From possibility to preference

The history of Danish *gide* 'be able to, feel like'

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Outline

1. Background on *gide*

2. Corpus and analytical categories

3. Discussion of findings

4. Conclusions

1. Background on *gide*

Present-day Danish *gide*

- Present-day Danish *gide* [ˈkiːɤ] + INF expresses the preference or inclination of the subject referent ('feel like', 'bother to'):

(1)   *Jeg   **gider**   ikke   læse   lingvistik   i_dag.*
       I   GIDE.PRS   not   read.INF linguistics today
       'I don't feel like studying linguistics today.' (Brandt 1999: 48)

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(2) *Egentlig   er   det   da   også   beundringsværdigt, at   nogen*
     in_fact   is   it   after_all also   admirable   COMP someone

     gider   *prøve   at   skabe   lidt   harmoni   i   verden*
     GIDE.PRS   try.INF to   create.INF a_little harmony   in   world.DEF

     'In fact it is also quite admirable that someone bothers to try to create a little harmony in the world.' (KorpusDK 1991)

Meaning of *gide*

- The meaning of *gide* has been described in different ways.

- As modal:
  - Brandt (1999): "inclination", a subtype of dynamic modality
  - Boye (2002): "agonist-internal force" modality
  - Westergaard (2020): "volitive" modality

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- As non-modal:
  - van der Auwera et al. (2009: 288): "non-modal – and postmodal – participant-internal" meaning
  - Vikner & Thráinsson (1995: 54): excluded on semantic grounds
  - Hansen & Heltoft (2011: 765, 780, 1426–27): auxiliary, but not a modal

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- Of course dependent on definition of 'modality'
  - Compare e.g. van der Auwera & Plungian (1998) and Narrog (2012)

gide 'feel like' ≠ *ville* 'want to'

- Note that the meaning of *gide* is distinct from that of *ville* 'want to':

(3)   *Jeg* **ville**   *gerne være præst, men jeg* **gad**   *ikke*
      I   want.PST   gladly be.INF pastor but   I   GIDE.PST   not

      tage   den   uddannelse.
      take.INF that   education

      'I would like to become a pastor, but I couldn't be bothered to take that education [i.e. theology].' (BT.dk, article from 2002)

History of *gide*

- Earliest (inferred) meaning 'get'
  - Found in Old Icelandic cognate *geta* (ONP, s.v. [2]*geta* vb.)
  - Preserved in English loanword *get* (OED, s.v. *get* v.)

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- Middle Danish sources: *getæ/gitæ* + PTCP 'be able to':

(4)   *Thæt dugh(ær) oc   thæm th(ær) æi **gitæ**   souæt*
      that   benefits   also   them   REL   not   GIDE.PRS.PL sleep.PTCP
      'This [i.e. poppy seeds] also benefits people who cannot sleep.'
      (tekstnet.dk, HarpS. 39ᵛ, c. 1300)

Gide as an acquisitive modal

- According to van der Auwera et al. (2009), *gide* changed from 'get' to participant-internal possibility ('be able to') to inclination ('feel like')

