

Historical Linguistics 2007

For more than three decades, the International Conference on Historical Linguistics (ICHL) has been characterized by diversity, both in terms of the theoretical frameworks used by its researchers and the wide variety of languages that are analyzed. ICHL 18, which took place at the Université du Québec à Montréal in August 2007, was no exception to the continuation of this tradition. The articles in the present volume encompass many different approaches and a wide range of theories, including grammaticalization, generative approaches to linguistic change and variation, reanalysis, the use of analogy, and the interplay between internal and external factors. The volume is divided into four sections, dealing with phonology, with syntax, morphology, and semantics, with external factors in linguistic change, and with tools and methodologies. This way, this volume aims to be a reflection of the diverse trends in current historical linguistic study.



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Monique Dufresne, Fernande Dupuis and Etleva Vocaj (eds.)

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on Historical Linguistics, Montreal, 6–11 August 2007*

HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS 2007

SELECTED PAPERS FROM

THE 18TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS,
MONTREAL, 6 – 11 AUGUST 2007

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Table of contents

Foreword & acknowledgements	ix
Introduction	1
PART I. Phonology	
Middle English vowel length in French loanwords <i>Ashley L. Burnett</i>	9
Dental fricatives and stops in Germanic: Deriving diachronic processes from synchronic variation <i>Bridget Smith</i>	19
Dialect variation and the Dutch diminutive: The role of prosodic templates <i>Laura Catharine Smith</i>	37
PART II. Morphology, syntax and semantics	
On the disappearance of genitive types in Middle English: Objective genitives with nouns of love and fear and the nature of syntactic change <i>Cynthia L. Allen</i>	49
An asymmetric view on stage II in Jespersen's cycle in the West Germanic languages <i>Anne Breitbarth</i>	61
Temporal reference and grammaticalization in the Spanish perfect (ive) <i>Mary T. Copple</i>	73
(Un)-interpretable features and grammaticalization <i>Viviane Deprez</i>	83
Imperative morphology in diachrony evidence from the Romance languages <i>Martin Maiden, Andrew Swearingen & Paul O'Neill</i>	99
VO vs V(...)O en Français <i>Christiane Marchello-Nizia</i>	109

On the development of Recipient passives in DO languages: A case study <i>Chantal Melis & Marcela Flores</i>	123
The emergence of DP in the history of English: The role of the mysterious genitive <i>Fuyo Osawa</i>	135
A diachronic view of Psychological verbs with Dative Experiencers in Spanish and Romanian <i>María Luisa Rivero & Constanta Rodica Diaconescu</i>	149
On the loss of the masculine genitive plural in Cypriot Greek: Language contact or internal evolution? <i>Ioanna Sitaridou & Marina Terkourafi</i>	161
The rise of peripheral modifiers in the noun phrase <i>Freek Van de Velde</i>	175
Wild variation, random patterns, and uncertain data <i>Dieter Wanner</i>	185
PART III. Sociolinguistics and dialectology	
Le changement linguistique dans la langue orale selon deux recherches sur le terrain séparées d'un siècle <i>Montserrat Adam-Aulinas</i>	197
Patrons sociolinguistiques chez trois générations de locuteurs acadiens <i>Louise Beaulieu & Wladyslaw Cichocki</i>	211
Change of functions of the first person pronouns in Chinese <i>Vicky Tzuyin Lai & Zygmunt Frajzyngier</i>	223
Vinderup in real time: A showcase of dialect levelling <i>Signe Wedel Schønning & Inge Lise Pedersen</i>	233
Variation in real time: A case of sound change in Catalan <i>Orland Verdu</i>	245
PART IV. Tools and methodology	
UNIDIA: A database for deriving diachronic universals <i>Mahé Ben Hamed & Sébastien Flavier</i>	259
Visualization, validation and seriation: Application to a corpus of medieval texts <i>Fernande Dupuis & Ludovic Lebart</i>	269

Quantifying linguistic changes: Experiments in Norwegian language history <i>Helge Sandøy</i>	285
Historical core vocabulary: Spring and/or anchor: On tendencies and mechanisms of language evolution <i>Valentyna Skybina & Iryna Galutskikh</i>	295
Index of languages and terms	307
Index of subjects and terms	309

Foreword & acknowledgements

The XVIIIth International Conference on Historical Linguistics (ICHL XVIII) was held at the University du Québec à Montréal, 06–11 August 2007. The conference hosted more than 330 scholars from 35 different countries. The Organizing Committee, consisting of the undersigned and a large number of local assistants and advisors in addition to those offering advice from the universities of Ottawa, Wisconsin, Oxford, Copenhagen, among others, was delighted that so many linguists were able to participate.

Among the members of the Scientific Committee we would like to acknowledge the support of David Heap, University of Western Ontario; Sophie Prévost, LATTICE CNRS, École Normale Supérieure; Anne Rochette, Université du Québec à Montréal; Lisa Travis, McGill University; Ioanna Sitaridou, University of Cambridge; Daniel Valois, Université de Montréal; and François Daoust, Université du Québec à Montréal.

