To dare larks: Analogy and interference in the English modals

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PhD project

"De-auxiliarization in the Dutch and English modals: A comparative diachronic corpus investigation"

1. New nonfinites in Middle English?
2. 'Degrammaticalization' of *dare*?

Old English modals

Hwæt   scealt   þu   þinum   hlaforde?

what.ACC owe.2SG.IND you.SG your.DAT lord.DAT

'What do you owe your lord?'

DOE Corpus: ÆHom 17,25

hine   sceal   on domes dæg   gesceamian   beforan Gode

him.ACC shall.3SG on Doomsday   be-ashamed.INF before   God.DAT

'On Doomsday he will stand ashamed before God'

DOE Corpus: HomU 37,161 (Warner 1993:123)
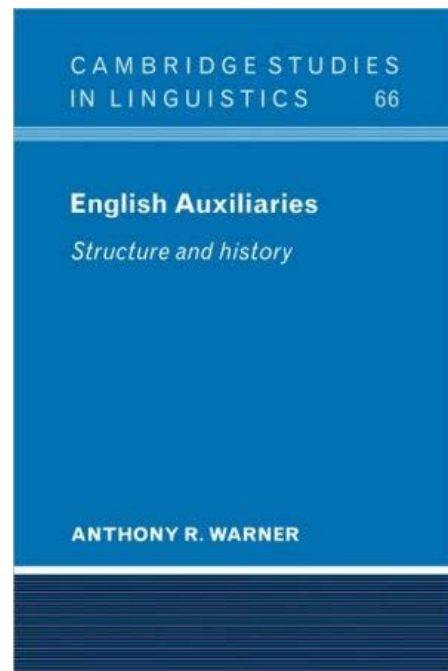
Old English modals

content item > grammatical word [e.g. auxiliary] > clitic > inflectional affix

Hopper and Traugott (2003:7)

Question 1

New nonfinites in Middle English?

New past participles

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English Auxiliaries

Structure and history

ANTHONY R. WARNER

"past participles of DARE, MAY and WILL appear in the course of Middle English"

Warner (1993:101)

I wold haue be thens yef I had <u>mowte</u>

'I would have been there if I had been able to'

c1500 (▶?a1475) *Assembly of Gods* (1896) 1951

But: Increased periphrasis

In Old English "the past tense was employed to express any event that belonged to the past, including events for which we would now use a perfect or pluperfect"

Fischer & Van der Wurff (2006:131)

Past/passive participles per 1,000 words:

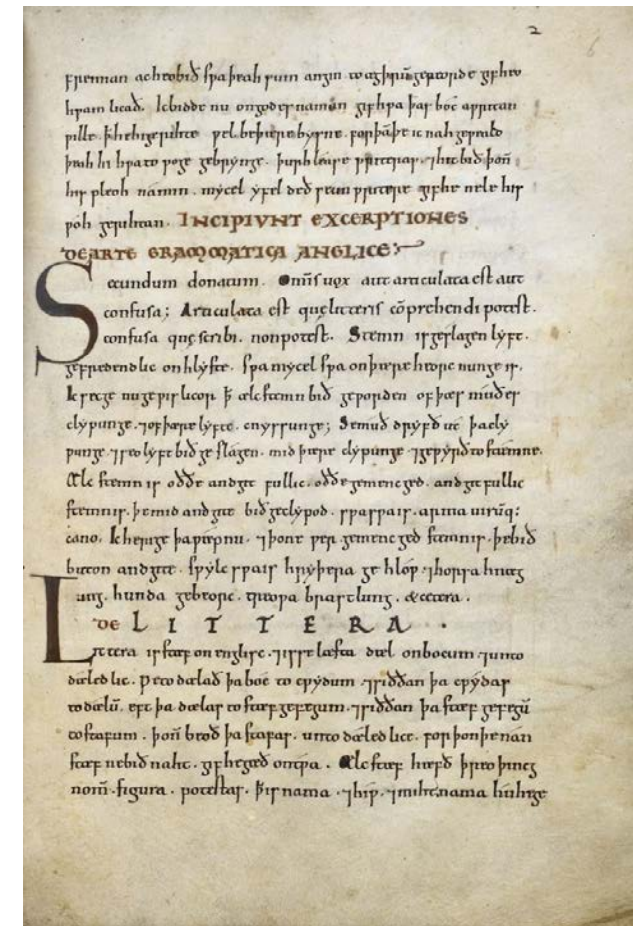|		
Old English (YCOE)	-1100	10.4
Early Middle English (PPCME2)	1100-1350	17.9
Late Middle English (PPCME2)	1350-1500	21.7

'Metalinguistic' evidence

Ælfric's Grammar (c. 1000)

licet mihi bibere mot ic drincan […]
INFINITIVVM *licere* beon alyfed

ÆGram 207.1 (Warner 1993:146)

Royal MS. 15 B.xxii, f. 6r
Source: British Library

Question 2

'Degrammaticalization' of *dare*?

Dare in Present-Day English

Variable inflection   *s/he dare* vs. *s/he dares*

Variable infinitive   *dare go* vs. *dare to go*

Transitive use   *I dare you* etc.

