

A Transformational Analysis of the so-called "Impersonal Construction"

by

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§ 1

In this paper, I want to treat the so-called 'Impersonal construction', one of the commonest linguistic phenomena in Old English and Middle English. This paper is, needless to say, merely tentative. My examples are taken from Chaucer, and are considered in relation to Modern English.

Though there arose radical linguistic changes throughout the whole ME period, a gradual transition from 'impersonal' to 'personal' construction appeared in the day of Chaucer, too.¹⁾ For example, according to Kerkhof, *liken* occurs fairly frequently with the oblique, but no instance has been found with the nominative, and *listen* seems to occur only once with the nominative; *thinken* with the nominative in the sense of ModE 'to think' or 'to intend' is very common and likewise with the oblique in the sense of ModE 'to seem.'²⁾

It might be possible for us to analyze these phenomena from the view-point of loss of inflection, establishment of word order, case-shifting and so on when we consider this period in which the same word could appear in both 'personal' and 'impersonal' constructions. But my approach will be done transformationally.

§ 2

To begin with, we should readjust the meaning of 'Case' here, and the following from Curme would be one of the representative definitions from the traditional standpoint:

"Case is that form of a noun or pronoun which makes it as the subject of a verb, or as the object of a verb, adjective, or

preposition, or as playing the part of an adjective or an adverb."³

We must distinguish 'Case form' from 'Case relation' when we consider case relationship. This is a logically inevitable result if we make a distinction between surface and deep structure. This standpoint, which is not new in the least, would be supported by the linguistic fact as follows:⁴

- 1) John broke the window
- 2) a hammer broke the window
- 3) John broke the window with a hammer

All the sentences 1) - 3) are grammatical, but neither 4) nor 5) is grammatical, unless we think of particular personification,

- 4) *John and a hammer broke the window
- 5) *a hammer broke the glass with a chisel

but 6) is grammatical

- 6) a hammer and a chisel broke the window.

Though ModE has lost all the case affixes — that is, suffixes — except the genitive, on the other hand, it has produced a feeling that the position before a verb is generally the place for the nominative.^{11(a)} The fact that the sentences 4), 5) cannot but be ungrammatical would be due to the principle that we cannot combine under the same case form two or more than two case relations which differ in underlying structure. That is, in sentence 4), *John* is an (A)gentive as in 1), *a hammer* is an (I)nstrumental as in 2) in the underlying structure. And *a hammer* and *a chisel* are both (I)nstrumentals in this underlying structure. And the latter takes the preposition *with* as a case marker as in 3). Briefly, sentences 4) and 5) are against the principle.

Then, what case relationship should we set up in the deep structure? Fillmore sets up (D)ative, (F)active, (L)ocative, (O)bjective, (B)enefactive and so on, besides (A) and (I).⁵ His (O) which he once called *Ergative* is a particular one, and he explains as follows:

"the semantically most neutral case, the case of anything representable by a noun whose role in the action or state identified by the verb is identified by the semantic interpretation of the verb itself; conceivably the concept should be limited to things which are affected by the action or state identified by the verb,

The term is not to be confused with the notion Direct Object, nor with the name of the surface synonymous with Accusative." Verbs are dominated by such Cases, which as we have seen, are inherent syntactic features, and at the same time, sentences furnish case environments or case frames. For example, in

7) I showed him my pictures

the sentence provides the frame feature [---O+D+A], and *show* has the syntactic feature+ [---O+D+A], and because of this, this verb can be inserted there.

Hitherto we have followed Fillmore, but we should consider in some detail what status ought to be given to Cases and how they should be brought to the surface structure. Though noun phrases should be dominated by nodes indicating case relationships for several reasons,⁷⁾ we cannot take them into such a base phrase marker as given by Chomsky, if we follow Fillmore, and this brings us to another difficult situation, even if we can solve the problem of 'cases.' So I want to search for a new method here. That is, I limit Cases to five; (A)gentive, (O)bjective, (D)ative, (G)enitive and (I)nstrumental in the deep structure, not following Fillmore's cases which would become quite numerous, because he seems to think of them only from a semantic point of view.⁶⁾

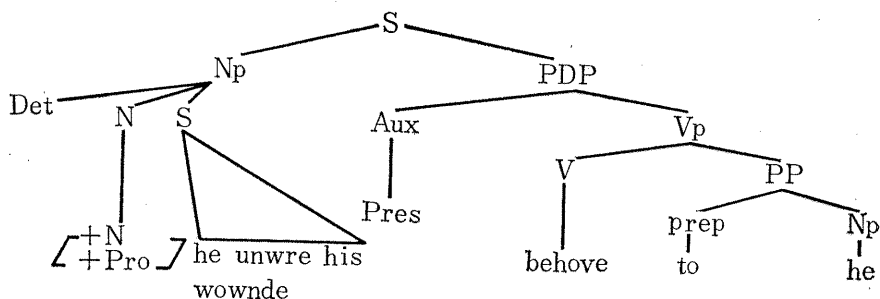
Now let's examine some examples. The following sentences are all grammatical and the same in cognitive meaning.

- 8) i) (to) hym byhoveth (to) unwre his wownde
- ii) (to) hym byhoveth that he unwreth his wownde
- iii) it byhoveth (to) hym that he unwreth his wownde
- iv) it byhoveth (to) hym (to) unwre his wownde

There are some transformational differences between i), ii) and iii), iv), and from the view-point of Complementizers (*for*) *to*, *that*, i), iv) and ii), iii) make the same groups, respectively.