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The XVIIIth International Conference on Historical Linguistics also hosted the numerous workshops listed below. We would like to express our sincere thanks to their convenors: *Theoretical Historical Linguistics*: Bert Vaux, University of Cambridge; *Language Change in Real Time*: Frans Gregersen, University of Copenhagen, Anita Berit Hansen, University of Copenhagen, Hélène Blondeau, University of Florida; *Corpora and Computational Tools*: Fernande Dupuis, Université du Québec à Montréal; *Origins of Germanic*: Kurt Braunmüller, University of Hamburg, Theo Vennemann, University of Munich; *Towards realistic models of contact-induced change*: *Mapping psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors*: Ioanna Sitaridou, University of Cambridge, Marina Terkourafi, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; *Diachronic Semantics and Pragmatics*: Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen, University of Copenhagen/University of Manchester, Jacqueline Visconti,

University of Genoa; *Historical Grammar and Spanish Dialectology*: David Heap, University of Western Ontario, Enrique Pato Maldonado, Université de Montréal; *Constructions grammaticales et ordre des mots : évolution en français*: Sophie Prévost, LATITCE/CNRS, École Normale Supérieure; *The Genesis of Creole Languages*: Claire Lefebvre, Université du Québec à Montréal; *Quantitative Approaches to Comparative Linguistics*: Joseph Salmons, University of Wisconsin, Sheila Embleton, York University; *The Theory of Metatypy (East Asian Languages)*: James M. Unger, Ohio State University, John Whitman, Cornell University; *Alternative Language Histories from the mid 18th century onwards: A view 'from below'*: France Martineau, Université d'Ottawa; *Language Change*: Monique Dufresne, Queen's University.

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We are additionally grateful to all the anonymous reviewers who helped us during the selection process for the Conference and in evaluating the papers submitted for publication in this volume. We thank Dr. E.F.K. Koerner, the series editor of 'Current Issues in Linguistic Theory', and his various advisors and commentators on individual articles. We also thank Simon Larochelle-Robillard, Université du Québec à Montréal, Gretchen McCulloch, Queen's University, Tobin Skinner, McGill University, and Michelle Troberg, University of Toronto, for their help in editing, formatting, and proofreading the manuscript; and Anke de Looper and her colleagues at John Benjamins for seeing the volume through production.

The Editors hope that, with all of the advice and support they received before, during and after the Conference and, especially, in the process of bringing the present volume of selected papers together, the final result will adequately reflect what was said and done at this important scholarly meeting.

Monique Dufresne
Fernande Dupuis
Étleva Vocaj

Montréal, Québec and Kingston, Ontario
June 2009

Introduction

For more than three decades, the International Conference on Historical Linguistics (ICHL) has been characterized by diversity, both in terms of the many theoretical backgrounds of its researchers and by the wide variety of languages that are analyzed. ICHL 18, which took place at the Université du Québec à Montréal in August 2007, was no exception to the continuation of this tradition. This was reflected in the numerous workshops that were held during the conference in addition to the general programme:¹ both the sheer number and breadth of topics demonstrated the vitality of the field of research that historical linguistics has become since the first such international meeting was held in Edinburgh in 1973.

ICHL has been the primary international forum for researchers in the field to share their work/findings with others and to discuss the state of knowledge in their areas of interest. Not only does this include the core presentations concerning the explanation of language change, but it has also gradually grown to welcome researchers in sociolinguistics whose contributions bring new perspectives to the domain. The constant broadening of the subject in this area of linguistics is also shown by the presence of researchers interested in creoles, as these languages of more recent origin shed light on the birth and grammatical development of language. This includes the growing number of researchers who use state of the art technology in their analyses deriving insights from the ability to manipulate ever-larger amounts of data. These recent methodologies are explored in Section 4 of the present volume.

As this volume aims to be first and foremost a reflection of the diverse trends in current historical linguistic study, it does not attempt to provide any sort of theoretical orientation or unifying theme. It is therefore not surprising that the articles in the volume encompass many different approaches and a wide range of theories, including grammaticalization, generative approaches to linguistic change and variation, reanalysis, the use of analogy, and the interplay between internal and external factors.

Part I is devoted to articles on phonology. It might seem surprising that there are only three articles in this section; however, while it would have been possible to include in this category three other articles that also discuss phonological issues, we decided to place them under sociolinguistics given that their analyses were

1. See the list we provided in the Foreword.

based primarily on external factors. In fact, given the increasing prominence of this kind of approach within historical linguistics in recent years, we have elected to place under sociolinguistics all articles that propose an analysis based on external factors, regardless of whether they may have fit under another category. The papers in this first section address problems such as prosodic factors, syllabic templates, and the role of distinctive features in linguistic change. Expanding on the model whereby the cut of a syllable determines vowel length, Ashley L. Burnett argues that vowel length in Medieval French loanwords was determined primarily by the reanalysis of syllables within the syllable cut system of Middle English. As a second factor, she calls attention to how the presence of long vowels in French induces smooth cuts. Bridget Smith shows how the dental fricatives produced by American English speakers are subject to variation in voicing based on their phonetic environment. The results of her study illustrate how low-level variation can provide insight into past sound changes. In Dutch, suggests Laura Catherine Smith, the prosodic shape of the diminutive stem determines whether or not nouns ending in sonorants are followed by schwa. In her paper, she develops a disyllabic template to explain the changes in the use of schwa in these stems from Early Germanic to Modern Dutch, with further evidence from dialectal variation.

