

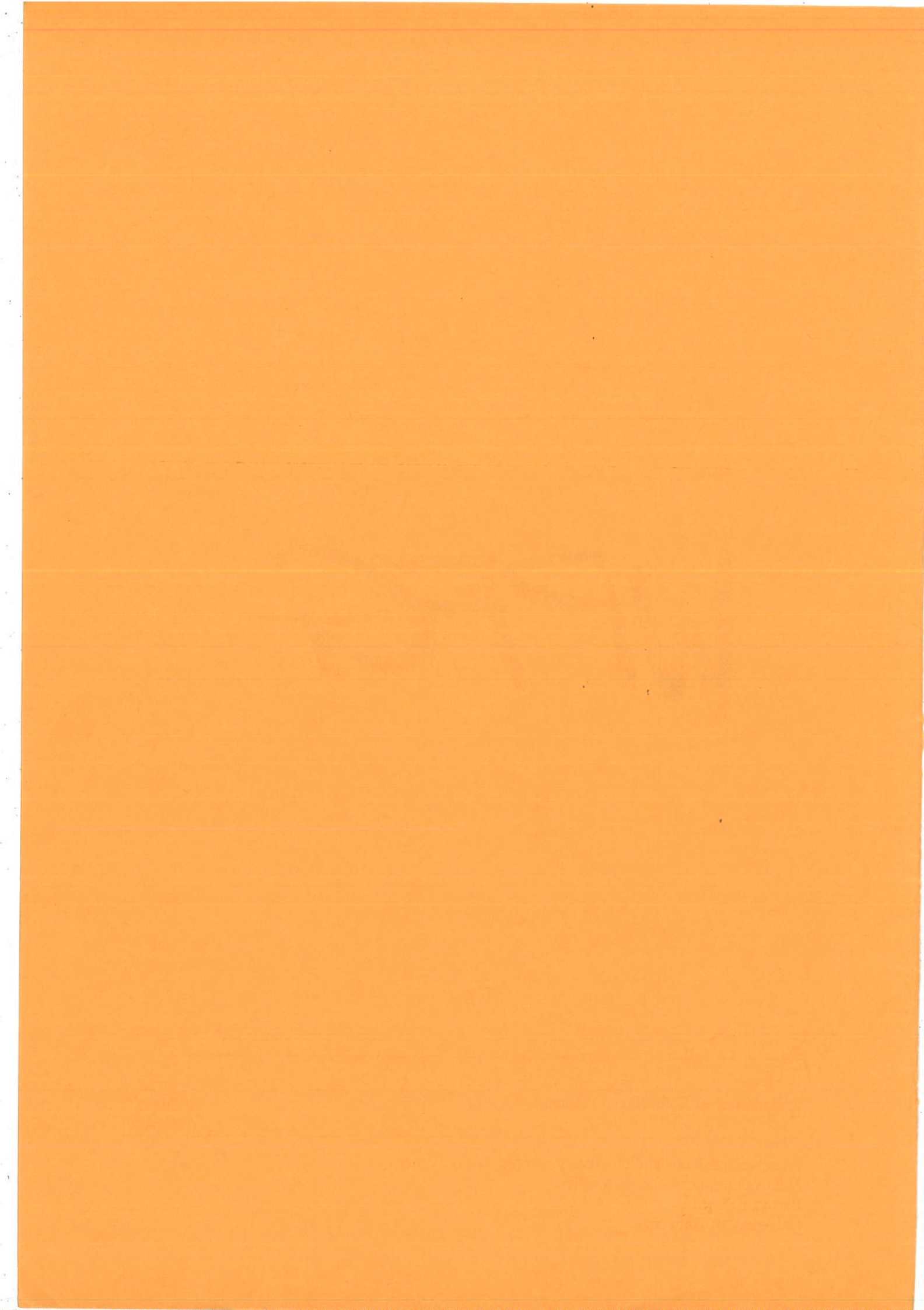
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Pragmatic positions and the history of English word order
A Functional Grammar perspective.
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Methodological preliminaries

1.1 Aims and limitations

This paper is an investigation into the diachronic validity of a synchronically defined concept within the theory of Functional Grammar (FG).¹ It tries to determine the practical and theoretical relevance of so-called *pragmatic positions* (or P-positions) in a description of the evolution of English constituent ordering.

The initial motivation for this enterprise was a distinct feeling of dissatisfaction I experienced with previous accounts of Old English (OE) word order in general and Dik's (1980) treatment of word order (change) in English in particular. As for the former point, many students of OE syntax agreed that the central difference between OE and New English (NE) word order was the degree of *freedom* enjoyed. Positional syntax was considered to be 'free' in OE, while NE constituent ordering was thought to be subject to strict syntactic constraints. Given that OE did in fact allow a greater number of permutations of a particular set of (clausal) constituents, it seemed highly unlikely - from a functional point of view - that this variation was not regulated by rules of any kind. It appeared to be interesting, therefore, to attempt to describe the various attested patterns in terms of their pragmatic functionality.

Before going any further, we should circumscribe the term *positional syntax* and the distinction between syntactic and pragmatic word order in some more detail. The former term is used in this paper to refer to (the study of) word order phenomena, whatever the nature of these phenomena might be. In particular, the term should not a

¹. This paper is a slightly revised version of the licentiate thesis I wrote at the University of Antwerp during the academic year 1992-1993. Thanks are due to Louis Goossens, Jan Nuyts and Lachlan Mackenzie.

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priori be taken to imply that a given word order system is syntactic rather than pragmatic. The distinction between syntactic (or grammatical; GWO) and pragmatic (PWO) word order is an inherently difficult one, in that it might be argued that constituent ordering is by definition a syntactic domain. In this paper, however, we will call a given word order system *syntactic* when it functions *primarily* as an indicator of the syntactic functions of constituents, and *pragmatic* when it functions *primarily* as an indicator of the pragmatic-informational status of constituents.

Assuming that OE constituent ordering was a coding device of pragmatic rather than syntactic information, then, turned out to amount to setting up word order schemas which included a relatively large number of pragmatic positions. The pragmatic *spotlight* on OE constituent ordering also offered an opportunity to account for the problematic presence of V3 constructions in OE (OE generally being described as a typical V2 language). The informational structure of the clause has been related to OE before, but for some mysterious reason these V3 orders have never received much attention in that work.

Referring to Carlton's (1970) historical categorization of existing work on earlier stages of English (in the first place OE), the present work should thus be situated in a (relatively new) fourth phase. According to Carlton, the pioneering comparative philologists of the 19th century studied OE syntax (if they did so at all) from the perspective of the classical languages, which methodology led to the conclusion that word order was functionally completely irrelevant, and was not governed by any kind of system of principles at all. The same position was taken by linguists of the second generation, who viewed the study of OE as part of the broader enterprise of establishing the genetic relationships of the Indo-European dialects. The third (and in Carlton's classification also *final*) phase in the study

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of OE word order saw a drastic shift away from the traditional viewpoint, in that it was generally recognized that constituent ordering *did* operate as a relevant syntactic signal in OE.

It seems to me that there is enough reason to warrant the assumption that we are moving at present towards a fourth phase, which would be the synthesis (almost in the Hegelian sense of the word) of the third stage and the two previous ones. It is currently widely admitted that OE was rule-governed (this aspect has been retained from stage 3), but the rules at stake are now often judged to have been pragmatic rather than strictly syntactic (cf. Connolly 1991), so that at least the position of the (relative) syntactic freedom of OE word order is restored (stages 1-2). In other words, without claiming that OE word order was syntactically fully insignificant, I do take the stance that it was to a large extent regulated by the behaviour of its set of P-positions.²

As for the diachronic aspect of this paper, the synchronic theoretical concept of pragmatic positions will indeed turn out to have quite some descriptive and explanatory power in the realm of language change as well. Although one might be critical of putting a synchronically motivated concept to a diachronic use (cf. Meeuwis & Brisard 1993), it remains a truism that *dynamicity* (i.e. continuous drift) is an essential characteristic of human natural language(s), so that the basic principles and methodology of any adequate (synchronic) linguistic theory should in fact be applicable to historical data as well. This might actually be taken to constitute an extra standard of explanatory adequacy: apart from pragmatic, psychological, and typological adequacy, then, we might

². The important point here is the relative difference in importance of these P-positions between OE and subsequent stages of the language.

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also speak of *diachronic* adequacy. Although this viewpoint is quite widespread, it is only very rarely made explicit.

The relevance of the hypotheses and observations yielded by the historical procedure adopted throughout the paper will not be restricted to the particular evolution under scrutiny. In a number of cases, some synchronic and diachronic data will be dug up that are interesting for the general theory of FG as well. This paper is thus partly descriptive (e.g., it deals with the practical technicalities needed to account for the evolution of English P-positions) and partly theoretical (e.g., a case will be made for the incorporation of extra-systemic and extra-linguistic motivations of linguistic change into the FG account of word order evolution).

As far as the descriptive part is concerned, then, it should be made clear from the start that we will only be dealing with the positional syntax of declarative main clauses. I will generally refrain from presenting either data or hypotheses on:

- other domains of constituent ordering, viz. the term and adjectival phrase.
- other types of clause, viz.
 - subclauses
 - interrogatives, exclamatives, imperatives.

1.2 The corpus

This paper aims at presenting hypotheses that are sufficiently backed up by empirical evidence. The corpus used consists primarily of Bible translations from four different periods: the OE bible (\pm AD 1000), the Wycliffite translation by John Purvey (\pm AD 1389), the Tyndale version (AD 1526), and finally *The Holy Bible: New international*

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version (AD 1978). In each case, I have used the first six chapters of the book of John.

The choice of the Bible was inspired by the desire to arrive at an acceptable level of stylistic continuity. Too many diachronic studies suffer from a devaluation of dependability because they are based upon a *discontinuous* historical database: they compare the syntax of *Beowulf*, for instance, with that of the *Canterbury Tales* and modern English prose. In this respect, it might be noted that Ries's (1907) conclusion that OE was a dominant SOV language - while being based upon a piece of OE poetry - has often been accepted as valid for the OE vernacular in general.

Choosing the Bible as a database remains, of course, somewhat of a mixed blessing. There are four obvious disadvantages to it, but these are outweighed by the need for register continuity just mentioned:

- the earliest Bible translation dates from approximately 1000 AD. For the study of word order change, this seems to be not quite old enough. I have therefore also included what I will occasionally refer to as a *secondary corpus*, consisting of extracts from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and taken from Dorothy Whitelock's revision of Henry Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon reader*. I have arbitrarily chosen the following entries: 755, 871, and 892 up to and including 896. Examples taken from this part of the corpus are referred to by means of a capital *S* followed by text and line number. Admittedly, this does lead to a certain degree of discontinuity within the corpus, but it is only for one stage, and the disparity is not so great as in a comparison of alliterative poetry with modern prose.
- a second objection that might be made is that we are violating the principle that the syntax of a language should be described on the basis of natively composed literature rather than translations (Werth 1970). Older translations (in particular those of 'holy books' such as

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the Bible) are often condemned as being slavish renderings of the original text, the Gothic version being the most notorious example. Personally, I find it very hard to believe that Wulfila did in fact use a completely foreign syntax when he intended his translation to be read and understood by as many of his flock as possible (cf. also Werth 1970; Haiman 1974).³ The same line of reasoning applies to English Bible translations.⁴ As far as OE is concerned, this stance is expressed - in its most extreme form - in Allen (1980: 34-35):⁵

The overwhelming concensus [sic] of students of Old English is that Latin influence was negligible in the Old English texts [...] Latin influence is not a serious problem when dealing with Old English texts.

● due to shifts in economic and political power, the subsequent translations are not written in the same dialect. As a result, some 'historical' differences might actually be due to regional rather than diachronic variation.⁶ But this is ultimately due to the absence of a true standard language in the earliest stages of English,

³. I am not, of course, claiming that translations do not include a certain number of borrowed constructions. I am only trying to make clear that the importance of this number should certainly not be exaggerated.

⁴. There is a further aspect of corpus-discontinuity in that the first three translations are based upon the Latin *Vulgate* of Jerome, whereas the *New English Bible* is a translation of the original Hebrew and Greek.

⁵. However Allen does seem to have become more sceptical later on (see e.g. Allen 1992).

⁶. This is quite hard to find out, since there exist few studies on syntactic variation within earlier stages of English.

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and is therefore a problem for any diachronic study, whatever the corpus that might be chosen.⁷

● finally, as a direct result of the choice to avoid stylistic discontinuity, the results of our research are confined to one register, and may not be fully representative of other domains of language use. While this is certainly an acceptable limitation, a comparison with other corpora is not expected to yield many fundamental differences in the phenomena this paper is concerned with.

1.3 The structure of the paper

This paper contains four further chapters:

Chapter Two introduces a number of valuable concepts (in particular, of course, the theoretical status of the special pragmatic positions) that will be used extensively throughout the rest of this work.

Chapter Three discusses the function of these P-positions in OE in considerable detail. As will be made clear at that point, the fact that we devote a whole chapter to OE is motivated by the consideration that the positional syntax of this stage of English in particular has often been misinterpreted.

Chapter Four - the central chapter of this paper - tackles the role of P-positions in the evolution of English constituent ordering, both from a descriptive and a more theoretical point of view.

And finally, **Chapter Five** will briefly sum up the most important conclusions of this paper.

⁷. Although OE, of course, had a West-Saxon 'standard'.

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Chapter Two

A theoretical perspective on P-positions

2.0 Introduction

Before embarking upon a corpus-based investigation of special pragmatic positions in Old English and in the history of the English language as a whole, it is necessary to introduce a few basic concepts in the FG treatment of P-positions. They will prove to be essential 'tools' for the research in the following chapters.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. Section 2.1 presents a brief overview of the different pragmatic positions postulated in Dik's model. The next section (2.2) digs deeper into the properties of the most important and most basic one: P1. It deals with its universality and with the placement rules posited for it. I also try to show that there are still some flaws in the FG theory of word order. This will be illustrated by a discussion of the position of the complementizer. It is by no means my ambition to solve all of these difficulties. My research domain is too specific to attempt such a thing, anyway. I only want to indicate in this part that there may exist some competing analyses in FG, between which it is empirically difficult to choose at this stage. The last section (2.3) gives a brief description of the extra-clausal positions P2 and P3.

