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*Brno studies in English*. 1969, vol. 8, iss. 1, pp. [123]-132

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/118049>

Access Date: 30. 11. 2024

Version: 20220831

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# HISTORICAL ASPECT OF THE ACCUSATIVE WITH INFINITIVE AND THE CONTENT CLAUSE IN ENGLISH

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The present communication carries on my research concerning the so called 'accusative with infinitive' constructions in English and their relation to a content clause. This time my interest is centred on the historical aspect, on the development of the described constructions in English. The questions to be answered are: why are these infinitive constructions rather infrequent in proportion to the content clause in Old English (OE); why then are they practically never found as a sole complementation of a verb; why, in the course of development from OE to Modern English (ModE), have they come to form a construction with a function of their own? In OE they were found side by side with the content clause, which was far the more usual way of complementing a verb, indeed the fundamental way.

There is general agreement upon the fact that these kinds of verbal complements are of both grammatical and lexical character. From this point of view it is necessary to show which are their lexical and syntactic features, to define their place on the scale between syntax and lexicon, before we can try to estimate their functions in any period of the development of the English language.

But first it is necessary for me to explain what I mean by the 'accusative with infinitive' constructions. The fact is, and everyone who has something to do with grammar knows it, that the term is far from being accurate. On the one hand it is quite difficult to talk about cases in English nouns and pronouns; on the other hand, in constructions of this kind, the infinitive is sometimes missing (*Do you think it likely?*), sometimes cannot be inserted at all (*He made her happy*). The reason why I use this term is purely conventional. It seems to me that for most people it is the best term comprehensible, that by using it one can at least approximately imagine at first sight or hearing what it is we are talking about. To define them more closely, I should say that the constructions in question are nominalized predications embedded in normal non-nominalized kernel utterances. This is still a little too wide a definition, because nominalization can be achieved by different means.

1. The original predicational relation (subject-predicate) is preserved; only the finite verb of the predicate changes into an infinitive (of a full verb or a copula), or it is dropped and the predicate is represented only by the semantic core of the original predicate, which is either a gerund (*They left me standing outside*), an adjective (*Do you think it likely?*), or a noun (*We thought her quite a clever girl*).

2. The original predicational relation is preserved, but the subject of the nominalized predication is the same as the subject of what is here called the main clause and it is obligatorily deleted (*\*I want me to come = I want to come*). The condensers are the same as before, the infinitive and the gerund, both looming somewhere between

Sentence }  
 Predicational }  
 (S-P) relation } →

Non-sentence  
 No predicational  
 (S-P) relation

1	2	3	4	5
She is happy He sleeps	(1) I say she is happy (2) I say he sleeps	(5) I think her (to be) happy	(22) I gave John a book	(24) I envy you your garden
	(3) I think she is happy (4) I think she sleeps		(23) I regard him as a fool	(25) A exhausts B with C
	(6) I want she is happy (7) I want he sleeps	(8) I want her (to be) happy (9) I want him to sleep		
	(10) I order she is happy (12) I order he sleeps	(11) I order her to be happy (13) I order him to sleep		
	(14) I make she is happy (16) I make he sleeps	(15) I make her happy (17) I make him sleep		
	(18) I see she is happy (20) I see he sleeps	(19) I see her (to be) happy (21) I see him sleep		

a noun and a verb. Among these we must also count sentences like *Coffee is ready to bring in to you, if you are ready*, where the subject of the infinitive is not the subject of the main clause, but it is general. Cases like these are of recent origin, because some ten or twenty years ago it was necessary to use the passive infinitive here.

It may be interesting to note that here the subject of the finite verb cannot be at the same time the subject of the infinitive (*bring* must refer to a personal subject) and that this incompatibility induces the hearer to refer the infinitive to a general subject.

3. The original predicational relation is not preserved, which means that the nominalized form is no longer felt as a part of the S-P relation, is no longer regarded as a predicate and does not refer to any subject. The condenser here is the verbal noun. In other words, it is insensitive to (markless in regard to) a predicational relation (*I saw the discovery*). This, of course, does not mean to say that something like a subject or object cannot appear here (*I saw his discovery. I saw the discovery of a letter*). All I mean to say is that no such subject or object is required, signalled. Now what I call the accusative with infinitive are of course instances of the first kind.