The second part of this volume is comprised of articles on syntax, morphology, and semantics. Topics discussed under syntax include word order, typology, and the role of functional categories in grammatical change (clitics, determiner phrase (DP) structure, pronominal systems and negation), while aspects of verbal morphology, case systems, and passives are important issues addressed at the interface between syntax, morphology, and semantics. To begin with, let us recall that ever since the publication of the seminal Hopper & Traugott book in 1993, researchers of various theoretical persuasions have been using the concept of grammaticalization to account for linguistic change. Two important articles in this section, by Christiane Marchello-Nizia and Viviane Desprez, although written from different backgrounds, both incorporate this concept. Marchello-Nizia presents a detailed study of grammaticalization within the verb phrase, where the development of cohesion between the verb and its object resulted in the establishment of strict SVO order in French. To accomplish this, she outlines the progression from Old French word order, where both subject and object are located after the verb, to the modern French SVO word order. Desprez, on the other hand, develops an analysis of the grammaticalization of grammatical features within the context of minimalist grammar (Chomsky 2000). She proposes a formal model of grammaticalization and shows how it explains the diverse distribution of determiners in French based Creoles (FBC). The core of her proposal takes grammaticalization to encode a change in the *interpretability* of one or more features of a lexical item. Based on a detailed study of their syntactic and semantic properties, Desprez thus demonstrates how her model explains the striking meaning-based ordering variations of

FBC determiners on the basis of interpretability distinctions in their number and person features.

A further three articles rely on the concept of grammaticalization as an explanation for language change. From the perspective of the West Germanic languages, Anne Breitbarth challenges any analysis of negation relying strictly on Jespersen's Cycle. She argues that the old preverbal marker and the new 'symmetric' bipartite negation markers in Jespersen's Cycle must be functionally differentiated at stage II in these languages and therefore proposes an 'asymmetric' interpretation of stage II. She thus proposes grammaticalization, implying the expression of negation to non-affirmative polarity, in order to explain this reanalysis. She suggests a reanalysis implying the expression of negation to non-affirmative polarity of the preverbal marker as the lexicalisation of the head of a high polarity projection. Mary T. Copple provides evidence that in certain varieties of Peninsular Spanish, the Present Perfect (PP) is grammaticalizing into a perfective, thereby expanding into new usage contexts previously occupied by the preterite. Her results provide new insight as to the grammaticalization of the PP over time. In their work on passives of Spanish ditransitive verbs, Chantal Melis & Marcela Flore investigate why certain double object languages develop a recipient passive, since this contradicts the typological tendency whereby theme passives are associated with double object languages, and recipient passives with primary object languages. Their study verifies that word order strategies take precedence over other coding properties in passivization.

This section also includes three articles on the loss of case markers. In her corpus-based investigation of nouns of emotion in which the stimulus of emotion is a pre-nominal genitive, Cynthia L. Allen shows that this construction was obsolete by the end of Middle English. She highlights the necessary role of reduced evidence available to language learners while they are constructing grammars of linguistic change. Contrary to the accepted view that the genitive has been the only English morphological case to survive to the present day, Fuyo Osawa argues that the genitive case lost its original argumental function earlier than other morphological cases, and that this contributed to the emergence of DPs in English. He shows that the shift from morphology to syntax is not anomalous and that this triggers diachronic change. Ioanna Sitaridou & Marina Terkourafi investigate a change in the case system of Cypriot Greek whereby the accusative wins out over the genitive: the loss of the genitive plural from the masculine nominal paradigm. They suggest analogy as an explanation of reconciling internal evolution and external factors under a more comprehensive view.

Within the framework of generative grammar, María Luisa Rivero & Constanța Rodica Diaconescu offer a diachronic view of psychological constructions with dative experiencers in Spanish and Romanian. Their analysis supports the constructionist approach developed by Borer (2005) and others, according

to which lexical items have no formal properties. This implies that the semantic roles of different arguments are the result of different functional projections of the clauses into which the lexical items are inserted. Although Rivero & Diaconescu, like Deprez, base their analysis on features, they are unlike the latter in that they attribute interlinguistic or diachronic variation to differences in the way a given language, or stage of a language, makes use of the various functional projections. Rivero & Diaconescu thus use the *Aspect* and *Tense* projections as excellent evidence for both the parallel and diverging changes that these two languages have undergone with regard to three different dative experiencer constructions.