2.1 General discussion

The Functional Grammar theory of "special pragmatic positions" (as presented in Dik 1989) is governed by one general and two specific principles of constituent

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ordering.⁸ The general principle of Pragmatic Highlighting (GP7) states that

constituents with special pragmatic functionality (New Topic, Given Topic, Completive Focus, Contrastive Focus) are preferably placed in 'special positions', including, at least, the clause-initial position. (Dik 1989: 343).

For this "clause-initial position", two specific principles are offered. The first (SP4) claims that

there is a universally relevant clause-initial position P1, used for special purposes, including the placement of constituents with Topic or Focus function. (o.c.: 348).

SP5 is essentially a diachronic principle and hypothesizes that

since the Subject is the prime GivenTopic candidate, it will often be placed in P1; this may lead to a reinterpretation of P1 as the unmarked Subject position. (o.c.: 349).

There are, of course, more "special positions" than just P1. However, no specific principles are offered for them, partly because they harbour "extra-clausal constituents" (ECCs; P2 and P3)⁹ and partly because they are not universal (e.g. P0).

⁸. I will only deal with special positions in the clause domain, not in the term phrase or adjectival phrase.

⁹ As such, these positions will have to be dealt with in part two of *The Theory of Functional Grammar*. A preliminary discussion of them can of course be found in Dik (1978).

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P0 and P1 are both structurally and functionally intra-clausal positions. They can harbour either the most topical or the most focal element of the clause (where topicality and focality are basically linked to the given-new distinction; see De Schutter 1985). P0, as the position immediately following the last part of the verb of a predication,¹⁰ seems to be relevant at least for Dutch (1) and German (2) (De Roeck 1987: 27):

(1) Ik heb een auto gekocht **gisteren** .
I have a car bought yesterday
"I bought a car yesterday"

(2) Ich habe einen Wagen gekauft **gestern**.

If a constituent is placed in P0, we can speak of *exbraciation* (a term coined by Theo Vennemann). Although FG explains this postverbal placement in the first place by LIPOC,¹¹ the special pragmatic function of a constituent may play a role as well (see below).

Constituents in P2 and P3 are not part of the predication proper, but precede (P2) or follow (P3) the clause. P2 can thus be equated structurally with the "left-dislocation" position, P3 with the "right-dislocation" position. Although these positions operate outside of the clause proper, they are connected with it by relations of a pragmatic nature. In standard FG, P2 is said to harbour constituents carrying the Theme-function (and only those), where "Theme" is defined as presenting

¹⁰ P0 can be equated with the "final field" in Topological Fields Theory (see De Roeck 1987). In further chapters I will refer to this position as P_f.

¹¹ LIPOC was first presented in Dik (1978). A slightly adapted version of this principle, called "The Principle of Increasing Complexity" (GP9), can be found in Dik (1989).

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a domain or universe of discourse with respect to which it is relevant to pronounce the following predication (Dik 1978: 130).

P3, then, can be filled by constituents with Tail-function (again: and only those). Such constituents present

as an 'afterthought' to the Predication, information meant to clarify or modify [some constituent contained in] the Predication. (ibid.).

We thus arrive at the following Language-Independent Pattern-Schema (LIPS):

(3) (P2), Predication, (P3)

The brackets indicate that both positions are optional; the commas, a break in the intonation pattern.

Since Standard FG in fact equates P2 and P3 with the Theme and Tail function respectively, we also find such representations as:

(4) (x_i)_{Theme}, Predication, (x_j)_{Tail}

This identification of position with function has met with quite some resistance. De Schutter (1985, 1987) and Van der Auwera (1987) have pleaded for a distinction between place and function categories. In their view, there is no one-to-one relationship between the two, but rather a one-to-n relationship (where $n \geq 1$). In other words, all special positions of LIPS must be "allowed" to have more than one function. They are *syntactic* devices that can (at least in principle) be used to express a diversity of pragmatic relations. This is not controversial for P1 (see 2.2.2); P2 and P3, however, are somewhat more cumbersome in this respect. The only element that has been claimed to occur in

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P2, for example (outside of the Theme), is the complementizer (Van der Auwera 1987).¹²

2.2 The P1-position

2.2.1 The universality of P1

FG claims that P1 is a relevant concept for the description of all languages (e.g. Dik 1978: 178). However, this does not mean that all languages make use of this position in the same degree and manner.

One aspect that plays a role in determining how important pragmatic positions are for a given language is whether or not that language has Subject and/or Object assignment. Languages with S/O assignment are less likely to use special positions for constituents with pragmatic functions systematically (Siewierska 1990: 215). *Mutatis mutandis*, languages without S/O assignment are expected to show greater reliance on special positions. The existence of such a trade-off between S/O assignment and the use of P-positions captures the observation that languages that permit a wide variety of ordering possibilities at the main clause level lack at least the Object function in the FG sense (one example is, as we will see later on, Old English).

2.2.2 Placement rules for P1

Dik (1989: 349) presents the following general pattern for the uses made of P1:

¹². And this proposal is not even a very convincing one (see 2.2.3). The fact that no other constituents have been identified as occurring in P2 or P3 may, of course, be due to a void in the research into word order within FG (see also Geluykens 1987: 127).

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- (i) There are designated categories of constituents whose members *obligatorily* go to P1 (these are the so-called P1-constituents).¹³
- (ii) If P1 is not occupied by some P1-constituent, then it may be used for positioning constituents with (Given)Topic or Focus function.

Three placement rules (or R-rules) are proposed for the filling of P1 (I will refer to these as *P1-rules*):

- (R1) P1-constituent → P1
- (R2) GivTop, SubTop, Focus → P1
- (R3) X → P1

These rules, like all other placement rules, are:

- strictly ordered. Hence, R2 only applies if R1 has not been applied, and R3 only comes into play if there has been no application of R2.
- governed by the principle that "once a position is occupied it cannot then be filled by another constituent of a different syntactic category" (Connolly 1983: 250; Siewierska 1990: 219). Therefore, R-rules cannot deal with inversion in P1SVO-languages such as Modern English (one would have to assume that a sentence like *Never have I seen such computers in my department* has both *never* and *have* in P1). To cover inversion in these languages, then, extra templates will have to be postulated.

The phrase "of a different syntactic category" in this last principle seems to be quite relevant. Polish, for example, does allow multiple P1-filling by constituents of the *same* syntactic class, as in (5):

(5) Kto kogo komu poleciał?

¹³. I will not follow De Roeck (1987) in calling any element that **can** go to P1 a P1-constituent, but will stick to Dik's definition of the concept.

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who whom to whom recommended

'Who recommended whom to whom?' (Siewierska 1991: 223)

What this example shows is that Polish, unlike any Germanic language, seems to be able to put three successive Q-words at the beginning of the clause (i.e. in P1).

Presumably, then, the general theory of FG has to allow for multiple filling of (at least) P1 by syntactically (or functionally) similar elements, but this does not imply that all languages necessarily share this capacity with the Slavic languages. Nor does it mean that P1 can be filled by two or more syntactically *divergent* constituents. In fact, since this multiple filling of positions considerably reduces the descriptive and explanatory power of the P1-concept¹⁴ (for instance, postulating a P1VSO schema for Dutch captures the generalization that Dutch declarative main clauses require the Vf in clause-second position only on the condition that P1 can harbour maximally one constituent), it would be wise to use it as a 'last resource' only.

Let us now have a closer look at the individual rules. (R1) assumes the existence of constituents that are regularly placed in P1, rather than in their 'pattern position'. There are a number of types of these P1-constituents in the subordinate clause (e.g. relative pronouns, subordinators; but see 2.2.3). As a result, it becomes quite difficult to place constituents with special pragmatic prominence (Topic or Focus) clause-initially. Languages may then invent new strategies for focalising/topicalizing elements of a subordinate

¹⁴. As Siewierska herself points out (1990: 223), Chomsky's Government and Binding Theory experiences the same kind of difficulties with the filling of C (or COMP).

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clause.¹⁵ Main clauses, on the other hand, generally leave P1 open for constituents with special pragmatic functions, since the only P1-constituents at this level are wh-words (at least, this seems to be the case for most SAE languages).¹⁶

(R2) places pragmatically prominent constituents in the clause-initial position. These constituents can have either Topic or Focus function. Since Q-words have inherent Focus, R1 could be at least partly subsumed under R2. However, R1 is an obligatory rule, whereas R2 - depending on the language - is either optional or obligatory.

This same rule also distinguishes apparent SVO languages with basic order P1VSO (e.g. Dutch, German, Old English) from 'real' VSO languages (i.e. languages with basic order P1VSO and dominant order VSO)¹⁷ The latter type has a rather weak application of R2; in the first type of languages, R2 is a much stronger rule, so that the Subj (as the prime GivTop candidate) is regularly placed in P1 (Dik 1980; Siewierska 1988). In fact, Dik analyses all modern Germanic languages - except English - in this way. The crucial difference here is that when some constituent other than the Subj is placed initially, English has the Subj in the second (preverbal) position (e.g. (6)), whereas the other Germanic languages have the finite verb (Vf)

¹⁵. For a discussion of two techniques to get some 'pragmatic articulation' in Dutch subordinate clauses, see Dik (1981).

¹⁶. Other possibilities in other languages seem to be related to interrogative clauses as well; Standard Yiddish *tzi* and Modern Standard Arabic *hal*, for example, are markers of yes-no-questions.

¹⁷. For the difference between basic and dominant order, see e.g. Dik (1980). Basic order is essentially a concept of linguistic theory (it is, in a way, the 'underlying' order), whereas dominant order belongs to linguistic reality (and is the actual surface order).

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there (and the Subject appears postverbally; e.g. Dutch in (7), Danish in (8)):

(6) In London I met some interesting people.

(7) In Brussel ontmoette ik enkele interessante mensen.

(8) I København mødte jeg nogle interessante mennesker.

Note also that R2 is non-committal with regard to the preference for either Topic- or Focus-initial placement. It is thus compatible with both cross-linguistic and 'cross-theoretical' variation. As for the latter, we can say there are two diverging views on the information structure of the proposition. On the one hand, there is the traditional claim of the universal preference for topic>comment order. On the other, the so-called *Task Urgency Principle* (e.g. Givón 1988: 275), which states that less predictable or more important bits of information are normally communicated first. It seems, however, that both proposals can be valid for different languages, and may even operate together in one and the same language (in such cases, each tendency will presumably have its own distinct field of application; for example, foregrounded clauses may prefer given-new order and backgrounded clauses, new-given order).¹⁸

If there has been no application of R1 or R2, then some constituent X may be brought to P1 by R3. In languages that do not require P1 to be filled, this rule is optional. In other languages, however, P1 must always be occupied by some element (yet X can have different values in different languages). Hence, these languages develop special 'P1-fillers', whose only function is to make sure that P1 is not empty. It has been claimed (Dik 1989: 362) that English

¹⁸. This has been claimed to be the case for Old English (Hopper 1979).

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there (and Dutch *er*, German *es*) is such a P1 place-holder, as in (9):

(9) There are a lot of music-loving people in Vienna.

However, this analysis is not completely unproblematic: if there were in P1, then we would expect it to be immediately followed by the (real?) subject (since Modern English is a P1SVO language).¹⁹ But since we actually find the verb in the clause-second position, we might suspect *there* to be in the Subject-position. This is corroborated by the fact that a topical/focal satellite can be placed in front of *there* in (9):

(10) In Vienna there are a lot of music-loving people.

Example (10) indeed seems to indicate that *In Vienna* stands in P1, and *there* in the Subject-position.²⁰

2.2.3 An exemplary problem: the position of subordinators

One of the most controversial aspects of the FG theory of constituent ordering is the position of subordinators.²¹ Dik has always seen them as P1-constituents of the subordinate clause. This analysis causes some difficulties, the most important of which is that - for instance in

¹⁹. The construction *there* + Subject + Verb may of course occur, as in *There she goes*. But in instances like this, *there* obviously has a deictic rather than a mere 'filling' function.

²⁰. One might of course argue that *In Vienna* occupies the P2-position. However, there need be no intonational break between this constituent and *there* (see 1.3), a fact which favours my analysis.

²¹. For a more general treatment of subordinators and other 'relators', see Dik (1983).

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English (11) - other focal/topical elements of the embedded clause can be placed before the subject as well:

(11) (I thought) that **yesterday** John sang quite well.

What is problematic about (11) is the position of *yesterday*. If *that* is taken to be in P1 and *John* in its pattern-position (S), then we are at a loss to determine the position of this temporal satellite.

Three possible solutions present themselves:

- it might be assumed that this is a case of double P1-filling. Besides the *a priori* theoretical and methodological objections to this point-of-view (see 2.2.2), there is also the fact that nowhere else in its grammar does English show any traces of this phenomenon. It is true that example (12) appears to have three distinct constituents in P1, but an analysis which takes these to form *one single* constituent seems to be more natural (conceptually, then, each added locative expression limits the 'search domain' for the addressee):²²

(12) {Behind the house in the garden to the left of the big oak tree} you will find a funny little garden gnome.

- a second proposal is that the subordinator actually stands in P2. This analysis was advocated by Van der Auwera (1987), and seems to have been accepted by De Roeck (1987), though not by Dik (1989). The problem here is that P2 is an extra-clausal position, whereas the complementizer is undeniably part of the (subordinate) clause (cf. Bennis & Hoekstra 1989; Dik 1983b). Hence, one would have to reformulate the definition of P2, which is quite undesirable, since this extra-clausal character is vital for the concept to be relevant at all.

²². For a similar construction (but with a temporal satellite in P1), see example (9) in section 3.3.

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● if the complementizer is in neither of the special pragmatic positions P1 or P2, then we are obliged to postulate a separate pattern position for this element, in front of P2 and P1. Let us, tentatively (and inspired by GB-practice), call this position COMP. Integrating this concept into the pattern-schema for the English subordinate clause, we get (13):

(13) COMP (P2,) P1 S V O

This schema, then, would be able to 'generate' sentences such as (11), where *yesterday* would be in P1. One might, however, object that this proposal violates the 'Functionality Principle' that governs every pragmatics-based language theory, and according to which

a grammar [and consequently, every hypothesis put forward within that grammar; BVH] can be accepted 'iff' it describes language in such a way that it reveals the functions of language. (Nuyts 1983: 373)

Then again, I do not believe that each and every syntactic rule in a functionalist theory needs to (and indeed can!) be explained functionally.²³ Still, for this case, we might hypothesize that the COMP-position serves - on the psychological level - as a marker of the beginning of the subordinate clause.

