
ARBEITSGRUPPE 7 | WORKSHOP 7

Raum | Room: S 23, Seminargebäude

Economy, routine and creativity in syntactic change

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Economy has been argued to play a fundamental role in many linguistic fields, including diachronic syntax. For example, it is well known to be of relevance for grammaticalization processes, cyclical changes, specific principles underlying language change (such as the Head Preference Principle and Late Merge; cf. van Gelderen 2021) etc. In particular, economy is often associated with routine since it seems to ensure regularity in diachronic processes. In contrast, creativity – often identified with extravagance, innovation, renewal etc. – is unpredictable (cf. van Gelderen 2021: 35) and could be considered not to be governed by economy.

However, economy can also lead to innovations in a language. For example, the grammaticalization of the Old High German relative pronoun *thaz* ‘that’ (cf. Axel 2009: 37) results in the emergence of a new complementizer (via Head Preference Principle). On the other hand, creativity sometimes feeds cyclical processes as in the case of the post-verbal negation particle (cf. Jäger 2008). This interaction between economy and creativity vs. routine has been less investigated so far.

The aim of this workshop is to bring together linguists from different areas of syntax and its interfaces who are interested in exploring the interplay of economy with both creativity and routine in syntactic change. The workshop will focus on (but will not be restricted to) the following topics:

- What can be identified as universal economy principles, cycles and grammaticalization processes?
- To what extent are language change processes influenced by economy?
- Are linguistic routines always driven by economy, as commonly assumed? Conversely, can creativity always be seen as “uneconomic”?

For this workshop, we welcome papers on syntactic change that address these and related issues both from a theoretical and empirical perspective.

References: • Axel, Katrin. 2009. Die Entstehung des *dass*-Satzes – ein neues Szenario. *LB Sonderheft* 16. 21–41. • van Gelderen, Elly. 2021. *Third factors in language variation and change*. Cambridge: UVP. • Jäger, Agnes. 2008. *History of German negation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Labelling, creativity and syntactic change in auxiliaries

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Kallulli & Roberts (K&R, 2022) identify and analyse auxiliaries that are synchronically neutralised between HAVE and BE. One such case is non-standard English *ain't* (reduced from *am/are not* and *have/has not*); K&R analyse *ain't* as a negative auxiliary with no Person/Number features and an optional LOC feature present in the possessive reading in (1a), but absent in the progressive reading in (1b). In these varieties, *there* has a LOC feature that allows the clause to be labelled, (2). Modulo the restriction to negative auxiliaries (linked to contracted negation), (2) equals (3):

- (1) a. I/you/he/we/they ain't got no money.
 b. I/you/he/we/they ain't going nowhere/nobody/cared what you think.
- (2) There ain't no students in the room.
- (3) a. Il y a des étudiants dans la salle. (French)
 b. Hay estudiantas en la sala. (Spanish)

Following Lass (1999), K&R provide an account of the historical convergence of *have* and *be* on *ain't* involving a sequence of phonological changes (deletion of the final voiced continuant of the auxiliary, compensatory lengthening of the vowel, diphthongisation and /h/-dropping), which cause the two forms of the negative auxiliaries to converge as a single neutralised auxiliary by the early 19th century. Syntactically, the neutralised auxiliary has ϕ -features and an optional LOC feature. Here, we examine a range of further cases of neutralisation of auxiliaries, such as *seva* in varieties of Italian, which appears to function this way; cf. Cennamo 2010:220-3, who argues that *seva* is a form of HAVE “with the incorporation of the initial consonant (*s-*) of the present indicative of *be*”, a proposal supported by the double-auxiliary *so've* construction of Ariellese (D'Alessandro & Ledgeway 2010). We treat *seva* as a neutralized auxiliary resulting from *s*-incorporation into the original HAVE forms, leading to an optional LOC feature being associated with this form. Bleaching the LOC feature (from location of possessum to external argument of “possess” with associated loss of raising of the locative argument from a small clause) to a generalized external-argument (EA) feature leads to the split-auxiliary patterns in Standard Italian and elsewhere (Kayne 1993; D'Alessandro & Roberts 2010). The fact that *seva* appears variably with unaccusatives, passives, copular constructions, and unergatives and transitives shows that the original LOC (later EA) feature is optional on this element. Cennamo (2010: 222-3) further documents varieties where there is “functional equivalence of HAVE and BE in all their domains”, indicating that both auxiliaries have an optional LOC/EA feature. We also analyse aspects of the Albanian auxiliary system, notably the admirative mood, which is derived from the auxiliary *kam* ‘I have’, also used to build Perfect.

