

A History of English Reflexive Pronouns: Person, Self, and Interpretability (Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today)

Elly van Gelderen

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This book brings together a number of seemingly distinct phenomena in the history of English: the introduction of special reflexive pronouns (e.g. myself), the loss of verbal agreement and pro-drop, and the disappearance of morphological Case. It provides vast numbers of examples from Old and Middle English texts showing a person split between first, second, and third person pronouns. Extending an analysis by Reinhart & Reuland, the author argues that the 'strength' of certain pronominal features (Case, person, number) differs cross-linguistically and that parametric variation accounts for the changes in English. The framework used is Minimalist, and Interpretable and Uninterpretable features are seen as the key to explaining the change from a synthetic to an analytic language.



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