

**THE QUALITATIVE DECLINE OF OBJECT-VERB ORDER
 IN LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH AND EARLY MODERN ENGLISH**

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1. INTRODUCTION

(1) OLD ENGLISH

þæt ic þas boc of Ledenum gereorde to Engliscre spræce *awende*
 that I this book from Latin language to English tongue translate
 ‘that I translate this book from Latin language to the English tongue’
 (*AHTh*, I, pref, 6/ Kemenade (1987:16) cited in Roberts (1997: 400))

(2) EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH

þat he **deap** *scolde* *þolizen*
 that he death should suffer
 ‘that he should suffer death’ (Vices & V. 113.21/ Fischer et al. (2000: 161))

(3) TABLE 1 --- QUANTITATIVE DECLINE OF OV ORDER

	c.1000	c.1200	c.1300	c.1400	c.1500
OV	52.5%	53.7%	40+%	14.3%	1.87%
VO	47.5%	46.3%	60-%	85.7%	98.13%

(Fries (1940: 201))

(4) *The OV order in the 15th century was on the decline in quality as well as in quantity.*

a. i. Ingham (2000), Morehout & Wurff (2000), Koma (2001)

⇒ Aux Neg-Obj V

ii. Wurff (1999), Fischer et al. (2000)

⇒ Aux Neg-Obj V

Aux Q-Obj V

Top-Obj \emptyset_{subj} (Aux) V

b. Foster & Wurff (1995, 1997), Fischer (1992)

⇒ Aux Prn-Obj V

(5) AIMS OF THIS STUDY

a. To clarify the facts of the OV order in the 15th century and afterwards.

b. To give an adequate explanation on the qualitative decline of OV order.

2. BASIC FACTS

(6) OV ORDER IN THE 14TH CENTURY

- a. I may **my persone and myn hous** so *kepen and deffenden*
I may myself and my house so keep and defend
'I can keep and defend myself and myself in such a way'

(Chaucer *Melibee* 1334/ Fischer et al. (2000: 163))

- b. And Absolon **his gyterne** hath *ytake*
and Absolon his guitar has taken
'And Absolon has taken his guitar'

(Chaucer *Miller's Tale* 3353/ Wurff (1997: 490))

(7) OV ORDER IN THE 15TH CENTURY

- a. Aux Neg-Obj V ⇒ (8) (Ingham (2000), Koma (2001) among others)
b. Aux Q-Obj V ⇒ (9) (Wurff (1999), Fischer et al. (2000))
c. Top-Obj \emptyset_{Subj} (Aux) V ⇒ (10) (Wurff (1999), Fischer et al. (2000))
d. Aux Prn-Obj V ⇒ (11) (Foster & Wurff (1995, 1997), Fischer (1992))

(8) AUX NEG-OBJ V

- I will **no thyng** *grawnt* with-out the vnder-shreves assent
I will nothing grant without the undersheriff's assent

'I will grant nothing without the undersheriff's assent' (*PL* 59.15/ Ingham (2000: 20))

(9) AUX Q-OBJ V

- he haþ on vs mervy, for he may **al þynge** *do*
he has on us mercy for he can all things do
'he has mercy on us, for he can do everything'

(*Barlam* 2740/ Fischer et al. (2000: 163))

(10) TOP-OBJ \emptyset_{SUBJ} (AUX) V

- a. *Relative Clause*

al them [that **this litel werke** shal *see, here or rede* to have me excused]
all them that this little work shall see hear or rede to have me excused
'all those that will see, hear or read this little work to forgive me'

(*Caxton* 46a.29/ Wurff (1999: 242))

- b. *Coordinated Clause (Second Conjunct)*

þat here kynge dede such reuerence and worschyp vnto þe poore men,
that their king did such reverence and worship unto the poor men
[and **such shame** *dede* vnto his dygnyte]
and such shame did unto his dignity

'that their king showed such reverence and respect to the poor people and caused
such shame to his own dignity' (*Barlam* 757/ op.cit.)

