On the Emergence of the Verb-Particle-Object Order in English: an Investigation into the Language Contact Factor*

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Abstract

A well-known characteristic of the Present-Day English (PDE, 1800-present) verb-particle combination is its alternating word order. When the object is a full DP, the particle can occur either before or after the object. This word order alternation gained ground in the Middle English (ME, 1150-1500) period, when particles came to occupy a postverbal position with increasing frequency. This paper investigates the sudden rise of the postverbal particle pattern from the transition from Old English (OE, 500-1150) to ME. In particular, attention is paid to the emergence of the verb-particle-object order. The data, collected from the York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE) and the second edition of the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PFCME2), show that this pattern was predominant from early ME (1150-1350). Moreover, a comparison between texts from the North-Eastern and South-Western parts of England shows there is a contrast in particle position. It is shown that the postverbal pattern shows up earlier and more often in North-Eastern texts and that the language contact situation with Old Norse (ON) in the tenth and eleventh centuries may have been a factor in this development.

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1 Introduction

The syntax of the English verb-particle combination has received an enormous amount of attention in the literature (Rayne 1985; Hoenstra 1989; Johnson 1991; den Dikken 1995; Svenonius 1990; Radford 1997; Deh 2002). The work on the construction has mainly been of synchronic nature, with a good deal of attention to the word order alternation.

In PDE, the particle can occur before or after a full DP object, (1a). When the object is pronominal, the particle must come after the object, unless the pronominal object is strongly focused, (1b).

(1) a. Dad chopped (down) the old oak (down).

b. Dad chopped *(down) it (down).

Rather less work has been done on the history of particle verb syntax (Hiltunen 1983 and Fischer, van Kemenade, Koopman, and van der Wuur 2000). The development of the verb-particle combination is described at length by Hiltunen (1983). He shows that the position of the particle changes dramatically in the transition from the OE to the ME period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pt(...)/V</th>
<th>V(...)/p</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinate main</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
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</table>

Table 1: The position of the particle in late OE prose (Hiltunen 1983: 108).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>pt(...)/V</th>
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<td>Subordinate</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 2: The position of the particle in early ME prose (Hiltunen 1983: 110).

In looking at the figures in Table 1 and 2 it is important to realise that verb movement plays a role in these two periods. Thus, for the figures in Table 1, the high percentage of postverbal particles in main clauses can largely be attributed to the verb-second rule. Elenbaas (2003) shows that there is good evidence for verb movement in early ME. In Table 2, then, the high number of postverbal particles in main clauses may (to some extent at least) still be due to the influence of verb movement. The clearest indication about basic word order is presented by the figures for subclauses, since verb movement in this environment is less prominent than in main clauses. The differences here are very striking: in late OE (1050-1150), particles are postverbal in only 33% of the cases. By contrast, particles are postverbal in 86% of the cases in early ME.

In this paper I will investigate the emergence of the postverbal pattern, in particular the verb-particle-object order, which is the most frequent postverbal order from early ME onward. The paper is organised as follows. §7 discusses the syntax of particle verbs in (late) OE and (early) ME and what changes they went through in the transitional stage between these two periods. In §3 I first consider some factors in the change to postverbal particles, and I present evidence for the role of language contact. Then I present the results of my data study in which I compared texts from the North-Eastern and South-Western part of England. §4 touches on some issues in analysing the development and §6 gives a short summary and conclusions.

2 The change from preverbal to postverbal particles

The postverbal position of PDE particles dates back to the transitional period between OE and ME. The postverbal position is predominant for early ME particles, in contrast to OE particles. In this section, I discuss the shift from preverbal to postverbal particles.

2.1 Particles in Old English

2.1.1 Old English particles as predicates

The grammatical status of the particle is a big puzzle in the study of verb-particle combinations. Judging by the morphological make-up of a verb-particle combination, the particle seems to be part of the verb, while its separability from the verb suggests it is syntactically independent. I follow van Kemenade and Lees (2000), who show that the literal meaning of OE particles fits with an analysis in which particles are resultative secondary predicates. I adopt their proposal that the origin of English particles lies in this resultative secondary predicate status. Though many PDE verb-particle combinations have an idiomatic meaning, there are also cases in which the particle clearly behaves as a resultative secondary predicate (John wiped the crumbs off for example).

There are a number of observations that provide support for a resultative secondary predicate analysis of the particle. First of all, OE particles have a literal, mostly directional, meaning. This was already pointed out by Hiltunen (1983: 147-149). A chara-
actoristic example is given in (2) below (from Fischer et al. 2000: 186, their example (10b)).