**The Latin to modern Romance nominal domain:
against *Minimal Search*-driven change**

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The intuition behind this offering is the classical one (cf. Schwegler 1990): Morphological richness of nominal inflection in Latin is related to the option of Left Branch Extraction/LBE (cf. (1) from Caes. *B.G.* 6.13.8), and the loss of morphological richness of nominal inflection yielded the Left Branch Condition/LBC characteristic of modern Romance, cf. (2) from Italian.

- (1) *qui summam_i inter eos habet [t_i auctoritatem]*
who highest_{ACC.FSG} among them_{ACC} has power_{ACC.FSG}
- (2) *chi(*[più alta]) fra di loro ha [la più alta autorità]* (Ledgeway 2012)
who more high among of them has the more high authority
 ‘who has the highest authority among them’

Couched within Labeling Theory (Chomsky 2013, 2015), this paper suggests that the nominalizing functional head *n* (cf. Borer 2005) is parametrized as labeling-strong and -weak, correlating with rich vs. poor/absent morphological case/gender/declension class marking on nouns. The former corresponds to Latin and the latter to modern Romance, summarized in (3):

- (3) ***The Nominal Strength Parameter***
 a. strong *n/n_{SP}*: Latin b. weak *n/n_{WK}*: Italian, Spanish, French

I show how this proposal captures in a uniform way the optionality of determiner categories in Latin and LBE on the one hand, and obligatory determiner categories in modern Romance and the LBC on the other. The diachronic passage, which morphologically corresponds to loss of nominal case inflection, is given in (4):

- (4) $n_{str} > n_{wk}$

Next to its unifying nature, the current approach has important ramifications, two of which are: (a) It avoids the DP-hypothesis and its associated problems (cf. Bruening 2009 and contributions in Blümel & Holler 2020). (b) The syntactic derivations of complex nominals in *both* Latin and modern Romance appropriate *Minimal Search* qua Labeling Algorithm and the diachrony is attributed to lexical change. In this sense, this analysis casts doubt on *Minimal Search* as the driving force behind syntactic change (*pace* Kallulli & Roberts 2022; van Gelderen 2021).

Selected References: • Blümel, A. & A. Holler (2020). New perspectives on the NP/DP debate. *Glossa* Special Collection. • Bruening, B. (2009). Selectional asymmetries between CP and DP suggest that the DP Hypothesis is wrong. *UPenn working papers in linguistics*, 27–35. • Van Gelderen, E. (2019). Cyclical Change and Problems of Projection. *Cycles in Language Change*, OUP.

Beyond economy: gendered language in German

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Gendered language forms – above all, nominal neo-forms as *Linguist*innen*, *Linguist:innen* or *Linguist_innen*, double-naming variants as *Linguisten* and *Linguistinnen* and “generic” feminines as *Linguistinnen* – can hardly be considered as economic when compared to the generically interpretable masculine *Linguisten*. Despite that, gendered forms have become quite popular. In my talk I will try to identify the reasons for that “triumph” and reflect on the supposed sustainability of innovative *-forms by analyzing (im-)possible uses from a theoretical perspective.

