On the Diachrony of Subject-to-Subject Raising Verbs in German

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Introduction to the topic

In general, infinitive-embedding predicates can be divided into two main groups: (i) control verbs, (ii) raising verbs:

(1) [*Der Lehrer*]$_i$ ***hat vor***, [$_{INF}$ PRO$_i$ *jeden Tag zu feiern*]
  the   teacher   intends   every   day   to   celebrate
  'The teacher intends to celebrate every day.'

(2) [*Der Lehrer*]$_i$ ***scheint***, [$_{INF}$ *jeden Tag* t$_i$ *zu feiern*]
  the   teacher   seems   every   day   to   celebrate
  'The teacher seems to celebrate every day.'

Introduction to the topic

One of the possibilities to identify a subject-to-subject raising verb refers to the use of weather predicates, e.g. *regnen* 'rain':

(3) *[*Es*]$_i$ **hat vor,** [$_{INF}$ t$_i$ *zu regnen*]
    it   intends   to   rain
    Intended: 'It intends to rain.'

(4) [*Es*]$_i$ **scheint,** [$_{INF}$ t$_i$ *zu regnen*]
    it   seems   to   rain
    'It seems to be raining.'

Polinsky (2013: 578): "Cross-linguistically, the set of lexical items that license raising must be determined empirically in each case, as it may vary from language to language in semi-predictable ways."

Introduction to the topic

The main focus has been on three matrix predicates: *beginnen* 'begin', *versprechen* 'promise' and *brauchen* 'need'. All of them can be used as subject raising verbs:

(5) $[Es]_i$ ***begann*** $[_{INF}$ t_i *zu* *hageln*$]$

it   began   to   hail

'It began to hail.' (DeReKo, *Mannheimer Morgen*, 29/4/2002)

(6) $[Es]_i$ ***versprach*** $[_{INF}$ t_i *zu* *schneien*$]$

it   promised   to   snow

'It promised to snow.' (Wurmbrand 2001: 169)

(7) $[Es]_i$ ***braucht*** *nicht* $[_{INF}$ t_i *zu* *regnen*$]$
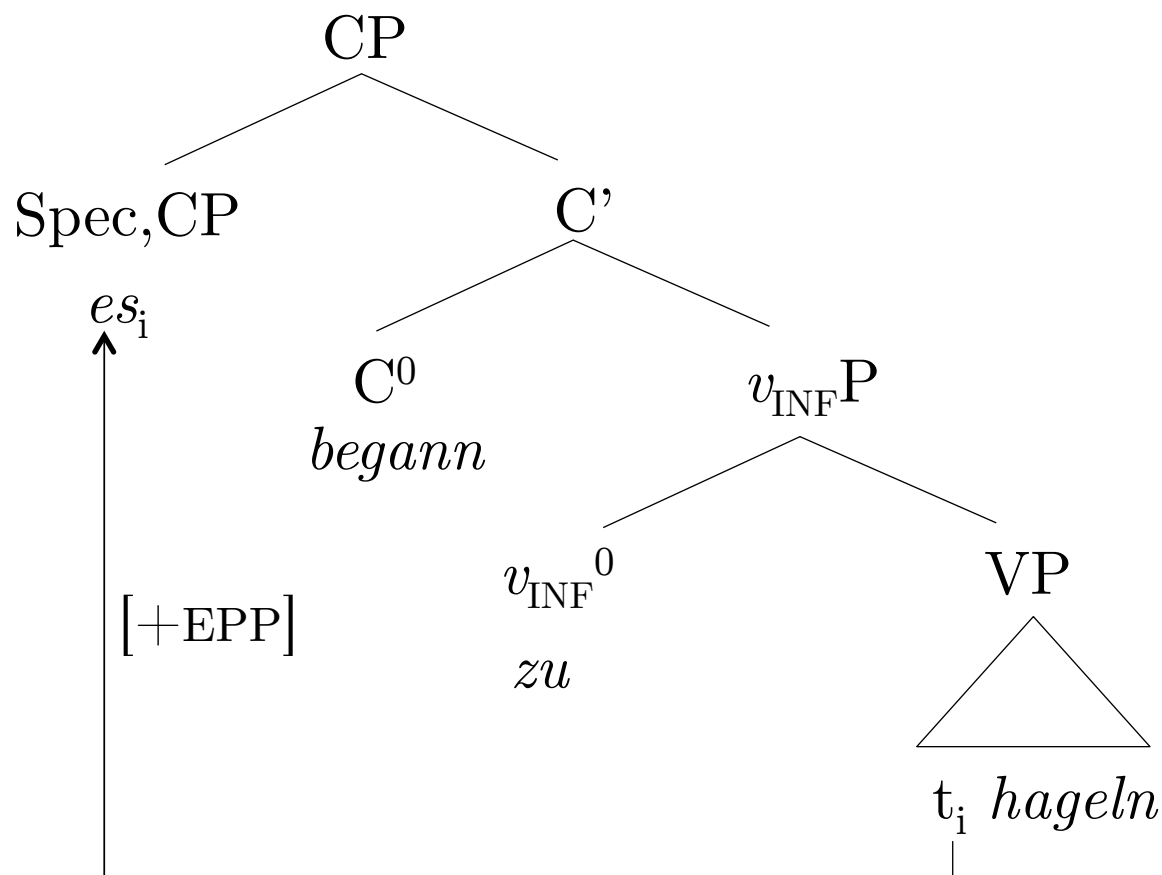
it   needs   not   to rain

'It need not rain.' (Ulvestad 1997: 228)

Introduction to the topic

Derivationally, we can assume *es* 'it' to be base-generated in the embedded infinitive clause. Formal features (e.g. an EPP feature) trigger its movement to a higher position:

Fig. 1: A partial derivation of *Es begann zu hageln*

Motivation

Main diachronic question:

How do subject-to-subject raising verbs emerge?

