



The development of the *as*-Secondary Predicate Construction: constructionalization and internalization



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ABSTRACT

The English Secondary Predicate Construction (SPC) establishes a predicative relation between a Noun Phrase and a Secondary Predicate XP (*I consider him_{NP} intelligent_{XP}*). This relation can be left unmarked in the zero-SPC (*I find it \emptyset complicated*), or it can be signalled by *as* in the *as*-SPC (*I regard him as my friend*). While the developments of the zero-SPC have been well documented, much remains to be said about the evolution of the *as*-SPC and its diachronic relation with the zero-SPC. This paper aims to examine this issue by means of a corpus-based study of the development of the *as*-SPC from Middle English to Late Modern English, and it compares this development with the evolution of the zero-SPC. It is argued that the *as*-SPC was established as a result of grammatical constructionalization of the preposition *as* to a predicative marker, thus paving the way for an internalization process in the *as*-SPC. This internalization process is similar to the one described for the zero-SPC, which may suggest influence from one development on the other. In particular, it is argued that the zero-SPC functioned as the model construction, whose distribution was to a large extent copied by the *as*-SPC. These findings shed new light on diachronic relations in the case of functionally similar constructions.

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1. Introduction: state of the art

In recent years, considerable attention has been given to constructional changes and constructional developments (see, e.g., Israel, 1996; Barðdal, 2008; Petré, 2012; Traugott and Trousdale, 2013). Against that background, the present paper addresses the development of the Secondary Predicate Construction (SPC) and the mechanisms underlying that constructional development.

Secondary Predicate Constructions (SPCs) consist of a [Verb + Noun Phrase + XPhrase]-sequence and involve a (secondary) predicative relation between the Noun Phrase (NP) and a predicate phrase (XPhrase, henceforth abbreviated as XP). Often, the SPC is not explicitly marked (zero-SPC), as in (1). In other types of SPC where the predicative relation is marked, the predicate phrase may be introduced by *as*, as in (2), by *for*, as in (3), and by *to be*, as in (4).

- (1) We [*consider*]_{Verb} [*prompt action*]_{NP} \emptyset [*invariably better than quiet reflection*]_{XP}. (zero-SPC) (PPCMBE, 1908, A.C. Benson, *The schoolmaster*)

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- (2) Under the notion of Protestants, we [*should consider*]_{Verb} [*ourselves*]_{NP} as [*christians reformed*]_{XP}. (as-SPC) (PPCMBE, 1762, J. Burton, *Two sermons preached at Saint Mary's*)
- (3) The rascally knave of a cook [*took*]_{Verb} [*me*]_{NP} for [*some green Six-penny Girl*]_{XP}, and recommended a chicken to me. (PPCMBE, 1745, J. Stevens, *The modern wife; or, the virgin her own rival*)
- (4) And when she [*perceived*]_{Verb} [*her strength*]_{NP} to be [*near exhausted*]_{XP}, she desired all the family to come near. (PPCMBE, 1744, J. Wesley, *An extract of the Reverend Mr. John Wesley's journal*)

This study will particularly document the history of the as-SPC (see (2)) from Middle English to Late Modern English, as well as addressing the mechanisms underlying its development. In that respect, not only construction-internal mechanisms (such as grammatical constructionalization and lexical analogy) will be envisaged, but special attention will be given to mechanisms involving the impact of the functionally similar, and diachronically earlier, Secondary Predicate Construction with a zero-marker (henceforth, the zero-SPC) (see (1)). In other words, given that the as-SPC operates in the same broad functional domain as the zero-SPC (expressing a secondary predicative relation), studying the as-SPC will not only unveil constructional change specific to that SPC, but it will also offer a unique window on how the development of the as-SPC relates to, and has been affected by, developments of the functionally similar zero-SPC (examined in D'hoedt et al., submitted).

Unlike the zero-SPC, the as-SPC has not been widely discussed in the literature¹: Tanaka and Yokogoshi (2010) mention the construction in their discussion of the formal developments of the SPC, and Gries et al. (2005, 2010) as well as Hampe (2014) offer a synchronic overview of the network of the as-SPC. However, a study detailing the developments of the as-SPC in its own right is lacking. It is the aim of this paper to remedy this situation through a corpus-based analysis of the as-SPC from Middle English (ME) to Late Modern English (LMoE), within a constructional (growth) framework.

