

Was Old English a V2 language?

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English Data Sources

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- Ann Taylor, Anthony Warner, Susan Pintzuk, and Frank Beths. *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose*. Oxford Text Archive, first edition, 2003.
- Anthony Kroch, Beatrice Santorini, and Lauren Delfs. *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English*. CD-ROM, first edition, 2004.
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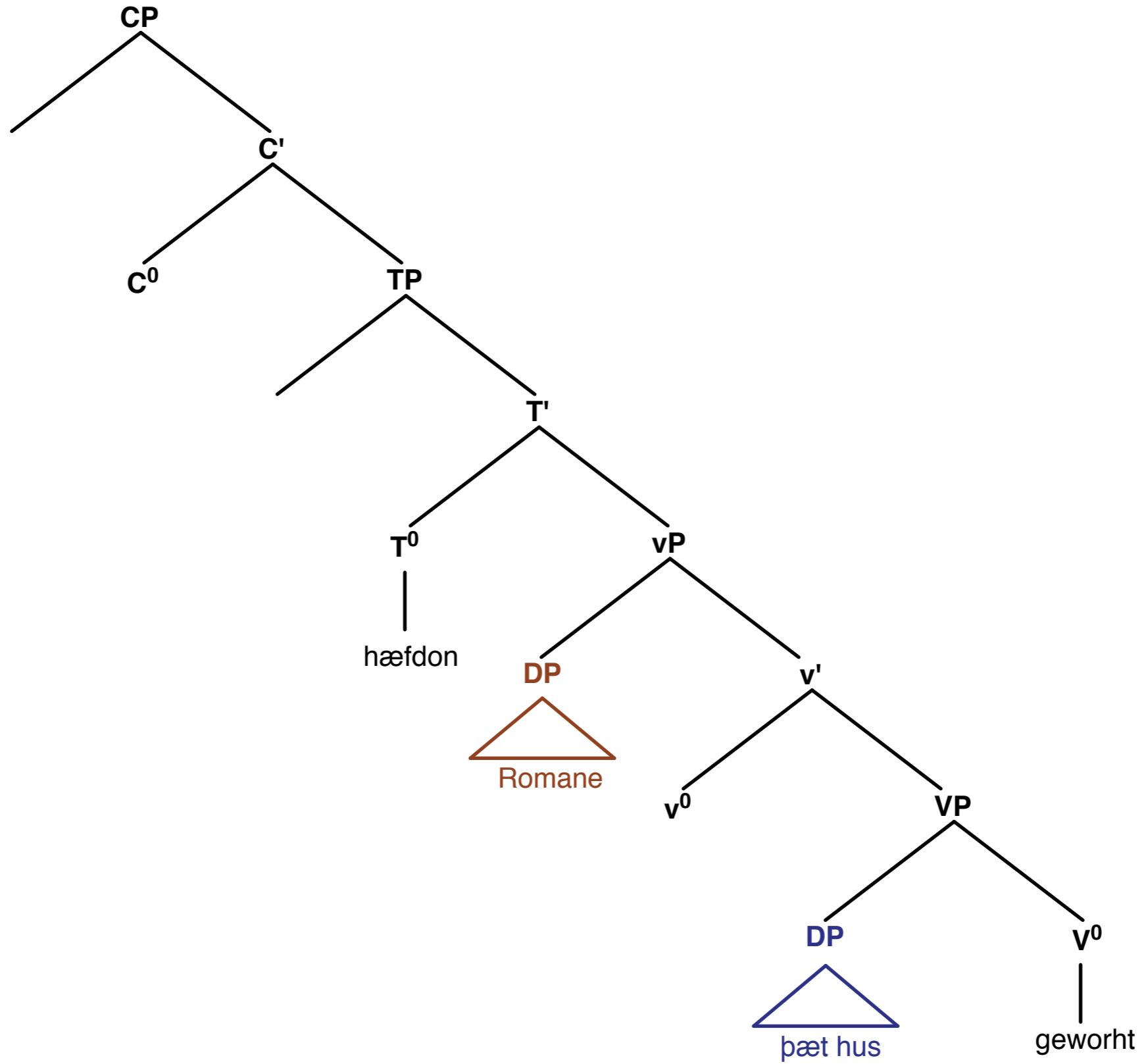
The V2 constraint in Old English: the pronoun exception

- (1) **Þæt** **hus** **hæfdon** **Romane** to ðæm anum tacne geworht.
- (2) **Ælc** **yfel** **he** **mæg** don.
- (3) **Þin** **agen** **geleafa** **þe** **hæfþ** gehæledne.
- (4) **&** **seofon** **ærendracan** **he** **him** **hæfde** to asend.

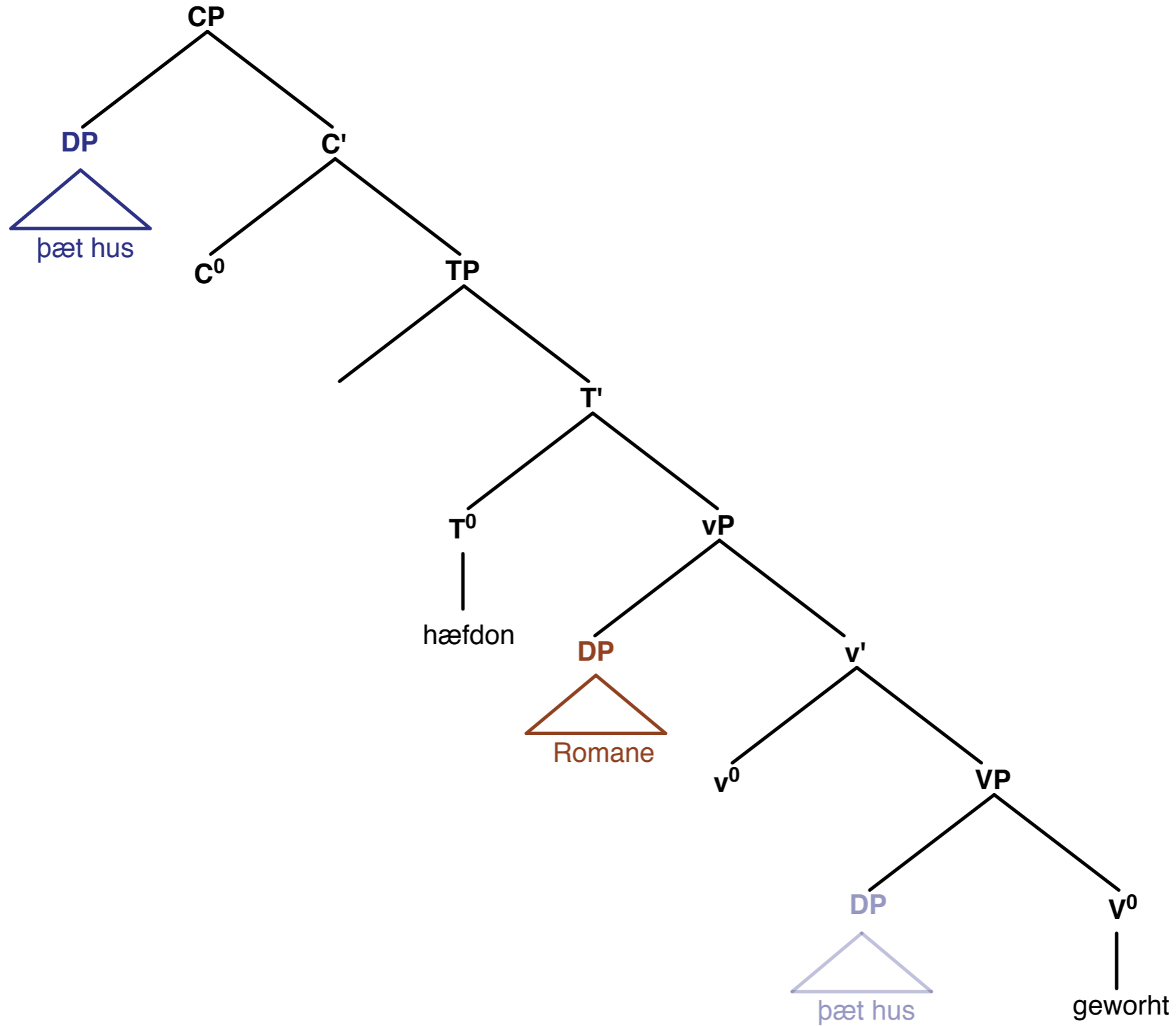
The V2 constraint in Old English: the exception to the exception exception

