# Verb and Object Order in the History of English

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## *A Language-Internal Account*

By

Chiara De Bastiani

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# PREFACE

This book is a revised version of my Doctoral Dissertation, defended on March 13th, 2019 at the Ca'Foscari University of Venice within a Cotutelle Agreement between the Ca'Foscari University of Venice and the Bergische Universität Wuppertal.

In the following revised version, I will discuss a major syntactic change that took place in the transition between Old and Early Middle English, namely the reanalysis of the Verb-Object order as the base order, by considering both prosodic and information structural interface conditions; it will be shown that the language change witnessed in the Early Middle English period has its roots in the Old English period.

The completion of the dissertation would not have been possible without my supervisors Roland Hinterhölzl, Svetlana Petrova, Marina Buzzoni and Carsten Breul who inspired me in the choice of the rather intricate and controversial question treated in this book and offered me invaluable advice throughout my whole PhD career. Moreover, I would like to thank the two reviewers of a previous version of my dissertation for their careful and insightful comments.

My stay at the Bergische Universität Wuppertal, which was essential for the completion of the PhD, was made possible by the scholarships received from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) and the International Promovieren in Wuppertal (IPIW) group, to which my gratitude goes.

I would like to thank moreover Ans van Kemenade and Tara Struik for insightful discussions on the topic of this book on various occasions and especially during my brief stay in Nijmegen in the Spring of 2018. Many thanks also to the member of the Discourse Grammar/Sentence Grammar group and to many other scholars and researchers I have encountered during conferences and workshops for their inspiring remarks.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their unconditional support, before, during and after the completion of the dissertation and the revisions presented in this book.

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

The reanalysis of VO as the basic word order in the history of English has been debated for over thirty years; there is no consensus in the literature on the underlying basic word order of Old English (henceforth OE) and different factors have been proposed to explain why and how the order SVO became the basic one.

In the extant documents from the OE period, a variety of different word orders can be observed, cf. Pintzuk (1999) among others. It is well known in the literature that OE was characterised by variation in the relative order of verb and object, as well as in the relative order of auxiliary and non-finite verb. Old English was subject to this variation for centuries, until Aux > V > O word order was reanalysed as the basic one around 1200 A.D, even though residual OV word orders with quantified and negated objects can be found until 1400.

The following examples illustrate the variation attested in the OE period:[1]

Aux > O > V

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | Þa | sume | dæge | rad | se | cyng | up | bi |
| | Then | some | day | rode | the | king | up | by |
| | þære | eæ, | 7 | gehawade | | hwær | mon | |
| | the | river, | and | observed | | where | one | |
| | **mehte** | **þa** | **ea** | **forwyrcan** | | | | |
| | might | the | river | obstruct | | | | |

"Then one day the king rode up by the river and examined where one might obstruct the river."

(Chron.A, year-entry 875)

[1] If not indicated otherwise, all OE examples were extracted from the author from the York Corpus of Old English Prose (henceforth YCOE, Taylor et al. (2003)). The examples with a labelling starting with *ChronA* or *ChronE,* such as example (1) in this chapter, were extracted manually from the author from Bately's (1986) edition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS.A and Clark's (1970) edition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Ms. E.

Aux > V > O

| (2) | þe | læs | þe | se | hlyst | & | seo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | the | less | that | the | hearing | and | the |
| | gesihð | **wurðe** | **bescyred** | | **þæra** | **haligra** | **geryna** |
| | sight | became | cut-off | | the | holy | mysteries |

“The less that the sense of hearing and seeing are deprived of the holy mysteries.”

(cochdrul,ChrodR_1:66.1.883)

O > V > Aux

| (3) | & | mec | mine | geferan | bædon | þæt |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | and | me | my | comrades | asked | that |
| | hie | **swelcra** | **merþo** | **bescerede** | **ne** | **wæron**. |
| | they | such | glory | cut off | not | were |

“And my comrades asked me that they were not deprived of such glory.”

(coalex,Alex:33.5.420)

V > Aux > O

| (4) | And | æfter | þam | þe | he | **gefadod** | **hæfde** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | And | after | that | that | he | arranged | had |
| | **eall** | **his** | **werod** | swa | his | þeaw | wæs, |
| | all | his | army | so | his | custom | was |
| | þa | ferde | he | to | þam | gefeohte | |
| | then | went | he | to | the | battle. | |

“And after that he had arranged all his army, as his custom was, he went to battle.”

(coeust,LS_8_ [Eust]:305.323)

As one can notice from sentences (1) to (4), not only is there variation in the relative order of verb and object, but also on the relative order of finite and non-finite verb; moreover, Pintzuk (1999) signals in her work further word order patterns attested, such as the following example:

| (5) | þe | æfre | on | gefeohte | **his** | **handa** | **wolde** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | who | ever | in | battle | his | hands | would |
| | **afylan** | | | | | | |
| | defile | | | | | | |

“Who would ever defile his hands in battle”

(ÆLS 25.858, Pintzuk 1999:68)

In this example, both the adjunct PP and the direct object precede the finite and non-finite verbs.

The aim of this book is to investigate the conditions driving the word order variation in OE and the reanalysis of VO as the basic word order in the Early Middle English period (henceforth EME). The research will be carried out within the framework proposed by Hinterhölzl (2014; 2015; 2017), illustrated in Chapter 2. To summarise the framework, a universal base word order is postulated, and the word order variation is driven by information structural (henceforth IS) and prosodic interface conditions. These conditions are thought of interacting in the OE period and to be subject to blurring during the EME period.

In the present work, a language internal account for the language change affecting the English language is proposed; as will be commented on in Chapter 9, however, the interface conditions and the account proposed in this work do not exclude that external factors, such as language contact, may have also driven the reanalysis of VO as the basic word order. However, it will be demonstrated that the inclusion of IS and prosodic factors offers a uniform account for the language change proposed; in other words, language internal interface conditions constitute the core of the language change mechanisms, whereas language external factors can be located at the periphery of the change.

