

Word Order in the History of English*

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Sohng, Hong-Ki & Moon, Seung-Chul. 2007. Word Order in the History of English. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 15(1), 159-197. The English language has progressed from a language with varied surface word orders towards a language with fixed surface order due to a general reduction of inflections. Old English looked similar to Middle and Modern English with regard to the SVO order in the main clauses. However, Middle and Modern English were very different from Old English with regard to the order in the subordinate clauses. This paper discusses in depth base as well as surface order in the history of English, based on a stimulating perspective from the recent language development theories set forth by Lightfoot (1981, 1997a, 1997b), Canale (1978), etc. After that, this paper provides a full-fledged account of word order variations in the English language in terms of a set of universal, hierarchical constraints.

Key words: the English language, history of English, Old English, Middle English, Modern English, word order, constraints

1. Introduction

As the English language has developed in the course of time from Old English (450-1100) into Middle English (1100-1500), and then to Modern English (1500-present), several grammatical and morphological changes have followed the development of the language. Among others, word order change in the development of English has been one of the keen interests for researchers in the history of English.¹⁾

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1) According to Fisiak (1995: 24-25), the history of the English language is classified as follows.

At first glance, Old English shared a lot of similarities with Middle and Modern English with regard to its word order, for example, word order in the main clause. Old English also seemed to possess a lot of differences from Middle and Modern English in regards to word order in the embedded clauses. Before the 1960s, a kind of general consensus was reached among scholars that Old English was a language with free word order, Modern English is a language with fixed word order, and Middle English a language progressing towards fixed word order.

As the theories on language have further developed since mid-1960s, a stimulating view on linguistic change has been taken by researchers on language development (Lightfoot 1981, 1997a, 1997b, Kemenade 1992, 1997, Canale 1978, Traugott 1965, etc.): base word order has been suggested and adopted, and word order variation has been considered to be regulated by some universal linguistic principles.

In this paper, we are going to explain word order change in the history of English in terms of a set of universal, hierarchical constraints.

Section 2 discusses in detail major grammatical characteristics of Old English, and relevant facts about word order of Old English. Sections 3-4 discuss in depth the outstanding grammatical characteristics of Middle and Modern English, and investigates word order of early Middle, late Middle, and modern English. In Sections 2-4, relevant facts from Modern English will be provided and compared with those from Old English and Middle English when necessary.

Section 5 gives an insightful account of word order change in the development of the English language. Section 6 provides a full-fledged account of word order in English in terms of a set of universal,

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- (i) Old English: pre-Old English (c. 450-700), early Old English (700-900), late Old English (900-1100)
 - (ii) Middle English: early Middle English (1100-1300), late Middle English (1300-1500)
 - (iii) Modern English: early Modern English (1500-1650), late Modern English (1650-1800), present-day English (1800-present)

hierarchical constraints. Section 7 is a conclusion of the paper.

2. Word Order of Old English

The 12th century chronicler Henry of Huntington remarked that an interest in the past was one of the outstanding characteristics of humans, compared with the other animals. We note that the medium in terms of which speakers belonging to a certain period of time in a language group communicate their feelings and ideas to other persons, through which they reflect and express the branches of science and the literary works are worthwhile to investigate and study.

Therefore, it is worthy of study to investigate and compare different uses of word order in the development of the English language. Before handling the matter of word order of Old English, we will consider in 2.1 some of the major linguistic characteristics of Old English, and compare them with those of Modern English when necessary. 2.2 will exclusively investigate word order of Old English.

2.1. Major Characteristics of Old English²⁾

Old English was not entirely a uniform language. Differences existed between the language of the early period (about A.D. 700) and that of the later time (Baugh & Cable 1993:51). Furthermore, four dialects were used in the Old English period of time — Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, and Kentish. The language itself has undergone drastic changes from Old English through Middle English to Modern English. Thus, we should consider major characteristics of Old English before handling word order change that has taken place throughout the history of English. The following characteristics have been suggested and discussed among scholars in English development.

First, the pronunciations of Old English words in general differ to

2) The account of major characteristics of Old English is based on Baugh & Cable (1993:50-54) and Pyles & Algeo (1982: 98-134).

some extent from those of words of Modern English. For example, the long vowels underwent considerable modification. The modern English form in parentheses show a typical Modern English development of the Old English sound (Pyles & Algeo 1982:106).

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| (1) <i>a</i> as in <i>habban</i> (have) | <i>ī</i> as in <i>rīdan</i> (ride) |
| <i>ā</i> as in <i>hām</i> (home) | <i>o</i> as in <i>mo ð ðe</i> (moth) |
| <i>æ</i> as in <i>þæt</i> (that) | <i>ō</i> as in <i>fōda</i> (food) |
| <i>ǣ</i> as in <i>dǣl</i> (deal) | <i>u</i> as in <i>sundor</i> (sunder) |
| <i>e</i> as in <i>settan</i> (set) | <i>ū</i> as in <i>mūs</i> (mouse) |
| <i>ē</i> as in <i>fēdan</i> (feed) | <i>y</i> as in <i>fyllan</i> (fill) |
| <i>i</i> as in <i>sittan</i> (sit) | <i>ȳ</i> as in <i>mȳs</i> (mice) |

Word such as *fæger* (fair), or *sāwol* (soul) suggest that they were contracted in later English. All these cases show genuine differences of pronunciation.

Secondly, the feature of Old English that immediately distinguishes itself from Modern English is the rarity of those words from Latin and the absence of those from French that form such a large part of our present vocabulary. The vocabulary of Old English is almost purely Germanic, and a large part of it has disappeared from the language. Due to the outstanding effects of the Norman Conquest on the vocabulary of Old English, much (85%) of its vocabulary appropriate to literature and learning disappeared and was replaced by words from French and Latin. Those words which survive are basics of the present-day English and express fundamental concepts – for example, *hūs* (house), *mann* (man), *wīf* (wife, woman), *cild* (child), *gōd* (good), *lēaf* (leaf), *etan* (eat), *libban* (live), etc.

The third and most fundamental feature that distinguishes Old English from Modern English is its grammar. Old English constituted an inflectional language like Latin, whereas Modern English lost most of the inflections that had been used in the Old English times. In Modern English, the subject and the object do not have distinctive forms, nor do we have, except in the possessive case and in pronouns, inflectional

endings to indicate the other relations marked by case endings in Latin (Baugh & Cable 1993:53-54).

Old English was very different from Modern English including inflections, pronunciations, grammar, and vocabulary. In 2.2, we will consider word order of Old English based on the knowledge of these differences.

2.2. Word Order of Old English

At first glance, word order in the main clause in Old English and Modern English look similar, as shown in (2), showing the subject-verb-object pattern.

