INFinitive subordinators and verb restructuring in french*

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0. Introduction

In this paper we show that there are two homophonous subordinators à in Old and Middle French infinitives. One qualifies as a prepositional determiner (preposition) situated in the complementizer (C) position and survives in Modern French; the other one cannot be defined as either C or P and was lost during the development of Modern French. In trying to define the second type of à, we could identify a new type of verb-restructuring mechanism specific to the structural environment (i.e. clause union) in which this subordinator appears. This environment lacks a tense component (T-features), which is usually considered to be the obligatory trigger for clause union. The typology of infinitive subordinators we propose for Old and Middle French, as well as the ensuing characterization of constructions with verb restructuring in this language, allow us to explain the apparently unsystematic pattern of variation in subordinator selection that took place between Old/Middle and Classical French.

1. The alternation à/de/Ø in C

The data presented in this section¹ show that in Old, Middle, and Classical French CP infinitives allow for a free distribution of à and de, as in (1) and (2).

* This article is the result of a complete collaboration between the authors; the order of names is purely alphabetical. The work in part was supported by a research grant from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa. Thanks to LSRL participants for suggestions and remarks.

¹ We have searched various databases: for Old French, the Textes du français ancien (TFA) (http://humanities.uchicago.edu/ARTFL/projects/LFA), a project of the ARTFL, supervised by Pierre Kunstmann and France Martineau; the Middle French and 16th century database of France Martineau at the LFA (Laboratoire de français ancien, Département des Lettres
Sentences containing these subordinators show the same verb without any difference of meaning. Furthermore, à/de occur in complementary distribution with Ø (null realization) in C, as in (3).

(1) Old and Middle French
   a. * car si tu me vœil promettre [à payer because if you me want to promise to pay seulement nostre marande]
      only our lunch
      “Because if you want me to promise to pay only for our lunch…”
      (Vigneulles, Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles 31,90)
   b. et promettait [de bien celer confession] and promised well to conceal confession
      “And he promised to conceal the confession well.”
      (Vigneulles, Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles 14,26)

(2) Classical French
   a. Il ne doit point refuser [à participer à ses he not should at all to refuse to participate in his plaisirs naturels] pleasures natural
      “He should not refuse to participate in his natural pleasures.”
      (Charron, Sages 313)
   b. ils refusent [d’assister leurs alliéz] they refuse to assist their allies
      “They refuse to assist their allies.” (Bergerac, AM 406)

(3) a. Il semble [la bataille estre mortelle] it seems the battle to be fatal
      “The battle seems to be fatal”
      (Le Loyal Serviteur X, 65; Damourette & Pichon 1911/1933:571)
   b. * Il semble â/de la bataille estre mortelle.

The complementary distribution illustrated in (3) arises from internal properties of the infinitive clause, which allow for lexical Nominative subjects only in a CP with C = Ø. Junker & Martineau (1992) relate the licensing of lexical subjects to the properties of infinitive inflection in Old/Middle French which have changed in the passage to Modern French. Thus, Old/Middle French infinitives behave like certain infinitives in Modern Romance (see Rizzi 1982 for Françaises, University of Ottawa) (http://aix1.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/ifa), and the ARTFL at Chicago (http://humanities.uchicago.edu/ARTFL) from the 16th to the 20th century.
Italian), which may license lexical subjects when their C is non-lexical, but not when it is occupied by elements equivalent to à or de.

All the constructions illustrated in (1) to (3) qualify as full-fledged CPs because they may display a series of fronted constituents between the subordinator and the infinitive verb. The movement these constituents undergo is generally related to various functional positions specific to inflectional phrases (IP). As illustrated in (4), clitic pronouns (associated with subject agreement (AgrS) heads), negation and auxiliaries (associated with tense (T) heads), and shifted objects (associated with object agreement (AgrO) heads) may all occur in this type of infinitive clause.