- (11) AUX PRN-OBJ V
 how hi ssolle **ham-zelue** *ssiriue*
 how they shall themselves thrive
 ‘how they must thrive themselves’ (Ayenbite 5.13/ Foster & Wurff (1995: 321))

- (12) (7a-c) vs. (7d) --- CONFLICTING OBSERVATION ⇒ FURTHER INVESTIGATION REQUIRED

- (13) SOURCES OF DATA (KROCH & TAYLOR (2000))
 2nd edition of *the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English*
 ⇒ Texts: M4 (1420-1500) & MX4 (comp. date unknown; ms. date 1420-1500)

- (14) TABLE 2 --- OV ORDER ATTESTED IN THE TEXTS FROM M4 AND MX4

	SENTENCES SEARCHED	OV TOKENS FOUND
cmaelr4	766	6 (0.78%)
cmcapchr	4175	10 (0.24%)
cmcapser	91	0 (0.00%)
cmedmund	300	0 (0.00%)
cmfitzja	228	9 (3.95%)
cmgregor	2631	6 (0.23%)
cminnoce	208	1 (0.48%)
cmkempe	3853	56 (1.45%)
cmmalory	4997	22 (0.44%)
cmreynar	740	12 (1.62%)
cmreynes	703	27 (3.84%)
cmsiege	733	55 (7.50%)
cmthorn	674	2 (0.30%)
TOTAL	20099	206 (1.02%)

(Miyashita (2001: 197))

- (15) TABLE 3 --- OBJECT TYPES INVOLVED IN THE ATTESTED OV ORDER

	FN-OBJ	PRN-OBJ	NEG-OBJ	Q-OBJ	TOP-OBJ	TOTAL
cmaelr4	0	1	3	1	1	6
cmcapchr	1	1	3	1	4	10
cmcapser	0	0	0	0	0	0
cmedmund	0	0	0	0	0	0
cmfitzja	1	3	1	2	2	9
cmgregor	1	2	0	1	2	6
cminnoce	1	0	0	0	0	1
cmkempe	12	5	20	3	16	56
cmmalory	2	9	3	1	7	22
cmreynar	3	4	2	0	3	12
cmreynes	6	10	4	0	7	27
cmsiege	2	48	0	0	5	55
cmthorn	0	0	0	0	2	2
TOTAL	29	83	36	9	49	206

(Miyashita (2001: 198) with slight modification)

(16) DOMINANT PATTERNS OF THE ATTESTED OV ORDER

- a. Aux Neg-Obj V ⇒ (17)
- b. Aux Q-Obj V ⇒ (18)
- c. Top-Obj Ø_{Subj} (Aux) V ⇒ (19)
- d. (Aux) Prn-Obj V ⇒ (20)

(17) AUX NEG-OBJ V

þei woldyn han a-wey hyr mayden fro hir þat sche xuld **no strumpet** *be* in hyr
they would have away her maid from her that she should no strumpet be in her
cumpany
company
'they would take away her maid from her so that she should not be a prostitute in her
company' (CMKEMPE, 62.1382/ PPCME2)

(18) AUX Q-OBJ V

I may **any-thing** *suffyr* for hys lofe
I may anything suffer from his love
'I may suffer anything from his love' (CMKEMPE, 123.2856/ PPCME2)

(19) TOP-OBJ Ø_{SUBJ} (AUX) V

But he deied sone, [and þe **tresor** *left* þere]
But he died soon and the treasure left there
'But he died soon, and left the treasure there' (CMCAPCHR, 94.1893-1894/ PPCME2)

(20) (AUX) PRN-OBJ V

- a. and fro his enmyes I schall **hym** *defende*
and from his enemies I shall him defend
'and from his enemies, I shall defend him' (CMREYNES, 266.509/ PPCME2)
- b. and I mekely **hit** *kyssyd* and allsoo þe heme of þe clothe þat he werryd
and I meekly it kissed and also the hem of the cloth that he wore
'and I meekly kissed it and also the hem of the clothes that he wore'
(CMSIEGE, 78.225/ op.cit.)

(21) OV ORDER IN THE FORMER HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY

- i. The final demise of productive use of OV order in prose texts [= (7a-c)] takes place in the first half of the 16th century. (Fischer et al. (2000: 164))
- ii. The pronominal object is occasionally found between the auxiliary and the non-finite form of a verb... (Rissanen (1999: 267))

↓

- a. Aux Q-Obj V ⇒ (22)
- b. Top-Obj Ø_{Subj} (Aux) V ⇒ (23)
- c. Aux Prn-Obj V ⇒ (24)

(22) AUX Q-OBJ V

Mine own good cousin, I cannot **much** *say*
(1534 More *Dialogue of Comfort* 144.9/ Fischer et al. (2000: 164))

(23) TOP-OBJ \emptyset_{SUBJ} (AUX) V
 Some are there also [that **such tales** *tell* them for consideration of another fear]
 (1534 *More Dialogue of Comfort* 181.25/ Fischer et al. (2000: 164))

