases with temporal adverbs. Although the data are at times scarce, it can be observed that the general trends mostly hold true for OE and also for the ME near-synonymous phrasal impersonals. All in all, Miura's investigation on the syntax-semantics interface of impersonal verbs and phrases in early English makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the development of impersonal constructions.

In **Laurel J. Brinton**'s chapter the focus moves on to pragmatics (see also McColm and Trousdale this volume). The author investigates the diachronic development of the syntactic construction *if you ask me* into a pragmatic marker; from a clause serving as a protasis in a direct condition to a comment clause of a parenthetical nature; and from a literal meaning where a question had been posited to a purely pragmatic meaning with no actual question, functioning as an epistemic hedge conveying negative politeness face-saving strategies. In contemporary English, the construction is parenthetical, structurally independent, and generally placed between commas, with relative flexibility of word order in the sentence; its internal structure is elliptical (lacking the complement of the verb *ask*), and prosodically it is also independent. A corpus-based analysis of Present-day American English, based on a sample from COCA, confirms the trends for indirect condition *if you ask me*, clearly in contrast with the syntactic structure of the direct condition *if you ask me*, which takes a complement argument and tends to occur in a more fixed initial position in the sentence (e.g. *And if you ask me to explain that, I'm going to have to demur*).

The data also point to a relatively stable frequency from 1990 to 2015, and to a higher frequency of *if you ask me* in more colloquial, oral genres, thus being considered a 'speech-like' construction in contemporary English. This sort of indirect condition is common in the history of English. On the one hand, they are 'expressions of epistemic modality', with a hedging function that softens the strength of the utterance. On the other hand, Brinton suggests that the indirect *if*-conditions serve as politeness forms, aimed at diminishing the threat to the interlocutor's face, as in *No, she looked half-starved if you ask me*. A further important issue raised in Brinton's chapter is the pathway of change of *if you ask me* in the history of English, for which she consulted a variety of well-known large-scale corpora containing British and American sources; the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) and *Google Books* were also surveyed. The earliest evidence of *if you ask me* is documented in the mid-sixteenth century, but it is not until the late nineteenth century that we observe unambiguous comment clauses with indirect condition *if you ask me*, as in *Well, it is the trick of the trade, if you ask me*. Given the dual elliptical nature of the construction as a comment clause – the lack of a complement structure required by the valency of *ask* and the lack of the main clause – the question posited here relates to the chronological order in which the elements were elided. The author tentatively concludes that insubordinated clauses are likely to have developed from a full biclausal structure, the deletion of the

complement probably having occurred first. As for the pathway of seman-
tic change, it is proposed that *if you ask me* develops from content meaning
to procedural meaning, bearing in mind that the literal meaning is still
used in PDE.

We turn now to **Sylvia Adamson**'s contribution, where she discusses
a misreading resulting from cognitively internalised prescriptive rules.
Adamson argues for the revival of the traditions of 'philologically oriented
language studies', away from the boom in large-scale research focused on
quantitative analyses and the use of statistical tools. She presents a novel
approach that combines qualitative historical linguistics with literary criti-
cism and textual criticism, as well as with recent developments in socio-
linguistics. In particular, she is concerned with the evidential value of
reading practices – and more precisely *mis*readings – in terms of what
these can tell us about how far prescriptive rules have influenced the
interpretative habits of a speech community and about the relation
between grammatical change and cultural change. Interestingly, Denison
(1998: 95) has noted with regard to potential sources of language change in
the recent history of English that '[m]ost, perhaps all, linguistic changes
start out as "mistakes" relative to the standards of the time (though often
not noticed at first)', and that '[a]n aberrant usage therefore represents one
of three broad possibilities: an incipient change which will in the long run
prove successful, a possible change which does not get generally adopted,
or simple error'.