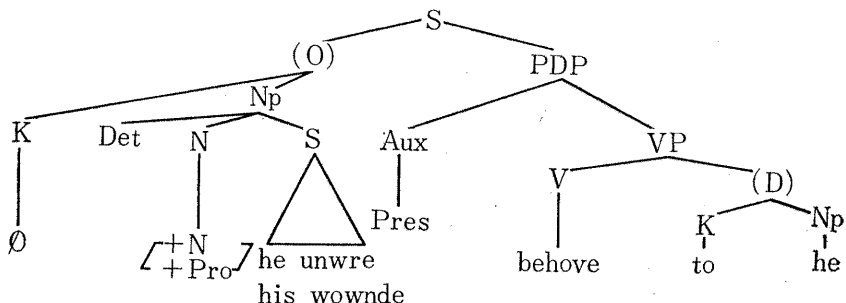
The underlying structure for the sentence 8) is something like this:

Fig. 1



In Fig. 1, Cases are not indicated, but here I show tentatively how we should place them in the tree diagram essentially of the type Fig. 1. It would be like this;

Fig. 2



Np's are all dominated by such nodes as (A), (D), (O), (G) and (I) which show case relationships.

Case categories can be either a prep. or an affix. That is, we have such a rule as follows:

9) Case \rightarrow K+Np

a K \rightarrow $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{prep.} \\ \text{affix} \end{array} \right\}$ (affix includes Ø)

b K \rightarrow null / [K+[Ø]Np] Case

(K=case-marker)

And I adopt a 'spelling rule' like 10), which Rosenbaum has set up for other reasons⁹⁾ — this shows this rule is not *ad hoc*.

$$10) \quad \begin{bmatrix} +N \\ +Pro \end{bmatrix} \longrightarrow it / [[\text{---}] N] Np$$

And we should postulate Expletive placement transformation in relation to 10).

11) T Expletive Placement (obligatory)

X-V-Y(-Np-Z)

[+Dat.]

$$1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5 \longrightarrow 1 + \begin{bmatrix} +N \\ +Pro \end{bmatrix} Np \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5$$

/neither 1 nor 3 contains any Np.

Furthermore, we need to think of Number in verbs. Verbs are singular in an 'impersonal' construction, and in order to guarantee this, we have only to set up the rule 12).

12) V \longrightarrow V [+Sg] / Np-X-V-Y

[+Dat.]

(obligatory but there are some exceptions)

§ 3

In the last section, we have seen the so-called 'impersonal construction', though insufficiently. Here, I think we had better make a readjustment concerning this construction in Chaucer. 'Impersonal construction' could be classified into such types as follows :

Types

- A) Oblique Np-V
- B) Oblique Np-V-Prep Np
- C) Oblique Np-V-Np
- D) Oblique Np-V-that S
- E) Oblique Np-V-inf.
- F) It-V-oblique Np-inf.
- G) It-V-oblique Np-that S
- H) It-V-(un)to Np-inf.
- I) It-V-(un)to Np-that S
- J) It-V-inf.
- K) It-V-that S
- L) It-V-(un)to Np

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- M) It-V-oblique Np
- N) It-V
- O) It-V-oblique Np-Prep Np
- P) V-that S

Examples

A) oblique Np-X-impers V-Y

- 1 every wight may entre whan hym liketh Melibee 1039
- 2 She may have bettre fortune than yow semeth Franklin 1497
- 3 Whan they were slayn, so thursted hym that he/.
Was wel ny lorn Monk 2039-40
- 4 Although thee ones on a tyme mysfille Knight 2388
- 5 But if yow list, my tale shul ye heere Franklin 728

B) oblique Np-X-impersV-Y-prep Np-Z

- 1 At every tyme that me remembreth of the day of doom I quake
Parson 159
- 2 Or him repenteth outrely of this LGW 368

C) oblique Np-X-impers V-Y-Np-Z

- 1 For certes, lord, so wel us liketh yow/And al youre werk
Clerk 106-07
- 2 me list hit noght H of F 1564
- 3 Hire liketh wel his port and his manere LGW 2453
- 4 Hym mette a wonder dreem agayn the day Nun's priest 3078

D) oblique Np-X-impers V-Y-(that) S-Z

- 1 Hym semed that he felte his herte colde Franklin 1023
- 2 evere semeth me that the trompe sowneth in myn ere Parson 160
- 3 Me thynketh that it were a wonder dede Second N. P 308
- 4 Hym thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee Nun's Priest 3011

E) oblique Np-X-impers V-Y-inf-Z

- 1 Ful oft hym happeth to mysusen it Canon's Yeoman 649
- 2 To asken help thee shameth in thyn herte Man of Law's Prol
101
- 3 And now me lyketh to withdrawe me Fortune 59
- 4 Hem semed han geten hem protecciouns Squire 56
- 5 And everich hath of God a propre yifte,/ Som this, som that, as

hym liketh shifte Wife of Bath 103-04

6 But that me list declaren my sentence Knight 3002

7 To hym byhoveth first unwre his wownde T & C i 858

F) it-W-impers V-X-oblique Np-Y-inf-Z

1 It liketh me to schewe by subtil soong Boece iii m2 1

2 It liketh hem to be clene, body and goost Wife of B's Prol 97

3 And in his wey it happed hym to ryde Wife of Bath 989

4 Yit happeth me ful ofte in bokes reede / Of his myrakles and his crewel yre Parliament of F 10-11

G) it-W-impers V-X-oblique Np-Y (that)S-Z

1 But sith it liketh yow that I be ded T & C ii 442

2 Hit fortuneth me that I was a slepe in the wyndowe Malory (Visser)

H) it-W-impers V-X-unto Np-Y-inf-Z

1 it aperteneth nat to a wys man to make swich a sorwe Melibee 981

2 it lyke unto youre grete goodnesse to lymyte us or assigne us Melibee 1766

3 It nedeth nat to yow reherce it moore Franklin 1594

I) it-W-impers V-X-unto Np-Y-that S-Z

1 it spedeth to hym that a myln stoon...be hanged in his necke Wyclif (Visser)

