

The role of French in the rise of the recipient passive in Middle English: can structural Case be borrowed?

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Outline

- 1 The puzzle
- 2 Datives and passives in a language contact situation
- 3 Conclusion

Recipient passive (RP)

Definition:

Recipient passive = the indirect passive of ditransitive verbs

(following Allen 1995)

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| (1) | Tom gave Mary presents . | active |
| (2) | Presents were given to Mary (by Tom). | direct passive |
| (3) | Mary was given presents (by Tom). | recipient passive |

Previous work

The puzzle:

Observation:

When the recipient passive first appeared in late Middle English, it was formed predominantly with French-origin verbs.

Problem:

French did not have a recipient passive.

Our task:

Relate these facts to the specific language contact situation and to the properties of the “dative” arguments in both languages.

The project: BASICS

- English-French contact in medieval times
 - triggered by the Norman Conquest of 1066
 - prevailed for more than three hundred years
- Many studies on loan verbs, but none on syntactic change induced by French verbs.

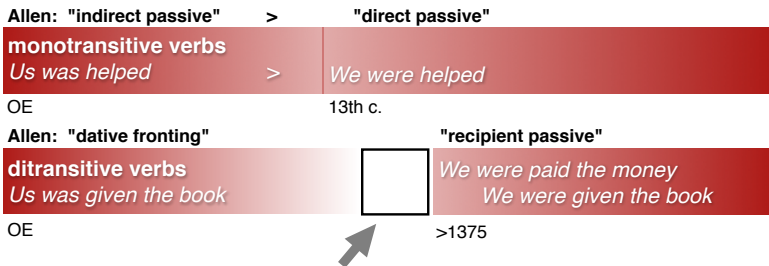


Bridge House Accounts vol. 1484-1509,
London Metropolitan Archives

Borrowing of Argument Structure in Contact Situations

How far, if at all, was the argument structure of English verbs affected by the borrowing of Old French verbs? (DFG research grant 2015-8)

Allen's study of the recipient passive



Allen (1995:384): a gap in the development of ditransitives

Dative fronting was not reanalysed as RP: they do **not** co-occur.

→ Dative fronting: limited to archaic texts, e.g. poetry

→ Wycliffe (~1400): no dative fronting. RP occur, but they are not numerous.

Allen's study of the recipient passive

Allen (1995): The first 'genuine example of a recipient passive' is quoted by Visser in a text from 1375:

- (4) Item as for the Parke **she** is a lowyd Every yere a dere
'Item: as for the park, she is allowed a deer each year'

AwardBlount p.205 (1375), from Allen 1995, 393

A slightly earlier Anglo-Norman (AN) example has a clausal complement:

- (5) Et q'**ils** soient allowes **de servir** par l'an entier, ou autres termes usuels, & nemy par journeies;
And that they be allowed to serve. . .

Foedera 3 (1359)

Recipient passive in the PPCME2 and PCEEC

- Query:
 - passives of ditransitive verbs
 - ... governing a subject *and* a direct object.
- ⇒ the subject is the former dative argument

Unexpected findings: language contact?

Confirmation of Allen's (Visser's) observation: first occurrences of true RPs in late ME (in the corpus in M4 (1420-1500))

BUT: Recipient passives are much more frequent with verbs of French origin than with native verbs.

Results from the PPCME2

- From Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur* (c.1469) and *Gregory's Chronicle* (1451-2)

- (6) Than **Ulphuns and Brastias** were delyvirde **three thousand men of armys**,
 'Then Alfons and Brastias were delivered three thousand men of arms.'
 (MALORY,21.633)
- (7) and **they** were servyd nexte unto the quene **every cours coveryde** as the
 quene.
 'and they were served next to the queen every course covered as the
 queen.'
 (GREGOR,139.584)

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deliver < French *delivrer*

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serve < French *servir*

Recipient passive in the PCEEC

verb	French verbs			verb	native verbs		
	active	RP	% RP		active	RP	% RP
pay	162	10		send	2502	1	
promise	96	7		give	1545	2	
offer(*)	55	12		tell	446	2	
allow	40	7		show	223	1	
deny	31	7					
serve	2	1					
fine	1	6					
	387	50	11.44		4716	6	0.13

Table 1: Active and recipient passive with ditransitive verbs

(*) from Latin *offerre*, reinforced by French *offrir*

Recipient passive: data from the PCEEC

(8) and that **he** shuld be servid **the same** wythinne fewe dayes.
and that he should be served the same within few days
'and that he should be served the same within a few days.'

M4-1461,PASTON,II,248.387.10097

(9) And seye þat **ye** will be paijd **euerj pene**,
and say that you will be paid every penny
'... and say that you will be paid every penny.'

M4-1465,PASTON,I,133.035.765

- The data (correspondence) reflects the active competence of the writers, independent of any direct French influence, e.g. by translations.
- ⇒ The passive is not calqued, but part of the writer's grammar.

The puzzle, revisited

- What we have to explain is. . .
 - that RPs appear only in late Middle English (>1375),
 - that RPs are much more frequent with verbs of French origin.
 - although French does not have RPs.

