

THE ORIGIN OF PERIPHRASTIC DO IN ENGLISH

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WHAT IS THE PERIPHRASTIC DO AND WHAT IS INTERESTING ABOUT ITS ORIGIN?

English **did** not have a periphrastic DO until the ME period

Negation

Why **did** it enter the language?

Inversion

It didn't appear out of the blue, **did** it?

Code

No, but it **did** appear somehow!

Emphasis

WHAT ARE THE THEORIES?

Theories of language internal change:

- The causative origin theory
- The perfective origin theory
- The habitual origin theory

Theories of language external change:

- The Celtic Hypothesis

RESEARCH QUESTION(S)

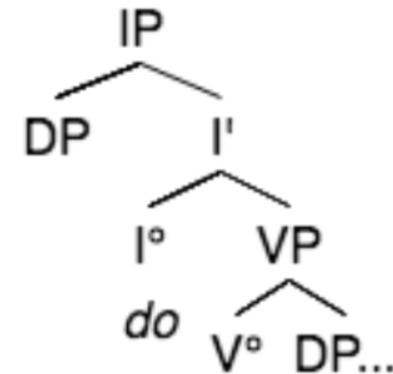
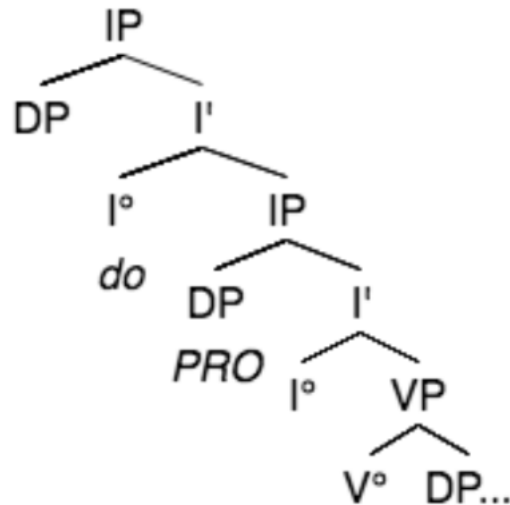
What was the origin of periphrastic DO in English?

Was it more likely the result of language internal or language external change?

THE CAUSATIVE ORIGIN THEORY

“Causative DO was the origin of periphrastic DO”

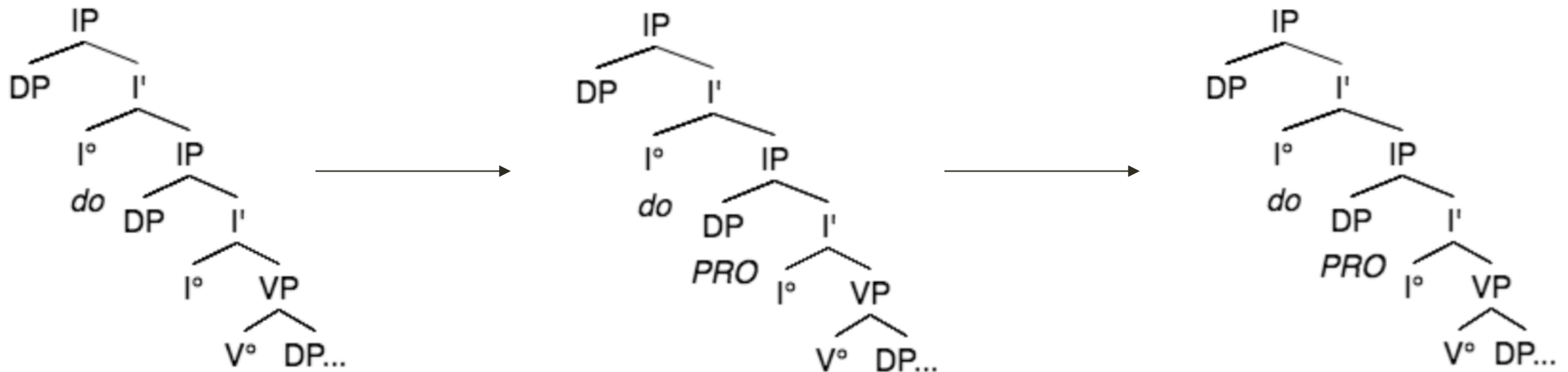
- In sentences, where the complement has a non-overt subject, this subject could be interpreted as either the direct or the indirect agent. However, when the clause contained a causative DO, the indirect agency interpretation would be redundant, and an ambiguity arose as to which verb contained the causative element



