The Recipient Passive in the History of English

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Abstract

Considerable attention has been paid to formal and functional aspects of the recipient passive (e.g. *Mary/She is given a book*) whereas its emergence during the 14th century has received little attention in the literature to date. This study seeks to explore its semantic and syntactic characteristics based on shared features of verb classes. It also considers potential influence of language contact in the form of the borrowing of Anglo-Norman verbs including their argument structure into Middle English. For a set of Modern English ditransitive verbs, the ability to signify a caused possession event type by selecting for a true RECIPIENT argument is identified as the necessary condition. A corpus analysis of two native and three French origin verbs from two Middle English corpora, PPCME2 (Kroch & Taylor, 2000) and PCEEC (Taylor, Nurmi, Warner, Pintzuk, & Nevalainen, 2006), reveals the set of verbs which can form recipient passives as historically stable with regard to event type and semantic roles. By tendency, the verbs form recipient passives as soon as the choice between expressing the RECIPIENT argument as either a prepositional phrase or a bare noun phrase becomes available. Native verbs lag behind non-native verbs. This tendency supports recent assumptions about borrowing of argument structure (Trips & Stein, 2019) and differences in argument realisation options across languages (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008).

Keywords: argument realisation; argument structure; recipient passive; contact-induced language change; Middle English

Contents

1 Introduction

The recipient passive is the passive of ditransitive verbs, in which the formerly indirect object of the sentence is promoted to the subject position and appears in nominative case (Allen, 1995).

(1) **She** was <u>given</u> a book.

This English pattern contrasts with other West Germanic languages like German, where a passive highlighting the indirect object of the verb exists, but in which it cannot be made the nominative subject of a passive clause. (2) a. and b. illustrate a German active sentence and a passive pattern preposing the indirect object in dative case. (2) d. shows that the corresponding

pattern is ungrammatical in English. Here, nominative case is required in order to make the sentence grammatical, as can be seen in (2) e.:

(2) a. Der Lehrer <u>gibt</u> **ihr**$_{DAT}$ das Buch.

  b. **Ihr**$_{DAT}$ wird das Buch (vom Lehrer) <u>gegeben</u>.

  c. The teacher <u>gives</u> **her**$_{OBJ}$ the book.

  d. * **Her**$_{OBJ}$ is <u>given</u> the book (by the teacher).

  e. **She**$_{NOM}$ is <u>given</u> the book (by the teacher).

In recent literature, considerable attention has been paid to the formal and functional aspects of the recipient passive (Wanner, 2009). Its development and origin, however, has not been discussed to an equal extent so far. In English, this construction did not exist before the 14th century (Allen, 1995; Denison, 1993). Yet, so-called dative-fronted passives were possible, in which the dative indirect object is not converted into a nominative subject of the passive clause:

(3) *Acc **him** wass ʒifenn mahht & witt*
  but him$_{DAT}$ was given might and wit
  'but he was given ability and intelligence'

<div align="right">Orm 19371
(as cited in Allen, 1995, p. 381)</div>

Considering the fact that this pattern does not exist today, it is obvious that sometime during its history, English must have developed into a language which can form recipient passives.

Traditional attempts at explaining the emergence of the recipient passive have looked at changes in morphosyntax and grammatical relations in English and see it as a consequence of the loss of case marking and the fixing of word order (Allen, 1995; Visser, 1973). Another possible scenario is language contact with Anglo-Norman (AN), the variety of French spoken in England following the Norman Conquest in 1066 (Trips & Stein, 2018). Due to the absence of a recipient passive in continental Old French (OF), the recipient passive cannot have been introduced by copying OF structures. Yet, a corpus study by Trips and Stein (2018) shows that in Middle English (ME), the recipient passive is found with verbs of French origin first and with native verbs later.

Section 2 presents an introduction to the recipient passive in modern and historical English as well as cross-linguistically. Section 3 gives a summary of the approaches discussing possible internal and external triggers for the change. In the previous literature, no precise description of the set of verbs which can form recipient passives has been given; therefore, section 4 presents the theoretical ground for such a description in syntactic and semantic terms. The existing work on the dative alternation and semantic classes in English will provide a set of verbs to which, in section 5, the previously introduced framework will be applied with a special focus on the underlying event type of recipient passives. In section 5, an analysis of some of these verbs in the diachronic dimension will be provided by taking into account active and passive examples from two corpora, the *Penn Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (PCEEC,

Taylor, Nurmi, Warner, Pintzuk, & Nevalainen, 2006) and the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English 2* (PPCME2, Kroch & Taylor, 2000) in order to illustrate how these verbs realised their arguments in ME. Section 7 discusses the findings and provides a further outlook.

All in all, the analysis of the data reveals that the set of verbs which can form recipient passives is historically stable as far as their event type and the semantic roles associated with it is concerned. It consists of those verbs which can express a caused possession event type by selecting for a true RECIPIENT argument.

2 Characteristics of the Recipient Passive

In Present Day English (PDE), there are three ways of expressing a sentence with two objects. A sentence like

(4)   The teacher$_{\text{subject}}$ gives$_{\text{verb}}$ **Mary/her**$_{\text{indir.obj.}}$ the book$_{\text{dir.obj.}}$.

is called an active sentence. It includes a subject, an indirect object and a direct object. Also taking into consideration the semantics of the sentence and its relevance for the syntax, the constituents can alternatively labelled AGENT, RECIPIENT and THEME respectively. These labels are called semantic roles and are generally given in capital letters. They refer to the relation between verbs and arguments and specify which role the constituent plays in the event denoted by the verb (Gruber, 1965). The AGENT typically corresponds to the subject of the clause, is usually animate and the instigator of the action described by the verb. The RECIPIENT participant usually corresponds to the indirect object of the clause and is typically animate. The THEME generally corresponds to the direct object and denotes the entity which is affected by the action. It can be either animate or inanimate (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1987; Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2005) The indirect object can also take the form of a prepositional phrase (PP) and follow the direct object (Greenbaum, Quirk, Leech, & Svartvik, 1987):

(5)   The teacher$_{\text{subject}}$ gives$_{\text{verb}}$ the book$_{\text{dir.obj.}}$ **to Mary/her**$_{\text{indir.obj.}}$.

However, the sentence in (4) can be transformed into a passive sentence by making the direct object *the book* the subject of the passive sentence (Greenbaum et al., 1987):

(6)   The book is given to **Mary/her** (by the teacher).

This construction is called direct passive. The AGENT *the teacher* – the active subject – can optionally be expressed with a *by*-phrase at the end of the sentence. Passivisation does not change the propositional meaning of the verb or the sentence, but its information structure (Wanner, 2009).

There is yet another possibility of expressing the sentence, which has been examined under multiple labels in the recent literature including "recipient passive" (Allen, 1995) and "indirect passive" (Wanner, 2009). The common feature shared by all accounts is the fronting of the RECIPIENT, and hence the term *recipient passive* seems to be an appropriate label and will be used from now on.

In the recipient passive, the RECIPIENT of the action denoted by the verb occupies the subject position and consequently shows nominative case and agrees with the finite verb (Allen, 1995). Agreement of the finite verb with the direct object of the sentence is ungrammatical in these cases (Greenbaum et al., 1987). In PDE, full NPs (noun phrases) do not exhibit case endings. Therefore, the change from the objective form to the nominative form can only be observed in sentences with a pronominal indirect object (Allen, 1995). In the following sentence, the case of the RECIPIENT has changed from objective *her* in in (4) to nominative *she.*

(7)   **Mary/she** is given the book (by the teacher).

Whereas the direct passive in (6) has been studied extensively in English (Wanner, 2009), English grammars only mention the recipient passive as a side note (Greenbaum et al., 1987) and treatments of the origin of the recipient passive are surprisingly rare (Trips & Stein, 2018). Other languages like German differ from English. They do not make the indirect object of a ditransitive verb the nominative subject of a passive clause when fronting the RECIPIENT:

(8)   Der Lehrer gibt **ihr**$_{\text{DAT}}$ das Buch.

(9)   **Ihr**$_{\text{DAT}}$ wird das Buch (vom Lehrer) gegeben.

Notably, the RECIPIENT *ihr* retains its dative case whether it appears in an active or in a passive clause. Note the ungrammaticality of a similar example in English:

(10)   a.   The teacher gives **her**$_{\text{OBJ}}$ the book.

  b.   * **Her**$_{\text{OBJ}}$ is given the book by the teacher.

  c.   **She**$_{\text{NOM}}$ is given the book by the teacher.

Swedish is another language in which the formation of recipient passives might be possible. Swedish ditransitive verbs can realise their arguments in the following manner:

(11)   *Ingvar/Han*$_{\text{SUBJ}}$ *gav   Olle/honom*$_{\text{OBJ}}$ *boken.*
Ingvar/He   gave Olle/him   the book.
<div align="right">(adapted from Holmes & Hinchcliffe, 2013, p. 315)</div>

In (11), the masculine singular nominative pronominal is *han. Honom* is the form for a masculine singular objective pronominal (Holmes & Hinchcliffe, 2013). Alternatively, the indirect object can also be expressed with a PP headed by *till* in Swedish as in "Ingvar gav boken till Olle" (as cited in Holmes & Hinchcliffe, 2013, p. 316).

Although prescriptive grammars[1] state that it is not possible to convert the indirect object in Swedish into the subject of a passive sentence (Björkhagen, 1923), a google query revealed that the structure can be found in modern literature and newspaper articles as shown in (12) and (13). The RECIPIENT has been highlighted in bold in the following examples:

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[1]The grammar consulted is an outdated copy from 1923. However, even in newer grammars, the structure in question in not mentioned and treatments of passivisation focus exclusively on the conversion of the direct object into the subject of the passive sentence (Björkhagen, 1923; Holmes & Hinchcliffe, 2013).

(12)   *Han fick hår och naglar klippta, skägget rakades av och* **han** *gavs sitt första ombyte kläder*
        på många månader.
        "He got his hair and nails clipped, his beard was shaved, and he was given his first
        clean clothes in many months."

                                                                                    (Jakobson, 2015)

In this passage, the verb *ge* ("to give") is used in its passive form. In Swedish, one way
of creating the passive is by adding an *−s* to the stem of the active verb form (Holmes &
Hinchcliffe, 2013). Instead of retaining the objective case *honom* ("him"), which would have
been used in the active, the RECIPIENT of the sentence appears as nominative *han* (Holmes &
Hinchcliffe, 2013). This is a clear indication that it has been promoted to subject status. *Ge* is
not the only verb that can form this structure. Other ditransitive Swedish verbs like *erbjuda*
("to offer") and *föreslå* ("to recommend") can also be found in this construction:

(13)   a. **Han** *erbjöds virkning och fotbad istället för jobb.*
            "He was offered a crochet and a foot bath instead of a job."

