

The Forms and Syntax of Verbs
in the Early Modern English and
Late Modern English Periods

Outline of the Thesis

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Outline of the thesis

The purpose of this study is to investigate the historical development of the indicative present third-person inflections *-(e)th* vs. *-(e)s* from the beginning of the 16th century until the end of the 18th century and the historical development of the conjunctive word-groups such as *as soon as*, *no sooner...than*, *scarcely...when*, *hardly...when*, *the moment* from the beginning of the 16th century until the mid-19th century, which introduce the adverbial clauses of time and which are used to express two events or actions that take place one after the other. Although it is difficult to find a lot of things in common between these two themes, the indicative present third-person inflections *-(e)th* and *-(e)s* continue to compete with each other somewhere in the early 16th century and their competition ends when the *-(e)th* ending is replaced by the *-(e)s* ending towards the end of the 18th century. On the other hand, two kinds of conjunctive word-groups in competition, *as soon as* vs. *so soon as* and *no sooner...but* vs. *no sooner...than*, occur during the Early Modern English period and each of them start to compete with one another during that period and they cease to compete with each other by the end of the 18th century. Thus, the indicative present third-person inflections and the conjunctive word-groups each develop in almost the same period, end their competition in almost the same period and finally lead to what they are in the Present-day English. I would like to verify this hypothesis.

The historical development of the indicative present third-person inflections *-(e)th* vs. *-(e)s* including the development of *doth* vs. *does* and *hath* vs. *has* is discussed in Chapters 1 to 4. Furthermore, the historical development of the conjunctive word-groups is discussed in Chapters 5 to 7.

In Chapter 1, a historical outline of the third-person inflections from Old English until Early Modern English is summarized on the basis of George Curme's description. The rule of agreement in number between the subject and the predicate verb is not always followed in the Early Modern English period. A few examples are presented to illustrate it. When an indicative present third-person verb often switches to the subjunctive present when it occurs in the conditional clause beginning with "if," "except

(=unless),” or in the concessive clause beginning with “till,” or “though.” This form is called “zero form.” It is illustrated by the quotations from Shakespeare.

The description of the historical development of the indicative present third-person inflections *-(e)th* vs. *-(e)s* starts in the 2nd chapter. All the texts used as corpora are classified into nine types as follows: The Bible; biography; essays; fiction; journals & reports; letters, diaries & memoirs; linguistics; official documents; and poetry. Indicative third-person present singular verbs are classified into the following three types: those that take the *-(e)th* ending alone, those that take both the *-(e)th* and *-(e)s* endings, and those that take the *-(e)s* ending alone. In this chapter the historical development from the late 15th century until the early 19th century is described on the basis of the nine types of texts excluding drama. During the period from the late 15th century until the early 17th century, the verbs that take *-(e)th* alone are mostly more dominant than those that take *-(e)s* alone. In the late 16th-century poetry, verbs that take the *-(e)s* ending alone begin to become more dominant (60%). In the early 17th century verbs that take the *-(e)s* ending alone become more dominant in three types of texts: biography, official documents and poetry. In the late 17th century, verbs that take the *-(e)s* ending alone becomes more dominant (60 to 100%) in eight types of texts: biography, essays, fiction, letters/diaries/ memoirs, linguistics, official documents and poetry. In the early 18th century, verbs that take the *-(e)s* ending alone becomes much more dominant (90 to 100%) in eight types of texts: biography, essays, fiction, journals & reports, letters, linguistics, official documents and poetry. In the late 18th century, a similar tendency (95 to 100%) continues. This phenomenon shows that the replacement of *-(e)th* ending by the *-(e)s* ending has been done somewhere during the 18th century, or at the latest by the end of the 18th century.

In Chapter 3, the development of the third-person present singular verb inflections *-(e)th* and *-(e)s* is discussed on the basis of drama excluding Shakespeare, from the late 16th century until the late 18th century, only because drama is not so frequently written in the early 16th century. Indicative third-person present singular verbs are classified into the same three types as those in Chapter 2. Drama texts are much closer to colloquial speech in those days compared with other types of texts. In the late 16th

century, verbs that take the *-(e)s* ending alone becomes more dominant (71%) than those that take the *-(e)th* ending alone. The rate of percentage of the *-(e)s* ending expands enormously in the early 17th century (96.5%) and in the late 17th century (99.6%). The rate of percentage of the *-(e)s* ending finally reaches 100% in the early 18th century. The late 18th century shows the same tendency. Thus, it is concluded that the replacement of *-(e)th* ending by the *-(e)s* ending in drama has been done during the late 17th century, or at the latest in the early 18th century.

In Chapter 4, the historical development of “*doth* vs. *does*” and “*hath* vs. *has*” all of which are employed as both auxiliary verbs and ordinary verbs is discussed. *Doth* and *does* have three kinds of usage when functioning as auxiliary verbs: *do*-support, *do*-periphrasis and pro-verb. *Do*-support is used to form an interrogative sentence, negative sentence or negative question; *do*-periphrasis is used as an emphatic operator or for stylistic or phonological purposes such as increasing the number of syllables and it occurs in the form of *doth* or *does* + stem of a verb; pro-verb is used to avoid the preceding verb phrase. *Doth* and *does* function as ordinary verbs when asking about someone’s state of health or, causing or effecting something. On the other hand, *hath* and *has* when functioning as auxiliary verbs are used to form the present perfect aspect. Moreover, *hath* and *has* when functioning as ordinary verbs are used to mean that someone owns or possesses something.