(4)  a. refusant[d’y commettre nulluy ne envoyer] refusing there to commit nobody not to send “Refusing to promise to anyone not to send something there…” (Chastellain II 152)

b. Sire, ne refuseray pas[à y aler] Lord not refuse-FUT1sg not there to go “Lord, I will not refuse to go there.” (Miracles de Notre-Dame 4,68)

c. Biel me seroit [d’avoir apris] well me be-COND3sg to have learned por coat tu ies de si grant pris. for what you were of such big price “It would be good for me to find out why you were so precious.” (Eracle 17)

d. Aussi pour nient nous serions mis // also for nothing we would-COND started [à estre jusques ici venuz] to be up here come “Also we would have taken the trouble to come here for nothing.” (Miracles par personnages 37,71)

e. Cil dedenz parlerent [de plait faire] those inside talked agreement to make “Those who were inside talked about making an agreement.” (Villehardouin II, 202)

Therefore, the data in (1) to (4) indicate that in Old/Middle and Classical French the prepositions à and de freely alternate in the complementizer position of infinitive clauses. These subordinators select full-fledged IP structures.
2. The alternation à/∅ and bare infinitives

Infinitive complements displaying clause union effects (e.g. clitic climbing and long object shift) present the following property: the subordinator à may freely alternate with a ∅ realization, but not with de, as shown in (5).

(5) a. ne se savoit assez [∅/de esbahir]
   not REFL knew enough to astonish
   “He did not know how to wonder enough about this.”
   (Vigneulles, Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles 470,17)

b. qui lui sceut [à/*de dire qui estoit ce messire M.]
   who to-him knew to say who was this sir M.
   “Who knew to tell him who this master M. was.”
   (Vigneulles, Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles 82,102)

c. et commencent Lancelot [à/*de blasmer.]
   and start-3pl Lancelot to blame
   “And they start to blame Lancelot.”
   (Mort Artu 118,56; Pearce 1985:130)

d. car amors ne se peut [∅/*de celer]
   because love not REFL can to hide
   “Because it is not possible to hide love.” (Pearce 1990:20)

Given their peculiar distribution, the subordinators à/∅ specific to constructions with clause union must have different properties than the subordinators surveyed in the examples (1) to (4).

Furthermore, the infinitive complement compatible with the alternation à/∅ presents a reduced structure compared to the infinitives in (1) to (4). In particular, à/∅ is strictly adjacent to the infinitive verb, disallowing insertion of

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2 Although clause union, detected through clitic climbing, is commonly attested across à, several studies (Martineau 1990, Pearce 1990, St-Amour 1983) also mention examples in which clitic climbing takes place across de, as in (i).

   (i) S’il nous a donné un enfant par miracle,
   if-he us has given a child by miracle
   ou par aucun secrète way don’t nous ignorons la manière
   or by any secret means of-which we ignore the manner
   [il ne nous a pasoublié [d’envoyer chevance pour l’entretenir]]
   he notus has not forgotten to send means for him-to maintain
   “If, by a miracle or an undisclosed way, he gave us a child, he also remembered to send us the means to take care of him” (Anonymous, Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles 128,86)

All the authors agree that these examples are scarce and non-typical of clause union facts, and their occurrence is restricted mostly to Old French. While acknowledging this possible use of de in Old French, we consider it too restricted to have an impact on the analysis of clause union proposed here.
constituents generally associated with the left periphery of infinitive IPs. Thus, the test in (6) shows that in structures with clause union (i.e. clitic climbing) moved constituents may not land in clause-internal positions.

(6) a. *luyi vint [à les aultres chosesj demander t, tj] 
               him came the other things to ask
b. *les aultres chosesj vint [à luyi demander t, tj] 
               the other things came him to ask
c. *luyi vint [à ne pas demander t,] 
               him came neg not to ask

The test in (6) indicates that functional heads associated with clitics, object shift, negation and auxiliaries (i.e. AgrS, T, AgrO) must be absent from the structure. Hence, the infinitive complement in constructions such as (5) qualifies as a bare VP shell, devoid of an inflectional domain.