- (5) **Hwi** sceole **we** opres mannes niman?
- (6) **Pa** ge-mette **he** sceaðan.
- (7) **Ne** mihton **hi** næ nigne fultum æt him begitan.
- (8) **Hæfdon** **hi** hiora onfangen ær Hæsten to Beamfleote
come.

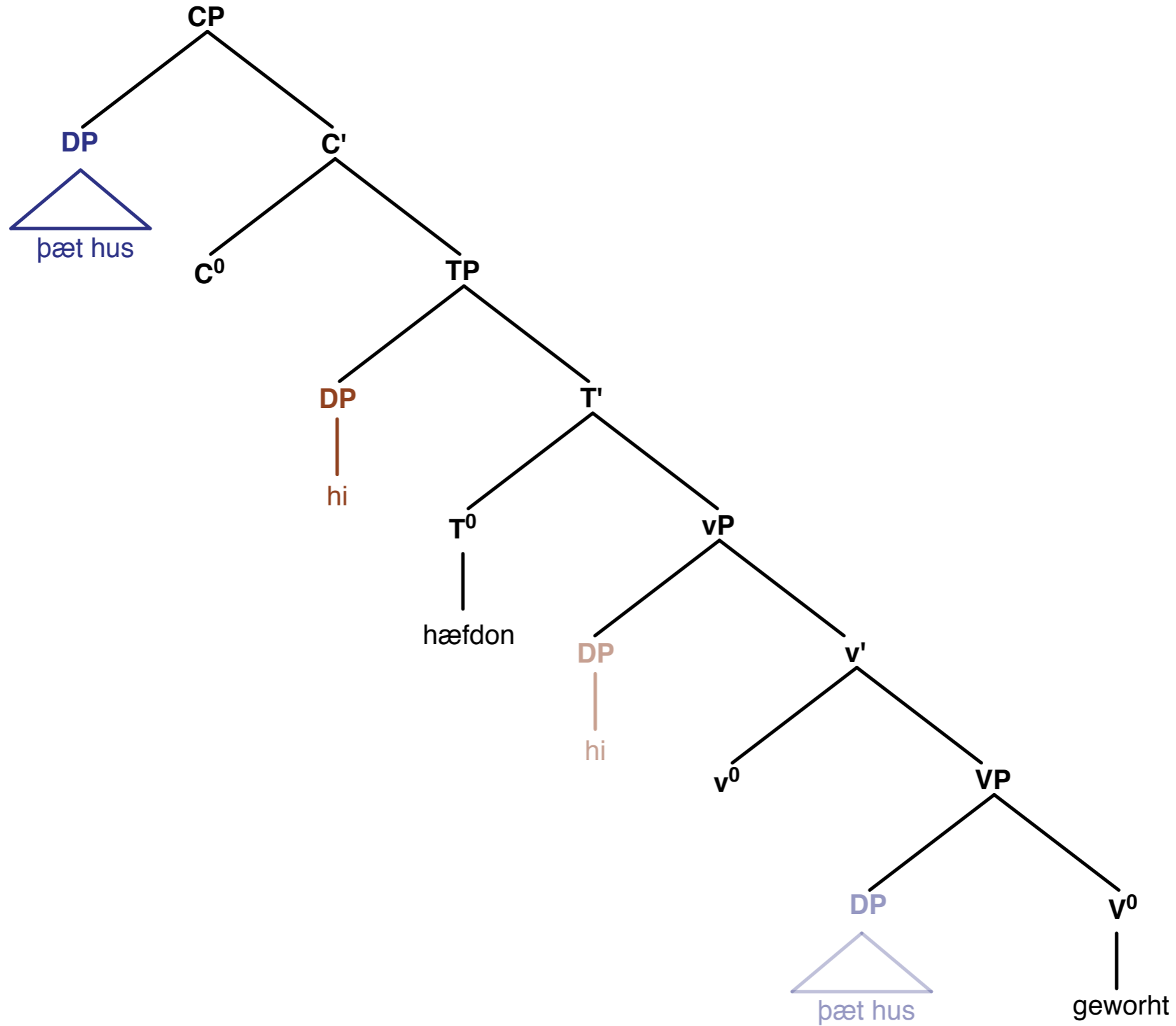
Phrase structure of an English V2 clause according to Kroch and Taylor 1997



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Low subjects in Old English

(9) ac mycel gepolode ðurh his mildheortnes se Crist
for ure þearfe.

(10) in þa tid wæs in Mercna mægðe Wulfhere cyning.