2 it spedith to you that o man die for the puple Wyclif (OED)

3 It liketh to youre fader and to me / That I yow wedde Clerk 345-46

J) it-X-impers V-Y-inf-Z

1 it may nat avaunce, / For to deelen with no swich poraille General Prol 246-47

2 I seye that yvele it sit / To assaye a wyf whan that it is no nede Clerk 460-61

3 for somtyme bihooveth it to been conseilled by manye Melibee 1170

K) it-X-impers V-Y-that S-Z

1 And it bihooveth that a man putte swich attemperance in his defense Melibee 1535

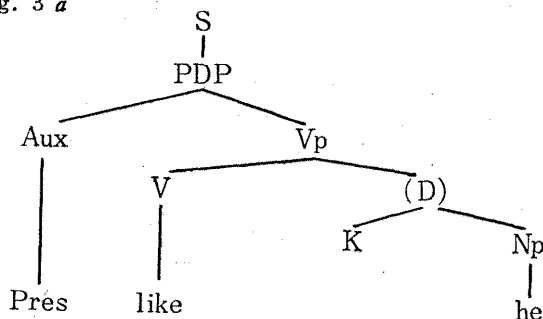
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- 2 Hit happed that I cam on a day / Into a place ther that I say
Book of D 805-06
- 3 it byfalleth that he that thow wenest be glorious and renomede
semeth in the nexte partie of the erthes to ben withouten glorie and
withouten renoun Boece iii p6 24-27
- L) it-X-impers V-Y-unto Np-Z
- 1 But if it lyke to this compaignye, / I wol yow of a somonour
telle a game Friair's Prol 1278-79
- 2 If that it like unto youre wommanhede T & C iii 1302
- 3 "As it liketh to the," quod I, "so do." Boece iv p6 40
- M) it-X-impers V-Y-oblique Np-Z
- 1 I am free To wedde, a Goddes half, where it liketh me Wife
of B 50
- 2 I prey to God that it may plesen yow Squire 707
- N) it-X-impers V-Ø
- it bloweth (clereth, raineth, etc.)
- O) Ø-X-impers V-Y-that S-Z
- Bifil that in that seson on a day, / In Southwerk at the Tabard
as I lay / Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage / To Caunterbury
with ful devout corage, / At nyght was come into that hostelrye /
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye, / Of sondry folk, by
aventure yfalle / In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle, /
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde. General Prol 19-27
- P) it-W-impers V-X-oblique Np-Y-prep Np-Z
- But, Lord Crist!. whan that it remembreth me / Upon my
youthes and on my jolitee, / It tikleth me aboute myne herte
roote. Wife of B 469-71

§ 4

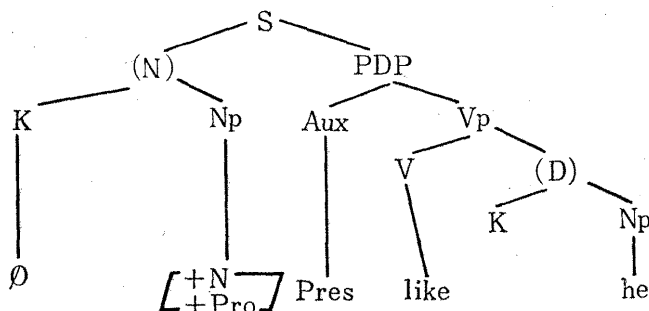
Let's examine how the sentences which we have seen in the previous section are generated, from the deep to the surface structures. How are the base P-markers in the type A)? The underlying structure of A) 1 would be something like

Fig. 3 a



But this is a clumsy and exceptional style in English. This so-called 'subjectless' sentence should be altered into *b* style by an attachment transformation 11)

Fig. 3 b



If we apply rules 9) *a* and 10) to this derived P-marker, we can get

- i) it liketh him
- ii) it liketh (un)to him

Both i) and ii) belong to the same pattern as M) and L), respectively. These sentences are grammatical and, furthermore, justified by the data.

Next I will examine some problems concerning iii), which belongs to A) type, and iv), which is a personal construction.

- iii) him liketh
- iv) he liketh

To Fig. 3 a, we apply the transformational rule as follows :

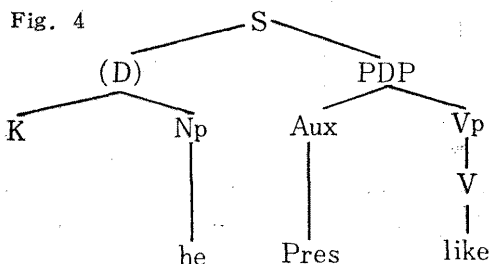
13) T Expletive replacement by Dative Np (optional)

X- $[\Delta]$ Np-Y-V-Np-Z

[+Dat]

1 2 3 4 5 6 \longrightarrow 1 5 3 4 \emptyset 6

and we would get a derived P-marker like Fig. 4



Then we apply the rules 9) and 12) to this P-marker, and we might get the sentence iii). In other words, an agreement would not arise between $[[he] Np] (D)$ and *like* in Fig. 4. That is, 'it liketh them' becomes 'them liketh', not 'them like.' But this is only a general tendency, and we know some exceptions. See note 10 for some exceptions and examples of unstable characters.