  - "the extant literature […] strongly suggests that its early possibility use was participant-internal. Here then it was a 'get' verb that never developed a participant-external possibility sense and later even dropped the participant-internal possibility sense, leaving only the non-modal – and postmodal – participant-internal sense" (van der Auwera et al. 2009: 288)
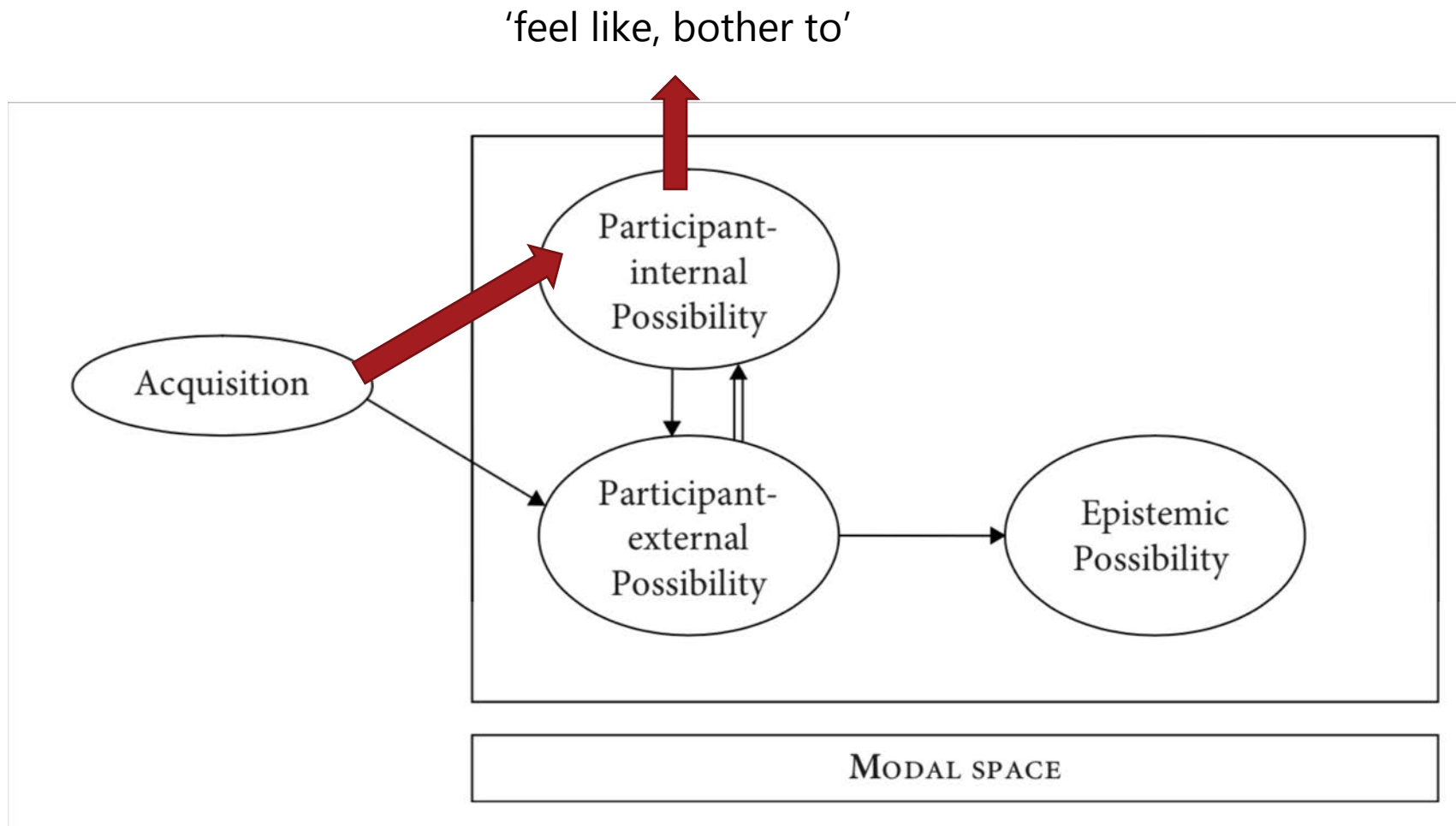
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- However, this is more a hypothesis than a conclusion, and as the authors note, "we need detailed historical work to answer the question about the direction of the development" (ibid.)

- Main question: **How did the present-day meaning of *gide* develop out of its earlier possibility meaning?**

Development of *gide* (initial hypothesis)

'feel like, bother to'

Based on Map 10 in van der Auwera et al. (2009: 293)

2. Corpus and analytical categories

Corpus and analysis

- Custom-made corpus from different sources, covering c. 1300–2000.
  - Major sources tekstnet.dk (c. 1300–1515), renæssancesprog.dk (c. 1515–1700), *Archive of Danish Literature* (ADL, c. 1700–), KorpusDK (c. 2000)
- Searched for possible spelling variants of *gide* and exported results to spreadsheets.

Corpus and analysis

- Caveat: *gide* is not a high-frequency item, so relatively few examples analyzed per period.
    - But enough to identify possible bridging contexts in the relevant period.

Time period	Years	Wordcount (appr.)	Examples
Early Middle Danish	c. 1300–1400	100,000	32
Late Middle Danish	c. 1400–1525	355,000	66
Early Modern Danish	c. 1525–1700	500,000 (+ Bible, 900,000 w.)	69
Late Modern Danish	c. 1700–1850	689,000	59
Recent Danish	c. 1850–2000	732,000 (+ KorpusDK)	56
			282

Annotation

- Annotated for various features, including clause type, tense, subject, negation, form and meaning of complement, meaning of *gide*, etc.