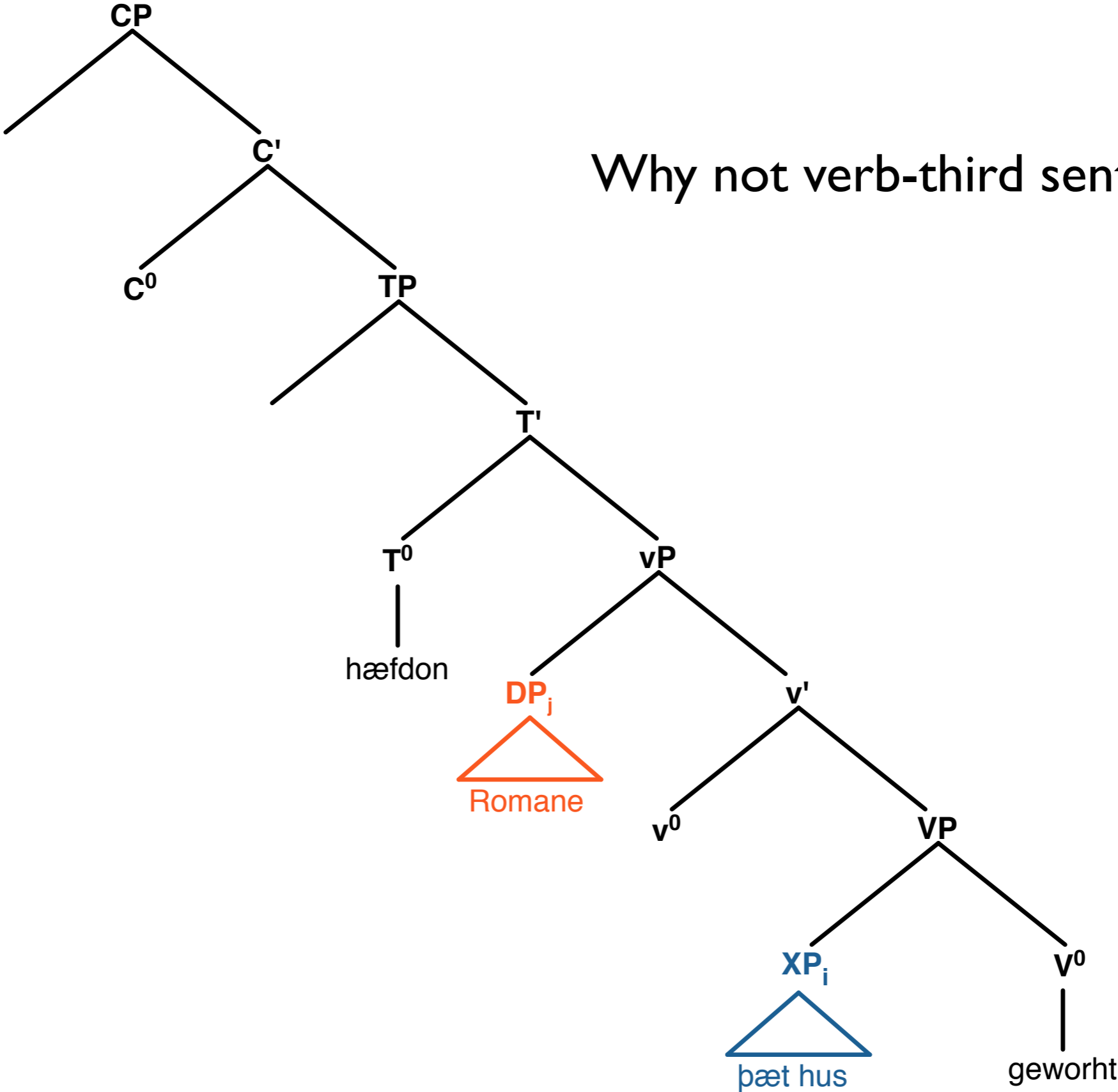
German subject positions (Haeberli 1999, 2002)

- (11) Dieses Haus wird später Hans für die Familie kaufen.
- (12) Dieses Haus wird er später für die Familie kaufen.
- (13) *Dieses Haus wird später er für die Familie kaufen.