To summarize so far, the subordinators à/Ø in constructions with clause union differ from the subordinators à/de/Ø heading non-restructured infinitive clauses both through their distribution and their selectional properties; à/Ø select bare infinitives, whereas à/de/Ø select CP infinitives.

3. Clause union revisited

This section reconceives the current analyses of the mechanism for verb restructuring in view of the data presented in section 2. Understanding the verb restructuring process helps us to define the status of à/Ø in (5).

Basically, verb restructuring involves merging of a verb with incomplete thematic specification (a modal, an aspectual) with a full-fledged lexical verb in the infinitive. The merging creates a verbal complex which is computed in syntax as a single unit. Hence, the verbal complex projects a common functional domain, in which movement is unrestricted by clause boundaries. For Rizzi (1982), the merging relies on the thematic properties of the two verbs and takes place at a pre-syntactic level, processing the complex [V1+V2] as one verb. Roberts (1997) argues that the trigger for clause union stems from the properties of the infinitive tense (T), which fulfills its checking requirements by moving to the matrix T. Verb restructuring occurs in overt syntax, consisting in the movement of a complex unit [V1 [V2+T]]; the merging takes place between two inflectional domains, and not between two verbal categories.

The data from Old and Middle French do not seem to comply with either analysis. It will be shown that an alternative mechanism for verb restructuring exists, which relies on merging of functional domains without involving the
presence of tense features. The mediators for this type of clause union are à
and its non-lexical equivalent Ø.

3.1 ‘Tight’ verb restructuring

The word order in the sentences illustrated in (5) indicates the presence of
clause union, which allows for clitic climbing and long object shift. The test on
the possible word order at the level of the infinitive complement as proposed in
(6) yields a definition of this segment as a bare VP shell, directly embedded
under à/Ø. Hence, a question arises regarding the mechanism which leads to
the clause union effect: (a) the clause union cannot contain the pattern [V1+V2]
because the lexical element à intervenes between the matrix and the embedded
verb and interferes with adjacency; (b) the clause union cannot contain the pat-
tern [V1 [V2+T]] because the infinitive complement lacks a T projection.

A further test on the word order in the infinitive complement suggests that
this constituent is embedded in a functional phrase. In (7), the adverb souvent
“often” which adjoins to the VP level in French (Pollock 1989) follows the in-
finite verb.

(7) et dist que einsi le porroit ele [voir assez souvent]
    and said that so him could she to see quite often
    “And said that, in this way, she could see him quite often.”

If the infinitive verb moves out of VP, as suggested in (7), then its landing site
must correspond to a functional head, and the infinitive clause cannot be a bare
VP shell, but a functional projection (FP). Therefore, the matrix verb does not
merge directly with a verbal category, but with a functional projection of this
verbal category. This analysis allows for the insertion of lexical elements, such
as à between the matrix and the embedded verb.

On the other hand, if à/Ø select an FP, we would expect to have adjunc-
tions at the FP level or clitic movement to F accompanying the verb movement.
The examples in (6) show that the latter type of movement cannot be obtained;
therefore, F lacks inflectional features which would retain clitics together with
the verb. Furthermore, adverbs which adjoin to a maximal projection indepen-
dently of the surrounding inflectional features are also excluded in this context.
French adverbs like encore “more” or tout “everything”, contained in their
own Aspectual phrases, generally adjoin to a high maximal projection within

3 We follow Hirschbühler & Labelle (1994) and Martineau (1993), who assume Pollock’s an-
alysis for Old/Middle French.
INFINITIVE SUBORDINATORS AND VERB RESTRUCTURING

infinitive IP (Cinque 1997). As shown in (8), adjunctions of this type do not appear in contexts with clause union.

(8) a. *et n' on nouvelle à encore dire.
    and not of-it knew they news more to say
b. *qui lui ceut à tout dire...
    who to-him knew everything to say

The exclusion of the word order in (8) suggests that there is no FP level separating à from the infinitive verb. Accordingly, à must be the head F receiving the infinitive verb. Along these lines, à is a functional morpheme with affixal properties, merging with the verb at a pre-syntactic level, and the resulting unit undergoes movement to F.