Even though OE is investigated to determine how the postulated interface conditions interact, the bulk of the analysis concentrates on EME. Whereas most of the extant works in OE are written in the West Saxon, Anglian or Mercian dialect, for EME we can find a wider array of texts from different dialectal areas. The texts investigated for the EME period cover the South-East Midlands, the North-East Midlands, the Kentish and the West-Midlands areas; however, not only is dialectal provenance considered in the investigation, but also the transmission history of the texts. In fact, the EME sample selected presents both texts composed directly in the EME period and texts copied from older manuscripts. In the literature on syntactic variation in EME the transmission history of the texts is not usually taken into account, since more weight is given to the dialectal provenance of the texts and the different word orders found across different dialectal areas (cf. Pintzuk and Taylor 2011, Kroch and Taylor 2000, Trips 2002). However, it will be demonstrated in Chapter 5 that the transmission history of a text is indeed a factor which has to be considered when analysing different syntactic word orders.

The research is carried out by carefully analysing the direct, indirect and prepositional objects of verbs in sentences containing an inflected and a non-inflected verbal form. The presence of both an inflected and a non-inflected verbal form is necessary to determine with certainty the position of the object and to exclude possibly ambiguous structures (cf. Chapter 2).

Before presenting the structure of the present work, the debate on the syntactic structure of OE and the causes that led to the reanalysis of VO as the basic word order in EME will be briefly summarised here. For reasons of space, it will not be possible to discuss in detail the many intricacies posed by this debate, but the reader is referred to the literature quoted and to De Bastiani (2019) for a more detailed overview. In the following, only the main points will be illustrated.

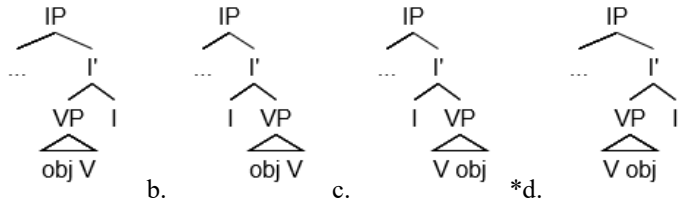
As stated above, the debate is complex and has been carried out for almost thirty years; in a nutshell, the controversy on the syntactic nature of OE focuses on the headedness of the IP and VP phrases, with the proponents of the Double Base Account on the one hand (Pintzuk 1999, Kroch and Taylor 2000, Trips 2002, Fuß and Trips 2002), and the proponents of antisymmetric frameworks on the other (Roberts 1997, Roberts and Biberauer 2005). As regards the causes for the language change from an OV to a VO surface order, major proposals involve the language contact with the Scandinavian settlers in the Danelaw (Kroch and Taylor 1997, Trips 2002, Fuß and Trips 2002, Emonds and Faarlund 2014), but other scholars have proposed endogenous sources for the language change (Kiparsky 1995, 1996, Roberts 1997, Biberauer and Roberts 2005).

Recall the different word orders illustrated in (1)-(5) above; it must be noticed that this type of variation is found not only within the OE period, but also within the same texts. In order to explain the different word orders simultaneously found in OE, Pintzuk (1999) proposes an analysis within the framework of Grammar Competition proposed by Kroch (1989). Pintzuk reviews van Kemenade's (1987) account of Old English as an OV language, which made use of operations such as Verb (Projection) Raising and Extraposition to derive some of the word orders reported above, observing that there are certain elements, such as object pronouns and particles, which are not expected in post-verbal position under a head-final account. In fact, such elements are not usually extraposed or involved in verb projection raising in languages with an OV base structure. Moreover, she notices that van Kemenade's (1987) proposed asymmetry between main and subordinate clauses does not account for the steady increase of inflection medial orders in both main and subordinate clauses; van Kemenade had proposed, in fact, that verb seconding to INFL is obligatory in OE main clauses, whereas subordinate clauses contain a base-generated complementiser in INFL, which blocks movement of the verb to this position. Apparent inflection medial or verb second word orders in subordinate clauses are generated by Verb (Projection) Raising in her account. Pintzuk observes that, if apparent verb seconding or inflection medial orders in subordinate clauses are generated by optional verb

(projection) raising operations, their steady increase throughout the OE period is inexplicable. Pintzuk (1999) demonstrates in fact that inflection medial orders increase at the same rate both in main and subordinate clauses in the OE period, a fact which calls for a unified explanation, rather than for the actuation of optional verb raising operations in the subordinate clause, and an obligatory verb seconding rule in the main clauses.

At this point, we need to define what is intended with Inflection medial orders in the terminology of Pintzuk. After reviewing van Kemenade's analysis, Pintzuk tackles the question as to which underlying structure OE presents; given the word orders such as (3) above, she claims there is evidence for head-final IP and VP projections, which derive orders attested also in Modern German and Dutch. Building on research by Kroch (1989, in Pintzuk 1999) and Santorini (1989, in Pintzuk 1999) on grammar competition and word order variation in Yiddish, she proposes that the Old English language had a Double Base structure. She defines the grammar competition in terms of different grammars which vary in the headedness of the IP and VP projections; the different output grammars, resulting from the combination of head initial and head final IP and VP projections, are given in the following:

(6)




a. b. c. *d.

Figure 1-1: Pintzuk's grammars in competition

a. Head-final IP + Head-final VP: S – O – V - $V_{fin}$
b. Head-initial IP + head-final VP: S – $V_{fin}$ – O – V
c. Head- initial IP + head-initial VP: S – $V_{fin}$- V – O
d. *Head-final IP + head-initial VP: S – V – O - $V_{fin}$

(Adapted from Pintzuk 1999: 47-48)

As can be seen from (6 a-d), combining head initial and head final VP and IP projections derive the word orders attested, with the exception of (6d), which is not only unattested in the OE records, but is extremely rare

in the languages of the world (cf. Fuß and Trips 2002).[2] As mentioned above, Pintzuk argues that there is evidence for a grammar with head final IP and VP projections. In order to test her hypothesis that there are also constructions involving head initial IP and head initial VP projections, Pintzuk examines the distribution of verbal particles, object pronouns and monosyllabic adverbs; these elements are light and are not generally involved in extraposition or verb projection raising processes, therefore their position after a finite verb would indicate an IP initial and a VP initial structure. She concludes that the distribution of these light elements provides evidence for an IP and VP-initial grammar. Pintzuk, moreover, estimates the statistic frequency of sentences exhibiting verb (projection) raising by collecting the number of examples such as (5) above, which cannot be derived by assuming head-initial IP and VP phrases, in her framework, nor by assuming left dislocation. She notices that the ratio of such examples is low and concludes that other types of Infl-Medial sentences must derive from a head initial IP.