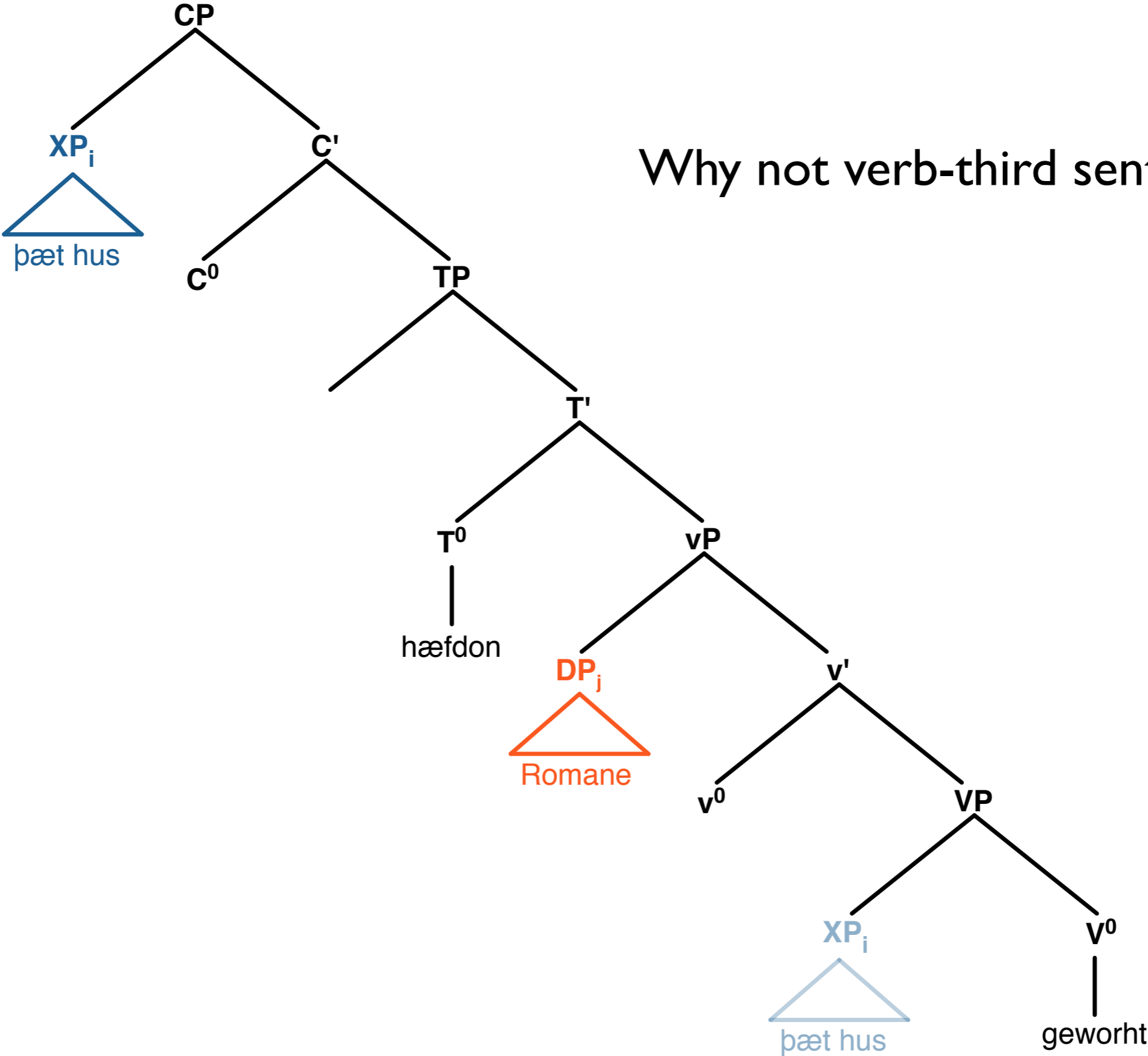
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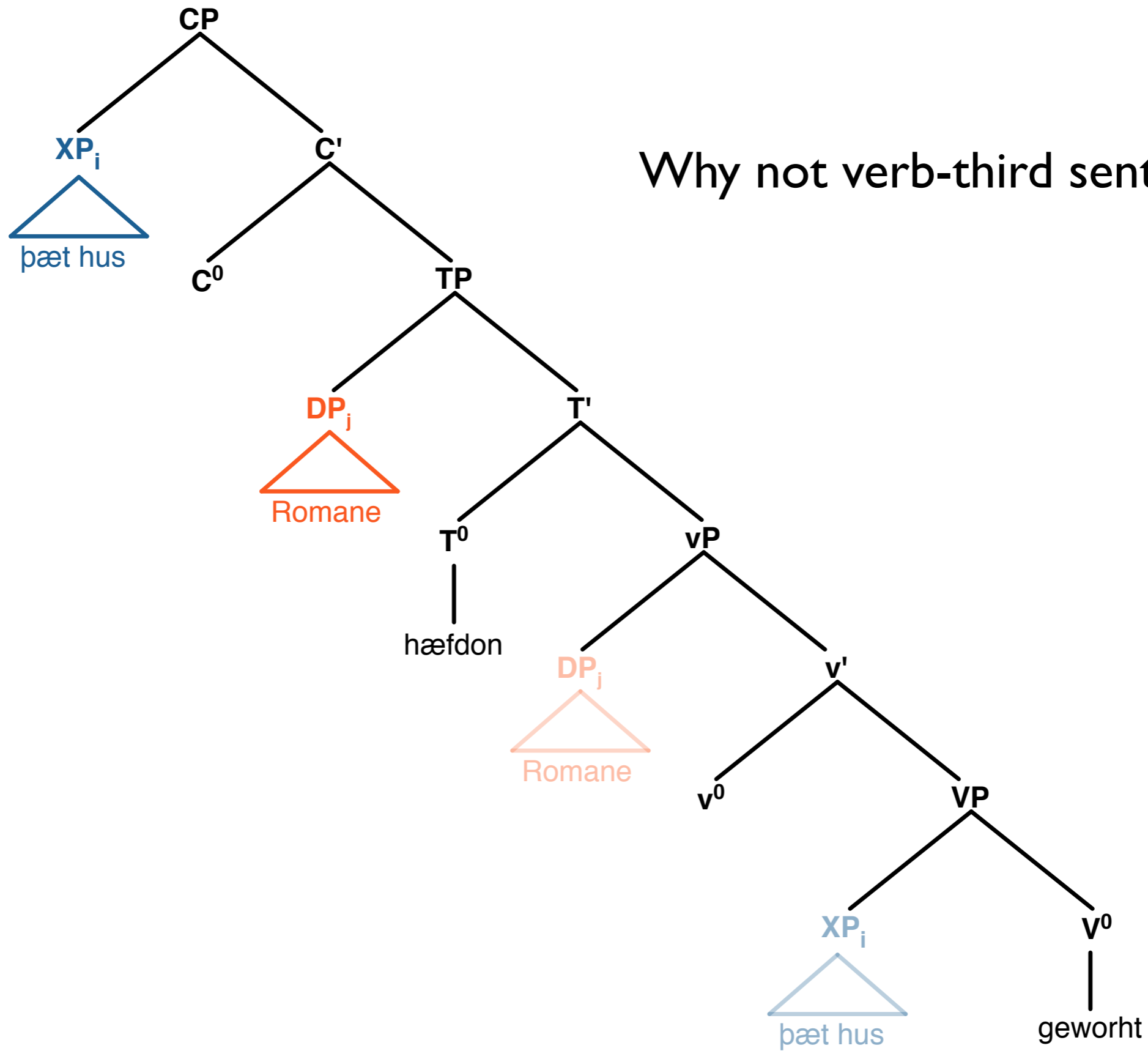
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- (14) Dieses Haus wird Hans später für die Familie kaufen.

Why not verb-third sentences?



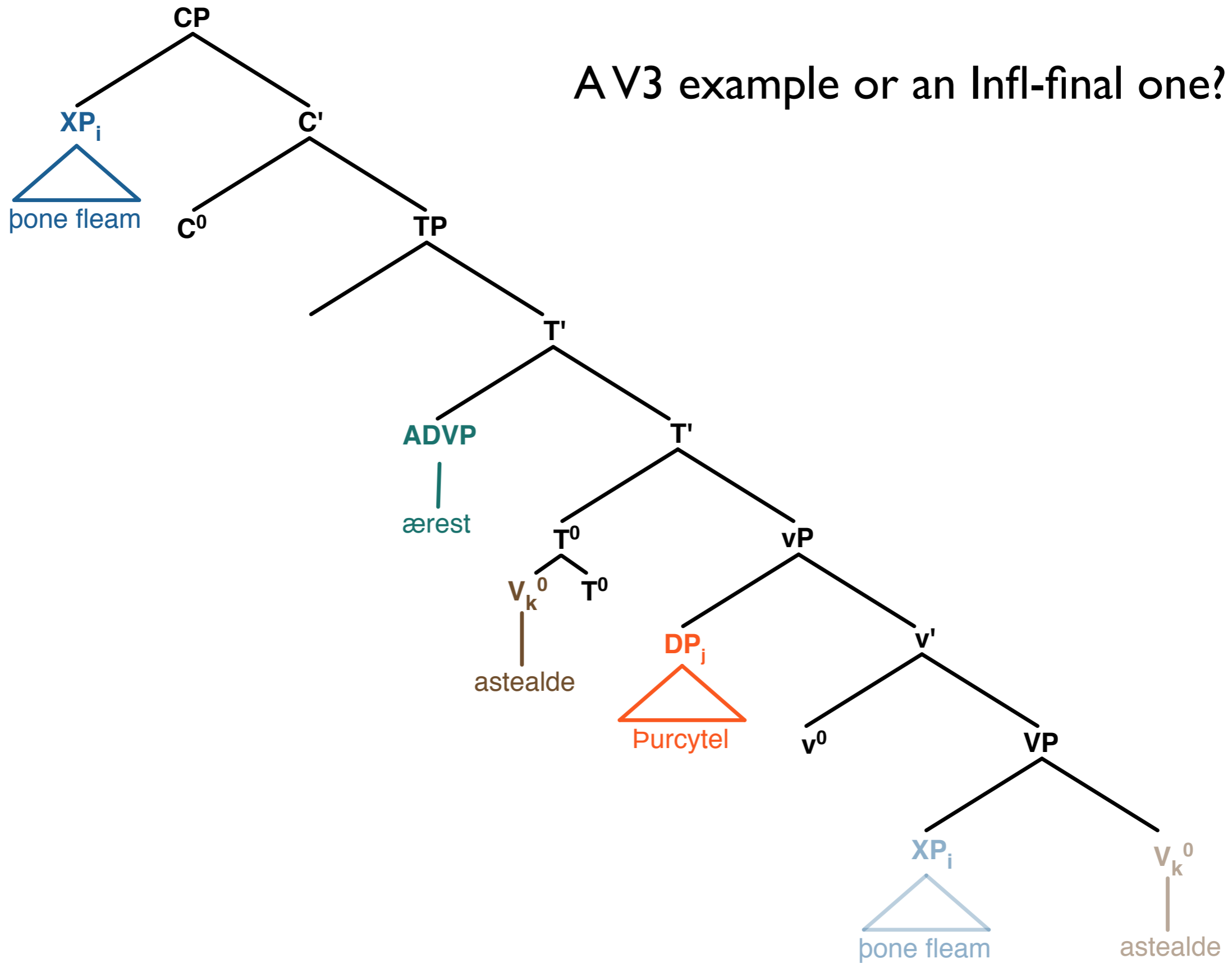
Why not verb-third sentences?



