Cycles and reanalysis in inherent and contact-induced changes: Against a declarative analysis of depictive manner complements

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1 Introduction

cyclic changes in syntactic history: paths that can lead to the emergence of innovative patterns again and again

prototype: the Jespersen cycle of negative elements (see e.g. Wallage 2008, van der Auwera 2009, Hoeksema 2009) – English:

(1)   ne → ne ... not → not

van Gelderen (2009) identifies various paths in this respect – different domains involved (e.g. positions, features)

one potential case: the (purported) reanalysis of *wh*-based manner adverbs into declarative complementisers

(2)   They told me [**how** the tooth fairy doesn't really exist].
          'They told me that the tooth fairy doesn't really exist.' (Legate 2010: 121)

→ question: whether the reanalysis of *how* (and German *wie*) can be supported

counterarguments so far:

- synchronic syntax (Legate 2010)
- semantics (Umbach et al. 2023)

further counterarguments:

- inherent problems of the purported reanalysis process
- syntactic parallels with regular similative clauses
- distributional parallels with complementisers deriving from verbs of saying

→ proposal: reanalysis also problematic in terms of grammaticalisation theory
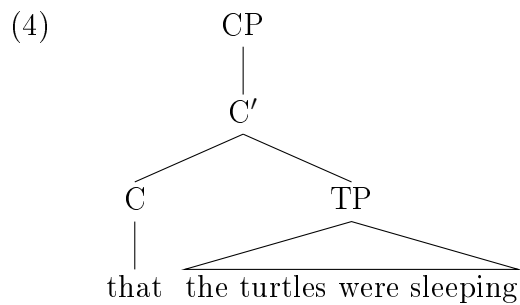
2 The problem

apparent equivalence of *how* and *that* in (2): lack of original manner interpretation associated with *how*-clauses

canonical position of *that* as a declarative complementiser in C

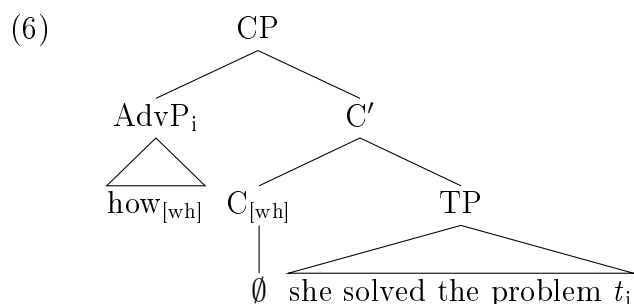(3)   He told me [$_{\text{CP}}$ **that** [$_{\text{TP}}$ the turtles were sleeping]].

structure:

(4)

```
            CP
            |
            C′
          /    \
        C        TP
        |      /    \
      that   the turtles were sleeping
```

canonical manner adverbial clause with *how*:

(5)   I don't know [$_{\text{CP}}$ **how**$_i$ [$_{\text{TP}}$ she solved the problem t_i]].

structure:

(6)

```
              CP
            /    \
        AdvP_i     C′
         /\       /   \
     how_[wh]  C_[wh]    TP
               |       /    \
               ∅    she solved the problem t_i
```

reanalysis proposed by van Gelderen (2009; 2015) for cases like (2): declarative cycle

- manner adverb reading absent

- base-generation in C rather than movement

- Feature Economy: base-generation preferred over movement

how in C – apparent structure:

(7)   They told me [$_{\text{CP}}$ **how** [$_{\text{TP}}$ the tooth fairy doesn't really exist]].

→ if so: *how* essentially equivalent to *that*

but: *that* and *how* not interchangeable in several contexts (Legate 2010):
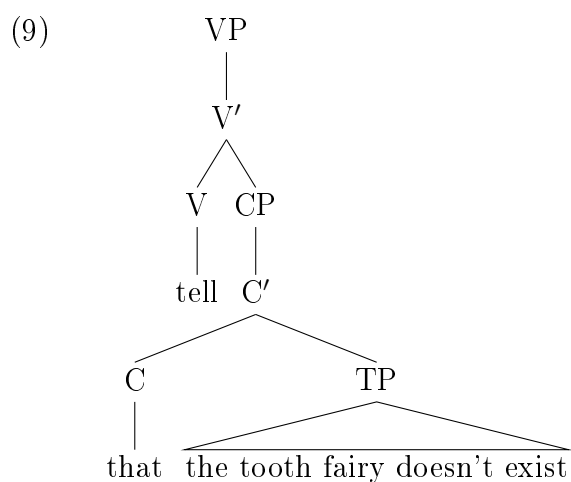
(8)   a. *It was conceded [**how** the tooth fairy doesn't exist].
          (Legate 2010: 124)

