

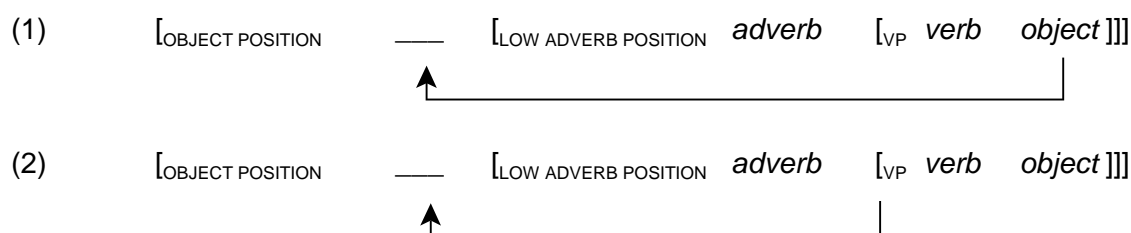
# A comparative perspective on syntactic change in the history of English

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Hypothesis pursued here: the key change in the historical development of English syntax is from object movement to VP-movement:



## 1. Survey of the syntactic changes in the history of English

phenomenon	Old English before 1100	Modern English after 1500	time of change	example
object position (embedded clause)	OV, nonadjacent	VO, adjacent	1300-1350	(1)
object order	free	IO-DO	"	(2)
particle position (embedded clause)	preverbal	postverbal	"	(3)
subject/verb inversion	all types of verbs	only w. auxiliaries	1400	(4)
position lexical verb (main clause)	outside VP	inside VP	1500	(5)
reflexive	= pronoun	= zero	Early Mod Eng	(6)
perfective auxiliary	have/be	have	19th century	(7)

(1) ..þæt he nolde næfre eft **eal mancynn** mid wætere **acwellan**  
 that he not-would never after all mankind with water destroy  
 ‘..that he would never again **destroy all mankind** with water.’

(2) a. ða bead se biscop **þam ceastergewarum** **heora sceattas**  
 then offered the bishop the citizens-DAT their treasures-ACC  
 ‘..then the bishop offered **the citizens their treasures**.’

b. þa bead Darius **healf his rice** **Alexandre**  
 then offered Darius half his kingdom-ACC Alexander-DAT  
 ‘..then Darius offered **Alexander half his kingdom**.’

(3) *ponne ne miht þu na þæt mot ut ateon*  
 then not can you not the mote out draw  
 'then you cannot **draw** the mote **out**'

(4) *Hwæt scealt þu þinum hlaforde?*  
 what owe you your lord  
 'What **do** you owe your lord?'

(5) *God him worhte þa reaf of fellum*  
 God them made then garments of skin  
 'God **then made** them garments of skin.'

(6) *He hine restan wolde*  
 he him-ACC rest wanted  
 'He wanted to rest ø.'

(7) *þa sind forðfarene þin geleafa hæfð ðe gehealed*  
 they are passed-away your faith has you healed  
 'They **have** passed away.' 'Your faith **has** healed you.'

## 2. Parameter change

(8) *Hypotheses*

- change in the setting of a headedness parameter (Canale 1978, Pintzuk 1991)  
 [Old English: head final > Modern English: head initial]
- change in the setting of an overt/covert movement parameter (Roberts 1997)  
 [Old English: overt object movement > Modern English: covert object movement]

(9) *Head initial character of Old English*

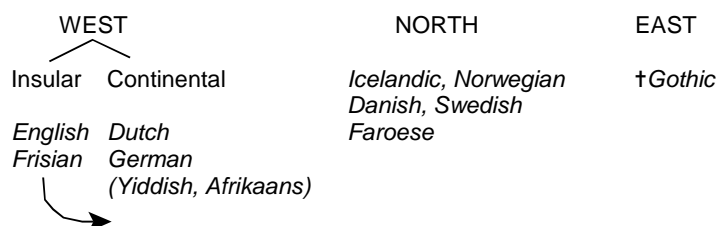
	Old English	Modern English
DP	<i>se cing</i>	<i>the king</i>
CP	<i>þæt IP</i>	<i>that IP</i>
PP	<i>on þam dæge</i>	<i>on that day</i>
NP	<i>ane boc be X</i>	<i>a book about X</i>
&P	<i>fæder and moder</i>	<i>father and mother</i>

(10) *Against covert object movement in English*

- object precedes low adverbs/adverbials/secondary predicates  
*John read the book quickly/yesterday/naked*
- predicts nothing about the behavior of the verb
- ad hoc character of the 'strength' property of features triggering overt/covert movement
- propriety of covert movement (cf. Kayne 1998).