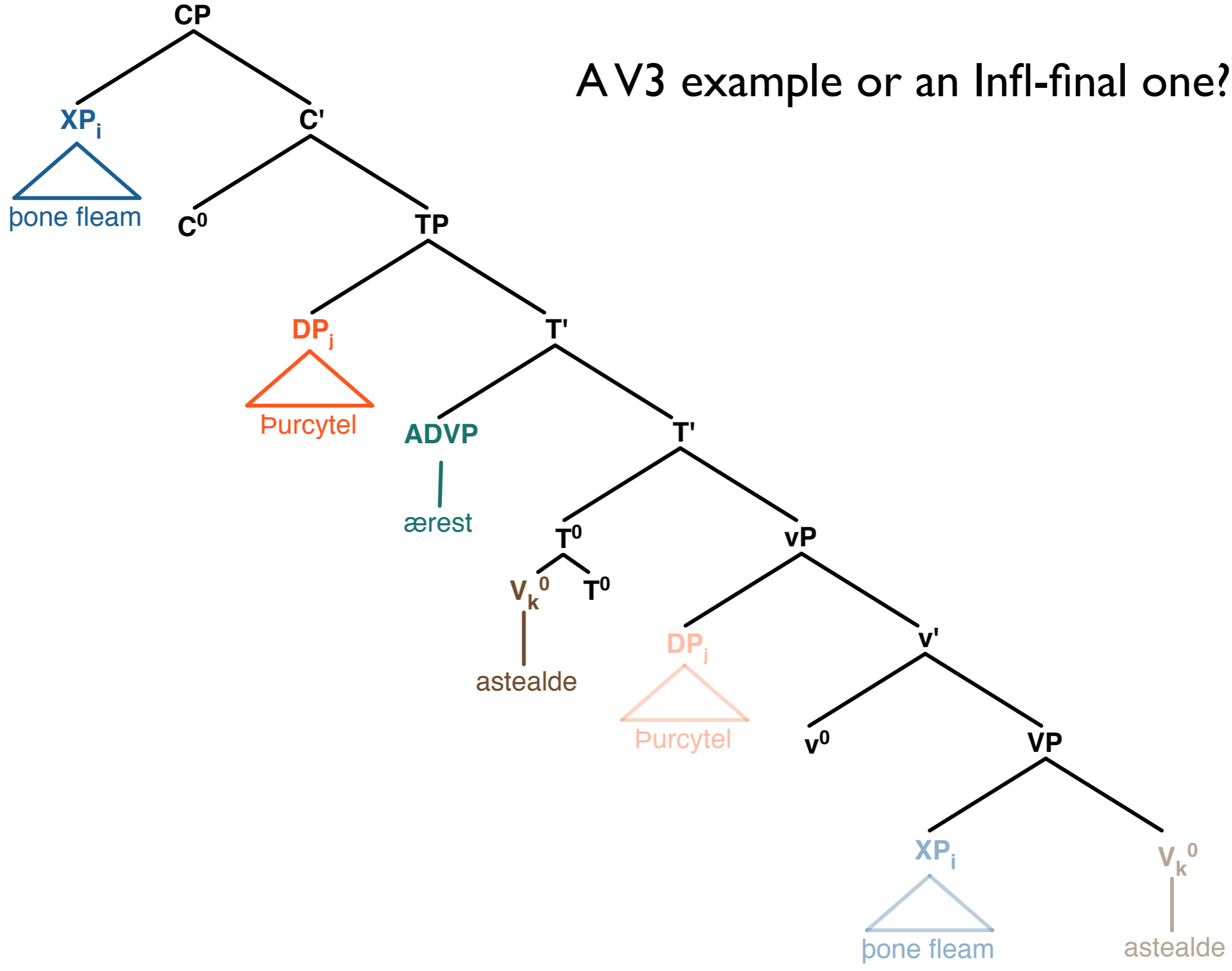


Why not verb-third sentences?

A V3 example or an Infl-final one?



A V3 example or an Infl-final one?



Unambiguous V3 clauses with topicalized objects

- (1) þæne se geatweard let **in**
that-one the doorkeeper let in
(cowsgosp, Jn_[VSCp]:10.3.6596)
- (2) and him se innop eac geopenode **ongean**
and him the heart also opened again
(coælive, +ALS_[Vincent]:170.7907)

Frequency of unambiguous V3 clauses against all particle verb cases

	full DP subjects	pronoun subjects
V2 cases	74	6
V3 cases	20	45
frequency V3	0.21	0.88

V3 clauses with topicalized objects ambiguous due to West Germanic verb raising

(I) ac þone yfelan fæstrædan willan folneah nan wind ne mæg
but the evil constant will almost no storm not may