This section includes two additional articles of generative obedience: one by Freek Van de Velde on the leftmost edge of the DP and another by Dieter Wanner on the evolution of Spanish clitics. Van de Velde provides an analysis whereby the template of the noun phrase (NP/DP) in Dutch and English contains a slot for peripheral modifiers, which precedes the determiner slot and hosts adverbial modifiers. He argues that this slot is of recent date, and that it is steadily on the increase, both on the type and token levels. Furthermore, Van de Velde suggests that this type of analogous development is based on structures that have existed in both languages since the Middle Ages, structures where adverbs, or a particle or adverb that indicates the focus, are found in a predeterminer position. Dieter Wanner, whose name is often associated with the study of the development of clitics in Romance languages, compares an analysis relying on analogy with an interpretation based on the unreliability of documentation to account for the sequencing between clitics and the infinitive in the evolution of Spanish. He argues that analogical modeling of unruly data implies a diminished role for strict regularity and that it provides a much better fit with the data than do standard rules.

The study by Martin Maiden, Andrew Swearingen & Paul O'Neill on the formation of different imperative forms in Romance languages attempts to explain the various forms of this type of conjugation. Their article presents a detailed description of the various processes involved, that is, suppletion, analogy, borrowing, interjection, and so on, and tries to explain why the imperative forms show these processes. Following this description, the authors conclude that detailed historical and comparative study can explain the variation found among Romance imperative forms.

The third part of this volume contains the five articles that rely on external factors to explain linguistic change. Three of them are based on concepts that have been developed by sociolinguists, most notably William Labov, over the past forty years. The study by Louise Beaulieu & Wladyslaw Cichocki on Canadian French in northern New Brunswick addresses Labov's 'transmission problem': the fact that children's language differs from their parents', and yet these differences develop in the same direction over several generations. To reflect this change, the authors

rely on both external factors, such as social networks, as well as internal factors, including changes in the root word. The study of these factors allows Beaulieu & Cichocki to conclude that, with respect to the transmission problem, the acquisition of social constraints does not necessarily take precedence over the acquisition of linguistic constraints, and vice versa. Rather, this transmission relies on much more complex factors. Signe Wedel-Schöning & Inge Lise Pedersen discuss the disappearance of dialects in the Vinderup region of Denmark and develop an analysis based on two types of study. The first, a 'panel study', compares the use of the local dialect among four different speakers, two male and two female, at two different points in time, in 1978 and 2006. The second, a 'trend study', compares dialect use among the four informants who use the most dialect features in each of two different cohorts: one born in 1964 and recorded in 1978, and the other born in 1991 and recorded in 2006. Through these studies, the authors show that use of this dialect is clearly diminishing among young people. However, they note that the dialect continues to be used within a sub-group of young people who identify strongly with the traditional values of the region. The third and final paper drawing on Labov's work was written by Orland Verdú, who analyzes real-time language variation with a focus on a sound change that is currently taking place in Catalan: the devoicing of the voiced palatal affricate. Using data from a period stretching from twenty-two years ago to the present day, he aims to determine if the variable rule is a cyclic phenomenon or if local variability in sound change has progressed.

As for the other two articles in this section, one relies upon the concept of 'typological space', while the other uses a functionalist-style analysis to account for language change. The study by Montserrat Adam-Aulinas covers ten variables of the Catalan verbal paradigm through the comparison of two corpora: the first prepared by Alcover between 1906 and 1928 and the second compiled by Adam-Aulinas herself between 1999 and 2000. The study that she develops is based on the concept of spatial typology, that is, on a dynamic or non-static approach to space, similar to that of the mathematical theory of graphs. Vicky Tsuyin Lai & Zygmunt Frajzyngier address the use of pronouns in modern Mandarin. Based on a detailed study of the data, the authors propose a pragmatic or functionalist explanation for the loss of certain pronominal forms in modern Mandarin and show that various social changes have motivated the reduction of the first person pronouns from Classical Chinese to Mandarin. Their findings imply that the lack of functional motivation for a form leads to its loss.

The last part of the volume, *Tools and Methodology*, covers topics including computational visualization of data, sophisticated tools to provide statistical inferences, models for measuring the extent of linguistic change, and mechanisms to determine historical core vocabulary. In their joint paper, Mahé Ben Hamed & Sébastien Flavier introduce Diachronic Universals, a database on sound change

designed to compile reconstructed sound changes in order to account for the history of the world's languages. This new database currently contains about 3,750 sound changes for some 190 languages and offers a set of tools that allow one to explore the data based on various phonetic criteria, and to visualize the sound change distribution on a map or on a language tree. Fernande Dupuis and Ludovic Lebart use correspondence analysis in their paper on Old French to produce planar maps highlighting the associations between graphemes and texts, and to re-order the rows and columns of a table of correspondence. They stress the role played by sophisticated techniques in allowing for valid statistical inferences in contexts where other methods fail. Helge Sandoy proposes a way to provide a typology of social communities and a model for measuring the extent of linguistic change. Her tentative calculations are primarily illustrated by data from 20th century Norwegian dialects. In their paper on the tendencies and mechanisms of language evolution, Valentina Skybina & Iryna Galutskikh argue that the significance of the historical core vocabulary as the pivotal factor of evolution results from its structural, functional, and semantic centrality, which has evolved throughout the history of language.

In summary, the editors are of the view that this collection of articles reflects a diversity of theoretical approaches that can be usefully implemented to address a broad range of topics/problems in the field of historical linguistics.

