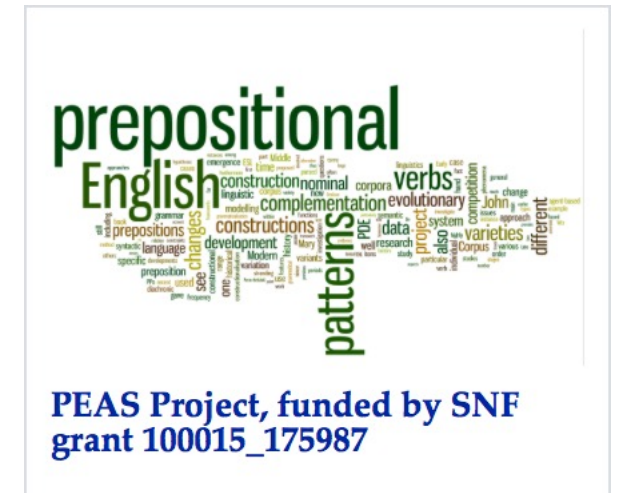




Prepositions in English ASCs

A language-contact approach to constructional variation and change

Marianne Hundt & Laetitia van Driessche





Introduction

Changes in ASCs in English

Type 1: NP > PP

Many a truer hath be~ hanged, though you escape the daunger
(‘Many more loyal people have been hanged, but you escape the danger’; PPCEME, STEVENSO-E1)

... he escaped out of their hand;
(‘... he escaped from their hands’; PPCMBE, NEWCOME-NEW-1796)

Type 2: PP > NP

They do not allow of an alternative road to our University Degrees.
(‘They do not permit an alternative way to our university degree’; PPCMBE, BAIN-1878)

It shall be lawful for the presentment sessions to allow an application for payment ...
(‘It shall be lawful for the presentment session to permit an application for payment’; PCMBE, STATUTES-1895)



Introduction

Competition with one and two complements.

Two arguments, Type 1 (NP > PP)

Go beare me thys token, carrie *me this letter*, ...

(‘Go and carry this token for me, carry this letter for me’; PPCEME, UDALL-E1-P1)

Twelue pasport to be procured from ye I. Admll for ffrenche merchant to carry *Corne for Spaine*.

(‘Twelve passports are to be procured from the first admiral for the French merchant to carry corn for Spain’; PPCEME, EDMONDES-E2)



Introduction

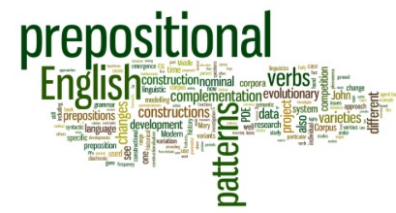
Language contact

World Englishes (ESL) varieties: variation between 'old' and new ASCs

Type 2, one complement

... one of the causes for poor sanitary conditions was the absence of back lanes and open yards to allow of drainage ... (ICE-SIN, W2a-010)

The focus of the paper is narrow so as to allow an in-depth study of the policy issue within MINDEF ... (ICE-SIN, S1a-007)



Why Romance loans words?

- Influence from French since Middle English
 - Inventory of (complex) prepositions, e.g. *in lieu of* (e.g. Beché 2020)
 - Pattern copying: PP complements more frequent in French-based texts (Trips & Stein 2019); secondary predicate constructions (e.g. *he left the room as a happy man*) – convergence of native and French verbs on a common constructeme (Percillier 2020)
- The ‘Latinated’ constraint in PDE, i.e. **explain me NP* (e.g. Pinker 1989, Goldberg 2019)

“The reason for this would seem to be that Latinated verbs entered English via French, bringing with them their argument structure (e.g. French ‘to give’ = *donner* [direct object] à [indirect object], and hence could not be accommodated into the native DO-pattern. The claim is not that speakers are actually sensitive to the etymology of individual verbs. Latinated verbs can be identified by their syllabic stress patterns” (Ambridge et al., 2012: 50)

BUT: Latinated constraint only developed in the LModE period (e.g. Coleman & De Clerck 2011)



Why historical varieties and PCEs?