(24) AUX PRN-OBJ V
 The drab she kepes away my good, the deuil he might **her** *snare*
 (c.1550 *Gammer Gurton's Needle* 59/ Rissanen (1999: 268))

(25) OV ORDER IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY
 i. ... 42% of all pronominal objects occur in the Mod/Aux O V pattern...
 (Wurff & Foster (1997: 448))
 ii. The placing of the object after the subject but before the verb is not infrequent,
 particularly when it is a pronoun... (Blake (1983: 120))
 ↓
 (Aux) Prn-Obj V ⇒ (26)

(26) (AUX) PRN-OBJ V
 a. 'Conuay', the wise **it** *call!*
 (1597 Shakespeare *Merry Wives of Windsor* I.iii/ Rissanen (1999: 267))
 b. Where plaine none might **her** *see*, nor she see any plaine
 (c.1580 Spencer *Faerie Queen* I.I.16/ Wurff & Foster (1997: 447))
 c. I might not **this** *beleue*
 (1600-1601 Shakespeare *Hamlet* I.i.56/ Blake (1983: 120))

(27) TABLE 4 --- SUMMARY OF OV FACTS

		OBJECT TYPES	SYNTACTIC ENVIRONMENTS
14TH CENTURY		any object	anywhere
15TH CENTURY		negated/quantified object topicalized object (any object) pronominal object	Aux Obj V relative/coordinate S w/ \emptyset_{Subj} (Aux) Obj V
16TH CENTURY	FORMER	quantified object topicalized object (any object) pronominal object	Aux Obj V relative/coordinate S w/ \emptyset_{Subj} (Aux) Obj V
	LATTER	pronominal object	(Aux) Obj V

- (50) FEATURES INVOLVED IN A'-MOVEMENT UNDER CONSIDERATION
- a. NM (cf. Nishioka (1999), Watanabe (2001a, 2002a, 2002c))
 - i. Probe (Neg): [uNeg]
 - ii. Goal (Neg-Obj): A. [Neg]
B. [uFoc]
 - b. OQR (cf. Beghelli & Stowell (1997), Watanabe (2002c))
 - i. Probe (Share): [uGRef]
 - ii. Goal (Q-Obj): A. [GRef]
B. [uFoc]
 - c. Topicalization (cf. Ishikawa (2001), Watanabe (2002c); contra Watanabe (2001b))
 - i. Probe (Top): [uTop]
 - ii. Goal (Top-Obj): A. [Top]
B. [uFoc]

5. CHANGES IN THE 15TH CENTURY AND AFTERWARDS

- (51) a. ... [B]eyond PF options and lexical arbitrariness, variation is limited to non-substantive parts of lexicon and general properties of lexical items.
(Chomsky (1993: 3))
- b. ... [P]arameters are restricted to *formal features* with no interpretation at the interface... [T]hey are restricted to formal features of functional categories.
(Chomsky (1995a: 6))
- (52) ... [C]hange can be described simply as the reorganization of the featural content of the lexical items of the language.
(Pintzuk et al. (2000: 7))
- (53) FORMATION OF THE LEXICON (Chomsky (2000, 2001a, 2001b))
- a. From a universal set of features, [F], a particular language L selects a subset of [F], namely {F}.
 - b. L then assembles {F} to lexical items.
- ↓
- LANGUAGE CHANGE TAKES PLACE IN THE COURSE OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.
- (54) The OV order had been attested with any object type since OE until the 14th century.
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It was not derived by a sole operation (i.e. OS+DISL), but by the following set of operations:
- a. OS+NM
 - b. OS+OQR
 - c. OS+Topicalization
 - d. OS+DISL

- (55) GRAMMAR CHANGE IN THE END OF THE 14TH CENTURY --- weakening of DISL
- OS+NM
 - OS+OQR
 - OS+Topicalization
 - OS+DISL (weakened)
- (55') RESULTANT LANGUAGE CHANGE --- OV order qualitatively restricted
- Aux Neg-Obj V
 - Aux Q-Obj V
 - Top-Obj ØSubj (Aux) V
 - (Aux) Prn-Obj V
- (56) GRAMMAR CHANGE IN THE END OF THE 15TH CENTURY
--- loss of [*uNeg*] on Neg and [*uFoc*] on Neg-Obj
- OS+OQR
 - OS+Topicalization
 - OS+DISL (weakened)
- (56') RESULTANT LANGUAGE CHANGE
- Aux Q-Obj V
 - Top-Obj ØSubj (Aux) V
 - (Aux) Prn-Obj V
- (57) GRAMMAR CHANGE IN THE END OF THE FORMER HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY
--- loss of [*uGRef*] on Share and [*uFoc*] on Q-Obj
loss of [*uTop*] on Top and [*uFoc*] on Top-Obj in embedded contexts
OS+DISL (weakened)
- (57') RESULTANT LANGUAGE CHANGE
(Aux) Prn-Obj V
- (58) GRAMMAR CHANGE SOMETIME AFTER THE 16TH CENTURY --- loss of DISL
- (58') RESULTANT LANGUAGE CHANGE
no OV order