In Fig. 4, if we choose $K \rightarrow \text{Prep.}$ in the application of 9) a, v) will be generated

v) (un) to him liketh

This type is obviously possible in the context such as i) ii) of 8), but it cannot be assured because of the lack of data whether v) can appear solely or not.

In the rule 9) a, if we choose $K \rightarrow \text{affix}$, we would get iii), which will be justified by our data.

Now, let's examine iv), *he liketh* which has already been altered into a 'personal construction.' Kerkhof says there is no instance of this type concerning *liken* in Chaucer.²⁾ But we can find some examples in which this verb takes a *noun*, *whoso*, *whyche* etc as its subject, and furthermore the next example 14), seen also in OED, is not anything else if not this type. So we should think the verb *liken* has already been used as a 'personal verb' in Chaucer.¹⁰⁾

14) And, for he was a straunger, somwhat she

Liked hym the bet,

The Legend of Good Women 1075-76

When we investigate iv) type sentences like 14), we had better take some historical reasons into our consideration. That is, *he liketh* is of more recent origin than *him liketh*, and was probably a stylistic variant of the latter form, originally. According to Fries, there were such circumstances as follows, behind the transition from 'him liketh' to 'he liketh,'

'Certain positions in the English sentence have come to be felt as "subject" territory, others as "object" territory and the forms of words in each territory are *Pressed to adjust themselves to the character of that territory*.... Our Modern English "I was given a book" furnishes a good illustration of the pressure of word order, The Old English "Me waes gegiefan a boc," with the dative pronoun standing first, was a common construction. It was only after word order had become a vigorous device for the showing of grammatical relationships that the dative *me* standing in "subject" territory was changed to the nominative *I*,'

11 b

The phenomena referred to in note 10 should be considered against such a historical background.

The transition from 'It am I' to 'It's me' might have some relation to this.¹²⁾ In other words, the full grammatical form 'him liketh,' 'them liketh' came to be altered into 'he liketh,' 'they like' under the 'pressure of position,' as being stylistic inversions. They would have been interchangeable in Chaucer's days. To explain this process, I set up such a rule as follows:

15) T Case changing from Dative to Nominative (optional)

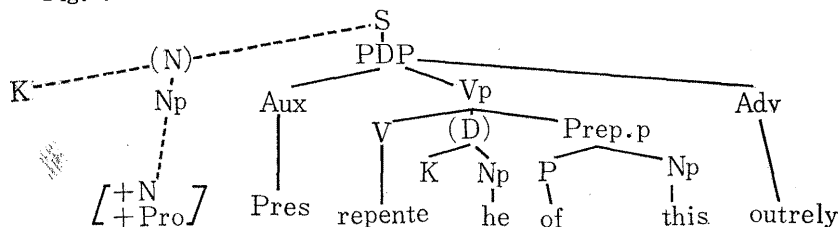
[[NP]] (D) -X-V-Y → [[NP]] (N) -X-V-Y

with this transformation and phonological rules of concord, we can get iv) from iii). The situations would be almost the same in 'me waes given a book' → 'I was given a book' and so on.

Now let's examine another type, the sentences of type B). The underlying structure of B) 2, 'him repenteth outrelly of this' would be something

like ;

Fig. 7



(Dots show that this 'subjectless' P-marker should be changed thus by the obligatory transformation 11).)

The status of the prepositional phrase 'of this' in Fig. 7 is not clear, so I want to avoid making a definitive statement. This was expressed as (G)-enitive in OE, and in the majority of cases it expresses the cause or the occasion of action or state denoted by the verb it qualifies. Though complement sentences in 'It repented him that he let go Demetrius,' 'Hym repented that he cam there,' (OED s. v. *repent*) seem to me subject Np complements, which might be (O) in the base P-marker, 'of this' in B) 2 would be an adverbial element. We have sentences as follows :

i) It shall not *repent* them *of* yt service.

Sleidane's Comm. (OED)

ii) But, Lord Crist! whan that it *remembreth* me / *Upon* my youthe and *on* my jolitee, / It tikleth ne aboute myne herte roote. (Cf P))

Sentences i), ii) would support my opinion. Visser calls such a prepositional phrase as 'of this' in Fig. 7 'causative object,' but this name is rather misleading as he himself admits. '*Of*' is far more frequent than any other preposition, but we often find *with*, *at*, *for*, *by* and so on, too. Almost the same thing in A) group can be said about transformations, but if *prep* is not chosen in this so-called 'causative object,' there would be generated C) type sentences, For example, the underlying structure of C) 3 can be shown as a tree diagram like