Adamson understands *misreadings* in relation to mistranscriptions of
a text, (conscious or unconscious) misquotations, and editorial corrections
of a text, and she argues that a text-based approach characteristic of literary
studies can provide suitable models for the role of misreadings 'as a window
on cognition'. She is first concerned with the case-study method in literary
criticism, where misreadings can be taken as creative transformations of
earlier precursor texts, psychological motivations playing a key role.
Adamson then turns to textual criticism, and more specifically textual
reconstruction, whereby misreadings are viewed as deformations of text
rather than creative transformations. She draws attention to the concept of
*banalisation*, whereby a transcriber or editor tends to simplify the text by
selecting the most banal or familiar form of expression. Moving then to the
arena of qualitative historical linguistics, Adamson hypothesises that
'[b]analisation is evidence that a grammatical change has become an
internalised rule for the individual speaker'. To illustrate the point, she
explores the regulation of the relative markers, specifically the animate/
inanimate distinction between *who* and *which*, and the third-person

anaphoric pronouns *he/she/it*. Going beyond the traditional approach that compares norms and usage, this chapter addresses the internalisation of externally imposed rules. Among the examples given of apparent changes in linguistic behaviour are the restriction on *that* vs. *which* in relative clauses, and a change in an individual from generic *he* to non-generic *he*. Historical data used as evidence by Adamson come from the reading of a line of Shakespeare, particularly whether the antecedent of *who* should be *heart* or *ghost* and the possibility that it involved personification. The final technique discussed by Adamson is the text-to-context method taken from literary studies: widening the scope to the textual, cultural, and intellectual context in which a text is produced can shed light on the original pragmatic purpose and its syntax.

The last chapter in Part II, by **Merja Kytö and Erik Smitterberg**, examines the syntactic use of the conjunction *and* as a phrasal and clausal linking device from the perspective of historical sociolinguistics, looking at variation and change in the lModE period as conditioned by two key social factors: gender and socio-economic group. Differences in text category and medium are also key to this investigation. The authors take two starting points: on the one hand, the synchronic correlation in PDE between clausal co-ordination and oral/spoken language, and between phrasal co-ordination and literate/written language; on the other hand, the diachronic cline towards colloquialisation observed in previous research in a variety of written genres. Thus it is hypothesised that (i) if the genre norms change following the historical drift towards orality, given the distribution of the clausal and phrasal patterns in PDE, we would expect an increase in the use of clausal co-ordination during lModE; (ii) if this evolves as a change from below the level of consciousness, we would expect women to lead the change to a greater extent than men; and (iii) if education and exposure to the written norm play a role, as they often do in lModE, we would expect higher social groups to show a preference for the phrasal use of the conjunction *and*.

Methodologically, the study draws data from a speech-based genre, the trial proceedings of the *Old Bailey Corpus* (OBC), and in particular from the language of witnesses. The analysis focuses on two linguistic variables: clausal *and*, as in *I ran after him for about 200 yards, came up to him, seized him, and knocked him down*; and phrasal *and*, as in *when she has addressed the prisoner in an angry and passionate manner*. The so-called *V and V* construction (e.g. *I went and enquired*) and ambiguous examples are also paid attention to. The results are quite consistent throughout and point to a cline towards a more frequent use of the speech-like clausal

conjunction *and* from the early (1753–1785) to the late periods (1850–1881). This is consistent in both female and male witnesses, and in both higher-class and lower-class witnesses. Crucially, this cline runs in parallel with the decrease in frequency of the more written-like use of the conjunction *and* as a phrasal marker. The authors suggest that this may be indicative of the process of colloquialisation as documented in other written genres in the lModE period. The formality of the setting of the courtroom discourse here is thus thought to play a role, since a more formal setting would call for a parallel tendency to favour the norms developing in written genres. A second explanation may lie in the nature of the spoken genre itself: that a speech-based text type favours the increasing use of an oral-like feature such as clausal-*and*, on the grounds that 'speech is the locus of most language change'. Hypotheses (ii) and (iii) above are also confirmed.

## Part III

In this, the final part of the volume, the focus turns to comparative and typological approaches, with British English examined alongside other varieties of English, Germanic languages, and Romance.