(2) Pa sticode him non ḷa cegan ut.
Then stuck him someone the eyes out.
‘Then his eyes were gouged out.’
(Crostesius 4.5.90.13)

Moreover, the meaning of OE particles is clearly resultative. The particle is a change-of-state predicate denoting the endstate of the verb’s direct object. So in the example in (2), the particle ut ‘out’ denotes the endstate of the object ḷa cegan ‘the eyes’. Consider also the example in (3) (from Fischer et al. 2000: 188, their example (17a)).

(3) Ond ḷa ahoft Drihten hie up.
And then raised God them up.
‘And then God raised them up.’
(LS 20(Assemp4Mat) 353)

In (3) the direct object hie ‘them’ undergoes a change (denoted by the verb) and reaches an endstate (denoted by the particle). The fact that the direct object and the particle can be paraphrased using the copula be (‘they are up’) also indicates the predicative nature of the particle. Van Kemenade and Los (2003) show that the resultative semantics of Old English particles fits into Spencer and Zaretskaya’s (1998) Resultative Lexical Conceptual Structure (R-LCS) which is a semantic representation of resultative predicates. I will adopt van Kemenade and Los’ proposal for the semantics of particle verbs (van Kemenade and Los 2003, §3). The R-LCS template is given in (4) below (van Kemenade and Los 2003: 90, example (24)) and in (5) I illustrate how the R-LCS can be applied to OE particle verbs, using example (2).

(4) [CAUSE[ACT [x]] BECOME [W(y)], av [V(x)]]

(5) a. ḷa sticode him non ḷa cegan ut.
then stuck him someone the eyes out.
‘then his eyes were gouged out.’
(Crostesius 4.5.90.13)

b. [CAUSE [ACT [mon]], BECOME [ut(ḥa cegan)]], av [sticid/mon]]

c. ‘someone caused the eyes to become out by sticking’

As van Kemenade and Los (2003: 90) note, the R-LCS represents a mismatch between the syntax and semantics of particle verbs. The resultative semantics of OE particles meshes well with a syntactic analysis in which the particle is a secondary predicate in a small clause (smc) configuration, (6). The particle predicates over the direct object, which functions as the subject of the small clause.

\[\text{(6)} \]

Though there is some variation in the ordering of verb, particle and object in OE, the order in which the object immediately precedes the particle is most frequent. This order is typical for resultative constructions and reflects the predicate status of OE particle: object(SUBJECT)-particle(PREDICATE).

2.1.2 The position of the particle in Old English

OE has a system of inseparable and separable prefixes. For the purposes of the present paper, I will deal with the latter (the particles) only. The separable prefixes (henceforth: particles) can be separated from their verb in various ways. The examples in (7) are from van Kemenade and Los (2003: 168) except (7b) and (7c) which I collected from YCOE (Taylor, Warner, Pinto, and Beths 2002) using CorpusSearch (Randall 2003).

(7) a. Negation

Burðen hie na me sceolde wæðan ford ne bringdb. Because he no sweet fruit forth not bringing.
‘Because it does not produce any sweet fruit.’
(coesura,CP:45.341.22.2297)

b. Infinitive marking

& desdesleasnessa ut to adrifanne. And demonical possession out to drive.
‘And to drive out demonical possession.’
(convosgn,Mk_[WSCp]:3.15.2351)

c. Modal in verb clusters

Paht hi hit ne sceoldon wurpan. That they hit out should throw.
‘That they should throw him out.’
(coesust,LS _[East]:168.173)

d. Preposition stranding

Ealond ... dat we ont of gongende wæron. Island ... that we before out from going were.
‘Island ... from which we had previously put out.’
(cobed,Beode _5:1.384.23.3834)
order patterns found. This is because finite verb-movement is very much present in the OE (and also in the early ME) period and thus interferes with basic word order patterns. Since Hiltunen (1983) does not make this distinction, his data provide us with a general picture of the transition only. In order to look beyond this general impression, I separated out finite verbs and non-finite verbs in the data I collected from YCOE. The figures are shown in Table 3.3

The figures in Table 3 confirm the general picture sketched by Hiltunen, but also offers us an important refinement of that picture. The distinction between finite verbs and non-finite verbs allows us to filter out those cases in which verb-movement causes the particle to surface postverbally. In the 48 main clause examples showing the order in which the particle follows the finite verb (V, ... prt), for example, the verb has been moved from a verb-final order. This is not the case for the 2 main clause examples in which the particle follows a non-finite verb (Vn, ... prt): the verb is non-finite and thus cannot have been moved. As for the orders in which the particle immediately follows the verb (V-prt), it is not possible to tell from the surface string whether the cases in which the particle immediately follows the finite verb (V, prt) involve verb-movement. Again, there are 3 main clause examples with a non-finite verb (V, n-prt), in which the verb must be in its base position.