After having defined the possible derivations for the different word orders attested, and the relative frequency of sentences exhibiting verb (projection) raising, Pintzuk examines the distribution of Infl-Final and Infl-Medial main and subordinate clauses in a set of selected prose texts, with a composition date ranging between ca. 880 and 1100. She demonstrates that, even though present already in the earlier texts, Infl-Medial orders increase steadily during the OE period. Pintzuk concludes that the steady increase of the Infl-Medial orders is to be ascribed to grammar competition, which yields the synchronic variation, and to the reanalysis of the head initial grammar as the basic one in the Early Middle English period.

Other researchers have worked within Pintzuk's framework of the Phrase Structures in competition, cf. Kroch and Taylor (2000), Pintzuk and Taylor (2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2015), and Trips (2002). A further refinement of Pintzuk's (1999) proposal was put forth by Fuß and Trips (2002); they tackle the question of the word order generated in (6d) above, for which the proponents of the Double Base Hypothesis argue its ungrammaticality may be due to some principles of UG (cf. Fuß and Trips 2002). They postulate that the parametric variation is to be ascribed to the presence or absence of the vP shell and to the possibility of overt vs covert V-to-v movement. They, moreover, adopt a modified version of Kayne's antisymmetric framework, by assuming that only functional heads are universally head initial, whereas lexical heads can still vary in their headedness. In their framework, only the

[2] Biberauer et al. (2014) demonstrate that the absence of this word order is to be ascribed to a universal principle, which they call Final Over Final Constraint (FOFC).

activation of a vP shell can generate a head initial VP, whereas an inflection final word order is determined by a grammar which lacks a vP shell. The reader is referred to Fuß and Trips (2002) and De Bastiani (2019) for a more in-depth discussion of this proposal.

Another proposal which calls for a uniform head-initial structure of functional categories was put forth by Kiparsky (1996). Kiparsky (1996) builds on the analysis by Pintzuk, claiming that the grammar competition in the Old English stage is to be described as the competition between a grammar without IP and a grammar with a fully developed I-projection. Kiparsky's criticism of Pintzuk's analysis of phrase structures in competition is the possibility of generating structure (6d) above, and the fact that the prediction that certain subordinate clauses can have an Infl-Medial structure leads to the prediction that Topicalization is possible in subordinate clauses, which was proven incorrect by van Kemenade (1987). Since he observes that the drift from OV to VO is a common drift across different language families, as opposed to the contrary process, which is extremely rare, Kiparsky proposes that the factor that pushed learners to opt for the VO order is a preference for uniform directionality on head-complement relations. This claim entails a basic assumption, namely that Spec-Head-Complement order is universal, and that apparent OV languages have extensive leftward movement processes (Kayne 1994).

As stated above, Kiparsky assumes a grammar without a grammaticalized IP projection, and a grammar with a grammaticalized IP projection; in the former grammar, the finite verb emerges fully inflected from the lexicon and is a complex category V/I; a bare declarative clause is at the same time an IP and a VP. In VIPs the verb remains in situ; this accounts for the presence of main clauses with verb final word order. Also CP is analysed as optional, so both IP and VIP can be main clauses or can be complements of CP. In this framework, the passage from OV to VO is characterised by the rise of I as a syntactical head out of VIP. The order in (6d) cannot be generated, since it would imply that the two grammars co-exist in the same sentence: a left branching VP cannot be nested in a right branching IP.

Pintzuk, however, has shown that both Infl Medial and Infl Final word orders are attested in main and embedded clauses from the start of the OE period. This entails, in Kiparsky's terminology, that for some sentences, the inflected verb is analysed as being part of a grammar with a grammaticalized IP phrase, whereas inflection final sentences are interpreted within a grammar with no IP projection. The problem of this analysis is, however, that these word orders occur in the same texts, as we pointed out above; if Infl-Medial order entails that IP is grammaticalized, it cannot be maintained that for the same speaker, this category is not analysed

as grammaticalized in other contexts, generating a sentence with inflection final structure. Another problem is connected to the grammaticalization of the category I, which van Gelderen (1993, in Kiparsky 1996) dates around 1380; if the order finite > non-finite verb is a result of the grammaticalization of I, then we would expect that the variation is resolved at a much later date than the standardly assumed one, namely 1200.

The latter two proposals reviewed involve some form of the LCA proposed by Kayne (1994), by assuming that at least functional projections must be head-initial. Roberts (1997) assumes that OE was uniformly head-initial and postulates leftward movement operations in order to derive the word orders attested. Roberts (1997), in fact, notices that languages such as Modern German and Dutch are traditionally analysed as representing a mixed typology: CP and DP are uniformly head-initial, whereas IP and VP are head-final. Roberts argues that there is empirical evidence to assume that IP and VP were head-initial in OE as well and proposes a framework in which standardly assumed head-final orders are derived by leftward movement operations. The trigger for the leftward movement operations is the checking of morphosyntactic features of the object; since OE has a rich case inflection, Roberts argues that the strong features need to be checked through movement. After $Agr_OP$ loses its strong features, the Procrastinate Principle leads to the impossibility of leftward movement, in a similar fashion to the loss of V to I movement in the history of English.