Fig. 8 a

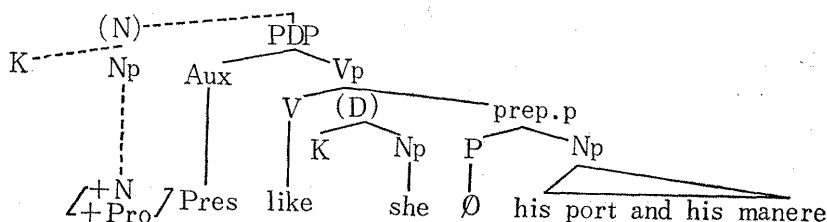
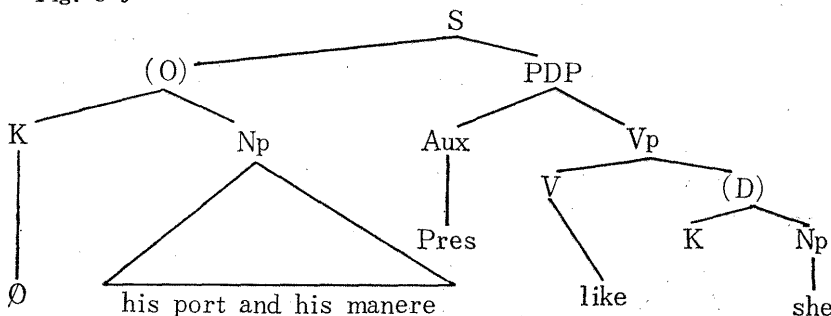


Fig. 8 b



Concerning Np like [his port and his manere]_{Np} in Fig. 8, Visser says as follows :

'When the complement of the verb is not a noun in genitive, but a noun in zero case, it is not clear whether this complement must be looked upon as a causative object or as a subject.' 13

That is, the sentence like 16)

16) when pou fels joyin Criste luf, pe wil lathe with pe joy of pis worlde. Hampole (Visser)

means (i) 'You will be disgusted because of this worldly joy,' but the sentence like 17)

17) ..., pe wil lathe pe joy of pis world can mean (ii) 'This worldly joy will disgust you,' besides (i). But Visser says ' [C] 1] would seem to plead against the interpretation of the (pro) noun complement as a subject.' (op. cit. p.25) It is clear that if 'yow and youre werk' were a subject in the sentence 'us liketh yow and youre werk' (cf C) 1), *liketh* must be altered into *liken*. Cf him *deaupe* þa *aeren*/him *dimmeþ* þa *eizen*

I want to agree with Visser in this case, though we cannot ascertain whether the people of the time felt so or not.

Historically, the interpretations of *a*, *b* would be both possible. But the interpretation of *a* seems more reasonable. Though it is not clear whether [his port and his manere] Np should be dominated by either prep. or (O) in the sense of Fillmore, this Np might be dominated by (O) and be realized as (A)ccusative in the surface structure.

C) 4 presents quite a difficult problem for me to solve here. I could not find any example in which the verb *mete* took the expletive 'it' as a subject in Chaucer, nor in OED. We must regard the underlying structure of C) 4 as either *c* or *d*, if we follow OED (cf. OED s. v. *mete* v²).

Fig. 8 c

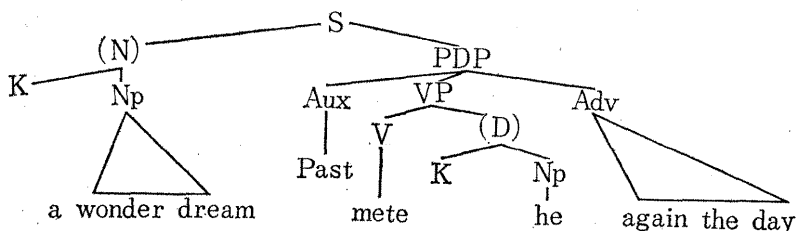
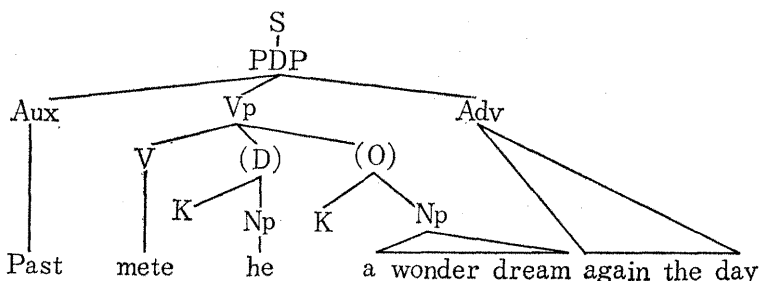


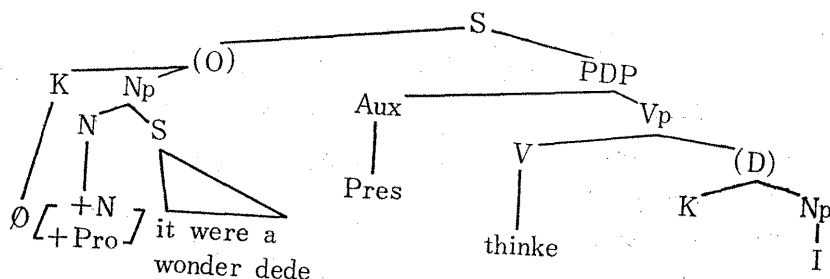
Fig. 8 d



But the possibility of 'a wonder dream' being an Np dominated directly by S is very slight, as we have seen. And I think *d* is better, though we cannot apply the expletive placement transformation 11) to this P-marker exceptionally, or we must consider the rule 13) as obligatory in this case, if we should apply the rule 11) to this P-marker. Anyway, this seems an accidental gap to me.