CP

Spec,CP
es

C'

$begann_i / versprach_i / braucht_i$ FP

t_i

$v_{INF}P$
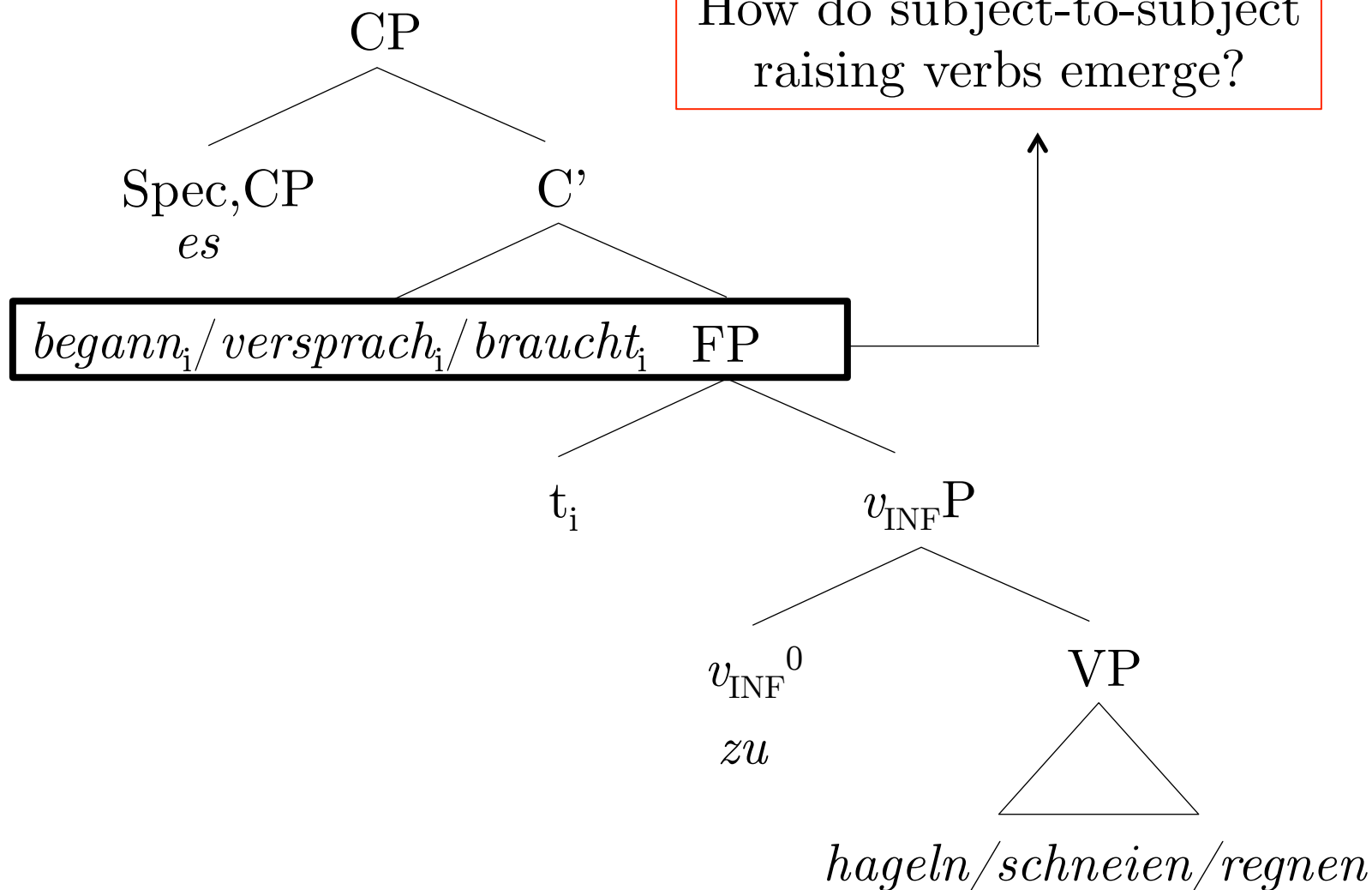
$v_{INF}{}^0$

zu

VP

hageln/schneien/regnen

Fig. 2: The syntactic position of the subject raising verbs

Motivation

Main diachronic question:

How do subject-to-subject raising verbs emerge?

Traugott (1997, 2010) (based on English data):

(a) All raising verbs undergo incipient grammaticalization.

(b) Raising constructions arise from non-raising ones.

(c) Subject raising verbs develop out of subject control verbs (= an infinitive complement is a necessary condition).
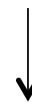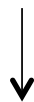
To what extent can these hypotheses be validated in German?