To summarise, Roberts (1997) proposes an antisymmetric framework, in which leftward movement of objects, non-finite complements and small clauses to [Spec, $Agr_OP$] is triggered by checking of strong features. Verb movement to $Agr_O°$ is not always obligatory, and there are two possible landing sites for scrambled objects; finally, CPs, PPs and focused DPs in the sense of Kroch and Pintzuk (1989) are not subject to the leftward movement operations. Abstracting away for this partially unaccounted for optionality, this framework is liberal enough to derive the different word orders attested in the OE period and Roberts (1997), moreover, notes that his approach does not involve a greater degree of stipulation with respect to previous proposals. In fact, for the Double Base account, one has to stipulate that not only the language community, but also the individual speaker had access to multiple grammars, switching from one to the other without apparent trigger. For the analysis proposed by van Kemenade (1987), one has to stipulate that there was a large degree of freedom in the use of operations such as Extraposition or Verb (Projection) Raising, which occurred also with elements which are ruled out in other West Germanic languages.

Roberts' approach, however, still involves a great deal of optionality; in fact, he argues that objects, infinitival complements and small clauses can be fronted to the [Spec, $Agr_OP$]. In Aux > O > V sentences, only the object complement is fronted, whereas in O > V > Aux sentences, also the infinitival complement is fronted; his framework allows for the derivation of such sentences, but no trigger is proposed, in order for the speaker to decide between object fronting or the fronting of the infinitival complement. Moreover, it is not clear how the features in [Spec, $Agr_OP$] are strong enough to attract object complements, infinitival complements and small clauses, but fail to attract CPs and PPs. Finally, if case is the relevant feature, one must stipulate a condition according to which focused DPs, as described by Kroch and Pintzuk (1989), can remain in situ and nevertheless check case features.

A similar proposal to Roberts (1997) was put forth by Fischer et al. (2000); they raise similar criticism to Pintzuk's (1999) proposal and devise a derivation which takes into consideration leftward movement of the object to the [Spec, $Agr_OP$]. Movement of the object to this position is obligatory in order to check case features; what differentiates the surface word orders OV and VO depends on when the Spell-Out takes place. If Spell-Out takes place before object movement, then surface VO is obtained, whereas if Spell-Out takes place after object movement, then surface OV is obtained. The authors, moreover, notice that there are word orders in OE and ME which are signalled by a diagnostic adverbial intervening between the object and the verb and are clearly derived from leftward movement of the object. They argue that in these cases, the object is moved to a higher $Agr_OP$; what is crucial, however, is that they argue that since these data show unambiguous leftward movement, nothing prevents us from analysing surface OV as the result of leftward movement as well. The advantage of their approach allows to explain some empirical facts about ME; in fact, even though 1200 is commonly analysed as the point in which VO is grammaticalized, Fischer et al. notice that quantified and negated objects retain a preverbal position the longer (up to 1400 according to Fischer et al.). In their approach, negated and quantified objects are moved leftward in order to check their features, and they argue that these objects require overt checking. With such an analysis, one would not need to invoke a double base structure for these restricted late Middle English data. However, this approach does not provide a cue to regulate late or early Spell-Out, resulting in a certain degree of optionality, as the former approaches do.

Since the optionality proposed by Roberts (1997) and Fischer et al. (2000) does not provide a satisfactory trigger for the word order variation attested, Roberts and Biberauer (2005) build on Roberts' (1997)

antisymmetric account, by assuming that the trigger for the leftward movement operations is the satisfaction of EPP features, which can be satisfied by either moving only the category carrying the EPP features, or by pied-piping the maximal projection containing it. This framework is devoted more space in the argumentation, since the present work builds on Roberts and Biberauer's (2005) analysis of VAux sentences. The central notion of pied-piping is briefly summarised following the argumentation in Biberauer and Roberts (2005); when a Probe is associated with an uninterpretable EPP feature, the appropriate Agree relation is created by the movement of the Goal bearing the interpretable feature. Nothing prevents to move the larger category in which the Goal is contained; this analysis must in fact be assumed in order to account for standard cases of pied-piping such as the following:

(7) A qui as- tu parlé ?
To whom have you spoken ?
"To whom have you spoken?"

(8) $wh_{PROBE}$ …. [PP $wh_{GOAL}$].
(From Biberauer and Roberts 2005:7, examples (1) and (2)).

The evidence in Modern English shows, however, that some languages allow for the possibility of pied-piping the larger XP governing the Goal, or by moving the Goal alone:

(9) a. To whom did you speak?
b. Who did you speak to?
(From Biberauer and Roberts 2005: 8, example (4 a-b)).

In Modern French, the stranding of the preposition results in an ungrammatical sentence:

(10) *Qui as- tu parlé a ?
Who have you spoken to ?
"Who have you spoken to?"
(Adapted from Biberauer and Roberts 2005:7, example 3)

When one abstracts from the specific case of pied-piping or preposition stranding illustrated above, the following representation for pied-piping can be formulated:

(11) $X_{PROBE}$ …. [$_{YP}$ …. $Z_{GOAL}$] ….
(From Biberauer and Roberts 2005:8, example 5)

Languages differ as to whether only the Goal moves to the Probe, or whether it is fronted to the Probe within the larger XP governing it; the two possibilities are allowed by UG, according to Biberauer and Roberts (2005). Finally, there are languages which allow for both options, as examples (9 a-b) show for Modern English.

The generalisation in (12) can be equated to the TP and vP projections respectively:

(12) $T_{PROBE}$ …. [$_{vP}$ … element with D features$_{GOAL}$]

Hence in the framework by Biberauer and Roberts, T's EPP features are satisfied by either moving only the element with the D-features, or by fronting the vP governing it.

Richards and Biberauer (2004) constructed a typology of ways of satisfying T's EPP features, which is based on the two parameters of the source of the D feature, and the size of the category containing it. They individuate two sources for the D feature: verb morphology, in languages where this is sufficiently rich, or the DP contents of [Spec, vP]. As pointed out above, the size of the category containing or bearing the D feature can either correspond to the verb or the DP subject, hence to the Goal, or to vP, hence the maximal category containing the Goal. For the present work, it suffices to say that, under this approach, Old English is analysed as a spec-pied-piping language. The languages belonging to this type are characterised by having as source for the D features [Spec, vP], and for allowing the pied-piping of the maximal category containing the Goal. These languages are unique in the set since they allow for both movement operations; in a head-pied-piping language having verbal morphology as a Goal, such as German in Richards and Biberauer's typology, the finite verb must obligatorily move together with the larger category containing it, since the finite verb is a head. However, in spec-pied-piping languages, both movement operations are equally possible, since in both cases they involve an XP.