Language contact situation favours more ‘transparent’ ASCs (i.e. prepositional over NP)

ME

I entered in þat erber grene. (c1400 (c1380) *Pearl* 1. 38)

EModE

the Lorde Marques hadd entered into the Tower of London (PPCEME, MORERIC-E1-P1)

IndE

Whenever I enter into the class they laugh at me (ICE-IND, S1a-001)

(e.g. Williams 1987, Schneider 2004, Deterding 2007, Nesselhauf 2009, Tan 2016, Hoffmann 2018)



Transparency (Hyperclarity)?

Counter-examples

To begin with you have to wedge or work the clay to make it pliable enough to shape before you can **talk __ the terms** that refer to creative output. (ICE-HK, W2d-015)

Okay let us first uh **explain __ them** the two current uh hypotheses about causality. (ICE-PHI, S1b-008)

Transparency vs. Economy



Analogy in history and language contact

So next week we can arrange to discuss *about* that. (ICE-SIN, S1a-015)

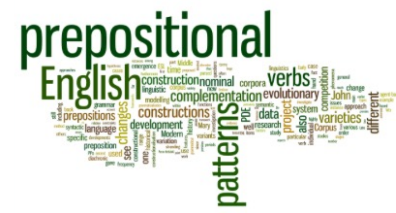
Perceived similarity in Diachronic (DCxG) and Diasystematic (DSCxG) construction grammar (e.g. Fischer 2018, Höder 2014)

- Analogy can operate at different hierarchical levels in the construction (De Smet & Fischer 2017)
- There can be multiple source constructions (see e.g. Van de Velde, de Smet & Ghesquière 2013 for DCxG, for DSCxG Kühl 2018)



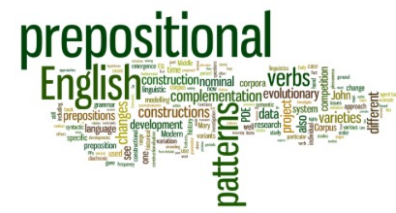
Analogy and competition between PP and NP in ASCs

- macro level:
 - Do the languages in contact have a constructional option for PP as a complement alongside bare NPs?
 - Are there supporting constructions (such as light verb constructions with a PP complement) that foster analogical extension?
- meso-level
 - Is there alternation between PP and NP complements for a particular class of verbs (e.g. communication verbs) in one/ both languages in the contact situation?
 - What are the odds of one variant to be chosen over another?
 - Are there specific lexical items that can serve as supporting constructions (e.g. *have a COMMUNICATION NOUN P*)?
- micro-level (for any specific verb): What is the ASC is in language A vs. language B?



Possible patterns of diachronic and regional variation

- (a) historical data have only NP complements, PCEs have PP complements: potential instances of structural nativization (Schneider 2004);
- (b) historical data have only PP complements, PCEs have only NP complements;
- (c) historical data have a different PP complement from the one(s) attested in PCEs (e.g. *persist in* vs. *persist into*; *result in* vs. *result into*): potential instances of structural nativization, typically towards more transparent prepositions;
- (d) historical data have a PP complement that is found in PCEs but has been lost from metropolitan varieties (e.g. *enter into* vs. *enter NP into*): potentially a case of diffusion or structural nativization;
- (e) no diachronic change nor variation in PCEs in ASCs (stable proportion of PP and NP complements) (hypothetical in our study due to our approach at data retrieval)



Predictions

EModE & LModE

- PP complements with verbs taking one non-subject complement will be more frequent to start with, subsequently: PPs will decline.
- DOCs with the Romance verbs will be rare (emerging 'Linate' constraint)

PCEs

- For DOC with Romance verbs: pronominal objects preferred (see *explain me this* patterns) and to be used in spoken usage rather than published, written material.
- There will be verbs with PP complements in our PCEs data that are not attested in the historical corpora (> nativization)



Methodology

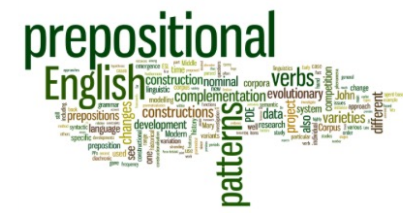
Starting point: preposition *into*

- retrieve all instances of PPs dependent on V from parsed version of ICE-PH, ICE-IND, ICE-SIN;
- reduce to set of Romance loan verbs;
- retrieve all instances with PP and NP arguments from PPCEME, PPCMBE;
- retrieve all instances of the Romance verbs from the ICE components (i.e. all NPs but also uses with a preposition other than *into*), including ICE-GB as reference variety;
- remove false positives and non-alternating constructions from the concordances.