- Most important here:

  - MEANING OF *GIDE:* possibility (internal/external), preference, or ambiguous

  - FORM OF COMPLEMENT: infinitive, participle, or other (e.g. elliptical)

3	, strakte sig, med Skove og Marker, længer, end hun kunde øine. Der var saa meget hun	gad vide, men Søstrene vidste ikke at give Svar paa Alt, derfor spurgte hun den gamle Bedstemoder	andersen-eventyr	gad	PST	vide	INF	KNOW	SUB-REL	hun	–	–	PREF
4	egen Pose og arbeidede med de tomme Væve, og det til langt ud paa Natten. »Nu	gad jeg dog nok vide, hvor vidt de ere med Tøiet!« tænkte Keiseren, men han var ordenligt	andersen-eventyr	gad	PST	vide	INF	KNOW	DECL	jeg	–	dog nok	PREF
5	ud med Sproget. Hvad mon vel i det næste Aar vil skee? Hvad mærkeligt? Ja, jeg	gad gjerne see Min egen Skjæbne, Kunstens, Land og Riges, Men Bedstemoder vil, sligt skal ei siges.	andersen-eventyr	gad	PST	see	INF	SEE	DECL	jeg	–	gjerne	PREF

3. Discussion of findings

Semantic development

Time period	Years	POSS	AMBIG	PREF	TOTAL
Early Middle Danish	c. 1300–1400	32	–	–	32
Late Middle Danish	c. 1400–1525	66	–	–	66
Early Modern Danish	c. 1525–1700	42	12	15	69
Late Modern Danish	c. 1700–1850	2	3	54	59
Recent Danish	c. 1850–2000	–	–	56	56

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Change in 17th century

- Switch from possibility to preference in the period c. 1600–1700 (at least in Copenhagen)

(5)   **Gider**   *hand   icke   gaaet   allene …*
        GIDE.PRS   he   not   walk.PTCP   alone

'If he [the sick man] is not able to walk on his own …' (tekstnet.dk, *Henrick Smids Lægebog*, 1577)

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(6)   *Ieg* **gad**   *icke holdt   samtale   med hender*
       I   GIDE.PST not   hold.PTCP conversation with her

       'I couldn't be bothered to converse with her' (renæssancesprog.dk, *Jammers Minde*, 1674)

Observation 1: context of change

- Participant-internal possibility (ability) due to current constitution or condition (e.g. stamina or appetite)

(7) *da   satte   det   aff   med   sin   appetit   oc*
then set.PST it   off   with   REFL.POSS   appetite   and

gad   *icke   fortæret   synderligt*
GIDE.PST   not   consume.PTCP   particularly

'... then it [a sick child] lost its appetite and could not [would not?] eat much' (Vonsild Parish Register, 1689)

Observation 2: 'contingent' ability

- Apparently *gide* never expressed 'general' participant-internal possibility – always ability CONTINGENT on some other factor (health, stamina, appetite...)

(8)   *Øynene   tyngis   saa at   hun nøye **gider**   oplat   dem*
        eyes.DEF weigh.PASS so COMP she hardly GIDE.PRS open.PTCP them

        'The eyes become heavy so that she is hardly able to open them'
        (tekstnet.dk, *Henrick Smids Lægebog*, 1577)

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     eyes.DEF weigh.PASS so COMP she hardly GIDE.PRS open.PTCP them

  'The eyes become heavy so that she is hardly able to open them' (tekstnet.dk, *Henrick Smids Lægebog*, 1577)

(9) *... saa ilde   tillpaß,   at   de   **gide**   iche siunget*
     so   poorly constituted COMP they GIDE.PRS.PL not   sing.PTCP

  '[Parishioners who are] so ill at ease that they cannot sing' (tekstnet.dk, *Palladius' Visitatsbog*, 1543)

Icelandic *geta*

- Parallel in Icelandic cognate *geta* in (10), described as 'temporary' by Thráinsson & Vikner (1995: 85)?
  - But what about (11) from Thráinsson (2019: 629)?