That there is an element of truth in this hypothesis is shown by the grammaticality of (14), and the doubtful acceptability of (15):

(14) (I thought) that yesterday John sang quite well.

²³. Cf. Dik (1983a: 5): "The functional approach to language is not committed to the view that any property of a language must be functionally explainable".

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(15) ??(I thought) yesterday John sang quite well.

(16) (I thought) John sang quite well yesterday.

In (15), there is no 'separator' between main and subordinate clause, so that the Addressee will experience some difficulties in determining whether the satellite *yesterday* functions at the level of the main or the subordinate clause. The presence of the subordinator *that* in (14) precludes any such misunderstandings. (16) contains no subordinator either. But here, the subordinate clause starts with its subject (*John*), which cannot normally be interpreted as the object of *thought*.²⁴

Another piece of evidence can be derived from the history of the Norse relative clause (Haugen 1976). Old Norse distinguished between main and relative clauses through word order alone: unmarked main clauses had SVO order, subordinate clauses (e.g. (17)) were SOV. But when Norse generalized verb-second order in main and subordinate clauses, a new subordination marker - the COMP position with the relative pronoun *sum* - was introduced in order to avoid ambiguity (as in (18)):

(17) þän af bondä häst leghir
he of farmer horse hires

(18) þän sum leghir af bondä häst
he who hires of farmer horse

'He who hires a horse from a farmer.'

²⁴. Except in the case of Raising-to-Object. Raising, however, seems to be less frequent than the occurrence of satellites at the main clause level. Moreover, raising triggers a non-finite verb form.

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The complementizer, as a marker of the starting-point of a subordinate clause, is needed most acutely when a complex clause is introduced by the embedded part:

(19) That Mary was great last night is beyond any doubt.

(20) *Mary was great last night is beyond any doubt.

Since the first finite verb to occur in an utterance is normally interpreted as the main verb (see e.g. Dik 1983b), the fronted subordinate clause will actually be construed (by the addressee) as the main predication, unless it is explicitly marked as being embedded. And the only strategy to do this (at least in English) is to express the subordinator (as in (19)).

Our analysis of the complementizer still meets with at least one apparent and one more intricate difficulty. The first problem relates to Polish, in which *natomiast* (glossable as 'whereas' and normally classified as a subordinating conjunction) can be placed after the first constituent of the subordinate clause:²⁵

(21) Marta wróciła z Australii, Ewa, natomiast
Martha returned from Australia Eve whereas
została z ojcem.
remained with father

"Martha returned from Australia, whereas Eve remained (there) with her father." (Siewierska 1991: 208)

²⁵. Although *natomiast* is a conjunction, both native speakers I asked about this sentence intuitively translated it as Dutch 'daarentegen' ("on the other hand"). This, together with the remarkable fact that the element is placed between commas, indicates that it is somewhat of a strange 'complementizer'.

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Apart from running counter to my analysis of the functionality of subordinators, this example also violates Dik's hypothesis that

the preferred position of a relator [i.e. an adposition, case affix or subordinator] is at the periphery of its immediate relator [i.e. that part of the complex clause with which the relator forms one constituent] (Dik 1983b: 274, the additions are mine; see also Dik 1989: 346)

Since FG proposes a multifunctional theory of word order, it might be accepted that one principle is violated in order to conform to another. But in this particular case, it is not at all clear what that other principle might be.

The second query is that 'deletion' of the complementizer seems to be easier in English than in, for example, Dutch, although the latter language has an extra linguistic device to differentiate between main and subordinate clauses: Dutch has dominant SOV order in subordinate, and dominant SVO order in main clauses, whereas English has SVO in both.

This is not the time or place to go deeper into this problem. I only wanted to show that the FG theory of word order is not yet completely over its teething troubles. As regards the position of complementizers, there are several possibilities compatible with the FG model. The choice among them is, of course, not a personal but an empirical one. An in-depth cross-linguistic study of the initialization of subordinate clauses should be able to throw some more light on the problem. At any rate, the matter is not of central importance to the rest of this paper.

2.3 P2 and P3

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The discussion of P2 and P3, the two extra-clausal positions in LIPS, will be much shorter than that of P1. There are a number of reasons for this:

- there has not been so much interest in P2 and P3 as in P1. As a result, much less is known about them.
- these positions do not show the same complexity and flexibility as P1. But this might, of course, be due to what was observed in the first remark.
- they are less relevant to the rest of this paper than P1.

I have already described P2 and P3 as harbouring extra-clausal constituents (ECCs). Examples are:

(22) **As for the teachers**, they won't be invited. (=P2)

(23) I don't really like him, **that tall guy**. (=P3)

The concept itself of the ECC has up to now been left rather vague. Intra-clausal constituents must be fully integrated in the clause both phonologically (there is normally no break in the intonation pattern of the clause) and morphologically (the semantic/syntactic function of the constituent must be marked by case-endings or adpositions). ECCs, on the other hand, are phonologically 'bracketed off' from the clause proper by 'comma intonation'.²⁶

Morphological marking, too, is not obligatory for ECCs, since they have "some degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the clause proper" (De Schutter 1987). They need not fulfill a semantic/syntactic function, and even if they do, this function need not be expressed morphologically. This last claim, however, seems to be true for P2, but not for P3. If a constituent in P3 has a semantic/syntactic

²⁶. In Chapters Three and Four we will discuss some difficulties this viewpoint meets with.

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function in the clause (which remains optional), then that function must be expressed, witness the situation in German, (24):

(24) Ich habe ihn schon lange nicht mehr gesehen, deinen Bruder (*dein Bruder)²⁷

'I haven't seen him for a long time, your brother (acc/*nom)'

anaphorisch.

your brother die habe ich ...

This may be taken to indicate that constituents in P3 are in some way 'closer' to the predication, an assumption which seems at least plausible when we look at some more specific definitions of their functionality. De Schutter (1987) describes Themes as indicating a relationship between (part of) the sentence and a general framework (either the whole Universe of Interpretation or a specific conceptual framework created by co- and/or context). And according to Geluykens (1987: 127), Tails are mostly used for identifying referents; they offer a "more complete semantic specification of [a] gap constituent" (ibid.).

To conclude, I would like to draw attention to one more observation made by Geluykens (in the same paper): he finds that filling of the extra-clausal positions is typical of conversational interaction. Since Tails, for instance, function essentially as a repair mechanism, they are not needed in spoken non-conversational language, and even less so in written discourse.

Anticipating on my own investigation of Old English (OE) constituent order (necessarily on the basis of written material), this means that we may expect some problems with regard to the question whether or not OE had such extra-clausal positions. Of course, since a written variety was only just beginning to emerge in that stage, OE prose might still contain more echoes of conversational syntax. I will briefly return to this problem in Chapter Three.

²⁷. The example is due to Georges De Schutter.

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Pragmatic Positions in Old English

3.0 Introduction

This chapter aims at presenting a coherent synchronic²⁸ description of the various pragmatic positions that seem to be relevant for a description of Old English (OE) constituent ordering. It will thus serve as a starting point for the diachronic hypotheses submitted in further chapters. Adequate insight into OE word order patterns is a vital prerequisite for the understanding of the evolution of English constituent ordering. There is thus sufficient warrant for a separate chapter devoted to the description of OE (see also Chapter One).

Before starting with the actual analysis, we should realize that the study of OE (positional) syntax has not always been as popular as it might have been. Older grammars (and even relatively recent ones, e.g. Campbell 1959) tend to ignore this domain in favour of phonology and morphology. This situation, which only has begun to improve considerably from the beginning of the 1970s onwards (Gerritsen 1978) - although it does seem to die hard (see Mitchell 1985 for some more discussion) - seems to have been the result of a number of coinciding factors, the most important of which I will briefly discuss:

- for quite a long time, the position was beyond any doubt that OE was a free word order language, comparable to

²⁸. As was discussed in Chapter One, this description of OE will not be based on a 'homogeneous' corpus. Due to the linguistic 'modernity' of my (biblical) corpus, occasional references will have to be made to earlier (more archaic) stages of the language.

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Latin and Ancient Greek²⁹ (e.g. Fries 1940, Mossé 1945; but even Visser 1973, Bynon 1977). This prejudice was even intensified by the fact that a lot of earlier grammarians tried to describe OE with the classical languages as their model. Although it is presumably true that - from a purely syntactic point of view - OE word order was less tightly constrained than that of its present-day descendant, this does not imply that it was not determined (or, to use a somewhat weaker word, affected) by considerations of a semantic and/or pragmatic nature. Note that this distinction seems to have puzzled many linguists in the past, witness some of the contradictions in Mossé (1945). For example, one page after stating that in OE word order "il n'y a donc aucun système" (o.c.: 168), he remarks rather opaquely that

si l'ordre des éléments est libre, il n'est pas indifférent (o.c.: 169).

Quite understandably for his time, Mossé did not think of pragmatics (or "stylistics", as it was then sometimes termed) as being 'systematic' (see Chapter 4 for further discussion). On the other hand, a good number of post-World War II scholars (e.g. Quirk & Wrenn 1955, Bacquet 1962, Mitchell 1985) have tried to prove that OE word order did show a high degree of regularity and conformity, and thus that Fries (1940) was wrong in saying that

[i]n Old English, [...] the order of the words [...] has no bearing whatever upon the grammatical relationships involved. (Fries 1940: 199)

²⁹. But see Dik (1989), according to whom the constituent ordering of these languages, too, is completely determined by semantic, syntactic and/or pragmatic factors.

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But maybe Fries should not be treated so harshly as he has been in the past. Indeed, I believe that he should be given some credit for his analyses, often condemned as being misguided and exaggerated. For one thing, he especially wanted to stress the relative *difference* in syntactic importance of word order in OE and Modern English. Even if we did not accept Fries's proposal in its most extreme form, we would have to admit that the gist of it is undoubtedly true: OE *did* have more ordering possibilities than Modern English. But I would like to go even further than this, and claim that the whole of Fries's hypothesis is basically correct. Although I will refrain from claiming that OE constituent ordering had no syntactic function at all (or indeed, that it had no function whatsoever), one of the conclusions of my research will be that OE element order served a pragmatic rather than a syntactic function (cf. also Connolly 1991; for the exact sense of the terms *syntactic* and *pragmatic* word order see section 1.1).

● a second reason is certainly that 19th-century (German) philologists were generally more interested in phonology and morphology, to the exclusion of (positional) syntax. This regrettable tradition not only led directly to a lack of interest in constituent ordering (Bacquet 1962), but also indirectly: the emphasis on morphology helped to cause the impression that word order had no importance at all for expressing relations (of any kind) between constituents. It should perhaps be mentioned here that morphology was not so distinctive in OE as used to be thought (Gardner 1971). In fact, OE was neither as 'fully' inflected as Latin nor as virtually uninflected as modern

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English.³⁰ We could call it, in Bruce Mitchell's terms, "half-inflected".³¹

● It might also be objected that we cannot make sufficiently correct statements about the grammar (in particular the syntax) of a dead language since we do not have the possibility of consulting the intuition of native speakers (King 1969; Gerritsen 1978). We necessarily have to work on performance data (viz. on a written corpus). But this seems to be less of a problem for FG than it is for (Transformational) Generative Grammar. Of course, FG *is* - quite like TG - a theory about linguistic competence (cf. Nuyts 1983);³² but the hypotheses formulated within it are formed primarily on the basis of a study of language use. FG attempts to describe (communicative) competence in terms of how we use it in linguistic social interaction. Still, there can be no doubt that intuition can and should sometimes play a role in functional research: a corpus only shows what is actually used in a limited number of situations, but not what is linguistically possible. On top of this, it is obvious that language use tends to deviate from competence rules. In other words, the absence of native speakers *is* somewhat of a handicap for FG, but it does not entail any fundamental theoretical or practical difficulties.

● what documents we have of the oldest stages of English (and other languages, for that matter) are predominantly of a literary kind and hence their syntax is influenced by

³⁰. The traditional, idealizing treatment of Latin indeed saw it as an exhaustively inflected language, although it is actually not fully distinctive in its morphology either.

³¹. Cf. also Huchon (1972: 250), who points out that OE "hésite entre la synthèse et l'analyse".

³². Still, there are those who deny that FG makes a distinction between competence and performance (e.g. Bubenik 1983).

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such stylistic factors as alliteration, poetic necessity, poetic licence etc.

● and finally, the long-lasting absence of a more or less adequate synchronic (and diachronic) syntactic theory has also contributed its mite to this collective neglect of OE syntax.

This chapter, then, aims at filling at least part of the void. In 3.1, I will discuss the general characteristics of OE word order. The following sections all deal with particular aspects of the various pragmatic positions relevant for OE: P1 in 3.2, P0 in 3.3, V-initial orderings in 3.4, P_f in 3.5, and the extra-clausal positions P2 and P3 in 3.6. And finally, a brief treatment of expletive elements (in particular *þær*) will be presented in 3.7.

3.1 General characteristics of OE word order

Before we can say anything definite about the constituent ordering principles of OE, we have to make out whether the Subject and Object functions are relevant for this stage of English. As far as the former is concerned, it is beyond any doubt that OE did distinguish the Subj function (as defined within FG), witness the occurrence of passive constructions such as:

(1) 1:3 ealle þing wæron geworhte ðurh hyme³³
"all things were made by him"

(2) 1:6 mann wæs fram gode asend þæs nama wæs iohannes
"a man whose name was John was sent by God"

³³. I will not indicate length-marks for the OE vowels, for the simple reason that the actual texts do not have them either.

