
Dynamics of focusing particularizers in English: just the interplay of internal and external factors?

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Late emergence of particularizers in English (XV-XVII cen.) (Nevalainen 1991; Traugott 2006) and their dominant representation by Latin lexemes that entered the language through French (Cougil Alvares 2003; Andrushenko 2022) have triggered the thought about the means of conveying this function at the earlier stages of the language and why this specific shift occurs only in Late Middle English (ME). Where is the interplay of intra- and extralinguistic (the unquestionable abundance of French borrowings) factors in this process? These considerations have initially arisen while investigating a prototypical ME particularizer *just* (OF *juste* < Lat. *iustus*) functioning as a focusing adverb. Meanwhile, the study of Old English (OE) shows that its sense can be rendered through numerous OE forms (*efne*, *ane*, *efne þa* (*ða*), *efne her*, *swa swa* and *efne swa*) ranging from 9.36.% to 29.69% of their general usage in texts. Yet, Early ME records demonstrate either the abrupt drop (*efne*) or fading (*ane*) of the particularizer function among the highlighted lexemes making room for a new lexical unit *just* to be introduced in the language. The second issue to speculate on, why Lat. *iustus* failed to emerge at much earlier stages of English, since the word is found in 331 Latin sentences translated into OE. Or why is it not the case for another Latin adverb *tantum* “just” finding feet in 123 sentences and their OE translations? Another aspect to consider among internal factors and specific timeframes is how the rigidity of word-order and its correlation with sentence information structure might have affected the introduction of the unified prototypical particularizer in Late ME.

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