Coming back to what I said about the place of the constructions in question I should like to suggest that they can be imagined as standing between two poles: between the sentence pole and the non-sentence (nearer the lexicon) pole. On the one hand there is the ordinary simple sentence, on the other hand there are verbs complemented by two objects without any trace of the predicational (S-P) relation left between them. I think it useful to illustrate what is meant by the preceding table.

The first column is formed by simple sentences with no other function than stating some event, just naming it, or asking about it (questions), or ordering it (commands). Compared with statements, questions and commands are characterized by the mark of appeal (Appel), but with regard to the second column they are markless. In this second column we find simple statements as indispensable complements of verbs. In relation to instances of the first column they are marked and the mark is rather difficult to express by a single term, which all the same might be misleading. I think it more suitable to explain first what I suppose the function of these constructions to be. Complements of this kind are usually spoken about as content clauses (or object clauses). There is a subordinate clause, whose function it is to state an event, and a main clause saying that what is the hearer or reader presented with is not a mere general statement, but one made dependent upon some factor which by means of its finite verb makes the event a kind of an outcome of what the verb stands for. This practically always means imposing limits on the original general validity of the event that has been made dependent.

When classifying the individual verbs occurring in the main clause, we can clearly see to what extent and in what way the factor is involved in this dependence. Practically always the factor is represented by human subjects communicating the event (either by external communication: *He said that...*, or internal communication: *He decided that...*), wishing for its realization (*He wanted that...*) and adding sometimes a little force (*He urged me that...*), combining communication with desire (*He asked that...*) and adding force to both (*He ordered that...*), purely causing (*He caused that...*, with factors that can also be inanimate), evaluating (*He thought that...*), or just finding it in the repertory of experience (perception: *He saw that...*; memory: *He recollected that*). The best way to express this dependence grammatically is a compound sentence of the described type. As the fact that the event of the subordinate clause is an outcome of the verb in the main clause is essential here, the main clause is indispensable. It is necessary to state explicitly that the utterance is not going to denote a simple statement. On the other hand the main clause cannot exist apart from the subordinate clause, from what is made its outcome. It would lose its *raison d'être*. While the subordinate clause preserves its original practically boundless substitutability (anything may become the object of communication), the main clause is strictly limited as far as both its subject and predicate are concerned. Only verbs of the semantic groups referred to and their subjects are allowed to stand here, which means a finite and not a very large number of verbs (usually not exceeding 200) and in most cases primarily human subjects (with the only exception of the verbs of causation where inanimate subjects are found side by side with human subjects). Which verbs may be used here is thus a matter of their meaning. The mark of this kind of dependence is not only superposed on simple statements, but also on both the forms of appeal (*I asked what kind of a man he was. I asked what he would do. I told him he should be more clever. I told him he should come later*). Some of the verbs in the main clause raise the question of what freedom there is in the two types of clause as far as modality is concerned.

From this point of view it may be said that the main clause always has its own modality at its disposal. Its finite verb may be modally modified both by grammatical and lexical means (*I should say, I might say, I want to say, If I said*) — for the present purpose I shall use the term 'modifying modality'. In fact it very often does distinguish various grades of modality by its very meaning (*he said, he promised, he ordered*); — in this connection, I shall speak of lexical modality. The former kind of modality conveys the meanings of likelihood, probability, advisability, and the like. The other one differentiates the verb as to the kind of dependence it expresses. *Said* is markless with regard to *promise*, which equals *said + guaranteed by his personal engagement, ordered = said + wanted what was said to be carried out*, etc. In this respect this differentiation of verbs as to their meaning is part of any process of this kind, the outcome of which need not be modal (*said + officially = declared, said + waited for the others to think about it = suggested*). This kind of modality is then only additional, it does not form any system of its own and may itself be further modally modified (*He should order that... If he promised that...*).

Now the subordinate clause, which — as I have said — has infinite freedom of substitution, has its own modality, too—the modality of outcome. Nevertheless we can easily see that what has been called the lexical modality of the main clause verb may exert its influence upon the modality of the subordinate clause. It may determine in which sense the event expressed by the subordinate clause is to be valid (*He promised that John would come, He ordered that we should come* are both all right, but *that John came, that we shall come* are not).