Due to their complexity, gendered *-forms feature many disadvantages, inter alia, their morpho-syntax causes severe processing problems (*Jede*r Professor*in lobt ihre*n*seine*n Studenten*in* ‘Every professor praises her/his student’), they bear incompatible affixes (*Studenten* acc.sg.masc/*Studentin* acc.sg.fem), and what’s more, they are semantically equivalent to generic masculines (Zifonun 2021, Trutkowski & Weiß to appear). Thus, it is obvious to assume that their use is (socio-)pragmatically driven: I hypothesise that they come along with a conventional implicature (Grice 1975/1989, Potts 2005), i.e., a speech act making use of gendered language can be understood as a performative act in which the speaker states that s/he is aware of the fact that the person(s) s/he is referring to can include people of any gender or sexual identity. Thus, gendered forms are not only honorific forms (which is one of the fields where conventional implicatures are found, cf. Potts 2005: 6), but also entail a selfish ‘awareness stance’ of the speaker.

Although speakers’ (often false) beliefs and dogmata about language play an important role in the debate on gendered language, the “survival” of the new forms will – so my hypothesis – largely depend on the *-forms’ scope of application: E.g., can they be used for word formation, can they be integrated in existing (or newly arranged) inflectional paradigms? etc. The more complex their phonological structure, the more difficult their morpho-syntactic integration, the less additional semantic value they add (and provide) and the more rare and limited their linguistic registers are, the less likely it is that innovative *-forms will replace generic masculines. I argue that *-forms will only persist if their conventional implicature is strong enough to outdo their uneconomic structure, so that the inconvenience associated with the production of neo-forms is (socio-)pragmatically “worth it”.

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Das geht nicht zu ändern: the origin and structure of the German go to+V modal passive

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We investigate a case of creative innovation straddling economy and expressivity involving a sparsely documented passive construction in colloquial German whereby *gehen* ‘to go’ combines with a *zu*-infinitive.

- (1) *Was einmal geschehen, das geht nicht zu ändern.*
 What once happened that goes not to change
 ‘What happened once cannot be changed.’

(Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. Bd. 1, 1867, S. 1585; DWDS corpus)

The construction resembles other modal passives, e.g. deontic *sein+zu* ‘be to’ (Demske-Neumann 1994, Eroms 2006, Holl 2010), since (i) it expresses modality (i.e., (im)possibility), and (ii) the infinitive’s object is promoted to subject. Yet the *go-to*-passive differs from other modal passives in its meaning and grammatical and lexical-semantic restrictions. Explicitly, the *go-to* passive expresses only (im)possibility and is facilitated by negation (or adverbials akin to middles) (2a); speaker consultation and corpus analysis also reveal a lexical restriction for transitive verbs expressing accomplishments (a result state/change of state involving a durative event, Vendler 1957) e.g. *abwischen* ‘to wipe (off)’, (*ver*)*ändern* ‘to change’, *öffnen* ‘to open’, (*ver*)*schließen* ‘to close’, while transitive change-of-state achievement verbs such as *töten* ‘to kill’ or *befördern* ‘to promote’ are incompatible but occur in other modal passives (2b).

- (2) a. *Die Tafel geht ??(nicht/einfach) abzuwischen.*
 the board goes (not/simple) off-to-wipe
 b. *Dieser Angestellter ist/*geht nicht zu befördern.*
 This employee is/ goes not to promote

We argue that the *go-to*-passive emerged by analogy with preexisting strategies involving *gehen* expressing impossibility (*Das geht nicht* ‘That isn’t possible’), especially with resultative particles (*Das geht nicht ab* ‘It doesn’t come off). The combination with *zu*-infinitives was also likely facilitated by an older construction involving ‘go’ and a *zu*-infinitive to express future events (Demske 2020).

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**Creative economy –
toward a theory of passive construction innovations in Chinese**