- (2) a. $\mathfrak{D}\bar{\epsilon}\mathfrak{s}$ geonga monn is forliden (AP)
this young man is shipwrecked
'This young man is shipwrecked'
- b. Ic herige $\mathfrak{D}\bar{\epsilon}$ (Ha.)
I admire you
'I admire you'
- c. & he sende him micla gifa
and he sent him great gift
'and he sent him great gift'
- d. Se swicola Herodes cwæð to ðam tungel-witegum
the treacherous Herod spoke to the star-wise men
'The treacherous Herod spoke to the astrologers.'
(AHTh I, 82, 15)
- e. & hier lic lip æt Pafian
and her body lies at Pavia
'and her body lies at Pavia' (Parker 883)

The English language belongs to the Germanic group of languages, a branch of the proto-indo-European family of languages. In fact, German and Dutch, members of the Germanic group, also exhibit the 'S-V-O' pattern in the main clause, as exemplified in (3)-(4), respectively.

- (3) Karl kauft das Buch.
 Karl buys the book
 'Karl buys the book.'
- (4) Wim koopt het boek.
 Wim buys the book
 'Wim buys the book.'

It is a well-known linguistic fact that the V2 phenomenon, the appearance of the verb in the second position of a clause, is well attested in Old English, German, Dutch, and other West Germanic languages. It should be thus noted that even word order in the main clause in Old English differs significantly from that in Modern English, since not just a subject, but an object, a prepositional phrase, or an adverbial can precede a verb, occupying the initial position and leaving the verb in the second position of a main clause, as shown in (5).

- (5) a. [eall þis] aredap se reccere swipe ryhte.
 all this arranges the ruler very rightly.
 'the ruler arranges all this very rightly' (CP 168, 3)
- b. [Swelcum ingeþonce] gerist þæt ...
 such-a disposition suits that ...
 'It is fitting for such a disposition that ...' (CP 60, 10)
- c. [for þæs wintres cyle] nolde se asolcena erian
 for the winter's cold not-wanted the layabout plough
 'the layabout didn't want to plough because of the cold'
 (AHP 17.116)
- d. Her gefeaht Ecgbryht cyning.
 In-this-year fought Ecgbryht king
 'In this year King Ecgbryht fought' (Chr.)

The initial position of a main clause is occupied by the accusative object, the dative object, the prepositional phrase, and the adverbial in (5a)-(5d), respectively.

German and Dutch also show the verb second phenomenon, as in (6)–(7), respectively.

- (6) a. Ich las schon letztes Jahr diesen Roman.
I read already last year this book
'I already read this book last year.'
- b. [Schon letztes Jahr] las ich diesen Roman
Already last year read I this book
- (7) a. Ik heb een huis met een tuintje gehuurd.
I have a house with a little-garden rented
'I have rented a house with a little garden.'
- b. Gisteren heb ik een huis met een tuintje gehuurd.
Yesterday have I a house with a little-garden rented
'I rented a house with a little garden yesterday.'

On the other hand, the verb second phenomenon for the main clause in Old English seems to disappear in the embedded contexts, as manifested in (8)–(10).

- (8) a. þa ic ða þis eall gemunde
when I then this all recall
'When I then recall all this' (CP 26)
- b. [among þā m þē] hīe þus spræcon, (Ha.)
while they thus spoke
'while they thus spoke,'
- (9) . . . , se his hūs ofer stān getimbrode. (Mat.)
who his house on rock built
' . . . , who built his house on rock.'
- (10) a. þæt ic þas boc of Ledenum gereorde to Engliscre spræce
that I this book from Latin language to English tongue
awende
translate
'that I translate this book from the Latin language to the
English tongue' (AHTh.)

Sentences (8a-b, 10) tell us that in the embedded clauses the verb is put in the final position. And in the relative clause (9), the verb is also positioned clause-finally. In Old English, the verb-final pattern appears in the embedded contexts introduced by a subordinate conjunction, or in the relative clause introduced by a relative pronoun. The examples (8-10) illustrate subject-object-verb (SOV) order for the embedded clauses.

Consider examples from German and Dutch for the same pattern in the embedded contexts.

(11) da ß Karl das Buch kauft
 that Karl the book buys
 'that Karl buys the book'

(12) dat Wim het boek koopt
 that Wim the book buys
 'that Wim buys the book'

However, the picture for word order in the embedded contexts in Old English seems blurred, as the following examples show.

(13) a. þ æt hi sceoldon oncnawan heora Scyppend
 that they might acknowledge their Creator
 'that they might acknowledge their Creator' (AHT_h 1, 96)

b. þ æt hi sceoldon heora Scyppend oncnawan
 that they might their Creator acknowledge

(14) a. Same men cweþaþ on Englisc þ æt hit sie feaxede steorra
 some men say in English that it is long-haired star
 'some men say in English that it is a long-haired star'
 (Parker 892)

b. Same men cweþaþ on Englisc þ æt hit feaxede steorra sie
 some men say in English that it long-haired star is

(15) a. We witon þ æt ure Drihten mid us wæs [on þ æm scipe]

We know that our Lord with us was on the ship
 ‘We know that our Lord was on the ship with us.’

(Sancta Andreæ 105-6)

b. We witon þæt ure Drihten mid us [on þæm scipe] wæs
 We know that our Lord with us on the ship was

(16) a. þæt hi willaþ [þæt men wenan [þæt hi yfele bion]]
 that they want that people think that they evil are
 ‘that they want people to think that they are evil’ (CP 21, 20)

b. *þæt hi willaþ [þæt men [þæt hi yfele bion] wenan]
 that they want that people that they evil are think

(17) a. þæt hie him gefultumadon [þæt hie wiþ þone here
 that they him assisted that they with the army
 gefuhton]
 fought

‘that they would help him fight the army’ (Parker 868)

b. *þæt hie him [þæt hie wiþ þone here gefuhton]
 that they him that they with the army fought
 gefultumadon
 assisted

Examples (13-14) show that the object NP or a complement NP could appear either pre-verbally or post-verbally in the embedded contexts. The sentences (15a-b) show that a PP also undergoes the same process: it could appear either post-verbally or pre-verbally. In addition, the sentences (16a-b, 17a-b) illustrate a very interesting fact about a sentential complement in Old English: a sentential complement can only appear immediately after the verb, but not pre-verbally.

However, in German and Dutch, the verb cannot be followed by an NP in the embedded clause introduced by a lexical complementizer. This thus means that Old English had a freer word order.

Following Lightfoot (1974, 1979, 1981, 1997a, 1997b), Canale (1978) and Traugott (1965), we propose SOV as base word order in Old English³. We will put forth a detailed analysis of word order in Old English in 5.2.

