

Syntactic change in Germanic

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This course explores microvariation as observed in the historical development of a single language and of a group of closely related languages. More specifically, we will focus on changes in the syntax of English and other Germanic languages. The main syntactic areas to be examined are:

- Verb Second
- V-to-I movement
- Directionality (OV/VO; V-Aux/Aux-V)

Each of these topics will be introduced by a detailed discussion of the developments in the history of English. Against this background, we will then consider comparative issues raised by the histories of other Germanic languages. The main aims will be (a) to identify grammatical parameters accounting for the diachronic variation within a generative framework; (b) to consider how and why certain changes occur (e.g. frequency patterns; language-internal and language-external causes); (c) to introduce students to tools available for research in historical syntax (parsed corpora).

Provisional schedule and some initial reading (further references will be provided throughout the course):

Session 1 - Introduction

Syntactic change: Introduction and methodological issues.

Reading:

- Kroch, A. 2000. Syntactic Change. In M. Baltin and C. Collins (eds.), *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell. 699-729.
- Pintzuk, S. 2003. Variationist Approaches to Syntactic Change. In B.D. Joseph and R.D. Janda (eds.), *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell. 509-528.

Sessions 1 to 4 – Verb Second

- The development of subject-verb inversion in the history of English.
- Diachronic aspects of subject-verb inversion in other Germanic languages (and Romance).
- Subject-verb inversion in Hiberno-English imperatives – a case of change in progress.

Reading:

- Eythórsson, T. 1996. Functional Categories, Cliticization, and Verb Movement in the Early Germanic Languages. In H. Thráinsson, S. Epstein and S. Peter (eds.), *Studies in Comparative Germanic Syntax II*, Dordrecht: Kluwer. 109-139.
- Haeberli, E. 2002. Observations on the Loss of Verb Second in the History of English. In C.J.W. Zwart and W. Abraham (eds.), *Studies in Comparative Germanic Syntax*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 245-272
- Henry, A. 1997. Viewing Change in Progress: The Loss of V2 in Hiberno-English Imperatives. In A. van Kemenade and N. Vincent (eds.), *Parameters of Morphosyntactic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 273-296.

Sessions 5 and 6 – V-to-I movement

- V-to-I movement in the history of English: Verb movement in Old and Middle English, the rise of *do*-support in Early Modern English.

- The loss of V-to-I movement in Scandinavian.

Kroch, A. 1989. Reflexes of Grammar in Patterns of Language Change. *Language Variation and Change* 1: 199-244.

Vikner, S. 1997. V-to-I Movement and Inflection for Person in all Tenses. In L. Haegeman (ed.), *The New Comparative Syntax*, 189-213. London: Longman.

Sessions 7 and 8 – Directionality (OV/VO; V-Aux/Aux-V)

- The change from OV to VO in early English.
- OV/VO in the history of other Germanic languages.

Biberauer, T. and I. Roberts. 2005. Changing EPP Parameters in the History of English: Accounting for Variation and Change. *English Language and Linguistics* 9:5-46.

Pintzuk, S. 2005. Arguments against a Universal Base: Evidence from Old English. *English Language and Linguistics* 9:115-138.

Level: Intermediate to advanced.

Prerequisite: Basic knowledge of generative syntactic theory (Principles and Parameter, Minimalism).

Credits: 6. Obtained on the basis of attendance and submission of a short paper.