THE PERFECTIVE ORIGIN THEORY

“Causative DO was the origin of perfective DO which was the origin of periphrastic DO”

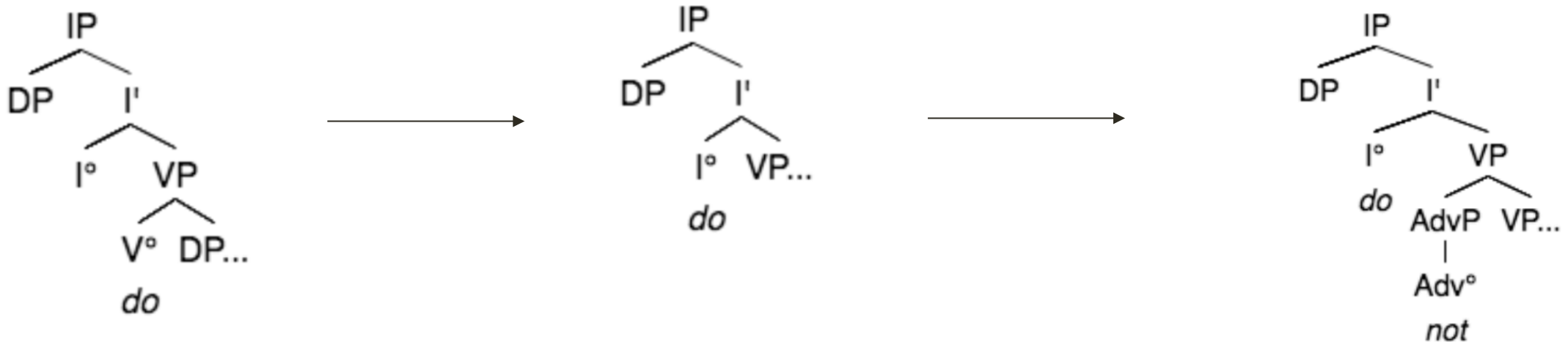
- Sentences with null subject complement clauses arose out of constructions where causative DO had a complement with an overt subject. In the new constructions, DO was not causative but perfective, and became periphrastic, once causative DO disappeared from the language, perfective DO became periphrastic



THE HABITUAL ORIGIN THEORY

“Lexical DO was the origin of habitual DO which was the origin of periphrastic DO”

- Habitual DO arose in constructions where the complement of the verb was a bare singular DP which could also be interpreted as a VP. The use of DO in post-verbal ellipsis contexts extended to include this construction, if it also contained a negative sentential element. In these contexts, DO was re-interpreted as periphrastic.



ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE LANGUAGE INTERNAL THEORIES

Geography: The first written attestations of the periphrasis was found in the west

Motivation for change: What motivates the development of periphrastic DO?

Lack of textual evidence

Why did these changes not take place in any other Germanic language?

THE CELTIC HYPOTHESIS

“Periphrastic DO entered the English language due to contact with Celtic”

- The presence of a periphrastic construction in Franco-Breton and Cornish suggests that the periphrasis existed in the Brythonic languages prior to the Germanic invasions, suggesting that English might have adopted the periphrasis from Cornish.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE LANGUAGE EXTERNAL THEORIES

No textual evidence

Celtic hasn't influenced English in any other way

WHAT TO DO WHEN NO THEORY IS 'PERFECT'

Take a step back and consider what else happened in the language at the time

- Is it possible to dismiss some of the arguments against the theories? – YES!

THE THEORIES — REVISITED

Geography and the spoken language

Motivation for change and the transition from OE to ME

CONCLUSION

The origin of periphrastic DO is more likely the result of language internal change

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