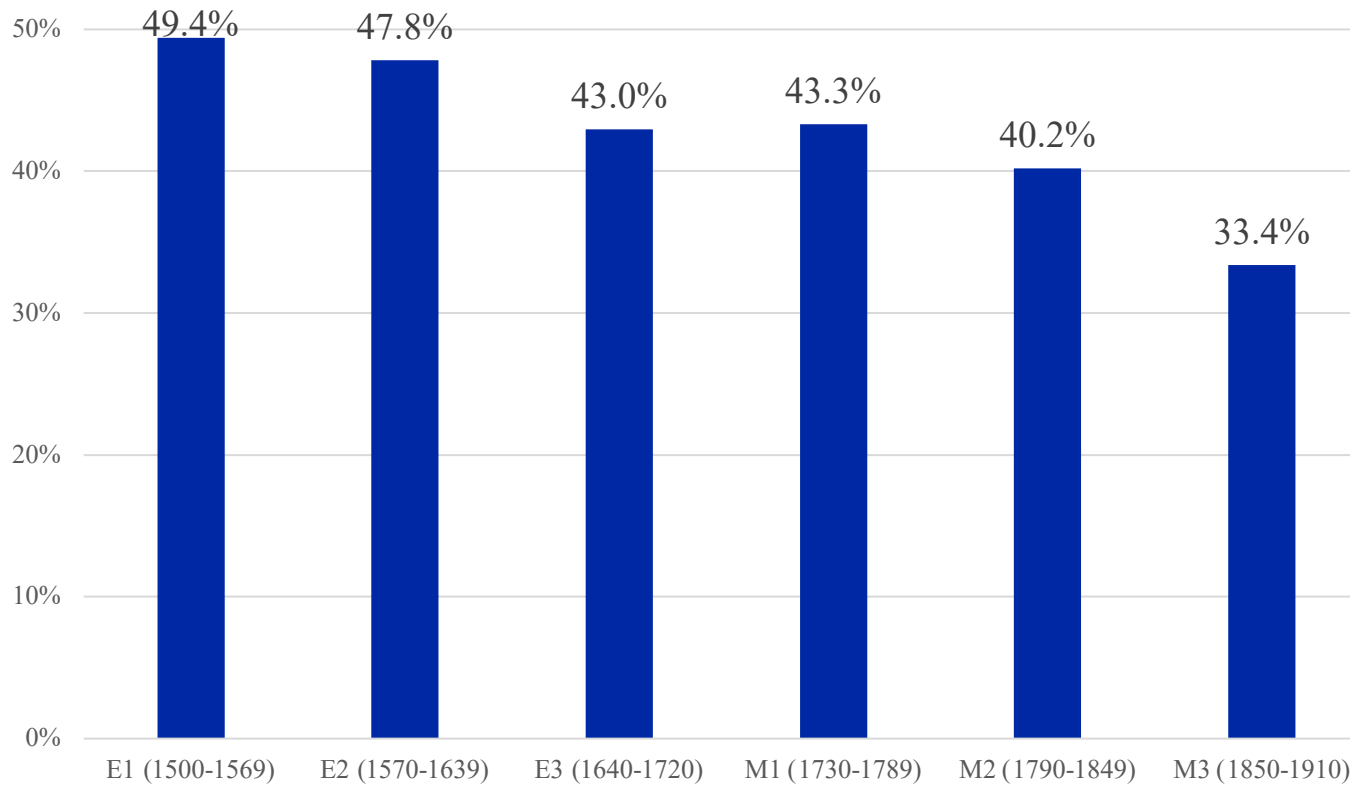


Predictor variables for PCEs data

Label	Levels	Comment
PERIOD	ME, EModE, LModE	Period when verb was introduced to English (first attestation in OED)
COUNTRY	Great Britain, India, Philippines, Singapore	For the respective World Englishes variety.
MODE	spoken, written	Mode of language use in ICE components.
REGISTER	Dialogue, Monologue, Non-Printed, Printed	Macro-categories from ICE as a proxy for levels of formality
ARGUMENT_TYPE	pronoun vs. other	For all (including those in the PP) whether they are pronominal or not.