- Explanation #1
 - 'French' indirect objects must have been perceived as a different kind of dative than English indirect objects.
 - English had inherent dative → no alternation
 - French had structural dative → alternation possible
 - But: what was borrowed or copied?

Structural dative in French

- Some diagnostics (cf. the summary of Herschensohn 1996, 46-50)

(10)	Ils ont parlé à Marie et *(à) sa sœur	(case marker obligatory)
	Ils sont allés à Paris et Rome	(preposition can be dropped)
(11)	Ils <i>lui</i> ont parlé	(dative DP ~ dative clitic)
	Ils <i>y</i> sont partis	(local preposition ~ adverb)
(12)	Ils ont coupé les cheveux à Marie.	(dative DP)
	*La coupe de cheveux à Marie	(only inherent case in nominalisations)

Indirect objects in diachrony (Troberg, 2008, 164)

“Structurally licensed IOs do not undergo a valency change, while IOs that are not structurally licensed are susceptible to change.”
Troberg argues that indirect objects of Old French ditransitives had structural case.

Structural dative in English

- Dative was inherent OE.
ME retained inherent dative Case for a long time → no RP
- Structural Dative appears in ME under French influence (Trips and Stein, accepted)

(13) I gave the money the king → I gave the money *to* the king

Basic elements of the problem

- The recipient passive arose in English but not in other West Germanic languages.
- It is first attested in the late 14th century with transfer verbs.
- It is found far more frequently in the Middle English with verbs of French origin.
- French has never had the recipient passive.

A possible source construction

- The recipient passive is found with French-origin verbs of communication in late Middle English.
- This time, there is a clear source construction in the French used in England (Anglo-Norman).

(14) **Panne Antifon**, a noble dyvynour, was demaunded **what** that shold signefye.

Trevisa 397 (c. 1385)

(15) Dunc soit agardé, qe **les principaus appelez del fet** soient solempnement demaandez **qe** il veignent.

'Then let it be ruled that those principally accused of the deed should be formally asked to come'

Britton 1-12 (c. 1300)

Anglo-Norman (AN) vs continental Old French (OF)

- In OF, *demander* took a dative Recipient → no RP
- In AN, *demander* sometimes had a direct object Recipient:

(16) Le dit archevesqe demanda les Communes s'ils vodrient assenter et
tener le prince R. lour roy
*'The said Archbishop asked the Commons if they would agree and hold
the prince their King'*
Anon. Chr 110.5 (c. 1345)

- OF freely allowed passivisation of transitive verbs, even with
direct object Recipients:

(17) Se par aventure aucuns hayneux a monseigneur avoient informé Gief-
froy d'autre chose que de raison. . .
If . . . some hating the lord had informed G. about other things. . .
Melusine (1396)

(18) Sire de Carintaine, sachiés que je sui informés pour quoy vous estes
venus par deça.
Sir of C., know that I am informed why you have come. . . Moree (c.1320)

Ditransitives with clausal complements in Anglo-Norman

Two classes of verbs:

- ① Recipient marked with *a*: no passive in the Anglo-Norman Hub database
 - e.g. *granter, noncier, notifier, denier, deviser, remembering*
- ② Recipient as direkt object allow a passive:
 - e.g. *assurer, comander, veer, demander, informer, certifier, prier, garnir*

Ditransitives with clausal complements

verb	Recipient acc.	Recipient Passive	meaning
<i>informer</i>	+	+	inform
<i>garnir</i>	+	+	warn
<i>avertir</i>	?	+	signal
<i>assurer</i>	+	+	assure
<i>amonester</i>	+	+	advise, warn

Table 2: Anglo-Norman usage of Old French verbs

Recipient passive with LME cognate verbs

- (19) And **oper**, þat of hertes er herd / And oute of mesure more froward, /
Mai be informed **bi** hir dede / And lere how þai þair lif suld lede.

St Benet Rule (Northern)

- (20) Also whan **oure lady and Ioseph** were warned **to** come oute of egypt by a
aungell, as þe gospell telleþ, þan þei were bode go in to galilee.

3 Kings Cologne

- (21) And therby **ye** shall be assured **that** he shall never be angry ne wrothe
wyth you.

4 Sons Aymon

Ditransitives with clausal complements

OF verb	Recipient acc.	Recipient Passive	meaning
<i>conseiller</i>	+	+	advise
<i>certifier</i>	+	+	confirm
<i>demander</i>	+	+	ask
<i>comander</i>	+	+	command
<i>granter</i>	–	–	grant
<i>(an)noncier</i>	–	–	announce
<i>notifier</i>	–	–	notify
<i>deviser</i>	–	–	order
<i>rememberer</i>	–	–	remember