So clause union in Old/Middle French involves verb restructuring between the matrix verb and a functional phrase containing the infinitive verb. This type of verb restructuring yields more reduced infinitive structures compared to their Italian counterparts analysed in Rizzi (1982) and Roberts (1997). In particular, adjacency between the subordinator and the infinitive verb is obligatory in French. The word order and the lack of tense features lead to the characterization of these structures as instances of 'tight' verb restructuring.

3.2 The categorial status of à/Ø

The tests in (7) and (8) suggest that à/Ø correspond to a functional head which attracts the infinitive complex in configurations with verb restructuring. Can this morpheme be defined in terms of existing categories, such as C or P?

Current analyses agree in denying the C status to à (Canac-Marquis 1996, Martineau 1990, Pearson 1990), mostly because it does not block clitic climbing, as expected of a lexical complementizer. We follow this analysis and add to the existing arguments the fact that the series of lexical Cs in (1) to (4) allows for distributional alternations excluded by the series of subordinators in configurations with clause union, as in (5). The two series of subordinators must have intrinsically different properties.

On the other hand, the above-mentioned studies opt for a definition of à as a preposition (or prepositional determiner) and resort to ad-hoc solutions to explain the clitic climbing across P. This analysis runs into the following problems.

(a) Prepositions do not select VP, but only structures with nominal features (e.g. DP or IP). Thus, infinitive clauses headed by P in Old/Middle French
display a full-fledged internal structure, that is, they select an IP, as in (9), where constituents may land between P and the infinitive verb.

(9) a. *Lequel il avait envoyé dehors [pour plus aisément l’ avoir]*
   whom he had sent outside for more easily her to have
   “Whom he sent outside in order to have her more easily.”
   (Anonymous, *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* 1)

   b. *Et défait, [pour plus assuérément estre avec son amoureux]*
   and in fact for more certainly to be with her lover
   “And actually, in order to be more surely with her lover.”
   (Anonymous, *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* 18)

   c. *Car il dit pour son excuse, et [pour sa femme contenter]*
   for he said for his excuse and for his wife to please
   “Because he said it as an excuse and to please his wife.”
   (Anonymous, *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* 1, 29)

The word order in (9) shows that the infinitive complement to P has an internal structure equivalent to the configurations in (1) to (4) and contrasting with the bare VP structure of the infinitive in (5).

(b) Supposing that the FP identified in configurations with ‘tight’ verb restructuring as in (5) has nominal features which make it compatible with P selection, we would still run into the problem signaled in (8); that is, P should not block certain constituents to adjoin to FP.

The proposal suggested by the tests in section 3.1 is that *à/Ø* is the category F, which arises only in configurations with verb restructuring. The trigger for this category consists in the thematic properties of the verbs involved, which fulfill the merging in the syntax. At this level, visibility conditions require that merging takes place between functional domains, since all bare lexical categories must be licensed through some type of checking. This approach implies that there is no bare VP in the grammar, a prediction for which confirmation must be sought in future work.

Arguments for the F definition of *à/Ø* are as follows.

(a) If *à/Ø* is F, and FP belongs to the functional domain of the matrix clause, then clitic climbing is expected to be not only possible but obligatory, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (6b).

(b) If *à* is F, then it has an affixal status since it appears at the right of the raised verb. In this respect, *à* behaves as the homophonous Romanian particle *a* (e.g. *a spune* ‘to say’), which stems from the same Latin etymon and serves as marker of the infinitive mood. Although the two bound morphemes /à/ differ in
their functions and distribution, they reflect a common Romance tendency to grammaticalize the same Latin preposition *ad* introducing an infinitive verb.

(c) If *à* is *F*, and therefore different (although homophonous) to the preposition *à* in C, then we can account for the peculiarity of *tough*-constructions, which disallow the alternation *â/de*. Consider the examples in (10), from 16th century French.