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Matters become a little more complicated for the Object function. Looking for evidence of the three criteria suggested by Dik (1980) for deciding whether or not this syntactic function should be used for the description of a given language, I can find no examples of raising or so-called 'causative oppositions'. The third characteristic of a true 'object language' - the dative shift phenomenon - is not unequivocally present in OE either. Recipients and Beneficiaries are not normally expressed by means of a prepositional phrase (so that the absence of a preposition in a constituent X does not warrant the conclusion that X has been assigned Obj function). They are regularly placed in front of the Goal constituent (as in (3)), but then they are still in the dative (in this case: *him* and not *hi(e)*), and cannot be regarded as true objects:

- (3) 1:12 He sealde him anweald þæt hi wæron godes bearn
[...]
"He gave them the power to be God's children"

We can now go on to give a schematic survey of the most important distinguishing traits of OE positional syntax. In simple declarative clauses, the unmarked order is generally considered to be SVO. SOV can be found in subordinate clauses (though less frequently in relative clauses, and generally not so often in my (late OE) corpus), in any coordinate clause after the first (again, these more often than not have SVO in my corpus), and also in main clauses (but then only when the object is a pronoun; hence, these orderings are instantiations of LIPOC). This seemingly straightforward position has nevertheless been questioned by some (notably Bacquet 1962, Strang 1970). They argue that the normal OE word order was SOV, and that the O could optionally be placed after the verb when it was complex (LIPOC) or when it had Focus function. This position seems to be quite untenable, not

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only for the biblical part of my corpus, but also for the extracts taken from the Chronicle. In both, the order SVO is clearly the unmarked one. SOV might, of course, have been dominant in more archaic documents (in the first place, the *Beowulf*), but this situation cannot simply be extrapolated to later stages of OE.³⁴ In doing so, one would take the position of pronouns (i.e. non-prototypical instances of the category 'noun') as one's starting-point, whereas the prototypical Subj/Obj are full noun phrases. One result of all this is that the possibility of postulating a special pragmatic position after the simple V is cancelled. In 3.5, I will argue that we can still distinguish such a position (called P_f, and quite similar to what was called P0 in Chapter 2),³⁵ but then only after the last part of a complex verb.

Verb-initial (V1) ordering is regular in yes-no questions, in jussive-volitional expressions and imperatives, and in conditional clauses not introduced by a conjunction (Quirk & Wrenn 1955). Adverbs could take up a variety of positions. And finally, although OE is basically a prepositional language, postpositions could also occur, especially when governing a pronoun (LIPOC).

3.2 The P1 position

A recurrent feature of the few existing FG studies on OE syntax is the assumption that OE word order can be profitably described by means of the pattern-schema P1VSO (Dik 1978, 1980). Although this position is not entirely correct (see 3.3), the P1 concept - the clause-initial position - obviously remains relevant, and V2-order is

³⁴. In this respect, it might be noted that Bacquet based himself on Ries's (1907) study of the word order of *Beowulf*.

³⁵. I use P0 to refer to the position in between P1 and V (see 3.3).

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indeed preferred in OE. It is our task, then, to establish what constituents can be placed there and under what conditions (in other words, to set up the relevant P1-rules).

Considering the semantic functions of the constituents occurring in P1, we only find arguments (Go, Rec, etc.), and σ_1 (Means, Manner, Source, Direction, etc.) and σ_2 (especially Time and Location) satellites. Attitudinal satellites (σ_3) do not seem to occur in P1, although this is possible in such typologically similar languages as Modern German and Dutch:

- (4) Hopelijk/blijkbaar/gelukkig droeg Peter een pruik.
Hopefully/apparently/luckily wore Peter a wig
"Hopefully/... Peter wore a wig"

The reason why this should be the case is presumably to be sought in the nature of my corpus. In Bible stories, the actual narrator's attitude towards the propositional content of what he communicates is not judged to be very important. That of the characters can of course be relevant, but then can only be expressed through direct speech (which is not frequent enough).

Categorially, then, these constituents can be NPs, PPs, adverbs, and clauses (correlative clauses with *þa* are particularly frequent).³⁶ P1-constituents, which are obligatorily placed in P1, include Q-words, but also the interrogative particle *hwæðer*.³⁷

As far as the pragmatic functionality of all these clause-initial elements is concerned, the majority of them are GivTops or SubTops. Occasionally, a focus constituent

³⁶. Note that, unlike correlative main clauses with *þa*, (temporal) subclauses initiated by correlative *þa* always have SV order. This corroborates my proposal in 2.2.3 that subordinators stand in a special COMP-position, and not in P1.

³⁷. For some further discussion of the latter, see 3.3.

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(e.g. a Q-word) can be placed in P1 as well. In still other cases, the initial constituent hardly seems to fulfil a pragmatic function at all (this is particularly true of 'markers of consecutive action' as *þa* and *þonne*, although one could argue that they are *temporally topical* in that they outline a time-background for the main chain of events).

The dominant order after a fronted constituent is Verb-Subject, although this is by no means obligatory (see 3.3). But of course, the Subject itself can also be placed clause-initially, and this is even the unmarked order in OE (as in all modern Germanic languages). Standard FG derives this SVO ordering from the more general P1VSO schema. In the case of OE, we could stipulate that S can be placed in P1 if it is GivTop or SubTop. This would indeed seem to be the most economical and sensible solution. With the advent of cognitive linguistics, however, it has been argued that economy must be consistent with psychological reality (Langacker 1987, 1990).³⁸ The best grammar is no longer the shortest grammar, but the one that most adequately describes the conventional linguistic knowledge of the natural language user. This knowledge includes all linguistic structures learned as established units (such as, we may assume, the SVO schema)³⁹ and may contain both general statements (P1VSO) and particular statements (SVO), even if these latter are fully subsumed by the general ones (as is the case here). Compare in this respect Langacker's claim that, even though no linguist can doubt that every

³⁸. I am adopting a static version of cognitive linguistics here. A more procedural cognitive model would maintain that the amount of (linguistic) information actually stocked in the brain is minimal. Such a theory would attach more importance to the conventionalization of the procedures involved in producing linguistic expressions.

³⁹. But note that different speakers may employ different (cognitive) strategies to arrive at the same linguistic result.

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native speaker of English 'knows' the general rule of plural-formation (singular form + -s), this does not imply that he cannot have the plural forms of particularly frequent nouns stocked as such in his mental lexicon.

This proposal also yields two added bonuses. Firstly, assuming such a separate pattern-schema SVO allows us to formulate the following general principle to distinguish marked from unmarked orderings in a systematic way (which is something a pragmatically adequate language theory should certainly be able to do; cf. Connolly 1983):

- (5) A given constituent ordering is marked *iff* some constituent (other than a P1-constituent) is placed in a position different from its pattern position.

A fundamental distinction can thus be made between SVO and, for instance, OVS. The latter is a marked construction derivable from the schema P1VSO, whereas the former is a direct instantiation of the SVO pattern, and does not need a particular functional explanation (since it is the default-order). Needless to say, principle (5), which seems at least intuitively quite attractive, could not be maintained if we persisted in deriving SVO orders from the P1VSO schema.

A second advantage of using both general and 'specific' word order patterns is that it makes Dik's theory of constituent ordering fit in better with his wish to "take languages seriously" (Dik 1989: 16). He condemns the "X is really Y position" - quite popular in the early seventies - according to which

what at first sight looked like X (where X could be a category or a construction) was in fact only the outward manifestation of some 'deeper' category or construction Y (ibid.)

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But in fact Dik does precisely the same when trying to demonstrate that obvious SVO languages like Dutch and German 'are really' P1VSO. If we accept the alternative analysis proposed here, then we can classify Dutch and German as SVO languages in the main clause (together with, for instance, Modern English and Chinese), but with the extra specification that they are P1VSO when a constituent other than the subject is fronted.

To sum up, including a separate schema SVO in the grammar of a 'P1VSO language' with unmarked order SVO is certainly less economical, but also more relevant psychologically than sticking to one general pattern-schema. This means, then, that we have to determine which property makes a grammar more adequate: economy or psychological plausibility? Furthermore, our proposal makes the FG theory of word order more consistent with the general aims of the model, while clearing the path for setting up the general markedness principle in (5).

3.3 The P0 position

Although it is often assumed that OE had a strict, essentially exceptionless V-2 rule (Haiman 1974; Bynon 1977; Stockwell 1977a; Van Stevens 1990; Minkova & Stockwell 1992), the language is not truly V2 typologically (cf. Bean 1983), and is hence not fully comparable to the Modern Germanic languages. In all OE prose texts, we also find V3 patterns with the subject and finite verb in the second and third clause-position respectively (albeit not very frequently, but this is not relevant). This phenomenon has turned out to be quite a problem for many scholars in the past. Various explanations have been proposed to deal with these V3 orders, involving the rhythm of the sentence, the length of the preposed constituent, and even an *ad hoc* division into 'strong heads' (normally entailing 'inversion') and 'weak heads' (normally followed by SV

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order). None of these seem to work adequately. The most radical (and most simplistic) way out has been suggested by Andrew (1940), who simply denies the existence of P1SVO orders. In his view, all alleged examples of this pattern are the result of literal translation, incorrect punctuation (by editors), scribal or grammatical errors, or 'idioms' (whatever he might mean by this term). In this section, I propose that we accept this P1SVO ordering as a distinct possibility of OE grammar, with its own specific functionality. I hold that in these structures the Subject is placed in a second preverbal pragmatic position, which I will call P0, and which is reserved for pronouns (as a result of LIPOC) and constituents with either NewTop or Focus function.^{40 41}

Looking for evidence for this hypothesis, we meet with some difficulties in the biblical part of my corpus. There are 13 examples with a pronoun (e.g. (6)), 5 examples with a NewTop or some type of Focus (e.g. Parallel Focus in (7)),⁴² but there are also 4 sentences in which the constituent in P0 is neither, as in (8):

(6) 1:43 On mergen he wolde faran to galilea
"In the morning he wanted to go to Galilea"

(7) 5:19 þa þing þe he wyrp se sunu wyrcð gelice
"the things that he does the son does likewise"

⁴⁰. On the first point, cf. Schmidt (1980). On the second, cf. Bacquet (1962). Note that NewTops are radically different from the prototypical Topic, and are relatively close to the focal side on the focality-topicality continuum.

⁴¹. Note that it is **only** the subject that can be placed in this P0-position. In other words, a constituent had to satisfy both syntactic and pragmatic conditions in order to be placed in P0.

⁴². The focus lies on the symmetry between the activities of God and those of his son (it is stressed that they are the same).

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- (8) 6:21 and sona þæt scyp was æt þam lande þe hig woldon
to faran
"and soon the ship was at the land they wanted to
go to"

This may, again, be due to the relative 'modernity' of the language. When we check the P0 hypothesis against some older (early OE) texts from the *Chronicle*, we indeed obtain a much clearer situation: I have found no examples in my sample of this text where the element in P0 is neither a pronoun nor a Focus/NewTop.⁴³ These texts also offer a nice example of the difference in position between focal and (given) topical subjects. Compare (9) (where the subject is in contrast with *se here þe Exanceaster beseten hæfde* from the previous paragraph) with (10), from the following paragraph:

- (9) S8.127 þa þy ilcan gere onforan winter þa deniscan
þe on meresige sæton tugin hira scipu up on
temese⁴⁴
"then, in the same year before winter, the
Danish that lived on Mersea Island rowed
their the Thames"
- (10) S8.130 Ond þy ilcan gere worhte se foresprecena
here geweorc be lygan
"and in the same year the aforementioned
army built a fortress near Lea"

⁴³. The 'deviant' examples of the New Testament will be tackled in Chapter Four.

⁴⁴. The three temporal expressions should be analyzed as being part of one sole constituent. The modern Germanic languages allow such constructions as well, e.g. Dutch *Gisterenavond rond een uur of vijf ontmoette ik Eva* ("Yesterday evening around five o'clock I met Eva").

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Of course, the rule that places pronouns and NewTop/Foc constituents in P0 is not an obligatory one. Hence, we do find sentences in which such constituents remain in their pattern-position. But this is hardly a problem; after all, pragmatic word order principles seldom impose rigorous structural constraints on languages, but rather result in 'tendencies'.⁴⁵

There remains at least one difficulty for the P0-hypothesis. Main clauses introduced by *þa*, *þonne* and other such connective adverbials never seem to have V3 order, which would mean that in these cases, the P0 position is never filled. But if we assumed that such sentences are mostly 'foregrounded' (i.e. express the mainline of the narrative), the situation could be tied up with Hopper's (1979) proposal that, in contrast to 'backgrounded' clauses (which support, amplify or comment on the events of the main narrative), OE foregrounded sentences prefer given<new order. This would explain why information which is somehow focal would preferably be placed at the end of the clause, but not why LIPOC does not seem to be able to place pronouns in P0. It is therefore probably best to agree with Campbell (1970, quoted by Mitchell 1985), who points to the potential ambiguity of the connective adverbials mentioned: they cannot only be used as satellites, but also as subordinators. Avoidance of ambiguity would then result in *þa/þonne* +SV in embedded, and *þa/þonne* +VS in main clauses (cf. also Quirk & Wrenn 1955).

While this problem does not immediately force us to seriously reconsider the P0-hypothesis, it remains possible to attack the proposal on other - more theoretical - grounds. It is, for instance, possible to defend the claim that OE was a faithful V2-language with an exceptionless verb-second constraint. This could easily be done by claiming that the fronted constituents in examples (6)-(8) are not placed in P1 (which is my claim) but rather in P2.

⁴⁵. Cf. Mossé (1945).

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However, this alternative seems to be quite unsatisfactory. My main objection to it relates to a comparison of the use of the P2 position in OE and the modern Germanic languages. Admittedly, building up a grammar of language X on the basis of another language Y (even though Y is, in this case, genetically related and typologically similar to X) is not the most reliable linguistic method ever heard of, but it is the only one we have at our disposal to solve the issue at stake here.

