

Multiple Causation in Syntactic Change: Romance subordination

KOLDO SAINZ

koldosainz@hotmail.es

1. In what follows, I will outline an approach to syntactic change which, following [1], stresses the difference between *effective causes*, i.e. the factors that induce learners to prefer the innovative structure, and *enabling causes*, the ones that make the structure attainable by the learner. In fact, I will adopt an even richer approach to causation with a clear aristotelian flavor, which will be embodied in an internalist approach to acquisition and change. Here, I will consider how this model applies to the development of subordination from Latin to Romance.

2. Causal Nets (=CNs) Model.

I distinguish two subparts in the LAD, which configure a Causal Net.:

1) **Triggering Module =efficient cause (=EC)** involving an ambiguous set of PLD, or two conflicting subsets, pointing to two different parameter settings.

2) **Problem Solving Module**, understood as a (chaotic) attractor and decomposed as follows:

2.1) **Material Cause (=MC)**: a sequence of elements providing the basis of the new structure.

2.2) **Formal Cause(=FC)**: the formal pattern that will be analogically extended.

2.3) **UG/Principles of Simpler Computation**: understood as a *preference metric* that could be formulated as a series of ranked constraints. *However, unlike in the OT-approaches, lg. variation/change does not involve constraint re-ranking, instead it arises from the fact that certain more highly ranked options are not available, since they are not part of 2.1), or 2.2).*

Hence, this approach has a number of salient properties, some of which are the following:

3. Some relevant properties of CNs.

1.- CNs solve acquisition problems in *local terms*: the simpler/more economic solution to a certain ambiguity/uncertainty in parameter setting may add more complexity in other areas, so that the overall complexity of the system remains stable and no *drift* emerges,

2.- **EC: Ambiguity/Opacity** may play a crucial role in change, but not necessarily: *asymmetries* in word order, case, etc. may also act as efficient triggers, as in the case of word order harmony.

3.- **MC vs. FC** can be viewed as an instance of the interaction of *Reanalysis (=MC)* and *Extension (=FC)* in the sense of [2]. I claim that a material basis is always needed, direct access to preferable or more highly ranked options in UG terms being therefore precluded, contra [3].

4.- **FC**: its existence can be considered an instance of the superset bias advocated for in [4]

5.- **UG and Computational Simplicity**. In 2.3) there is a crucial issue concerning the status of computational simplicity: either it belongs to UG or it is part of the *third factor*, or it is a specific property of the LAD: the latter option may imply explanatory discontinuity in the sense of [5], but I leave the question open. In any case, following [4], I assume that there are no true UG parameters, except for the very limited array of options considered in [6].

3. Romance finite subordination I: the emergence of *quod/quia*

Relying on the account in [7], vol.II, ch. 9.3, I argue that Romance finite complementation emerged from Latin clauses headed by *quod/quia* as follows:

1) **Efficient cause**: the trigger was the ambiguity of contexts where it wasn't clear if *quod*-clauses were extraposed, indexed with a neuter noun or a null S/O, or complements of V, as in: (1) *scitis rem narraui uobis quod uostra opera mi opus siet* (Plautus, *Poenulus* 547)

know-2pl thing-Acc told-1sg you-Dat.pl that your help-Nom.sg me.Dat need be.Subj-3sg.

'You know the situation I explained to you that I need your help'

Where the *quod* clause is analyzed as indexed with an implicit object or as a V complement.

2.1)Material Cause: the existence of sequences where the *quod* clause was coindexed with a FACT nominal, first with subjunctive as in (2), and only later with indicatives, as in (2) below:

(2)*scio iam filius quod amet meus/ istanc meretricem* (Plautus, *Asinaria* 52)

know-1sg already son-Nom that love-Subj-3sg my that-Acc wench-Acc.

‘I already know that my son is having a fling with that courtesan’

2.2)Formal Cause: the structure involved in complements of factive-emotive Vs, where the *quod* clause acted as quasi-causal complements stating the source of emotion, as in (3):

(3)*sane gaudeo quod te interpellavi* (Cicero, *De Legibus* 3.1.)

Soundly rejoice-1sg that you.Acc interrupt-Perf-1sg

‘I am overjoyed that I interrupted you’

2.3)UG/Principles of Simpler Computation: asymmetric rightward adjunction is more complex than a head complement structure, hence $[_{TP} TP CP] > [_V V CP]$. It is unclear whether this statement is given by UG for free, or it is a third factor principle: since head complement merger is the simplest operation, the first possibility seems more likely, but if we assume that adjunctions implicate the previous labeling of the phrase adjuncts are attached to, an interesting problem emerges with respect to timing of labeling and merge, an issue I leave open here.

Some caveats about MC vs. FC. Under this approach, one may ask why we don’t invert the causal roles and claim, e.g., that factive complements were the FC, and quasi-causal factive-emotive ones acted as the MC. There is an important reason: purely factive structures alternate with cases where this FACT nominal is overtly expressed, as in (4):

(4)*hoc scio quod scribit nulla puella tibi* (Martial 11.64.2)

This know-1sg that write-3sg no.Fem girl.Fem.Nom you.Dat

‘I know (this,) that no girl is writing to you’

This overt (pro)nominal is absent from the quasi-causal factive emotive structures seen in (3): this indicates that they acted as a true formal pattern, which provided abstract evidence for the analogical extension of the possible reanalysis of complements of purely factive Vs..

4.Romance Subordination II: the loss of *ut*.

In a nutshell, I argue that the **UG/Simpler Computation Principle** involved was *the impossibility of the Latin-like system of Multiple Exponence of Mood in C and T once the positional licensing of arguments (=A-position for preverbal subjects) emerged in Romance.*

This account is embodied in a much larger picture concerning the impossibility of Tense-doubling in SV languages (*that-ed Mary talk-ed), as opposed to well-known Agreement-doubling and the availability of Mood-doubling just under C-split, as in [8] with the subjunctive complementizer in Force and V bearing [+Mood] in Fin.: arguably, this was not the case in Late/Vulgar Latin *ut* SV sequences, which involved S in SPEC TP, precisely the kind of configuration that was prone to change. Since *ut* was substituted by *quod/quia*, its dismissal is an incomplete CN, somehow acting as the trigger of all the changes detailed in 3..

References:

- [1]Kiparsky(1996):The Shift to Head-Initial VP in Germanic. In Thráinsson et al. (1996).
- [2]Harris & Campbell(1995):Historical Syntax in Cross-linguistic perspective. C.U.P.
- [3]Kiparsky(2012):Grammaticalization as Optimization. In D.Jonas et al. eds.:*Grammatical Change*.OUP
- [4] Boeckx(2008): Approaching Parameters from below. Ms. Harvard U.
- [5]Yang(2002):Knowledge and Learning in Natural Language. O.U.P.
- [6]Longobardi(2005):A minimalist program for parametric linguistics?. In H. Broekhuis et al.,eds.:*Organizing Grammar*.Berlin: Mouton/de Gruyter
- [7]Miller(2010):Language Change and Linguistic Theory.O.U.P.
- [8]Ledgeway(2012): The fall and rise of the Romance subjunctive. Handout talk at DiGS 14, Lisbon.