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PART I

Phonology

On the disappearance of genitive types in Middle English

Objective genitives with nouns of love and fear
and the nature of syntactic change

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This paper looks at the disappearance of the 'objective' genitive with nouns of emotion in which the Stimulus of Emotion is a prenominal genitive, e.g. *godes lufu* 'God's love' in the meaning of someone's love towards God. A systematic corpus-based investigation involving three nouns of emotion indicates that this construction was obsolescent by the end of the Middle English period. I suggest that the favouring of *of* phrases over genitives reduced the evidence available to language learners necessary to construct grammars incorporating a marked assignment of semantic to grammatical roles.

1. Introduction: Obsolete genitives

The genitive case was used in Old English (OE) in a number of ways which disappeared in the Middle English (ME) period. These now-obsolete genitives include genitive objects of verbs and postnominal genitives (e.g. *sumu godes* 'God's son') as well as prenominal ones in particular functions. There are many questions of interest surrounding the loss of these genitive types. For example, might all these changes have been triggered by a single precipitating event or perhaps the combination of two events, such as loss of inflection combined with a shift in the ordering of heads and complements? Questions about what caused the loss of the obsolete genitives can only be answered when we have a more adequate empirical base for testing hypotheses than is as yet available. The primary purpose of this paper is to provide a small contribution towards remedying one particular deficiency in this empirical base by presenting the results of a very limited but systematic study into the decline of a particular type of prenominal genitive with specific head nouns.

In this paper, I will use the term 'genitive' to refer to phrases in the genitive case in OE and their reflexes in Modern English, prenominal possessives with *'s*,

and will use 'of phrase' to refer to expressions like *the king of France, the roof of the house*, etc. This paper focuses on the loss of one functional type of prenominal genitive, namely 'objective' genitives in which the head noun refers to an emotion such as LOVE or DREAD. After presenting the results of my empirical study, I will discuss some ideas which either have been or might be proposed to explain the loss of objective genitives, with particular reference to how well these hypotheses account for the relative timing of the decline of this genitive type and other morphosyntactic changes which might be thought to be related to this change.

1.1 Objective genitives with nouns of emotion

It is traditional to refer to expressions such as *the president's assassination* or *John's murderer*, in which the genitive is equivalent to the object of the verb corresponding to the nominalisation, as 'objective' genitives. In Modern English, objective genitives are not possible with nouns of emotion or cognition such as LOVE and KNOWLEDGE. Modern English is unlike many other Indo-European languages in this respect, e.g. *la sua percezione* 'the perception of it' (=problem, etc.) (lit. 'the its perception') is possible in Italian (Longobardi 2001:570). A change has taken place in English here, since objective genitives were freely possible with such nouns in OE.¹

- (1) a. *þurh ðines feondes lufe þu bist*
 through thy.GEN.SG enemy.GEN.SG love thou art
Godes freond
 God.GEN.SG friend
 "through the love of your enemy, you are the friend of God"
- b. *for his ege*
 for his fear
 "on account of the fear of him"

In OE, expressions such as *godes lufu* were completely ambiguous between the love which God feels (for someone) and the love which someone feels for God. As I will point out below, the restrictions on these genitives seem to be related to semantic roles (Experiencer vs. Stimulus of Emotion) rather than to grammatical ones. Because genitives like those of (1) are commonly treated as a movement of

1. Examples are cited as they appear in the corpora detailed in Section 2. I have glossed morphemes only where I judge that it could be useful to the reader.

an object to a possessive position, however, I shall continue to refer to them as 'objective'.²

2. The history of objective genitives of fear and love

My pilot study into the objective genitives of emotion was limited to two nouns in both Old and Middle English, namely LUFU 'love' and EGE 'fear'. The noun DREAD 'fear, dread' first appears in the early ME period, and so I added it to my searches of the ME material.³ I chose these nouns as commonly occurring nouns which are good representatives of the sort of noun of emotion which does not permit an objective genitive in Present Day English (PDE).

2.1 From early to late OE

The first thing to do is to look at the behaviour of the objective genitives in OE. Were they usually prenominal or postnominal? This question is important because if objective genitives were normally postnominal in OE, the general replacement of postnominal genitives by *of* phrases in ME might have played an important role in their loss (as Fischer & van der Wurff 2006:119 seem to suggest). The answer to the question depends on whether we lump all prenominal objective genitives together or separate the phrasal genitives, which generally had the option of occurring prenominally or postnominally, from the genitives consisting of a single word (a pronoun or proper noun), since these were nearly always placed in the prenominal position. Table 1 presents some figures based on searches I made in selected texts in the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose* (YCOE). In this table, which excludes genitives consisting of a single word, I have divided the texts into Early West Saxon texts and Late West Saxon texts, restricting myself to texts which belong firmly in one period or the other.

2. So, for example, Anderson (1978) assumes that 'possessivization' can move an object to prenominal position, and more recently Longobardi (2001) assumes that 'internal' arguments (objects) can move to an 'external' position (that is, for English, the prenominal possessive position) if a subject is not present to fill this position.