If we look at Dutch, then, we readily see that the only satellites that can occur in P2 belong to level 4 (for some more discussion and examples see 3.6). A translation of example (6) as (11) (with the σ_2 satellite '*s Morgens* in P2) would therefore be unacceptable:

(11) * '*s Morgens, hij wou naar Galilea gaan.*

We might even suspect that this is in fact a language-universal constraint: elements belonging to the proposition have to be expressed clause-internally, i.e. they cannot be placed in P2 or P3.⁴⁶ But even if this is not a general principle,⁴⁷ it certainly does hold for all modern Germanic languages, and we can hypothesize that it is also valid for OE. Of course, we are still stuck with the problem that we are extrapolating 'from the known to the unknown'. But the same objection can be raised against the 'P2 alternative' (and there OE is described from the point of view of Modern English - i.e. it is analysed as a P2,P1SVO language - which is typologically more distinct

⁴⁶. I am using the term *proposition* in a technical sense here: it refers to the third level of the organisation of the underlying clause structure (UCS). The *clause* is here the result of the application of the expression rules to the UCS.

⁴⁷. For a discussion of some facts that seem to favour this stance, see Chapter Four. But the tendency would perhaps still remain valid as a special case of the principle of iconic ordering (Dik 1989: 340).

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from it than the other Germanic dialects are). And although it is not a very compelling piece of evidence either, it is worth remarking that most students of OE syntax have accepted the fact that OE was not consistently V2 and did have V3 orderings.

3.4 V-initial constructions

We have now arrived at the following pattern-schema for OE:

(12) P1 P0 V S A₂

where P1 is reserved for topical (and to some degree also focal) constituents, and P0 for subjects that are either pronominal or somehow focal. In the biblical texts I examined, at least one of these two pragmatic positions is always filled. Older texts, however, show a not infrequent use of V-initial (V1) constructions. In the entries 892-896 of the *Chronicle*, there are 8 examples of this order altogether. Six of these involve either *wesan* 'be' or the auxiliary *habban* 'have', and may be the result of a tendency (already growing rather weak in early OE) for auxiliaries (as expressions of π -operators) to occur initially:⁴⁸

(13) S8.57 *Hæfde Hæsten ær geworht þæt geweorc æt
Beamfleote, ond wæs þa ut afaren on hergaf,
ond wæs se micle here æt ham.*

The two other examples, however, cannot be explained in this manner, since they involve full verbs (specifically *besæton* 'besiege' and *foron* 'go'; observe that both

⁴⁸. Note that the OE auxiliary verbs are still somewhat removed structurally and semantically from the 'real' auxiliaries we have in Modern English (Goossens 1987, forthc.).

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examples have an 'implicit' subject and might also be accounted for by assuming that OE derives from a Pro-drop parent):

(14) S8.82 *Foron þa up be temese oþ þæt hie gedydon at sæferne*
 "(They) then went up on the Thames until they arrived at Severn"

(15) S8.108 *besæton þeah þæt geweorc utan sume twegen dagas*
 "(They) nevertheless besieged the fortress for some two days"

Again, there is no consensus on how these examples should be explained. It has alternatively been suggested that they link consecutive events (Bean 1983), introduce a new train of thought or change emphasis (Snegireva, quoted by Mitchell 1985), mark a turning-point in the discourse (quite like a new paragraph in Modern English; Mitchell 1985), impose a "relief expressif" on the clause (Mossé 1945), or result in an 'emotive' effect (Fourquet 1938). It has also been claimed that in V1-clauses, the P1/P0 position is actually not empty, but filled by an illocutionary operator (Strang 1970; the result would be that the clause-type is highlighted) or the verbal predicate itself (Huchon 1972, who holds that V1 focuses on the action/state expressed by the verb).

While at least some of these proposals may contain some element of truth, they are all either too general or too specific to count as necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of V1. Hence, I put forward the suggestion that we simply look upon these examples as marked constructions that draw attention to themselves precisely because of their markedness (cf. Fourquet 1938), and can in fact serve a variety of (pragmatic) functions. How exactly they are interpreted depends on the particular

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communicative situation they occur in, and need not be part of the grammar, but rather of a more general theory of verbal behaviour and communication. Often (for example, in my corpus) they will hardly be more than a device to avoid stylistic monotony (cf. also Quirk & Wrenn 1955).

3.5 The position P_f

In the schema in (12), we neglected to indicate that not all parts of the verbal group need to be placed one directly after the other. In unmarked main clauses, the non-finite part of the verb is placed clause-finally. Constituents may be placed after the last part of the complex verb, but then only if particular (pragmatic) conditions are fulfilled. Hence, the postulation of a third pragmatic position (in the 'final field') seems to be warranted, so that the schema in (12) is elaborated to the one in (16):⁴⁹

(16) P_1 P_0 V_f S A_2 X V_i P_f

P_f seems to fulfil roughly the same function as the preverbal position P_0 , in that constituents may be placed there because of their special pragmatic prominence or (but less frequently so) because of their higher complexity (LIPOC). As for the first point, consider the following typical examples:⁵⁰

(17) 1:46 *mæg ænig þing godes beon of nazareth* (P_f =Focus)
"Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

⁴⁹. The P_f position is similar to what was called P_0 in Chapter Two (in relation to Dutch and German).

⁵⁰. The fact that the first example is a question has no bearing on the issue at stake (of *nazareth* in (17) is no less exbraciated than on *galilea* in (18)).

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(18) 1:43 On mergen he wolde faran on galilea (P_f =Focus)

"In the morning he wanted to go to Galilea"

One instance of the preferred placement of complex constituents in P_f is (19):

(19) 2:20 þis tempel was getimbrod on six and feowertigon
wintron

"This temple was built in forty-six years"

3.6 P2 and P3

Now that we have discussed all the relevant intra-clausal P-positions, we can briefly deal with the extra-clausal P2 and P3. The discussion will indeed of necessity be brief, since my corpus seems to confirm Geluykens' (1987) observation that especially the P3 position is less characteristic of spoken than it is of written language. I have consequently found no examples of P3, but in view of its presumed universality, I shall nevertheless include such a position in the complete pattern-schema for OE.

The P2 position does seem to be relevant, even for written OE. But here, too, we run into a problem. The very essence of P2 is that it harbours extra-clausal constituents, which are bracketed off from the rest of the clause by "comma-intonation". But of course we cannot apply such a phonological criterion to written documents. Nor can we work with its typographical correlate (the use of a comma), since that was not used in OE. I therefore propose to work with another test for determining what elements occur in P2: if there is 'inversion' of subject and verb after a given preposed constituent X, then X is in P1. If there is never inversion after X, the constituent can be taken to occur in P2. Of course, lack of inversion might also indicate that the subject is in P0 (and that X is in P1). Hence, we are obliged to compare the OE data with a

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more or less cognate modern Germanic language like Dutch. In Dutch, a clause-initial satellite can only occur in P1 if it belongs to level 1, 2 or 3. Illocutionary (σ_4) satellites, put at the beginning of the clause, are obligatorily placed in P2:

(20) Snel/ Gisteren/ Hopelijk ging Peter naar huis.
quickly/yesterday/hopefully went Peter to home
"Quickly/... Peter went home"

(21) *Snel/..., Peter ging naar huis.

(22) *Echt waar ging Peter naar huis.
really went Peter to home
"Really, Peter went home"

(23) Echt waar, Peter ging naar huis.

The semantic distinction drawn by Greenbaum (1969) between adjuncts (level 1 and level 2 satellites, which are semantically integrated in the predication) and disjuncts (levels 2 and 3, which are not) is thus not backed up by formal behavioural properties, at least not in Dutch: the (formal) cut-off point appears to lie between the third and the fourth level.

The same seems to be true of OE. Satellites such as *witodlice* and *sop(lice)*⁵¹ are frequently left-dislocated. Other constituents occurring in P2 include vocative expressions, but also subjects (a resumptive pronoun is then placed in the pattern-position of the subject):

(24) 3:36 Se þe gelyfð on sunu se hæfð ece lif
"he who believes in the son has eternal life"

⁵¹. *Sop* most frequently functions as a noun in OE (meaning 'truth'), but it can also be used as a satellite.

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The effect of such constructions seems to be that, through its dislocation and its repetition, the constituent in P2 is focused upon.

3.7 Expletive elements

Elements like *þær* and *hit* are generally analysed as *dummies*, whose only function is to make certain that a particular position in the clause-pattern is not left open. For the old Germanic languages, it has been suggested that such elements function as P1-fillers (Haiman 1974; Dik 1989). They are said to be placed in P1 when no other constituent takes clause-initial position, because of a general V2-constraint which does not allow verbs to stand clause-initially. The only modern Germanic language for which this proposal might be said to work is Yiddish. The following examples clearly show that *es* 'it' is only needed (and indeed only allowed) when P1 is not filled by any other constituent:

(25) In Shikage iz azoy kalt vi in Moskwe.
in Chicago is so cold as in Moscow
"In Chicago it is as cold as in Moscow"

(26) Es iz azoy kalt in Shikage vi in Moskwe.

(27) *In Shikage iz es azoy kalt vi in Moskwe.

But even Yiddish is not a strict V-2 language: verb-initial orderings are particularly frequent in narrative texts (where they often indicate a consecutive or cause-result relationship between States of Affairs).

Turning our attention to Old English again, we find that Haiman's analysis may be adequate for the biblical texts I investigated, but also that it certainly does not apply fully to the texts from the *Chronicle*. In contrast to

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the former part of my corpus, the *Chronicle* texts do allow V1 order (see 3.4). This indicates that P1 is not obligatorily filled. Consequently, there would be no reason for *þær* to occur at all in this analysis.⁵² The fact is, however, that it does:

(28) S8.190 *þær wearð ofslægen lucomon, cynges gerefa*
 [...]⁵³

"There was slain Lucomon, the king's reeve"

Moreover, *þær* can occur (but only preverbally) even if the P1 position has already been filled by some other constituent, as in (27):

(29) S8.98 *ond þara deniscra þær wearð swiðe micel*
 geslegen

"and of the Danish there were very many
slain"

This evidence seems to point in the direction of an analysis of this element as a P0-filler. However, the reason why it is P0 that would need to be filled is rather obscure (since P0 is not obligatorily filled either). Possibly, the use of *þær* relates to a tendency to conform to the growing importance of the canonical SVO order (see Chapter Four). Note that this analysis is fundamentally different from Dik's. First of all, I do not conceive of *þær* as a P1 but as a P0 filler. More importantly, the ultimate ground for the appearance of such an element is not some rigid 'non-V1 constraint' (since such a constraint

⁵². One possible solution here is to take into account the fact that the V-initial pattern was already recessive.

⁵³. Note that, more often than not, *þær* still retains something of its original locative meaning (Vallins 1959; cf. also the inherent conceptual link there exists between location and existence (Lyons 1967)).

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did not exist for the earliest documents), but a desire to comply with the Addressee's expectation to hear/read the Subject before the Verb. When P1 is filled as well, this leads to remarkably modern constructions of the structure P1-there-V-complement, as in (29).

3.8 Conclusions

This chapter has presented the following pattern-schema for OE declarative main clauses:

(28) P2, P1 P0 Vf S A₂ X Vi P_f ,P3

in which the most important pragmatic positions seem to be P1 (which can harbour topical and focal material), P0 (which is reserved for pronouns and constituents that are NewTop or Foc, and can also contain 'fillers'), and P_f (which can contain NewTop or Foc constituents and elements that are relatively complex). We have also found that the Obj function is not relevant for OE. Furthermore, it has been argued that the postulation of this general schema does not preclude the existence of other - more specific - patterns (for example, SVO) that are stored in and processed by the human mind as such.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of OE constituent order thus seems to be that it distinguished a relatively large number of 'special pragmatic positions' (in contrast to its present-day descendant). This change from 'pragmaticity' to 'syntacticity' of English word order will naturally be one of the main lines of research in the following chapter.

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Diachronic Perspectives on English

P-positions

4.0 Introduction

We will start this fourth and central chapter by having a brief look at the main differences in positional syntax between the two extremes on the English temporal axis: Old English and New or Modern English (NE) (section 4.1). Once we are aware of the general characteristics of the evolution in constituent ordering we are dealing with, we can go on to attempt to sketch a consistent and realistic theory of word order change which can be incorporated into the general linguistic framework of FG, and which is meant to serve as a more adequate alternative to the diachronic word order theory mainly outlined in Dik (1980) (section 4.2). Using this theoretical background, we will describe the role of P-positions in the evolution of English syntax in a more detailed manner (section 4.3).

4.1 A schematic comparison of OE and NE word order

Our discussion of NE constituent ordering need not take us long. NE word order has been described in sufficient detail elsewhere. The pattern-schema proposed in the literature for the main clause (for example in Dik 1989) - which is represented here as (1) - seems to be the right one for describing my corpus as well:

(1) P2, P1 S V O X, P3

The extracts from the Bible used for analysis in this paper seem to be reasonably representative of 'normal'

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written English, although the general archaic character of the Biblical register is also to a certain extent reflected in its positional syntax. But altogether the presence of truly archaic constructions seems to be minimal; one example may well be the relative frequency of V-2 orderings (see 4.1.2 for some more discussion).

When we compare (1) with the template proposed for OE in (25) of Chapter Three, the two central differences clearly are that:

- OE distinguished more pragmatic positions than NE. Within the clause proper, OE had P₁, P₀, and P_f, whereas NE has only retained P₁ (see section 4.1.1).⁵⁴
- OE was basically still a V-2 language (with possible V-3 order in particular pragmatic contexts), whereas NE is fairly consistently V-3 (P₁SVO). This change from P₁SVO to P₁SVO will be tackled in 4.1.2.

Both the first and the second subsection of 4.1 will also discuss pattern-schema (1) in some more detail.

4.1.1 From pragmatic to syntactic word order

For various reasons, the only intra-clausal pragmatic position that has been retained in NE is the universal position P₁. One cause of the absence of P_f is surely the impermeability (or at least the great cohesion) of the verbal group. As is also the case in Yiddish and Swedish, for example, the finite and non-finite parts of the English verbal group tend to stick together. Dutch and German, on the other hand, have a distinct preference for verbal 'cleaving':

⁵⁴. It might be argued that Present-day English has a P_f position as well, as in *Malcolm explained to his audience the implications of his ideas*, although this position is certainly not the direct descendant of the OE (postverbal) P_f.

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(2) I **have killed** John with an axe.

(3) Ich **habe** Jan mit einer Axt **getötet**.

(4) Ik **heb** Jan met een bijl **vermoord**.