The first two chapters in this part take a cross-linguistic comparative approach. As with the above chapter by Los (Part II), **Olga Fischer and Hella Olbertz** discuss at length the role of analogy in relation to a specific grammaticalised construction in the early history of English. They take the premise that analogy may determine the outcomes of grammaticalisation to a great extent. Their object of study is HAVE-*to*, and its development is compared to the Spanish construction TENER-*que* (literally 'have which'), and, in particular, to the development of a possessive verb into a modal verb of obligation/necessity. The chapter is theoretically oriented in various ways. First, the authors revisit Fischer's earlier challenge to the traditional view of the role of word order change in this development in English (i.e. cause rather than result), in the sense that, as pointed out in Fischer (2015), word order may not be *the only* cause of change, although its relevance is not discounted. Second, the authors look closely at other constructions with similar formal and semantic characteristics and assess the role these neighbouring constructions may have played in the process of change, notably in terms of both semantic and structural analogy. Fischer and Olbertz contend that such analogical support from other constructions helps to establish the 'necessity' meaning acquired by HAVE-*to* in English, and by TENER-*que* in Spanish. Third, frequency is of great importance, and both languages shared the potential for analogical change

in that a lexical item expressing 'need' was frequently associated with the developing Aux-V construction, bringing the necessity meaning to the context. Furthermore, the traditional scenario of the process of grammaticalisation is replaced by one which goes beyond the unidirectional pathway from functional change to syntactic surface change, so that it works bidirectionally, and in addition is affected by synchronic internal (grammar) and external (socio-cultural) conditions co-determining speakers' way of processing their utterances.

Regarding the pathway of English HAVE-*to*, the authors summarise their account of how various structures contributed to this development, with supporting quantitative evidence to show the importance specifically of the structures involving the noun *nede* 'need' and its adverbial counterpart *nede(s)*. Synchronically neighbouring constructions are seen to have shared formal and semantic features with each other, and by means of analogical processes they 'co-determined the formal and functional development of HAVE+*to* into a semi-modal auxiliary expressing external necessity', rather than, for instance, expressing futurity. The grammaticalisation process of Spanish TENER-*que* involves some different analogical circumstances, yet it resembles English HAVE-*to* to a great extent. Fischer and Olbertz survey the history of HAVE-*to* and TENER-*que* and their variant constructions, and describe similarities and differences in the developments. In order to enrich the comparative syntactic account of the constructions in English and Spanish, the authors briefly address the asymmetry with Dutch and German, two languages with different pathways. Both of these have what is called the weak possessive construction with potential for the rise of a necessity meaning, yet only in certain contexts. Overall, this chapter makes an important contribution to the field in that it highlights the determinants of grammaticalisation phenomena and the role played by analogy in morphosyntactic developments.

**Kersti Börjars and Nigel Vincent** also present a cross-linguistic analysis, this time involving Germanic languages and looking at the development of what they label WILL-verbs. Empirical evidence is drawn from English, Danish, Dutch, Icelandic, and Swedish, all of which have WILL-verbs which can be traced back to the Proto-Indo-European root *wel-* 'want, wish'. The authors' aim is not to provide a detailed historical account of each of these languages, but to trace global patterns and to compare developments across four historical trajectories. The authors diverge from the difficult question of *why* language change occurs in some environments and not others and instead offer insight into *what* causes items to change in some environments but not in others (see also Miura this volume). This set

of verbs offers 'fertile ground' for this investigation, given that in some of these languages the original lexical meaning is largely preserved, in some it has been lost and has developed into modal or temporal meanings, and in others it exists at an intermediate stage. The authors propose in particular that developments occur as a consequence of interaction between changes in both form and function, but note that change to form and function may happen at different rates, and that these two dimensions may interact in ways which are difficult to model.