3. EGE is related to modern AWE but awe is a Scandinavian form of the word. AWE and DREAD have both undergone some semantic shifting, being used in many situations in earlier English where we would use FEAR. The first attestation in the *Oxford English Dictionary* of FEAR to refer to an emotion (rather than a frightening event) is from c1175, and the word is not found in objective genitives in the PPCME2.

Table 1. Objective genitives with LUFU and EGE in Early and Late West Saxon texts

	PrenomNP	Postnom	Total	%Postnom	%Prenom
Early West Saxon					
ASC	0	0	2	-	-
Oros	5	0	5	0	100
CuraPref	0	0	0	-	-
CuraC	0	1	1	-	-
CP	7	17	24	71	29
EWS	12	18	30	60	40
Late West Saxon					
CHI	2	4	6	-	-
CHII	3	3	6	-	-
BenRul	0	2	2	-	-
Wulf	1	1	2	-	-
LWS	6	10	16	62	38

Looking at this table, we see that the phrasal objective genitives were more likely to be postnominal than prenominal in both early and late West Saxon. However, prenominal position was by no means rare and there was no general shift towards postnominal genitives in Late West Saxon.⁴ Furthermore, if we add in the numbers for the objective genitives consisting of a single noun in OE, the answer to our question must be that objective genitives were overwhelmingly prenominal overall in OE; I counted 80 examples of a single N in a prenominal objective genitive in my Late West Saxon texts, and the prenominal number would become much higher if pronouns were added. Given the frequent use of prenominal objective genitives in late OE, we cannot appeal to the general loss of postnominal genitives as the culprit in the replacement of objective genitives by *of*-phrases.

2.2 Middle English

We turn now to the loss of these objective genitives. It can be said first of all that objective genitives do not in fact disappear with these nouns quite completely during the ME period. In Table 2, I present some results of my searches in the

4. There was a general shift away from postnominal genitives between early and late OE, except with partitive genitives (Mitchell 1985: §1305, Allen 2008: §3.16, etc.). The figures for the phrasal objective genitives with LUFU and BEN might suggest that this type of genitive resisted this trend to prenominal position, but they are too small for statistical significance, and at any rate the large number of objective genitives consisting of a single word shows that objective genitives were not generally associated with postnominal position in late OE.

Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English 2 (PPCME2) for 'objective' genitives. The first column is for prenominal phrasal possessors such as *the king's*, and the second is for prenominal possessors consisting of a single noun, such as *God's* (tagged N\$ by the PPCME2). The third column is for possessive pronouns (PRO\$), but here examples are so frequent in the earlier periods that I have only counted them for the last period, when they have become unusual. The fourth column is for postnominal objective genitives, but we see that these have disappeared even in the first period. This is in line with the general disappearance of all postnominal genitives except for partitive genitives by the end of the twelfth century, even in dialects which had sufficient case marking to have in theory made a postnominal genitive possible.

Table 2. Objective genitives with LUFU, EGE, and DRED in ME

	Prenom NP-POS	Prenom N\$	Prenom PRO\$	Postnom
m1 (1150-1250)	32	37	common	0
m2 (1250-1350)	1	43	common	0
m3 (1350-1420)	1	26	common	0
m4 (1420-1500)	2	3	9	0

The aim of my investigation was to discover when the objective genitive disappeared from the texts, and I did not collect data on how frequently the genitive was used relative to alternative constructions in all texts. However, the figures presented in Table 2 are sufficient to show that the objective genitive had become unusual with phrasal genitives already in the m2 period. With single nouns, objective genitives remain reasonably easy to find in the m3 period. This is also true with pronouns, which are so common in the earlier periods that I haven't given figures. So we see that objective genitives were still used in the places where prenominal genitives had always been strongly favoured, that is, with pronouns and single nouns.

It is of course the *of* phrase which is replacing the objective genitives. By the end of the twelfth century, postnominal genitives had completely disappeared, except for some partitive genitives, even in texts written in dialects in which the old case categories are maintained (although the marking of the cases has become largely optional), showing that the *of* phrase was not simply used in situations where genitive case was no longer possible but is better seen as an alternative construction to the prenominal genitive. To a certain extent, the *of* phrase was a substitute for the old postnominal genitive, but by the early thirteenth century it was also frequently used for possessives of types which had been more often found in the prenominal position in OE, such as the 'object' of the verbs of love and fear.

So in the *Vices and Virtues* of the early thirteenth century we find *for ðe loue of gode* (CMVICES1.7.65) expressing the meaning 'for the love of God'. However, although the *of* phrase has replaced (non-partitive) postnominal genitives in this text, objective genitives still remained a structural possibility, as examples such as *for godes loue* (CMVICES1.3.13) in the same meaning attest. While either construction could be used in some instances, such as this one, the variation was by no means random. Unsurprisingly, *of* phrases were especially likely to be used when the target of the emotion was phrasal, that is, where a postnominal genitive could have been used earlier. But the *of* phrase has made inroads into what used to be the (nearly) exclusive territory of prenominal genitives, as the example with a proper noun just mentioned illustrates. *Of* phrases were not common with pronouns at this time, but they are found in some texts, although a prenominal possessive pronoun is more common in those texts:

- (2) a. *For þe loue of him*
 "for the love of him" (CMANCR1W-1.II.84.1023)
 b. *þæt ha her for his loue edmodliche þolede*
 what she here for his love humbly suffered
 "...what she here humbly suffered for the love of him"
 (CMANCR1W-1.II.75.869)

Pronouns were still usually prenominal in the m1 period, but the prepositional genitive became the usual type even with pronouns in the m3 period.