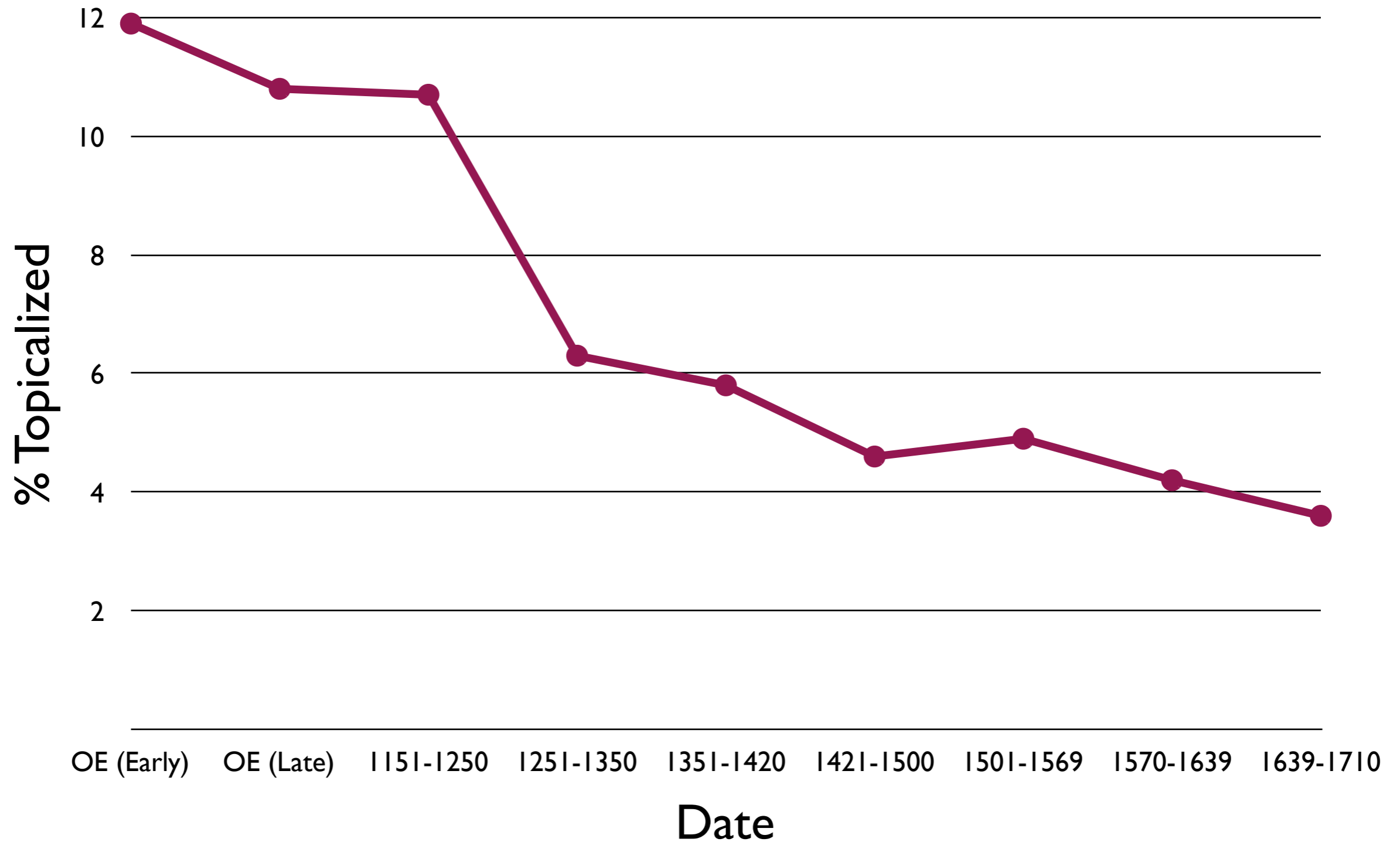
awecggean
awaken

(cocuraC,CP_[Cotton]:33.224.4.85f.)

Expected versus observed number of V3 clauses with topicalized objects given verb raising

number SOVI main clauses with full noun phrase subjects	20
ratio of SOVI to SOIV in unambiguous verb-raising environments	0.7
rate of object topicalization in verb-final clauses	0.2
predicted number of OSIV cases due to verb-raising with topicalization	2.8
actual number of OSIV cases	22

Decline of direct object topicalization in English

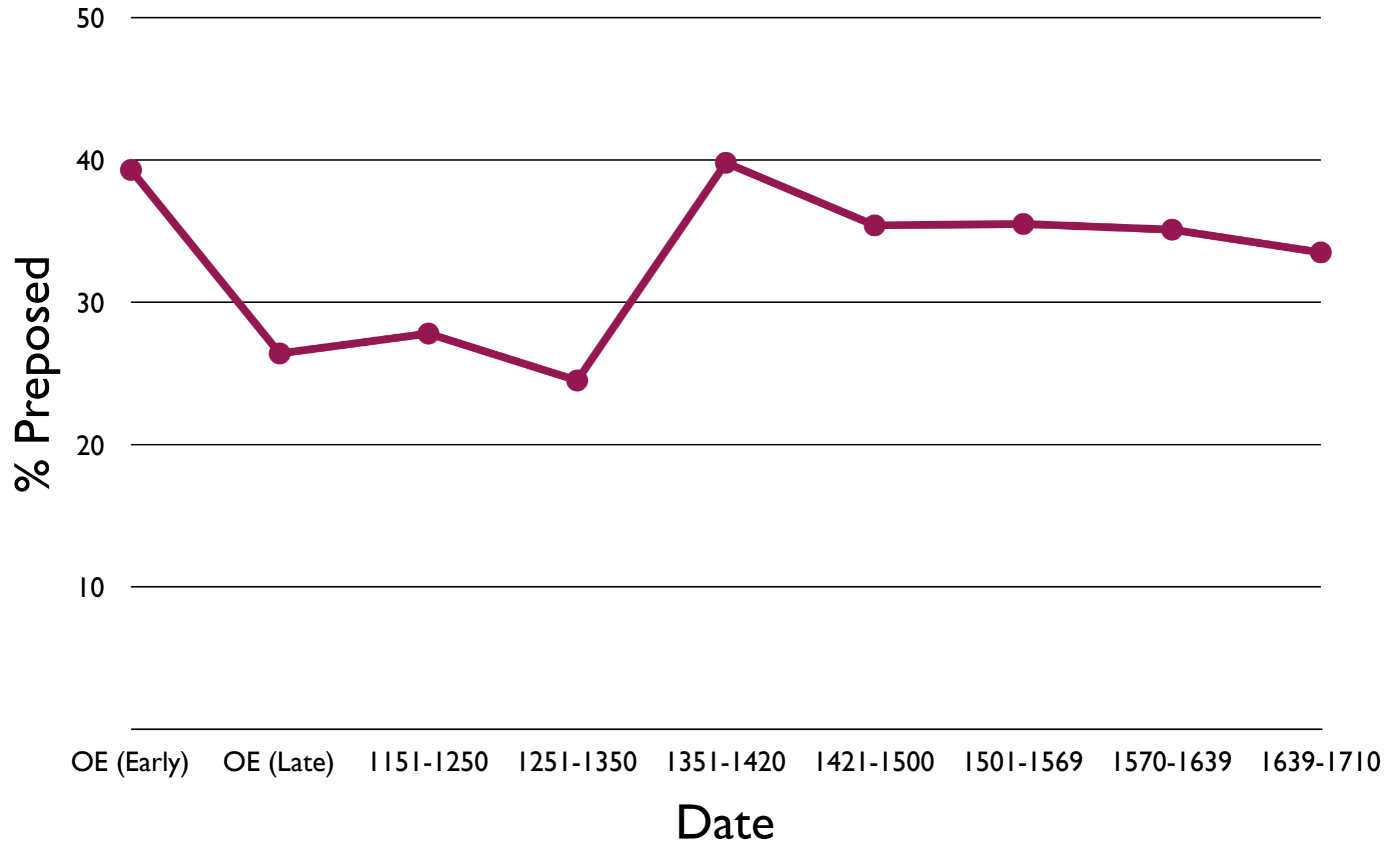


Frequency of direct object topicalization in modern spoken Dutch (Bouma 2008)