3. Word Order of Middle English

The Middle English period (1100–1500) was characterized by extensive, profound changes, changes that affected the English language in both grammar and vocabulary. The Norman Conquest and the conditions that followed from it resulted in some of them. At the beginning, early Middle English (1100–1300) differed somewhat from its modern counterpart, but late Middle English (1300–1500) was similar to Modern English in several aspects. Before discussing word order of Middle English, it seems worthwhile to consider major characteristics of Middle English in the first place.

3.1. Major Characteristics of Middle English⁴⁾

There were such extensive changes in pronunciation during the Middle English period, in particular, of unaccented inflectional endings, that grammar was heavily changed. The changes can be described as a general reduction of inflections. Many of the grammatical distinctions of Old English disappeared, so Middle English became structurally much more like the language of the present time.

Speaking of the nouns in Middle English, the inflectional endings for them were seriously disturbed. To cite an example, in the London English of Chaucer, the forms *stān*, *stānes*, *stāne*, *stān* in the singular and *stānas*, *stāna*, *stānum*, *stānas* in the plural were reduced to three:

3) Since Bach (1971) and Bierwisch (1963), it has been assumed that German is an SOV language. Based on the particle distribution, Koster (1975) discusses that Dutch is also an SOV language. Scholars including Lightfoot (1981) and Lee (1993:29) discuss that even in Old English, the position of the particle *very* frequently coincides with that of the verb, attesting to the SOV hypothesis for Old English's underlying word order. There are also theory-internal arguments for Old English SOV underlying order. See Lightfoot (1974, 1979, 1981, 1997a, 1997b), Canale (1978), Traugott (1965) and Lee (1993).

4) The account of major characteristics of Middle English in this section is based on Baugh & Cable (1993:154-187) and Pyles & Algeo (1982: 137-155).

stān, stānes, stāne. The only distinctive termination was the -s of the possessive singular and of the nominative and accusative plural.

The leveling of forms for the adjectives had much greater consequences: the form of the nominative singular was extended to all cases of singular, and that of the nominative plural was extended to all cases of the plural, both in the strong and weak declensions. Consequently, there remained no longer any distinction between the singular and the plural in the weak declension. Both ended in -e (*blinda* > *blinde* and *blindan* > *blinde*). This was also characteristic of the adjectives under the strong declension whose singular ended in -e.

Due to the decay of inflections during the Middle English period, juxtaposition, word order, and the use of prepositions played important roles in making clear the relations of words in sentences. The decay of inflections also brought about the loss of grammatical gender in English. Due to the leveling of inflections, syntactic and semantic relationships that used to be signaled by the endings of words became ambiguous. In Old English, the grammatical functions of two consecutive nouns were clear from their inflections in, for example, the Nominative and Dative Cases. In Middle English their functions might be unclear. The direct way to avoid ambiguity of this kind is through limiting the possible pattern of word order (Baugh & Cable 1993: 162). We will investigate the patterns of word order during the Middle English period in 3.2.

3.2. Word Order of Middle English

In this section, we will explore word order in the Middle English period, and compare it with word order in the Old English times when necessary. We will focus on word order of early Middle English in 3.2.1 and word order of late Middle English in 3.2.2.

3.2.1. Word Order of early Middle English

Discussions on word order of early Middle English in this section depend heavily on *Ancrene Wisse*, the work produced in early 13th

century, around 1222.⁵⁾

We already noted in 2.2 that the SOV pattern was rather a standard pattern for embedded contexts in Old English, while the SVO pattern appeared much more in main clauses in the Old English times.

In the early Middle English period, the SVO pattern also constituted a general pattern for main clauses. Further, that pattern looked like a common pattern for embedded contexts during the early Middle English period.

Consider the following examples from early Middle English.

- (18) a. þeos þreo Maries bitacnið þreo bitternesses.
These three Maries signify three bitterness (AW 1409)
'These three Maries signify three types of bitterness.'
- b. Crist [cl hit] wat
Christ it knows
'Christ knows it.'

(18a) shows the SVO pattern for the main clause. (18b) may not be a counterexample to the main clause SVO pattern, since the object is not a full NP but a clitic that cliticizes to a position outside VP.

Let us consider examples about embedded clauses from early Middle English.

- (19) a. . . . , þah ha her polien (AW 0732)
although she here suffers
'although she suffers here'
- b. . . . , þah he hehe sitte
although he aloft sits
'although he sits aloft'
- c. For þi Crist luueð mare (AW 2321)

5) The source of the text of *Ancrene Wisse* is given in the section "Texts Quoted by Abbreviated Titles" in this paper.

because Christ loves more
'because Christ loves more'

(19a-c) shows that the SV pattern appears in the embedded clauses introduced by *þah* 'although' and *for þi* 'because'. As for the adverbs which precede the verbs in these examples, they can be analyzed as clitics that cliticize to some position above VP.

- (20) a. o ðer þe hali halhen, þe bohten hit se deore
or the holy saints who bought it so dearly
'or the holy saints, who bought it so dearly' (AW 0922)
- b. me Gódd, mi deorewur ðe feader, hauest tu al forwarpe me,
my God, my dear father, have you all abandoned me
þin anleþi sune, þe beatest me se hearde?
your only son who beat me so hard?
'My God, my dear Father, have you all abandoned me, your
only son, (you,) who beat me so hard?'

There were 129 occurrences of pronominal objects in *Ancrene Wisse* most of which appear post-verbally, and 13 of which appear preverbally. As the examples (20a-b) illustrate, objects occur post-verbally.

Consider the following examples from *Ancrene Wisse*.

- (21) a. & talde him þet his deore spuse se swi ðe murnede efter him
and told him tha this dear bride exceedingly mourned for him
þet heo wi ð uten him delit nefde i na ing (AW 1134)
that she without him delight had in nothing
'and told him that his dear bride mourned exceedingly for him,
that she had no delight in anything without him.'
- b. Of heo þe hare curtles toteore ð o pisse wisse, sei ð Ysaie,
of those who their tunics tear in this way says Isaiah
'Of those who tear their tunics in this way, Isaiah says, . . .'
(AW 0933)

The examples (21a-b) exhibit preverbal occurrences of the objects, which differ from the pattern in (20a-c). Working on the patterns that appeared in *Ancrene Wisse*, we propose that the SVO pattern was a base pattern for both main clauses and embedded clauses in the early Middle English period. The detailed account of the examples will be given in 5.3.

3.2.2. Word Order of late Middle English

We already saw in the previous section that the SVO pattern was rather dominant in the early Middle English period. In fact, the SVO pattern persisted as a major pattern through the Middle English times, even though the SOV pattern also appeared in a decreasing manner during the same span of time.

