



Must in Chaucer: from Deontic to Epistemic

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In the paper, we take and exemplify the non-autonomy (integrated) stand on linguistics and linguistic research. We thus relate language to human experience of the world and anchor linguistic meaning in the user's cognitive assessment of the situation, which amounts to a psychologically-motivated search of motivation for linguistic structures.

Specifically, our aim is to test two related assumptions concerning the MidE history of *must*. It is argued that (i) the epistemic meaning of *must* arises in the context of generalized deontic statements, and that (ii) what strengthens the epistemic necessity meaning of *must* is its collocation with the adverb *nede(s)*. It is these two assumptions that Traugott and Dasher (2002: 128) consider to be "key to the emergence of semanticized epistemic meaning" of *must*, which, further on, on Brinton and Traugott's (2005: 108-109) account, is one of the best-known examples of subjectification.

With regard to the first tenet, the epistemic sense started to appear in statements that express the generalized necessity, which was due to two factors: firstly, the source of authority in such statements was global/universal, and, secondly, there was the tendency to use generalized subjects.

As to the other assumption, the adverb *nede(s)*, i.e. 'without doubt,' came to be used with the verb *must* to emphasise that not only was a given event strongly obliged to happen, but also to indicate that it was highly improbable for the event not to occur. We should then expect a fair amount of indeterminacy between the obligation/compulsion kind of necessity and logical/evidential kind of necessity.

References:

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