

Structure and Variation of Relative Clauses in the History of Norwegian

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This study examines relative clauses throughout earlier stages of Norwegian and connects a shift in relative clause variation with parallel structural changes that take place in Middle Norwegian (MNw). Using evidence from early runic inscriptions, Old Norse, and a corpus of 300 MNw letters written between 1275 and 1450, we provide a diachronic analysis of relative clause variation while positing a unified account of relative clause structure in the history of Norwegian, addressing facts concerning overt case marking which are problematic in Kayne's (1994) raising approach to relatives.

We examine a variety of relative clause types in early Scandinavian/Norwegian but focus mainly on a unique subset of examples that overlap with each other in Old Norse. Relative clauses may be marked by a combination of a demonstrative pronoun and an uninflected relative particle which we analyze as a relative complementizer (*er* or *sem*), as in (1) and (2), or by the complementizer by itself, as in (3) (from Áfarli 1995):

- (1) *hann kemr á fund ármannz þess er Áki hét*
he meets civil servant (GEN) that(GEN) (which) Aki is-called
- (2) *ok ólust þaðan of mankindir þeim er bygðin var gefin undir Miðgarði*
and afterwards there grew up many peoples(NOM) those(DAT) (which) home was given on earth
- (3) *hann tekr hest er Gunnar átti*
he takes the horse that Gunnar owned

In (1), the relative pronoun reflects the morphological features of the correlate in the matrix clause, and in (2), the pronoun exhibits case required by the verb of the relative clause. In both examples, the relative pronoun directly follows the correlate. In (3), the relative complementizer *er* acts alone. During the MNw period, examples like (1) and (2) disappear and relative clauses like (3) become the norm, as the older particle *er/en* gives way to *sem/som* in the 14th and 15th centuries.

The shift to this third type of relative clause type and the decline of the first two coincides with changes in the order of elements in MNw DPs. Old Norse allowed for variation in the order of a genitive complement and its head noun, as in (4) and (5) (from Faarlund 2004:60):

- (4) *hverr valid er verks þessi*
who perpetrator is deed this
- (5) *var þeira dóttir Húngerðr*
was their daughter Hungerd

Empirical analysis of the MNw corpus, however, indicates that this variation slowly disappears by the middle of the 15th century as the order in (5) becomes categorical.

We connect this change in the order of nominal elements in (4) to the loss of relative clause examples like (1) in which the relative pronoun follows the correlate and agrees with its case. Furthermore, we argue for an analysis which accounts for the different case-matching patterns in (1) and (2). Following Platzack (2000) and Julien (2005), we posit an analysis that departs from Kayne's (1994) and Bianchi's (2000) raising approach to relative clauses, suggesting instead that the relative clause is a complement of N^o and the correlate is generated outside the relative clause, as in [_{DP} D^o

... [_{NP} ...N^o CP]]. Since the correlate and the operator originate separately in (2), they can be case-marked independently. To account for (1), we suggest that the correlate is in Spec-DP, *þeim* is realized in D, and the operator remains phonologically empty. Example (3) follows straightforwardly from any analysis in which the relative complementizer is realized in C^o and the correlate is, as in examples (1) and (2), generated outside the relative clause.

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