During the late Middle English times, except in some sentences, the most frequent order was SVO, just like in Modern English.

- (22) a. me schal holden schild ine vihte up abuuen ðe heued
 people must hold shield in right up above the head
 ‘People must hold the shield in the right up above the head.’
 (*Ancr. RiwI* 132.16)
- b. His forme gefeoht wæs wi ð Atheniense. (Mitchell 630)
 his first fight was against Athens
 ‘His first fight was against Athens.’
- c. that knyght smote down sir Trystramus frome hys horse, . .
 that knight smote down sir Tristramus from his horse
 ‘that knight smote down sir Tristramus from his horse, . . .’
- (23) a. for he hadde power of confessioun, . . .(Mustanoja 143)
 for he had power of confession
 ‘for he had power of confession, . . .’
- b. wher as evere him lest to sette.. (M: 14c. Gower CA 1.37)
 where ever he desired to remain
 ‘where he (lit.: him) ever desires to remain’

c. . . þat ever I made hem myself (M 290)
 that ever I made him myself
 ‘that I ever made him myself’

The examples (22a-c) show us the SVO pattern for the main clauses, and those in (23a-c) manifest the same pattern for the embedded contexts.

Even though the SVO pattern was the most frequent order in late Middle English, the SOV order was also found. Consider the following examples.

- (24) a. I may no sorwe haue.
 I may no sorrow have
 ‘I may have no sorrow.’ (Jacob’ s Well 21/17)
- b. it hym conserveth florissynge in his age
 it him conserves flourishing in his age
 ‘It conserves him flourishing in his old age.’
 (Chaucer, *Melibee* 995)
- c. And fayn I wolde my sowle saue.
 and gladly I would my soul save
 ‘And I am eager to save my soul’
 (*Castle of Perseverance* 378)
- (25) a. þif þei þise degrees knowyn.
 if they these degrees know
 ‘if they know about the degree [i.e. of affinity].’
- b. Though that the feend noght in oure sighte him shewe
 although that the devil not in our sight him shows
 ‘Although the devil does not show himself in our sight’
 (Chaucer, *Canon Yeoman’ s Tale* 916)
- c. And though I nat the same wordes seye
 and though I not the same words say
 ‘And though I do not say the same words’
 (Chaucer, *Tale of Thopas* 959)

As is shown in (24a-c), objects may also occur pre-verbally in main clauses in the late Middle English period. It is also true of embedded clauses, as is illustrated in (25a-c).

Following Lightfoot (1981, 1997a, 1997b), Traugott (1965), etc., we proposed SOV as the base word order in Old English in 2.2. Scholars including Kemenade (1987, 1993a, 1993b) have argued that Middle English became underlyingly SVO by around 1200, and that the V2 phenomena disappeared from the language at around 1400. We propose the SVO pattern as the base word order for early and late Middle English. The SOV pattern, as noted in 3.2.1, appeared less frequently in early Middle English and much less so in late Middle English, and finally disappeared from Modern English. We will give a full account of word order of Middle English in 5.2.

4. Word Order of Modern English

English grammar in the early Modern English is marked more by the survival of certain forms and usages that have since disappeared than by any fundamental developments. The great changes that reduced the inflections of Old English to their modern counterparts had already taken place (Baugh & Cable 1993:235). Modern English lost most of the inflections that had been used in the Old English times. In Modern English, the subject and the object do not have distinctive forms, nor do we have, except in the possessive case and in pronouns, inflectional endings to indicate the other relations marked by case endings in Latin. Lee (1993: 265-267) relates the loss of V2 movement to a weakening of agreement morphology, especially to the loss of plural endings of verbal inflection, which occurred approximately in 1400. Due to the great reduction of the inflections, Modern English came to depend heavily on fixed word order to indicate the distinctive grammatical relations.

As Pintzuk (1991: 365-367) and Allen (1990) point out, the base order for English had become SVO by around 1200, but the SOV pattern was still used in the decreasing manner for around 200 more years. It follows that the SOV pattern and the V2 phenomena disappeared from

English by around 1400. The Middle English period saw the SVO pattern as the dominant order, with SOV occurring in a decreasing manner. The Modern English period, which began at around 1500 and has lasted through the present time, has witnessed the SVO pattern as the sole surface word order, with the exception of OSV with topicalization of an object.

Consider the following examples from early Modern English.

- (26) a. , and amend things by rebellion to your utter undoing.
(Cheke I-265)
- b. Applieth the Italian phrase to our English speaking.
(Wilson I-290)
- c. He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son . . . (Prov. 29:21 (King James Version 1611))
- d. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil. (2 Cor. 13:7 (King James Version 1611))
- e. For the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. (Zeph. 1:7 (King James Version 1611))

As we can see in these examples from early Modern English, the SVO pattern was exclusively used both in the main clauses, as in (26a-c), and in the subordinate clauses, as in (26c-e).

Consider next the examples from late Modern English.

- (27) a. Then he himself uses it to the' r punishing. (Milton II-483)
- b. Since she has gone to Mayfair they say she only frequents parties. (Wentworth 1710)
- c. If he had not come up as he did he would have had a Fever or Convulsions. (Verney 1717)
- d. I wonder you say nothing of Dilly' s being got to Ireland. (Swift 1711)
- e. It would be very difficult to meet with any one in our

country that would take it and manage it as they ought, . . .
(Banks 1730)

We once again note here that the SVO pattern exclusively dominated main and subordinate clauses in late Modern English.

The following examples are from present-day English (1800–present).

- (28) a. First let me give you the best news . . . (Wordsworth 1822)
b. The Lord has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated those he has invited. (Zeph. 1:7 (New International Version 1984))
c. As he took my old gun with him it has again returned into my hands. (Livingstone 1851)
d. The value of my writing has changed since I made my last agreement for a story. (Hardy 1873)
- (29) a. Mary, John likes.
b. That, I don' t know.

We conclude by considering the examples in this section that SVO order has been a fixed order for modern English, with the exception of topicalization of the object, as in (29a–b).

5. Base Word Order and Its Implications

As was mentioned in the introduction, scholars before the sixties argued that Old English was a language with free word order, Modern English is a language with fixed word order, and Middle English was a language progressing towards fixed word order. Since the development of modern linguistic grammars, the assumption that there are two types of languages in the world, the free word order type of languages and the fixed word order type has not been appealing to the researchers in language development. That kind of assumption is not compatible with Universal Grammar accepted by scholars in language development. Once base or underlying word order is posited, the surface orders can be derived from it by various grammatical operations.

In this section, we will consider the base word order for Old English, Middle English, and Modern English, and the way that the surface orders are derived.