Results

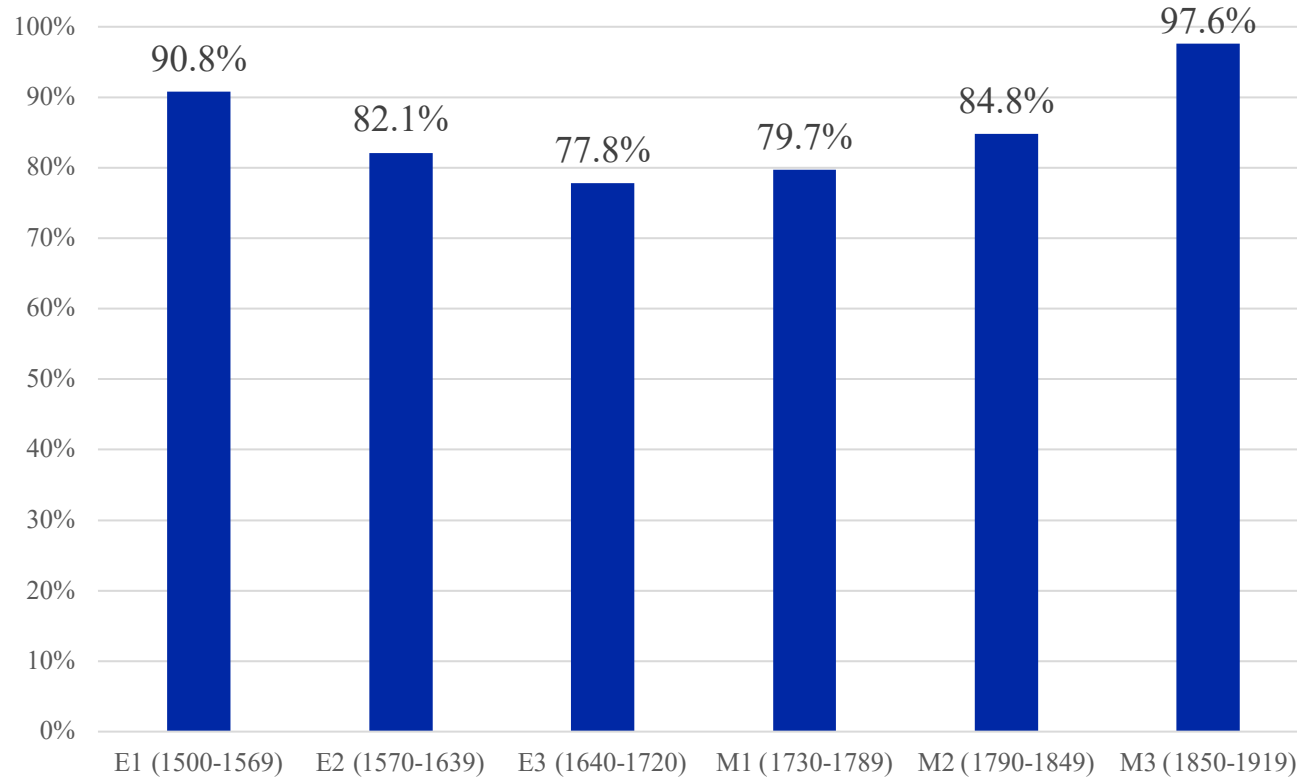


Proportion of PP arguments for Romance verbs with one phrasal complement (variable verbs only)

(Total constructions per subperiod E1: 859, E2: 1077, E3: 1357; M1: 778, M2: 794, M3: 626)