Dutch and German, then, still have the possibility of putting constituents both before (*Einklammerung* or *embraciation*) and after (*exbraciation*) the non-finite part of the verb. Since the postverbal placement of a constituent X results in a marked focus-construction, the two languages can still be said to distinguish the P_f position. Some more basic and general factors lying at the root of the situation in English will be discussed in 4.2 and 4.3.

In Chapter Three we decided that OE V-3 orders were the result of the exceptional placement of a focal, new-topical or pronominal constituent (which was also the subject) in P₀. In NE the only requirement a constituent has to fulfil in order to be able to occur between P₁ and V is a syntactic one: it has to be the subject of the clause. It thus seems that a pragmatic pattern-position (P₀) has turned into a purely syntactic one (S) (i.e. the extra pragmatic conditions have worn off). And this is indeed symptomatic of the general direction of the evolution of English positional syntax: from a word order regulated by pragmatic tendencies towards one determined predominantly by syntactic rules.⁵⁵

In this respect, it might be noted that the strength of LIPOC seems to have decreased through the centuries (or rather that its influence has become weaker, in that it has been increasingly overruled by syntactic considerations).

⁵⁵. For the distinction between pragmatic and grammatical word order languages, see e.g. Givón () and Thompson (1978). Givón (1979) refers to the evolution from the former to the latter as "the genesis of syntax ex-discourse" (97).

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The pragmatic tendency to put structurally simpler elements at the beginning of clauses and more complex ones towards the end had indeed a greater domain of application in OE than it does in NE.⁵⁶ For example, pronouns normally 'jumped' to the left of the governing preposition, and pronominal objects⁵⁷ could do the same with regard to the verb at the level of the main clause (which resulted in SOV order).

Another characteristic of NE that might be linked up with this general evolution towards greater syntacticity is the unambiguous presence of the Object function. Applying the three tests proposed in Dik (1980) - which we already used in section 3.1 - to NE yields the following observations. First of all, Dative Shift is unequivocally part of NE grammar. In a predication with both a Goal and a Recipient, either constituent can become object: the Goal (*life*) is Object in (5), and the Recipient (*him*), in (6):

(5) 6:33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives *life* to the world.

(6) 5:27 And he has given *him* authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

The second requirement for deciding whether or not the Object function is relevant for a given language - the presence of Raising-constructions - is also observed in NE, although there are no examples of this in my corpus. And finally, NE also shows to have causative constructions, for example with *make*:

(7) 6:10 Jesus said, "Make the people sit down."

⁵⁶. For the OE data, see 3.1.

⁵⁷. Recall that we demonstrated in 3.1 that OE did not distinguish the Object function in the FG sense.

4.1.2 From P1P0VSO to P1SVO

As has been repeatedly pointed out in this paper, OE was essentially a V-2 language. The V-2 order was, however, only a (relatively strong) tendency and by no means an absolute constraint. We have just seen that NE is a V-3 language. In other words, when a constituent other than the subject is fronted, the finite verb appears in the third position of the clause (i.e. after the fronted constituent and the subject). In 4.2 and 4.3 we will argue that this change is caused by a markedness shift, which is in its turn caused by case syncretism.

But the V-3 rule in NE is not exceptionless either.⁵⁸ We do in fact find remnants of the older V-2 stage. V-2 order seems to occur particularly in clauses with the copula *be* (e.g. (8) and (5)), or with an intransitive verb (e.g. (9)):⁵⁹

(8) 1:47 Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.

(9) 2:6 Nearby stood six stone water jars [...]

Note in passing that copula constructions also allow archaic constituent orderings in other environments. In

⁵⁸. Generalizing over these data, we might suspect there to be some tendency in NE to avoid verb-final constructions. It is obvious, however, that this is only a tendency, witness examples like *There he comes*. Another possibility is that in the inversions at stake both the constituent in P1 and the Subj are focal.

⁵⁹. I am not referring to simple SVO clauses here (e.g. *Mary kissed John*). Note in passing that there seems to be a conceptual difference between the use of the term V2 and that of V3. V2 is normally taken to refer to a strict constraint (the verb had to be in second position) whereas the term V3 refers to what happens when a non-subject constituent is fronted.

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relative clauses, for example, both XV (in (10)) and the modern VX (11) occur:

(10) The world is all that the case is.

(11) The world is all that is the case.

This divergent syntactic behaviour of the copula might of course be linked up with its special status as a verb originating in the expression component (cf. Dik 1989: 165f.).

The essential difference between OE and NE thus seems to be that OE was basically V-2 with exceptional V-3 orderings, whereas NE is fundamentally V-3 while occasionally allowing V-2 (as for the latter category, I am not taking into account simple SVO structures, which I take to be instantiations of the P1SVO schema with empty P1). The V-3 orderings in OE were pragmatically determined (the constituent between P1 and V was either structurally simple or had a particular pragmatic function), which led us to include a P0 position in the pattern-schema of the language.

The marked V-2 constructions in NE presumably have a pragmatic *raison d'être* as well, but it is not immediately clear what this might be.⁶⁰ In many cases, using V-2 achieves a greater level of formality. But this is by no means always the case. Putting the subject before the verb in (8) and (9), for instance, results in rhythmically awkward sentences. At any rate, this situation cannot involve a particular pragmatic *position*. Clearly, we cannot use the schema P1P0VSO to describe NE word order, since the constituents in 'P0' do not conform to any pragmatic generalization: they can be NewTopic (12) and Focus (13), but also GivenTopic (14):

⁶⁰. For an elaborate yet not very illuminating treatment of 'inversion' in English, see Schmidt (1980).

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(12) 2:1 On the third day a *wedding* took place at Cana in Galilee.

(13) 2:19 Whatever the Father does *the Son* also does.

(14) 1:43 The next day *Jesus* decided to leave for Galilee.

The only generalization possible here is that all constituents in italics have the same syntactic function. The template P1SVO is hence far more suitable to cover these instances than the pattern-schema with the pragmatic position P0. Note that in order for a constituent to be placed between P1 and V in OE, that constituent had to be Subj as well. The point is, however, that while this is a necessary and sufficient condition in NE, it was clearly not so for its predecessor. OE still imposed the extra restriction on P0 that in order to be considered as a candidate for placement in that position, a constituent had to satisfy particular *pragmatic* conditions as well.

The fact that NE follows a P1SVO structure entails one considerable theoretical and practical problem: it proves to be difficult to distinguish between P1 and P2. For Dutch and the other Germanic languages except NE, we have seen that we can use the criterion of Subject-Verb 'inversion' to decide whether a given fronted constituent is in P1 or in P2. We have also drawn the conclusion from this experiment that semantically, only level 4-satellites can occur in P2 (at least in the Germanic V-2 languages). We have then applied this principle to OE (in defence of the P0-hypothesis), assuming we *could* do this because OE and - for instance - Dutch are typologically similar (though obviously not identical).

But for NE, things are still more complicated than for its earliest attested ancestor. The criterion of inversion is obviously useless, as is the derived semantic principle we have just mentioned (NE and the other Germanic languages being typologically too dissimilar). When we try to

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interpret the data independently of any helping heuristic principle, it appears that the NE P2 position exhibits greater flexibility, in that it can harbour satellites of other levels as well. Examples (15) and (16) seem to have a σ_2 satellite.

(15) 5:1 Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews.

(16) 3:22 After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside.

But such speculations must be handled with care, since they are based on a written corpus, and punctuation is quite unreliable. Consider Dutch in this respect, in which a constituent 'bracketed off' from the rest of the clause by a comma might still cause inversion:

(17) Toen ik gisteren naar huis ging, ontmoette ik Jan.
when I yesterday to home went met I Jan
"When I went home yesterday, I met John"

Further study - preferably on the basis of spoken data - should be able to throw more light on this matter (see, for example, Geluykens 1992).

4.2 Towards an integrated theory of word order change

Before we have a look at the details of the change in the use of P-positions in English, we should consider some theoretical concepts and proposals which may help us to understand the subtleties of this evolution. The various theories of word order change can best be evaluated by ordering them into three groups, according to how they see the relationship between changes in morphology and changes in (positional) syntax. A quite unpopular claim is that

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changes in syntax cause changes in morphology (4.2.1). A second group of linguists - which seems to include Dik - says there is no direct link between the two components (4.2.2). And a third position - which is the one I will defend here - holds that a decrease in the use of inflectional morphology causes an increase in the use of word order as a device for signalling syntactic relationships (4.2.3).

4.2.1 Syntax as the causal factor in change

A small minority of linguists claim that when the word order of a language becomes syntactically important - i.e. when the position of a constituent starts to indicate its syntactic function rather than its informational (pragmatic) status - inflectional morphology loses its function and hence starts to collapse. In this vein, Carlton (1970) puts forward the claim that constituent ordering

had become prevalent in Old English so that inflections were no longer necessary for many syntactic distinctions. (129; my stress, BVH)

The main problem with this hypothesis is that it cannot explain why a formerly pragmatic word order should become syntactically significant all of a sudden. From a functional point of view, it seems strange - to say the least - that a language would complicate its grammar in this way while it still had a morphology that adequately performed the function of signalling the syntactic roles of constituents.

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4.2.2 Morphology and syntax : no relationship

A somewhat less unpopular claim is that there is no fundamental or direct link between simplification of morphology and syntactization of word order. This means that other explanations have to be sought to account for both changes. Generally, the alternative explanations offered for syntactic change are rather disappointing.

Starting from the (doubtful) assumption that English derives from an SOV parent, McLaughlin (1983) considers the process of topicalization (and more specifically the ambiguities resulting from it) to be the driving force behind the drift towards SVO. He points out that fronting of the object in an SOV language results in OSV, so that when morphological markings are lost, there is no way the Addressee can find out which is the subject and which is the object in such sentences. To avoid this ambiguity, the verb became a 'separator' of subject and object: the unmarked order of the declarative main clause was from then on SVO, and the 'topicalized' order could stay OSV.

This explanation is highly unlikely for two reasons. Firstly, McLaughlin seems to ignore the fact that English went through a V-2 stage before becoming a P1SVO language. And secondly, fronting of objects is too infrequent a phenomenon to be able to cause such a major syntactic change. Consider the situation in Dutch once more. Dutch has unmarked SVO order, and after topicalization this becomes OVS. Dutch morphology being quite comparable in its poverty to that of English, McLaughlin would have to conclude that this, too, is a situation creating too much ambiguity to be allowed. Yet Dutch - and all other Germanic languages, for that matter - has managed to live with this 'handicap' since the time of its earliest documents. More often than not, intonation, subject-verb agreement, and pragmatic information (both of a linguistic and an extra-linguistic nature) lead the Addressee to the right interpretation. In the few cases where this would still be

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insufficient (as in (19), with the same semantic meaning as (18)), the Speaker normally decides to express his thoughts in a different way (in this case he would, for instance, choose (20), or simply 21)).⁶¹

(18) Jan zag Piet (unmarked declarative).

John saw Pete
"John saw Pete"

(19) PIET zag Jan (ambiguous sentence with Focus on Object)
PETE saw John

(20) Het was PIET die door Jan werd gezien.
it was PETE that by John was seen
"It was Pete who was seen by John"

(21) Jan zag PIET.

At any rate, such ambiguity is far too marginal to trigger any kind of word order change.

A second attempt to account for changes in constituent ordering without referring to morphological evolution is presented in Dik (1980, Chapter 7). Dik starts by drawing up a typology of four possible language types, which succeed one another in time: V-1, V-2, V-2s (i.e. 'strong' V-2), and V-3 languages. Their characteristics can be summed up as follows:⁶²

- V-1 type : basic and dominant VSO order
- V-2 type : basic VSO, dominant SVO
- V-2s type : basic VSO, dominant SVO

⁶¹. Capitals provisionally indicate accent here.

⁶². For the difference between basic and dominant order, see 1.2.2.

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(with exceptionless V-2 constraint)

- V-3 type : basic SVO
(if any other constituent than the S is
fronted, the verb is in clause-third
position)

According to Dik, the change from V-1 to V-2 is a case of *markedness shift*: SVO, first a pragmatically determined order, loses its marked character and becomes the dominant word order. V-2 develops into V-2s through what Dik refers to as *V-2 generalization*: the statistical dominance of V-2 over time becomes a structural requirement. And V-2s languages, finally, become V-3 through reinterpretation of the basic order: the VSO template is simply readjusted to the fact that the actual dominant order is SVO.

What mainly concerns us here is, of course, the change from V-2s to V-3, since this is what Dik claims to have taken place in the history of English. In his view, OE was a fully consistent P1VSO language with unmarked SVO order in main declarative clauses. The P1-position thus tended to be filled by the subject, and this tendency grew stronger and stronger until P1 was actually *reserved* for and obligatorily filled by it (which resulted in an underlying SVO-template). But because P1 is a universal position, English had to create one anew, which has led to the P1SVO-pattern it currently exhibits.

This position, too, seems to be quite untenable for various reasons. First of all, some languages just do not fit into Dik's typology. OE, as we have seen, is simply *not* a V-2s language. Still, we might classify it as a V-2 language (i.e. a language *with* a V2 tendency but *without* an absolute V-2 constraint). But by doing this we would imply -still following Dik's hypothesis - that OE did develop into a strong V-2 language later on in its history. And there is no proof that this did in fact happen at any stage (see 4.3 for some further discussion).

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Next to this basically synchronic objection, there is also the problem that Dik's theory assumes some linguistic stages that are not (and cannot) actually be attested in any language. He claims that V-2s (P1VSO) languages first develop into SVO, after which they immediately go to P1SVO since the P1-position is universal. Clearly, the second (SVO) stage is not attested for English, and cannot even be attested for any language according to Dik's own theory (since there simply cannot exist languages without P1). If we do persist in starting out from a V-2s stage, it would be more realistic to assume that the growing tendency of S to go to P1 (with the consequent loss in pragmatic distinctiveness of P1) and the emergence of a new (truly pragmatic) P1-position go hand in hand. But this implies that for a certain period of time, the language would have two pre-verbal pragmatic positions. Presumably, they would have their own distinct functionality (if not, the language would exhibit a quite chaotic structure), and in this way we would actually come very close indeed to the analysis of OE proposed in the present paper (i.e. the postulation of two pragmatic positions P1 and P0).