In what follows, a brief description of the SPCs in general will be provided (Section 2). The data and methodology will be presented in Section 3. In Section 4, we will discuss the development of the as-SPC from Middle English to Late Modern English. It will be argued that as has undergone a process of grammatical constructionalization as it developed from a preposition in adverbials of manner/comparison/similarity to a predicative marker in the Secondary Predicate Construction. The locus of this change can be traced back to the pseudo-causative verb class, which saw a development from similitive to essential uses. This process then opened the possibility for the construction to be used with a wider array of verb classes. In particular, the as-SPC shifted towards more internal uses as it came to be used with verbs representing mental states and cognitive processes. We will refer to this development as 'internalization'. Section 5, then, tries to justify why it is precisely these internal verb classes that typify the expansion of the as-SPC. In this respect, the evidence points to an influence from the zero-SPC on the as-SPC. The zero-SPC, being the older of the two SPCs, will be argued to have undergone a more gradual internalization than the as-SPC. By contrast, in the case of the as-SPC, the internalization process is rather abrupt and is to a large extent the result of copying of the distribution in the zero-SPC. An abrupt development like this is not uncommon in language change: Petré (2012), for instance, demonstrates that the verb *becuman* (originally meaning 'arrive') rapidly grammaticalized into a productive copula meaning 'become' by analogy with productive *weorðan*. Section 6 summarizes the findings and discusses their implications for the theories on mechanisms of language change.

2. SPCs characterized

In previous literature, the Secondary Predicate Construction has received a multitude of labels, with overlapping definitions. These labels include 'Small Clause' (Williams, 1980, 1983; Aarts, 1992, 1997; Haegeman and Guéron, 1999; Hoekstra, 2004; Los, 2005), 'Predicative Complement' (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002; Himmelmann and Schultze-Berndt, 2005), 'Object Complement' (Quirk et al., 1972; Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973), 'Predicative Adjunct' (Visser, 1970) and 'V + NP + Pred-construction' (Denison, 1993).²

The common denominator in these definitions is the predicative nature of the relation between the NP and the XP component: the XP denotes a property that is predicated of the NP (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p. 217), just as a predicate complement in a copular clause denotes a property predicated of the subject. An additional shared feature with copular clauses is that the property predicated of the NP is a *state*.³ It is this predicative, 'state' relation between

¹ Most attention has indeed gone to the zero-SPC, with studies focusing on its internal structure (Williams, 1975, 1983; Stowell, 1983; Safir, 1983; Aarts, 1992), its syntactic classification (Hoekstra, 1988; Basilio, 2003) and on whether the zero-SPC involves subject-to-object-raising (Safir, 1983; Denison, 1993; Los, 2005). In addition, a number of diachronic studies have discussed the initial stages of the zero-SPC (see Miller, 2002 on reflexive verbs in the zero-SPC and Lowrey, 2012 on causative *don* + SPC in Old English) and the relations with the Exceptional Case Marking Construction (Zeitlin, 1908; Bock, 1931; Warner, 1982; Denison, 1993; Los, 2005).

² It should be pointed out that not all labels cover the SPC as envisaged here, i.e. [Verb + NP + XP]: some only refer to the XP slot, or to the semantic (predicative) relation between the NP and XP.

³ Stativity is often defined as part of the state–event dichotomy, which in its turn is linked to a basic, cognitive capacity: the ability to perceive change [i.e. event] (or the lack of change [i.e. state]) over time (see Langacker, 1987, pp. 258–261; Michaelis, 1998, p. 16; Givón, 2001, p. 106). In Croft's (2012) aspectual analysis, this dichotomy is broadened to a tripartite distinction between inherent state (i.e. 'traditional state', as in *The door is open*), acquired state (i.e. 'changed state', as in *The door is shattered*) and activity (i.e. 'traditional event', as in *The girls were singing*) (Croft, 2012, pp. 57–63). Thus, both inherent state (which relates to copula *be*) and acquired state (which relates to copula *become*) fall under the cover term 'state' and both are found in the SPC.

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