5.1. Base Word Order of Old English and Its Implications

We noted in 2.2 that the SVO pattern prevailed in the main clauses in Old English, whereas the SOV pattern was the dominant one in the embedded contexts even though the SVO pattern also occurred in the embedded contexts.

Since Bach (1971) and Bierwisch (1963), German has been assumed to be an SOV language. Koster (1975) gives several arguments that Dutch, another member of the Germanic group of languages, is also an SOV language. Further, Lee (1993:21-47) provides several theory-internal arguments that SOV was the base order of Old English.⁶

Following Lightfoot (1974, 1979, 1981, 1997a, 1997b), Canale (1978), Traugott (1965), and Lee (1993), we propose SOV as the base word order for Old English. We will consider the surface orders shown in 2.2. in depth here. In *Minimalist Inquiries* (Chomsky 1998, 1999), the most recent generative grammatical theory, Agree occurs between T and the subject, and between v and the object, resulting in the subject - verb agreement and the object - verb agreement, respectively.

It is well-known that, in a number of dialects of Dutch (e.g., South Hollandic, West Flemish, Groningen, etc.) and German (e.b., Bavarian, Luxemburgish, etc.) the complementizer shows person and /or number agreement with the subject morphologically, as illustrated in the

6) Under Lee's perspective, the SOV pattern was the base order for Old English, and SVO is derived by grammatical operations - the verb is raised to INFL, and then to COMP to check Agreement in COMP, which is V2 movement. The subject is moved to Spec CP by topicalization, resulting in the SVO surface order. In the embedded clause introduced by a lexical complementizer, which checks Agreement in C, the verb cannot raise to COMP, and thus stays in-situ. resulting in SOV order. He argues further that positing SVO as the base order cannot explain the SOV order in the embedded contexts, since there is no landing site for the postposed verb in subordinate clauses.

following examples.

(30) da-n-k ik kom-(e)n (West Flemish)
that-1sg. I come-1sg
'that I come'

(31) of-s too kom-s
whether-2sg. you come-2sg.
'whether you come'

The complementizers in these examples are in agreement with the verbs with regard to person and number. Following Lee's (1993: 86-89) proposal, we argue that COMP contains AGR even in Old English, Standard German, and Standard Dutch, where the agreement morphology of a complementizer is not overtly realized. In other words, Old English complementizers had the abstract, covert agreement features since their cousin category, a demonstrative, had an agreement paradigm in Old English.⁷⁾

In the *Minimalist Inquiries* account, we propose that Old English and Modern English are parameterized differently as to the agreement features that express the subject - verb agreement: in Modern English T has the agreement features, but in Old English the verb had the agreement features.

(32) [Se swicola Herodes] cwæð to ðam tungel-witegum
the treacherous Herod spoke to the astrologers (AHTh)
'The treacherous Herod spoke to the astrologers.'

Under our account, the verb in (32) has the agreement features and agrees with the subject, getting the feature [3rd person, masculine, singular] from the subject. After that, Agree between AGR in Comp and the verb occurs. We argue here that if a probe in A' -position in a

7) OE demonstratives had various inflected forms according to gender, number, and Case. This is also the case in standard German and Dutch (Lee 1993: 133).

peripheral area outside IP agrees with a goal in A-position inside IP, it results in the movement of the goal to the peripheral area. We know very well that the topic or focus movement induced by Agree of the topic or focus features involves the movement of a goal to the peripheral area outside IP. In case of the Old English examples like (32), AGR in Comp agrees with the verb, leading to the head movement of the verb to Comp, as Comp is the only possible landing site for a head in the projection of C. We also propose that Old English is parameterized for the topic feature differently from Modern English: T in Old English had the topic feature, while Comp or some other functional head in Modern English has the topic feature. As the head movement of V to C carries along T with the topic feature, the topic feature in T adjoined to C induces movement of the subject, or some other XP with the topic feature to Spec CP. Hence applications of head movement of the verb to C prompted by Agree and the movement of the subject with the topic feature to Spec CP derive the SVO order from the base SOV order in main clauses in Old English.

Let us discuss why there is no movement in the embedded clauses, resulting in the SOV order.⁸⁾

- (33) a. *ƿ æ t ic ƿ a s b o c o f L e d e n u m g e r e o r d e t o E n g l i s c r e*
 that I this book from Latin language to English
 s p r æ c e a w e n d e
 tongue translate
 ‘that I translate this book from the Latin language to the
 English tongue’

8) Scholars (Lightfoot 1991, 1997b, Kemenade 1992, 1997, Koopman 1994, etc.) supporting the SOV base order for Old English argue that no movement occurs in the embedded clauses in OE. The account of the SOV order in the OE embedded clauses that follows is a *Minimalist Inquiries* version of Lee’s (1994), who argues in the *Minimalist Program* framework that verb-raising to COMP is not triggered in the OE embedded clauses, since the agreement features of COMP (AGR_C) has already checked the ϕ -features of the lexical complementizer and disappeared.

- b. *þa ic ða þis eall gemunde*
 when I then this all recall
 ‘when I then recall all this’

As the lexical complementizers *þæt* and *þa* in the above examples already filled Comp and agree with Comp, no Agree between Comp and the verbs occurs. Thus, the verbs stay in-situ and the subjects move to Spec TP from Spec VP to check the topic feature in T, showing the surface SOV pattern in the embedded contexts. As for the topic, Vennemann (1974) argues that general topics are all reduced to the subject in Old English.

Consider the following embedded clauses from Old English.

- (34) a. *þæt hi sceoldon oncnawan heora Scyppend*
 that they might acknowledge their Creator
 ‘that they might acknowledge their Creator’ (AHT_h 1, 96)
- b. *þæt hi sceoldon heora Scyppend oncnawan*
 that they might their Creator acknowledge
- (35) a. *þæt hie him gefultumadon [þæt hie wiþ þone here*
 that they him assisted that they with the army
gefuhton]
 fought
 ‘that they would help him fight the army’ (Parker 868)
- b. **þæt hie him [þæt hie wiþ þone here gefuhton]*
 that they him that they with the army fought
gefultumadon
 assisted

Contrary to our expectation, the embedded clauses in (30a-b) show that the object NP could appear either pre-verbally or post-verbally, and the embedded clause in (31a-b) shows that a sentential complement can only appear immediately after the verb, but not pre-verbally. In Modern English, a heavy object NP can be extraposed to the sentence-final

position, as in the following example.

(36) I put t_i on the counter [the big jar with ice floating in it],.