                                                                    (Petterson & Svennebäck, 2013)[2]

        b. **Jag** *erbjöds en stol och något att dricka.*
            "I was offered a chair and something to drink."

                                                                    ('Erbjöds i en mening', n.d.)

        c. *Så jag startar om den med knappen, och* **jag** *föreslås systemåterställning.*
            "So I rebooted with the button, and I was recommended a system reset."

                                                                    ('Datorn vill inte starta', 2006)

It should be noted, however, that only a few of these examples could be found in a simple
google query looking for passives of ditransitives used with the nominative pronominal and
a direct object. Structures in which the RECIPIENT of a ditransitive verb is fronted but retains
its objective case could not be found. Overall, the passivisation of the THEME in a ditransitive
construction is much more widespread than the passivisation of the indirect object. Never-
theless, the findings show that a structure similar to the English recipient passive is in use in
modern literature as well as newspaper articles and on websites. Without further research, it
is not clear whether this is a new phenomenon caused by exposure to this type of structure
in English or whether this phenomenon has been attested in earlier stages of the language as
well.

In English, recipient passives did not exist before the second half of the 14th century (Allen,
1995). Before that, passives with a fronted RECIPIENT looked more like the German example
in (9). Here, the dative indirect object *himm* is not converted into a nominative subject of the
passive clause:

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[2]Compare the (possibly archaic) clausal ditransitive use of the verb, in which the indirect object is not converted
into the nominative form but remains objective: "**Honom** *erbjöds att gå i Portugisisk tjenst med 4000*" ('427
porträtter', 2016).

(14) *Þegg wisstenn þatt himm was þatt daȝȝ Summ unncuþ   sihhþe shæwedd*
     They knew   that him   was that day some   unknown sight   shown

"They knew that some strange sight had been shown him that day" / "They knew that
he had been shown a strange sight that day."

Orm 227

(as cited in Allen 1995, p. 381)

Given the fact that sentences of this type do not exist in PDE, it is evident that at some point
in time, the old pattern must have become obsolete and English must have developed into a
language which can form recipient passives.

3 The Emergence of the Recipient Passive

Before attempting to find a trigger for this particular change, the theory of language change
needs to be outlined briefly. Yang states that "language change is observed when a generation
of speakers produces linguistic expressions that differ from those of previous generations,
either in form or in distribution" (Yang, 2000, p. 231). In order to explain language change,
its driving causes have to be identified and "their interactions [...] made clear" (Yang, 2000,
p. 231). In other words, there has to be a trigger for a particular change. There can be both
language-internal and -external factors triggering a change in a language, although a clear
division between the two cannot be drawn (Hickey, 2012; Yang, 2000).

Some changes in a language can be explained by looking at structural aspects, without the
influence of any sociolinguistic factors. This kind of change can be labelled as "internally-
motivated" (Hickey, 2012, p. 388). In addition to linking a particular change to related changes
inside of the language, language change can also be due to external factors. One case can be
language contact when the native grammar and the linguistic evidence which the language
learner is exposed to is "affected by an alien grammatical system" (Roberts, 2007, p. 236).

A theory of language change has to take into consideration how language is acquired by
child learners because "ultimately, language changes because learners acquire different gram-
mars from their parents (...) [and] as children become parents, their linguistic expressions
constitute the acquisition evidence for the next generation" (Yang, 2000, p. 231). Contact with
other languages, as in migration situations, can change the linguistic environment for a gen-
eration of learners profoundly. This can alter the grammar of the new generation and make
it different from the old setting (Yang, 2000).

Roberts (2007) views a contact situation as a significant number of tokens from a foreign
grammatical system entering the language. As a consequence, the new generation of lan-
guage learners is exposed to language data which had not existed at the time when the older
generation had acquired the language. Typical scenarios, in which such a situation arises are
invasions and immigration situations.

3.1 Internal Changes in Morphosyntax

The emergence of the recipient passive has often been causally linked to the loss of inflectional endings on ME nouns, which made the syntactic function of sentence elements ambiguous and triggered a reanalysis of the fronted indirect object as the subject of the sentence (Visser, 1973). A newer account by Allen (1995) treats the rise of the recipient passive as resulting from a reanalysis of indirect objects as direct objects due to their immediately postverbal position after the fixing of word order in ME, as will be elaborated below.

The ME stage of the English language is considered as a transition stage between Old English (OE) and PDE. The most notable changes concern the loss of inflectional endings on verbs, nominals and adjectives, the increased importance of prepositions and the development of increasingly fixed word order (Mossé, 1975).

As a case marking language, OE displayed inflectional morphology for four cases (nominative, genitive, accusative and dative case) as well as number and gender and had a relatively free word order. It showed multiple patterns for verbs involving a direct and indirect object, especially for verbs signifying a change of possession. In these cases, the indirect object usually appeared in the dative and the direct object in the accusative case (Allen, 1995; Gerwin, 2014).

OE featured a number of passive constructions, most of which are no longer productive in PDE. In general, two types of passives existed: impersonal passives, in which objects retained their case and there was no nominative subject, and direct passives, in which the THEME was promoted to subject status (Denison, 1993).

Ditransitives were able to appear in both pattern types, while monotransitives only appeared in impersonal passives. The recipient passive has often been linked to the construction in (14), a subtype of impersonal passives, which was called *dative-fronted passive.* In this type of passive, the indirect object RECIPIENT is preposed but retains its case and object status (Allen, 1995).

In order to find out what triggered the emergence of the new passives possible in English today, Allen (1995) looks at the timing of the changes in English syntax during the ME period. The case system of OE steadily lost suffixes and the relevant changes for passives are said to be the loss of the nominal dative suffix *−e* and the following loss of accusative and dative as a category distinction (Denison, 1993), which can be dated at around the latter half of the 13th century. Following these changes, direct passives of monotransitive verbs were replaced by their modern counterparts and dative-fronted passives were replaced by the innovative recipient passive by 1375 (Allen, 1995).

The reanalysis of direct passives can be explained by looking at case assignment. During ME, the English language developed gradually from a language in which verbs assign case lexically to a language in which all case marking is syntactic. Generally, the notion of case can be split up into two different types. There is structural and non-structural case, which can further be subdivided into lexical and inherent case (Woolford, 2006). Structural case is assigned to certain syntactic positions by verbs or agreement and not dependent on the thematic relationship between the case assigning element and the position (Cook & Newson, 2007). Non-structural

case is more irregular. Lexical case is idiosyncratic and lexically selected by verbs and prepositions. Inherent case is more regular than lexical case and associated with theta-positions, e.g. dative object NPs in ditransitives . In contrast to structural case, non-structural case is learned by learners with each individual item. Since dative case in ditransitives is fairly regular, it is considered to be an instance of inherent case. The distinction between inherent and structural case is important for passivisation (Haegemann, 1991; Woolford, 2006).

Consequently, the loss of the distinction between dative and accusative case resulting in the modern objective case can be seen as the loss of the ability of verbs to assign case lexically. A failure to acquire the distinction between accusative and dative case could lead learners to assume that a given verb does not have a lexical entry which specifies which case is assigned to its complement. They hence lost evidence for lexical case marking of the complement by the verb. Given that lexical case is preserved under passivisation, complements which obtain their case lexically from their verbs retain their original case forms. If there is no evidence for lexical case assignment, nominative case is assigned structurally by default (Allen, 1995).

However, the rise of the recipient passive cannot result directly from the loss of inflectional case endings, since there is a time gap between the disappearance of the conservative and the emergence of the innovative pattern. According to Allen (1995), the grammar of English speakers at the middle of the 14th century did not include dative-fronted passives anymore. Yet, ditransitive verbs did not appear in recipient passives before the late 14th century. If the emergence of the recipient passive had been a reanalysis, which requires an existing pattern to serve as the model for the new one, then evidence that dative-fronted passives were gradually replaced by recipient passives should exist. However, such a replacement did not take place and recipient passives do not appear until 200 years after the loss of case distinctions (Allen, 1995).

Allen (1995) underlines the importance of the fixing of word order in English, which can be dated at around the same time as the introduction of the recipient passive. Since word order did not become fixed immediately after the loss of case distinctions there was variation and ambiguity as far as the semantic roles of the objects were concerned. Animacy and context often served as the disambiguating characteristics. Eventually, this ambiguity triggered a reanalysis of indirect objects as direct objects due to their position before the THEME of the sentence and this "led directly to the introduction of the recipient passive, since the passive has the effect of relating direct objects to subjects" (Allen, 1995, p. 448). In this line of thought, the change can be seen as a result of a reanalysis of indirect objects of ditransitive verbs as direct objects.

In order to produce the innovative pattern, language learners needed to have grammars which did not allow the fronting of indirect objects in active or passive sentences. Although it had been possible to front bare RECIPIENTS in OE, these structures became less and less acceptable in ME. As a consequence, "dative-fronted passives disappeared because of a general disinclination to front bare indirect objects, rather than because of a replacement by recipient passives." (Allen, 1995, p. 388). Thus, the dative-fronted passive and the recipient passive never co-occurred, which rules out the possibility of a reanalysis (Allen, 1995).

A complicating factor is the mistaking of structures for recipient passives when they are

actually examples of dative fronting. It is especially hard to tell these two apart when the NP in question is not a pronoun. In this case, due to ambiguous inflectional endings, the case cannot be observed. Examples are unambiguous when they either feature a pronoun or show agreement of verb and a plural noun (Allen, 1995). Furthermore, any instance of a RECIPIENT in the subject position becomes proof of the recipient passive as soon as there is no fronting of indirect objects in general anymore at the same time. Therefore, any fronted RECIPIENT is the subject of a recipient passive (Allen, 1995).

The first attested recipient passive dates from 1375:

(15) *Item as for the Parke **she** is alowyd Every yere a dere*
       "Item: as for the park, she is allowed a deer each year"

<div align="right">

AwardBlount p.205 (1375)

(as cited in Allen, 1995, p. 393)

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The RECIPIENT *she* appears in nominative case and agrees with the finite verb *is*. Therefore, this example is an unambiguous instance of a recipient passive.

So all in all, Allen (1995) assumes that the emergence of the recipient passive did not directly result from the loss of case endings in ME. It was rather connected to a reanalysis of grammatical relations of the directly postverbal NP as the indirect object when word order became more fixed during the 14th century.

Although Allen (1995) argues against the possibility that "the recipient passive was first restricted to a subclass of the ditransitive verbs, and then gradually expanded" (Allen, 1995, p. 394), she nevertheless mentions that

> It is certainly true, for example, that we have examples of *pay* in this construction before we have examples of *give*. Could it be that *pay* was a verb which assigned its Recipient to the grammatical role of direct object, while *give* assigned its Recipient to indirect object? (Allen, 1995, p. 394).

This remark is interesting because it involves two verbs of different origin. The verb *pay* was borrowed from French during ME ('pay, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015), whereas *give* is of native origin ('give, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015). This raises the question as to whether there might have been a distinction between native and non-native verbs in the grammar of a speaker.