(Variable *do*-support   *dare not* vs. *don't dare*)

"so this means you <u>daren't give</u> him anything now"

<div align="right">BNC (1993, S_meeting)</div>

"the draftsman <u>did not dare to risk</u> such Kafkaesque accuracy"

<div align="right">BNC (1990, W_ac_polit_law_edu)</div>

Degrammaticalization?

	Present-Day English	Middle English
inflection	variable (*dare(s), dared*)	irregular (*dar, durst*)
infinitive	variable (± *to*)	without *to*
transitive	*I dare you* etc.	not attested

Beths (1999); Schlüter (2010):
PDE *dare* less grammatical than ME *dar*

Early non-auxiliary instance

Ne dear ich þ^t   ha deopluker   ne   witerluker   schriue   hire
not dare I   that she deeply.COMP nor   openly.COMP confess REFL

to ʒeung Preost   her abuten
to young   priest   here-about

'I dare not that she makes confession more deeply or openly to a young priest about this'

A line of poetry

Cotton MS. Nero A.x, f. 37r
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Hys fraunchyse is large þat euer <u>dard</u>
his   privilege   is large that ever *?*

To Hym þat matȝ   in synne   rescoghe
to him   that makes   in sin   rescue

Pearl, ed. Gordon (1953), ll. 609-10
Cotton MS. Nero A.x (14th c.)

Another *dare*

1. dare, *v.*[1] View full entry   •••••● ○ ○   c1000
    To have boldness or courage (*to do* something); to be so bold as.

2. dare, *v.*[2] View full entry   ••••● ○ ○ ○   c1220
    To gaze fixedly or stupidly; to stare as one terrified, amazed, or fascinated. *Obs.*

And at þat syȝt vche douth con <u>dare</u>
'And at that sight every host did <u>tremble</u>'
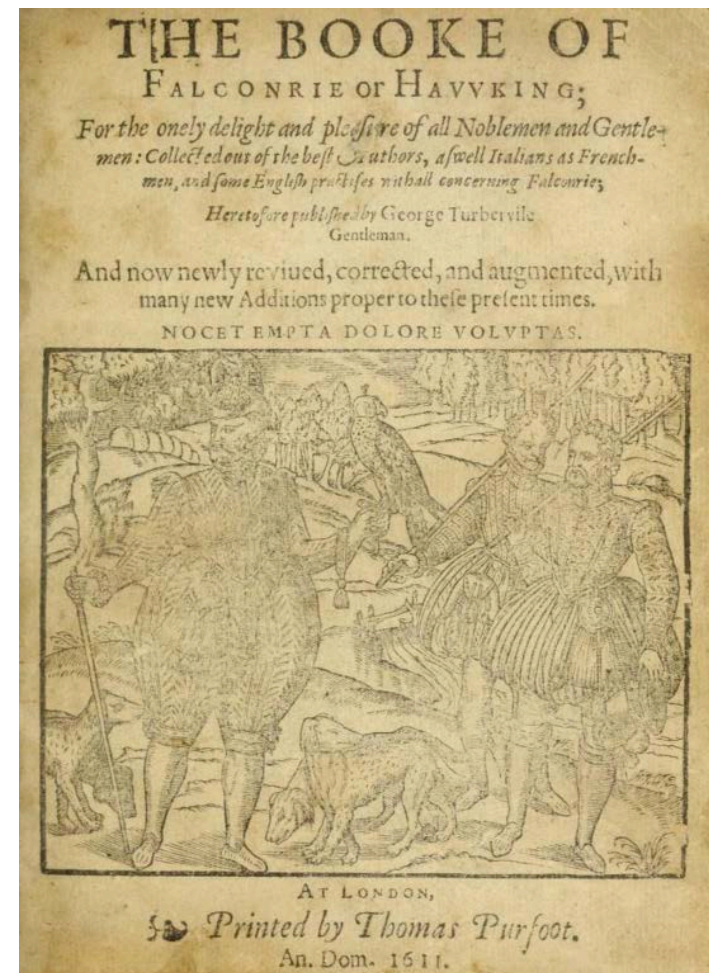
Pearl, ll. 839-40

Dare, transitive verb

"Like vnto men that <u>dare</u> larkes, which holde vp an hoby [falcon], that the larkes eies beyng euer vpon the hoby, shuld not see the nette that is layd on theyr heades."

1551 T. Cranmer *Answer S. Gardiner* 121

"<u>daring</u> of larkes [...] a very good sporte and full of delight, to sée the fearefull nature of the silly Larke, with the great awe and subiection that the Hobbie hath her in"

Turbervile 1611 [1575]:57

Turbervile 1611 [1575]
Source: Internet Archive/Boston Public Library

THE BOOKE OF FALCONRIE or HAVVKING;

For the onely delight and pleasure of all Noblemen and Gentlemen: Collected out of the best authors, aswell Italians as Frenchmen, and some English practises withall concerning Falconrie;

Heretofore published by George Turbervile Gentleman.

And now newly reviued, corrected, and augmented, with many new Additions proper to these present times.