Singling out subordinate clauses also allows us to reduce the influence of verb-movement. Though verb movement does occur in the subordinate environment as Pietzuk (1991) has shown, it is not nearly as common as in main clauses, so the word order patterns in subordinate clauses will more closely reflect the underlying word order. The numbers for subordinate clauses in Table 3 are clearly in favour of the pattern in which the particle is in preverbal position. Out of a total of 205 subordinate clauses, no less than 178 show the preverbal pattern.

In sum, a vast majority of the examples portrayed in Table 3 have prt-V word order. V-prt word orders can mostly be attributed to verb-movement. Cases of V-prt in which there is no role for verb-movement are minimal.

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3 For further details of the texts examined, see Appendix I.
4 Vn stands for 'particle immediately precedes finite verb', Vn, Vn for 'particle immediately precedes non-finite verb', V... V stands for 'particle precedes finite verb and V... V for 'particle precedes non-finite verb'.
2.2 Particles in (early) Middle English: the rise of postverbal particles

The transitional period from OE to ME is the stage for some important syntactic and semantic developments in the verb-particle combination. The ME period sees the first non-literary particle meanings and the position of the particle changes from preverbal to postverbal. In this section, I present data from PPCME2 (Kroch and Taylor 2000a) and discuss the shift in particle position and will pay some attention to the status of the particle. As Hiltunen (1983) in his study on particles in OE and ME shows, the position of the particle changes quite dramatically when we leave the OE period and enter the ME period. Particles are no longer predominantly preverbal, but are overwhelmingly postverbal instead (see Table 2 in §1). Table 4 presents the figures for the different word order patterns, again split up into finite and non-finite verbs. The labels M1 (period 1150-1250) and M2 (period 1250-1350) are employed in PPCME2 and refer to the first two subperiods of the ME period.

The figures in Table 4 not only reveal that the order in which the particle is postverbal is now predominant (cf. Table 2 in §1), but also show that the order in which the particle is immediately postverbal is strikingly frequent. The high numbers for preverbal particles in the period 1250-1350 (M2) compared to the period 1150-1250 (M1) wrongly suggest that this pattern is on the rise again. The sparsity of M1 texts can largely be held responsible for the difference in frequencies. The examples in (12), collected from PPCME2, contain preverbal particles.

(12) Preverbal particles

a. For heo is up hafen ofer ægelene wero,  
   Because she is up lifted above angels' host,  
   'Because she is raised up above the angel host.'  
   (CMKENTHO,138.133)

b. Pat feste unt yede bi þe Moreghen for to hire werkmen in to his  
   That first out went by the morning to hire labourers into his  
   vineyard.  
   'That went out first in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard.'  
   (CMKENTSE,220.164)

c. For monkynde as soþ þe hode / But durste he never wiþ yþe vp hode.  
   For mankind as says the book / but dares he never with eyes up look.  
   'For mankind as the book says / but he never dares to look up with his eyes.'  
   (CM Arundel, 1819/20)
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The set of example sentences in (12) all contain particles that occur in preverbal position. The particle up ‘up’ in (12a) precedes a non-finite verb (ahafen ‘raised’). In (12b), the particle set ‘set’ combines with a finite verb which has not moved to a higher position in the clause (it is a subclause); here too, both the particle set ‘set’ and the verb sate ‘sate’ are in their base positions. Examples (12c) and (12d) are from the only southern version of the poem Cursor Mundi in the Arundel manuscript. Both example (12c) and (12d) portray the rhymes that occur throughout the poem. In both cases, the verb at the end of the line rhymes with the last word of the next line. The position of these verbs, then, could well have been determined by the requirements of the rhyming scheme, so that the particle appears in a preverbal position. In any case, these examples show that particles in early ME could still occupy the preverbal position, but as the figures in Table 2 and 4 show this had already become rare by this time. A predominant number of particles occurs in postverbal position in the early ME period. Examples such as these in (13) have become the norm.