It is only in the m4 period that the objective genitives become really rare.⁵ Furthermore, the few objective genitives we find are of the sort that are likely to be commonly-repeated phrases which could just be learned:⁶

- (3) a. *for oure Lordis loue*
 "for the love of our Lord" (CMEDMUND.164.24)
 b. *For thy love I lefte my contrey,*
 "For the love of you, I left my country" (CMMALORY.641.3991)

5. In addition to the texts in the PPCME2, I examined the *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* (edited by Connolly 1993), a text found in an early fifteenth century manuscript. This text, a treatise on how to come to the proper love and fear of God, has a huge number of examples of *loue of God*, etc., but I only found one example of an objective genitive (*for oure loue*), so this text with a large number of examples of the target nouns gives a similar picture to a collection of texts from the period.

6. Since possessive pronouns comprise a (small) finite list, for example, it is possible to list expressions such as *your love* with their meanings in the lexicon. With nouns and phrases, all examples follow the preposition *for*, and *for X's love* could also be listed.

3. Possible explanations

How can we explain the loss of the objective genitives of emotion? Fischer and van der Wurff (2006:119) suggest that typological harmony may have played a role. The idea is that in OE, when objects frequently preceded verbs, prenominal objective genitives were in harmony with the usual OV order. But when English shifted from OV to VO it was no longer natural for complements to precede heads. Therefore the objects of these nouns could only appear postnominally, and since postnominal genitives were no longer possible, this meant they must be the object of a preposition.

Accounts based on typological harmony are difficult to prove or disprove, and before typological harmony could be seen as playing a significant role, it would have to be established typologically that there was a correlation between OV order and objective genitives, and this does not seem to be the case. Furthermore, typological harmony would not explain why objective genitives are possible with some nouns in Modern English but not others.

Since the shift from OV to VO order does not seem to offer a satisfactory explanation, we need to look in some other direction. Within the Principles and Parameters framework, Crisma (forthcoming) outlines a diachronic account that is based on Longobardi's (2001) assumption that while German and French nominal phrases have two positions available for 'external' arguments, PDE has only one.⁷ Longobardi furthermore assumes that the 'unaffected' nouns always require the syntactic expression of their S(subject) argument, even though this may be by an empty subject. In PDE, this S blocks the appearance of an underlying O(object) in the 'external' prenominal position, since S already fills it. The languages allowing 'unaffected' objective possessives, however, have a second external slot for P(ossessor), and so an underlying O and an underlying S can be moved to an external position; that is, the O is not competing for the same slot as S. Crisma suggests that the second slot was lost in ME when N-Raising was lost from the grammar; N-Raising, along with moving the possessum higher in the sentence, had the effect of creating a new Specifier position into which arguments could be moved.

A major stumbling block for this or any other account in terms of a change in a parameter setting as a 'trigger' for the loss of the unaffected objective genitives is the gradual nature of the latter change. If a language loses N-Raising, this should mean that once the parameter-setting which made this process possible has been lost, then the constructions which are dependent on this process should become impossible, except in some fixed expressions. As I have demonstrated, however,

7. This suggestion originated with Jaeggli (1986).

the productive use of prenominal objective genitives with the nouns of love and fear did not disappear suddenly, as we would expect with the sudden change of a parameter setting. There does seem to be a substantial decrease in the now-obsolete objective genitives in the m1 period, but if we attribute this to the loss of N-Raising, we are left with no explanation for why objective genitives consisting of only a noun were still frequently used. The explanation furthermore requires us to assume that genitives such as *the love of God* have an unexpressed but syntactically present subject, while *the assassination of the president* does not, which is an assumption that many linguists would reject.

I would like to suggest that the reduction of frequency in the use of the prenominal position for the objective genitives played a crucial role in the loss of this type of genitive with the nouns of love and fear. My impression is that objective genitives of nearly all types are unusual in ME after the m1 period. It seems that *of* phrases were replacing objective genitives quite generally in ME, not just objective genitives of emotion (although I did not make a systematic study). So, for example, we find six examples of 'objective' possessives with the noun *destruction* in the m4 period. These show a pattern similar to that found with the nouns of fear and love, that is, with the three examples that do not involve a pronoun, the possessive is in the form of an *of* phrase, e.g. *the destruction of all thys realme* (CMMALORY, 41.1350). The pronominal 'objects' are prenominal possessors (including one example of *our bothes* meaning 'of both of us'). Thus if *destruction* is typical of nominalisations in general, the decline in frequency of prenominal genitives with the nouns of emotion is simply part of an overall decline in objective genitives. A regular exception is that agentive nominalisations like *my Savour* continued to be the norm at a time when *of* phrases had nearly completely replaced objective genitives with emotion words, even with pronouns. The general decline of objective genitives seems to be part of a general favouring of *of* phrases over genitives in ME. Mustanoja (1960:74–76) documents a steep decline in frequency in ME as the *of* phrase became more and more widely used. As Rosenbach (2002:184) demonstrates, however, the prenominal genitive underwent a revival around 1400. So the question really seems to be why this revival did not save the objective genitive with nouns of emotion, while the objective genitive with some other nouns survived.