## 3. Comparative angle: Modern Continental West Germanic is like Old English

(11) *The Germanic language family*



(1)' ..dat hij **de mensheid** met water **verdelgde** (Dutch)  
 that he the mankind with water destroyed

(2)'/ (3)' a. ..dat hij **de burgers** **hun schatten** terug gaf  
 that he the citizens their treasures back gave  
 b. ..dat hij **hun schatten** **de burgers** terug gaf  
 that he their treasures the citizens back gave

(4)' Wat **zeg** je?  
 what say you  
 'What are you saying?'

(5)' Hij **maakte** toen kleren voor ze  
 he made then clothes for them

(6)' Hij scheerde **zich**  
 he shaved REFL  
 'He shaved.'

(7)' Hij **is** gekomen — Hij **heeft** gewerkt  
 he is come he has worked

*Guiding idea: whatever characterizes the synchronic difference between Modern English and Modern Continental West-Germanic also characterizes the diachronic difference between Old and Modern English.*

#### 4. English vs. Dutch: collective vs. individual movement

(12) Types of adverbs (Cinque 1999)

1. evaluative: *frankly, fortunately, allegedly*
2. modal: *probably, possibly, necessarily*
3. aspectual: *usually, again, often, quickly, completely, still, virtually*
4. manner: *well, fast, quickly, completely*

(13) *Cinque's theory*

These adverbs occupy VP-external specifier positions in functional projections which express adverbial notions and which are universally rigidly hierarchically ordered.

(14) *Consequence*

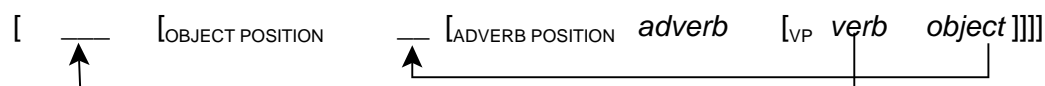
Whatever precedes the low (manner) adverbs must be outside VP

(15) a. John did it **fast** (\*fast did it, \*did fast it)  
 b. Jan heeft het **snel** gedaan (\*gedaan snel)  
 John has it fast done

(16) *Consequences*

1. the object is outside VP in both English and Dutch
2. the finite verb is outside VP in English, but not in Dutch (embedded clauses)

(17) Johnson (1991)



(18) *Does not account for the verb-object adjacency in English*

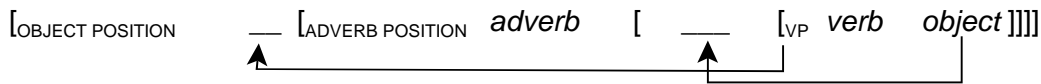
- a. John kissed (\*{virtually, fast, yesterday}) Mary
- b. ..dat Jan Marie {praktisch, snel, gisteren} kuste  
 that John Mary virtually, fast, yesterday kissed

(19) Hypothesis: where Dutch moves the object, English moves the entire VP (Cinque 1999, Koster 2000).

(20) *Some supporting observations*

- a. Heavy NP Shift [absent from Dutch] (21)
- b. Position and order of secondary predicates (22)
- c. Position and order of multiple adverbials (25)

(21) John discovered yesterday [a phenomenon that might change our views]



(22) a. John ate the meat **raw naked**

- b. ..dat Jan het vlees **naakt rauw** op at  
 that John the meat naked raw up ate

(23) *roll up collective movement (English)*



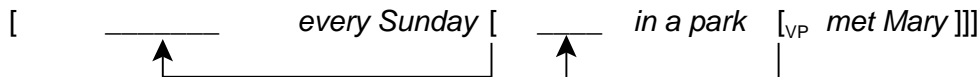
(24) *individual object movement (Dutch)*



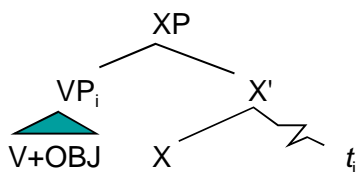
(25) a. John met Mary [in a park] [every Sunday]

- b. ..dat Jan Marie [elke zondag] [in een park] ontmoette (every>a / a>every)  
 that John Mary every Sunday in a park met (every>a)