The Diachrony of Subject-to-Subject Raising Verbs in German

Beginnen

Beginnen 'begin'

There is no empirical evidence for grammaticalization of *beginnen* as subject-to-subject raising verb. In OHG (750-1050) *beginnen* merges with weather predicates:

(8) *Hîer   ist   náht.   híer   uualtent   unrehte   dero   rehton*
    here   is   night   here   reign   wrongs   the   rights

    *Sô   diu   naht   fergât.   unde   iz   **hina tagen***
    when   the   night   passes.by   and   it   dawn

    begínnet.   *so   uualtent   aber   rehte   dero   únrehton*
    begins   then   reign   but   rights   the   wrongs

    'Here it is night. Here preside the wrong over the right. If the night is past and it begins to dawn, then the right presides over the wrong.' (NotP 3.2, XLVIII)

Beginnen 'begin'

All OHG examples in which *beginnen* embeds an infinitive clause exemplify its use as a subject-to-subject raising verb (also infinitives involving an active infinitive):

(9) *tház* [*sie*]$_i$ [*thes*]$_k$ **bigínnen,** [$_{INF}$ *iz úzana* t$_i$ *gisíngen*]$_k$
that they ^{COR} begins it by.heart sing.INF
'that they began singing it by heart' (Otf I, 1: 109)

This is in line with Reis (2007: 20), who shows that subject raising is not excluded if an agentive involvement is encoded in the complement clause:

(10) [*Peter*]$_i$ **scheint** [$_{INF}$ *ihn* t$_i$ *umbringen zu* t$_i$ *wollen*]
Peter seems him kill to want
'Peter seems to intend to kill him.' (Reis 2007: 21)

Beginnen 'begin'

In addition to infinitive complements, *beginnen* used to select finite clauses introduced by the complementizer *dass* 'that':

(11) *Óba   thu   ouh   **bigínnes** [$_{CP}$ **thaz** *thu   zi   góte   thinges*]
      if   you   also   begin   that   you   to   God   hope

      ínti   thu   githénkes [$_{CP}$ *thaz   thin   gibét   wirkes*]
      and   you   recall   that   your   commandment   fulfill

      'If you also begin to hope for God and if you remember to fulfill your commandment ... ' (Otf II, 21: 1-2)

The example given in (11) instantiates:
-   hyper-raising (A-movement over a C-head),
-   copy-raising (A-movement with an overt A-copy).
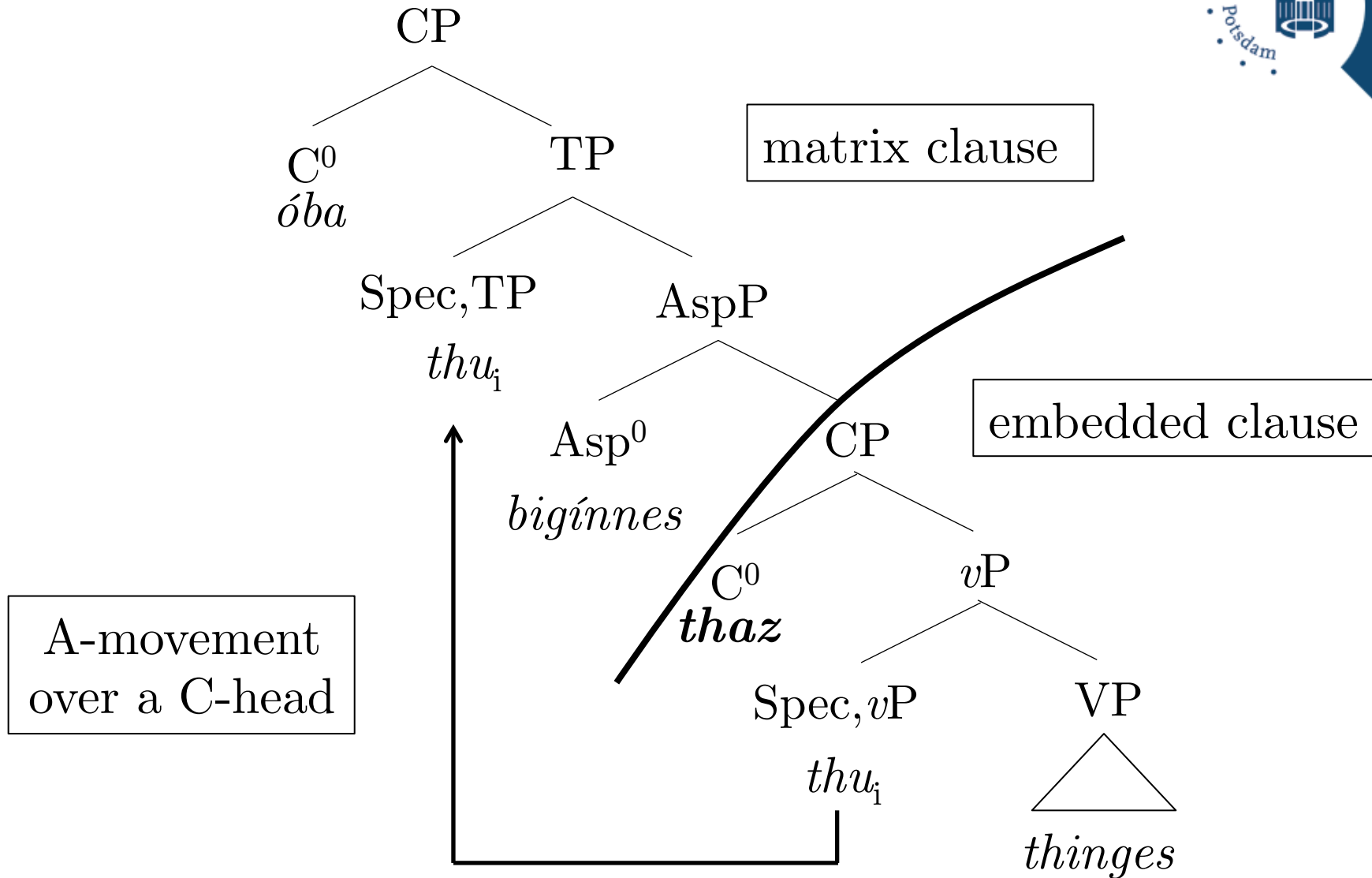
Beginnen: hyper- and copy-raising