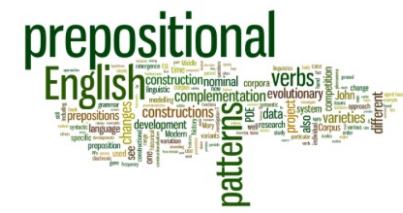


Results



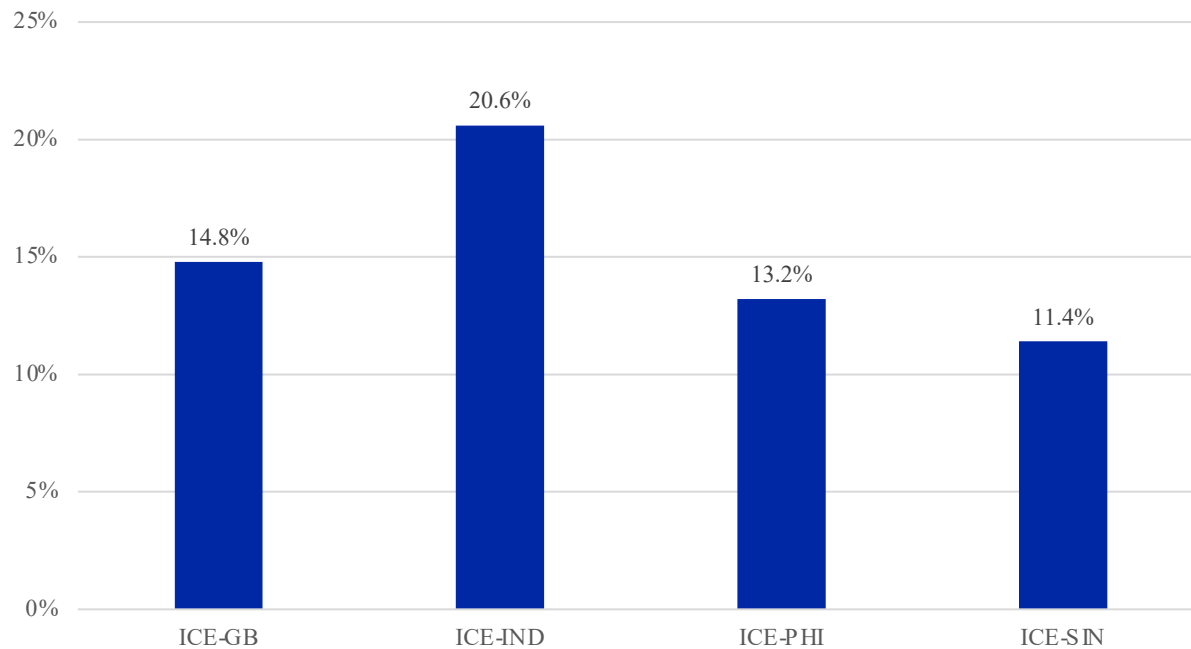
Proportion of PP arguments for Romance verbs with two phrasal complement (variable verbs only)

(Total constructions per subperiod E1: 76, E2: 117, E3: 180; M1: 69, M2: 46, M3: 42)