      b. It was conceded [**that** the tooth fairy doesn't exist].
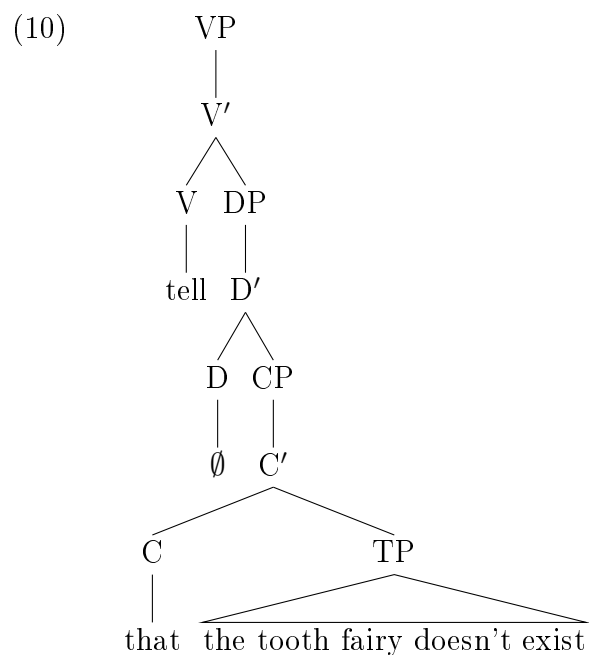   (Legate 2010: 124)

→ modified analysis:

- base-generation in C correctly predicts the lack of the manner reading (Legate 2010, Nye 2013, see also Umbach et al. 2023)

- additional DP layer in the matrix clause predicts that depictive manner clauses pattern with DPs syntactically (Legate 2010)

- congruent with the semantics: the construction presupposes the existence of some discourse referent that is specified by the complement clause (Umbach et al. 2023)

structure of a *that*-clause:

(9)

```
              VP
              |
              V′
             ╱ ╲
            V   CP
            |    |
           tell  C′
               ╱   ╲
              C      TP
              |     ╱  ╲
            that  the tooth fairy doesn't exist
```

structure of a *how*-clause (as depictive manner complement, Legate 2010: 131):

(10)

```
            VP
            |
            V′
           /  \
          V    DP
          |    |
        tell    D′
              /  \
             D    CP
             |    |
             ∅    C′
                 /    \
                C      TP
                |     /    \
              that  the tooth fairy doesn't exist
```

→ the manner depictive *how*-clause functioning as a verbal complement is an illusion

3   Cyclic changes

prototypical case of a cyclic change: the relative cycle (van Gelderen 2009)

- original relative pronoun reanalysed into a complementiser

- this reanalysis makes the [Spec,CP] position available for novel relative pronouns

change well-attested in the history of English

original relative markers in Old English (Traugott 1992, van Gelderen 2009, Ringe & Taylor 2014):

- complementiser *þe*

- *d*-pronouns

- the combination of the above options

combination:

(11) a. ac   gif we asmeagaþ þa   eadmodlican dæda **þa**   **þe** he
          but if   we consider   those humble   deeds that.F.PL.ACC REL he
          worhte, þonne ne   þincþ us þæt nan wundor
          wrought then   not seems us that no   wonder
          'But if we consider the humble deeds that he wrought, then that will not
          appear marvellous to us.' (*Blickling Homilies* p. 33)

      b. þurh   **þæt**   **þe** he on þam   gebede gehyrð
          'through that.N.ACC REL he in this.DAT prayer hears
          'through what he hears in this prayer'
          (Aethelwold, *The Benedictine Rule*, 884–885)

most frequent pattern in Old English involved the complementiser *þe* (Traugott 1992,
   Ringe & Taylor 2014)

reanalysis of *that* into a complementiser:

- *that* was the most unmarked pronoun (singular, neuter, nominative/accusative)

- disappearance of *þe*

- disappearance of the other *d*-pronouns

that attested as a complementiser on its on from Middle English onwards (see van
   Gelderen 2009):

(12)   and suggeð **feole þinges**; bi   Arðure þan kinge. // **þat** næuere nes
       and say   many things   about Arthur the king   that never   not-was
       i-wurðen
       happened
       'and say many things about King Arthur that never happened.'
       (Layamon, *Brut*, Caligula version, 11473–11474)

innovation in Middle English: appearance of *wh*-based relative pronouns (see, for in-
   stance, Mustanoja 1960, Rydén 1983, van Gelderen 2004, Gisborne & Truswell 2017,
   Bacskai-Atkari 2020; 2022)

þe → *that* change effectively completed:

- *that* replacing *þe* in all contexts

- *þe* completely lost

features:

- original phi features on *that* lost (see Bacskai-Atkari 2020)

- *that* has the same features as the earlier *þe*

$\rightarrow$ no split pattern in the form of (2) arises

conversely: the split pattern in (2) indicates that *how* does not have the same features as *that* – novel pattern has not superseded the older one

structures synonymous in certain contexts but not others – split not in the sense of complementary distribution

structural synonymy:

(13) a. [$_{VP}$ tell [$_{CP}$ that [$_{TP}$ . . .]]]
      b. [$_{VP}$ tell [$_{DP}$ $\emptyset$ [$_{CP}$ how [$_{TP}$ . . .]]]]

lexical synonymy:

(14) a. I spent my **holidays/vacation** in Amsterdam.
      b. Christmas and Easter are public **holidays**.

structural synonymy also in other contexts: Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian complementisers *da* (with a wider distribution) and *što* (restricted to factives)

(15) a. Jesam ti   rekao [**da** je   Marija orišla na odmor]?
        AUX.1SG you.DAT told   that AUX.3SG Marija gone on vacation
        'Did I tell you that Marija went on vacation?'
        (Arsenijević 2020: 341)

      b. Jesam ti   rekao [**što** je   Marija orišla na odmor]?
        AUX.1SG you.DAT told   that AUX.3SG Marija gone on vacation
        'Did I tell you that Marija went on vacation?' (it is a fact that she did)
        (Arsenijević 2020: 341)

difference in factivity (Arsenijević 2020): *što*-declaratives have referential properties and are thus similar to relative clauses (see Krapova 2010: 1266 for Bulgarian and Macedonian and Bužarovska 2009 and Browne 1986: 69 for Macedonian; see also Aboh 2005 for factives being a special kind of relative clauses)

economy: it is not expected that a single system should contain two fully grammaticalised declarative complementisers at the same time (NB process in principle possible, see also Bacskai-Atkari 2014)

$\rightarrow$ the reanalysis of *how* as a complementiser cannot be considered the completion of a declarative cycle

4 Syntactic attachment

depictive manner complements not only with English *how* but also with German *wie* – narrower distribution (Umbach et al. 2023):

(16)   a.   Frieda sah,   [**wie** Georg das   Fahrrad geschickt reparierte].
              Frieda saw.3SG how George the.N bike   skillfully repaired.3SG
              'Frieda saw how George skillfully repaired the bike.' (Umbach et al. 2023)

        b.   *Sie   erzählten mir, [**wie** die   Zahnfee   nicht wirklich existiert].
              they told.3PL me   how the.F tooth.fairy not   really   exists
              'They told me how the tooth fairy does not really exist.'
              (Umbach et al. 2023)

distribution depending on the embedding verb: possible with utterance verbs and perception verbs in English, but only with perception verbs in German (Umbach et al. 2023)

wie a complementiser also in similative and equative clauses (see Jäger 2010; 2018, Bacskai-Atkari 2018, Bacskai-Atkari 2023b):

(17)   a.   Die   Krähe ist **(so)** [**wie** die   Eule].
              the.F crow is   so   how the.F owl
              'The crow is like the owl.'