Furthermore, Roberts and Biberauer extend the analysis to the domain of verbal complementation; the formula in (13) extends to the following categories:

(13) $v_{PROBE}$ …. [$_{VP}$ … element with D features$_{GOAL}$]

The same movement operations illustrated above apply to check v's EPP features. To sum up, Roberts and Biberauer (2005) argue that OE was a language that required either the pied-piping of the category containing the EPP features to the Probe, but also allowed the satisfaction of the EPP features by only moving the category bearing the Goal features. Finally, they propose that the language change witnessed in ME involves the loss of the pied-piping option, by requiring the satisfaction of the EPP features only by moving the relevant category.

In order to derive the S > O > V > Aux order attested in OE, Biberauer and Roberts assume an underlying universal head-initial order of constituents and propose the following movement operations (the Auxiliary is presented as directly merged in T, for ease of exposition):

(14)

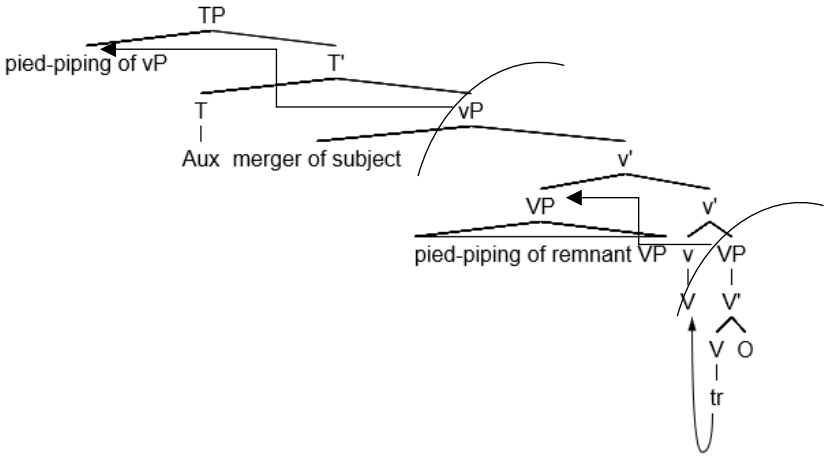



Figure 1-2: the derivation of S > O > V > Aux order in Biberauer and Roberts' (2005) framework

The non-finite verb moves to v, and the remnant VP is fronted to the inner specifier of vP; the subject is analysed as being directly merged in the topmost Specifier of vP. After that these movements have taken place, the vP is fronted to the Specifier of TP.

Crucially, under Biberauer and Roberts' (2005) analysis, the derivations of the different word orders attested differ minimally with respect to the instantiation of the pied-piping parameter. Let us observe, in fact, their derivation of the S > Aux > O > V and S > Aux > V > O orders respectively. For sentences presenting a modal verb, they assume a bi-clausal structure;

in fact, modal verbs are not fully grammaticalized in the OE and ME periods, but they are rather lexical verbs selecting a defective $TP_{DEF}$ (non-phi-complete) complement, which is selected by V. This entails that the derivation proceeds for longer before material is sent to Spell-Out and rendered inaccessible for further syntactic operations (cf. their discussion of Chomsky 2001).

In the infinitival clause, T attracts v, which attracts V; after these movements are complete, the remnant VP is moved to the inner specifier of vP. The Subject generated in the topmost Specifier of vP is moved to the specifier of the matrix TP via the specifier of the matrix vP. The remnant vP is moved to the Specifier of the $TP_{DEF;}$ these movement operations derive the superficial S > Aux > O > V order. In the following, the structure given by Biberauer and Roberts (2005:17) is reported:[3]

(15) [TP S T VR [TP [vP tS [vP tV O] V + v + T tvP]]

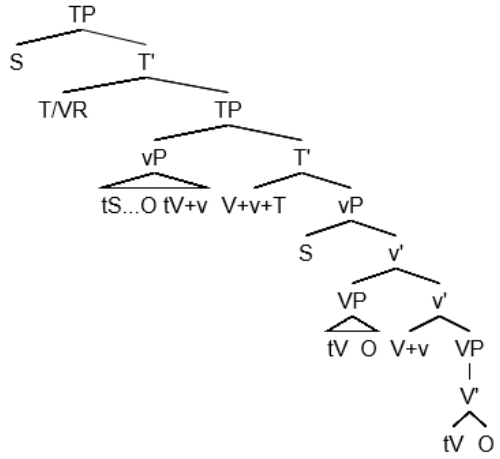



Figure 1-3: the derivation of S > Aux > O > V order in Biberauer and Roberts' (2005) framework

The following structure represents their derivation for S > Aux > V > O order:

[3] The Label "VR" stands for "Verb Raising". Notice that in their representation, the matrix vP is lacking.

(16) [TP S T VR [TP tS V+v+T[ vP tS tv+V [VP tV O]]]]

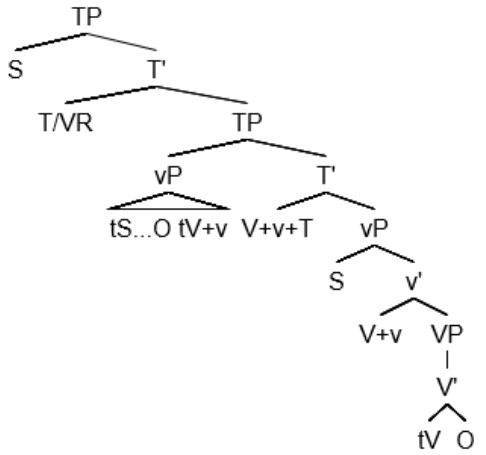



Figure 1-4: the derivation of S > Aux > V > O order in Biberauer and Roberts' (2005) framework

The order above is derived by Biberauer and Roberts with the same operations as for the S > Aux > O > V sentence, with the difference that there is no remnant movement of VP to the inner Specifier of the embedded vP.