(13) Postverbal particles

a. & disse him gyuen up at abbotice of Burch & faren ut of.
   And made him give up the abbey of Peterborough and go out of
   land.
   ‘And made him give up the abbey of Peterborough and go out of the country.’
   (CM.PETERB,54.375)

b. Forrj jatt he was cumenn inn / Ian aces weres newe,
   Because he was come in / in a man’s shape,
   ‘Because he had come in / in the form of a man.’
   (CMORM,1,73.658)

c. After jatt Sho was hofenn upp / To wurrn Goddes moder.
   After that she was lifted up / to become God’s mother.
   ‘After she was lifted up / to become God’s mother.’
   (CMORM,1,94.827)

d. & ter fell dun jatt hus purrh wind.
   And there fell down the house through wind.
   ‘And there the house fell down because of wind.’
   (CMORM,1,166.1364)
In the example from the Peterborough Chronicle in (13a), the particle up 'up' follows the non-finite verb gyuen 'give'. Examples (13b) and (13c), both from the Ormulum, are in verse and in each case the particle (in 'in', upp 'up' respectively) immediately follows a non-finite verb (numen 'come', hopen 'hoped'). Example (13d) has the verb-particle-object order that shows up quite abruptly in the beginning of the ME period. In the example from the Aebihite in Inwyrc (13e), the verb cemen 'comes' and the particle out 'out' precede the subject. In the examples (13f) and (13g), the object precedes the particle (awit 'away', upp 'up' respectively), yielding the small clause order I discussed for OE in §2.1.1. In both these examples, the particle is a predicate denoting the endstate of the object. Note that the particle has a literal meaning in all examples in (13), except for the particle upp 'up' in (13a). Denison (1985: 44, example 28) refers to this example from the Peterborough Chronicle as one of the first cases in which the particle does not have a literal (directional) meaning, a development which was also discussed by Hiltunen (1983: 146-149). I briefly return to this issue at the end of this section. As far as the syntax of particles in early ME is concerned, the high frequency of the verb-particle-object order in early ME deserves a good deal of attention. The frequency of this pattern suggests that the verb and the particle to be seen as a much closer unit in early ME. A schematic representation of the transition that took place between OE and ME is given in (14), which shows surface patterns.

\[
\text{OE} \quad \text{ME}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[O prep]} & \quad [V [O prep]] \\
\text{[V prep]} & \quad [O]
\end{align*}
\]

Note that I have bracketed the verb and the particle together in the verb-particle-object order. This is intended as a descriptive device rather than as a claim about syntactic structure (see also §4). The question I will address here is how the development to this verb-particle-object order took place. What made speakers come up with this order, which occurred only as a surface pattern in OE? A first option is that the two post-verbal orders that arise in ME are examples of an internal syntactic change. If this is what happened, then the 'new' orders are presumably derived from the OE order. The verb-object-particle order can be derived through finite verb movement, which was still prominent at the time. It is conceivable that language learners reanalyzed this structure as an underlying structure (maybe as imperfect learning, see §3.1), whereas it was a surface structure to their parents. Note, however, that this leaves the question why such a reanalysis took place and why the reanalysis happened on such a large scale. As for the order verb-particle-object, it is not clear what language learners would have reanalyzed or how they would have done it. It is unlikely that this pattern was the result of internal factors only. A second option is that external factors influenced the development of the verb-particle-object pattern. I will investigate this in the next section.

In addition to the important change in particle position, there was also a notable development in the semantics of verb-particle combinations in the ME period. Whereas literal meanings are still predominant with particles in early ME, the first non-literal meanings begin to appear (cf. example (13a)). In the light of this development, I will briefly consider whether the resultative predicate analysis I adopted in §2.1.1 for OE particles can hold for ME particles too. Whereas it can be argued for particles with non-literal meaning that they are predicates predicating over the object (the particle's subject), this is not immediately obvious for particles with a non-literal meaning. Consider again the example from the Peterborough Chronicle in (13), repeated from (13a).

(15) & dide him gyuen up jab abbotricise of Burch & faren ut of And made him give up the abbey of Peterborough and go out of lande.

And made him give up the abbey of Peterborough and go out of the country.

(CMPETERB,54,375)

In this example, the particle up 'up' does not have a directional meaning and does not seem to denote an endstate of the object jab abbotricise of Burch 'the abbey of Peterborough.' A paraphrase with the copula be is not straightforwardly available: 'the abbey is up' is odd. Semantically, then, the particle up 'up' in this example is not a resultative predicate, which suggests that it does not fit into the R-ICS (its meaning is too bleached), repeated in (16) from (4).