3.2 Language Contact

Allen's (1995) explanation of the introduction of the recipient passive as a reanalysis in grammatical relations and not as a gradual change tied to particular verbs stands in contrast to another approach taken by a corpus study by Trips and Stein (2018), who consider the effects of language contact on ME verbs. Support for the assumption that the borrowing of verbs including their argument structure possibly affected the argument structure of native verbs is provided by the fact that recipient passives occur first and more numerously with verbs of French origin in ME. Trips and Stein suggest that the recipient passive was "the result of

interpreting the French dative as different from the English dative" (Trips & Stein, 2018, p. 241).

More precisely, the study looks at possible syntactic change through borrowing of French verbs with their argument structure and queries two corpora containing texts of different genres for occurrences of recipient passive in ME (Trips & Stein, 2018).

In line with the analysis provided by Allen (1995), it is to be expected that recipient passives occur in the single genre PCEEC first, since it contains less literary texts. ME literary texts were often directly influenced by French; in fact, many of them were direct translations. Since there are no recipient passives in French (Allen, 1995), no recipient passives are expected in texts based on French originals (Trips & Stein, 2018).

The study confirms that recipient passives are relatively numerous in the PCEEC, although unexpectedly with verbs of French origin first. The ME verbs *paien* (PDE pay), *promisen* (PDE promise), *offren* (PDE offer), *allouen* (PDE allow), *denien* (PDE deny), *serven* (PDE serve) and *finen* (PDE fine) – all of French origin – are found in this construction. The native verbs *senden* (PDE send), *yeven* (PDE give), *tellen* (PDE tell) and *sheuen* (PDE show) are also found with recipient passives. However, the number of recipient passives with native verbs is strikingly small in relation to their total number of occurrence. As for the PPCME2, only five recipient passives were found in total. The French origin verbs *deliveren* (PDE deliver), *banishen* (PDE banish), *serven* (PDE serve), *paien* (PDE) and the native verb *smiten* (PDE strike) could be found. Still, these findings confirm that, all in all, it can be said that recipient passives were firmly established in the grammars of writers during that period (Trips & Stein, 2018). Nevertheless, in line with the observations made by Allen, they were still rare in the 14th and 15th century and only more commonly used during the 16th century (Allen, 1995).

Following from these results, it becomes necessary to find an explanation for the date of the appearance of the structure after 1375, its surprising frequency with verbs of French origin and the ability of verbs of French origin to appear in recipient passives despite the absence of a recipient passive in French. From its absence from French grammar follows that the recipient passive is not an instance of *grammatical replication* (Heine & Kuteva, 2008), the kind of borrowing of language structure where in a given language, a new structure and its associated meanings come into existence based on the model of a grammatical structure in another language. The fact that recipient passives first appeared with verbs of French origin rules out the possibility of the change having a native origin. Inhibition from French cannot have been the reason for the absence of recipient passives before that period, as the results from the two different corpora showed (Trips & Stein, 2018).

The cause for the changes seems to be connected to the category dative. Assuming that items like verbs can be copied as a whole, in this case including their argument structure, differences in the category dative in the two languages could be a trigger for this change (Trips & Stein, 2019).

Firstly, OF and OE dative case differ from each other. In OF, dative case is seldomly realised as a bare dative NP. Rather, in OF, dative takes the form of a PP headed by the preposition *a*, as can be seen in the following example, where the PP is *a hume* (Trips & Stein, 2018):

(16)   *Et   dunet a hume graze et   dulce parole*
       and gives to man   grace and sweet word

       "and he gives the man grace and sweet word"

<div align="right">SRCMF Lapidf p.102

(as cited in Trips & Stein, 2018, p. 245)</div>

This kind of dative marking for animate RECIPIENTS was not possible in OE. Instead, datives in ditransitives were exclusively realised as bare NPs (McFadden, 2002). In contrast to the realisation options in PDE, however, it did not matter in which order the two object NPs appeared in an active sentence. Instead of marking the dative with a *to*-phrase, the majority of OE ditransitive verbs would select for a bare NP RECIPIENT marked for dative case and and accusative THEME (Allen, 1995). The example in (17) shows that the old direct object - indirect object pattern is still found in ME, where the RECIPIENT *þe deuel* is realised as a bare NP following the THEME *leue*:

(17)   *and ure drihten þe   him swo michel luuede ʒaf   leue   þe deuel to binimende him*
       and our lord   who him so   much   loved gave leave the devil to take   him
       his oref.
       his cattle.

       "And our lord, who loved him so much, gave the devil leave to take his cattle from him."

<div align="right">CMTRINIT,167,2272

(as cited in McFadden, 2002, p. 13)</div>

According to Denison (1993), this dative marking of indirect objects was gradually replaced by the prepositional form during Middle English. What is essential is that indirect objects realised as *to*-phrases can be taken to be instances of structural case whereas NP indirect objects with inflectional endings can usually be considered to be inherent case. This is relevant because, when French verbs were introduced into the English language, they brought along their case properties and were analysed differently from other native verbs. Since the indirect objects of French verbs can be seen as instances of structural case, they could become subjects of passive clauses. At the same time English verbs were unable to do this. Native verbs, whose indirect objects as instances of inherent case were prohibited from undergoing conversion into the subject of the sentence, also acquired these case properties later (Trips & Stein, 2018). Proof for the suggestion that speakers of a language might be able to distinguish between native and non-native items in their grammar on the basis of their stress patterns is given by Pinker (1989) and Ambridge, Pine, Rowland, Freudenthal, and Chang (2014). This distinction, in addition to the erosion of inflectional case endings in English and the introduction of structural case on indirect objects due to borrowing of argument structure from French might have been the driving forces for the emergence of the recipient passive (Trips & Stein, 2018).

The approach presented above suggests that the key to understanding the recipient passive lies in the argument structure of verbs. Therefore, the notion of argument structure will be examined more closely in the following section.

4 Ditransitives and Argument Structure

In the previous literature, both ditransitives and the recipient passive have been characterised in terms of their syntactic characteristics (Allen, 1995; Gerwin, 2014). In the light of current argument structure research and its implications for syntactic borrowing, the semantics of ditransitives has to be defined more precisely as well. The study of argument realisation deals with how arguments of verbs are expressed in the syntax (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2005). One major focus of argument realisation research is on verb alternations, i.e. the ability of verbs to realise the same set of arguments in multiple ways (Levin, 1993). In order to determine a set of verbs which are able to form the recipient passive, syntactic criteria of ditransitive verbs have to be formulated and their semantics has to be taken into account as well.

4.1 Syntactic Criteria of Ditransitives

Recipient passives are based on ditransitive verbs. In the previous literature, there has been a considerable amount of overlapping definitions for the term *ditransitive.*

In traditional grammar, there are transitive and intransitive verb classes. The term *ditransitive* applies to a subset of transitive verbs which require a direct and an indirect object in the form of two bare NPs. In addition to that, the indirect object can often take the form of a *to*-phrase (Gerwin, 2014; Greenbaum et al., 1987). Generally speaking, a ditransitive verb is a verb which conceptually takes three arguments. In an active sentence, all of these three arguments – subject, direct object and indirect object - are expressed. In the passive use of ditransitive verbs, the AGENT and former active subject can be omitted, although it is still conceptually present. Either of the two objects can be made the subject of a passive clause (Greenbaum et al., 1987). The way ditransitive verbs realise their arguments varies diachronically. Yet even in OE, most ditransitive verbs feature a bare indirect object NP in dative case and a bare direct object NP in accusative case (Allen, 1995).

On a different note, it is important to distinguish between ditransitives which select for a THEME NP and those which select for a clausal complement. Allen remarks that verbs with clausal complements pattern differently in ME with regard to the morphosyntactic realisation of their complements and "that the two types must be kept separate, because in ME, some verbs consistently occur with recipient passives in the construction with a clause, while such passives were not possible when the Theme argument was an NP" (Allen, 1995, p. 378). She adds that at earlier stages of the language, recipient passives of verbs like OE *warnian* (PDE warn) with clausal THEME complements have been attested. At the same time, the passivisation of the indirect object had not yet been grammatical (Allen, 1995). Also, Visser (1973) claims that recipient passives were not rare in ME, but it should be kept in mind that he does not take into account whether they appear with a clausal THEME or not. This implies that for an analysis of the recipient passive, the distinction between clausal complements and NP complements is important and necessary.

To sum it up, for the purposes of the analysis here, verbs are considered as ditransitive in their uses if 1) they conceptually involve three participants, 2) they realise all three participants

in the active, 3) they realise two of these participants in the passive (with the third participant optionally expressed), 4) they realise their objects as two bare NPs or as an NP and a PP in the active, and 5) they do not have a clausal THEME constituent.

4.2 Semantic Criteria of Ditransitives

A semantic investigation of English ditransitives inevitably leads to an examination of the dative alternation. In addition to an AGENT constituent, verbs participating in the dative alternation are said to select for a RECIPIENT or BENEFICIARY and a THEME (Gerwin, 2014). Before considering the semantic aspects of the English dative alternation in more detail, it is necessary to introduce the notions of *argument realisation* and *argument alternation* as well as *semantic roles* in more detail.

4.2.1 Argument Realisation

The theory of argument realisation deals with "all facets of syntactic expression of any arguments of verbs, including the entire range of options for the grammatical relation they may bear, their syntactic category and their surface morphosyntactic expression." (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2005, p. 3). Projectionist approaches to argument realisation, which assume that the morphosyntactic expression of arguments of verbs is already determined by the semantic representation of the argument structure in the verb's lexical entry, cannot explain the phenomenon of argument alternations. Therefore, they fail to account for puzzling patterns in the range of argument realisation options and the variation in meaning which accompanies them, inside a language and cross-linguistically (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 1998, 2005). Constructional approaches to argument realisation assume that "the behavior of a verb, particularly with respect to the expression and interpretation of its arguments, is to a large extent determined by its meaning" (Levin, 1993, p. 1), thereby linking verb meaning and syntactic context (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2005) but also taking into consideration that in English, a single verb can exhibit a wide range of syntactic expressions (Levin, 1993).

Levin's (1993) systematic study of English verbs and their argument-taking properties revealed that verbs can be grouped together into semantic classes based on similar syntactic behaviour. The basis for this analysis is the fact that verbs pattern together in *diathesis alternations*, i.e. alternative ways of expressing their arguments, which show "semantic coherence" (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2005, p. 2).

If the appearance of a verb in a certain alternation is based on its shared semantics with other members of this class, then verb meaning cannot only be located in the verb root. Part of the verb's meaning must be located in the syntactic construction it appears in. Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1998) assume that verb meaning can be split into two parts: a meaning located in the verb's root and a meaning which is situated in the syntactic construction itself. The root meaning of a verb is what differentiates the verb from other members in the same class, although this "idiosyncratic aspect is not relevant to the verb's grammatical behaviour." (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 1998, p. 107). The structural component is relevant for its grammatical behaviour and determines its semantic class-membership. It often corresponds to the

aspectual classes the verb is associated with (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 1998).