(10) a. *car il leur seroit tres facile de les assommer comme bestes* as it them be-COND very easy them to-knock as beasts
   “It would be very easy for them to knock them on the head as if they were beasts.” (Rabelais, *Gargantua* 312)

b. *comme il estoit facile à escouter toutes personnes* as it was easy to listen all persons
   “As it was easy to listen to all the people.” (Bonaventure des Periers, *Recreations et Joyeux Devis* 404)

c. *tant ilz sont faciles à/*de esmouvoir so they are easy to impress
   “They are so easy to impress.” (Philibert de Vienne, *Le Philosophe de Court* 94)

The non-restructured sentences in (10a,b) present free alternation between *â* and *de*, as expected under the analysis of (1) to (4) proposed in this paper. However, when restructuring applies between the adjective and the infinitive verb, only *â* is possible, as in (10c). The same contrast in subordinator selection is noticed in the Modern French counterparts. The restriction in (10c) indicates, first, that *â* in this context is different from *à* in C as in (10b), and therefore, it cannot be analysed as C (Roberts 1997). Second, if *â* in (10c) had the status P, it should have violated the well-formedness condition on chains. Assuming the analysis in Chomsky (1986), *tough*-constructions have their chains mediated by null operators, licensed in SPEC,CP positions. Since only SPEC,PP is available in this configuration, the derivation should be ruled out (Canac-Marquis 1996). However, if *â* is *F*, and FP belongs to the matrix functional domain, then the derivation in (10c) follows naturally from long object shift within clause boundaries, as in the regular configurations with clause union, such as illustrated in (5c, d). The *tough*-constructions in Modern French seem to be residual FP structures.

Summing up the discussion, the subordinator *â* and its non-lexical counterpart, which both occur in constructions with clause union, receive the definition of a functional morpheme, in contrast with the homophonous morphemes *â/Ø*
inserted in C and P. Its incompatibility with the C status has already been demonstrated in the literature, while its non-P status has been argued for here, on the basis of selectional restrictions specific to prepositions, word order (imposing adjacency with the infinitive verb), and well-formedness of chains resulting from clitic climbing and long object shift. Although the label attributed to this subordinator may vary (F, Mood, Aspect), it must reflect two intrinsic properties: it is not an inflectional head (incompatible with clitics, negation, auxiliary) and is affixal in nature (allowing V insertion on the right).

3.3 Typologies

The analysis developed so far leads us to two typological distinctions.

(i) Verb restructuring. The verb restructuring mechanism, consisting of the merging of two functional domains, may involve two patterns: (a) ‘tight’ verb restructuring, that is [V₁ [V₂ +F]]; or (b) T-to-T verb restructuring, that is [V₁ [V₂+T]], as established in Roberts (1997) for Italian. Old/Middle French displayed only the former type, which was lost towards Modern French, except in tough-constructions.

(ii) Infinitive subordinators. Old/Middle French present two series of homophonous subordinators: (a) prepositions inserted in the C position of infinitive clauses; and (b) a morphological mark for verb restructuring, inserted in a functional (non-inflectional) head preceding the infinitive VP. Only the elements of the first group show differences in their distribution, that is, whether they can occur in free alternation (à/de) or in complementary distribution (à/de vs Ø). The typology of infinitive subordinators can be summed up as in (11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Alternations</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>à/de</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>IP - infinitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>IP - infinitive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>à/Ø</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>VP - infinitive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The properties identified in (i) and (ii) above have changed in the passage to Modern French in a way which pairs the loss of Group (b) properties in each category (i.e. loss of ‘tight’ verb restructuring coincides with the loss of the à/Ø + VP-infinitive).