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Zipf (1949) proposed the principle of Least Effort as a general prognosis of human behavior including verbal behavior. In linguistics, the effect of this principle, more commonly known as the principle of economy, has been widely observed, both in synchrony (e.g., Altman 1985; Horn 1984; Grice 1989; Sperber & Wilson 1995; Prince & Smolensky 2004, *inter alias*) and in diachrony (Hopper & Traugott 2003; van Gelderen 2004; 2021) and has led to renewed theoretical interests (e.g., Xiang 2017). Recent studies have argued for the effect of economy on linguistic creativity and innovation (Axel 2009), raising interesting questions regarding the relationship and interaction between economy and creativity. However, existing research that engages with such questions mostly draws on data from European languages. On the other hand, recent research on the development of new construction types from the Chinese canonical *bei*-passive construction has showed syntactic innovations in special discourse contexts lead to categorial expansion of the canonical lexical class of transitive VP to intransitive VP and NP as part of the innovative constructions. This kind of change allows creative construal of novel stances and the conventionalization of innovative constructional subtypes (Wang 2011; Xiao 2016; Peng 2017). While this linguistic innovation has been analyzed from the perspective of pragmatics and cognitive construction grammar, little has been said about the mechanisms underlying the categorial expansions key to the linguistic innovation and pragmatic creativity. It is the goal of this presentation to propose the principle of Creative Economy to account for the linguistic innovation in the *bai*-construction. Drawing on corpus data, I show that the creative type-shift that occurs when the VP slot violates the transitivity constraint by admitting intransitive verbs and nominal structures in adapting to emerging communicative needs is best account for by economy. Creative economy gives rise to new routines for communication, which become conventionalized in the linguistic system. This study has both theoretical and empirical implications for language change and its underlying mechanisms.

References: • Zipf, G. K. (1949). *Human behavior and the principle of least effort*. Cambridge, MA.: Addison-Wesley. • Grice, P. (1989). *Studies in the way of words*. Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press. • Horn, L. (1984). Towards a new taxonomy of pragmatic inference: Q-based and Rbased implicature. In D. Schiffrin (ed.), *Meaning, form, and use in context: Linguistic applications*. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 11–42. • Prince, A. & P. Smolensky (1993). *Optimality theory*. Rutgers Center for Cognitive Science: Technical Report RuCCSTR-2.

**Economy, innovation, and analogy:
effects of language contact on English verb fronting**

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In Modern English, verbal elements available in T can move up to C in a limited set of contexts, including main clause interrogatives, regularly leading to subject-auxiliary inversion. The loss of lexical verb fronting in English can be seen as conforming to economy principles as the movement step from V to T (and hence to C) is lost. There is no grammaticalisation involved, though, as lexical verbs preserve their lexical features; further, the development cannot be characterised as innovation either since the VP-internal position of lexical verbs was part of the system anyway. Regarding the major word order change from V2 to basic SVO, Kroch & Taylor (1997) show that the loss of V2 took place in two steps, resulting in dialectal variation in Early Middle English: while Southern varieties were similar to Old English in exhibiting verb fronting to C, Northern varieties influenced by Old Norse exhibited verb fronting only to T but not to C (in line with the Old Norse pattern). The loss of verb fronting was thus fostered by language contact, presumably because the available input for language acquisition contained fewer cues for V-to-C movement in declarative contexts. In this scenario, one might argue that language contact fostered the establishment of a less complex pattern. Welsh English exhibits a reverse development in that embedded questions commonly involve T-to-C movement (Paulasto, Penhallurick & Jones 2021):

- (1) a. Did you see [what kind of coal was it]?
 b. I asked them in the camp, [**would** they like the plums].

Such patterns are most likely affected by Welsh contact (Paulasto, Penhallurick & Jones 2021). The insertion of a complementiser arguably constitutes a more economical configuration than movement: if so, (1) may be seen as a potential counterexample to economy principles guiding change. However, the patterns are not entirely innovative: the inverted word orders are available in the language anyway in main clauses and were analogically extended to embedded contexts. Analogical change goes further in this variety: cleft constructions either contain the complementiser *that*, or they show verb fronting. While the complementiser option may be favourable in terms of derivational economy, paradigmatic economy fosters the availability of the verb movement option. That is, contact-induced change in this case is only apparently contrary to economy principles.

References: • Kroch, A. & A. Taylor (1997). Verb movement in Old and Middle English: Dialect variation and language contact. In A. van Kemenade & N. Vincent (eds.), *Parameters of morphosyntactic change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 297–325. • Paulasto, H., R. Penhallurick & B. A. Jones (2021). *Welsh English*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Relexification with English as reflected in Bangla due to contact-induced changes

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This study aims to chart the trend of relexification as reflected in Bangla due to the language contact (LC) with English.