The chapter opens with a detailed description of the formal and structural properties of the different WILL-verbs, specifically of the categorial properties of the verbs themselves and those of their complements. Börjars and Vincent conclude that, diachronically, WILL is quite similar to lexical verbs in terms of form distinctions across Danish, Dutch, Icelandic, and Swedish. In terms of structure, there is also little change historically in these four languages, while English has been affected by considerable structural developments over time. The authors discuss semantic properties in some detail, proposing a revision of the traditional semantic pathway in grammaticalisation: Desire > Willingness > Intention > Prediction. They argue that the cline should be reconceptualised as a cline from Desire to Prediction with 'a bifurcating diachronic route' for Intention and Willingness instead of a single trajectory; in particular, mapping the historical development of Germanic languages against the linear trajectory singles out 'willingness' as a distinct feature, interpersonal contexts serving as the triggering factor. The essence of the chapter lies in the authors' attempt to model the observed micro-steps of change within the theoretical framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG). They consider this approach to be appropriate because it allows for shifts in form and for changes in meaning independently of each other, and also for domains to change at different paces in different languages. The account presented by Börjars and Vincent addresses relevant issues for the cline from Desire to Intention to Prediction, such as the role of Independently Referring Expression, Anaphoric Subject Pronoun, (Quasi-obligatory) Anaphoric Control, Functional Control, and Raising. In conclusion, the authors emphasise the importance of considering smaller intermediate steps in studying semantic clines, and illustrate this with a more fine-grained comparative analysis of English and Danish.

The two remaining chapters in Part III present comparative studies dealing with syntactic variation and change in different varieties of

English. The research described in **Benedikt Heller and Benedikt Szmrecsanyi** nicely complements Payne's study (Part I) on genitive variation, this time offering a large-scale, synchronic, and comparative analysis of probabilistic genitive grammars in nine different varieties of English from around the world. Syntactic variation is here restricted to PDE, as documented in the *International Corpus of English* (ICE); to two variants, namely the *s*-genitive and the *of*-genitive; and to choice contexts in which the two constructions are interchangeable (i.e. excluding categorical uses of the construction), such as *the university's activities* and *the activities of the university*. The framework is Probabilistic Grammar, enriched by an understanding of World Englishes, with the aim of exploring variability in the hidden – though cognitively 'real' – probabilistic constraints that fuel variation within and across speech communities. The questions motivating the research here are to which extent varieties of English have different grammars for genitive choice, and what probabilistic constraints tend to make a difference across the varieties. Like other work in Part III, this chapter not only provides insights into syntactic variation but also considers what syntactic theory can add to our understanding of cognitive, sociolinguistic, and grammatical processes.

Methodologically, Heller and Szmrecsanyi present a highly sophisticated variationist method of analysis. This is based, on the one hand, on rich annotation comprising multiple conditioning factors previously identified in the literature: possessor animacy, constituent length (of both the possessor and the possessum), final sibilancy, information status of the possessor head (including givenness, thematicity, and overall frequency), and lexical density. On the other hand, the multifactorial analysis is plotted on a conditional inference tree, which reveals the extent to which the varieties under study share a core grammar that is explanatory across different varieties, and the degree to which individual probabilistic constraints are stable (rather than malleable) across varieties. The nine varieties under scrutiny comprise four Inner Circle varieties – British English (*br*), Canadian English (*can*), Irish English (*ire*), and New Zealand English (*nz*); two advanced Outer Circle varieties – Jamaican English (*ja*) and Singapore English (*sin*); and three other Outer Circle varieties – Hong Kong English (*hk*), Indian English (*ind*), and Philippine English (*phi*). From the main findings, the authors first observe that the *s*-genitive variant is attested more frequently in (native) Inner Circle varieties than in the indigenised L2 varieties of the Outer Circle, with two outliers (*sin*, *hk*). This is explained in relation to the language acquisition mode in the outlier varieties. Second, the cross-varietal comparison between written and spoken texts points to

three different groups: some varieties show a preference for the *s*-genitive in spoken texts (*nz*, *can*, *ire*, *sin*); some document a lower frequency of this variant in the spoken medium (*phi*, *hk*); and some others display no particular difference for this extralinguistic factor (*br*, *ja*). Third, the linguistic constraints on syntactic variation for the genitive alternation display the expected effects. The multifactorial mapping of the linguistic factors points to the relevance of possessor animacy, constituent length, and final sibilancy. Finally, two main groups of varieties are distinguished: *br*, *ind*, *ja*, and *phi* vs. *can*, *hk*, *ire*, *nz*, and *sin*.