Although this paper does not allow for further expansion, arguments may be adduced for the existence of the (b) type of verb-restructuring in Modern French, for example in constructions with pouvoir “can”, which require obligatory NP-movement to the matrix subject position. Along these lines, verb restructuring did not disappear from French (there are still verbs with incomplete thematic specifications) but only switched the typological group.
4. **Diachronic variation of subordinators**

The typologies proposed in section 3.3 provide a principled account for the variation in subordinator selection noticed in the development of French. In particular, two facts have been singled out: (a) Modern French displays the same array of subordinators à/de/Ø, but their distribution has changed according to an apparently unsystematic pattern; and (b) the selection of the subordinator de showed a remarkable increase from the 16th century to Classical French (Martineau 1998), followed by a decrease in Modern French. Martineau linked that phenomenon to the decrease of clitic climbing and the fact that de became a default complementizer. Our account holds that the typology of infinitive subordinators interacts with the switch of the parameter for verb movement. The latter has changed from optional movement of the infinitive verb to inflection in Old/Middle French to obligatory non-movement in Modern French (Pollock 1989). Only subordinators associated with infinitival structures displaying non-movement have survived (i.e. the subordinators of Group (a) in (11)). The gradual transition from optional movement to non-movement of the infinitive verb is reflected through the stage at which de selection prevailed over the other subordinators.

4.1 **Verb movement in Old/Middle French**

Two patterns are observed in Old/Middle French with respect to the movement of the infinitive verb to inflection: (a) structures with obligatory movement and (b) structures with optional movement. The former category covers constructions with à/Ø + VP-infinitive, whereas the latter concerns the constructions à/de vs Ø + CP-infinitive.

Obligatory verb movement to inflection in the infinitives with ‘tight’ restructuring follows from the discussion proposed in section 3. The word order verb-adverb (see example (7)) and the adjacency between à and the infinitive verb (see example (8)) indicate that the infinitive verb moves out of VP and lands at the same level as à. Since these conditions hold true of any configuration with ‘tight’ restructuring, it is plausible to consider that verb movement was obligatory in this environment.

However, the infinitive structures belonging to the other group (i.e. à/de vs. Ø) present optional verb movement. The following examples illustrate only structures with à/de because CPs with C = Ø involve a further parametric change (i.e. null subject parameter), which obscures the aspect emphasized in this discussion. Consider the word order in (12) and (13), where the adverbs delimit the VP level. The order [verb-adverb] indicates movement, whereas [adverb-verb] indicates non-movement.
(12) Middle French/16th century French and movement
a. *Est-il bon [de ne se haster point?]*
   is-it good not REFL to hurry at all
   “Is it good not to hurry up?” (La Tour Landry 102; Kok 1985:335)
b. *car elle(...)commencea à ne le chercher pas*
   because she started not him to look for not
   “Because she began not to look for him.” (Navarre, Heptam. 763)

(13) Middle French and non-movement
a. *Vous avez tort [de nous ainsi reveiller]*
   you have wrong us this way to wake up
   “You are wrong to wake us up in this way.”
   (Anonymous, Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles 212,169)
b. *Les allemands [...] commencèrent [à se retenir]*
   the Germans started secretly to consult
   *livrer*
   to deliver
   “The Germans started secretly to consult to deliver…”
   (Fct DeMCh 281)

The word order corresponding to the non-movement option, as in (13), becomes more frequent towards Classical French. Taking into consideration the placement of the negative adverb *pas*, Hirschbühler & Labelle (1994) establish the following rates in the increase of adverb-verb word order: 10% in the 16th century; 63% in the 17th century; 81% in the 18th century. Given this situation, our analysis correctly predicts that constructions with ‘tight’ verb restructuring, and, therefore, the F-type subordinators (i.e. à/Ø) associated with them, are less and less an option starting with the 16th century.

4.2 Prevalence of *de* in Classical French
Martineau (1998) notices that infinitive complements headed by à or Ø in the previous stages of French change to the subordinator *de* in Classical French. Increase in *de* selection is significant, as illustrated in Tables 1 and 2.