In section 1 *doth* and *does*, and *hath* and *has* in Shakespeare’s drama is dealt with. *Doth* and *does* most frequently occur in the usage called *do*-periphrasis: 243 times in comedies, 204 times in history plays, 206 times in tragedies and 59 times in romances. They second most frequently occur in the usage called *do*-support: 61 times in comedies, 58 times in history plays, 59 times in tragedies and 14 times in romances. They third most frequently occur in the usage called pro-verb: 33 times in comedies, 44 times in history plays, 37 times in tragedies and 27 times in romances.

The number of occurrences of *doth* and *does* when functioning as ordinary verbs is as follows: 43 times in comedies, 33 times in history plays, 46 times in tragedies and 12 times in romances. When comparing the number of occurrences between *doth* and *does*, *does* is more frequently used in the plays written in the 17th century and it is reflected in the percentage of the

following three kinds of plays: 67.4% in comedies, 87% in tragedies and 83.3% in romances.

When functioning not merely as an auxiliary verb but as an ordinary verb, *hath* is more frequently used than *has* in Shakespeare's drama: 91.3% in comedies, 91.4% in history plays, 85.5% in tragedies and 83.1% in romances; 80.8% in comedies, 84.2% in history plays, 58.9% in tragedies and 59.2% in romances.

In section 2, *doth* and *does*, and *hath* and *has* in nine types of texts (The Bible; biography; essays; fiction; journals & reports; letters, diaries & memoirs; linguistics; official documents; and poetry) are dealt with. When functioning as an auxiliary verb, *doth* is exclusively used in all the nine types of texts from the early 16th century until the early 17th century. *Does* functioning as an auxiliary verb sporadically occurs in the late 17th century and becomes more dominant than *doth* either in the early 18th century or the late 18th century, because the period when *does* establishes its dominance is different from usage to usage. On the other hand, when functioning as an ordinary verb, *doth* is exclusively used from the early 16th century until the late 17th century. *Does* functioning as an ordinary verb occurs in the early 18th century and *doth* is replaced by *does* by the end of the 18th century. Apart from *do*-support, the number of occurrences of *doth* in the usages of *do*-periphrasis and pro-verb begins to take a sharp drop right after the early 17th century. On the contrary, the number of occurrences of *does* begins to increase to 72 times in the early 18th century and reaches 217 times in the late 18th century.

Hath is more dominant from the early 16th century until the early 17th century when functioning not only as an auxiliary but as an ordinary verb. The number of occurrence of *has* as an auxiliary verb begins to increase in the early 17th century and it exceeds that of *hath* in the early 18th century and *has* establishes the dominance in the late 18th century. Similarly, the number of occurrence of *has* as ordinary verb begins to increase in the late 17th century and *has* establishes the dominance in the late 18th century.

In section 3, *doth* and *does*, and *hath* and *has* in drama excluding Shakespeare is dealt with. The number of occurrences of *doth* in the usages of *do*-periphrasis and pro-verb is large from the late 16th century until the early 17th century or the late 17th century and it begins to take a sharp drop

after that. *Doth* is mostly more dominant than *does* from the late 16th century until the early 18th century. *Does* establishes the dominance in the late 18th century but the number of its occurrences is small as follows: 2 times in *do*-periphrasis, 28 times in pro-verb and 11 times in ordinary verb respectively. The number of occurrences of *doth* when used in the usage of *do*-support also declines and *does* establishes the dominance in the early 18th century. The number of occurrences of *does* in the early 18th century and the late 18th century is not small compared with that in other three usages as follows: 42 times and 73 times respectively.

Hath is more dominant from the late 16th century until the early 17th century when functioning not only as an auxiliary but as an ordinary verb. The number of occurrences of *has* begins to increase in the early 17th century and *has* establishes the dominance in the late 18th century both in an auxiliary verb and an ordinary verb.

In Chapter 5, the historical development of the conjunctive word-groups which introduce the adverbial clauses of time when they are used to express two events or actions that take place one after the other. Prose texts from the late 15th century until the early 19th century are used as a corpora. The usage of conjunctive word-groups, the competition between *as soon as* and *so soon as*, the competition between *no sooner... but* and *no sooner...than*, the co-occurrence of each conjunctive word-group with the tenses of the verbs in the main and the subordinate clauses, variants of conjunctive word-groups, the inverted word order that occurs when either *no sooner* or *scarcely* or *hardly* is placed at the beginning of the clause or sentence, *as soon as*, *as fast as* etc. functioning as an adverbial phrase to express the same degree between two people or two things, and *as soon as one can*, *as fast as possible*, etc. which functions as an intensifier when modifying a verb are discussed.