In the language situation of Bangladesh, an unregulated English Language Education (ELE) system comprises a compulsory education system of Literacy-English emphasizing the practice of the four skills and an optional provision for the education of academic subjects through the English medium exists in all phases of the education system. This country-wide unregulated ELE system has created a condition for the LC between Bangla and English where English operates as a superstrate over its substrate, with Bangla instigating the contact-induced changes, which includes relexification is meant to a mechanism of language change by which one language changes much or all of its lexicon, including basic vocabulary, with the lexicon of another language, without drastically changing the relexified language's grammar.

Given the above backdrop of the language contact situation in Bangladesh, I have conducted a survey to reveal the recurrence trend of contact-induced changes. This survey reveals that one of the contact-induced change is consequent to the relexification of Bangla into in English reflected in the personal names, e.g., Sweety Das, Lovely Akhter, etc.; place names, e.g. Western town, South city, etc., as well as in the names of institutions and organizations, e.g., Green University, Southeast bank; financial institutions, e.g., Reliance Insurance; residences, e.g., Dream House, Lake view hut; apartments, e.g., Eastern Housing; and other institutions, e.g., police station, army medical college, etc.

The phenomenon of relexification is now widespread, reflected in the social interaction and linguistic landscape of the language situation of Bangladesh as follows.i) Language mixing, which varies in code-mixing, can be seen in social settings, e.g., South city-er bhaRa koto. (How much is the fare for South city?), and code-switching, e.g., Let us go to South city (Let us go to South city.). Shekha tui treat dibi (Give us a treat there.); and ii) Manifestation of awkward English jargon in the acoustic and visual linguistic landscape through various media, including signboards, billboards, and banners in the social settings.

In the language situation of Bangladesh, relexification is now promoted through the practice of translingualism with the government-run biliteracy language (simultaneous literacy of Bangla and English) education system, and this practice of relexification is now highly evaluated.

Does economy (or efficiency) explain grammatical change?

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In this big-picture talk, I address the question whether cost-benefit tradeoffs (often known under the label of communicative efficiency, Levshina 2023) have a central role in explaining language change. Since Gabelentz (1891), linguists have often made claims along these lines (e.g. Langacker 1977; Keller 1994), but these ideas have generally remained speculative and have been supported by individual examples and intuitive judgements, not by systematic cross-linguistic evidence. The purpose of this talk is to throw serious doubt on this time-honored idea.

The term “economy” has also been used in the sense of “system economy”, a principle that favours minimization of elements of the system rather than a tradeoff between costs and benefits in actual communication (e.g. van Gelderen 2004). I will briefly comment on some of these proposals, pointing out that there is no clear relationship between system economy and communicative efficiency. Quite generally, the idea that system considerations drive or explain language change suffers from the problem that change in language use must always precede system change (as emphasized e.g. by Lightfoot 1999).

That communicative efficiency shapes language structures to a substantial extent is now widely recognized (e.g. Gibson et al. 2019), and extensive cross-linguistic evidence has been assembled for various domains of grammar. There is also general agreement that language change must play an important role in bringing about efficiently designed systems, as in biological change (e.g. Croft 2000). But is it the nature of the diachronic processes and pathways of change that is responsible for the resulting efficient language structures? This has been argued in recent years (e.g. Bybee 2006; Cristofaro 2019), and if true, this would be in line with the old idea that efficiency tradeoffs instigate and drive the change processes.

Here I will argue, by contrast, that the causal relationship is the reverse: Language users unconsciously prefer efficient variants in language use, which results in overall efficient systems. The changes that lead to the resulting systems have very similar results, but their starting points and trajectories are very diverse. I will give examples from a range of languages (mostly Indo-European) in the following domains of grammar: (i) differential object marking, (ii) adnominal possessive marking (cf. Stolz et al. 2008); (iii) future tense marking; (iv) plural marking; causative and anticausative marking (cf. Haspelmath 2016). Establishing causality in language change is generally very difficult (if possible at all), so the argument is primarily built on plausibility considerations.

