Redundancy in semiotic indexicality as a trigger for regrammation
Paradigmatic reorganisations of the Middle Danish case system based on MS E cod. var. 136, 4º

Bjarne Simmelkjær Sandgaard Hansen, University of Copenhagen

CLAIM 1: THE MIDDLE DANISH UNSTRESSED-VOWEL NEUTRALISING SOUND LAW (´-V > ´-ə) AND THE CHANGES IN AND GRADUAL LOSS OF THE DANISH CASE SYSTEM WERE UNRELATED EVENTS

The earliest Middle Danish texts of the Scanian dialect, e.g. *Skånske Lov*, are characterised by a relatively stable use of case marking for indexing government (externally) and NP-internal agreement (internally) as well as a relatively unreduced system of unstressed vowels. Thus, examples of historically expected case use abound (1), even though examples of partial and full accusative participations (2) as well as partial and full total neutralisations to a new, non-genitive unity stem (NGUS) formally identical to the historical accusative start to appear, too. Later texts of the 15th century, e.g. *Sjælens Trøst* and *Søndags-evangelier*, display a general increase in the percentage of partial (3) and full (4) participations and neutralisations, cf. also e.g. Bjerrum (1966: 8-11, 38-40) and Jensen (2011: 67-70).

(1) at andr-u thing-i
at second-N.DAT.SG. moot.N-DAT.SG
'at the next moot'

(2) at andr-u thing-Ø
at second-N.DAT.SG. moot.N-ACC.SG
'at the next moot'

(3) vpa en-um aghir-Ø
on a-M.DAT.SG. field.M-NGUS.SG
'[we were] in a field'

(4) met mi-t sværdh-Ø
with my-N.NGUS.SG sword.N-NGUS.SG
'[I carried three baskets] on my head'

For three reasons – and contrary to what has been traditionally assumed (e.g. Skautrup 1944: 266) – these case neutralisations cannot be caused solely by regular, Neogrammarian sound laws (above all reduction of unstressed-vowel qualities) and analogical reshapings on the expression level of the grammatical signs.

1) A text such as *Sjælens Trøst* does not display any major neutralisations of unstressed vowels.
2) This unstressed-vowel-neutralising (or any other well-defined) sound law hardly brings any explanatory potential to the loss of, say, the original *-Vr* of the nom.sg., cf. also Jensen (2011).
3) Even later texts such as *Søndagsevangelier*, to the language of which this sound law has partially applied, display a case system similar to that of the non-unstressed-vowel-neutralised *Sjælens Trøst* with both historically expected case marking and partial and full neutralisations.

CLAIM 2: THE CHANGES IN AND SUBSEQUENT LOSS OF THE DANISH CASE SYSTEM WAS MOTIVATED BY SYNTACTICALLY CAUSED REDUNDANCY IN THE NP-INTERNAL INDEXES OF THE GRAMMATICAL SIGNS

What rather happened was that the relatively predictable order of elements within the Middle Danish NP (cf. Diderichsen 1941: 93-107) simply made case marking redundant. Based on the notion of Nørgård-Sørensen & al. (2011: 43-45, 71-72) that morphology and syntax should both be regarded as paradigmatically organised and thus grammatical, I will therefore argue that the Middle Danish case system underwent a grammatical change where the original, morphologically and syntactically based case paradigm was regrammated into a purely syntactic one. More precisely, the indexical sign relation (cf. Andersen 1980: 4-5, 27-30, 2010: 119-121 with reference to Peircean semiotics) was changed so that the expression of morphological case no longer indicated the mutual NP-internal connection between the NP head and modifier (agreement); rather, this relation was now (as also before) indicated by the fixed order of head and modifier – as well as by gender and number agreement. This change inevitably led to the subsequent loss of the NP-external indexes of government (i.e., case) on the content level of the grammatical sign.

In my presentation, I will take the case-paradigm situation of *Sjælens Trøst* as my main point of departure, basing my claims on the registration of different case-marking systems in this text as well as on the relative prevalence of these systems. My presentation will therefore, secondarily and indirectly, also include a description and quantitative analysis of the case-marking systems in *Sjælens Trøst*.

References

Andersen, Henning. 1980. Morphological change: towards a typology. In: Jacek Fisiak (ed.), *Historical morphology* (Trends in Linguistics. Studies and Monographs 17), 1-50. The Hague, Paris & New York: Mouton.

Andersen, Henning. 2010. Chapter 8: From morphologization to demorphologization. In: Silvia Luraghi & Vit Bubenik (eds.), *The Bloomsbury companion to historical linguistics* (Bloomsbury Companions), 117-146. London, New Delhi, New York & Sydney: Bloomsbury.

Bjerrum, Anders. 1966. *Grammatik over Skånske Lov efter B 74*. København: Københavns Universitets Fond til Tilvejebringelse af Læremidler.

Diderichsen, Paul. 1941. *Sætningsbygningen i Skaanske Lov fremstillet som Grundlag for en rationel dansk Syntaks* (Acta Philologica Scandinavica 15/1). København: Ejnar Munksgaard.

Jensen, Eva Skafte. 2011. *Nominativ i gammelskånsk. Afvikling og udviklinger med udgangspunkt i Skånske Lov i Stockholm B 69*. Odense: Universitets-Jubilæets danske Samfund & Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Nørgård-Sørensen, Jens; Heltoft, Lars & Schøsler, Lene. 2011. *Connecting Grammaticalisation* (Studies in Functional and Structural Linguistics 65). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Skautrup, Peter. 1944. *Det danske Sprogs Historie* 1. København: Gyldendalske Boghandel & Nordisk Forlag.

Manuscript texts

Sjælens Trøst = Niels Nielsen (ed.). 1937. *Sjælens Trøst*. Universitets-Jubilæets Danske Samfund (after MSS Cod. Holm. A 109 & Cod. Ups. C 529).

Skånske Lov = Johs. Brøndum-Nielsen (ed.). 1961. *Legem Scaniae e codice B 74 Bibl, Reg, Holm., et e codice coll. Reg, vestus, 3121, 4°, Bibl, Reg, Haun, phototypice expressam necon et Jus ecclesiasticum Scaniae ex iisdem codicibus eodem more redditum* (Corpus Codicum Danicorum medii aevi 3). Hafniae: Ejnar Munksgaard (after MS Cod. Holm. B 74).

Søndagsevangelier = Bertil Ejder (ed.). 1983. *Svenska medeltidspostillor* 8. Lund: Svenska Fornskrift-sällskapet (after MS Gl. kgl. Saml. 1390, 4to).