

## Relativisation strategies in English – Output from Penn Parsed Corpora of Historical English

The current research is a follow-up to my PhD study on word order change in Early English (2016). During that time, the increasingly prevalent rigid SVO order was accompanied by various processes and phenomena which were more or less instrumental in the change. The rearrangement of relativisation strategies was mentioned as one of these processes (e.g. Dekeyser 1986). The present study explores the environment of the relative clause (RC) in English, including earlier and later stages of development of the language. The subsequent phase of this research will encompass the exploration of the dynamics of changes in the current varieties of English. The distributions of the majority of common relativisers have been considered. The study also examines the impact of different factors behind the change in the choice of particular relativisers across time. Various studies on the topic speak of several potentially determining aspects at play. Among these, there are structural ambiguities, processing difficulties, stylistic conditioning, and strong prescriptive tradition (e.g. Leech et al., 2009: 228-230). The current phase (2) entails the investigation of the RC environment from the late Middle, through the Early Modern English to the earlier part of Modern (British) English. Results of the searches on the (updated) sections of *the Penn Parsed Corpora of Historical English* will be presented (PPCME2, PPCEME, PPCMBE2). This study relies on a frequency-based model. Moreover, a selection of sampling techniques, including controlled (multiple) sampling and stratified sampling, has been vital not only in assessing the impact of factors behind the distribution of relativisers but also in addressing the peculiarities of the data available for the analysis.

Dekeyser, X. 1986. English contact clauses revisited: A diachronic approach. *Folia Linguistica Historica*, 7.1: 107–120.

Leech, G., Hundt, M., and Mair, C. 2009. *Change in Contemporary English: A Grammatical Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### Corpora used:

Kroch, Anthony, and Ann Taylor. 2000. The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2). Department of Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania. CD-ROM, second edition, release 4 (<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/ppche-release-2016/PPCME2-RELEASE-4>).

Kroch, Anthony, Beatrice Santorini, and Lauren Delfs. 2004. The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English (PPCEME). Department of Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania. CD-ROM, first edition, release 3 (<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/ppche-release-2016/PPCEME-RELEASE-3>).

Kroch, Anthony, Beatrice Santorini, and Ariel Diertani. 2016. The Penn Parsed Corpus of Modern British English (PPCMBE2). Department of Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania. CD-ROM, second edition, release 1 (<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/ppche-release-2016/PPCMBE2-RELEASE-1>).