This distinction between root meaning and constructional meaning stems from an observation by Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1998), who notice that the range of argument expression options is much broader for some verbs than for others. Given that in general, verbs are used in order to describe specific properties of events rather than the events themselves, a single event can be construed in more than one way by a language. "When alternate construals are possible and involve different grammatically relevant aspects of meaning, the result can be pairs of near-synonyms within or across languages showing different argument realisation options" (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2005, p. 19). By means of an example, Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1998) further distinguish *manner verbs*, which specify the result of an action without specifying a resulting state, and *result verbs*, which specify a result, but which do not elaborate on the manner in which the result is achieved. This contrasting behaviour can be attributed to a difference in their lexical aspectual classification. Manner verbs lexicalise activities and result verbs describe achievements or accomplishments. This distinction is important for the discussion of ditransitives because although some ditransitive verbs are compatible with more than one lexical semantic representation, they still have a basic semantic classification, which means that they still signify either more prototypically an activity or an achievement (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 1998).

Another important notion in connection with semantic classes are semantic roles. Semantic roles are labels which determine the role of a constituent in the event denoted by the verb and further specify the semantic relation between the verb and the argument (Gruber, 1965). There is only a small set of semantic roles and the members of one class share semantic properties and morphological realisation options (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2005). Early versions of semantic roles include Fillmore's *case notions*,

> a set of universal, presumably innate, concepts, which identify certain types of judgements which human beings are capable of making on the events that are going on around them, judgements on such matters as who did it, who it happened to, what got changed" (Fillmore, 1968, p. 24).

They include concepts such as *Agent*, which is the case taken by "the instigator of the action" (Fillmore, 1971, p. 37), *Object*, "the entity which moves or undergoes change" (Fillmore, 1971, p. 42) or *Goal*, which refers to the location to which something moves (Fillmore, 1971).

To sum it up, a single verb can showcase variation in its underlying event type as well as in the number and nature of arguments it selects for, in terms of morphological realisation and semantic roles. Verbs which exhibit similar syntactic behavior and semantic roles can be grouped together into semantic classes and alternations, which vary cross-linguistically (Levin, 1993).

4.2.2 The Dative Alternation

The most important alternation when looking at ditransitives is the dative alternation. The dative alternation involves "the subset of ditransitive verbs that take agent, recipient (possessional goal), and theme arguments, such as *give*, *send* and *throw*" (Levin, 2011, p. 1).

The dative alternation is not found in all languages (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008) and the arguments of verbs in this alternation can be realised in two ways (Levin, 2011). They can both be realised in the Double Object Construction (DOC), which realises both object arguments as bare noun phrases with the THEME constituent following the RECIPIENT.

(18)   The teacher gives her_{RECIPIENT} the book_{THEME}.

They can also take the form of a *to*-phrase. In this case, the THEME argument is realised as a bare NP, followed by a PP headed by the preposition *to*. The THEME precedes the RECIPIENT.

(19)   The teacher gives the book_{THEME} to her_{RECIPIENT}.

There have been many attempts at trying to find the motivation behind this alternation. For example, it is often argued that the DOC variant implies successful transfer whereas the prepositional variant does not. Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2008) argue against this and state that successful transfer is already contained in the verb and has nothing to do with the syntactic construction. There are generally two approaches. One takes both variants to have the same meaning and simply two argument options. The other suggests that both options express different although related concepts depending on the realisation pattern (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008). The second approach is more accepted at the moment and called the *uniform multiple meaning approach.* According to Pinker (1989), "verbs must be interpreted in a certain way when they are assigned an argument structure composed of a particular set of grammatical functions" (Pinker, 1989, p. 70). In other words, this approach assumes that the DOC variant signifies an event of caused possession, which can be conceptualised as "X causes Y to have Z" (Pinker, 1989, p. 82), whereas the *to*-variant signifies an event of caused motion, which signifies "X causes Y to go to Z" (Pinker, 1989, p. 82). The latter can also be described as an event where an "agent causes a theme to move along a path to a goal" (Goldberg, 1995, p. 152). As a consequence, this approach takes all verbs which exhibit the dative alternation to have two distinct meanings (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008).

However, Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2008) take a new approach, reexamine the data and conclude that this might not be the full story. They apply a "verb-sensitive approach" (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008, p. 129) which differentiates different parts of verb meaning. It looks at the core meaning lexicalised in the root of the verb, the event type and semantic roles associated with this meaning. It also considers the morphosyntactic frames, i.e. DOC and the *to*-variant, which can express the event type, and how each category of representation is linked to the others.

Rather than viewing all dative verbs as belonging to one heterogeneous set of verbs, they split the dative verbs into *give-type verbs* and *send-type verbs* and observe that the difference between the two verb classes lies in the semantic roles connected with them. Since give-type verbs inherently lexicalise a change of possession, they always select for a RECIPIENT (Levin, 2011). Send-type verbs, on the other hand, do not necessarily lexically select a RECIPIENT and can also select a spatial GOAL, since they "inherently describe causing a theme to move to a spatial goal" (Levin, 2011, p. 3). They can, however, also denote caused possession events, "as they describe activities that provide the means to effect caused possession" (Levin, 2011).

A third category, *throw-type verbs*, is added but they largely pattern with send-type verbs in their ditransitive use and will henceforth be subsumed under this label (Levin, 2011).

Interestingly, indirect objects taken by give-type verbs can never be analysed as spatial GOALS. Rather, they are inherently RECIPIENTS, because they "lack a conceptual path constituent" (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008, p. 129), although give-type verbs can undoubtedly realise their indirect object with a PP. The uniform multiple meaning approach would consider the to-variant to be an instance of caused motion in the possessional field. However, Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2008) argue that "these verbs do not take a possessional path argument, and the recipient marked by *to* cannot be analysed as the goal of such a path" (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008, p. 137). This is because the *to*-phrase complements taken by give- and send-type verbs differ from each other. The most noticeable difference is that give-type verbs can only take animate and no spatial GOALS. Furthermore, *to*-complements of give-type verbs cannot be questioned with *where*, nor can they appear with spatial prepositions other than *to*. They are also unable to take a source phrase (Levin, 2011), as illustrated in (20):

(20) a. Where did you *give/throw/send the package?
      b. The teacher *gives/throws/sends the package next to Mary's house.
      c. The teacher *gives/throws/send the package from London to her office.

The general assumption that to-complements are always to be analysed as spatial GOALS arises because the preposition *to* implies "that the recipient is the goal of a possessional path" (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008, p. 133). However, in PDE, the morphological realisation option *to*-phrase is not only restricted to spatial GOALS but allows various other argument types as well, which can lead to confusion (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008).

Send-type verbs are compatible with both RECIPIENTS and spatial GOALS, whereas give-type verbs only co-occur with RECIPIENTS. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the argument realisation options for both verb types and the semantic roles of the indirect objects associated with them as well as the relevant event type. The indirect object is marked in bold.

Table 1: *Give*-type verbs

Example	Semantic Role of the Indirect Object	Event Type
She gives **him** the book. She gives the book **to him**.	human RECIPIENT	caused possession
She gives **the library** the book. She gives the book **to the library**.	human-like RECIPIENT; extension via metonymy	caused possession
*She gives **the countryside** the book. *She gives the book **to the countryside**.	spatial GOAL	—

Table 2: *Send*-type verbs

Example	Semantic Role of the Indirect Object	Event Type
She sends **him** the book. She sends the book **to him**.	human RECIPIENT	caused possession
She sends **the library** the book. She sends the book **to the library**.	human-Like RECIPIENT; extension via metonymy	caused possession
She sends the book **to the countryside**. *She sends **the countryside** the book.	spatial GOAL	caused motion

It can be concluded that give-type verbs always signify caused possession and that send-type verbs can express both caused possession and caused motion, depending on whether they take a RECIPIENT or a spatial GOAL. Still, a caused motion event can only be realised with the to-variant (Levin, 2011). Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2008) add that "actual appearance in one or the other frame often seems to come down to considerations in information structure and heaviness of the indirect object" (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008, p. 156).

5 The Recipient Passive and Present Day English Verbs

The next step is to find out in how far this analysis of the dative alternation is relevant for an analysis of the recipient passive. Since the recipient passive always involves a RECIPIENT, it can be assumed that both give-type and send-type verbs are compatible with this structure, but that give-type verbs are always able to form recipient passives but send-type verbs only when they include an actual RECIPIENT.

Thus, the verb sensitive approach (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008) argues that although there are two different morphological realisation patterns for ditransitive verbs taking a RECIPIENT complement, they only have the underlying event type caused possession. Notably, some ditransitive verbs (send-type verbs) are also able to take spatial GOALS as their indirect objects, but only in the to-variant, thereby signifying a caused motion event.

Tables 3 and 4 show that only ditransitive verbs taking a true RECIPIENT are eligible for the recipient passive. The RECIPIENT is necessarily a human-like, animate entity, which is capable of possession. RECIPIENTS like organisations or institutions can be conceptualised as human-like via metonymy and are therefore capable of possession (Gerwin, 2014). Sentences in which ditransitive verbs take spatial GOALS as their indirect object complements, however, cannot be transformed into a recipient passive, since spatial complements lack the characteristics described above.

To sum up the theoretical considerations of the section above, an examination of the be-

haviour of give- and send-type verbs in the recipient passive confirms that give-type verbs cannot take spatial GOALS as a principle. Therefore, all of their uses automatically involve a true RECIPIENT and can be transformed into recipient passives. For send-type verbs, it depends on whether they take a RECIPIENT and therefore signify a caused possession event or a spatial GOAL.

Table 3: *Give*-type verbs in the recipient passive

Example	Semantic Role	Event Type
He is given the book.	human RECIPIENT	caused possession
The library is given the book.	human-like RECIPIENT	caused possession

Table 4: *Send*-type verbs in the recipient passive

Example	Semantic Role	Event Type
He is sent the book.	human RECIPIENT	caused possession
The library is sent the book.	human-like RECIPIENT	caused possession
*__The countryside__ is sent the book.	spatial GOAL	—

It follows from this distinction that differences in the syntactic behaviour and the ability to form recipient passives are expected concerning the different verb classes as well as individual verbs inside of a given set. The following analysis is concerned with the event type a verb is associated with, what kind of RECIPIENT the verb root implies and whether these verbs can form recipient passives. The necessary condition for recipient passives seems to be the compatibility with the caused possession event type, which also requires the verb to take an animate human(-like) RECIPIENT capable of possession as opposed to a spatial GOAL. The idiosyncratic meaning of the different verbs inside of the classes seems to specify either the nature of the possession (Levin, 2011), the nature of the THEME transferred or the manner of the act of giving. Possibly, the root meanings further influence whether a verb can appear in the recipient passive.