The following conjunctive word-groups occur in each half century: *anone as*, *as sone as* in the late 15th century; *as soon as*, *as soon as ever*, *anon as*, *no sooner...but*, *scarce...than* in the early 16th century; *as soon as*, *as soon as ever*, *so soon as*, *as fast as*, *no sooner...but*, *no sooner...but that*, *no sooner...than*, *scarce...before*, *scarce...but*, *scarce...but that*, *scarce...ere*, *scarce...when*, *scarcely...before*, *scarcely...but that*, *scarcely...when* in the late 16th century; *as soon as*, *as soon as ever*, *so soon as*, *no sooner...but*,

no sooner...than, scarce...that in the early 17th century; *as soon as, so soon as, as fast as, no sooner...but, no sooner...than, no sooner...when, scarce...when, scarce...before, scarce...but, scarcely...when, scarcely...before, hardly...when, hardly...e're* in the late 17th century; *as soon as, as fast as, no sooner...but, no sooner...than, scarce...when, scarce...before, scarce...but, hardly...when, hardly...before, the moment, the instant* in the early 18th century; *as soon as, so soon as, as fast as, soon as, no sooner...but, no sooner...than, scarce...when, scarce...before, scarcely...when, scarcely...before, scarcely...ere, scarcely...than, hardly...when, the moment, the moment that, the instant, the instant that, the minute* in the late 18th century; *as soon as, so soon as, as fast as, soon as, no sooner...than, scarce...when, scarce...before, scarcely...when, scarcely...before, scarcely...ere, scarcely...than, hardly...when, hardly...before, barely...when, the moment, the instant, the minute, directly* in the early 19th century.

The competition between *as soon as* and *so soon as* starts in the late 16th century (109 times vs. 31 times) and ends in the early 19th century (170 times vs. 8 times). On the other hand, the competition between *no sooner...but* and *no sooner...than* starts in the late 17th century (62 times vs. 19 times) and ends in the late 18th century (3 times vs. 136 times).

As for the co-occurrence of each conjunctive word-group with the tenses of the verbs in the main and the subordinate clauses, the combination of the tenses which very frequently occurs are as follows: the simple past tense in the subordinate clause + the simple past tense in the main clause or the past perfect aspect in the subordinate clause + the simple past tense in the main clause.

The variants of conjunctive word-groups are as follows: *as soon as ever, no sooner...but that, scarce...but that, scarcely...but that, the moment that, the instant that, no sooner...e're, almost as soon as, so soon as ever, immediately as soon as, almost as fast as, as soon then as, as soon too as*, etc.

The examples of the inverted word order which occur very frequently in the *no sooner* group, the *scarce* group, the *scarcely* group and the *hardly* group are as follows: *no sooner...but* (12 out of 33) in the early 17th century, *scarce...when* (3 out of 6) in the late 17th century, *no sooner...but* (9 out

of 35) in the early 18th century, *no sooner...than* (50 out of 136) and *scarcely...when* (7 out of 26) in the late 18th century, *no sooner...than* (22 out of 41), *scarcely...before* (3 out of 6) and *hardly...when* (3 out of 8) in the early 19th century.

The examples of *as soon as* or *as fast as* functioning as an adverbial phrase which express the same degree occur in the late 16th century, in the late 17th century, in the early 18th century, in the late 18th century and in the early 19th century.

The examples of *as soon as one can*, *as fast as possible*, etc functioning as intensifiers occur in the late 16th century, in the late 17th century, in the early 18th century, in the late 18th century and in the early 19th century.

In Chapter 6, what kinds of the conjunctive word-groups are used in Shakespeare's drama and drama excluding Shakespeare from the late 16th century until the early 19th century is discussed. Shakespeare employs the following six kinds of conjunctive word-groups: *as soon as*, *so soon as*, *so soon as ever*, *as fast as*, *no sooner...than* and *no sooner...but*. They occur in *TGV*, *WIV*, *AYL*, *TN*, *TRO*, *2H6*, *1H4*, *R3*, *H5*, *TIT*, *ROM*, *JC*, *HAM*, *MAC*, *COR*, *TIM*, *CYM*, *WT* and *TMP*. On the other hand, the following twelve kinds of conjunctive word-groups are used in drama excluding Shakespeare: *as soon as*, *as soon as ever*, *so soon as*, *as fast as*, *no sooner...but*, *no sooner...than*, *scarce...but*, *scarce...when*, *scarcely...but*, *scarcely when*, *the moment* and *the instant*.

In Chapter 7, "*directly*" functioning as a conjunctive word which often occurs in the mid-19th century prose works. It is used in Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray and Matthew Arnold's works. It is often used in the informal style.

The replacement of the *-(e)th* ending by the *-(e)s* ending in the indicative third-person present tense is achieved by the end of the 18th century. Furthermore, the replacement of *doth* by *does* and that of *hath* by *has* is achieved by the end of the 18th century. The conjunctive word-groups which are employed in the Present-day English occur by the end of the 18th century. Therefore, the hypothesis that is proposed at the beginning is confirmed as the result of the discussion of each chapter.