In contrast, a simple object NP could be extraposed to the right of the verb in the embedded clause in Old English.⁹⁾ In Old English, extraposition of PP and CP was very common, which is also attested in Modern English, Dutch, German, etc (Lee 1993: 35-38). However, extraposition of CP was obligatory in the Old English times, unlike extraposition of PP. The object NP was extraposed in (34a), but it was not in (34b). The sentential complement was obligatorily extraposed in (35a). Hence the ungrammaticality of (35b). We will pursue an Optimality Theoretic account of word order in section 6.

5.2. Base Word Order of Middle English and Its Implications

Scholars including Kemenade (1987, 1993a, 1993b), Canale (1978), and Lightfoot (1981) have reached an agreement that Middle English became underlyingly SVO by around 1200, and that the V2 phenomena disappeared from the language at around 1400. The SVO pattern was a dominant order throughout the Middle English times, even though the SOV pattern also appeared in a decreasing manner during the Middle English period.

- (37) a. β eos β reo Maries bitacni δ β reo bitternesses. (AW 1409)
These three Maries signify three bitterness
'These three Maries signify three types of bitterness.'
b. o δ er β e hali halhen, β e bohten hit se deore (AW 0922)
or the holy saints who bought it so dearly
'or the holy saints, who bought it so dearly'

9) In the main clause in Old English, where SVO was derived from SOV, there was no motivation to extrapose the object, as the object was already in sentence-final position. Hence, extraposition was only applicable to the embedded contexts as an optional operation in Old English.

- c. me Godd, mi deorewur ð e feader, hauest tu al forwarpe me,
 my God, my dear father, have you all abandoned me
 þ in anle þ i sune, þe beatest me se hearde?
 your only son who beat me so hard?
 ‘My God, my dear Father, have you all abandoned me, your
 only son, (you,) who beat me so hard?’
- d. Of heo þ e hare curtles toteore ð o pisse wisse, sei ð Ysaie,
 of those who their tunics tear in this way says Isaiah
 ‘Of those who tear their tunics in this way, Isaiah says, . . .’
 (AW 0933)
- (38) a. me schal holden schild ine vihte up abuen ð e heued
 people must hold shield in right up above the head
 ‘People must hold the shield in the right up above the head.’
 (Ancr. Riwl. 132, 16)
- b. for he hadde power of confessioun, . . . (Mustanoja 1960, 143)
 for he had power of confession
 ‘for he had power of confession, . . .’
- c. I may no sorwe haue.
 I may no sorrow have
 ‘I may have no sorrow.’
- d. And though I nat the same wordes seye
 and though I not the same words say
 ‘And though I do not say the same words’

The SVO pattern occurred frequently in early and late Middle English, but the SOV order was also used much less frequently in that period of time. Lightfoot (1974, 1979, 1981), Canale (1978) and Traugott (1965) propose that SOV was the base order in the Old English times. We already noted that the base SOV pattern was turned into the surface main clause SVO pattern by movement of V and topicalization of the subject to Spec CP. However, many of the grammatical distinctions of Old English disappeared in the Middle English times, so Middle English became structurally much more like the language of the

present time.

Middle English had become underlyingly SVO by 1200. Thus no such movement as V movement and topicalization to Spec CP was required in Middle English. The subject raised to Spec TP from Spec VP to satisfy Topic in T, and the verb and the object stayed in-situ in the sentences, which showed the SVO pattern.

We propose that, in (37d) and (38c-d), examples with the SOV order, the object NPs select the focus feature in the course of the Lexical Array, and the functional head *v* is assigned the focus feature in transition from the Lexicon to the Lexical Array. Consequently, Match occurs between the probe *v* and the goal, and the object NPs raise overtly to the outer Spec of *v*P to check the focus feature in *v*.¹⁰ It follows that, in (37a-c) and (38a-b) with the SVO order, no focus feature is assigned to the object NPs or to the functional category *v*, and the sentences exhibit the base SVO order.

5.3. Base Word Order of Modern English and Its Implications

We noted in the previous section that SVO was a dominant order in Middle English, and that the SOV order completely disappeared from the language by around 1400. Consequently, in the Modern English period which started at around 1500, SVO has been the sole word order, with the exception of topicalization of the object in the main clause.

Consider the following examples from Modern English.

- (39) a. For the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his
 guests.
 b. Then he himself uses it to the' r punishing.
 'Then he himself uses it to their punishing.'

10) The movement of this type might be viewed as object shift which occurs in Icelandic, etc. Object shift may be analyzed as being prompted by the EPP feature in *v*. Even though the focus movement of the object to the outer Spec *v*P doesn't exist in Modern English, we consider the left-ward movement of the object in (38c) as focus movement in Middle English, which is optional.

- c. I wonder you say nothing of Dilly' s being got to Ireland.
- d. As he took my old gun with him it has again returned into my hands.

In the main clauses in (39a-b) and the subordinate ones in (39c-d), the subject raises to Spec TP from Spec vP to satisfy the EPP feature on T, and the verb raises to v to form [V-v] complex.¹¹⁾ Agree occurs between the subject and T, valuing the agreement features of T and the Case feature of the subject. Agree of the object and v also takes place, valuing the agreement features of v and the Case feature of the object. Hence the SVO order.

- (40) a. Mary, John likes.
- b. That, I don' t know.

After the surface order was formed in the above examples, Agree of (T, the subject) and Agree of (v, the object) take place. After that, the objects raise to Spec Topic Phrase to check the topic feature in the functional category Topic.

We will pursue an Optimality Theoretic account of word order in English in the next section.

6. An Account of Word Order of English

Since Prince and Smolensky (1991, 1993), the OT mechanism has been used to provide an adequate account of an enormous number of linguistic phenomena. In this section, we will provide an account of word order of English in terms of a set of hierarchical constraints that are assumed to be inherent in English speakers' language faculty.

11) We argue that Modern English is parameterized for the feature on T differently from Old English. T in Old English had the topic feature as well as the optional EPP feature, but T in Modern English has the obligatory EPP feature. The subjects of the sentences in Old English were optional due to the optional EPP feature on T.

6.1. An Account of Word Order of Old English

SOV was posited as the base order for Old English, but we proposed that SVO for the main clause was derived by applications of head movement of the verb to C and topic movement of the subject to Spec CP, as in (41a). However, in the subordinate clauses introduced by the lexical complementizer, the complementizer agrees with Comp, and no Agree of Comp and the verb occurs. Hence the verb stays in-situ, and the subject moves to Spec TP to satisfy the topic feature in T, resulting in the SOV order for embedded clauses, as in (41b) and (42b).