(16) [CAUSE][ACT (x)], BECOME [W(y)], av [V(x)]

Van Kemnaerde and Lox (2003: 80) show that the fact that the content of the predicate position (W) is variable allows the elements that occupy the predicate position to vary in
meaning from literal to abstract. In example (15), the meaning of the particle up ‘up’ is abstract (it merely denotes the endpoint of the activity) but the variability of the content of the predicate position \( W \) ensures that it still fits in the R-LCS.

3 The role of language contact in the emergence of the V-prt-object order

The change from preverbal to postverbal particles is often associated with the loss of OV word orders that started in the OE period and was completed near the end of the ME period. Though it is beyond doubt that the shift to postverbal particles was influenced by the loss of OV orders, the speed with which the change took place suggests that this cannot have been the only factor. In the remainder of this paper I will investigate possible influence of an external factor (the language contact situation with Old Norse [ON]) on the changeover to postverbal particles. It has been proposed that differences between North-Eastern and South-Western ME are due to Scandinavian influence (Kroch and Taylor 1997; Kroch 2001; Trips 2002). It is apparently assumed by these authors that it is self-evident that [late] Northern OE was the same as Southern OE. It cannot be a priori assumed, however, that northern OE syntax was the same as southern OE syntax. Unfortunately, not much work has been done (e.g. Kroch and Taylor 1997) on this yet and since this is beyond the scope of the present paper, I will leave this issue for further study.

3.1 Contact induced language change

Several authors (Kroch and Taylor 1997, 2000b; Kroch 2001; Trips 2002) have suggested that language contact may give rise to syntactic change. Kroch (2001), for example, comments on language contact as a possible cause of language change, which he defines as “a failure in the transmission of linguistic features” (Kroch 2001: 698). He notes that language contact may change the character of the evidence available to the learner, which can in turn cause failure of transmission. At the same time, Kroch notes that “the abstract possibility of imperfect transmission tells little about what changes or how much change to expect” (Kroch 2001: 702). What is important for us here is that, in principle, the language contact with OE may have had syntactic influence as well. Since the transition is a radical one, I want to explore the possibility of language contact, following work by Kroch and Taylor (2000), who suggest that language contact plays a role in the change in the position of the finite verb, and Trips (2002) who deduces the language contact factor in the change from OV to VO. It is conceivable that the position of the particle was influenced by the language contact situation as well. Contact-induced change is often believed to be a matter of substratum effects (Thompson 2001), by which a language formerly spoken by a group of people influences the acquisition of a language spoken later. The resulting imperfect learning causes the language to change. For the English case under scrutiny in this paper, this means that, when OE and ON were in close everyday contact, former ON speakers learned English imperfectly. Besides this route of contact-induced change, it is also conceivable that an unstable linguistic community gives rise to innovation. In sum, I believe the change in the position of the particle could theoretically be an instance of imperfect learning, but could also have come about as an innovative structure in a time of linguistic instability. The idea that language contact is involved in the emergence of postverbal particles is further supported by evidence from Dutch creoles. Bruyn (2001 a,b) notes that particles are immediately postverbal in the Dutch-based creoles Berbice Dutch and Negerhollands. This is unexpected since Dutch has preverbal particles. Bruyn’s material shows that the postverbal position of particles in Dutch-based creoles is due to influence of English and English-based creoles, which invariably have postverbal particles. This is illustrated by the examples in (17).

The examples in (17a) are from Bruyn (2001a: 3), the example in (17b) is from Bruyn (2001b: 5).

(17) a. Berbice Dutch: ndef [prepare, get ready] (Dutch klaarmaken ‘make ready’)  
    b. Negerhollands: mpdo [take, gather, pick up] (Dutch opraapen ‘pick up’)  
    c. Virgin Islands English Creole: gape up ‘scratch’

Verbs with postverbal particles are marginals in Berbice Dutch, whereas they are frequent in Negerhollands. This difference can possibly be attributed to stronger influence from English and English creoles in the case of Negerhollands (Bruyn 2001a: 5). Bruyn’s studies show that speakers can resort to placing their particles postverbally when in contact with a language that does so, even if this implies a radical change from the input. It is conceivable that adults (L2 learners) start to place their particles in postverbal position more often as a result of contact with a ‘postverbal particle-language’. This, in turn, will result in more positive evidence for L1 learners to set the ‘particle-parameter’ postverbally. The intensive language contact situation with ON, where particles predominantly occurred in postverbal position, may have led to a similar result, although, as mentioned above, Northern OE may already have been more VO-like.