Finally, for sentences with the order S > V > Aux > O, they propose that the Aux selects a smaller complement, namely vP. They motivate this by noticing that semi-modals in OE are optional restructuring verbs; moreover, they argue that in such structures, there is no remnant VP raising to the inner Specifier of vP. When the vP phase is completed, the object is sent to Spell-Out, and is unavailable for further syntactic operations. Since the non-finite verb precedes the auxiliary in these sentences, the sentence must involve the attraction of the remnant vP to the Specifier of the matrix TP. Biberauer and Roberts notice that leftward movement in Germanic is a "defocusing operation", and that Kroch and Pintzuk (1989) report that in Beowulf focused constituents remain in situ, therefore they claim that in sentences such as the one represented above, v's EPP feature is reanalysed as an optional feature, triggering defocusing movement.

With respect to Roberts' (1997) framework, Biberauer and Roberts' (2005) analysis provides a precise trigger for the movement operations they postulate. This trigger, namely the satisfaction of the EPP features, can be realised either by pied-piping of the whole category containing the Goal, or by moving the XP bearing the Goal features; the framework exploits

mechanisms which are allowed by UG and are attested cross-linguistically. Moreover, the analysis is not created *ad hoc* for the Old English language, but builds on previous research on Modern Germanic languages, which yields similar results for Swiss German and spoken Afrikaans (cf. discussion in Biberauer and Roberts). However, the analysis of S > V > Aux > O clauses involves the postulation of a certain optionality when it comes to v's EPP features. In fact, Biberauer and Roberts conclude that in such cases, v's EPP features are optional, and movement could be triggered by a defocusing operation. As in Roberts (1997), this claim is based on Kroch and Pintzuk's (1989) study of post-verbal DPs in Beowulf, but no further evidence is provided for it. The approach, moreover, raises the question as to whether S > O > V > Aux clauses can be analysed as minimally differing from the S > V > Aux > O clauses in involving the defocusing of VP and its object in the first case and in focusing of the objects in the second case. Moreover, it is not clear whether the defocusing operation is linked to the information conveyed by the verb which has undergone leftward movement, or whether the leftward movement is needed in order for the stranded object to be interpreted as focused. Finally, if the stranding of the object involves a focus interpretation, it is reasonable to assume that this is the case also in the S > Aux > V > O sentences, and that S > Aux > O > V sentences differ from the former with respect to the information structural value of the object. These questions are not addressed in Biberauer and Roberts' (2005) account, but they will be addressed in the present work.

We can conclude that the antisymmetric accounts reviewed are theoretically more appealing, since they allow to derive the word order variation attested by assuming one uniform grammar. Provided that we can show that the variation between the different derivations is governed by different principles, we could do away with the optionality which underlies both the accounts within the framework of Grammar Competition and the ones assuming a universal base by individuating precise constraints which regulate the choice between the different derivations. I argue that these constraints have to be defined by information structural and weight factors, as recent literature on Earlier Germanic suggests; the IS and Prosodic Conditions are defined in the framework proposed by Hinterhölzl in a series of papers (2014;2015;2017) and illustrated in Chapter 2.

After having reviewed the main proposals regarding the underlying structure of OE and the processes leading to the reanalysis of VO as the basic word order, I will review the factors involved in the reanalysis proposed in the literature. For reasons of space, the main points will be touched upon, but the reader is referred to the works quoted for a full overview.

The main causes for the language change hypothesised in the literature are the loss of strong case morphology (Roberts 1997), the emergence of the I category (Kiparsky 1996), and the contact with the Scandinavian settlers in England (Kroch and Taylor 2000, Trips 2002, Fuß and Trips 2002, Emonds and Faarlund 2014).

Roberts (1997) identifies strong case morphology as the trigger for the leftward movement of objects of verb to a checking position. Once case morphology is lost, the strong features do not need to be checked in a dedicated [Spec, Agreement] projection. This would have led to the loss of the movement to [Spec, $Agr_OP$] for reasons of Economy. This approach raises a series of questions; in fact, if the loss of case morphology would have prompted the reanalysis of VO as the basic surface word order, one needs to explain why Dutch has retained OV word order, despite losing case morphology, and why Icelandic has developed VO word order, despite presenting rich case inflection. Moreover, Kiparsky (1996) notes that the erosion of the case declension had already started in the Old English period.

Kiparsky (1996) proposes that it was the rise of the I category which led to the grammaticalization of the VO word order, as summarised above. In his language change scenario, the rise of Infl-Medial word orders would have prompted the reanalysis of the underspecified VPs into head-initial VPs. It must be underlined that the grammaticalization of auxiliaries does not have to coincide to the grammaticalization of the syntactic projection hosting them. But if this were the case, it must be stressed that the two language changes, i.e. the grammaticalization of the VO word order and the grammaticalization of auxiliaries, do not coincide. In fact, the reanalysis of VO as the basis word order is dated around 1200 A.D., whereas van Gelderen dates the grammaticalization of auxiliaries around 1380. As far as modal verbs are concerned, these are grammaticalized much later, at the beginning of the Early Modern English period (cf. Roméro 2005).

A more influential proposal involves the language contact with the Scandinavian settlers in the Danelaw as the source for the language change; this proposal is defended by Kroch and Taylor (1997), Trips (2002), and Fuß and Trips (2002). It is assumed that the contact with the Scandinavian settlers, who allegedly spoke already a VO language, prompted the reanalysis of the VO word order in the Early Middle English period. The hypothesis is supported by empirical studies on different dialectal varieties of the Early Middle English period; in these studies it is reported that more innovative word orders, namely Infl-Medial and VO, spread from the North-East Midlands, which were densely settled by the Scandinavians, to the South and West of England. Moreover, Kroch and Taylor (1997) claim that

the Northern dialects present categorical V2, similar to the Scandinavian V2 pattern, unlike the Southern varieties.