A third objection to Dik's proposal is more of a theoretical nature, and is furthermore linked to the diachronic ideas expressed in Dik (1989). After having introduced a wider range of general and specific constituent ordering principles than he assumed necessary in earlier stages of the FG model, Dik suggested there that word order change could be explained as the result of 'battles' between the various principles.⁶³ At any given stage of a language, some of them are more powerful than others. But this situation may change over time: other principles may become more influential in their turn,

⁶³. Cf. Steele (1975:243): "If the order of elements is, at least in part, a function of strategies which may conflict, word order change may be the result of ever-changing resolutions of conflicts".

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naturally entailing changes in the actual word order of the language.

Both this and the more detailed hypothesis of 1980 are in fact subject to the same objection: they both treat word order as a "closed circuit" (De Roeck 1987: 6), explaining word order changes system-internally, i.e. by reference to principles of word order only. No reference is made to extra-systemic (e.g. morphology) or extra-linguistic (e.g. the laziness principle) information.

As for the former kind of data, it is an empirical fact that case syncretism and syntactic fixation of word order go hand in hand historically (for the case of English, see 4.3). One can account for this relationship by viewing either phenomenon as the cause of the other, or by seeing both as the result of some other linguistic change (a possibility which to my knowledge has not yet been investigated), but considering them to be completely independent changes leads nowhere. And a truly functional theory of language should not, of course, be afraid to account for linguistic change by making reference to factors inherent to the Natural Language User's psychology.

Having said that, I should make it clear that I am not claiming that *all* kinds of word order change result from extra-systemic and/or extra-linguistic factors. I do believe that at least the multi-functional diachronic proposal put forward in Dik (1989) has some descriptive and explanatory power. But syntactic change is too complex and too varied to exclude other - more powerful and often more 'natural' - explanatory means, some of which we will discuss presently.

4.2.3 Morphology, simplicity, and syntax

By far the most successful account of word order change sees it as an effect of the breakdown of inflectional

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morphology. The earliest version of this hypothesis is Sapir's (1921) theory of *drift*:

As the inflected forms of English became scantier, as the syntactic relations were more and more inadequately expressed by the forms of the words themselves, position in the sentence gradually took over functions originally foreign to it (Sapir 1921: 166)

In other words, word order first served a pragmatic rather than a syntactic function, but had to start indicating the syntactic status of constituents when morphology could no longer do the job.

This viewpoint was more recently picked up by Vennemann (1975), who adds some insights from the study of language universals. Having accepted SOV as the earliest word order template for English, Vennemann goes on to explain the subsequent history of English positional syntax as the result of a diachronic 'law' which says that

If an XV language loses its substantive S-O marking system [i.e. a uniform, conspicuous, and dependable morphological system making it clear in every case which is the S and which is the O; BVH], it changes to VX (Vennemann 1975: 289).⁶⁴

Even if we do not accept this particular proposal (since it starts out from the dubious assumption that English was at some point in time an SOV-language), Vennemann's ideas about the causal relationship between

⁶⁴. This principle is in fact the logical result of Greenberg's universal 41: "If in a language the verb follows both the nominal subject and nominal object as the dominant order, the language almost always has a case system." (Greenberg 1963: 96).

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case syncretism and word order change certainly remain valid.

We have already seen that Dik has never even discussed the possibility of a link between morphology and constituent ordering. This is all the more surprising when we consider the fact that he himself actually offers the perfect means to account for such a relationship in a coherent and consistent way. Dik accepts the *synchronic* existence of "a certain degree of 'trade-off'" (Dik 1989: 334) between the three sub-systems of the expression component (word order, morphology, prosody). The more a language uses of one expression device, the less it will need employ the other. This presumably language-independent characteristic had earlier been formulated as the "principle of covariation of functional equivalents" by Keenan (1978):

Syntactic (and morphological) processes which have the same 'function' covary in their distribution across languages [...]

By 'covary' we mean that the more a language has of one of the processes the less it need have of the other. (Keenan 1978: 120)

German, for instance, still has a relatively rich noun morphology, so that its word order is syntactically freer; the inverse situation obtains, of course, in Modern English. But the concept of a trade-off between expressive subsystems can also be taken to have *diachronic* validity and explanatory power. We will briefly return to this in 4.3, but we can already say that the general direction of the English expression component has been from more to less extensive use of morphology, entailing the exact inverse reaction in the constituent ordering system.

But we can go still further than this. Case syncretism is the direct, but not the ultimate cause of word order change. Morphological change is itself the result of other

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linguistic evolutions and extra-linguistic tendencies. Rather than trying to present an exhaustive list of factors that work together in triggering case syncretism, I will discuss only two factors which seem to have been important in the case of English, and which may well claim to have universal validity as well.

A well-known position is the one articulated in Vennemann (1975). He states as a general principle that

[e]very morphological system is destroyed in time by phonological change. (Vennemann 1975: 293)

With respect to the Germanic languages in particular, then, he submits that the loss of morphological marking is ultimately due to the Germanic shift in stress, which fixed the main stress in a word on the root (i.e. mostly the first) syllable. Since much articulatory energy was spent on this first syllable, the following ones became subject to vowel reduction (and subsequent disappearance). And because case-marking in the older Germanic languages (and still, of course, in Yiddish,⁶⁵ German, Faroese and Icelandic) took place by means of suffixes, inflectional morphology gradually faded away.

Apart from this extra-systemic factor, there is also an extra-linguistic aspect to what causes case syncretism. For this we have to accept the existence of a psychological tendency in the Natural Language User to *simplify* the structure of his language (this tendency is sometimes referred to as the *laziness principle*). Such a psychological explanation of morphological change was already latent in Sapir (1921), but was first clearly articulated fifty years later, in Bever & Langendoen

⁶⁵. Note, however, that Yiddish -possibly a creolized version of German- exhibits a morphology which has already undergone considerable simplification.

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(1971).⁶⁶ The authors of this seminal paper claim that one of the reasons why languages change is the existence of a dynamic interaction between the demands of simplicity for language learning and production on the one, and those for language perception on the other hand. The problem is that the two cannot easily be conciled, because

what makes a language easy to understand can often make it difficult to learn [or to produce; BVH].
(Allen 1980: 9, summarizing Bever & Langendoen 1971)

Thus, when a certain change simplifies the grammar from the point of view of production, it may make the understanding of the language more difficult.⁶⁷ Moreover, there seems to be a tendency to keep the balance between productive and perceptual simplicity. Hence, other changes may take place, which move the language more in the other direction again (making the language perceptively easier, yet productively more difficult again).

Simplification (with respect to either production or perception) is indeed mostly the initiating factor in language change, entailing elaboration in other parts of the grammar if either production or perception are hindered by it (Traugott 1972; Rydén 1979). For instance, loss of case distinctions makes a language easier to speak, but because syntactic functions of constituents are no longer marked, it results in chaotic ambiguity if no further steps

⁶⁶. Earlier attempts to do this -within the generative paradigm (e.g. King 1969)- were not quite satisfactory, in that simplicity was treated as a linguistic rather than as an extra-linguistic concept (cf. Bossuyt 1983). As a result, instances of elaboration of grammar were very hard to explain.

⁶⁷. Cf. also Lightfoot's (1979) claim that grammars practice therapy rather than prophylaxis: complexity on one side of the communicative process is corrected by a therapeutic (complexity-reducing) remedy which is 'blind' to the needs of the other side.

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are taken (cf. Burgschmidt 1973). Consequently, the word order of the language will lose its syntactic freedom and will become governed by strict syntactic rules, thus being able to take over the function of morphology and making easier the job of the interpreter.

The gist of this viewpoint was already discussed within the framework of the FG model in Bossuyt (1983). Bossuyt, too, sees every language stage as

a state of precarious balance between perceptual and productive simplicity (Bossuyt 1983: 308)

Intuitively attractive and theoretically realistic as this idea may seem, we must face the problem that there is no absolute certainty that there is in fact such a strong link between the two psycholinguistic tendencies mentioned. This is actually what is (implicitly) suggested in Hawkins (1986). Having compared German and English from a typological point of view, Hawkins sets up a linguistic continuum according to the 'tightness of fit' between surface form and meaning. In German, the two are quite close together: morphology indicates the syntactic and semantic functions of constituents, while word order primarily serves to encode pragmatic distinctions. English, almost completely lacking inflectional morphology, is on the other side of the continuum. Its word order has to indicate not pragmatic but syntactic and semantic relationships between constituents. This means that English constituent ordering (and grammar in general) is *pragmatically ambiguous*. In other words, English linguistic expressions do not spell out the subtleties of their Underlying Clause Structures in so much detail as German ones do.

Hawkins goes on to link up this 'tightness of fit' with the tendencies towards productive and perceptual simplicity. German, having a richness in expressive devices and a consequent lack of distance between meaning and

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linguistic expression, is productively difficult while being perceptually quite simple (since the Addressee can easily make use of morphology and syntax to trace the smallest semantic and pragmatic distinctions of an utterance). And English is quite easy from the Speaker's point of view, but the Addressee has a hard job arriving at the actual communicative intent.

The problem with Hawkins' proposal basically lies in his treatment of the *evolution* of English. Quite rightly so, he describes English as having moved from perceptual (syntactic use of morphology) to productive simplicity (syntactic use of word order). But he actually sees this evolution as a *result* of the decline of morphology, while it is clearly preferable to view it the other way around. Still more importantly, Hawkins' continuum entails that there can be no causal link between changes favouring productive simplicity and those entailing simplicity on the perceptual side.

It is far from obvious, however, that this continuum is in fact correct. Hawkins does not mention the third subsystem of the expression component (intonation). The pragmatic role word order has lost in English might well have been taken over by prosody, which change would have maintained the "precarious balance" between the psychological tendencies at stake here. But again, we will have to await further research: little - if any - linguistic effort has been spent on finding out whether there are differences in the function of intonation between pragmatic and grammatical word order languages.

The aim of the above discussion has been to sketch a theoretical background against which we can better understand the two changes that will be focused upon in 4.3, i.e. the decrease in the use of P-positions in English, and the establishment of a relatively consistent P1SVO pattern. I do not, however, wish to imply that every particular linguistic simplification entails an elaboration: we have been talking about the evolution of

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subsystems, not about the evolution of particular individual elements of such subsystems. Nor do I take the stance that each and every case of language change can be analyzed as the result of the tension between productive and perceptual simplicity. What I do claim is that this dynamic interaction is one factor that can be used to explain language evolution, and that it is undoubtedly the most important one in the change we will presently discuss in some more detail.

4.3 P-positions and the history of English positional syntax

In section 4.1 we briefly discussed the two major syntactic changes related to P-positions that English has undergone: there has been a significant decrease in the use of pragmatic positions, and - as an indirect result - the position of the Subject has become fixed between the constituent in P1 (if there is one) and the finite part of the verb. Both changes will now be dealt with in some more detail.

4.3.1 From pragmatic to syntactic word order

Because English has changed from a predominantly pragmatic to a predominantly syntactic positional syntax, the number of pragmatic positions it uses has decreased. It is, of course, no use trying to establish when exactly this change took place. In contrast to what has often been assumed within the generative paradigm (e.g. King 1969; Lightfoot 1979), linguistic change should be seen a gradual rather than a 'discontinuous' or 'discrete' phenomenon (cf. Chung 1977). Considering the use of P-positions, we can, of course, try to decide which is the earliest linguistic stage in our corpus that no longer distinguishes a

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particular position. Doing this by no means invalidates the general assumption that pattern-positions do not disappear (or change their nature) overnight.

We have already noted (section 3.3) that late (and more specifically biblical) Old English had moved a step away from the pragmatically oriented pattern-schema of early West Saxon. This is quite clear for the P0 position. While it was still very distinctive in early OE, the status of P0 as a focal pattern-position gradually began to wear off. It slowly changed into a purely syntactic position, which evolution has led to the NE pattern-schema P1SVO (in which P0 has become S through a process of markedness shift). The details of this change and some central evidence for it will be discussed in 4.3.2.

The other pragmatic position that has disappeared (or rather *changed* into a syntactic one) is the postverbal P_f (but see 4.1, footnote 1). In OE, constituents could only be placed behind the last part of the verbal group when they satisfied particular pragmatic conditions. But through the centuries, this pragmatic restriction has worn off so that the postverbal position is currently the unmarked one, at least for objects.⁶⁸ The following typical examples ((22) and (23) are sets of translations of 1:14 and 5:14 respectively) give an indication of the evolution in the default placement of complements (i.e. the placement of non-focal, structurally simple arguments):⁶⁹

⁶⁸. I am not taking into account adverbial satellites. Their positioning is considerably more complex, some satellites actually preferring placement within the verbal group.

⁶⁹. A good case might of course be made for resisting the claim that the constituents in bold are in fact arguments in the technical sense of the word. But whatever their exact nature might be, what is important here is their positioning vis-à-vis the verbal complex.

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- (22) OE : And *ðæt* word wæs *flæsc* geworden
ME : And the word is maad *fleisch*
eNE : And that worde was made *flesshe*
NE : The Word became flesh

- (23) OE : nu *ðu* eart *hal* geworden
ME : Lo! thou ert maad *hool*
eNE : Beholde! thou arte made *whole*
NE : See, you are well again

As we will also see in 4.3.2, the word order in Wycliffe's Bible translation is apparently quite modern. By the 14th century, the unmarked placement of verb complements has changed from pre- to postverbal position (in other words, the cohesion between the different parts of the complex predicate has significantly increased). At this stage of the language, P_f has already lost its pragmatic functionality, and has become a syntactic rather than a pragmatic position. This change can be seen as an instance of *markedness shift*, in the sense given to the concept in Dik (1989):

By [markedness shift] I mean a historical process through which an originally marked item loses its marked character (gets 'demarked'), and thus makes room for the creation of a new marked form. (Dik 1989: 41)

As regards the case of the P_f position, this means that, after the OE period, it became increasingly more 'normal' to place objects (and arguments in general) behind the last part of the verb, so that exbraciation - initially a Focus construction - lost its marked order and postverbal position ended up as the unmarked one for arguments. Put

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differently: the pattern-schema P1P0VfSOXViP_f changed into P1P0VfSVfViOX.⁷⁰

One question will have to remain unanswered for the present moment: it is not yet clear what was the causal factor in the evolution under scrutiny. Did ME, in its earlier stages, increase cohesion within complex predicates so that arguments were forced to move to the 'final field'? Or was the whole process actually triggered by the markedness shift changing P_f into O(X), thus automatically inducing parts of complex predicates to 'stick together'? The former proposal has to face the problem that it cannot explain what was the cause of the change towards greater verbal cohesion. The latter hypothesis might explain the markedness shift as the result of the decline of morphology: since word order had to indicate syntactic and semantic functions of constituents, the object had to find a fixed position in the clause. And because OE did not distinguish the object function, ME had to reserve a position for object constituents when this function was first introduced. But why it chose P_f rather than the A₂ position is not immediately clear either. On a more theoretical plane, this situation also raises the question whether every linguistic change actually *needs* an explanation of some sort. Is causalistic thinking uniformly valid in historical linguistics, or is it possible that languages change 'just like that', without any reason whatsoever? Presumably, both viewpoints contain a kernel of truth. While it is undoubtedly true that many linguistic changes are caused by other evolutions, we must accept that at the start of every causal chain there is a 'spontaneous'

⁷⁰. As we will show in 4.3.2, late Middle English had already seen the change of P0 into the syntactic position S as well, thus exhibiting the same pattern-schema (P1SVfViOX) as NE.