The third column consists of constructions that can be called non-sentential, but still predicational. These are cases where the subordinate clause of the second column loses its finite verb, which is either nominalized in the form of an infinitive or sometimes dropped altogether (*I want him to come, He made me happy*). With regard to the previous column their function may be said to be characterized by the mark of reference. This needs some explanation. I suggested that the grammatical construction of column 2 may be said to express that an event is presented as an outcome of what the main clause indicates. This automatically means that the main clause verb at the same time brings the event and the factor (the sphere introduced by the factor) into a relation of reference. The event is referred to the sphere of the main clause subject. So apart from saying that the event is the outcome of communication, will, force, causation, etc., the main verb suggests that its subject is somehow involved with regard to the event. The kind of involving is then specified by the main clause verb and its meaning. This stressing of precisely the fact that the event of the subordinate clause is referred to the subject, which is involved (concerned), is the mark of the construction. The result is fewer verbs in the main clause, while mostly only relational meanings can appear here (e.g. most of the communication verbs are missing and those that can be used here shift their actional meanings to relational—*say* goes over to *consider*). There is also some limitation in the subordinate part of the predicate. After verbs expressing evaluation only the infinitive of the verb *to be* (originally not present in these constructions in OE at all and introduced in analogy with Latin) can be used. Other verbal groups of this column do not show any restriction like this with the exception of verbs of causation, which cannot be followed by *to be* (*I made him sleep, I made him rich*, not \**I made him be rich*). With *order, to be* cannot be dropped at all.

A group of its own is formed by constructions noun + noun, with adjectives and participles occurring only very rarely and never replaceable by a content clause.

These are complements of the verbal group represented by *name*. Here the other of the two nouns is very often a proper noun and in this case we have to do with a pure naming act (denotation). Complements of this kind may be shown to be derived from two kernel sentences, one having the form of a BE relation:

<i>They gave him a name</i> <i>John is a name</i>	}	→	<i>They gave him a name John is a name</i> → <i>They gave him a name John</i> → <i>They</i> <i>gave him the name of John</i>
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(*gave him the name* = *named him, baptized him, Christened him, called him, etc.*).

These cases of pure denotation, of naming an individual person or thing, are however rather close to evaluation. As soon as we have common instead of proper nouns, there is a bridge towards evaluations (*They called him Henry, They called him a fool*).

The shift from the second in the direction toward the third column may be characterized as a gradual change from a sentence to a non-sentential form standing more closely to constructions such as a verb with two indispensable complements (two objects)—*I think he is a fool—I think him (to be) a fool—I regard him as a fool*. We could even go further than that and say that it is a gradual lexicalization of the construction. This is, in addition to the mentioned symptoms, borne out by the fact that the secondary subject may become a primary (*He is thought to be a fool cf. He is regarded as a fool*), which with a content clause is unthinkable (*\*I was thought that I was a fool, \*It was thought by him that I was a fool*). The explicitly expressed character of a sentence disappears, but is still preserved in the S—P relation present between the two members of the complement. It is however to be lost in the next column. The other member of the complement differs from an object, as it can never become the subject of the finite verb (*\*A fool was thought by me*). Where infinitives are the rule, they form the other part of the complement and cannot be shifted to the subject either (*To come was wanted by me, nor is it possible to signal the infinitive by it: It was wanted to come by me*).

The fourth column consists of a verb and two indispensable complements. These constructions are even further from the first column; their only link with the left hand side of the diagram is the potential S—P relation between their complements (indicated by a dashed line). It is still possible to regard both parts of the complements as derived from something like a kernel sentence, giving—after condensation (nominalization) and obligatory deletion of the nominalized verb—only the originally nominal part of the S—P relation. I call this relation only potential because compared with column 3 the condensed form (condenser) cannot appear (and has in fact never appeared in English at all—*\*I gave John to have a book, \*Put it to be here*), even if it were to form the other member of the complement itself (*\*I gave John to speak. I gave John to understand* is undoubtedly a purely lexical, not a lexically grammatical matter). A verb may appear here only in its substantivized form (*He denied her admittance, I gave John a good whipping*), which is neutral to the S—P relation and cannot be called a proper condenser. The relation expressed between the presumed underlying sentences here is either BE or HAVE; from time to time verbs of learning by means of one's senses appear here: BE—*He has given it away* (It is away). HAVE—*I gave the money to my friend* (My friend has the money). *I gave her two flowers* (She has two flowers). *He bought a gold watch for his wife* (His wife has a gold watch). HEAR—*I read him the letters* (He hears the letters). *They told the news to everybody they met* (Everybody they met heard the news). SEE—*We showed the pictures to our*

teachers (Our teachers saw the pictures). NOT HAVE—*He denies her nothing* (She has everything from him).