In the following section, a detailed analysis of the two verb classes will be provided. A google query searching for occurrences of recipient passives was used to assess the grammaticality of the constructions in PDE. The web search has been restricted to UK sites in order to make as sure as possible that the author is a native speaker[3]. It should be kept in mind that

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[3]A simple google query was carried out with the aim of a basic assessment of the grammaticality of the verbs of the two verb classes in recipient passives in written English. In every query, the search term included the passive form of the verb in question preceded by either present or past tense auxiliary and a first- or third person singular pronoun showing nominative case, e.g. "he was given" or "she is airmailed". No quantitative assessment had been intended but the search nevertheless revealed that some of the queries showed numerous results while others did not return any hits. In the case that no recipient passive with a pronoun in nominative case could be found, the search was extended to include NP RECIPIENTS as well. Naturally, given the limits of

clausal ditransitives are not considered in this discussion about recipient passives and should be treated as a separate category. The results of the grammaticality tests are presented below. After analysing the behaviour of give- and send-type verbs, a section focusing on verbs of Latinate origin will shed light on the distinct syntactic behaviour of native and non-native verbs.

5.1 Give-type verbs

According to Levin (2011), give-type verbs as core dative verbs are generally able to realise their arguments in the DOC or with a *to*-phrase. Dative verbs inherently signify caused possession and therefore necessarily involve a RECIPIENT capable of possession. Consequently, the verbs listed as *Give Verbs*, *Verbs of Future Having* and *Verbs of Transfer of Message* in Levin (1993), which all show the dative alternation, are expected to be able to form recipient passives.

Give Verbs (Levin, 1993) are verbs which "cannot be used in [their] literal sense unless [they] denote[…] a giver having some object and then causing it to enter into the possession of a recipient" (Pinker, 1989, p. 110). The verb *give* itself - being the prototypical member of its group – signifies a transfer resulting in a state of possession. In this case, the root of the verb contributes nothing more to the meaning of the verb than the event type already implies (Levin, 2011). Pinker (1989) further adds that manner and direction are some defining characteristics contributed by the roots of other verbs in this group which add to the meaning of the caused possession event type. The *Give Verbs* (Levin, 1993) include *feed, give, lease, lend, loan, pass, pay, peddle, refund, render, rent, repay, sell, serve* and *trade.* The following examples show some of them in recipient passives:

(21) *This orphaned hedgehog certainly did when **he** was fed a large meal after being taken in by staff at a wildlife hospital in Tel Aviv, (1995).*

('Tired baby hedgehog', 2014)

(22) *… a coroner's jury heard claims that in March 2002, while on guard duty at the Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut, **he** was lent a rifle despite not being officially old enough to be alone with a weapon.*

(Payne, 2006)

(23) *When he returned to the UK Mr Ingram asked OneTwoTrip why **he** was sold a product that would allow him free flight changes and refunds …*

(Blackmore, 2015)

Feed, lend and *sell* all describe an event of caused possession with an animate RECIPIENT. The verb root of *feed* in (21) contributes a specification of the THEME transferred (food) to the constructional meaning. The root of *lend* in (22) specifies that the possession is temporary ('lend, v.2', OED, Proffitt, 2015) and the root of *sell* in (23) specifies that the condition for the transfer is some sort of payment ('sell, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015).

such a google query, no definitive statements can be made about either frequency or nonexistence of any of the verbs in recipient passives.

The verbs *peddle* and *trade*, which were included in the list of *Give Verbs* (Levin, 1993), but not listed in Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2008), do not appear in recipient passives in the google query. This might be due to their root meaning. The roots of *peddle* and *trade* do not lexicalise a resulting state but the manner in which a transfer is achieved. In general, although some verbs are compatible with more than one lexical semantic representation, they still signify either more prototypically an activity or an accomplishment. Verbs with roots which already signify an accomplishment are maximally complex and cannot be broken down. This means that their resulting state cannot be substracted without altering the meaning of the verb (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008). *Peddle* and *trade* as well as most verbs listed in the category of *Throw Verbs* designate activities rather than accomplishments and are therefore less likely to necessarily include a RECIPIENT.

The *Verbs of Future Having* (Levin, 1993) can be described as denoting "not changes of possession but proactive commitments of some sort guaranteeing them" (Pinker, 1989, p. 111). Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2005, p. 19) remark that "it is crucial to recognize that verb meanings represent construals of events rather than the events themselves". This is especially interesting for the group of *Verbs of Future Having* since these verbs evoke a construal of transfer of possession although they do not describe an actual transfer itself. There is also a set of "verbs of future not having" (Pinker, 1989, p. 111), which is not taken into account by Levin (1993), since they alternate in DOC. Examples of these verbs are *deny* and *forgive* (Pinker, 1989), which can form recipient passives as well. Just as the *Verbs of Future Having*, *Verbs of Future Not Having* can also not be construed without a resulting state of possession, and therefore they should be included in an analysis of the recipient passive. The two classes include *advance, allocate, allot, assign, award, bequeath, cede, concede, extend, grant, guarantee, issue, leave, offer, owe, promise, vote, will* and *yield* (Levin, 1993) as well as verbs like *deny* and *forgive* (Pinker, 1989).

(24)   *Dominic West hints **he** WAS offered a part in Game of Thrones: 'If they asked again, I'd be delighted'*

(Gordon, 2016)

(25)   *That's not to say **he** was forgiven his many failings because of these results but it certainly bought him greater respect from the fans.*

(Patterson, 2017)

(26)   *In 1816 **he** was bequeathed a farm in Yarrow, where he spent most of his time for the rest of his life, combining farming with writing.*

('James Hogg', 2017)

In addition to signifying caused possession and including an animate RECIPIENT, the root meaning of *offer* in (24) specifies the fact that the transfer is dependent on the decision of the RECIPIENT to accept what has been held out to him ('offer, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015). *Forgive* in (25) signifies the nullification of a claim of recompense ('forgive, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015) and *bequeath* in (26) ties the transfer to the condition of the death of the former possessor of the THEME ('bequeath, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015).

The last group listed under give-type verbs are *Verbs of Transfer of Message* (Levin, 1993). Their "direct object signif[ies] the message and [the] to-object signif[ies] the audience" (Pinker, 1989, p. 112). Not all of them are well-formed in the recipient passive construction, because "only some can be given a thematic reanalysis whereby the speaker is treated as an agent of a change of possessional state of the audience, that is, x causes y to know (perceive, apprehend, be aware of) z" (Pinker, 1989, p. 112). The list of *Verbs of Transfer of Message* includes *ask, cite, demonstrate, dictate, explain, explicate, narrate, pose, preach, quote, read, recite, relay, teach, tell, write* and *show* (Levin, 1993; Pinker, 1989). They all specify a particular kind of communicated content of the event but do not elaborate on the manner of the communication process, e.g. the verb *read* in (27) communicates a story to an audience, *show* specifies the content as a perceptible object (Pinker, 1989) and *teach* in (28) communicates a lesson.

(27) *When **he** was <u>read</u> a tweet from an angry Aussie calling for him to be deported from Australia, Tomic responded: 'Well, that's his opinion.*

(Lambert, 2017)

(28) *Wojciech Szczesny has admitted that **he** was <u>taught</u> a valuable and necessary lesson last season when he was suddenly dropped by Arsene Wenger.*

(Wilson, 2013)

(29) ***He** was <u>written</u> a trilogy of memoirs of growing up in Belfast during the Troubles.*

('Prayer for the Day', n.d.)

Instances of the verb *write* in (29) in the recipient passive were not numerous, possibly because it is more focused on manner than on the result of the act of writing. The verbs which could not be found with relevant examples, or which appeared in fewer numbers, were *cite, demonstrate, dictate, narrate, pose, recite*. Again, this suggests that verb root meanings which focus on a result or the RECIPIENT seem to be more likely to be well-formed in the recipient passive than manner-type verbs.

Many of the verbs in this subset are frequently used with a clausal complement instead of an NP THEME. Although the verb *explain* could be found in the recipient passive in (30), and the verb *ask* can be found in RECIPIENTs like in (31), where the THEME constituent involves the word *question*, verbs of this kind are also often used with a clausal complement like in (32) and (33).

(30) *After **he** was <u>explained</u> the risk of potentially losing money on his contract, that thing has been parked ever since.*

(Rovell, 2006)

(31) *Putin's mood turned slightly sour when **he** was <u>asked</u> a series of questions about the recent death of Boris Berezovsky …*

(Elder, 2013)

(32) *Richard Bilton confessed to Murat that **he** was <u>asked</u> to operate covertly within the press pack.*

(O'Sullivan, 2017)

(33)   *Speaking at the Cheltenham Science Festival,* **he** *was* <u>asked</u> *whether religious studies should be abolished in schools …*

(Knapton, 2017).

An analysis of English give-type verbs suggests that they appear in recipient passives if their constructional meaning is caused possession including a true RECIPIENT and if the idiosyncratic meaning component contributed by the verb root focuses on the result of the transfer and not on the manner in which the transfer is achieved.

5.2 Send-type Verbs

Send-type verbs are also expected to be able to form recipient passives if they take a RECIPIENT as their complement instead of a spatial GOAL since, in this case, they signify caused possession events. The send-type verbs comprise the *Verbs of Sending, Throw Verbs, Bring/Take* and *Verbs of Instrument of Communication* (Levin, 1993).

The *Verbs of Sending* mostly specify the manner and medium of a transfer event. The set includes such verbs as *airmail, convey, deliver, dispatch, express, forward, hand, mail, port, return, send, shift, shunt, slip, smuggle, sneak, transfer* and *transport* (Levin, 1993).

(34)   *A stunned online shopper was left speechless after* **he** *was* <u>delivered</u> *a single sprout.*

('Sainsbury's deliver', 2017).

(35)   **John Collier**, *of Lisvane Avenue, Scarborough, was* <u>airmailed</u> *the 24 flags by Civil War buff Steve Halcomb, of Orange County, California.*

('The battle of Collier's flag', 2001)

(36)   *While the preparation was on to perform the last rites of senior Congress leader Mahendra Karma,* **his eldest son Chavindra**, *33, was* <u>conveyed</u> *a threat: "Leave the village or get ready to face the consequences".*

(Purohit, 2013)

The verb *deliver* in (34) designates a transfer of possession by a messenger ('deliver, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015). In (35), the medium of the transfer is by plane ('airmail, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015) and the verb *convey* in (36) specifies the transfer of something immaterial ('convey, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015).