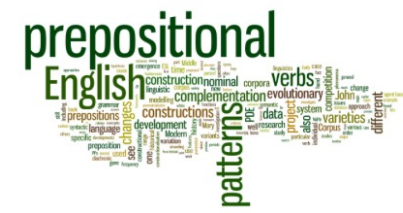


Results

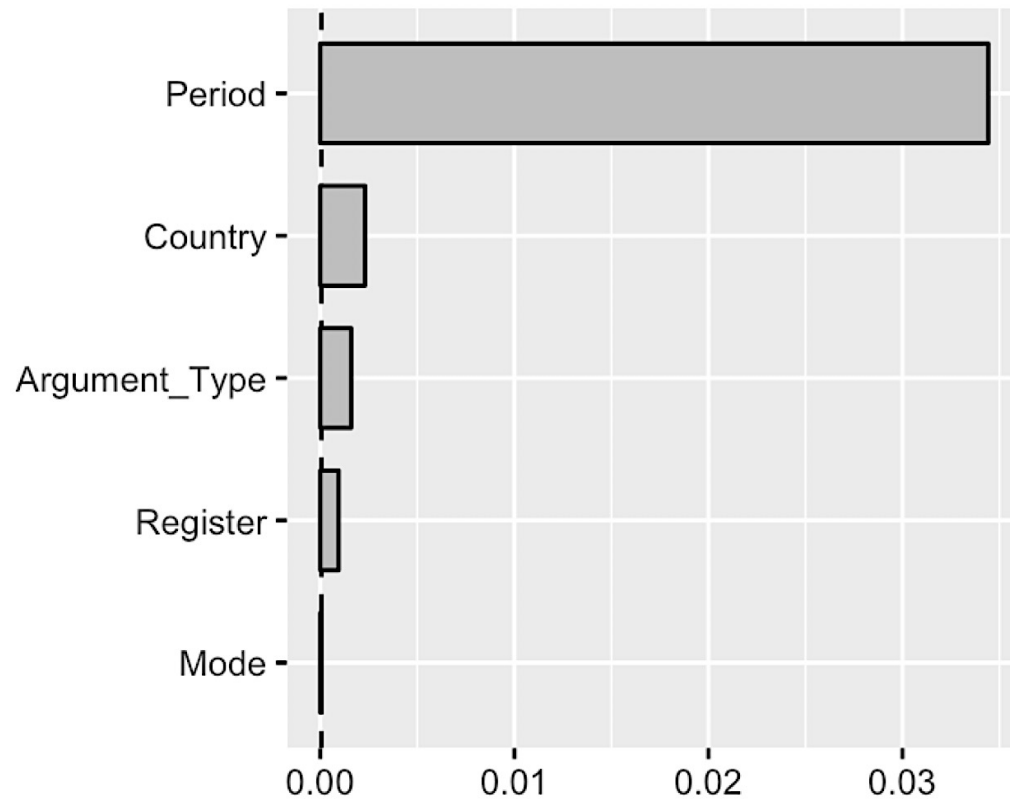
Only two alternating verbs with two arguments – focus on verbs with one argument



Proportion of PP arguments for Romance verbs with one phrasal complement in ICE (Total constructions per variety BrE: 1559, IndE: 1459, PhilE: 1756, SingE: 1591)