- (41) a. Ic herige þe (Ha.)
I admire you
'I admire you'
- b. þæt ic þas boc of Ledenum gereorde to Engliscra
that I this book from Latin language to English
spræce awende
tongue translate
'that I translate this book from the Latin language to the
English tongue'
- (42) a. þæt hi sceoldon oncnawan heora Scyppend
that they might acknowledge their Creator
'that they might acknowledge their Creator' (AHTh 1, 96)
- b. þæt hi sceoldon heora Scyppend oncnawan
that they might their Creator acknowledge
- (43) a. þæt hie him gefultumadon [þæt hie wiþ þone here
that they him assisted that they with the army
gefuhton]
fought
'that they would help him fight the army' (Parker 868)
- b. *þæt hie him [þæt hie wiþ þone here gefuhton]
that they him that they with the army fought
gefultumadon

assisted

We also argued in 5.1 that the object NP could be extraposed in the embedded clause, as in (42a), while the sentential CP was obligatorily extraposed in Old English, as shown in (43a).


We can come up with the following constraints to account for word order of Old English.

(44) Constraints for Old English

- (A) Satisfy_{AgreeC}: Agreement features in C must be checked.
- (B) Satisfy_{Topic}: The topic feature must be checked.
- (C) Stay: Do not move.
- (D) Satisfy_{end-focus}: The clause-final Focus feature must be checked.
- (E) Satisfy_{heavyCPfocus}: The heavy CP must be focused clause-finally.

- (45) a. Ic herige þ ē (Ha.)
 I admire you
 'I admire you'
- b. *Ic þ ē herige (Ha.)
 I you admire
- c. *herige Ic þ ē (Ha.)
 admire I you

(46)

Input	Satisfy _{AgreeC}	Satisfy _{Topic}	Stay
a. 			**
b.	*		
c.		*	*



In the OT mechanism, the candidate that violates the lower-ranked constraint(s) than the other candidates is chosen as optimal. (45a) is

derived from the base pattern in (45b) by V-to-C movement and movement of the subject to Spec CP. Hence the sentence (45) violates the constraint Stay two times. In (45b), the verb stays in-situ, violating Satisfy_{AgreeC}, and the subject satisfies Topic feature in Spec TP. In (45c), the verb moves to C to satisfy the constraint Satisfy_{AgreeC}, but the subject stays in-situ, violating Satisfy_{Topic}. Thus (45a) with the SVO pattern, which has the least violations of the constraints, is selected as the best candidate out of the set of candidates.

Consider the embedded clauses in (42a-b).

We noted that the object NP could be extraposed, as in (42a). Since this operation was optional, (42b) where the object NP stays in-situ was also grammatical. The following ranking of the relevant constraints accounts for the grammaticality judgments in (42a-b).


(47)

Input	Satisfy _{AgreeC}	Satisfy _{Topic}	stay	Satisfy _{focus(end)}
(42a) 			*	
(42b) 				*

We assume that the constraints Stay and Satisfy_{focus(end)} are unranked with respect to each other in Old English; in other words, they are tied. As (42a-b) each violates one of the tied constraints, both are judged grammatical in terms of the set of the universal constraints.

Consider next the OT tableau (48) to account for the sentences in (43a-b).

(48)

Input	Satisfy _{AgreeC}	Satisfy _{Topic}	Satisfy _{heavyCPfocus}	Stay
(43a) 				*
(43b)			*	

As the constraint Satisfy_{heavyCPfocus} is ranked higher than the constraint Stay in Old English, (43a), which violates Stay, is favorable to (43b),

which violates $\text{Satisfy}_{\text{heavyCPfocus}}$.

(49) Ranking of the Constraints for Old English¹²⁾

$$\text{Satisfy}_{\text{AgreeC}} > \text{Satisfy}_{\text{Topic}} > \text{Stay}$$

We can come up with the constraint ranking (49) for Old English. We will show that rankings of the constraints distinct from that for Old English are relevant for Middle and Modern English in the next sections.

6.2. An Account of Word Order of Middle English

We proposed in 5.2 that SVO was base order for Middle English, but the SOV pattern also appeared when the object NP raised to outer Spec vP to check the Focus feature in v. What this means is that a new constraint on Focus began to come into force in the Middle English times.

We already noted in 3.1 that Middle English became structurally much more like the present-day English due to a general reduction of inflections. However, we assume that $\text{Satisfy}_{\text{Topic}}$ and $\text{Satisfy}_{\text{AgreeC}}$ still existed as grammatical constraints in Middle English.

Thus, in addition to the constraints $\text{Satisfy}_{\text{Topic[TP]}}$, Stay, and $\text{Satisfy}_{\text{AgreeC}}$, we have the following constraint that came into force in Middle English.

(50) $\text{Satisfy}_{\text{Focus[v]}}$: The Focus feature in v must be checked.

(51) a. þ eos þ reo Maries bitacni ð þ reo bitternesses. (AW 1409)
These three Maries signify three bitterness

12) V-to-C movement ensures that the Topic feature in T is now in the adjoined position to Comp. In other words, Topic movement of the subject to Spec CP is prompted by V-to-C movement. This is why the constraint $\text{Satisfy}_{\text{AgreeC}}$ is ranked higher than the constraint $\text{Satisfy}_{\text{Topic(C)}}$.

- ‘These three Maries signify three types of bitterness.’
- b. $\text{p eos } \text{p reo } \text{Maries } \text{p reo } \text{bitternesses bitacni } \delta$.
 These three Maries three bitterness signify
- c. $*\text{bitacni } \delta \text{ p eos } \text{p reo } \text{Maries } \text{p reo } \text{bitternesses}$.
 signify these three Maries three bitterness

In general, SVO was a preferred order in the Middle English times, but SOV was still possible, as illustrated in (51a–b). Thus the following constraint rankings were both used in Middle English as coexisting grammars in the sense of Kroch & Taylor (1997).

(52) Rankings of the Constraints for Middle English

- (A) Stay > Satisfy_{Focus[v]} > Satisfy_{Agree[C]}
 (B) Stay > Satisfy_{Focus[end]} > Satisfy_{Agree[C]}

The tableau (53) illustrates the ranking (52A) of the universal constraints for Middle English.

(53)

Input	Stay	Satisfy _{Focus[v]}	Satisfy _{Agree[C]}
SVO θ			*
SOV	*		*
VSO	**		

It was noted in 5.2 that, as focus movement is optional, no focus feature is assigned to the object NP or to v in (51a) with SVO order. Hence, the sentence (51a), which involves a violation of the constraint Satisfy_{AgreeC}, shows no violation of the constraint Satisfy_{Focus[v]}. And the sentence (51b) observes the constraint Satisfy_{Focus[v]}, which necessarily entails that it violates Stay. Even though (53c) satisfies the constraint Satisfy_{AgreeC} in terms of V movement to COMP, it involves two violations of Stay: one for V-movement to v for the sake of θ -marking

the subject, and another for V-movement to COMP. As shown in (54), SVO order with the least violation of the constraints is chosen as optimal.