The *Throw Verbs* include verbs such as *bash, catapult, kick (ball), pass, throw, toss,* etc. (Levin, 1993). Some verbs of this class have been omitted for the reason that most do not conform to the syntactic criteria for ditransitives. Only some of them can be used with an indirect object, even less with an indirect object signifying a RECIPIENT. Many of these verbs involve a metaphorical transfer, in which the RECIPIENT is "affected in some way by 'receiving' the second object" (Goldberg, 1992, p. 60). The following two examples illustrate how *throw* and *pass* can be used in the recipient passive when taking a true RECIPIENT:

(37)   *So when* **he** *was* <u>thrown</u> *a lifeline by Kieron Dyer's latest injury, Cole needed to deliver his clearest message of intent to the doubting Eriksson that he could still be an England force.*

(McNulty, 2003)

(38)   *Spraire started slow after this and seemed a little in shock, a few minutes passed and* **Sam**
       Pinnegar *in goal was* <u>*passed*</u> *a ball from defence to relieve some pressure but his return*
       pass was a little soft, ...

('U9s A triumph', n.d.)

A further subtype of send-type verbs are the verbs *bring* and *take* (Levin, 2011). While they
both have an underlying event type of caused possession, they differ in one respect: the di-
rection of the transfer. Whereas *bring* lexicalises a motion towards a RECIPIENT, *take* specifies
a motion away from the former possessor and AGENT ('bring, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015). Hence,
it is not surprising, that only *bring* is well-formed in the recipient passive, as the example in
(39) shows. No example of *take* in subject position could be found in the google query, which
is likely because of the recipient passive being a construction highlighting the RECIPIENT and
allowing an omission of the AGENT. The AGENT, however, is crucial for the verb *take* as a point
of reference.

(39)   **I** *was* <u>*brought*</u> *a plate with two baby carrots, two small asparagus spears, and a small*
       bunch of broccoli.

('Gherkin', n.d.)

Finally, *Verbs of Instrument of Communication* (Levin, 1993) such as *e-mail, fax, radio, wire,*
telegraph and *telephone* could all be found in recipient passives. They signify an event type
of transfer of message resulting in metaphorical possession of the information conveyed by
the message. They include a necessarily animate RECIPIENT. In addition to that, the individual
verbs each specify the channel used for communicating the message, as the following example
shows, where the message is conveyed by e-mail:

(40)   *The tribunal heard that* **"Mr Lloyd-Hilbert"** *was* <u>*e-mailed*</u> *a job description for a quality*
       inspector and a maximum salary of £33,000 was indicated.

('Racism denied', 2007)

In conclusion, those send-type verbs which can take a true RECIPIENT object can form re-
cipient passives. A special case is *take*, which, although it includes a RECIPIENT, cannot form
recipient passives because of the direction of the motion specified by it.

5.3 Special Cases

Up to this point, it has been assumed that all give- and send-type verbs are able to realise
their arguments in both the DOC and in the to-variant in active sentences. However, there
are also verbs, which cannot be expressed in the DOC. Verbs of Latinate origin seem to be
unable to express their indirect object as a bare NP and can only realise their indirect object as
a *to*-phrase. This has been taken to suggest a relationship between the morphological origin
of a verb and its compatibility with a particular morphological frame (Ambridge et al., 2014;
Pinker, 1989).

Gerwin states that "etymologically native verbs tend to be monosyllabic and monomor-
phemic" (Gerwin, 2014, p. 38) in contrast to Latinate verbs, which are mostly bi- or trisyllabic.

What further distinguishes Latinate verbs from native verbs is their stress pattern. Latinate verbs have their stress on the second syllable. In contrast, native verbs have the stress on the first syllable (Ambridge et al., 2014).

Many of the verbs of French origin found in recipient passives in ME (Trips & Stein, 2018) have developed into verbs in PDE which fall under the Latinate constraint. Since these verbs were the first verbs in recipient passives in ME (Trips & Stein, 2018), their inability to appear in the DOC should not be relevant to their being able to form recipient passives. A search for dative verbs of Latinate origin, e.g. *advance, allot, assign, award, concede, extend, demonstrate, dictate, explain, narrate, recite, deliver*, etc. shows that they appear in recipient passives and behave just like the verbs of Latinate origin which have acquired native stress patterns like *offer* and *promise*. The examples below show some of them in recipient passives:

(41)   *She sold half a billion books over nearly half a century; in 1998* **she** *was* <u>*advanced*</u> *the record sum of $10m for her next three novels.*

(Farquhar, 2015)

(42)   **He** *was* <u>*assigned*</u> *a court lawyer during an initial hearing on Monday and appeared via video link from his cell.*

(Pearlman, 2017)

(43)   *The chef had another chance to witness the rookie dictator's diet up close in 2012, when* **he** *was* <u>*extended*</u> *a personal invitation to North Korea.*

(Power, Ozawa, & MacFarlan, 2015)

In the preceding examples it can be seen that verbs of Latinate origin are well-formed in the recipient passive. Not only does the inability of verbs of Latinate origin to occur in the DOC not seem to have any effect on their ability to form recipient passives, it is exactly their ability to only realise the indirect object with a *to*-phrase and not with an NP, which makes a further examination of the relationship between a verb's ability to realise the indirect object with a *to*-phrase and its appearance in the recipient passive more interesting, since the rise of the recipient passive has been tied to a reanalysis of the indirect object as direct object because of its position immediately following the verb (Allen, 1995).

6 The Recipient Passive in Middle English

In order to illustrate how ditransitive verbs in ME realised their arguments and form recipient passives, two diachronic corpora have been queried for occurrences of the list of dative verbs. Five representative verbs have been selected for an in-depth analysis of recipient passive and active uses.[4]

The version of the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English 2* (PPCME2) (Kroch & Taylor, 2000) used for this project is lemmatised[5]. Therefore, relevant occurrences of active and

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[4]The corpora have been queried with the help of the *Corpus Search Tool* at `http://corpussearch.sourceforge.net`. (Randall, 2009).

[5]Although the official version of the PPCME is not lemmatised, a lemmatised version built by the DFG research project *Borrowing of Argument Structure in Contact Situations (BASICS)* was accessed for this project.

passive uses of each verb could be obtained by searching for the MED (Middle English Dictionary) (McSparran et al., 2001) lemma. The output has been reduced to such ditransitive uses which fit the event type of caused possession established above. Texts in this corpus include texts of various genres from handbooks, science texts, and religious treatises, to historical documents and fiction. In total, it contains 1.2 million words, covering the period between 1150 and 1500 (Kroch & Taylor, 2000).

The *Penn Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (PCEEC) (Taylor et al., 2006) is not lemmatised and has therefore been queried for the occurrence of possible alternative spelling forms listed in the MED entry of a given verb. Here, as well, the output has to be reduced to ditransitive uses only. This corpus is a single-genre corpus, which shows correspondences from ME and Early Modern English (EModE). It is considered to contain less literary texts and therefore portrays spoken English of the time. This corpus includes 84 letter collections, totalling 2.2 million words. The period covered spans from 1410 to 1695 (Taylor et al., 2006). The period from 1350 to 1499 (labelled M3 and M4) is particularly relevant for recipient passives (Allen, 1995).

Three verbs of French origin and two native verbs have been selected. For French borrowings, the verb *paien* (PDE pay) was chosen because it was the only verb which could be found in the recipient passive in both corpora and therefore seems to be a keystone to understanding recipient passives. The verb *denien* (PDE deny) acts as a representative of the *Verbs of Future Not Having*. The verb *promisen* (PDE promise) was chosen because it has been found in the recipient passive although its ditransitive uses are rare in both corpora. The verb *yeven* (PDE give), as the most prototypical verb of change of possession, acts as a representative for the native verbs. The native verb *sheuen* (PDE show) is a representative of the *Verbs of Communication of Message.*

Having defined the necessary conditions for verbs to be able to appear in recipient passives today in the section above, the following section will enter into a detailed discussion of whether the same criteria apply to the ME verbs as well. Before proceeding to analyse the data from the diachronic corpora, the ditransitive meaning of the corresponding PDE verb will be determined with the help of the OED (Oxford English Dictionary) (Proffitt, 2015). In addition, the MED entries of the verbs will be checked for matching uses.

In line with the findings by Allen (1995) and Trips and Stein (2018), it seems to be the case that recipient passives are rare in ME. This raises the question as to how the data retrieved can be taken to be representative. Although a single occurrence of a syntactic construction does not prove that a structure was possible and commonly used, the systematic appearance of a structure across a set of verbs with similar characteristics and across texts of different genres and authors suggests that the construction was compatible with the grammar of a speaker at a given time. A compilation of this kind of data has been attempted in the following section.

6.1 Pay/Paien

The verb *pay* denotes a change of possession in terms of financial transfer, during which money or other valuables are handed over to another person or institution ('pay, v. 1', OED,

Proffitt, 2015). This makes *pay* a prototypical *Verb of Giving*. The root of the verb adds a specification of what is transferred – something valuable – to the constructional meaning of caused possession.

Although it can also be used monotransitively (because the root already specifies the kind of THEME transferred), the verb is often used ditransitively and can, therefore, form recipient passives. The RECIPIENT can be either expressed with a *to*-phrase or with a bare noun phrase in the DOC, although the examples in the OED entry prefer the DOC over the to-variant ('pay, v. 1', OED, Proffitt, 2015).

The verb *paien*, a borrowing from Anglo-Norman *paier*, initially meant *to satisfy*, but its use in the modern sense of financial transfer is attested from the 14th century ('pay, v. 1', OED, Proffitt, 2015). It has a matching sense in its MED entry. The MED entry examples show that as early as in the 14th century, the RECIPIENT could be expressed with a *to*-phrase ('paien, v.', MED, McSparran et al., 2001):

(44) *Mesa [...] paiede* **to þe kyng** of israel *an hundryd thousend of lambys.*
      Mesa [...] paid   to the king of Israel a   hundred thousand of lambs.

      "Mesa paid a hundred thousand lambs to the king of Israel."

      WBible(1) (Bod 959)

      (as cited in 'paien, v.', MED, McSparran et al., 2001).

Although the MED entry lists more occurrences of the verb *paien* with a *to*-phrase denoting the RECIPIENT, the following passage from the PPCME2 shows the verb in the DOC in the 15th century. In (45), the case-marked pronominal RECIPIENT *hym* appears in NP form and is followed by the THEME *twenty pound of gold.*

(45) *Here after he chased þe Norþ Britouns at Herford, so þat þey schulde paye* **hym**
      Here after he attacked the North Bretons at Herford, so that they should pay him
      every ȝere twenty pound of gold, and þre   hondred pound of silver, and five and
      every year twenty pound of gold, and three hundred pound of silver and five and
      twenty hondred reþeren:
      twenty hundred head of cattle:

      "After this, he attacked the North Bretons at Herford, that as a consequence they should pay him twenty pound of gold, three hundred pound of silver and two thousand and five hundred head of cattle every year."