The difference there is between the prepositions *to* and *for* seems to be in that *for* always is a signal of the HAVE relation, while *to* may serve also for SEE, HEAR—*He bought one for me. He handed the book to me. But He read the book to me not \*for me,* because here we have the underlying verb HEAR.

In this column there are both prepositional and non-prepositional complements. Some verbs have both (*give, buy*), some only the former (*regard as, take for*). What is most interesting from the ModE point of view is that evaluational verbs of this column take a unique place among all the other semantic groups. It is only these verbs that have their exact semantic parallels in columns 3 and 4. This is found nowhere else. To explain this more closely: there is a competition between the two means which English has to express evaluation, means which come very close both semantically and functionally. *I think him a fool* is a non-sentence complement of a verb with evaluational meaning preserving the S—P relation, *I take him for a fool* a non-sentence complement of a verb of the same meaning with the only difference that the S—P relation in the latter case is only potential. This competition between two ways of putting practically the same thing leads to a more detailed segmentation of the semantic field. The two constructions have come too close to each other and the result is that column 3 constructions (*I think him a fool, I think him to be a fool*) are gradually removed towards the periphery of the language and acquire stylistic flavour. They are now too bookish.

We must add here, taking into account the potential S—P relation between the members of a compound complement, constructions of the type *He beat them black* (= They were black). They do not fit here entirely, because the other member of the complement is dispensable both structurally and semantically (*He beat them*). This is what brings them close to dispensable subordinate clauses (adverbial clauses).

In the fifth column we find double indispensable complements of verbs (both prepositional and non-prepositional), where no S—P relation (even potential) is traceable any longer. This places them even further from the sentence pole; their lexicalizing character is more pronounced than before. They are sentences like *I envy you your garden, A exhausts C with B*. It may be interesting to note that in the case of *envy* there seems to be a potential S-P relation: *I envy something, You have a nice garden*. But close inspection shows us that an S-P relation is not between *you* and *your garden*, but between *your* and *garden*; in other words *I envy you your garden* has two kernel sentences

(1) *I envy you sth.*

(2) *You have a fine garden*

$C_1 \quad C_2$

First (2) must be nominalized to (3) *your fine garden* and only then put in the place of  $C_2$ . With *I gave you two flowers* it is quite different (4) *I gave you sth.* (5) *You have two flowers*

(6) *You to have two flowers* → (7) *I gave you to have two flowers* → (8) *I gave you two flowers.*

The fifth column is the utmost point where we can look for a possible S-P relation between the complements of the verb. Further on to the right we have only verbs with one complement or with none at all.

To conclude this part of the report, it might be interesting to sum up what has been said about the horizontal axis, because we will need it in our historical explanation.

If we follow the direction from left to right, we can once more stress that the sentence character of the original construction gradually disappears and that so does the S—P relation. The meaning of the main verb is shifted from full action towards pure relation (towards the relations BE and HAVE) and the whole structure becomes more and more lexicalized.

I should perhaps say that the table is a survey of all theoretical possibilities and does not represent any practical state in any period of English. It is the task of an historical analysis to show which of the columns and which of their individual cases were or still are used. It is impossible in a single article (and also immaterial to our present interest) to deal with all the columns mentioned in detail. As the title of the paper suggests, my endeavour will be only to try to show in brief what I think has been the relation between columns 2 and 3 in the development of the English language from OE up to ModE.

Starting with the OE period we can see that practically all verbs of the aforesaid semantic fields covering columns 2 and 3 are complemented by column 2 construction. In fact, the content clause forms the basic, fundamental way of expressing both column 2 and 3 functions. Column 3 construction may be said to occur side by side with the clause, and from what my material shows it is situated somewhere on the periphery, being in most cases less frequent. There are no OE verbs or meanings connected exclusively with column 3 complement. This is a very important observation. We can say that in OE columns 2 and 3 do not exist as separate columns, that the two functions later to be separately represented by these columns are not yet distinct. The clause expresses that its event is the outcome of the main clause subject and its predicate and at the same time indicates that this event is brought into relation to the main clause subject, that it is referred to the sphere of his (or sometimes its) interest, concern, capacity, or influence. No differentiation is made between what is later the markless constructions of the second column, saying nothing whatever about the presence or absence of such relation, and the marked constructions of the third column, explicitly stressing this relation. This is a matter of later development.