(26) *roll up collective movement (English)*



(27) *Immediate consequences*



- a. VO, adjacency (1)
- b. fixed IO-DO order (2)
- c. particle position (3); assumption: particle is generated inside VP (Small Clause analysis)
- d. no lexical verb movement (4); follows if head movement out of specifier is prohibited
- e. lexical verb inside VP (5)

## 6. The pied piping parameter and the history of English

- (28) *Hypothesis*  
 Old English individual object movement to object position > Modern English collective VP-movement to object position

### A. the OV > VO shift

- (29) *VO orders not uncommon in Old English*  
 ..pæt hi urum godum geoffrian magon **ðancwurðe** **onsægednisse**  
 that they our gods offer may grateful sacrifice  
 ‘..that they may offer to our gods grateful sacrifice.’

*But only with full NPs. Early Middle English shows an increase in the order Verb—Pronoun, trickling down from the northern dialects (West Midlands, Kroch & Taylor 2000).*

- (30) ..pæt ze mahen ane pine *me* here  
 that you may alone torture me here

*The relevance of this is that the verb and the pronoun are necessarily adjacent, so the reordering leads to adjacency, i.e. treating the VP as a unit.*

- (31) *Manner adverbs in Old English precede the embedded/infinitival verb (Fischer et al. 2000:142ff, De Haas 2003)*  
 ..pæt hi mihton **swa bealdlice** Godes geleafan bodian  
 that they could so boldly God’s faith preach

*The exact position of manner adverbs in the transition period has not been studied yet.*

### B. double objects

*Individual movement of objects entails the possibility of reordering them; collective movement of the VP prohibits reordering of the objects.*

- (32) *Special adjacency relation Verb—Indirect Object leads to special syntax*  
 Mary was given a book (‘recipient passives’, emerging 1400-1500)

### C. Particle verbs

- (33) *Old English patterns*  
 a. PRON/NP PRT VERB (3), (34)  
 b. PRT VERB NP/\*PRON (35) cf. (29)

- (34) þa ahof<sub>i</sub> Drihten **hie** up <sub>ɿ</sub>  
 then raised God them up

(35) pa ahof<sub>i</sub> Paulus up t<sub>i</sub> **his heafod**  
 then raised Paul up his head

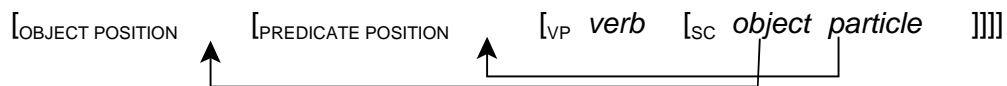
(36) *Middle English patterns*

- a. VERB PRON/NP PRT (37)  
 b. VERB PRT NP/\*PRON (38)

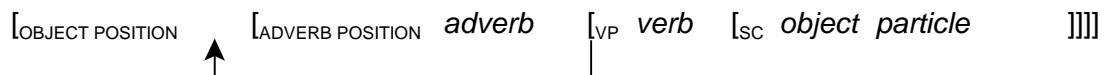
(37) heo holden {**hire / hire honden**} up  
 they held her / her hands up

(38) heo hef up {**hire hond / \*hire**}  
 she raised up her hand / her

(39) *Old English / Dutch individual movement (Zwart 1994)*



(40) *Modern English collective movement*



(41) *Modern English PRT—NP order is a residu of the Old English Heavy NP Shift order.*

## 7. Grammaticalization of auxiliaries?

(42) *types of auxiliaries*

	English	Dutch
temporal	<i>have, be</i>	<i>hebben, zijn</i>
modal	<i>will, must, may, can</i>	<i>zullen, willen, moeten, mogen, kunnen</i>
dummy	<i>do</i>	--

(43) *properties of modal auxiliaries in English*

- a. no infinitive: \**to will/must/may/can come*  
 b. no stacking: \**He must can come* (√be able to)

(44) *these properties are absent from Dutch modal auxiliaries*

- a. infinitive: *te zullen/ willen/ moeten/ mogen/ kunnen komen*  
 to shall will must may can come  
 b. stacking: *Hij moet kunnen komen*  
 he must can-INF come-INF 'He must be able to come.'