      (CMPOLYCH, VI,441.3227)

The verb *paien* was the only verb found in r ecipient passives both in the PCEEC and in the PPCME2. In the PCEEC, uses of *paien* in the recipient passive can be found in the Paston Letters from the 15th century:

(46) *... and whedir* **he** *be paijd such mony as I sent home word he shuld be paijd;*
      ... and whether he is paid such money as I sent home word he should be paid

      "and whether he is paid as much money as I sent word home that he should be paid"

      (PASTON,I,128.034.640)

(47)   *And seye þat **ye** will be <u>paijd</u> euerj pene'*,
       And say that you will be paid every penny,
       "And say that you will be paid every penny,"

<div align="right">(PASTON,I,133.035.765)</div>

In (46), the pronominal RECIPIENT *he* has been promoted to subject status, which can be seen in its nominative case. In (47), the RECIPIENT is the pronoun *ye*, which also shows nominative case.

The PPCME2 also shows *paien* in the recipient passive. In the example below, the RECIPIENT *þei* appears in nominative case. The finite verb *were* agrees with the RECIPIENT in subject position:

(48)   *and **þei** þat took hem were treuly <u>payed</u> too þousand pound.*
       and they that took him were truly   paid   two thousand pound.

       "And those who took him were truly paid two thousand pound."

<div align="right">(CMCAPCHR,153.3587)</div>

Concerning *paien*, it can be summed up that the verb was able to appear in the recipient passive in the relevant time frame. Additionally, active uses in both DOC and the to-variant were found.

6.2 Deny/Denien

The verb *deny,* which belongs to the *Verbs of Future Having,* conceptually signifies the refusal of an act of bestowing. The event type is caused possession because the verb denotes a conceptual event type in which, potentially, an entity is caused to be possessed by a potential RECIPIENT, even though the transfer does not happen. This suggests that successful transfer seems to be of no significance for forming recipient passives because the OED explicitly states that either of the objects of the ditransitive verb can be made subject in the passive ('deny, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015).

The MED confirms that the ME verb *denien* could be used ditransitively in DOC or the to-variant to denote the withholding or failure to grant an entity to someone, as the two following examples from the middle of the 15th century demonstrate ('denien, v', MED, McSparran et al., 2001):

(49)   *Not <u>denying</u> iustice **to his enemy**.*
       Not denying justice to his enemy.

       "Not denying justice to his enemy."

<div align="right">Scrope Othea (St.-J-C H.5). 99
(as cited in 'denien, v.', MED, McSparran et al., 2001)</div>

(50) *With ynne the ferst xl   dayes after that his parcener denyed **hym** his part.*
Within   the first forty days after that his coheir   denied him his part.
"Within forty days after his coheir denied him his share."

<div align="right">Ipswich Domesday(2) (Add 25011). 123</div>

<div align="right">(as cited in 'denien, v.', MED, McSparran et al., 2001)</div>

The PCEEC does not give many examples of recipient passives with the verb *denien.* There is one example from 1520, which shows the pronominal RECIPIENT *I* in its nominative form. The THEME complement takes the form of the NP *that*, which refers to a request made by the author of the manuscript to the *maiestie.*

(51) *And if **I** be denid   that, if your maiestie comaund   not other ways, he shall neuer*
And if I be denied that, if your majesty commands not other ways, he shall never
skape   my handes.
escape my hands.
"And if I am denied that, if your majesty does not command otherwise, he shall never escape my hands."

<div align="right">(WYATT, 108.016.493)</div>

One more instance of a recipient passive can be found, but it dates from much later. It stems from a collection of writings from the second half of the 17th century. The RECIPIENT, *the Jesuits themselves,* has been fronted and the finite verb agrees with the plural RECIPIENT:

(52) *But since **the Jesuits themselves** have been denied the priviledge of receaving*
But since the Jesuits themselves have been denied the privilege of receiving
confession by latters, I shall by no meanes press it...
confession by letter, I shall by no means press it...
"But since the Jesuits themselves have been denied the privilege of receiving a confession by letter, I shall by no means press it."

<div align="right">(DUPPA,18.0011.245)</div>

Furthermore, data from the PCEEC confirms that *denien* could appear in DOC with pronoun as well as with a full NP RECIPIENT:

(53) *I might noot deny **hym** yt,*
I might not deny hym it,
"I might not deny it to him."

<div align="right">(CELY,16.012.171)</div>

(54) *For they have denied **them of Gaunte** diuerse of ther desyrys,*
For they have denied them of Gaunts various of their desires
"For they have denied various desires to the Gaunts."

<div align="right">(CELY,244.147.3254)</div>

In conclusion, this shows that the ME verb *denien* could appear in the recipient passive and was used in both DOC and the to-variant during the 15th century.

6.3 Promise/Promisen

The verb *promise* is one of the *Verbs of Future Having*. The underlying event type is that of transfer of possession. The verb can form recipient passives as the following example from a newspaper shows: *In the wake of the publicity **he** was promised a desk job in his unit, ...* (Adams, 2010).

However, in PDE, *promise* occurs less often with a direct object in the form of an NP than it does with clausal complements. Sentences like "*He was promised that he would be able to work in a factory ...*" ("Case Study", 2017), in which the pronoun appears in nominative form, but in which the THEME appears in the form of a subclause, are far more widespread.

What distinguishes the verb promise from other give-type verbs is the fact that the kind of transfer described by the verb is not possible without a verbal act. Whereas the transfer in events described by verbs like *give, hand, pay,* etc. can be carried out without any verbal communication, this is not the case for *promise.* In fact, other *Verbs of Future Having* with a similar meaning are more often found in clausal ditransitive constructions as well. Passivisation of these verbs usually involves the passivisation of the THEME in the form *it was promised that.* Another verb of this class would be the verb *explain.*

The ditransitive use of *promise* signifies the commitment "to do or refrain from (a specified thing or act) or to give or bestow (a specified thing)" ('promise, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015). It is further added that it can be used with a noun phrase "indicating the person to whom the promise is made" ('promise, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015), i.e. the RECIPIENT of the action. This description matches the caused possession event type and includes a projected human RECIPIENT, which is construed as a future possessor.

The ME form of the verb is *promisen* and was formed in English from the Anglo Norman *promesse* (PDE promise) ('promise, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015). The verb had a ditransitive use which matches the sense established above. Relevant examples in the active in both DOC and the to-variant from the 15th century are:

(55)   *My seide lorde commaunded the seide Maier to shewe that speciall writing that he*
       My said lord commanded the said mayor to show that special writing that he
       *hadde promysed **to my lorde Chaunceller**.*
       had   promised to my lord   Chancellor.

       "My said lord commanded the said mayor to show that special writing which he had promised to my lord chancellor."

<div align="right">Shillingford 49</div>
<div align="right">(as cited in 'promisen, v.', MED, McSparran et al., 2001)</div>

(56)   *But ye   will **me** certeynlie Promyse youre help sekirlie.*
       But you will me certainly promise your help securely.

       "But you will certainly promise me your help without mistake."

<div align="right">Gener.(1) (Mrg M876) 1676</div>
<div align="right">(as cited in 'promisen, v.', MED, McSparran et al., 2001).</div>

No example of a recipient passive could be found in the PPCME2. The PCEEC in total

provides some examples of recipient passives with the verb *promisen.* However, most of them have a clausal THEME complement:

(57)   *... whiche **I** was <u>promised</u> I shoulde not paye for in respecte I paye so deare for the*
       ... which I was promised I should not pay for in respect I pay   so dearly for the

       reste.
       rest.

       "... which I was promised not to have to pay for considering that I pay so dearly for the rest"

                                                                                    (BACON,I,30.013.230)

The results of the corpus query show that the use of *promisen* with clausal complements is more common than its ditransitive use with two NP complements. Occurrences of recipient passives dating from approximately 1600 can be found:

(58)   ***I** have ben   <u>promised</u> a sight of yt once or twise*
       I have been promised a sight of it once or twice

       "I have been promised a sight of it once or twice."

                                                                                    (CHAMBER,I,397.027.1131)

(59)   ***I** am <u>promised</u> halfe a bucke agaynst   sunday*
       I am promised half   a basket in time for sunday

       "I am promised half a basket in time for sunday."

                                                                                    (HOSKYNS,68.003.93)

The first example stems from a collection of letters of John Chamberlain, which date from 1597 to 1625, a time frame in which the recipient passive has been established in the English language. The second one is taken from a collection of letters by John Hoskyns, which date from 1601 to 1629. Both examples show the recipient passivised in its nominalised form, and the THEME complements of the sentences are full NPs.

Although in the active use of the verb, too, ditransitive uses with a clausal complement are more numerous than ditransitive uses with two NP objects, there is evidence that the verb could be utilised with a *to*-phrase as well as in DOC. The latter construction appears to occur more often with pronominal RECIPIENTS.

(60)   *for I shall <u>promise</u> **you** my helpe to gete you youre lady*
       for I shall promise you my help to win you your lady

       "For I shall promise you my help in winning your lady."

                                                                                    (MALORY,65.2218)

In summary, *promisen* could be used in both DOC and the to-variant. Towards the 16th century, it was used in recipient passives. The fact that *promisen* frequently takes clausal complements makes the search for recipient passives more difficult.

6.4 Give/Yeven

The PDE verb *give* is of native origin and developed from the MED verb *yeven*, which again developed from the OE verb *giefan/gifan*. It is the most prototypical verb signifying caused possession. The crucial sense for *give* as a ditransitive verb is to hand something over and thereby "confer [...] the ownership" of said thing ('give, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015). Almost all uses of the verb *yeven* listed in its MED entry are ditransitive ('yeven, v.', MED, McSparran et al., 2001).

In the literature, it is often argued that *yeven* could not appear in recipient passives until very late around 1600 (Allen, 1995). However, Allen gives an early example of a recipient passive from 1470, where the nominative case of the fronted RECIPIENT *he* can be observed:

(61)   *whan **he** was <u>gyvyn</u>   the gre*
       when he was awarded the prize

       "When he was awarded the prize"

<div align="right">Malory,699.20
(as cited in Allen, 1995, p. 394)</div>

In the PPCME2, the only occurrence of *yeven* in the recipient passive is the following from a manuscript dating from the period M3 about rituals for the ordination of nuns:

(62)   *For þe prioresse is <u>geuin</u> **a mater** to be prowd in þe begynnyng of hyr ordinance ...*
       for the prioress is given a womb to be proven in the beginning of her ordination ...

       "For the prioress is given a womb to be proven virtuous in the beginning of her ordi-
       nation (...)"

<div align="right">(CMBENRUL,43.1346)</div>

The verb *give* is interesting concerning its argument realisation. In OE, there had been two ways of ordering the arguments of native ditransitive verbs like *giefan*. Expressing the RECIPIENT as a *to*-phrase was not an option (McFadden, 2002). The order of the two object constituents, however, was free. The order NP$_{THEME}$ NP$_{RECIPIENT}$ as well as the order NP$_{RECIPIENT}$ NP$_{THEME}$ existed and were "nearly equally common" (Allen, 1995, p. 418).