Before I am going to illustrate this state of affairs, I should like to make another suggestion. Looking more closely at column 3 constructions we may see that it does not seem right to say that historically they are condensed (nominalized) original full sentences, as from the synchronic point of view it seems to be the case. On the contrary, they must have originated from column 4 construction, from cases where the verbs were complemented by two indispensable complements with only a potential S-P relation. What makes me suggest that? A highly productive construction of the column 3 type is represented by evaluational verbs complemented either by a noun + adjective, or noun + participle, noun + noun not being very common. They were cases like *Ʒaet hine God Ʒaes cyneƷomes weorƷne munde* with the verbs *munan* and *on-munan* without any clause complement recorded in OE. No instances with *to be* are found here and the adjective or participle agrees in case with the preceding object. This brings these constructions nearer to *regard someone as such* than to *consider that he is such* (cf. *Hi gewunƷedon hi moder cygean, Ge cƷylpiƷ me laeow*). As far as the constructions with an infinitive are concerned, it is a well-known fact that originally infinitives were verbal nouns, and that we have them preserved as such in older OE *Hé his ealdormen haefƷe beboden Ʒá clúsan to healdanne*, etc. Only later they lost their substantival character and could be associated with the verb and its predicational function. Thus from this point of view we might historically rather speak about predicationalization than about nominalization. This of course was brought



about by the rising tendency to condensation, because a condenser was needed for the finite verb. The nearest form at hand was the infinitive which could vacate its verbal noun function, because this was taken over by the then existing verbal nouns in *-inge, -unge*. With the immense support of Latin accusative with infinitive constructions, which kept pouring in through all channels during the Middle English period, the infinitive constructions lost their original column 4 character. The evaluational constructions did the same and there were attempts at bringing them nearer to predication by inserting the *to be* form before the adjective or participle, later also a noun. The only difference is that column 4 did not lose its evaluative verbs with prepositions. In OE these were most often the prepositions *to* and *for* (*He bið to eaðmōð ðam yflan mannan, and læt him to gelicne* = regarded him as an equal). This explains why evaluative constructions of column 3 type remained unintegrated in the system and are now stylistically marked.

Let us now follow the individual semantic groups of columns 2 and 3 in OE. Verbs denoting communication are the most numerous. They are of two main semantic types: SAY (outer communication) and REFLECT (inner communication). Their complement is a clause. They have no column 3 constructions, but there is their column 4 counterpart covering only a part of the communicative meaning, i.e. only that verging on evaluation. Thus an event may be treated either as the outcome of the main clause subject evaluation (what I call internal communication: *Hé læt ðæt he ána sý strenga ðonne hí ealle*), or there is a verb with purely evaluational meaning with two indispensable complements and a potential S-P relation between them (either without a preposition: *Ic hine gelicne læte wisum were*, or with it: *ðe ðú to godum tiohhast*).

Verbs expressing volition are far less numerous and are likewise complemented mostly by column 2 construction (*Gé geornað ðæt gé woldon éowerne naman to bráedan geond alle eorðan*). Some of them may be followed by the infinitive (*Se ðe wille sóð spreca*), but there is no column 3 construction.

With verbs expressing volition and causation (*níðan*) and volition, causation and communication combined (*béodan*) the picture is a little different. Here we have something like column 3 side by side with column 2 construction. The oldest examples show their column 4 origin (*Hé bebedð ðæt nán cristen mon ne cóme on his hiérede: Ne budðú mé ná aelmessan to syllanne*), which later disappears (*Drihten, hwaet háetst ðú mé dón?*). This does not mean that all meanings of this kind are necessarily accompanied by the column 3 construction. There are many verbs with clause only: *Hine Hannibal aspón, ðæt he ðæt gewinn leng ongan. Hét gebéodan byre Wihstánes haeleða monegum boldágendra ðæt hie báelwudu feorran feredon*.