CP
- C⁰
  óba
- TP
  - Spec,TP
    *thu*ᵢ
  - AspP
    - Asp⁰
      bigínnes
    - CP
      - C⁰
        thaz
      - vP
        - Spec,vP
          *thu*ᵢ
        - VP
          thinges

matrix clause

embedded clause

A-movement over a C-head

Fig. 3: The hyper- and copy-raising in Old High German (750 – 1050)

Versprechen

Versprechen 'promise'

Versprechen 'promise' can have two different readings. When it occurs as a speech act verb, the speaker commits himself to perform *p*. Usually, it takes three arguments, merges as a lexical V-head and exhibits subject control:

(12) [*Ich*]$_i$ ***verspreche*** [*Ihnen*]$_j$ [PRO$_{i/*j}$ *freundlich zu sein*]

   I   promise   you   nice   to   be

   'I promise you to be nice.' (DeReKo, *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 14/9/2005)

On the other hand, *versprechen* can also be employed as a functional head. In this case, it is a subject raising verb and its theta grid is associated with two arguments:

(13) [*Das Buch*]$_i$ ***verspricht*** [t$_i$ *ein Erfolg   zu   werden*]

   the book   promises   a   success to   become

   'The book promises to be a success.'

   (DeReKo, *Mannheimer Morgen*, 7/8/2004)

Versprechen 'promise'

In addition to infinitive complements, *versprechen* can also embed DP complements:

(14) *Der*   *Machthaber*   **verspricht**   [$_{DP}$ *Reformen*]

the   power.holder   promises   reforms

'The strongman promises reforms.'

(DeReKo, *Nürnberger Nachrichten*, 11/1/2012)

(15) *Das*   *Wetter*   **verspricht**   [$_{DP}$ *schnelles*   *Winterende*]

the   weather   promises   quick   winter.end

'The weather promises a quick winter's end.'

(DeReKo, *Burgenländische Volkszeitung*, 1/3/2012)

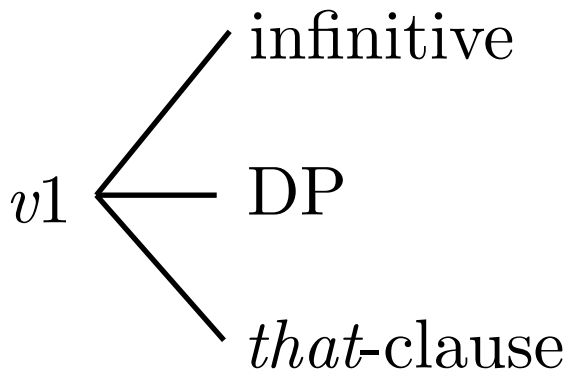# *Versprechen* 'promise'

grammaticalization   subject raising

Stage 1   Stage 2   Stage 3

infinitive

$v1$ ⟨ DP $v2$ —— DP $v2$ —— infinitive

that-clause

Fig. 4: The development of *versprechen*

Versprechen 'promise'

(14)   *Der Machthaber verspricht* [$_{DP}$ *Reformen*]

Reading I: 'The strongman promises that he will enact reforms.'

