

As research into the topics treated in this book progresses in the future, it is likely that the language-internal, discursal and social trends seen as underlying the grammatical changes discussed in this book will have to be reassessed to some extent. The book presents a substantial basis for further inquiries into recent grammatical changes.

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Kiriko Sato. The Development from Case-Forms to Prepositional Constructions in Old English Prose. Linguistic Insights, 88. Bern: Lang, 2009. Pb. 231 pp. € 53,50. ISBN 978-3-03911-763-5.

The most fundamental and most obvious morpho-syntactic features distinguishing Old English from Present-Day English reflect the development of English from a synthetic to an analytic language, a stage considered to have been reached by Early Middle English. One central aspect within this development is the focus of the study under review here, the replacement of case forms by prepositional phrases. Sato aims at investigating the situation in Old English, where both case-forms and prepositional phrases were used in certain semantic functions, such as Instrumentality/Manner, Accompaniment, Point and Duration of Time, Origin, or Specification (for details, see below). This situation is, of course, of crucial interest for general principles of language change, in particular for the question if morpho-syntactic change is gradual or abrupt (see the discussion in Fischer 2007). Linguistic issues like these, however, are not Sato's field. Thus the reader misses chapters on the functions of the specific cases in Old English (although terms like 'dative of manner' etc. are used; for an in-depth discussion cf., for example, Allen 1995 and 2008), on lexicalization or idiomaticization (see below on the uses in certain collocations) or on word order in Old English (which is relevant because case-forms, but not prepositional phrases, may be placed between S and V; cf. 177).

In this study, her doctoral thesis, Sato attempts a comprehensive investigation of the use of case forms and functionally equivalent prepositional phrases in

Old English, examining six prose texts, three from the early and three from the late Old English period. For the early period, chapters 1 to 3 study the *Parker Chronicle*, Annals 1-891 (25-44), the Old English translation of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (45-68; the attribution of this translation to King Alfred is outdated, though; see Godden 2007 and Godden and Irvine 2009) and the Old English translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (69-98). As specimens for the later Old English period, chapters 4 to 6 examine the *First Series* of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* (99-128), Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* (129-50) and Wulfstan's *Homilies* (151-69). It is not easy to understand why these texts were chosen or how they could be comparable for the purposes of a morpho-syntactic study of this kind. The texts deal with very different subject matters and thus necessarily show uneven frequencies in the semantic functions investigated in the book: the *Chronicle* and the *Lives of Saints*, for instance, have a much larger number of instances for 'Point of Time' and 'Duration of Time' than the translation of the *Boethius*, a philosophical treatise aiming at universal validity. Furthermore, relatively independent Old English texts like the *Chronicle* are compared with often slavish translations of a Latin text (as in the Bede translation), with the other texts oscillating between these two poles. The choice of two Ælfrician texts for the later period – instead of, for example, the later parts of the *Peterborough Chronicle* which would have been comparable to the *Parker Chronicle* annals – is even more irritating and in turn leads to wrong conclusions (see below).

Six functions for which both case-forms and prepositional constructions could be employed in Old English are examined for each of the texts; for most of the functions, though, the analysis is restricted to a few specific nouns only (whose choice is not explained in all cases). In addition to their thorough discussion in the main text, the instances found are also printed in a very helpful and reader-friendly way in the appendices. In the chapters and appendices, the discussion and presentation are given in the order of the following functions:

- (1) Instrumentality/Manner: dative/instrumental vs. *be/on* + dative, *mid* + dative/instrumental, e.g. *feawum wordum* vs. *mid feawum wordum* 'with few words' (cf. 67).
- (2) Accompaniment (case-forms are rare in Old English): instrumental vs. *mid* + dative/instrumental; only constructions with the noun *werod* 'troop' are examined; e.g. *werode* vs. *mid werode* 'with troop' (cf. 197-98).
- (3) Point of Time: genitive or dative/instrumental vs. *in/on* + dative/accusative, *to* + dative; constructions with the nouns *dæg* 'day', *gear* 'year', *niht* 'night' and *tid* 'time, hour' are examined; e.g. *ðam tidum* vs. *on ðære tide* 'at that time' (cf. 67).
- (4) Duration of Time: accusative vs. *binnan/for/to* + dative, *geond/þurh* + accusative; constructions with the nouns *dæg* 'day', *fæc* 'interval, portion of time', *fyrst* 'time', *gear* 'year', *monað* 'month', *niht* 'night' and *winter* 'winter,

year' are examined; e.g. *seofon monþas* '(during) seven months' vs. *geond ealle þa niht* 'through all the night' (cf. 126).

- (5) Origin (in the expression of racial or national origin): genitive vs. *of* + dative; the construction *beon* + *cynnes/of cynne* 'of the kind/tribe/family of [...]' is examined; e.g. *Scotta cynnes* vs. *of þam æbelstan cynne* (cf. 96)
- (6) Specification (Parts of the Body): dative vs. *be/on* + dative; e.g. *handum and fotum* '(bind him) on hands and feet' vs. *be þam fotum* 'on/by the feet' (cf. 116).