(10) *Jón kann að synda en hann **getur** ekki synt núna.*
     J.   can   to swim.INF but he   GETA.3SG not swim.PTCP now

    'John knows how to swim but cannot swim now.'

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  'John knows how to swim but cannot swim now.'

(11) *Hún **getur** ekki talað dönsku.*
  she GETA.3SG not speak.PTCP Danish

  'She cannot speak Danish' [= does not know how to]

Observation 3: participant-**external** possibility

- Note: in the Early Middle Danish texts (c. 1300–1400), almost all examples are participant-external (*pace* van der Auwera et al. 2009)
  - Does this meaning develop before contingent participant-internal possibility, or are the high figures c. 1300–1400 due to genre effects? More research needed.

(12) *brytær   man skip þa   ma   hans kost   aldrih uare*
     wreck.PRS man ship then may his   goods never be.INF

     *urak   e   mæþæn han **gitær**   sialfær burhit*
     wreckage ever while   he   GIDE.PRS self   salvage.PTCP

     'If someone is shipwrecked, his possessions may not be [considered] wreckage as long as he himself is able to salvage [them]' (tekstnet.dk, Scanian Law, c. 1300)
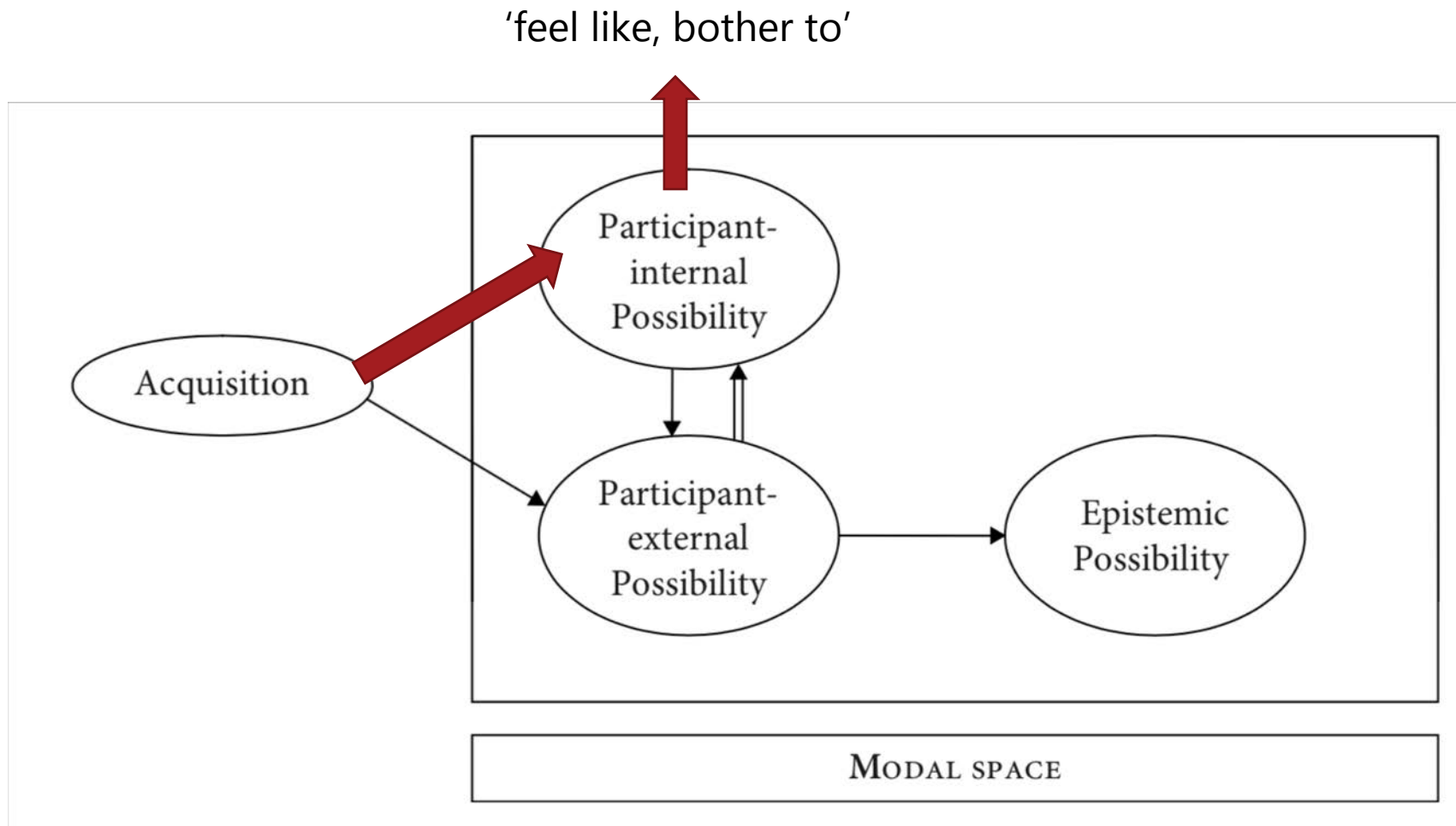
Types of possibility, 1300–1700