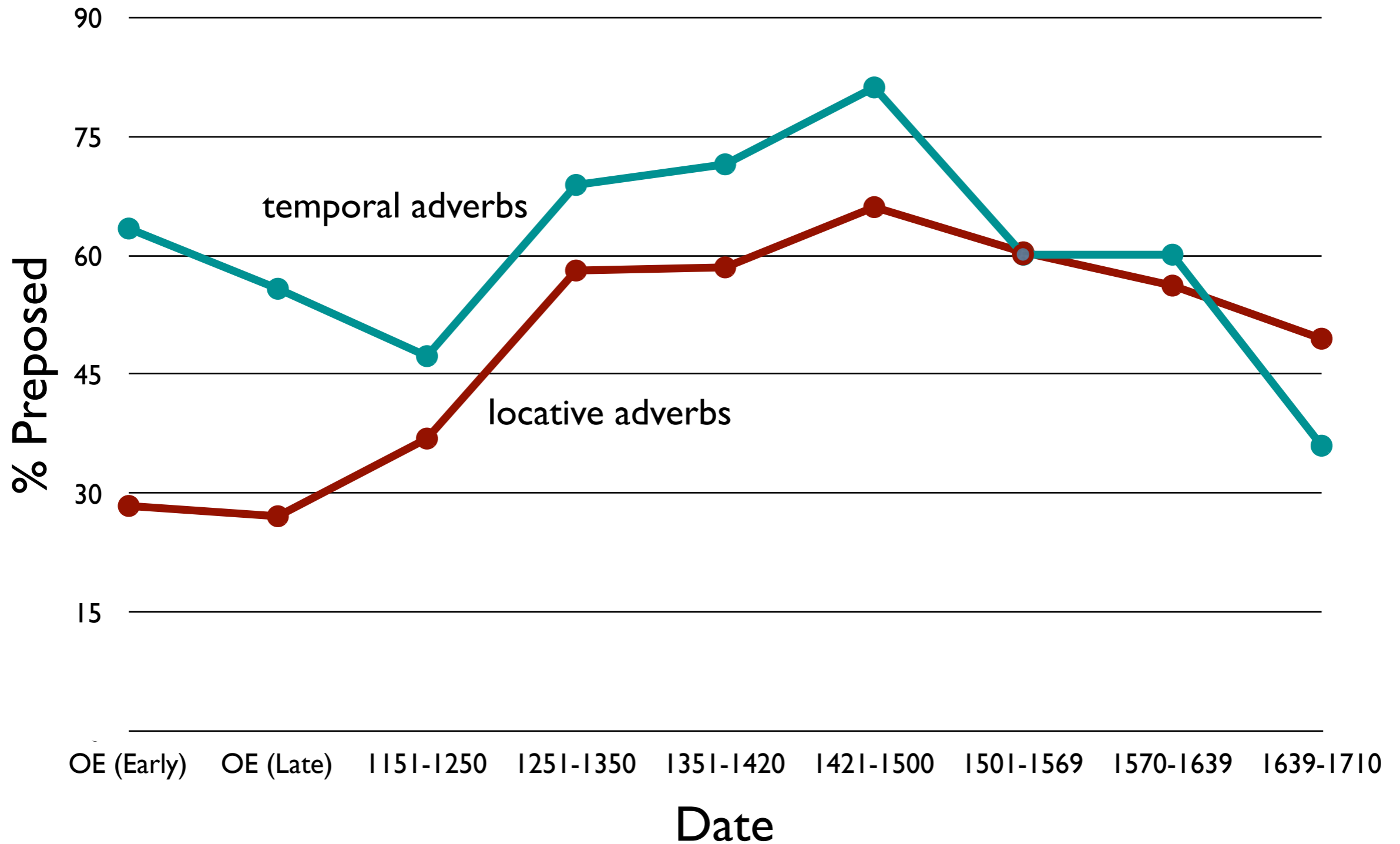
Table 4.2: Summary of Vorfeld occupation of arguments.

Argument	Vorfeld		Prop est (%)
	yes	no	pt
subject	43 523	18 597	70.1
direct object	3 418	20 432	14.3
indirect object	38	815	4.5