In these six functions, case forms and prepositional phrases are attested in equivalent or similar function in Old English (the genitive of possession is not yet relevant because the *of*-phrase denoting pure possession only develops in Middle English; cf. also 21). Not only the restriction to certain headwords shows, however, that the two patterns contrasted are not fully comparable in all cases: while there is great variability in 'Point of Time' in almost all texts, 'Accompaniment', where the analysis is restricted to the headword *werod* 'troop', is only attested in case-forms in the *Chronicle* (and invariably so), while all the other texts invariably use the preposition *mid*. As a seventh parameter, Dative Absolute Constructions are analyzed (e.g. *upahafenum handum* 'with hands lifted up'). Even if dative absolutes may sometimes "overlap in sense" (23) with the dative of manner, their inclusion in this study is not at all warranted, since dative absolutes are a calque on the Latin ablative absolute. Sato tries to justify their inclusion "because it is a piece of evidence indicating that case-endings of nouns played an important role in Old English" (23), but this is not relevant for the major concerns of her study because dative absolutes are typologically foreign and thus not a construction which can be taken to illustrate the path from synthetic to analytic in English.

The main interest of this doctoral thesis is "to show the replacement of case-forms by equivalent prepositional phrases within the Old English period where the two constructions competed with each other" (25). This and similar wordings (cf. 17, 99, 113, 131, etc.) show that Sato has clear ideas of the outcome of her study, i.e. that there is a gradual change, a replacement of case forms by prepositional phrases in the Old English period. The summary based on a total of 1,937 examples seems to corroborate this assumption (cf. 171-87). The statistics seem to indicate a large disparity between the early and the late Old English period: While case-forms are slightly more frequent (i.e. 56.9%) than prepositional constructions in early Old English prose, prepositional constructions have risen to approximately four-fifths (i.e. 78.5%) in later Old English prose (171). A closer look at the individual texts reveals, however, that the proportions vary considerably from text to text, which can, as Sato concedes, "sometimes be ascribed to the uneven frequency of examples" with the individual texts (172); in the *Chronicle*, for example, the 125 instances of case-forms are basically restricted to temporal expressions such as *þy (ilcan) dæge/geare* 'on/in the (same) day/year' (172; see also above on the choice of texts). More impor-

tantly, great differences in frequency are noticeable among texts of the same period. The methodological weaknesses of the study are exposed by the details for the later period. The analysis of Wulfstan's *Homilies* shows a frequency of case-forms (37.7%) which is almost identical with that of the translation of *Boethius* (38.7%) and similar to the instances in the translation of *Bede* (44.6%), "showing resemblance to early OE prose, but differing from Ælfric's prose, where case forms account for only 7.6% (*Homilies*) and 8.4% (*Lives of Saints*)" (155). This, however, means that the high, and at first sight convincing percentage of prepositional phrases (i.e. four-fifths) in later Old English prose is determined by the choice of two Ælfrician texts for the later period. The picture would have been very much different if other texts had been chosen. A more careful attitude might thus have been advisable, in particular since Sato cites momentous literature suggesting no visible development during the Old English period. As concerns the frequencies and distributions of these patterns, Bruce Mitchell, for example, summarizes:

But, for what it is worth, my own impression is that – perhaps contrary to what we might expect – little significant change in the comparative percentages of case-forms alone and of prepositions + case-forms in those contexts where both are possible can be detected in the extant OE monuments (Mitchell 1985, § 1225).

Although she claims the opposite, Sato's analyses show that there is no general development from case-forms to prepositional constructions in the materials examined. Sato's strong claims of a steady change from case-forms to prepositional constructions thus do not stand the test of critical scrutiny. This does not mean, however, that her study is worthless. The great strength of this investigation are the often very prudent analyses of the individual instances of case-forms vs. prepositional constructions in the different texts, revealing that, for example, case-forms in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* only survive in a limited number of collocations, such as *nama* 'name' + *gecigan/hatan/nemnan* 'call', *þys* 'this' + *word* 'word' and *deap* 'death' + a verb of dying such as *sweltan* 'die' (107). In many cases, Sato's philologically and stylistically very informed analyses reveal that – as we might have expected – case-forms and prepositional phrases are not completely equivalent, but that there are often very subtle semantic or pragmatic differences: For 'Duration of Time', for example, Ælfric tends to use *binnan* and *geond* instead of the simple accusative to describe something unusual and to emphasize the length of the period (113). Very many of these particular findings will be of great relevance for further studies on the subject, even if the argument is often hard to follow because Sato does not give glosses or translations of the Old English terms and sentences (the translations above are mine). Many of these specific findings relate to questions of style (e.g. relation to the Latin text, relevance of rhythm in Ælfric's and Wulfstan's alliterative prose) and thus style is – in addition to the percentages discussed above – the major concern of Sato's "Conclusions". Since these analyses are also the best parts of the book, the study is, in spite of its methodological deficiencies and contestable conclusions, still an

investigation which can be used as a basis for further studies examining the interrelation of case-form and prepositions in Old English.

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