This changed in ME. When prepositions became an option for marking indirect objects after the loss of case endings (Allen, 1995), for some time, all three variants co-occurred (Gerwin, 2014), and eventually the order NP$_{THEME}$ NP$_{RECIPIENT}$ went out of use. The latest example found by Allen (1995) is from 1479:

(63)   *It is not good to take the brede of chyldren and <u>gyue</u> it **dogges** to ete*
       it is not good to take the bread of children and give it dogs   to eat

       "It is not good to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs to eat."

<div align="right">Fisher 144.15
(as cited in Allen, 1995, p. 420)</div>

As for the distribution of the two frames which were still possible it can be said that the order with two bare NPs was more common when the RECIPIENT was a pronoun. In these

constructions, the preferred order of elements was NP_{RECIPIENT} NP_{THEME} (Allen, 1995; Gerwin, 2014), since RECIPIENTS tend to express given information in discourse and therefore appear more often in pronominal form and precede the THEME complement of the clause (Levin, 2011). The findings from the PPCME2 for *yeven* in ditransitive constructions confirm this:

(64)   *& forþi   <u>iæf</u> se kyng **him** þone eorldom of Flandres.*
      and consequently gave the king him the   county of Flanders

      "And consequently, the king gave him the country of Flanders."

<div align="right">(CMPETERB,48.207)</div>

This example from the PPCME2 shows the usage of *yeven* (PDE *give*) in the DOC. The subject AGENT *se kyng* in nominative case precedes the indirect object in the dative case *him* and the THEME in accusative case *þone earldom of Flandres.* The RECIPIENT in this sentence is human and animate and therefore capable of possession.

(65)   *ich schal leote wilde deor   to-liken   & toteore   þe & <u>geoue</u> þi   flesch*
      I   shall let   wild animals pull to pieces & dismember you & give   your flesh
      *fode **to fuheles of þe lufte**.*
      food to birds   of the air

      "I shall have wild animals dismember you and pull you to pieces and give your flesh as food to birds of the air."

<div align="right">(CMJULIA,99.60)</div>

In this sentence from the PPCME2, the RECIPIENT is *fuheles of þe lufte.* It is realised as a *to*-phrase following the THEME of the sentence, *þi flesh*, which is further specified by the secondary predicate *fode.*

Yeven, in summary, developed from a verb which could realise its object complements as NPs only in OE to a verb which could also mark the RECIPIENT with a *to*-phrase in ME as well. In the 14th century, it can be found in the recipient passive.

6.5 Show/Sheuen

The verb *show* is part of the *Verbs of Transfer of Message* (Levin, 1993). It can be construed as signifying caused possession in its ditransitive use. The OED entry lists its ditransitive use as "to present or display (an object) in order that it may be looked at; to expose or exhibit to view" ('show, v.', OED, Proffitt, 2015) and lists both argument realisation options DOC and to-variant as grammatical. For *show*, the indirect object, the viewer, can be regarded as a RECIPIENT which is caused to perceive or be aware of the shown object (Pinker, 1989).

Its diachronic counterpart *sheuen* is the second representative for the group of native verbs which became able to express recipient passives. The MED lists a use which involves an indirect object and matches the OED sense presented above ('sheuen, v.', MED, McSparran et al., 2001). This confirms that *sheuen* is part of the set of verbs which can potentially form recipient passives since it conforms to the syntactic criteria, being able to take an indirect object (in the form of a bare NP or a *to*-phrase) and the semantic criteria by signifying metaphorical transfer.

The PCEEC gives an example for *sheuen* in the recipient passive from a collection of letters dating from the first half of the 17th century. An earlier example could not be found. The RECIPIENT *you* shows nominative case and agrees with the finite verb *were.*

(66)   *I presume **you** were <u>shewed</u> y^e fine things y^r   father brought me ...*
        I presume you were shown the fine things your father brought me ...

        "I presume that you were shown the fine things your father brought to me."

<div align="right">(HATTON,I,50.020.413)</div>

Similarly to the ME verb *yeven, sheuen* probably could be expressed in the order NP$_{\text{RECIPIENT}}$ NP$_{\text{THEME}}$ as well as the order NP$_{\text{THEME}}$ NP$_{\text{RECIPIENT}}$ in OE, given that ME examples of these word orders can be found, the first one dating from around 1600 and the second from around 1400.

(67)   *and, for the Adonis, I <u>shewed</u> **him** this day one of your letters ...*
        and, for the Adonis, I showed him   this day one of your letters ...

        "And as for the Adonis, I showed him one of your letters today."

<div align="right">(ARUNDEL,356.059.806)</div>

(68)   *This chanoun   took out a crosselet Of his bosom and <u>shewed</u> it **the preest**.*
        this clergyman took out a crosselet of his bosom and showed it the priest

        "This clergyman took a small cross out of his bosom and showed it to the priest."

<div align="right">Chaucer CT.CY.(Manly-Rickert) G.1118</div>
<div align="right">(as cited in 'sheuen, v.', MED, McSparran et al., 2001)</div>

However, the use of *sheuen* with a *to*-phrase denoting the RECIPIENT can also be found from the first half of the 15th century:

(69)   *For iiij   thynges oure noble <u>sheueth</u> **to me**, Kyng, shype, and swerde and pouer of the*
        for four things   our noble shows   to me, King, ship,   and sword and power of the
        see.
        sea.

        "For four things our noble shows to me: King, ship, sword and power over the sea."

<div align="right">Libel EP (Warner) 34</div>
<div align="right">(as cited in 'sheuen, v.', MED, McSparran et al., 2001)</div>

All in all, the verb *sheuen* appears with various forms of complementation in ME. In addition to being able to realise the two object complements as full NPs, the verb sheuen can take *to*-phrases as complements in ME. An example of the verb in the recipient passive can be found dating from the first half of the 17th century.

7 Conclusion and Outlook

Although the rise of the recipient passive has not been widely discussed in the literature so far, interesting and contrasting approaches to explain its emergence have been put forward.

Due to the timing of the first examples of the recipient passive in late ME, it is plausible to link it to a number of changes which occurred during that time, since ME was a transitional stage in the English language. Some of these changes relate to the realisation of arguments of verbs and therefore its is promising to try and find the motivation behind the recipient passive in its argument structure. An analysis of PDE and ME recipient passives in terms of argument structure has been attempted in the analysis here and suggests the following conclusion.

The definition of a set of PDE verbs which can form the recipient passive comes down to the notion of event type. Every instance of a recipient passive reveals itself to be an event of caused possession. Therefore, the necessary condition for verbs to build recipient passives is a compatibility with the event type of caused possession, which also implies that a verb must take a true RECIPIENT as its indirect object.

The assumption that verb meaning partly resides in the root and partly in the syntactic construction it appears in (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 1998), opens up the possibility for an analysis of additional meaning components which possibly reinforce the compatibility with the recipient passive. All in all, those verbs whose idiosyncratic meaning emphasises a RECIPIENT or the nature of possession generally seem to be more likely to form recipient passives than those which designate manner and do not necessarily include a RECIPIENT. However, more research has to be conducted to concretise this assumption.

The analysis of five ME verbs confirms, in line with Allen (1995) and Trips and Stein (2018), that both native and non-native ME verbs of transfer can be found in the recipient passive in late ME. The native verbs build recipient passives later than verbs of French origin.

Although in French ditransitive verbs prefer the option of a *to*-phrase for marking their RECIPIENTS (Trips & Stein, 2018), there are instances of them in the DOC in ME. Similarly, it is the case for native verbs that although their RECIPIENTS cannot be expressed with a *to*-phrase in OE (McFadden, 2002), they can be found in the to-variant in late ME.

As no quantitative analysis of the occurrences of the verbs has been conducted here, no conclusive statements about the timeliness of the changes can be made at this point.

All in all, after having analysed the syntactic behavior of ditransitive verbs in ME by examining their argument realisation in the active as well as verifying whether they could be used in the recipient passive by the 15th century, much remains to be done to come closer to an explanation of why the recipient passive became an option in ME. It has been confirmed that the PDE verbs building recipient passives have the same underlying event type as the ME verbs which appear in recipient passives. It is therefore likely that the same set of verbs in OE also had the same event type, e.g. the OE verb *gifan* is listed with similar uses as the corresponding ME verb *yeven* (Bosworth, 2011).

Hence, the emergence of the recipient passive naturally has nothing to do with a change in event type or the nature of the RECIPIENT. What has changed, however, are the argument realisation options connected with this event type. In OE, there was no dative alternation (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2008), since RECIPIENTS could only be realised as bare NPs (McFadden, 2002). In addition to that, the availability of two options for realising the arguments of ditransitive verbs in the dative alternation is not universal. In English, this alternation exists because spatial GOALS and RECIPIENTS can both appear as a *to*-phrase (Rappaport Hovav

& Levin, 2008), which makes a further analysis of the correspondence between event types and their morphological realisation options following Levin (2011) is in relation to recipient passives interesting.

Furthermore, an examination of other languages like Swedish, which seem to have instances of a recipient passive expressed in a similar manner as in English, could provide some indication whether this can also be linked to similar argument realisation options. Swedish, too, has the option of expressing the indirect objects of ditransitive verbs as either bare NPs or a *to*-phrase (Holmes & Hinchcliffe, 2013). This suggests that a study of recipient passives across languages is interesting and necessary.

There have been multiple attempts to explain the rise of the *to*-phrase as an option for marking RECIPIENTS. McFadden (2002) discusses how, due to morphological erosion in the OE case system and the fixing of word order, the to-variant was introduced as a way of disambiguating constituents in ditransitive constructions. Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2008) link it to information structure and heaviness demands which arose due to a more fixed word order. Another way of introducing the *to*-phrase is contact with Anglo-Norman, when French origin verbs including their argument realisation options entered into the ME lexicon (Trips & Stein, 2018).

In line with Trips and Stein (2018), then, it is to be expected that the option of expressing the RECIPIENT with a *to*-phrase, which was reinforced due to the introduction of French origin verbs and their argument structure, led to the possibility of transforming the indirect object to a nominative subject in the passive. The option of analyzing the case of indirect objects as structural case consequently made them eligible to move to the subject position and to be converted into nominative case.

Lastly, due to the limited scope of this thesis and of the diachronic corpora available, the above examples and considerations only include a small set of prototypical verbs of transfer of possession. The set of verbs with this underlying event type seems to have been much bigger, and it would be interesting to examine verbs such as ME *administren* (PDE supply), *bistouen* (PDE bestow), *quiten* (PDE repay) and *yelden* (PDE relinquish), which are listed with ditransitive uses in the MED, with regard to their argument realisation options in more depth.

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