I would like to suggest an explanation which takes as its starting point the widely accepted observation that some semantic roles are universally less likely to be assigned to the possessor role than others are, that is, that objective genitives with them are more marked. Variants of this assumption have been suggested in a variety of frameworks. So, for example, Longobardi (2001) assumes that the arguments of nouns such as *love* and *fear* are assigned to the same underlying syntactic position as the arguments of the corresponding verbs but that nouns have two 'external' positions, while verbs only have one. Longobardi argues for a hierarchy

of arguments within the nominal phrase, whereby P(ossessor) outranks S(ubject) in the competition for 'possessivization', while S in its turn outranks O(bject). In contrast, Rappaport (1983) argues that the restrictions on the assignment of semantic roles to the possessor grammatical role hold whether the argument in question would be the subject or the object of the corresponding verb. Rappaport uses nouns such as *amusement* and *pleasure* to illustrate this point; we can say *the children's amusement at the scarecrow*, where *children* would be the object of the corresponding verb *amuse*, while **the scarecrow's amusement of the children*, a 'subjective' genitive, is not possible. Rappaport's generalisation is that the 'Experienced' (i.e. Stimulus) cannot be assigned to the possessor role, but only to an oblique (such as an *of* phrase). The grammaticality of 'objective' genitives such as *the children's amusement* is a problem for the idea of typological harmony, but it fits in quite well with the idea that language learners require more evidence that objective genitives are possible with them. If we assume a hierarchy of semantic roles which can be assigned to the possessor function, we can hypothesise that children learning a language assume that certain semantic roles are not assigned to the grammatical role of possessor unless they hear robust evidence that they can be used in the function. Robust evidence would not be needed, however, in the case of a less marked assignment, e.g. of a Patient or Experiencer argument, to the possessor role. So the change is not to be seen as the loss of the ability of objects of verbs to be 'possessivised', but rather as the shrinking of the possessor function to its more central semantic roles. It was the popularity of the *of* phrase as an alternative to the genitive for all sorts of possessives in early ME that began this reduction in the functional domain of the genitive. With the *of* phrase the most favoured construction except in some restricted situations (proper nouns, etc.), the frequency of possessives of various types dropped to a very low level.⁸ It is reasonable to suggest that this low frequency did not prevent language learners from constructing grammars which would produce possessives with fairly unmarked semantic roles for that function such as Patient or Experiencer, so when the genitive started to increase in frequency again, we find *the king's murder* and *God's love* in the 'subjective' reading, etc. With the more marked assignments, however, the low frequency of genitives was a death blow, as it caused language learners to construct grammars without a productive process for generating the marked type, although their grammars still produced some fixed expressions such as *for godes love* (in the objective reading) for a period. As noted above, objective genitives

8. I am not suggesting that the semantic hierarchy explains why *of* phrases were generally preferred to prenominal genitives consisting of a single noun in early Middle English; this is simply a fact, the relevance of which to the objective genitives is that the overall reduction in prenominal genitives resulted in a lower frequency of objective genitives.

are only found at a low frequency in the m4 period even with nominalisations that allow them today. However, the examples that I found do not have the feel of fixed expressions the way the genitives with *love* do; for example Malory writes *to our bothes destruction* 'to the destruction of us both' (CMMALORY, 69.2343). Such examples suggest that objective genitives remained a productive construction even when they were produced with a low frequency. It is also possible that the objective genitives with agentive nouns referred to above played an important role in supplying evidence to language learners about which semantic roles could be assigned to the possessor function.

4. Conclusion

The facts I have presented are more consistent with the idea of a construction becoming disfavoured in competition with another construction, namely the *of* phrase, than with a triggering event which caused objective genitives to become impossible at some point. We can assume that when the frequency of the objective genitives with particular nouns dropped to a low enough point, language-learners stopped constructing grammars which allowed them. Although the same disavowing of the objective genitive seems to have occurred with nouns involving other semantic relationships, language learners may need less evidence for them to cause them to construct a grammar which generates them. However, this is an untested assumption at this point, and acquisitional studies on living languages are needed in order to test the idea that typologically more marked assignments of semantic roles to possessor positions are more difficult to acquire than more 'natural' assignments, such as agentive possessors.

More investigation into the history of a larger number of nouns of different semantic types is needed to get a clearer picture of the disappearance of possessive functions in ME. Categorising possessives as 'objective' or 'subjective' obscures the possibility that the restrictions are based on semantic, not grammatical, roles. My study stopped at the end of the ME period, where the story of the objective genitive with other types of nouns seems to be one of bare survival. Apparently, there is a story of revival in the Early Modern English period which awaits a corpus study.

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