The main problem with this hypothesis is that the language spoken by the Scandinavian settlers is not attested, and the fact that this language displayed surface Infl-Medial and VO word orders is a stipulation. In fact, there is evidence from Old Icelandic and Old Swedish showing that the same type of variation in surface word orders affected Old Scandinavian languages; the word order variation in Icelandic lasted for centuries, until VO was reanalysed as the basic word order during the 19th century. As far as Old Swedish is concerned, Delsing (2000) reports that variation in the relative order of object and verb is attested until the 16th century.[4] Furthermore, under these approaches, it is generally assumed that the language contact between the Scandinavians and the English was extensive, and that the two populations fused. The scholars quoted in this paragraph, moreover, rely upon reports of mutual comprehension between the English and the Scandinavians (cf. Trips 2002:17). However, Bech and Walkden (2016) report that there is evidence against this view; in fact, if the two populations were as extensively fused as authors such as Trips, and Emonds and Faarlund put it, one would expect to find also a high amount of genetic fusion. This is not the case, since there is more Norman DNA as Viking DNA in the British population (cf. literature in Bech and Walkden 2016). This finding confirms the conclusions reached by traditional historians and archaeologists that the Vikings came in small numbers, plundered and kept to themselves. The ones who remained in England shifted to English. Furthermore, Townend (2002, in Bech and Walkden 2016) argues that the population was bilingual, but not the single individuals. Moreover, Pintzuk shows that Infl-Medial and VO orders are already attested in OE texts of the 9th century; most of the texts she uses for the analysis are in the West Saxon and in the Mercian dialects. These are the dialects of areas in which the Scandinavian influence was less strong.

Finally, there are some caveats with some of the texts examined to defend this hypothesis; Trips' (2002) study on OV and VO word order in Early Middle English is centred on one text, namely the metric poem of the Ormulum. This text is an original EME composition from the Northern East Midlands and occupies therefore a key position in the study of language

[4] One of the reviewers, moreover, points out that also Old High German and Old Saxon were subject to a similar degree of variation, despite their having had little contact with the North Germanic languages. Word order variation is a feature of Earlier Germanic languages, as extensive literature shows (cf. Linde 2009 for Old Saxon, Petrova 2009, Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2010 and Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2018 for Old High German, among others).

change in the history of English (cf. also Chapter 5 for a more detailed description of this text). However, the text is written with a rigid metre of 15 syllables, to which the author conforms very precisely. Trips claims that Scandinavian features can be detected in this text; let us review her main points. Trips (2002) aims to determine whether Object Shift can be found in the Ormulum; if this were the case, then this must be derived from the contact with the Scandinavian settlers, in her view. However, as Trips (2002) herself notes, the evidence she finds is equivocal and not conclusive. Trips, moreover, discovers Stylistic Fronting in the text, as defined by Platzack (1988). She concludes that the author of the Ormulum resorted to Stylistic Fronting when failure to do so would result in a wrong accent pattern. In Chapter 5 we will see that the same can be stated for the mapping of constituents and pronouns in the text. The fact that this text exhibits Stylistic Fronting provides evidence for a possible Scandinavian influence in the text; however, I think that the evidence in this text must be treated with caution, since its metric composition may have led the author to use a marked word order in order to conform to his strict pattern firmly. Moreover, it must be noticed that V > Aux orders are found also when a subject DP is expressed in the text (cf. Trips 2002); these are not cases of Stylistic Fronting, by definition. Given the fact that Trips (2002) adopts Pintzuk's framework, the relative clauses with a subject gap and V > Aux order that she analyses as instances of Stylistic Fronting could be analysed in her framework as instances of residual inflection final grammar. Finally, as Svenonius (2005) notices, the discovery of Stylistic Fronting and the Norse V2, as characterised by Kroch and Taylor (1997), does not provide evidence to claim that the drift from OV to VO word order was triggered by the contact with the Scandinavian settlers. This text shows that some Scandinavian traits can be found at least in the author's grammar, but they do not directly bear on the question of the word order change investigated in this work.

A proposal which takes the role of the influence of the Scandinavian language to the extremes was put forth by Emonds and Faarlund (2014); they in fact propose that Old English simply died out, and that the language from which Modern English descends is "Anglicised Norse", a language which originated from the contact between the Scandinavian and the English inhabitants. They claim that this language had a Northern Germanic grammar with retention of some Old English vocabulary. The core of their argument relies on the comparison of syntactic properties of Modern English and Modern Scandinavian languages that cannot be derived from Old English, but from Anglicised Norse. This rather controversial view has received criticism in the literature, cf. van Kemenade (2016), Simms (2016),

Bech and Walkden (2016), whereas Lightfoot (2016) underlines that the work constitutes an important contribution on the debate on the word order variation in OE and the grammaticalization of the VO word order. It can be demonstrated that most of the properties they claim are directly derived from their Anglicised Norse ancestor, can be likewise derived from Old English (cf. Walkden and Bech 2016 and Buzzoni 2017, for the syntax of the Ormulum). Moreover, if Modern English descends from Anglicised Norse, one would need to explain why it has not developed a post-posed article and strict V2, as the Scandinavian languages; these properties are not satisfactorily accounted for by Emonds and Faarlund. I join the criticism by authors such as van Kemenade (2016) and Bech and Walkden (2016), by arguing that the contribution by Emonds and Faarlund does not resolve the question about the impact of the Scandinavian language, and that the classification of Modern English as a Northern Germanic language is ill-founded.

The debate summarised above constitutes the point of departure for the present work; one of the aims is to determine whether the different word orders attested in OE can be explained by the interplay of both IS and prosodic interface conditions. A second aim of the present work is to test whether the syntax of the EME texts selected constitute a uniform development from the OE period, and whether the blurring of the interface conditions postulated can be analysed as the factor responsible for the reanalysis of S>Aux>V>O as the basic word order.

In Chapter 2 the theoretical framework and the methodology are presented; the framework employed is inspired by the antisymmetric accounts illustrated above but considers IS and prosody as the relevant interface conditions responsible for the Spell-Out of constituents. The interface conditions postulated stem from recent literature on Early Germanic which demonstrates how IS and weight of the constituents play a role in the surface structure of clauses (cf. Hinterhölzl, Petrova & Solf 2009; Linde 2009; Struik and van Kemenade 2018; Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2018, among others). In the second part of Chapter 2 the methodology and the samples are presented; except for the text of the Ormulum, the sample consists exclusively of prose texts.