(45) *Standard view on this difference: English modal auxiliaries are in INFL  
 Dutch modal auxiliaries are in V*

(46) *More differences (all of these absent from Dutch):*

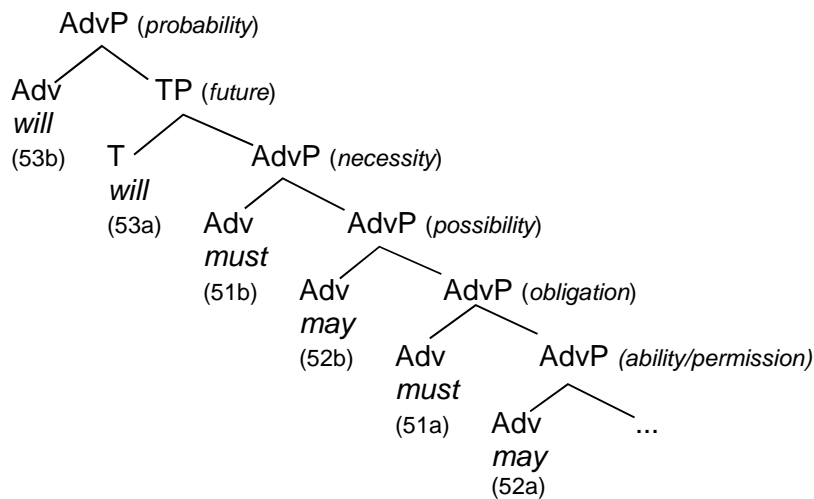
- a. negative verb forms (47)    b. special syntax (48)    c. licensing ellipsis (49)

- (47) will ~ won't  
 can ~ can't [kæn ~ kant ]  
 must ~ mustn't [mʌst ~ mʌsnt]
- (48) Can/must/will/may I come ?  
 \*Came he ? (√Did he come?)
- (49) a. John will come and so will Bill <come>  
 b. \*Jan zal komen en Piet zal ook <komen>  
 John will come and Pete will too come

*Epistemic vs. root readings of modal auxiliaries*

- (51) a. John must report to the police *root: obligation*  
 b. John must be crazy! *epistemic: necessity of conclusion*
- (52) a. You may return to your seats *root: permission*  
 b. We may never love like this again *epistemic: possibility*
- (53) a. He will return to Venice in the Spring *temporal: future*  
 b. He will be out of town, I suppose *epistemic: probability*
- (54) *Grammaticalization: development of a lexical element to a functional element*  
 must: 'have to' > 'inevitably, necessarily'  
 may: 'be allowed' > 'possibly'  
 will: 'desire' > FUTURE > 'probably'

(55) The auxiliaries as functional heads (Cinque 1999):



NB, the specifier positions of the AdvPs in (55) can be occupied by adverbs, from top to bottom: *probably, necessarily, possibly, obligatorily, possibly.*

*Epistemic vs. root readings of modal verbs in Dutch*

- (56) a. Hij moet zich melden *obligation*  
 he must REFL report 'He must report.'  
 b. Hij moet wel gek zijn *necessity of conclusion*  
 he must PRT crazy be 'He must be crazy.'
- (57) a. Hij kan/mag zich aankleden *permission/ability*  
 he can/may REFL dress 'He can/may put his clothes on.'  
 b. Hij kan/mag wel rijk zijn, gelukkig is hij niet *possibility*  
 he can/may PRT rich be happy is he not  
 'It may be that he is rich, he is not happy.'

- (58) a. Hij zal zijn best doen future  
 he will his best do 'He will do his best.'  
 b. Hij zal wel gelukkig zijn probability  
 he will PRT happy be 'I guess he is happy.'

The order in which the auxiliaries can be stacked is also the one predicted by the theory of Cinque:

- (59) ..dat hij het boek zal moeten kunnen lezen  
 that he the book will must can read  
*probability necessity ability*

Conclusions: a. Dutch auxiliaries may be in INFL, just like English auxiliaries (IJbema 2002)  
 b. The development from Old English (~Dutch) to Modern English is *not* a matter of auxiliaries shifting from V to INFL.

