

Causative Verbs in Old and Middle English

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Introduction: V vs v

- V = **lexical** head,
- v = **functional** (i.e. grammatical) head.

⇒ in Distributed Morphology (see Marantz (1999)), v has the following features:

- it **creates** a verb,
- it provides **event semantics**,
- it provides **agentive semantics** for agentive constructions,
- it **merges** with an external argument,
- it has an **Agree relation** with the object.

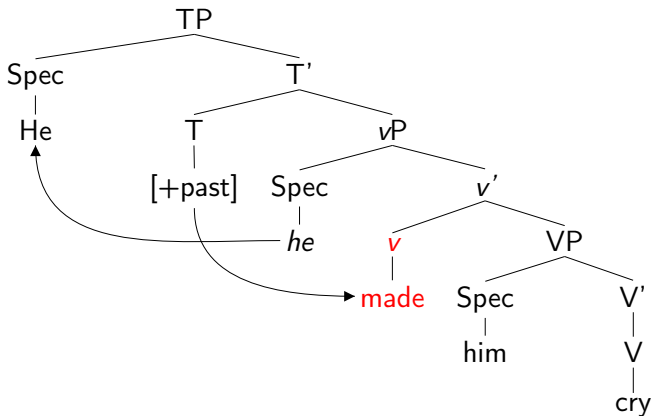
⇒ in Roméro (2005), v_{Modal} (i.e. a specific type of v) has features 1, 2 and 3:

- it creates the **preterite present** = semi-lexical,
- it provides event semantics,
- it might provide agentive semantics.

Question: In CE causative structures, the **object of the finite verb is a VP**. What about OE?

Examples of causative structures in CE

- (1) He had them eat the cake.
- (2) He made him cry.



- Examples with **don** "cause, make":

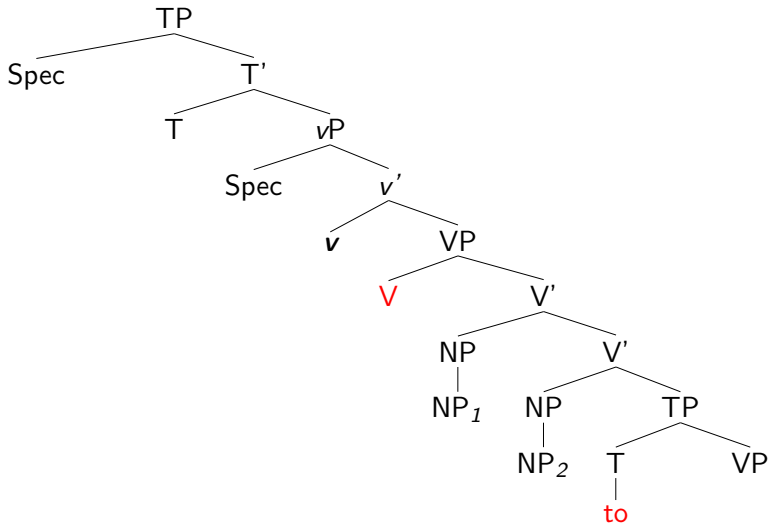
- (3) (...) **doð** foroft drymen & wiccan on heora scincræfte, **to** beswicenne... *Very often with their craft, the magicians and soothsayers are deceiving...* (coaelhom,ÆHom_18:91.2543)
- (4) Ðone oðerne dæl he **dyde** \emptyset *gehealden* mid him **to** bebyrgenne æfter his forðsiðe. *he had this other speech be followed before him for his burial once he died.* (coaelive,ÆELS_[Basil]:123.531)

- Examples with **lætan** "cause":

- (5) And ræde ðæs se cing **let** geridan ealle þa land þa his modor ahte him to handa. *And soon after this the king determined to invest all the land that his mother had in her hands.* (cochronC,ChronC_[Rositzke]:1043.5.1816)
- (6) Hi **leton** hig hadian to bisceopum. *They got themselves ordained bishops.* (Bd 1053)
- (7) He sette scole and on ðære he **let** cnihtas læran. *He set up a school and had boys taught in it.* (Num II.24)

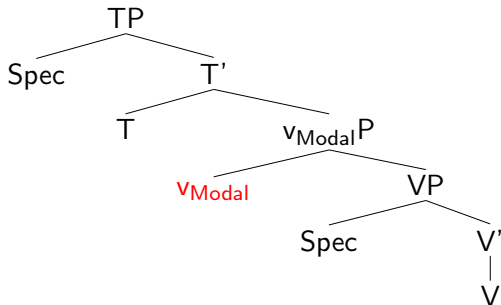
Causative structure in OE

- In OE, the structure of causatives is is



Preterite present structure in OE

- Whereas the structure for a preterite present (semi-lexical) is



Conclusion for Old English

- The verb complement of a causative verb is a **TP** and **causative verbs are V's** (i.e. lexical verbs),
- The complement of a preterite present is a **VP** and they are **v_{Modal}'s** (i.e. semi-lexical verbs),
- The TO particle functions as a **functional head** in Late OE.

⇒ The preterite presents and TO began grammaticalizing in late OE, not the causative verbs. (See Roméro (2005) for more details on the preterite presents)

In ME, there are many linguistic changes. Among which

⇒ The preterite presents grammaticalized: appearance of **epistemic modals** in Late OE,

⇒ TO grammaticalized due to the **loss of the subjunctive ending** (see Roberts & Roussou (2003)).

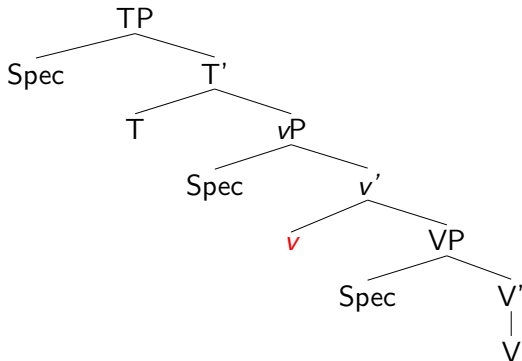
Question: **What about causative verbs?**

Some examples of causative verbs:

- (8) uor uirtue **makeþ** **wynne** heuene, and onworþi þe wordle...
or virtue makes us grant paradise and deserve the world...
(CMAYENBI,84.1630)
- (9) þu **habbe** heo **idon** mid þe licome... *you have them do with flesh...* (CMLAMBX1,21.242)
- (10) (they sholden) at the last **maken** hem **lesen** hire lordshipes... *at last, they should make them lose their powers...* (CMCTMELI,231.C1.532)

Causative structure in ME

The structure is now (as in CE)



Conclusion for Middle English

- **causative verb**: lexical (V) → **semi-lexical** (v); from a TP complement to a VP complement,
- **deontic modal**: semi-lexical (v_{Modal}) → **grammatical, i.e. functional** (v_{Modal}); in DM, v_{Modal} and T fuses.

General Conclusion (so far)

- Mainly focused on **syntactic** behaviour,
- **Grammaticalisation** of causative verbs, along with modal verbs and the TO particle,
- Still, question to be investigated: does syntactic change trigger semantic change, or is it the other way round?

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