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change, or at least one that is due to extra-linguistic (for instance psychological) factors.⁷¹

Whatever the ultimate cause of the syntacticization of P_f may have been, I hope that it has been made sufficiently clear that English has not been able to retain either P_0 or P_f . Moreover, I have repeatedly pointed out that this loss is symptomatic of the general 'drift' English has undergone from a pragmatic to a syntactic word order. It is quite important to note, however, that no clean-cut line can be drawn between pragmatic (PWO) and syntactic or grammatical word order (GWO) languages. All languages are both, but the relative importance of the two determinants of constituent ordering varies. In other words, we could - at least in principle - place every language on a prototypicality axis (with the prototypical PWO language at one end, and the prototypical GWO language on the other). And of course we can do the same for language *stages*. The case of English, then, is exemplified in Figure 1:

PWO----->GWO

OE-----NE

Figure 1: from PWO to GWO

Moving along the scale, English constituent ordering became increasingly 'stricter'. Note that the change is not one from 'free' to 'constrained', or from 'random' to 'regular' word order. At every stage of its history English conformed to certain rules. But in the OE period they were mainly (albeit not exclusively, of course) of a pragmatic nature

⁷¹. Such psycholinguistic tendencies are, of course, acceptable as causes of change, but are themselves quite hard to explain in a cause-result scheme.

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(so that one principle could relatively easily be overruled by another). From the ME period onwards (see also 4.3.2), English constituent ordering became governed by strict syntactic rules. Put more concretely: pragmatic positions, which need not *obligatorily* be filled by a constituent of a particular nature, developed into syntactic ones. As a result, the positioning of constituents became subject to far less variability. It thus seems that *allotaxy*⁷² decreases when word order becomes syntactically rather than pragmatically significant.

If we decide to view the transition from OE to ME as the vital step in the evolution from PWO to GWO, then we predict (following our theoretical proposals in 4.2.3) that in ME, the collapse of the inflectional morphological system is already a fact. And this indeed seems to be the case. In obvious contrast to OE, ME had considerably simplified its case system.⁷³ Broadly speaking, only the genitive case was still operational, and then only in the singular. The following paradigms (of the OE and ME form for *son*) may serve to illustrate this:⁷⁴

⁷². A term coined by Haiman (1985) to refer to the use of different word orders for the expression of the same grammatical relationships.

⁷³. OE morphology had obviously already undergone some simplification as well. And of the four cases it still distinguished according to most handbooks, nominative and accusative were often marked in the same way.

⁷⁴. For a clear and succinct discussion of some more paradigms, see e.g. Nist (1970).

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	Old English	Middle English
Singular	N.A. <i>sunu</i> G.D. <i>sunas</i>	N.A.D. <i>sonne</i> G. <i>sones</i>
Plural	N.G.A. <i>sunas</i> D. <i>sunes</i>	N.G.D.A. <i>sones</i>

Table 1: OE and NE paradigms of 'son'

4.3.2 From P1P0VSO to P1SV0

In (early) Old English, the subject of the main clause could take either of two positions, depending on its informational and structural (length and complexity) status: it could be placed before (P1SV) or after (P1VS) the finite verb. Both possibilities were 'productive', although the latter strategy was used more frequently. While P0 was thus still a clearly identifiable position in eOE, it gradually lost its pragmatic distinctiveness in later stages of the language and - through a process quite similar to the one P_f underwent - ended up as a purely syntactic pattern-position (S). Table 2 gives an indication of this evolution. It tells us, for every language stage, how many of the constituents placed between P1 and V are still either focal or pronominal (both absolute and relative figures are given):

	eOE	lOE	ME	eNE	NE
Absolute	7/7	18/21	49/83	25/45	50/93
Relative	100%	85.7%	59.1%	55.6%	53.8%

Table 2: the syntacticization of P0

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It thus appears that P0 was definitely not a functional (i.e. recognizable) pragmatic position anymore from ME onwards. The first traces of this change can be found in 10E, but the first stage for which we can set up a P1SVO schema is surely ME (this runs counter to Van Kemenade's (1987) proposal that English changed into a V3 language around 1400; the evolution at stake seems to have been completed before that date). There is still a further decrease in percentage after this period, but the differences are hardly significant, and are irrelevant to our present purposes anyway.

As the absolute numbers in Table 2 show, there appears to be a remarkable decrease in the total number of V3 orders in eNE (there were only 45 instances altogether). There are a great many sentences which have V2 order in Wycliffe but V3 in Tyndale. Most contrastive instances contain *Therefore* in the former, and *Then* in the latter translation, as in (24) and (25):

(24) 6:34 Therefore thei seiden to him, Lord, euere gyue to
vs this breed.

vs.

Then sayde they vnto hym, Master, ever moore geve
vs this breed.

(25) 4:52 Therefore he axide of hem the our, in whiche he
hadde betere [sic].

vs.

Then enquiryed he of them the houre, when he began
to amende.

But the same can also be observed when other constituents are in P1:

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(26) 6:1 Aftir thes thingis Jhesu wente ouer the see of Galilee, that is Tiberiadis.

vs.

After that went Jesus his waye over the see of Galilee, nye to a cite called Tiberias.

We would naturally expect that, as the 'normality' of V3 (i.e. P1SVO) increases, the frequency of the construction would increase as well. For some mysterious reason, eNE does not fit into this pattern. It is possible that the translator wanted to give his product a more formal and archaic character by 'artificially' increasing the frequency of V2, but without further historical and linguistic evidence such an explanation obviously remains too tentative to be acceptable. But at any rate, a comparison of the *relative* numbers clearly shows that eNE *does* fit into our general schema of the syntacticization of the P0 position.

This change from P1P0VSO to P1SVO seems to warrant, as I have already suggested, an explanation in terms of markedness shift once again. But the ultimate cause is, of course, the decrease in the use of morphology. As inflectional morphology collapsed, the need for a strict and constant word order grew. Why exactly SVO was chosen is the result of at least two factors. Firstly, SVO was already the unmarked order of main clauses without a preposed constituent in OE. And secondly, the subject in main clauses *with* a constituent in P1 could occur in the P0 position when it fulfilled particular pragmatic conditions. As these conditions faded away, it became increasingly normal for subjects to be placed in P0. This, then, resulted in the 'demarking' of the P1SVO construction. Following Anttila (1972: 189) in seeing change as "the struggle of variants", we can say that the originally marked construction 'beat' the unmarked one: P1SVO took over the role of P1VSO as the 'normal' construction.

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It should have become clear that I am not claiming that English changed from a consistent V2 to an equally consistent V3 stage (see 3.3 and 4.1). Instead of accepting this evidently wrong viewpoint, I suggest that we view the difference between P1VSO and P1SVO as a gradual one: OE was 'more' a P1VSO and 'less' a P1SVO system than NE. Figure 2, then, shows the gradual drift towards the V3 prototype:



Figure 2: From P1VSO to P1SVO

English has thus changed from a stage that was *essentially* V-2 to a stage that is *essentially* V-3, but - as far as my corpus is concerned - has never been an exceptionless member of either class.

Dik (1980) is certainly right in observing that this type of change (i.e. from V2 to V3) is remarkably frequent in languages across the world. To take just one example, it was shown in Haiman (1974) that French - now a relatively consistent P1SVO language - used to have a quite strong V2 tendency (until the 11th-12th centuries), possibly inherited from Vulgar Latin:

(27) Mais en enfer voil jou aler.

but to hell want I go

"But to hell I want to go"

(28) Encor ai je ci une bone espee.

still have I here a good sword

"Still I have a good sword here"

It would be very interesting to check whether the analysis we have proposed here for the evolution of English can also be applied to French (and other languages, for that

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matter); in other words: was French, too, at some stage in its history a P1P0VSO rather than simply a P1VSO language ?

Pursuing this inter-linguistic perspective, we might ask ourselves why the other Germanic languages have not developed into a P1SVO structure as well. Dutch and the Scandinavian languages (excluding Icelandic and Faroese) have lost their case systems as well, so if morphology is the causal factor in syntactic change, why has their P1VSO schema not developed into a P1SVO one?⁷⁵ Does this mean that the theory we have up to now adhered to is incorrect? Definitely not: it only means that linguistic change is far more intricate than any description of it can possibly suggest. Markedness shift, generalization of pattern schemas, morphological breakdown, and other factors can work together in producing various outcomes. P1SVO has been generalized in English, while all other modern Germanic languages follow a P1VSO schema (or, put differently: English has transformed P0 into a syntactic position while the other dialects have retained the old (?) subject position).

This last remark naturally leads to the question what word order Proto-Germanic had. There is some evidence that other old Germanic dialects besides OE had possible V3 orderings as well, for instance Old High German (29) and even Middle Dutch (30):⁷⁶

(29) erino portun ih firchnussa
iron doors I shatter

⁷⁵. Interestingly enough, it is precisely Faroese and Icelandic that are currently introducing V3 orders, although they are still clearly strong V2 languages (Haugen 1976; Kossuth 1978).

⁷⁶. Weerman does not give any information about frequency. The examples may even be due to influence of a source language. At any rate, the first 300 verses of the Middle Dutch story *Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet* (dating from before 1291) do not show any trace of V3 at all.

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(30) achter die ploech die cnape lach (Weerman 1989: 24)
behin the plough the boy lay

Weerman concludes from these examples that

the oldest stages of at least some of the Germanic languages appeared to be non-Vf2 in our terminology [i.e. P1SVO or P1P0VSO in FG terminology; BVH] (ibid.)

While I do not want to dwell too long and too deeply on this point (it is by no means essential to my analysis, anyway), I would like to point out that Weerman's proposal seems quite promising, at least if we interpret his "non-Vf2" as P1P0VSO. This would mean, then, that English has become typologically isolated from the rest of the Germanic stock precisely because it has changed P0 into S, while its sister-dialects have kept the ancient S-position and, due to the decrease in pragmaticity of constituent ordering,⁷⁷ have simply lost the P0 position, so that they are now genuinely P1VSO.

⁷⁷. Other factors must have played a role as well, since PWO languages as German and Icelandic have not retained P0 either.

Conclusions

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will sum up some of the observations and proposals made in the present paper. We will divide the discussion in two parts: a descriptive and a theoretical one (see Chapter One).⁷⁸ Section 5.1, then, will recapitulate our treatment of the evolution of English constituent ordering in terms of pragmatic positions. In 5.2, we will summarize the synchronic and especially diachronic theoretical alternatives we have tentatively offered (mainly in Chapter Four) to hypotheses put forward within "standard" FG.

5.1 Descriptive findings

The 'technical' part of this paper focused on the synchronic and diachronic behaviour of pragmatic positions in English.

It was found that earlier claims that Old English was a consistent, near-exceptionless V2-language are simply untenable in view of the obvious (albeit infrequent) occurrence of V3-orders (P1SVO), attested even in early entries of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Starting out from the theoretical assumption that productive variation serves a functional goal rather than being 'arbitrary' (while admitting that OE was indeed 'basically' a V2-language), we hypothesized the existence of a P1P0VSO schema for the main declarative clause in OE. Subjects could be placed in P0 if

⁷⁸. The distinction is, of course, a gradual and to some extent also an arbitrary one, but it remains helpful to structure the discussion.

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they were either pronominal (LIPOC) or somehow focal (which points to the original pragmatic nature of the position). V3-constructions were thus found to be marked orders serving a clear pragmatic function.

Taking a more detailed version of this schema as our point of departure for the description of the further history of English word order turned out to yield quite acceptable and natural diachronic hypotheses. The change from OE P1POVfSOXViP_f to NE P1SVfViOX was described as involving two cases of markedness shift: both P₀ and P_f were syntacticized, yielding a new subject position and a distinct object position respectively. This change was furthermore viewed as indicating the evolution English has undergone from pragmaticity to syntacticity of constituent ordering.

5.2 Theoretical findings

Elaborating somewhat further our analysis of OE as a P1POVSO language, we concluded that Dik's (1980) 'diachronic cycle' (i.e. the synchronic-diachronic typology discussed in 4.2.2) was empirically contradicted by at least the case of English. As far as our data show, OE was never a strong V2 language. Although OE was undoubtedly characterized by a V2-tendency, it also allowed constructions in which the finite verb of a main clause was preceded by two distinct constituents (the second of which was invariably the subject of the clause). OE was thus neither an exceptionless V2-language nor a true V3 one. We proposed instead to see the shift from V2 to V3 as a gradual one, in which the early occurrences of V3 were pragmatically rather than syntactically motivated. The consideration that languages seem to blend 'characteristics' of different language types naturally casts doubt on the underlying assumption in some FG

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research that language systems are expected to be typologically 'consistent'.⁷⁹

⁷⁹. Cf. also Watkins (1976) and Ramat (1976) on the use of typology in diachronic linguistics; in the same critical vein, Langacker (1987: 53) notes that "language has proved itself generally reluctant to adhere to the strictures linguists would impose on it".

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