SOV order was also permissible in Middle English, as shown in (51b). We assume that a different ranking of constraints, as shown in (54), was also employed in the Middle English times. In short, the combinations of the constraints illustrated in (52A) and (52B) were used in Middle English as coexisting grammars to yield SOV sentences as well as SVO ones.

(54)

Input	Stay	Satisfy _{Focus[<i>end</i>]}	Satisfy _{Agree[C]}
SVO	*		*
SOV 		*	*
VSO	**	*	

Since SOV order was also used in literary works in Middle English, people who preferred to use the SOV pattern might have assumed that SOV was base order for Middle English by analogy to SOV base order for Old English. On the assumption that SOV was base order for Middle English, SVO was derived by extraposing the object to the sentence-final position in the way SVO was derived in the embedded clauses in Old English. Hence (51a) with SOV order involves a violation of Satisfy_{Focus[*end*]} and Satisfy_{Agree[C]}, while (51a) with SVO order and (51c) with VSO order involve violations of the higher ranked Stay. For those who took SOV as base order for Middle English, sentences like (51b) were chosen as optimal.

So far we have seen that the distinct combinations of the relevant constraints were employed in Middle English to yield both SVO and SOV sentences, and that the combination of the constraints in (52A) was much more used during the Middle English times.

It was pointed out in 5.3 that SOV order had completely disappeared from the language by around 1400. What this means is very clear: since

around 1400, the combination of the constraints illustrated in (52B) had died out, and the constraint mechanism in (52A) had exerted itself as the sole grammatical mechanism of word order for the remainder of the Middle English times.

6.3. An Account of Word Order of Modern English

As we observed in 5.3 and 6.2, SOV order disappeared from English by around 1400. Since that time, SVO has been the sole word order for English, with the exception of topicalization of the object, as illustrated in (40). As was pointed out at the end of 6.2, (52A) had persisted through the Middle English times, whereas (52B) has died out since around 1400.


It should be noted that the leftward movement of the object which had happened in late Middle English didn't occur in Modern English, as shown below.

- (55) a. she only frequents parties.
- b. *She only parties frequents.

What this means is that out of the two constraint patterns that were used in Middle English, (52A) continued to prevail through Modern English, while (52B) had died out.

- (56) a. He took my old gun.
- b. *He my old gun took.
- c. *Took he my old gun.

(57)


	Stay	Satisfy _{Focus[v]}	Satisfy _{Agree[C]}
SVO 			*
SOV	*		*
VSO	**		

(56a), the standard Modern English example with orthodox SVO, is selected as optimal in violation of the constraint $\text{Satisfy}_{\text{Agree}[\text{C}]}$, while (56b-c) are rejected in violations of the higher ranked Stay. Consider next the object-topicalized sentence.

- (58) a. *John likes Sue_[topic].
 b. Sue_[topic], John likes.

We noted in 5.1 that Modern English is parameterized for the Topic feature differently from Old English: the functional category Topic outside CP has the topic feature in Modern English, while T has it in Old English. We argue that the functional category Topic is selected into the Lexical Array for (58a-b), and the objects are assigned the topic features in transition from the Lexicon to the Lexical Array. We can come up with the following ranking of the constraints to account for the sentences (58a-b).

(59)

	$\text{Satisfy}_{\text{Topic}}$	Stay	$\text{Satisfy}_{\text{Agree}[\text{C}]}$
(58a)	*		*
(58b) 		*	*

The constraint ranking (59), where $\text{Satisfy}_{\text{Topic}}$ is ranked higher than Stay, provides an account of the grammaticality judgments on (58a-b): (58b) which has a violation of the lower-ranked constraint is chosen as optimal.

We have found in this section that (57), one of the competing grammatical constraints for Middle English, came to prevail in Modern English, yielding the SVO pattern, and that, in addition, (59) has also been used in Modern English.

We have seen in section 6 that word order of Old English, Middle English, and Modern English is well-explained in terms of a set of

hierarchical constraints that are assumed to be inherent in English speakers' language faculty.

7. Conclusion

The English language has progressed from a language with varied surface word orders towards a language with fixed surface order due to a general reduction of inflections. Old English looked similar to its descendants, Middle and Modern English, with regard to the SVO surface order in the main clause. On a closer inspection, however, Old English was very different from Middle and Modern English. SOV was a major pattern for the embedded clauses in Old English, but SVO was the major order for both main and subordinate clauses in Middle English. And SVO is the single word order in Modern English except for the OSV topicalized sentences.

Since the advent of modern linguistic theories, language change, especially word order change, has been studied from a more scientific perspective. Base word order is taken, and word order variation is assumed to be regulated by universal linguistic principles. Sections 2-4 have discussed in detail major linguistic characteristics and word order of Old, Middle, and Modern English. Section 5 discusses in detail base order and surface order derived from base order in Old, Middle, and Modern English.

Section 6 provides a full-fledged account of word order change in English in terms of a set of universal, hierarchical constraints. A factor for word order change has been the status of the constraint Stay: it topped the hierarchy of the constraints in Middle and Modern English, but ranked lowest in Old English.

We have thus seen that word order variations of Old, Middle, and Modern English are nicely handled by the different rankings of the constraints that are assumed to be inherent in English speakers' language faculty.

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Texts Quoted by Abbreviated Titles

- AHP = *Homilies of AElfric: A supplementary collection*. Ed. J. Pope. (1967). Early English Text Society (EETS) vols. 259 and 260, London: Oxford University Press.
- AHTh = *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon church*. Ed. B. Thorpe. (1971), AElfric Society, 1844-1846. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp.
- Ancr. Riwl. = *The English text of the Ancrene Riwe*. Ed. M. Day (1952). EETS, vol. 225, London: Oxford University Press.
- AP = *Homilies of AElfric*. 1967 ed. J. Pope, EETS, vols. 259 and 260, London: Oxford University Press.
- AW = *Ancrene Wisse*. Ed. J. Tolkien, (1962), EETS. Vol. 1. London: Oxford University Press.
- Chr. = The Old English chronicle. *The elements of Old English*. (1965).
- CP = *King Alfred's translation of Pope Gregory's Cura Pastoralis*. (1871-1872). Ed. H. Sweet. EETS, vols. 45 and 50, London: Tr bner.
- Ha. = The harrowing of hell. *The elements of Old English*. (1965).

M = Kurath, H. S., S. M. Kuhn, J. Reidy, R. E. Lewis et al. (Eds.)
(1952), *Middle English dictionary*. Ann Arbor: University of
Michigan Press.
Mat. = The gospel of Matthew. *The elements of Old English*. (1965).
Parker = *The Parker chronicle*. Ed. A. H. Smith (1935), London:
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