(59) TABLE 5 --- SUMMARY OF CHANGE

	GRAMMAR CHANGE	LANGUAGE CHANGE
1300 - 1400	weakening of DISL	Obj-Aux-V (any object) Aux-Obj-V (any object) Obj-V (any object)
1400 - 1500	loss of [uNeg] on Neg and [uFoc] on Neg-Obj	Obj-Aux-V (Top-Obj) Aux-Obj-V (Neg-Obj, Q-Obj & Prn-Obj) Obj-V (Top-Obj & Prn-Obj)
1500 - 1550	loss of [uGRef] on Share and [uFoc] on Q-Obj & loss of [uTop] on Top and [uFoc] on Top-Obj in embedded contexts	Obj-Aux-V (Top-Obj) Aux-Obj-V (Q-Obj & Prn-Obj) Obj-V (Top-Obj & Prn-Obj)
1550 - ?	loss of DISL	(Aux-)Obj-V (Prn-Obj)
? - PE		no OV order

6. CONCLUSION

(60) RESIDUAL ISSUES

- a. identification of the period where the Aux Prn-Obj V order was lost
⇒ SOMETIME AFTER THE 16TH CENTURY?
- b. syntactic behavior of the OV order in earlier English (especially OE and EME)
⇒ DISTRIBUTIONAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OBJECT TYPES?

APPENDIX 1: SOURCES OF DATA (PPCME2)

- 🍏 a. M4 (1420-1500)
 - i. *Aelred of Rivaulx's De Institutione Inclusarum in Bodley ms.* (cmaelr4)
 - ii. *Capgrave's Chronicle* (cmcapchr)
 - iii. *Capgrave's Sermon* (cmcapser)
 - iv. *Life of St. Edmund* (cmedmund)
 - v. *Fitzjames' Sermo die Lune* (cmfitzja)
 - vi. *Gregory's Chronicle* (cmgregor)
 - vii. *In Die Innocencium* (cminnoce)
 - viii. *The Book of Margery Kempe* (cmkempe)
 - ix. *Malory's Morte Darthur* (cmmalory)
 - x. *Caxton's History of Reynard the Fox* (cmreynar)
 - xi. *The Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes* (cmreynes)
 - xii. *The Siege of Jerusalem* (cmsiege)
- b. MX4 (comp. date unknown; ms. date 1420-1500)
 - i. *The 'Liber de Diversis Medicinis' in Thornton ms.* (cmthorn)
- 🍏 I. northern dialect: (b-i)
 II. southern dialect: (a-vi)
 III. West Midland dialect: (a-ix) & (a-xii)
 IV. East Midland dialect: the rest of the texts above
 ⇒ NO MAJOR DIALECTAL DIFFERENCE WITH RESPECT TO OV ORDER
 (CONTRA THE DIALECTAL DIFFERENCE IN V2)
 (cf. Kroch & Taylor (1997), Haeberli (2000))

APPENDIX 2: OPTIONALITY OF OS

- (I) HOLMBERG'S GENERALIZATION: OS is contingent on V-raising (out of VP).
- (II) a. *v* is assigned an EPP feature only if that has a semantic effect on outcome.
 b. The EPP position (i.e. phonological edge) of *v* is assigned INT.
 c. At the phonological border of *v*P, XP is assigned INT'.
 (Chomsky (2001a: 35))
- (III) INT
 "INT is an interpretive complex which consists of specificity/definiteness, [old] information, focus, etc. (Chomsky (2001a: 31))." This is the semantic interpretation that the shifted object receives.
- (IV) PHONOLOGICAL BORDER
 The phonological border of a phrase is a position not c-commanded by phonological material in that phrase.
 (Chomsky (2001a: 34))
- (IV') [TP ... [T [_v V-*v*] -T] ... [_vP **Obj** [_v Subj [_v *t*_v [_vP *t*_v **Obj**]]]]]
 PHONOLOGICAL EDGE PHONOLOGICAL BOARDER

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