NOCET EMPTA DOLORE VOLVPTAS.

AT LONDON,

Printed by Thomas Purfoot. An. Dom. 1611.

Dare, transitive verb

"Siles doun on aithire side selcuth kniȝtis, Sum <u>darid</u>, sum dede, sum depe wondid."

c1450(?a1400) *Wars Alex.*(Ashm 44) 3044

"For our approach shall so much <u>dare</u> the field / That England shall crouch down in fear and yield"

Henry V, IV. ii. 34–35 (c. 1599)

Lambeth Palace Library MS. 6, f. 243
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Possible evidence

Ambiguous examples

"An English man hath three qualyties, he can suffer no partner in his love, no straunger to be his equal, or <u>to be dared</u> by any"

<div align="right">Lyly 1868 [1580]:316</div>

Puns

"Enclos'd the bush about, and there him tooke Like <u>darred</u> larke, not <u>daring</u> up to looke"
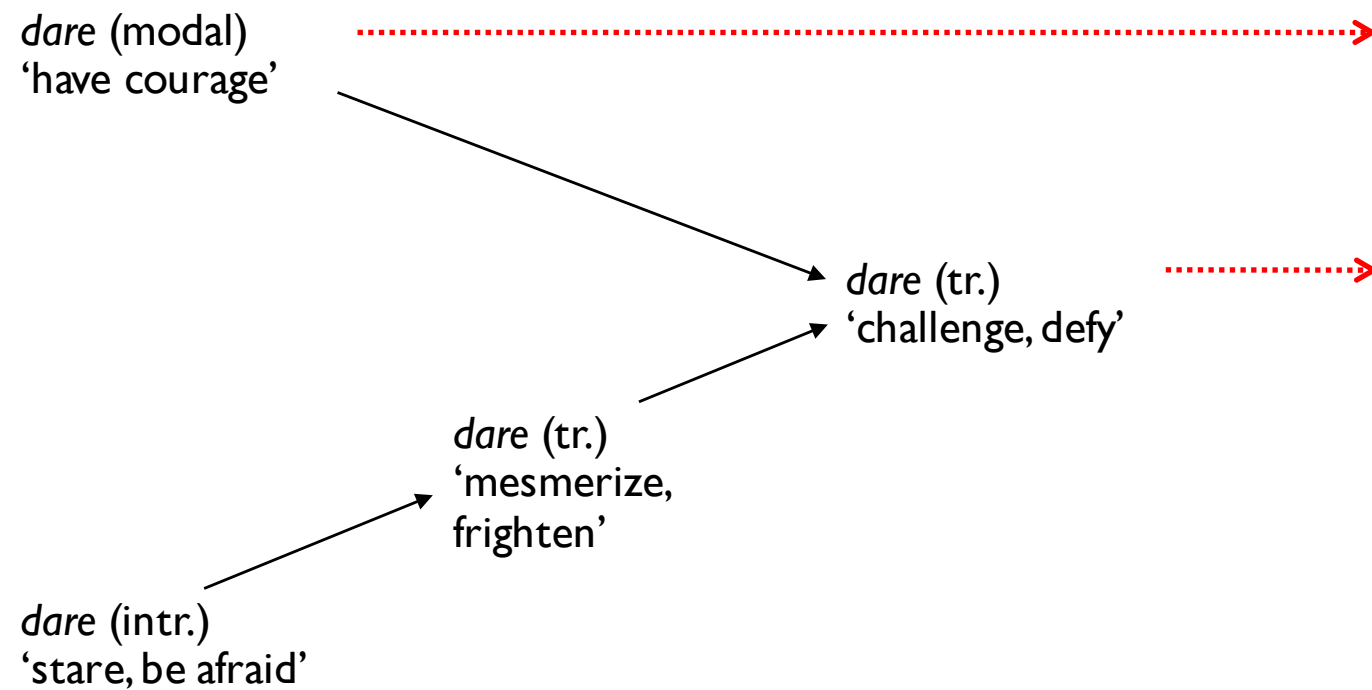
<div align="right">Spenser 1805 [1596]:199-200</div>

Dictionaries

"*to <u>Dare</u>, an old English word, for to* stare, *because they which behold a man stedfastly with a wide open staring eie, are said to bee* bold *or <u>daring</u>*."

<div align="right">Minsheu 1627:197</div>

Hypothesis

dare (modal)
'have courage'

dare (tr.)
'challenge, defy'

dare (tr.)
'mesmerize,
frighten'

dare (intr.)
'stare, be afraid'

Summary

1. 'New' nonfinite forms in Middle English may reflect an increase in periphrastic forms

2. Metalinguistic evidence (*Ælfric's Grammar*) should be considered, but very carefully

3. New transitive uses of *dare* may have developed through conflation with another verb (*dare* v.2)

4. Tracing the histories of individual lexemes may overlook interference within the linguistic system

Thank you!

Cod. Pal. germ. 848, f. 7r
Source: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

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EDD Online = Innsbruck Digitised Version of Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*, 1898-1905. University of Innsbruck 2016. http://eddonline-proj.uibk.ac.at/

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