In Chapter 3 an empirical survey on the grammaticalization of the definite determiner is presented; the prosodic condition presented in Chapter 2 predicts that an XP with both head and complement filled is spelled-out in post-verbal position. With the grammaticalization of the demonstrative into the definite determiner, a structural reanalysis takes place: the demonstrative located in [Spec, DP] is reanalysed as the head of the DP, turning the DP with a definite determiner into a phrase which is likely to be

spelled-out in post-verbal position. For this reason, it is crucial to determine when the definite determiner is reanalysed as the head of the DP in the history of English.

In Chapter 4 the OE sample is presented; the pilot sample investigated yields results which are very similar to a large-scale investigation conducted by Struik and van Kemenade (2018); it will be seen that pre-verbal constituents are subject to precise IS and prosodic constraints, whereas post-verbal constituents show a heterogeneous distribution. The results obtained with the pilot OE sample will constitute the basis for the study of the comprehensive EME sample.

In Chapter 5 the EME sample is investigated. It will be demonstrated that the prose texts belonging to the sample can be divided into two groups; in the first group, a more conservative syntax can be observed, whereas in the second group VO order constitutes the vast majority of cases. It will be seen that the conservative or less conservative character of the texts is not only linked to their dialectal provenance but also to their transmission history. Finally, an analysis of the poetic text of the Ormulum is presented; this text constitutes one of the few extant works produced in an area densely settled by the Scandinavian population. Given the paucity of texts for the period investigated, its inclusion in the sample allows to better understand whether the texts produced in an area influenced by the language of the Scandinavian settlers indeed presents a higher amount of VO orders. However, as pointed out above, this text was composed following a rigid metric scheme; it will be demonstrated that this rigid metric scheme shapes also the syntax of the work.

In Chapter 6 the syntax of object pronouns is investigated; being light elements which can be also cliticised, it is reasonable to treat them separately from the other types of arguments of verbs analysed in Chapters 4 and 5. It will be demonstrated that these elements are also governed by IS constraints, since they realise different types of topics which correlate with different projections. In the course of the EME period, these IS constraints are blurred and the post-verbal position is reanalysed as the Spell-Out site.

In Chapter 7 a summary of the data is presented, and the role of the grammaticalization of the definite determiner is looked at in more detail. The data reviewed in Chapter 7 lead to the syntactic analysis proposed in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 concludes the book.

# CHAPTER TWO

# THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND THE METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will illustrate the theoretical framework underlying this research; the theoretical framework presented here is elaborated by Hinterhölzl (2014; 2015; 2017) and builds on the previous debate on the underlying structure of OE, presented in Chapter 1. This theoretical framework aims to derive the different word orders attested by postulating a universal base word order; contrarily to the approach presented in Biberauer and Roberts (2005), however, the different attested word orders are derived by different Spell-Out options driven by IS and prosodic interface conditions operating at the LF and PF interface. Building on the literature on the role of IS on Early Germanic syntax, Hinterhölzl devises precise interface conditions which influence the Spell-Out of constituents so as to meet discourse and prosodic needs. In section 2.1, I present the general theoretical framework and the expected output of our interface conditions; in section 2.2, I will give the reasons for the postulation of a prosodic interface condition which defines heaviness in terms of metric structure, and in section 2.3 I will discuss the interaction between the interface conditions postulated and the grammaticalization of the definite determiner. In section 2.4, I will present the prospected language change scenario. Finally, in sections 2.5 and 2.6 I will present the methodology and the samples.

## 2.1 Interface conditions governing the Spell-Out of constituents

Building on the current debate on variation in OE word order, and from empirical findings about the influence of IS, Hinterhölzl (2014; 2015; 2017) proposes an anti-symmetric framework, in which IS and prosodic interface conditions govern the Spell-Out of constituents. The literature on the interaction between word order variation and IS is vast; cf. for instance the work by Schlachter (2004), Petrova (2009), Petrova and Solf (2009),

Hinterhölzl, Petrova and Solf (2009), Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2010; 2018) and Linde (2009) for Old High German and Old Saxon. As far as Old English is concerned, cf. the work by Bech (2001), van Kemenade and Los (2006; 2018), Cloutier (2009), van Kemenade (2009), Petrova and Speyer (2011), van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012), Elenbaas and van Kemenade (2014), Milicev (2016) and Struik and van Kemenade (2018). Moreover, also the weight of the constituents is analysed as a relevant factor in the OV/VO variation in Old Icelandic (cf. Hróarsdóttir 2000), whereas Struik and Van Kemenade (2018) argue that both information structure and weight yield statistically significant results in the mapping of direct objects of OE subordinate clauses. Please note that throughout this book I will refer to prosodic conditions; given the fact that the only evidence available comes from written texts, it is evident that prosodic intonation and contour cannot be tested. However, as will be discussed also below, the syntactic weight of constituents also has an impact on the prosodic structure of the sentence.

Recall that Roberts (1997) postulated that leftward licensing movement operations common to OV Modern Germanic languages, such as Modern German and Dutch, were operative also in OE, but he claims that these movement operations are optional, yielding the word order variation attested in the OE stage by assuming an antisymmetric universal base.

Hinterhölzl (ibid.) takes the movement operations postulated in Roberts (1997) to be obligatory; the leftward licensing movement operations proposed by Hinterhölzl are listed under (1 a-c):

(1) a. Licensing movement of arguments into a Case Phrase; [5]
b. Licensing movement of verb particles into the specifier of a low Aspect Phrase;
c. Licensing movement of predicative elements into a Predicative Phrase;

(From Hinterhölzl 2015: 303, example 9)

After these licensing movements have taken place, Hinterhölzl (ibid.) proposes the following interface conditions governing the Spell-Out of either the higher or of the lower copy of movement:

[5] This syntactic position is analogous to Roberts' (1997) $Agr_OP$.