        b.   Die   Krähe ist **so** schlau [**wie** die   Eule].
              the.F crow is so clever how the.F owl
              'The crow is as clever as the owl.'

grammaticalisation in Early New High German (see Jäger 2010; 2018) – loss of original manner adverb reading

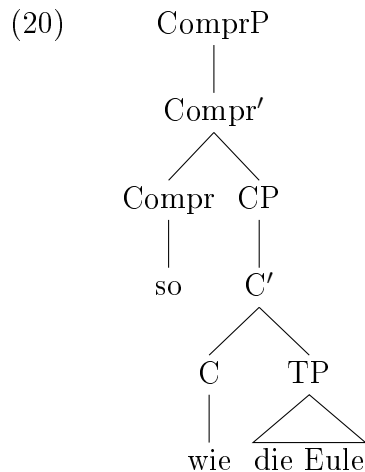matrix *so*: bleaching of the original manner deictic meaning (see Bacskai-Atkari 2023a for discussion):

(18)   Es ist **so**.
        it is so
        'It is so.'

matrix correlative element *so* can be optional (in similatives) and it imposes selectional restrictions on the subclause:

(19)   *Die   Krähe ist **(so)** [**als** die   Eule].
        the.F crow is   so   as the.F owl
        'The crow is like the owl.'

→ subclause a complement of the correlative element (Jäger 2018, Bacskai-Atkari 2018, Bacskai-Atkari 2023b)

structure (Bacskai-Atkari 2023b):

(20)   ComprP
         |
       Compr′
        /   \
    Compr   CP
      | |
      so   C′
              / \
             C   TP
             | △
            wie die Eule

structural parallelism with depictive manner complements:

(21)   a.   [$_{vP}$ ist [$_{ComprP}$ (so) [$_{CP}$ wie [$_{TP}$ ...]]]]
       b.   [$_{VP}$ sah [$_{DP}$ ∅ [$_{CP}$ wie [$_{TP}$ ...]]]]

change from Compr to D: further semantic bleaching – not only manner deictic but also comparison meaning lost

but: the attachment of depictive manner complements via a matrix XP that establishes the referential interpretation of the subclause is the rule, not the exception

5   Splits and language contact

arising new(ish) complementisers:

- internal change: reanalysis from another element

- contact-induced change

further (purported) case of the declarative cycle by van Gelderen (2009): complementiser *se* from the lexical verb 'say' in Jamaican Creole:

(22)   Him all swear [**seh** him was going to tell me].
       'He even swore that he was going to tell me.' (Patrick 2008: 627)

reanalysis from V to C also assumed by Patrick (2008) – but: process not completed, since *se* has a more restricted distribution than *that*: occurs only after predicates of speech, thought, perception or emotion

all-purpose *dat* 'that' (Patrick 2008):

(23)   Dat mean him **deh** go tek set pon me.
       'That means that he is going to become malignly fixated upon me.'
       (Patrick 2008: 628)

$\rightarrow$ Güldemann (2005): *se* a quotative complementiser

$\rightarrow$ *se*/*that* split similar to the *how*/*that* split: *that* and the more specific complementiser synonymous in certain contexts but not in others

diachronic scenario:

- V-to-C reanalysis not unproblematic – not attested in English otherwise, also downward grammaticalisation

- no transitional stages attested ($\leftrightarrow$ grammaticalisation of *how*) $\rightarrow$ Güldemann (2005): direct contact effect (from West African substrate languages), also in other Atlantic creole varieties

- importance of contact: similar complementisers also in other creole varieties of English – British Creole (Sebba 2008) and Liberian Settler English (Singler 2008)

$\rightarrow$ splits arising from more specialised declarative-like complementisers not merely byproducts of language-internal grammaticalisation

6   Conclusion

status of depictive manner complements – question of the declarative cycle

- cycle evidently not completed – partial split between *how*-clauses and *that*-clauses

- attachment via a matrix XP also attested in similative clauses (German *wie*-clauses)

- partial split also arising via other diachronic processes – e.g. contact in Jamaican Creole (*se*)

$\rightarrow$ declarative analysis of depictive manner complements problematic from a diachronic perspective as well

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