(60) *Epistemic readings of modal verbs in Old English are well attested (Denison 1993, Warner 1990):*

- a. nu *mæg* eaþe getimian  
 now may easily happen  
 b. gif hit *mot* gewiderian  
 if it may be-fair-weather  
 c. hwær gesette beon *sceoldon* þa lichaman  
 where buried be should the bodies  
 d. ic wat, þæt hine *wile* tweogan  
 I know that he will doubt

(61) *Deriving the differences between English and Dutch auxiliaries*

- a. *the absence of modal infinitives in English*  
 remains unclear (the result of a late development)  
 b. *the possibility of stacking of auxiliaries*  
 may reduce to the presence/absence of modal infinitives  
 c. *the absence of negative auxiliaries in Dutch*  
 may be just a matter of Dutch lacking a reduced negative form

- (62) a. zal ik > zal ək > zak 'will I'  
 b. haal ik > haal ək > \*haak 'get I'

- d. *the fact that inversion is limited to auxiliaries*  
 lexical verbs are stuck within VP in a specifier position in English (cf. (27d))  
 e. *the possibility of licensing deletion*  
 maybe explained by the circumstance that the English VP is treated as a unit, sitting in a specifier position, whereas the elements of the Dutch VP are scattered all over the clause (through verb movement and object shift), i.e. a function of *constituency*.

## 8. Later developments

### A. The zero reflexive

- (63) *The West-Germanic inventory of pronouns*  
 REFLEXIVE (Fr/OE *him*, Du. *me*, *hem* > *zich*, Ge. *mich*, *sich*)  
 SELF (Fr. *sels*, OE *self*, Du. *zelf*, Ge. *selber*)  
 PRONOUN (Fr/OE *him*, Du. *me*, *hem*, Ge. *mich*, *ihn*)  
 ANAPHOR [REFL+SELF] (Fr. *him-sels*, Du. *me-zelf*, *zich-zelf*)



(64) *Evidence for zero reflexives in Modern English*

- a. consistent pattern with reflexive verbs (65)
- b. middle construction (66)(Steinbach 2002)

(65) *Reflexive verbs in Middle English, Modern English, Dutch*

	Middle English	Modern English	Dutch
motion verbs	<i>hasten hym</i>	<i>haste</i>	<i>zich haasten</i>
cognition verbs	<i>remembren hym</i>	<i>remember</i>	<i>zich herinneren</i>
psych verbs	<i>deliten hym</i>	<i>delight</i>	<i>~zich verheugen</i>
behavior verbs	<i>beren hym</i>	<i>behave</i>	<i>zich gedragen</i>
pseudo-reflexives	<i>strecchen hym</i>	<i>stretch</i>	<i>zich uitstrekken</i>

(66) *Middle constructions*

- a. German: Dieses Buch liest sich gut  
                   this book reads REFL well
- b. English: This book reads  $\emptyset$  well

(67) *Development of the English system*

REFLEXIVE	<i>him</i>	--> $\emptyset$
SELF	<i>self</i>	--> <i>himself</i>
PRONOUN	<i>him</i>	--> <i>him</i>
ANAPHOR [REFL+SELF]		--> $\emptyset$ + <i>himself</i> = <i>himself</i>

(68) *Why did the reflexive pronoun turn to zero in English only?*

In Old English and Continental West-Germanic, the reflexive pronoun realizes a separate grammatical function, Object (by moving to the object position). In Modern English, the entire VP moves to the object position, hence the reflexive is not crucial to realizing the object function.

## B. The generalization of *have* as the perfective auxiliary

(69) *Standard view (though no one is sure): confusion*

- a. both *has* and *is* reduce to *s* (but *have* > *ve* vs. *am* > *m* / *are* > *r*)
- b. *be* + *past participle* also used for statives (*is left* / *is gone*); but this is common West Germanic, and elsewhere no confusion
- c. double class membership (telic vs. atelic use); but this too is common West Germanic

- (70) a. De kinderen **hebben** gelopen (atelic)  
           the children have walked
- b. De kinderen **zijn** naar huis gelopen (telic)  
           the children are to house walked

(70) *New hypothesis: confusion resides in different realizations of resultatives (transitive + reflexive vs. unaccusative)*

- a. Hij **heeft zich** om gekeerd (transitive + reflexive resultative)  
    he has REFL around turned
  - b. Hij **is** om gekeerd (unaccusative resultative)  
    he is around turned
- both 'He turned around.'

- (71) *In Early Modern English, with the reflexive gone, this becomes*  
 a. He has turned  $\emptyset$  around  
 b. He is turned around *both meaning the same thing.*

*Ultimately, then, the disappearance of perfective 'be' can be related to the shift from individual object movement to collective VP-movement, via the disappearance of the overt reflexive (see A).*

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