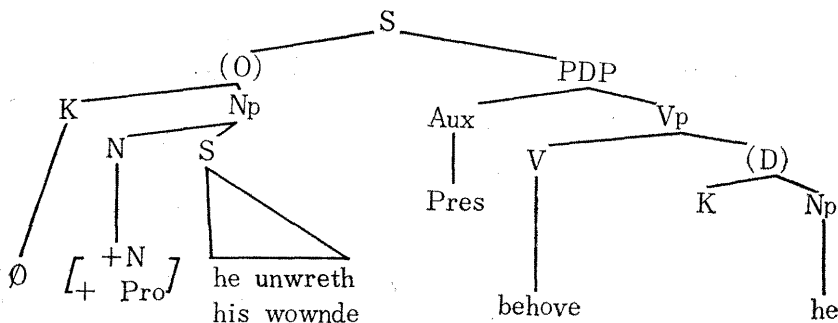
There can arise some dubious problems concerning the status of '(that)S' in the case of the type D), too.¹⁴⁾ D) 3 seems to have an underlying structure as follows :

Fig. 9



Sentences of D) take 'that' complementizer, which can be deleted as in D) 4. But if they take 'inf' complementizers, they will be the same as the E) type. It is not certain, though a complement sentence with 'inf' complementizer is sometimes placed before the verb, whether it is a causative object or a subject, as in the case of 'that' complementizer'¹⁵⁾ I shall treat complement sentences later in some detail but here let's examine the relation between D), E) and F) - I). Sentences of F) and G) choose affixes (suffixes) when rule 9) *a* is applied, while H) and I) choose prep. in that case. But there would be no difference in the underlying structure, as we have seen. The underlying structure of E) 7 would be something like

Fig. 10



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To this P-marker, we apply Complementizer transformation (which is to be investigated later), and we get

- i) $[[\Delta]_N[\text{he (for) to unwre his wownde}]_S]_{Np}$ Pres behave $[\text{he}]_{(D)}$
- ii) $[[\Delta]_N]$ that he unwreth his wownde $]_S]_{Np}$. Pres behave $[\text{he}]_{(D)}$

And then, by the application of Extraposition transformation,

- i') $[[\Delta]_N]_{Np}[\text{Pres behave } [\text{he}]_{(D)}[\text{he (for) to unwre his wownde}]_S]_{Vp}$
- ii') $[[\Delta]_N]_{Np}[\text{Pres behave } [\text{he}]_{(D)}[\text{that he unwreth his wownde}]_S]_{Vp}$

And then, by Identity erasure transformation,

- i'') $[[\Delta]_N]_{Np}[\text{pres behave } [\text{he}]_{(D)}[(\text{for) to unwre his wownde}]_S]_{Vp}$
- ii'') no application

We can get sentences as follows, if we apply rules 9), 10) at this stage,

- 18) it behoveth $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{him} \\ \text{unto him} \end{array} \right\}$ (for) to unwre his wownde

In the application of 9), if we choose $K \rightarrow$ affix (suffix), we get 'him' here (i. e F) type), and if we choose $K \rightarrow$ prep, we get '(un) to him' here (i. e H) type).

- 19) it behoveth $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{him} \\ \text{unto him} \end{array} \right\}$ that he unwreth his wownde each of 19)

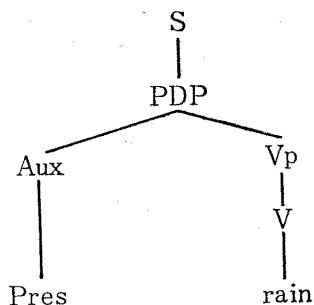
corresponds to G) and I), respectively. But after the identity erasure transformation, if we apply the rule 13) Expletive replacement by Dative Np, optionally, we would get sentences like

- 20) him behoveth $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} (\text{for) to unwre his wownde} \\ \text{that he unwreth his wownde} \end{array} \right\}$

and these are types E), D) sentences, respectively.

Now let's examine J), K) and N) types, N) would have the underlying structure

Fig. 11



We apply the rule 11) Expletive placement transformation to this P-marker and we get $[[\Delta]_N]_{Np}[Aux [rain]_V]_{Vp}$ and then with the 'spelling rule' 10)

21) it raineth

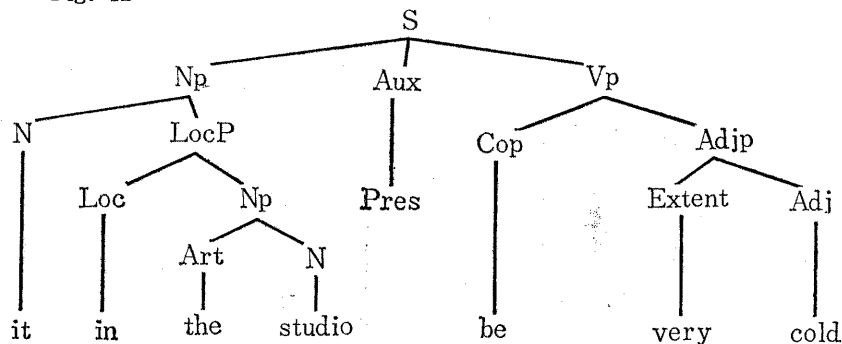
We have a sentence like 22), which is similar to N) type in a sense.

22) i) it is very cold in the studio

ii) the studio is very cold

According to Langendoen (cf. note 6. p.209 in the same book), the underlying structure for 22) would be like

Fig. 12



Base must contain a rewriting rule of the type 23) for us to admit this P-marker.