Evolution of PP preposing in English



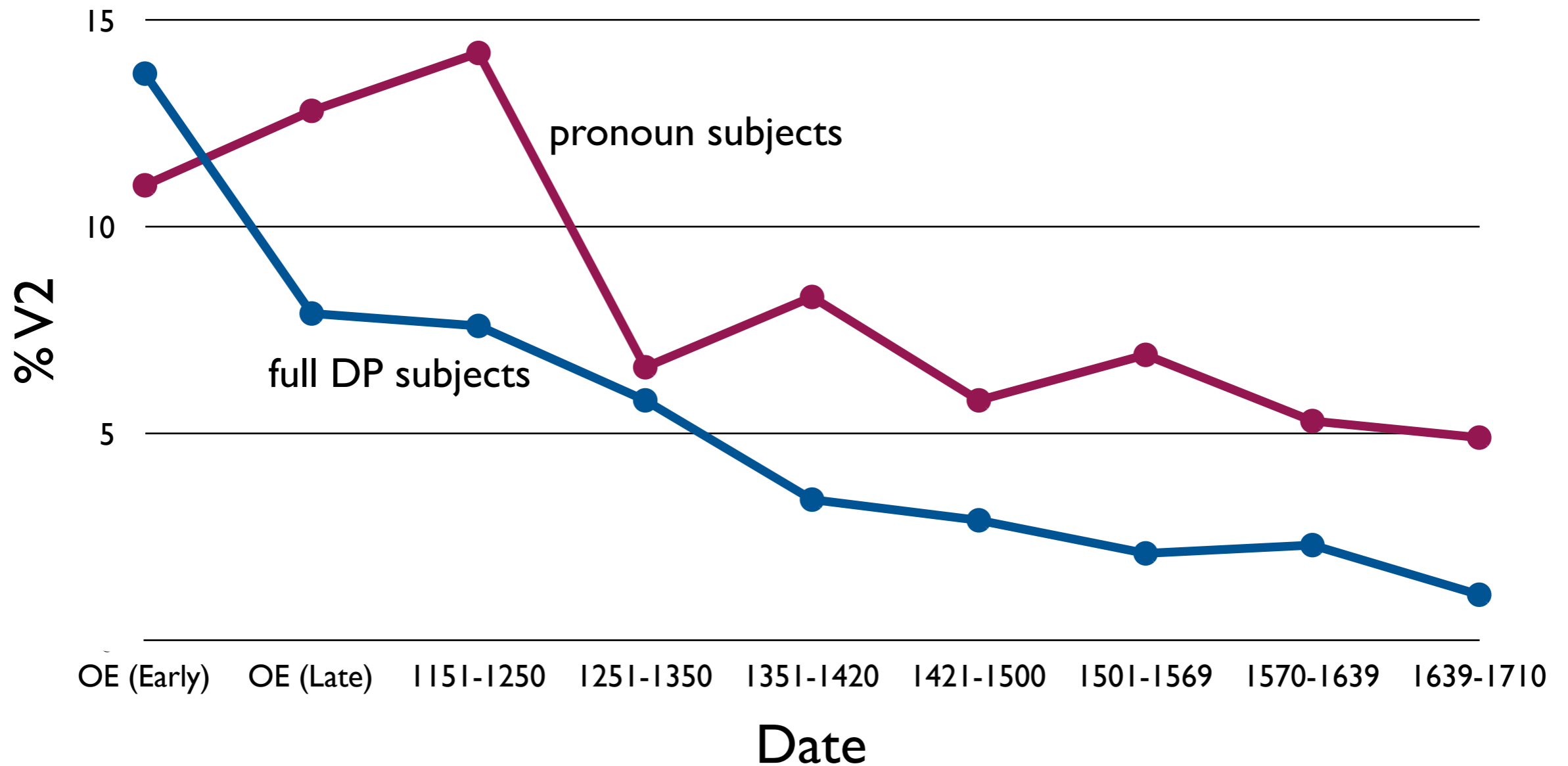
Evolution of adverb fronting in English



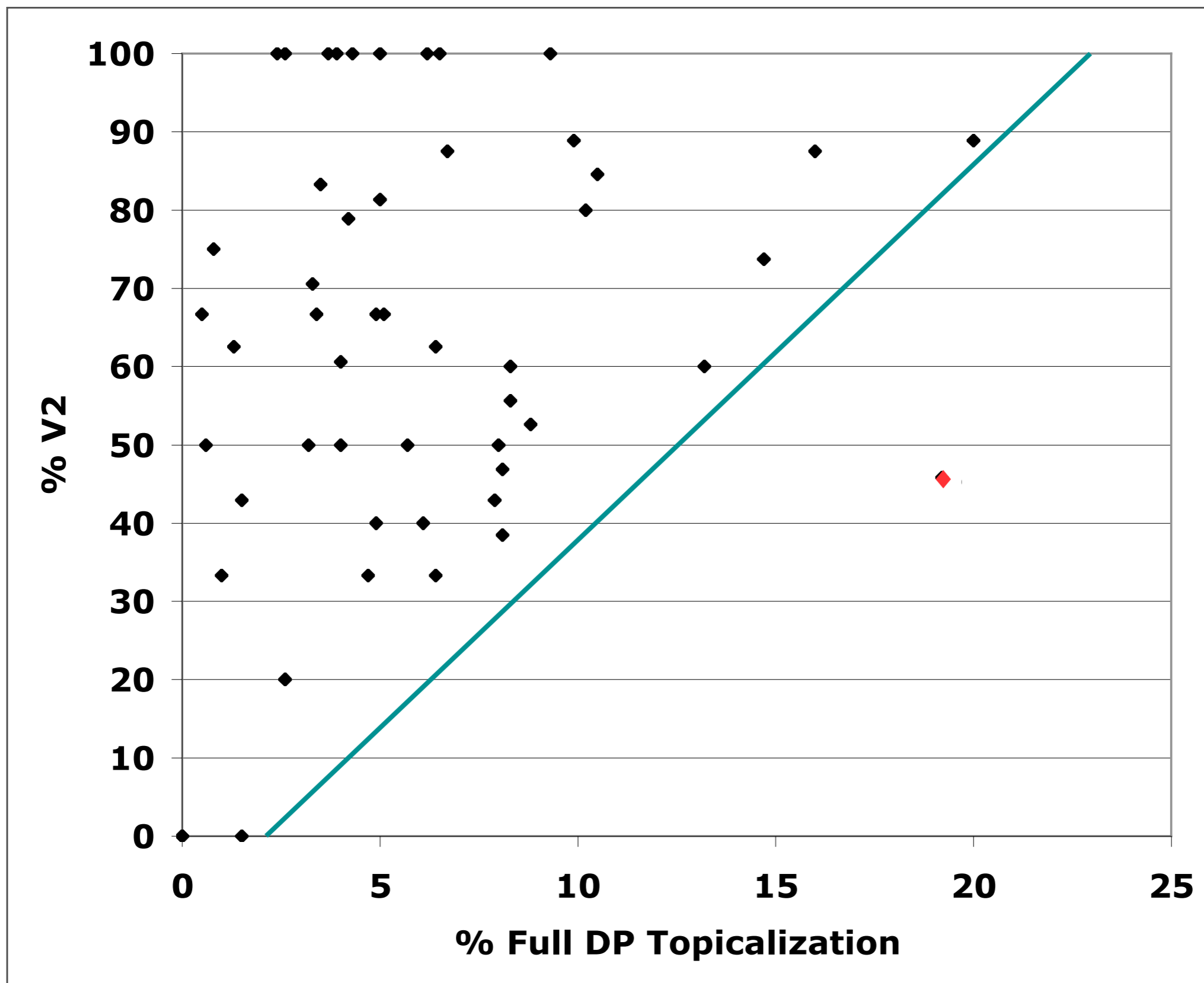
The history of topicalization in English (Speyer 2008)

- Why does topicalization decline in Middle English but not disappear? If the change a parametric one, it should go to completion. Otherwise, topicalization, a clear case of stylistic variation might be expected to be stable in frequency over time.
- This question has answer in the specific interaction between parametric settings and stylistic variation in the history of English.

Decline of direct object topicalization by subject type



Correlation between frequencies of object topicalization and of V2 in Middle English texts (Wallenberg 2007)



Distribution of subject types in a corpus of topicalized and non-topicalized sentences in natural speech

personal pronoun	demonstrative pronoun	full noun phrase
140	20	142
46.4	6.6	47.0

Subject type in sentences with *in situ* objects

personal pronoun	demonstrative pronoun	full noun phrase
181	2	17
90.5%	1%	8.5 %

Subject type in sentences with topicalized objects

Clash avoidance

- The type of topicalization that declines:
 - (1) The **nèwspaper** **Jóhn** read; the **nòvel** **Máry** did.
(Compare: The **nèwspaper** read **Jóhn**.)
- The type of topicalization that doesn't:
 - (2) The **nèwspaper** I **réad**; the **nòvel** I **dídn't**.

Translating German topicalized arguments into English in three modern German novels [by Böll, Dürrenmatt and Grass]

Topicalized to topicalized:

G: **Mahlkes Haupt** bedeckte dieser Hut **besonders peinlich**.

E: **On Mahlke's head** this hat made a **particularly painful impression**.

Topicalized to non-topicalized:

G: **Zu den sechs** kamen noch **drei weitere**.

E: **Three others** joined **these six** in the afternoon.

Accent placement and topicalization frequencies in translating German topicalized arguments into English

	2nd accent on the German subject	accent elsewhere
topicalization in the English translation	0	31
no topicalization in the English	25	100

Finis