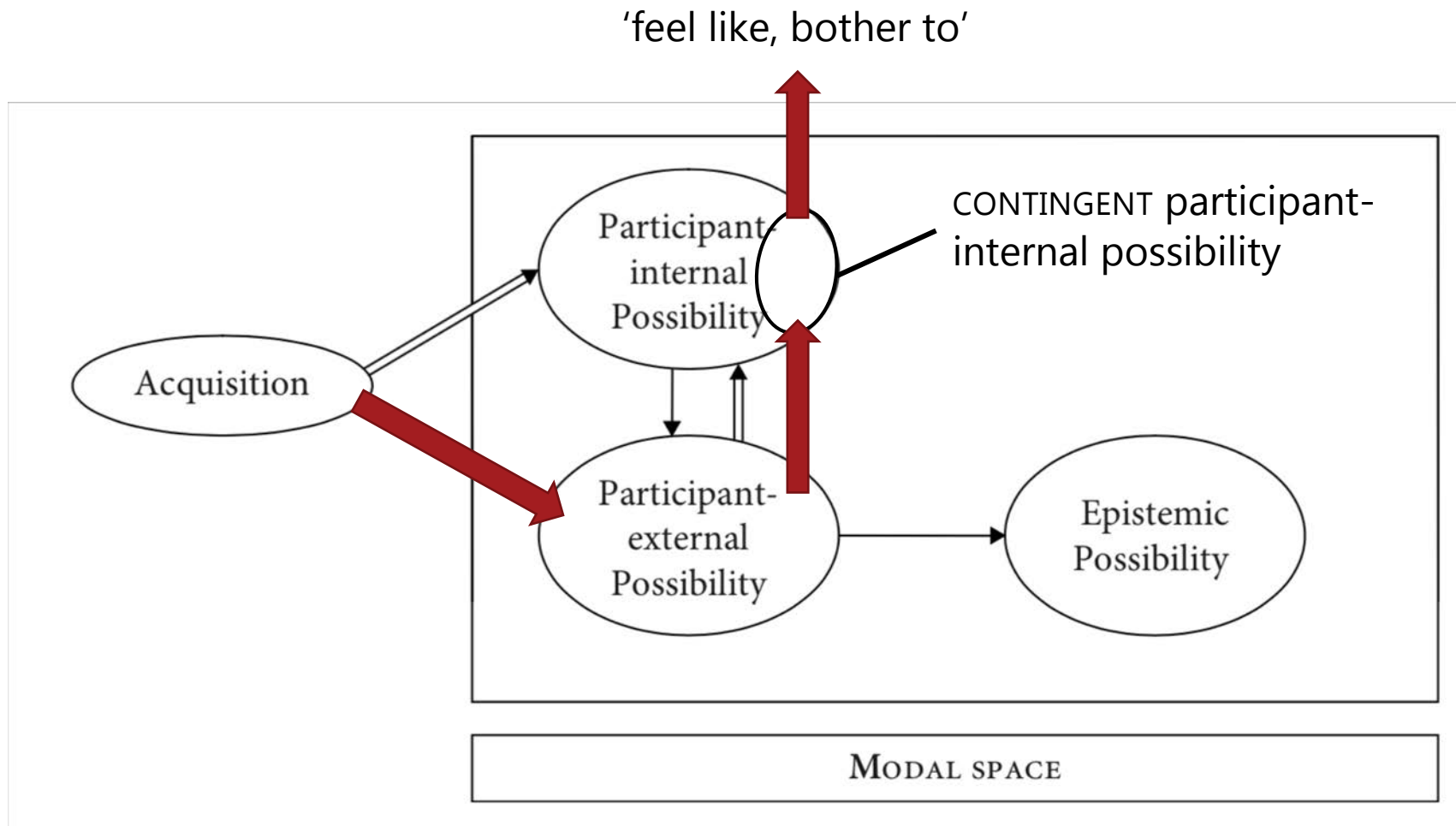| Time period	Years	INTERNAL	AMBIG	EXTERNAL
Early Middle Danish	c. 1300–1400	4	1	27
Late Middle Danish	c. 1400–1525	57	14	5
Early Modern Danish	c. 1525–1700	38	4	–