Results

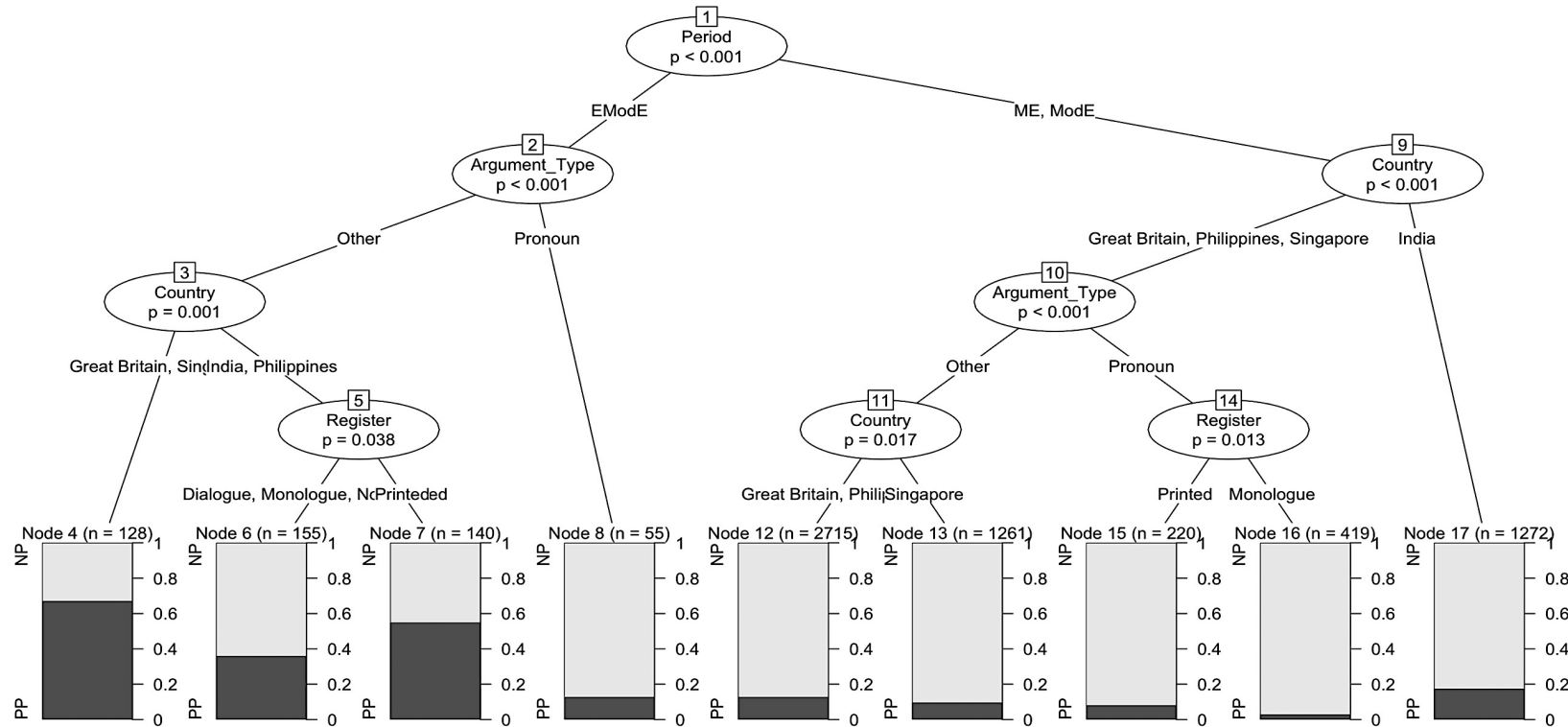


Variable importance for ASCs with Romance verbs with one complement (alternating verbs, only)
Somers2 at C = 0.680, Dxy = 0.361



Results

Variable interaction for ASCs with Romance verbs taking one non-subject argument in ICE
Somers2 at C = 0.5765





Drift

PROVOKE NP PP

... you would provoke me to a Quarrel, in hopes either to slip thro' my Lungs into my Estate , or to get yourself run thro' the Guts , to put an end to your Pain: ... (PPCEME, VANBR-E3)

And it provoked her to tears that other girls lived right in the thick of the social scene ... (COHA, FICTION, 2009)

Damp water was then applied ... provoking the class of wannabe restorers and conservators to cheers of triumph (ICE-PHI, W2b-006)



Candidates for structural nativization

CONSTITUTE PP

Now in the micro approach we have to see what the text is constituted of. (ICE-IND, S1a-081)

To provide an opportunity for language educators and reading and writing researchers to constitute themselves into a network of interested professionals ... (ICE-SIN, W1b-029)

CONSTITUTE NP as NP

It is his aptitude it is his interest it is his need to develop his own personality that have constituted the main focus of education as an activity. (ICE-IND, S2a-031)

...if they hadn't in brief, constituted themselves as sovereign nation-states by writing their own Declaration of Independence. (ICE-PHI, W2a-017)



Summary

ASCs with Romance verbs fall into two groups: with one and two non-subject arguments – different diachronic trajectories, different patterns of regional variation

- diachronic change: development towards bare NP complements (one complement) towards the POC (two non-subject arguments)
- macro-level: no difference between BrE and PCEs (nor with respect to substrate)
- micro-level of individual verbs: individual candidates for nativization (low frequency, but highly salient)



Transparency, analogy

Example of *enter into*

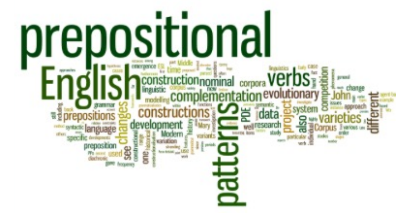
- transparency not a result of language contact (Latin, Anglo-Norman French, medieval French) > variant with preposition is attested as well
- ‘pleonastic’ use attested occasionally in current metropolitan varieties of English (see OED online, 2010)
- polysemy of the verb: non-spatial uses such as *enter into a relationship*, *enter data into an EXCEL sheet* (analogical support for the ‘old’ variant with the preposition)

Multiple source constructions and multiple factors behind processes of variation and change, i.e. language contact *one* possible reasons for variation and change in ASCs with Romance verbs in English (see also Holler, 2015)



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