Reading II: 'The strongman's behavior indicates that he will/may/ might enact reforms.'
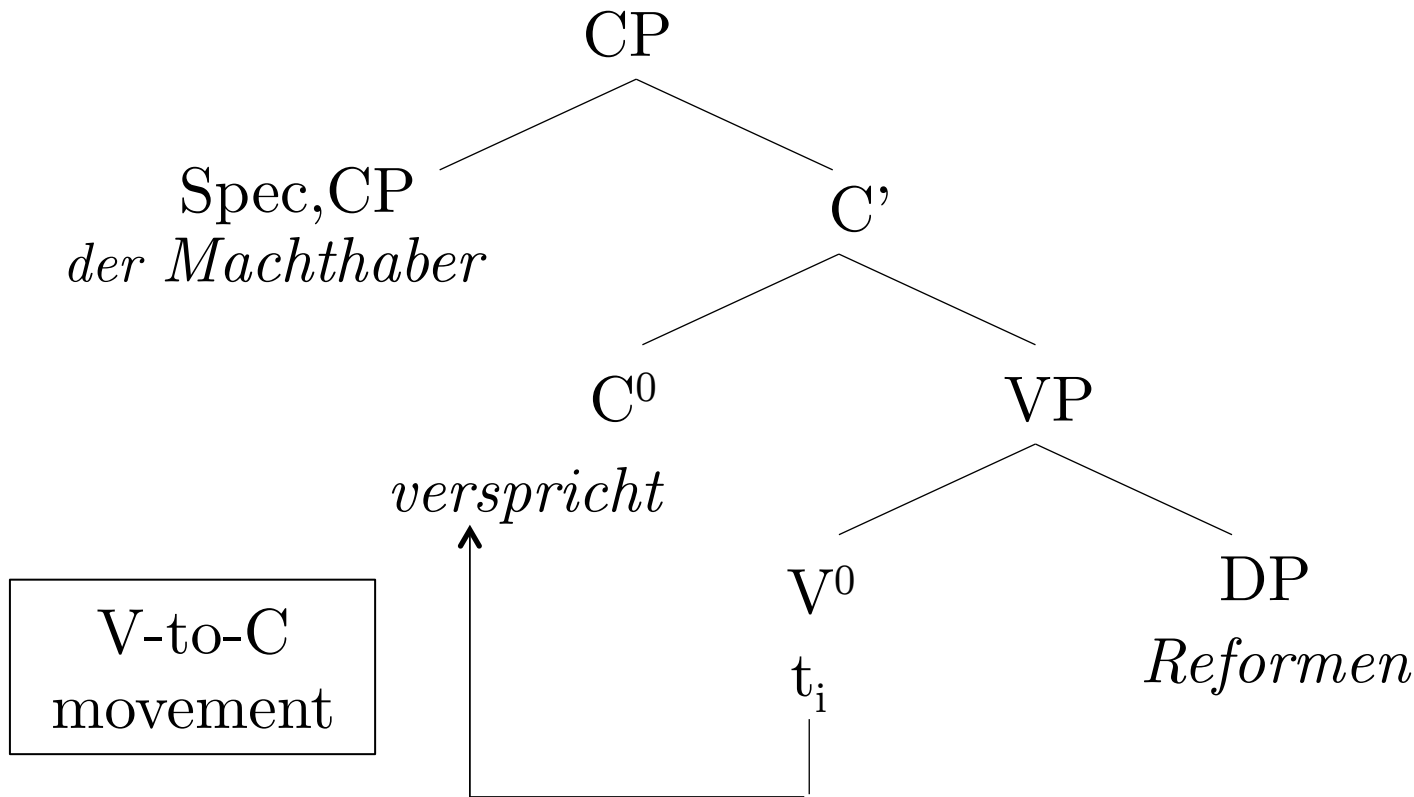

Fig. 5: The derivation of *Der Machthaber verspricht Reformen* (lexical)

Versprechen 'promise'

(14)   *Der Machthaber verspricht* [DP *Reformen*]

Reading I: 'The strongman promises that he will enact reforms.'

Reading II: 'The strongman's behavior indicates that he will/may/ might enact reforms.'
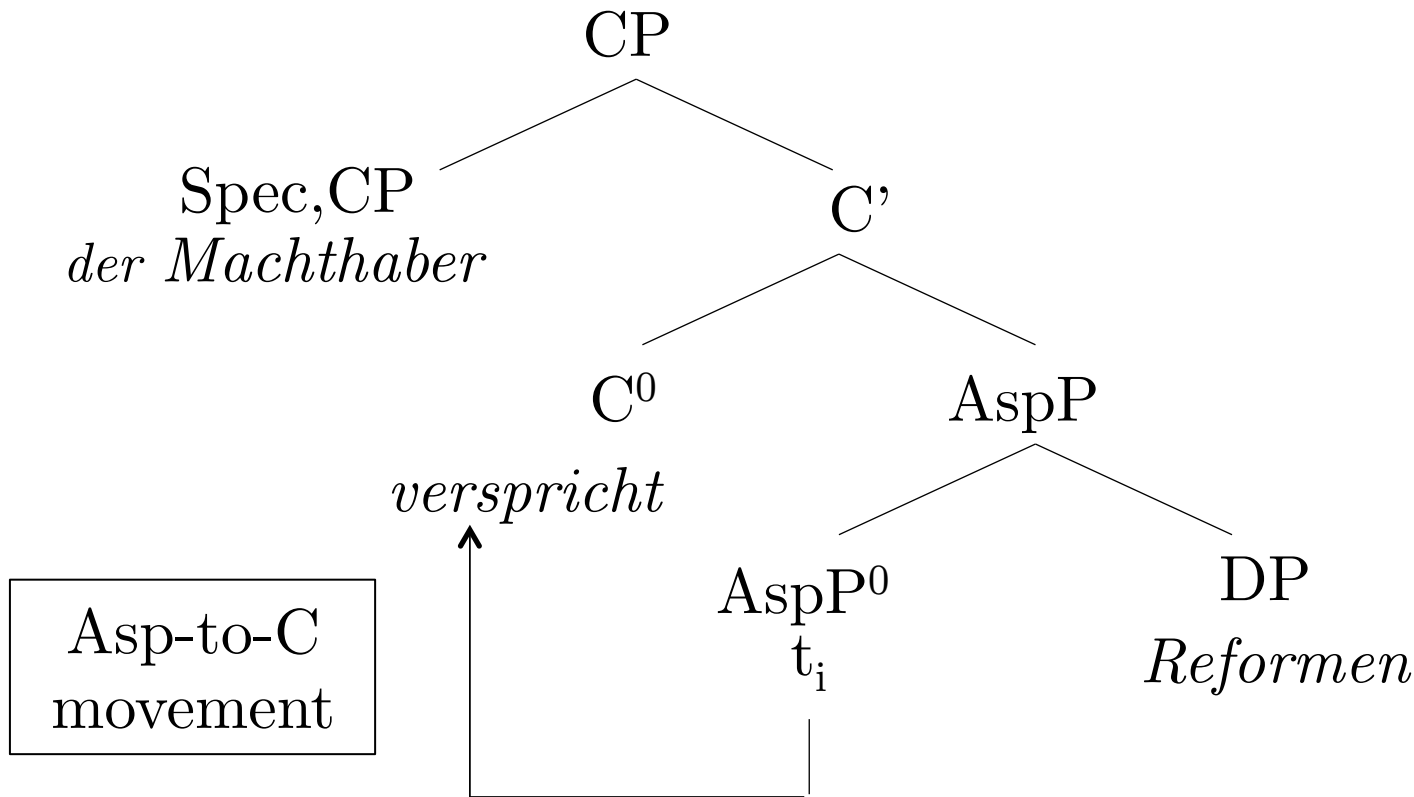