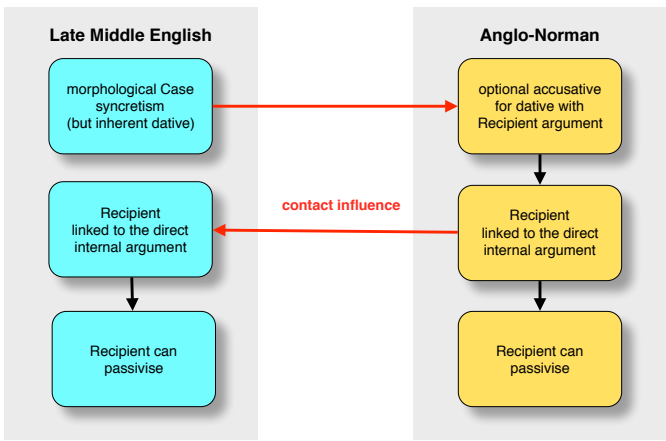
Table 3: Anglo-Norman usage of Old French verbs

Recipient passive with LME cognate verbs

- (22) **Euery seke man** . . . is to be counselled besily **þat** he labour with reason of his mynde. Craft of Dying
- (23) **Y** am certified at fulle that among the holders of this same iiije. opinioun summe be.... Pecock Repressor
- (24) **He** was demaunded **yif** he sent to þe lord Ffaunhop eny word of þeire beyng þere to geders. Chancery English
- (25) This child **I** am comanded **for** to take. Chaucer Clerk Oxenforde

The global picture

- The interaction between French, English, and Anglo-Norman is more complex.



The role of clausal complements

- Verbs like *offrir*, *promettre* and *denier* could take a DP or a clause as second object.
- Hence 2nd internal argument could be either a nominal or a clause

(26) Pramist lor qu'a els revendreit.
'He promised that he would come back to them'

Salemon 1-32

(27) Le prestre ne deit denier/A nul, quel hure ke ceo seit,/ Mes ke ceo seit al murir dreit, Ki demande cunfessiun/Ke n'eit reconciliaciun.
'The priest should not refuse to anyone asking for confession, whenever it might be, except right before death, that he should have reconciliation'

Secr. 10124

OF clause-taking verbs assign dative

- Active

(28) Et après manger, le seignour comanda **sez vadletz de** seller les chivalx.
'And after the meal, the lord ordered his servants to saddle the horses'

Manlang 14 (c.1400)

- Passive

(29) ...dautres Baillifs, **qi** serront comandez **a** faire veue avant lacompte.
'... other bailiffs, who will be ordered to make an inspection before the plea'

Redbook 3_872 (1323)

RP was favoured by language contact

- When OF verbs governing Recipients were borrowed, the Recipient was linked to a structural case position.
- Speech act verbs governing a DP and a clause were “bridge contexts”, where the Recipient could be an accusative or a dative NP, depending on the verb.
- Thus, Recipients of **French verbs** were in a **structural** case position, and could become the subject of passive constructions.
- Recipients of **Middle English verbs** were **inherently** case-marked, and therefore excluded from the passive alternation.

Loose ends

- Correlations of RP with the frequency of double object constructions:
 - Do French-origin verbs also have proportionally more DOC than native verbs?
- Clitics
 - for Anglo-Norman verbs having acc-DP + clause: do they also have acc-clitic + clause?
 - more generally, from an acquisitional point of view: could case-neutralised input have affected the recipient passive indirectly?
 - e.g. ?*je le_{acc} donne un cheval*
- Is there a way to find out what the case of the first internal object in the DOC in Middle English is?
 - acc → directly influenced by the V+Acc+clause verbs
 - dat → influenced in so far as the dative has become structural, with V+Acc+clause verbs acting as a bridge construction

You_{DAT?} are thanked for your attention!

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French/Latinate verb resist DOC

(Pinker, 1989)

(30) Max donated his painting to the museum.

(31) *Max donated the museum his painting.

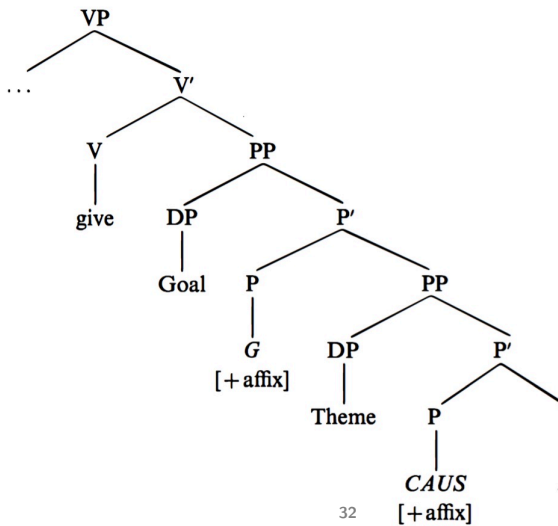
Two analyses for DOC:

- ① Difference lies in information-structure (old-new, light-heavy, pronouns-full NPs)
- ② HAVE/GOAL approach:
 - ① to: MOVE x towards y
 - ② DOC: CAUSE y to HAVE x

The have/goal approach

- Pesetsky (1996, 197), developed by Harley (2002)

(511)



Copying: the bridge construction

- So the bridge takes the form of a Recipient argument standing in Spec PP:

comander + [[PP DP [0]] [CP]]

- copied as:

command + [[PP DP [0]] [CP]]

- This structure made it possible for verbs of transfer to adopt a similar a-structure:

pay + [[PP DP [0]] [DP]]