The typology proposed in (11) explains the critical use (although not exclusive option) of *de* selection in 16th century to Classical French, if we take into consideration that the parameter for verb movement starts switching at the same time, as argued in Hirschbühler & Labelle (1994). Thus, the subordinators à and Ø have ambiguous parsing because of à/Ø association with obligatory verb
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical periods</th>
<th>% à</th>
<th>% de</th>
<th>% Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old French</td>
<td><strong>60%</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td><strong>40%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3/5)</td>
<td>(0/5)</td>
<td>(2/5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle French</td>
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<td><strong>36.4%</strong></td>
<td><strong>27.2%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th century French</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1/10)</td>
<td>(9/10)</td>
<td>(0/10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical French</td>
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<td><strong>98.6%</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3/365)</td>
<td>(360/365)</td>
<td>(2/365)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern French</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>99.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2/276)</td>
<td>(274/276)</td>
<td>(0/276)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Frequency of infinitive subordinators selected by refuser "to refuse"

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Historical periods</th>
<th>% à</th>
<th>% de</th>
<th>% Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old French</td>
<td><strong>75%</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.1%</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.9%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(36/48)</td>
<td>(1/48)</td>
<td>(11/48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle French</td>
<td><strong>33.8%</strong></td>
<td><strong>24.7%</strong></td>
<td><strong>41.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(26/77)</td>
<td>(19/77)</td>
<td>(32/77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th century French</td>
<td><strong>5.2%</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.2%</strong></td>
<td><strong>69.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7/135)</td>
<td>(34/135)</td>
<td>(94/135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical French</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td><strong>58.8%</strong></td>
<td><strong>41.2%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0/362)</td>
<td>(213/362)</td>
<td>(149/362)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern French</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td><strong>93%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0/536)</td>
<td>(35/536)</td>
<td>(501/536)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Frequency of infinitive subordinators selected by désirer "to desire"

movement at least in the environment of ‘tight’ verb reconstruction). On the other hand, the subordinator de associates unambiguously with non-movement configurations, since it occurs only in constructions such as (12) and (13) and not in clause union.

Furthermore, the same explanation extends to the decrease of de selection from Classical to Modern French. Once the non-movement parameter has been set for infinitives (i.e. by the end of Classical French), the series of infinitive subordinators is reintroduced in the language, but with a new categorial and unambiguous definition: all infinitive subordinators in Modern French qualify as prepositions inserted in C, including the non-lexical manifestation Ø.

Predictably, the loss of ‘tight’ verb restructuring entails a reorganization of verbs in new semantic classes; for example, verbs with double thematic specification in Old/Middle French (e.g. vouloir as a modal and a full-fledged lexical
verb) lose their modal value. Selectional properties must also be included in these changes, altering the option for the redefined infinitive subordinators.

5. Conclusions

Tests of word order have allowed us to distinguish two types of infinitive complements in Old/Middle French: CP infinitives and VP infinitives. Only the former display constituents in the left periphery domain of the infinitive clause. Although homophones, the series of subordinators associated with CP infinitives (i.e. à, de, Æ) is different from the series of subordinators associated with VP infinitives (i.e. &Ø), through their distribution and properties. The analysis reduces this difference to the categorial status: subordinators compatible with C belong to the preposition class, whereas subordinators compatible with VP infinitives belong to a class of functional morphemes of type F, marking the achievement of clause unions.

Further tests on the constructions à/Ø + VP infinitives led to the conclusion that verb restructuring configurations may be obtained in the absence of tense features. Thus, the analysis reveals that two mechanisms for verb restructuring must be at work in Romance languages: one triggered by the properties of T, as proposed in Roberts (1997), and one triggered by the properties of F (i.e. à is analysed as an affix). In both instances, verb restructuring qualifies as a syntactic process, involving obligatory and overt verb movement.

The typology of infinitive subordinators proposed in this paper offers a principled explanation of diachronic variation in subordinator selection from Old/Middle to Classical and then to Modern French. It is argued that subordinator selection interacts with the switch in the parameter for verb movement in infinitive clauses: only those subordinators associated with the non-movement option survived to Modern French (i.e. preposition in C).

REFERENCES


5 Note that the Old/Middle French distribution of infinitive subordinators may still be seen in Canadian French dialects, especially Acadian (Motapanyane 1997), which have also retained some configurations with obligatory verb movement and null subjects, for example the hypothetical infinitives (Martineau & Motapanyane 1997).