Fig. 6: The derivation of *Der Machthaber verspricht Reformen* (functional)
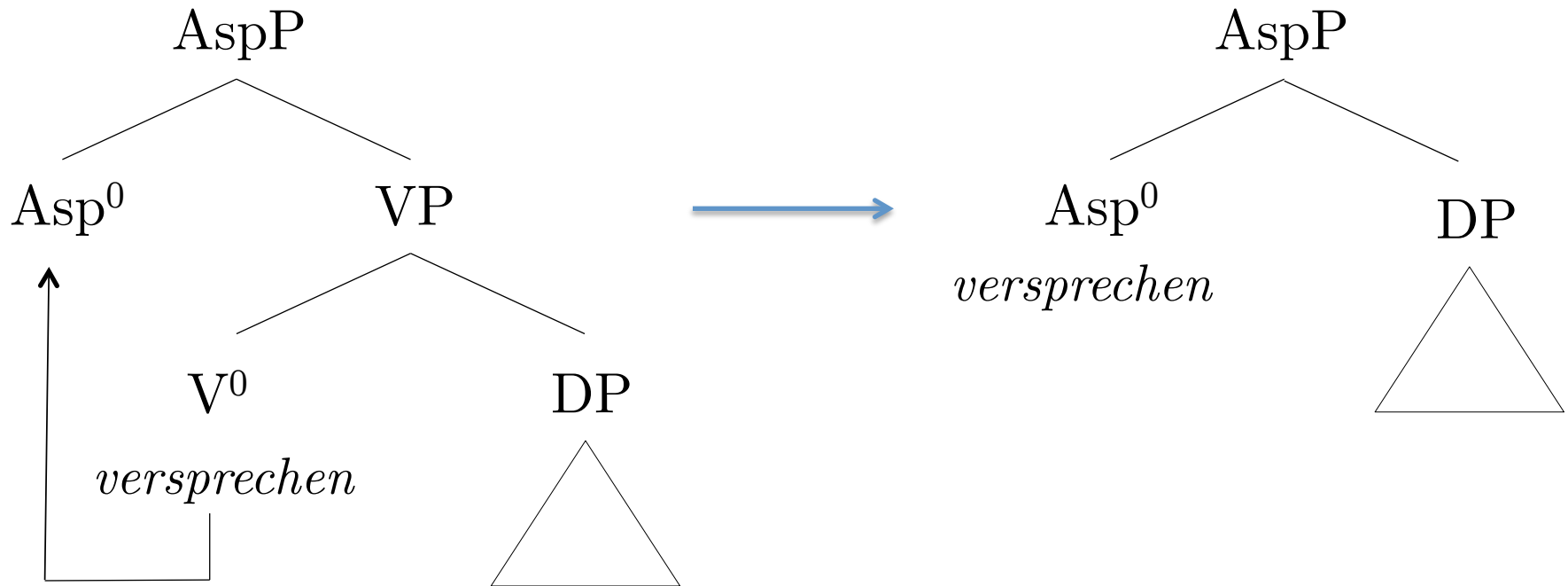
Versprechen 'promise'

Fig. 7: The grammaticalization of *versprechen*

Brauchen

Brauchen 'need'

In Present-day German *brauchen* can be used in two different ways, either as a lexical V-head embedding DP complements or as a modal verb selecting infinitives:

(16) *Wir* **brauchen** [$_{DP}$ *deine Hilfe*]

     we   need   your   help

     'We need your help.' (DeReKo, *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 28/12/2011)

(17) *Du* **brauchst** *nicht* [$_{INF}$ (*zu*) *warten*]

     you need   not   to   wait

     'You need not wait.'(DeReKo, *St. Galler Tagblatt*, 28/12/2011)

(18) *Das* **braucht** *nicht* [$_{INF}$ (*zu*) *stimmen*]