Diachronic change from participant-external to contingent participant-internal possibility?

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'feel like, bother to'

Based on Map 10 in van der Auwera et al. (2009: 293)

Development of *gide* (revised hypothesis)

'feel like, bother to'

CONTINGENT participant-internal possibility

Based on Map 10 in van der Auwera et al. (2009: 293)

Development in complement types

Time period	Years	PTCP	INF	OTHER	TOTAL
Early Middle Danish	c. 1300–1400	32	–	–	32
Late Middle Danish	c. 1400–1525	56	2	8	66
Early Modern Danish	c. 1525–1700	56	6	7	69
Late Modern Danish	c. 1700–1850	29	26	4	59
Recent Danish	c. 1850–2000	6	47	3	56

Only with *vide* 'know' in the fixed expression *(jeg) gad vidst* 'I wish I knew …'

Development in complement types

- Change from PTCP to INF complement in Late Modern Danish (1700–1850), apparently standard from c. 1800
  - Høysgaard (1747: § 280): *gide* can only take a participle
    - "det Verbum gider tager al-eneste Supinum til sig, saas: Jeg gider hørt &c."
  - Jens Baggesen, *Labyrinten* (1792–93) mainly uses PTCP complements
  - Hans Christian Andersen, *Eventyr* (1835) only uses INF complements

- Constructional analogy with modal verbs, but only after change from possibility to preference (*pace* Falk & Torp 1900: 219–220)
  - What are the conditioning factors?

4. Conclusions

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- The Present-day Danish (postmodal/marginal modal) meaning 'feel like' develops in 17th c. out of CONTINGENT PARTICIPANT-INTERNAL POSSIBILITY
  - Context of change: situations where ability/inclination is contingent on current constitution, esp. stamina or appetite

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  - Context of change: situations where ability/inclination is contingent on current constitution, esp. stamina or appetite
- Early Middle Danish texts (14th c.): *gide* almost exclusively used for participant-external possibility
  - Source of participant-internal meaning, or distribution due to genre? More research needed!

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- Early Middle Danish texts (14th c.): *gide* almost exclusively used for participant-external possibility
  - Source of participant-internal meaning, or distribution due to genre? More research needed!

- Analogical change from PTCP to INF complement, but only after change from possibility to preference
  - Clearly analogical association with modal verbs even if 'preference' meaning is not considered truly modal

Two implications

- Changes out of 'core' modality need not involve desemantization (cf. the Call for Papers)
  - The current (postmodal/marginal modal) meaning of *gide* is as 'contentful' as the older possibility meaning

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- Changes out of 'core' modality need not involve desemantization (cf. the Call for Papers)
  - The current (postmodal/marginal modal) meaning of *gide* is as 'contentful' as the older possibility meaning
- Middle Danish *gide* may provide evidence of a pathway PARTICIPANT-EXTERNAL → (CONTINGENT) PARTICIPANT-INTERNAL POSSIBILITY
  - Interesting because PARTICIPANT-INTERNAL → PARTICIPANT-EXTERNAL has sometimes been claimed to be unidirectional (but see Narrog 2012: 202–209; Kuteva et al. 2019: 344)

Topics for future work

- Similarities/differences with Icelandic cognate *geta*

- Cross-linguistic parallels of 'contingent ability'

- Development in Early Middle Danish – from participant-external to participant-internal possibility?

- Supplement to existing descriptions of Late Middle and Early Modern Danish modals (e.g. Obe 2011, 2013; Gregersen 2020: 293–305)

  - *gide* had its own functional niche!

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Mange tak! Merci beaucoup!