

Chapter I

Introduction

The information presented in this thesis, I will deal with the topic of the English alternation *that/Ø* (henceforth referred to as the alternation), and the mystery surrounding it which has yet to be solved. Most studies about regarding this subject, including of course the present research, are mainly motivated for by the following reasons/criteria:

- a) The alternation is still unaccounted for in grammar.
- b) The wrong use of the alternation leads to ungrammaticality.

Even though/Although extensive and thorough research and different attempts of explanation have mostly been made within has been conducted in regards to syntax over the years, as well as various attempts at an explanation, this approach study will take a different direction/expand upon that information by including an/the historical perspective of the alternation. Thus, this analysis pretends then intends to fill a gap in the evolutionary study of this topic, a linguistic aspect which/that has not yet been treated properly, yet and in turn may/which might contribute to give us a a better understanding of the subject matter-it. In that sense, by taking/adding an historical slant/aspects into the debate, I-this research will build an argue/argument against the idea that an alleged principled syntactic account would be regulat/ing both the function/ing and the distribution of the alternation, as several studies have claimed so far.

Consequently, the research proposition which-that will guide this investigation is the following working hypothesis:

If we consider English historical developments, then attempts to reach a syntactic principled account for the distribution of the alternation *that/Ø* in subordination might become reduced and/or blocked.

Subsequently, the objectives of this thesis are:

- 1) To trace the alternation back in time in order to determine when and/or how it could possibly have been incorporated and/or developed in the language.
- 2) To find out/discover which other linguistic elements might be involved in the process of the activation and/or development of the alternation.

The subject of study will be subordination or complementation in finite declarative sentences; however, other syntactic structures in which the alternation is a part of might also appear. When considering historical linguistic aspects, English writing from the periods referred to as Old English (OE) and Middle English (ME) will ~~accordingly make up~~ serve as the main source of examples found throughout this paper.

Chapter II

Background

2.-1. About this approach

a) Conceptual framework and delimitations

The main lines of this study will be circumscribed within the framework of English historical linguistics. Because of the nature of this approach, it will ~~of course~~ acquire a diachronic slant. Most studies carried out within these parameters have to deal with some intrinsic limitations or constraints, which come from the object of study itself. As we know, the non-contemporaneity of actors, the quality and availability of original sources and/or manuscripts, etc., are among the main challenges in this field.

As for the acceptability or grammaticality of the different utterances used in this analysis, I will consider original sentences from early English writing as syntactic structures ~~which that~~ are representative ~~enough~~ of the idiomatic or linguistic practice of the time ~~they refer to~~.

~~As to the~~ The examples ~~utilized~~ ~~used~~ within this study, ~~they will be~~ ~~were~~ taken from original renderings, manuscripts and/or transcriptions made at different times throughout the history of the English language. Regarding the transcriptions from OE and ME into ModE, they will be provided by the respective Anglo-Saxon or OE and ME professors, scholars, translators, PhDs, philologists, ~~etc.~~ who published the texts of the early English writings which were selected for the use of this research ~~here~~.

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the most complete and reliable database of English words, will be used as well.

b) Subordination

Commented [J1]: You never defined this. Is it Modern Day English? You should define it like you defined the others.

Commented [J2]: I don't usually use periods after abbreviations... I don't think they are entirely necessary and can sometimes create a stumbling block in the sentence. This is pretty much up to you, however.

The main reasons ~~that~~which justify the delimitation of this analysis to the alternation in subordination are:

a) The alternation is a widespread phenomenon in English; so ~~because of~~due to the limited extent of a master thesis, it will ~~prove~~be practically impossible to treat all of them properly.

b) Subordination in declarative sentences is one of the most typical and frequent syntactic environments ~~in which~~where the alternation occurs; so it is properly representative of this topic.

c) Another important structural element to consider is the fact that, along with other syntactic environments such as coordination, relative clause, etc., subordination can still be traced back ~~up~~ to the origins of English writing, which allows ~~for~~a more complete and extensive evidence of its historical development. ~~And~~Moreover, within the topic of subordination ~~in~~ itself, subordination in declaratives is the most common and identifiable syntactic structures in which the alternation is a part. ~~of~~This can be compared, for instance, to subordination in questions, which is harder to identify ~~and find~~ in the earliest of English writing, ~~as~~since they were either much less frequent or had no standard structures.