     that needs   not   to   be.right

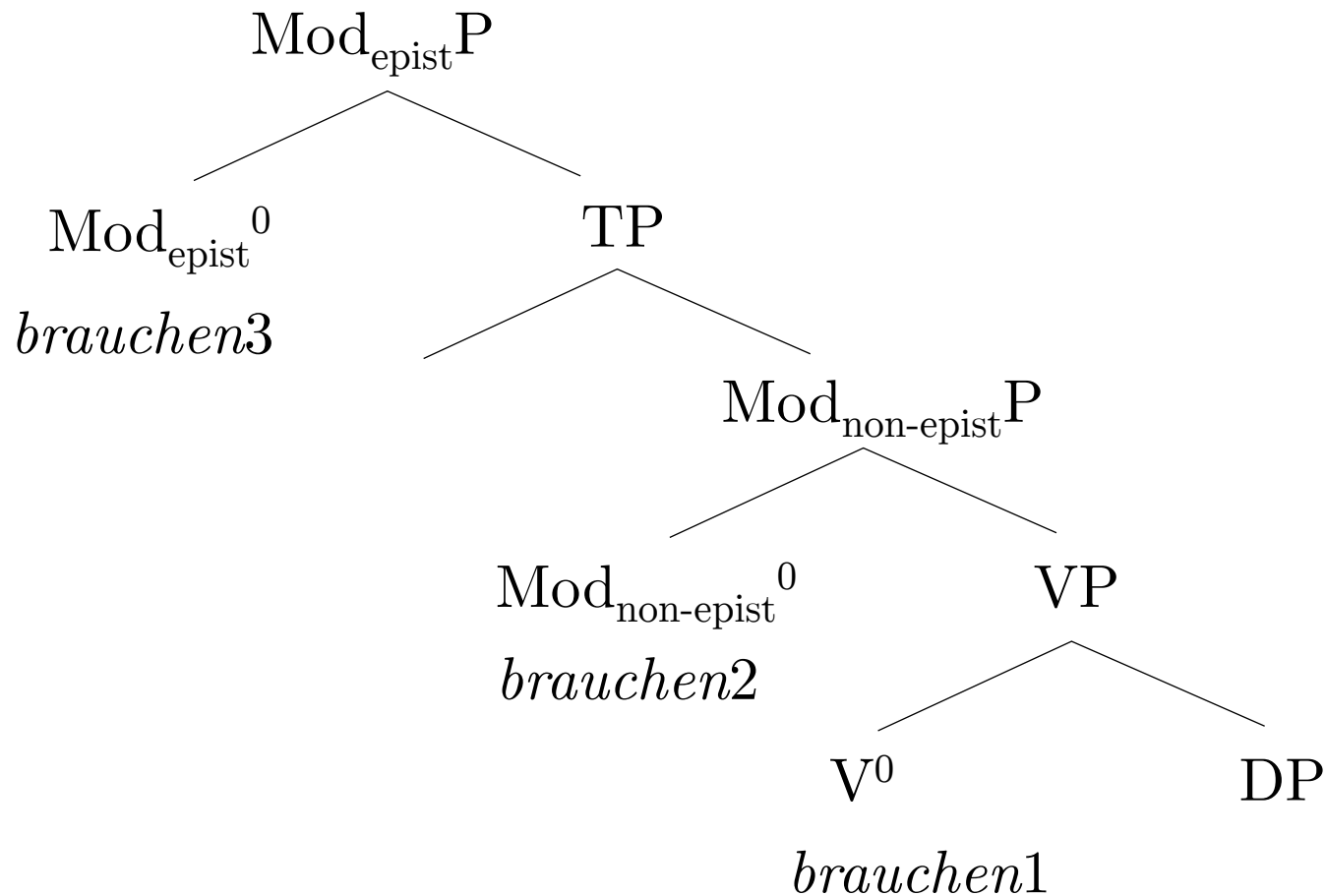   'That need not be correct.' (Vater 2010: 108)

Brauchen 'need'

$\text{Mod}_{\text{epist}}\text{P}$

$\text{Mod}_{\text{epist}}{}^{0}$
*brauchen*3

TP

$\text{Mod}_{\text{non-epist}}\text{P}$

$\text{Mod}_{\text{non-epist}}{}^{0}$
*brauchen*2

VP

V^0
*brauchen*1

DP

Fig. 8: Merge positions of *brauchen* in Present-day German

Brauchen 'need'