23)

$$Np \longrightarrow (Det) N \left\{ \begin{array}{l} S \\ LocP \\ MeasureP \\ TimeP \\ of Np \\ etc. \end{array} \right\}$$

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To the structure like Fig. 12, we apply a rule like

24) T Locative extraposition (obligatory)

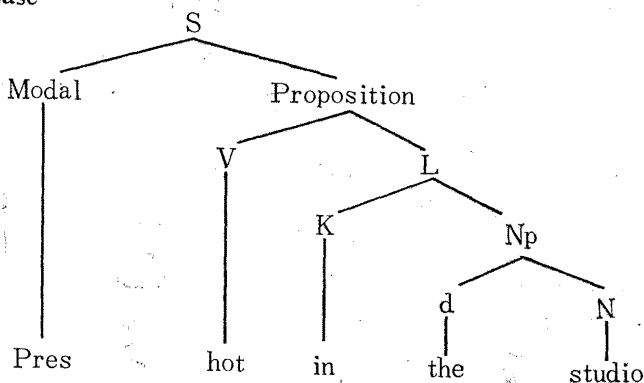
$X \left[\left[\text{it} \right]_{\text{Np}} \right] Y \left[\left\{ \text{in, on, at} \right\} \text{Np} \right]_{\text{Locp}}$

1 2 3 4 \rightarrow 1 \emptyset - 4 3 \emptyset

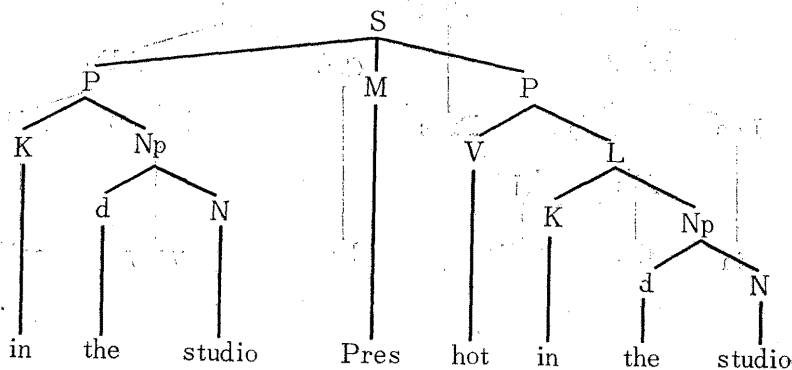
This process of Langendoens is parallel to ours.

Fillmore explains this process in the following way, using 'copying' transformation. (Fillmore op.cit. p.70f.)

a Base



b Copying



c second-copy deletion

the studio is hot

d first-copy deletion

it is hot in the studio

But Fillmore's 'copying' transformation could not explain the sentences like

26) i) It is raining today in Tokyo.

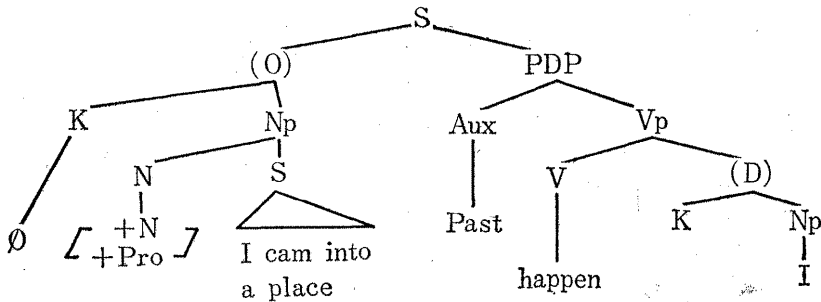
ii) *Tokyo is raining today.

27) i) My stomach hurts me.

ii) *I hurt in my stomach.

The underlying structure of K) 2, with unrelated parts omitted, would be something like

Fig. 13



In types J), K), complement S would be dominated by the node (O) in the deep structure and the dative Np is deleted in its surface structure. But i) cannot be possible in Chaucer.

i) *that I cam into a place happed (to me)

Furthermore, neither of

ii) (for) to come into a place happed (to me)

iii) me (for) to come into a place happed

would be grammatical.

As we have already seen, by applying T Extraposition to Fig. 13 28)

$[[\Delta]_N]_{Np}$ happed (to) me $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{me to come} \\ \text{that I cam} \end{array} \right\}$ into a place

can be obtained, and after that, we can get the following sentences through the application of T Identity erasure,

i) it happed (to) me (for) to come into a place

ii) it happed ((to) me) that I cam into a place

In the sentences of K), Dative Np, which must have been in the deep structure, is easily recognized, but in those of J), it is not always clear. However, if we look carefully, the deleted dative Np would be a generic or indefinite person. This does not violate the principle of 'recoverability.'

There is a variant form of K), which has no 'expletive' it, i. e. O) type. In this type, neither 'it' nor the Dative object is expressed. The reason for this phenomenon is not clear to me, but I can say from our investigation that in this type the sentence introduced by *that* complementizer would be a subject Np complement, which is dominated by (O) in its deep structure, like $[[[\Delta]_{N^S}]_{Np}]_{(O)}-X-Vp-Y$. And if we apply the Expletive deletion transformation like 29) and several phonological rules, without applying the Extraposition transformation,

29) X N S Y

$$\begin{bmatrix} +N \\ +Pro \end{bmatrix}$$

1 2 3 4 \rightarrow 1 \emptyset 3 4

we will get such a clumsy sentence like 30)

30) That in that seson on a day . . . toward Caunterbury wolden ryde bifil. (Cf. O) on page 10)

But this sentence would be prevented from (a) a stylistic reason and (b) the reason we have seen in the note 14. (Cf. OED s. v. *befall* 4 d)

I think we have examined almost every 'impersonal' construction permitted in Chaucer except such as follows.

me were lever / me had better.

But these would be explained in the similar way, and the type 'copula-adj.' shall be treated later in some detail.