Economy and verb movement: the diachronic perspective

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In this work we investigate a syntactic change that can be seen as an effect of economy of movement, i.e., the way a V2 syntax is lost by progressively reducing the movement span of the inflected verb inside a split left periphery (Rizzi 1997, Benincà & Poletto 2004). The loss of V2 correlates with the rise of Infinitival Anteposition (IA) – the anteposition of infinitival forms (Inf) to modals (Mod), see (1) – across a series of Old Venetian (OVec) texts from the early XIV to the early XVI c.

- (1) se [...] no entrometerà poi **entrometere** no **porà**
if not sue.FUT then sue.INF not can.FUT
 ‘if [...] they will not sue, they will not be able to sue.’ (Stat. Ven. 4, 19)

The texts displaying the properties of a V2 grammar – V2 restriction, subject inversion, main/embedded asymmetry, enclisis to the finite verb (Benincà 2004) – show no cases of IA. The texts which do not display such properties allow for IA, with an increase toward the end of the period. The properties of IA are illuminating in explaining why this is so. With IA, only negative and impersonal clitics may intervene between Inf and Mod, so that Inf and Mod must be close. Additionally, the absence of main/embedded asymmetry and the order complementizers/topic/focus > Inf indicate that Inf sits in the low extreme of the CP, possibly in a ground position.

- (2) [_{ForceP} [_{TopP} [_{FocP} [_{GroundP} far [_{FinP} debia [_{TP} **debia** ... [_{VP} **far**] ...]

This explains the inverse correlation with V2. Suppose that XIII/early XIV c. OVec is a “Force-V2” language (very spare attestations of V3). In such a configuration, the inflected V would always bypass GroundP, the landing position of Inf in (2), accounting for the lack of IA. When V-to-Force is being lost, the reduced movement span of the inflected verb makes room for the surfacing of IA. This shows that the loss of V2 does not occur abruptly but in a stepwise fashion (Poletto 1998) providing us with a window on how economy applies to language change.

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Uneconomical word order in Old Italian: semantics and Information Structure

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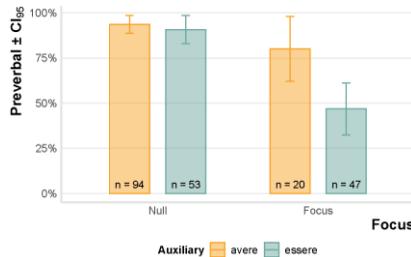
Word order freedom can be considered an uneconomical feature in a language. This is particularly striking if syntax provides multiple word order options that do not clearly correlate with semantic phenomena (such as scope-rigidity) or specific information structures. Old Italian seems to display this kind of syntactic optionality, at least as far as the position of DP arguments is concerned.

From the point of view of Semantics, Old Italian allows for scope configurations that are hardly available in Modern Italian, where “preverbal subjects tend not to reconstruct into the scope of a lower operator” (Bianchi and Chesi 2014). Fox (1995), Wurmbrand (2010) and other works connect the availability of covert operations to economy conditions: languages with more word order possibilities are expected to be scope-rigid, but Old Italian is a counterexample. Subjects can freely occur pre- or post-verbally; nonetheless, preverbal quantified subjects can reconstruct under negation, as in (1).

- (1) Ogni uomo che sa lettera non è savio. (*Novellino*)
every man that knows.3SG letter NEG is wise
 ‘Not every man who can read is wise.’

Although free word order is vastly attested among languages and cannot be considered an imperfection that language change tries to eliminate, Old Italian displays an intermediate degree of freedom between Latin and Modern Italian, suggesting that grammaticalization of some configurations was taking place. With a

focus on the subject position, I will argue that some aspects of Old Italian grammar are already a glimpse of the stricter constraints of Modern Italian. For instance, non-focused subjects already prefer a preverbal position, as shown in the plot above ($z = -4.27, p < 0.05$). However, tendencies are not rules, and Old Italian still allows for free and creative word orders in other cases.



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