The final chapter in Part III is also concerned with national varieties of English, this time focusing on American English and British English, and attending not only to synchronic variation but also to diachronic developments since the early nineteenth century. Taking as a starting point Edgar Schneider's 'Dynamic Model' for the emergence of new varieties of English, **Christian Mair** aims to pinpoint the chronology of a number of standardisation processes in American and British English. Specifically, he is concerned with Phase 4 *endonormative stabilisation*, dating between 1828/1848 and 1898, and Phase 5 *differentiation*, dating from 1898, in order to assess the alleged claim that British and American English diverged in the nineteenth century, and that the former has undergone a certain level of Americanisation during the twentieth century. Mair's approach is enlightening in that it goes beyond the one traditionally taken in the literature on differences in pronunciation and vocabulary: he explores the history of various linguistic features at the level of orthographic, morpholexical, and syntactic variation, the last in greatest detail. This new perspective, moreover, is strengthened by means of an integrative approach in which the author combines close philological scrutiny of individual examples with statistical evidence from large-scale and smaller corpora.

Three variables are examined with regard to orthographic standardisation. First, the use of *-or* for *-our* in American English (e.g. *color/colour*) is taken to illustrate endonormative stabilisation because of its rapid integration into the national variety at the expense of the British *-our* variant, in particular during the decades of the 1830s to 1850s. Further spelling phenomena investigated include the *-er* vs. *-re* spellings (e.g. *center/centre*) and the word-final single consonant in unstressed syllables before vowels, as in *traveler* and *worshiping*. The two morpholexical variants under consideration are the preference in American English for *toward* vs. British English preference for *towards*, and the past participle *gotten* vs. *got*. The trend favouring *toward* in American English is apparent from the late 1890s, which fits nicely with Schneider's chronology of Phase 4 and

Phase 5. The distributional patterns of *towards/toward* in British English do not show change during the nineteenth century, and the Americanisation in favour of *toward* is only notable from the 1960s. The account for *gotten* and *got* is more complex. Mair argues that the perception of *gotten* as a long-established Americanism is in fact a misperception, possibly resulting from the salience of the form to British English ears, historically accustomed to a preference for the form *got*. Syntactic variation between the two national varieties is studied with regard to complementation patterns of the verbs *help* and *prevent*. Regarding the latter, the *from*-less construction (e.g. *it was necessary to distract Jones's mind in this way to prevent him killing himself*) continued to increase in frequency in British English, as it had done in both varieties during the nineteenth century, while it decreased in American English to the verge of becoming obsolete. The analysis of the four complementation patterns with *help* – *help* (+NP) (+*to*) + infinitive – revisits Mair's (2002) findings that the regional contrast observed in data from 1961, in which American English shows a preference for the bare infinitive pattern and British English for the *to*-infinitive pattern, had almost levelled out in the 1991/1992 data, so that British English now also prefers bare infinitives. The claim here is that this is not a straightforward case of Americanisation, but rather that grammaticalisation and the *horror aequi* factor (i.e. the avoidance of the construction *to help* + *to*-infinitive, e.g. *I was Calld up at 5 to help dress John*) play a crucial role in the increasing frequency of bare infinitives in both varieties.

This discussion above has outlined the studies contained in this volume. The range reflects the breadth of research currently being undertaken on English syntax. It suggests that there is no single approach currently driving research in the syntax of the English language, but we hope that the depth and diversity of the research presented in this volume provide an apt and vivid illustration of what Barbara Strang (1970: xv) has called 'the inexhaustible richness and variety of the subject'.