From a historical point of view, the general inclination of the replacement from (D) to (N) should be investigated more perfectly. However, this is beyond my intention. But I want to end this chapter by citing instructive passages from Fillmore;

(i) We do not need to agree with Jespersen when he describes the change in English from the type *him likes oysters* to those

of the type *he likes oysters* as reflecting a change in the 'meaning' of the verb *like* from something like "to be agreeable to" to something like "to take pleasure in" (Jespersen: *The Philosophy of Grammar* P. 160). The change seems merely to be a result of the inter-influencing of the two processes of choosing the first word and establishing verbal concord." (*The Case for Case* p. 68)

- (ii) Certain historical changes in language may turn out to be purely syntactic, and, in fact, may pertain exclusively to the status of particular lexical items as exceptions to given transformational rules.

The English verb *like* did not change in its meaning or in its selection for ergative-dative sentences, only in that it lost its status as an exception to the rule that all fronted actants were neutralized to the so-called nominative form.

('A Proposal concerning English prepositions' *Report of the seventeenth annual round table meeting on linguistics and language studies* No. 19, 1966 p.27)

NOTE

1 Mustanoja *Middle English Syntax* p. 434f.

2 Kerkhof *Studies in the Language of Geoffrey Chaucer* p. 147

3 Curme *Accidence* p. 127

4 Fillmore *The Case for Case* p. 42

5 Fillmore op. cit. p. 46f.

6 There can arise some problems concerning the status of prepositions. That is, Fillmore seems to think every prepositional phrase is 'Case-marker+Np' as the natural result of setting up so many 'Cases.'

Cf. (i) The position of preposition can be guaranteed either by having the case categories rewritten as *Prep+Np*, or by having *Prep* be one of the obligatory constituents of Np.

Fillmore op. cit. p. 60

- (ii) I differ from Fillmore in that I distinguish between the *categories* LocP and Np. He would consider a locative expression to be a noun phrase which simply happens to be introduced by a certain kind of preposition.

D. T. Langendoen 'The syntax of the Expletive "it" fn. 5
*Report of the seventeenth annual round table meeting on
linguistics and language studies* No. 19

But I admit only five Cases, as we have already seen. And, of course, I admit prepositional phrases as in Langendoen. If we follow Chomsky's system, this is a matter of course. But if we do so, *Prep. phr.* in the surface structure can be from either *Case-marker + Np* or *Prep. + Np* in the deep structure. This presents some difficult problems for me to consider here in detail. But we must notice that *case forms* in the surface structure (i. e. Nominative, Genitive, Accusative-Dative forms in late ME and ModE) differ from these in the deep structure. These should not be confused.

7 Chomsky *Aspects of the theory of syntax*

'...specified feature [2Case] is introduced by a rule that does not belong to the base subcomponent of the syntax at all but rather to its transformational part,' p. 171

'Notice' for example, that Case is usually determined by the position of the Noun in the surface structure rather than in deep structure, although the surface structures given by stylistic inversions do not affect Case. Even in English, poor as it is in inflection, this can be observed, p. 221 f-note 35

8 Chomsky op. cit. p. 122

9 Rosenbaum *The Grammar of English Predicate Complement Constructions* p. 22

- 10 This period was the time of transition from 'impersonal' to 'personal.' It is not the aim of this chapter to think why it was so. But I want to say a little about it. Visser said, after he thought of the disappearance of an impersonal construction, 'It is therefore hardly possible for a twentieth century linguist to ascertain how speakers and listeners of the time apprehended such sentences as

Juno list nat at the feste be LGW 2249

The servant of God bihoveth nat to chide Parson 630

whoso list hem for to rede Monk 2319'

An Historical Syntax p. 30

Furthermore we can find sentences with 'unstable structural character' such as

Us sholde neyther lakken gold ne gere, / But ben honoured while we dwelten there.

T & C iv 1523-24

Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys, / And graunted hym withouten moore avys,

General Prol. 785-86

But these unstable characters can be explained through our transformational method. But the next one from Ascham contains some problems.

me think this is the wisest counsel. (Visser)

Visser explains this phenomenon as follows:

'Occasionally the form *me* ahd *payn* are kept in spite of the fact *thinketh* and *seemeth* are altered into *think* (e) and *seem* (e) as if the subject were *I* or *they*.

Visser op. cit. p. 31

Cf. H) 2 *it like* ...

11 Fries *American English Grammar*

(a) 'A sentence such as "Him and me hit the man" would normally be interpreted in accord with the word order rather than in accord with the case forms.' p.90

(b) Concerning 'impersonal constructions' Fries says as follows:

The dative with impersonal verbs which appeared frequently in Old English and Middle English also shows the pressure of word order as these constructions were replaced by the nominative form of the pronoun and personal verb. *Him likode* became *He liked*. *Me greues* became *I grieve*.

12 M. Yasui 'It's me' *Studies in English Philology* p. 119f

Fries op. cit. p. 91

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Kerkhof op. cit. p. 142

It *were my wretched clothes*, nothing faire Clerk 850

13 Visser op. cit. p. 24

14 Visser op. cit. p. 25

'The complement of the type 'me briwp' often takes the form of a *that*-clause, e. g. La3amon 4851 'him scomede pat he swa iscend wes'. The probability of this clause not being a causative complement, but the subject, slight, since it is never placed before the verb, and consequently sentences of the type 'pat he swa iscend wes him scomede' are non-existent,'

15 Visser *ibid.* p. 26

○参考文献録割愛

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