$$\text{Mod}_{\text{epist}}\text{P}$$

$$\text{Mod}_{\text{epist}}^{0} \qquad \text{TP}$$

*brauchen*3

$$\text{Mod}_{\text{non-epist}}\text{P}$$

$$\text{Mod}_{\text{non-epist}}^{0} \qquad \text{VP}$$

*brauchen*2
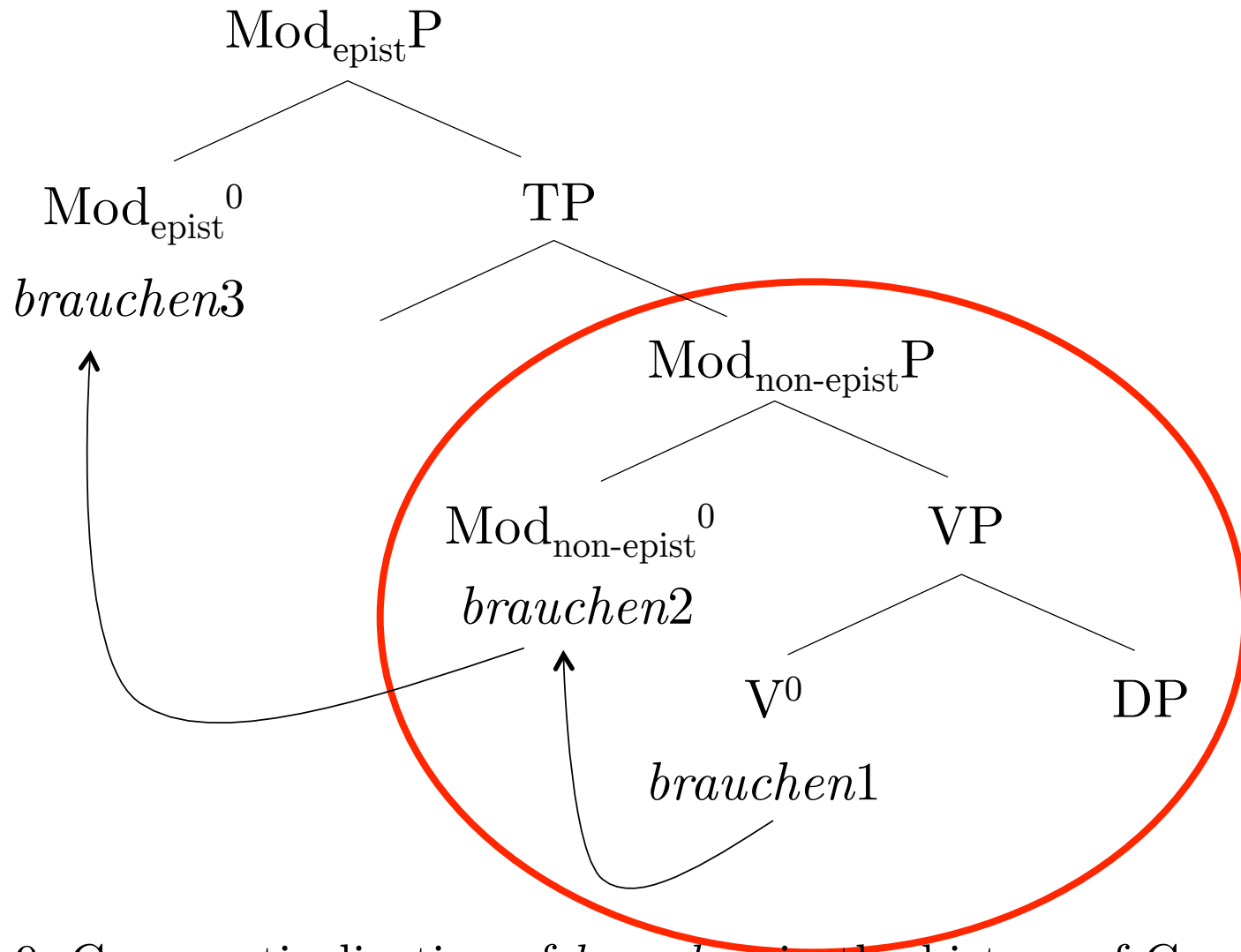
$$V^0 \qquad \text{DP}$$

*brauchen*1

Fig. 9: Grammaticalization of *brauchen* in the history of German

Brauchen 'need'

Following Kluempers (1997), cases like those under (20) are supposed to be regarded as an intermediate step between *brauchen*1 and *brauchen*2:

(20) *Es* **braucht**s *nicht,* *dass* *ich* *es* *seh*
      it   needs   not   that I   it   see
      'I do not have to see it.' (GMC, 1737)

subject-to-subject raising verb

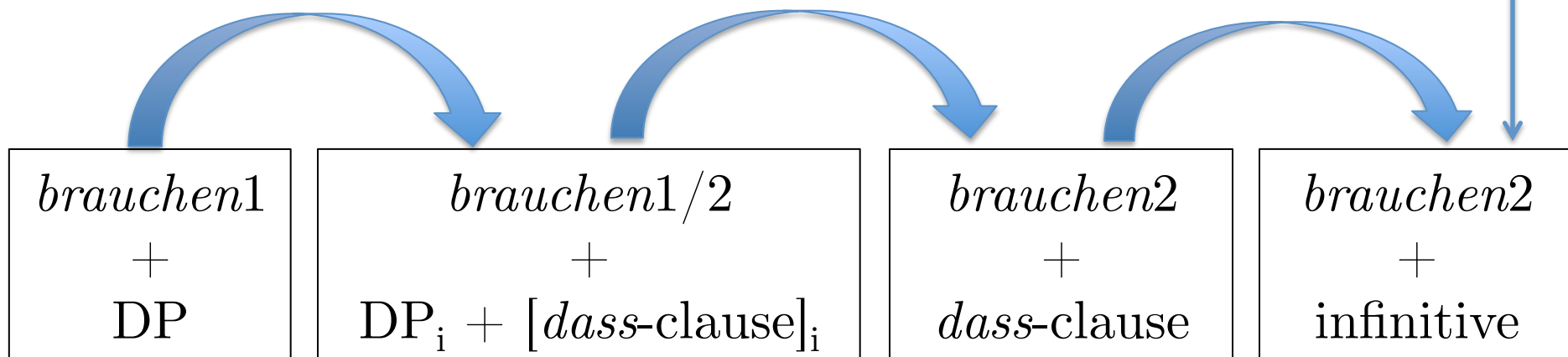| *brauchen*1 + DP | *brauchen*1/2 + DP$_i$ + [*dass*-clause]$_i$ | *brauchen*2 + *dass*-clause | *brauchen*2 + infinitive |

Fig. 10: The development of *brauchen*

Summary

The main aim of the PhD thesis has been to investigate the emergence circumstances of three subject raising verbs:

➢ *beginnen* 'begin'(= aspectual head),
➢ *versprechen* 'promise' (= temporal-aspectual head),
➢ *brauchen* 'need' (= modal head).

Although all three predicates can be brought down to a common syntactic denominator (= A-movement of the embedded subject into the matrix subject position), they emerged in different structural environments.

Diachronically, subject-to-subject raising verbs cannot be treated in a unified way.

It begins promises needs to be the end …

Thank you
for your attention!

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