The same may be said about verbs of causation. The commonest of them in OE, *dón* (or *gedón*), had clause complement denoted as much more frequent than column 3: *Gif se sácerd déð ðæt folc synge. Swá ðú dydest mínne bróðor his god forlætan, swá dó ic éac ðé forlætan ðínne god*. Besides there still is a verb with causative meaning complemented only by a clause: *Ðeáh fýr wið ealla síe gemended weoruldgesceafta, ðeáh waldan ne móð ðæt hit ðenige fordó*.

With perceptive verbs the picture is similar; only there are no verbs of this type found without the column 3 variant. The ModE distinction between learning by senses (+clause) and perception (+column 3) developed very early: 1000 *Ic ðæt lond-buend leode mín seczan hyrde* (perceive with the ear): 1000 *Hyrde ic ðæt he ðone healsbeah Hyrde zesealde* (get to know by hearing). *Ic seah turf tredan . vi. gebróðor* (perceive): *Ná mon ne máeze seón ðæt hí gesion na mázon* (understand).

To make the Old English scene complete, I should like to add that my material consists of 209 verbs: 157 have only a clause, 3 only a column 3 construction (*munan*, *onmunan*, *prófan*—the evaluation type), the remaining 49 a clause with a column 3 variant.

In Middle and Early Modern English we can see that this state of things had radically changed. Many new verbs had been introduced from French and the growing tendency to condensation got hold of both OE variants strengthening them by the rich French supply. This can easily be seen even from my incomplete data. I could excerpt my material only from roughly letters A-F of the Ann Arbor *Middle English Dictionary* and in this comparatively short part there are as many as 43 new verbs with nothing but a column 3 construction in their volitionally causative meanings. This flood of new verbs with their infinitive constructions results in their getting an independent status and function. This process, of course, was only gradual and was not completed in Middle English. The present day state of things must have been reached somewhere during the 16th and 17th centuries. We can see that particularly with evaluational verbs of the first group which had been shifted from column 4 to column 3. The inserted infinitive of *to be* appears, e.g., with *deem* in the 15th century (*Daet ðing whiche resoun knowith and demed to be good*), with *think* and *reckon* in the 16th century (*Thinking his prattle to be tedious, I reken your vyage to be a daungerous passage*), etc.

Verbs expressing volition join column 3 rather late, at the beginning of the Early Modern English period, because they originally never had double complement (unlike volitionally causative verbs): *wish* 16th cent. (*Aftur a mane the wych I wold wysch to be put in vse wyth us*; its column 3 construction without *to be* is 1400: *He wysshed them at the devyll therfore*), *desire* 14th cent. (*I desired ðis damiselle to have hire to ði broþer ac hire oþer hire nold me graunte*), *want* as late as 1845 (*I want you to be a good boy*). Clause is obsolete since 16th cent.

Verbs expressing volition and causation, or volition, causation and communication combined change their original clause complement in the direction of column 3 and in Modern English clause is no longer frequent in colloquial style.

With verbs of causation we again find in Middle English a distinct shift in the direction of column 3 constructions. The OE verb *dón* becomes too much involved with grammatical distinctions and it cedes its causative meaning to the verb *make*, which gradually loses its older clause complement. Round about 1300 we come across another verb of this kind, i.e. *gären*, this time of Scandinavian origin, with no column 2 at all (*I shal, for mi mede, garen him to spede, For ful we I con*). It could however not stand the competition of *make* and had for a long time existed only in dialects (1894 *A dinnle in the elbuck that gar ye loup like a trout*). *Cause* is another newcomer appearing at the end of the 14th cent (1385 *This prisoun caused me nat to crye*). In analogy to *make* it for a time had the column 3 construction with the infinitive *to be* suppressed (1576 *It causeth them also most white*), but this form of its complement had become obsolete and it has now a bookish flavour.

## RESUMÉ

Historický pohled na konkurenci vazeb akuzativu s infinitivem a vedlejší věty obsahové při doplňování sloves v angličtině

Práce se snaží ukázat, jak se ve vývoji angličtiny postupně od sebe obě vazby oddělovaly a vytvářely každá svou vlastní funkci. Zařazuje je do širšího kontextu na stupnici mezi jevy vysloveně větného a naprosto nevětného charakteru, vymezuje jejich místo a vzájemné vztahy a pokouší se ukázat, jak se obojí měnilo v historické perspektivě.