

Elly van Gelderen:

Subjunctives and the split CP in the history of English

In this paper, I compare the CP layer in the main and embedded clause in the history of English. The Modern English main clause is not as easily expandable as the Old English one but it is the reverse for the subordinate clause, namely Modern English has a more flexible embedded CP than Old English. I'll focus on the developments of the embedded CP and argue that the heavy use of the subjunctive in old English keeps the CP unexpanded. It has been claimed that Old English lacks an embedded split CP and therefore lacks embedded V2 and a host of other embedded root phenomena. I show this for complements to both assertive and non-assertive verbs. In Modern English, this distinction has an effect on the strength of the C-position but not in Old English. Assertives in e.g. Modern English allow main clause phenomena in subordinate clauses whereas non-assertives typically don't. The main point of the paper will be to chronicle the changes that 'stretched' the embedded CP.