3.2 Language contact with Old Norse

The sacking of Lindisfarne by the Vikings in 793 A.D. marked the beginning of a period of Viking raids and later Viking settlements in the Northern and Eastern parts of England. Townend (2002) remarks that Anglo-Saxon England in the tenth and eleventh centuries could be regarded as Anglo-Scandinavian England, with the two peoples, similar but distinctive, in close and persistent contact” (Townend 2002: 2). Assuming there was
A stage of bilingualism, the influence that ON had on English is considerable. Apart from the place names the contact resulted in a large number of words that go back to Scandinavian origin, examples are husband, egg, fellow. The intensity of the contact is especially apparent from some grammatical elements that were borrowed from ON. These are the personal pronouns they, their and them (replacing the English pronouns his/her, his/her, his/her and him/her) and the third person singular -s ending (replacing the English -eth ending). See Kroch and Taylor (2000) and Tripos (2002) for more hypotheses on Scandinavian influence.

As far as particle verbs are concerned, Denison (1981, 1985) argues that ON is the source for some non-literal meanings that first appear in early ME. Like (Old) English, ON had many verb-particle combinations, but in contrast with OE, ON particle verbs often had an idiomatic meaning (Denison 1981: 278, relying on Heusler 1964). Denison shows that some verb-particle combinations that show up in ME were probably built on the model of ON. He argues that geven 'give', in the combination geven up 'give up' (which first appears in the Peterborough Chronicle), could be a loan translation from ON geven 'give', and that the prepositional meaning of up could be a semantic loan from ON (Denison 1985: 54). The ON equivalent of OE up is upp. The word order of ON differs from that of OE mainly in the behaviour of the finite verb, which in ON normally comes in first or second position (Denison 1981: 276-277 largely basing himself on Heusler 1964). As for element order of verb-particle combinations, the postverbal position is the common position for ON particles, while the preverbal position is normal with non-finite verbs (Denison 1981: 277). Denison (again basing himself on Heusler) also notes that the verb-particle-object order is more common for idiomatic verb-particle combinations which are very frequent in ON. Again, the similarities or differences between OE and ON may not be decisive in bringing about change. In a period of linguistic instability it is conceivable that speakers come up with new constructions.

3.3 The data: a comparison of North-Eastern and South-Western texts

In this section, I will compare texts from the North-East (under Viking influence in the OE period) and texts from the South-West of England. If the language contact situation with ON influenced the emergence of postverbal particles and the verb-particle-object order in particular, we expect to find more verb-particle-object orders in texts from the Daneslaw area than in texts from the area outside the scope of Scandinavian influence.

The early ME data are collected from PPCME2 (see Appendix I for a complete list of texts searched). Because there is only a limited number of sources available for the period under investigation, I also studied a Northern version and the only Southern version of the Cursor Mundi (Cotton manuscript and the Arundel manuscript; for further details see Appendix I) to compare the position of the particle. Table 5 and 6 present the figures for the position of the particle in the periods 1160-1250 (M1) and 1250-1350 (M2), again following the division as it is made in PPCME2. I have made a distinction between South-Western texts (SW) and North-Eastern (NE) texts. To rule out influence of verb-movement as much as possible I have included figures for subcases only.

For period M1, the first thing to notice is the scarcity of available texts: we have only one text from the South-West, the Kentish Homilies, and two North-Eastern texts, The Peterborough Chronicle and the Ornulum, the latter of which is verse. Despite the small numbers of available data, the results we get from the texts are striking. The Kentish Homilies except that is included in PPCME2 contains four examples with a particle verb, all of which show the particle in preverbal position. If we compare this to the North-Eastern figures, the picture is very different from the South-Western one. The nine examples I found in the Peterborough Chronicle except all have a postverbal particle. In the Ornulum, too, the postverbal pattern is clearly predominant: in 91 of the examples the particle occurs in postverbal position and only 4 of the examples have the particle preverbally. There is a clear difference, then, between particle position in South-Western texts on the one hand and North-Eastern texts on the other in period M1. Second, it is worth noting that of the postverbal patterns, the V-prt pattern is most frequent. I already noted this above, but Tables 5 and 6 allow us to see where the V-prt pattern shows up exactly. There are no instances of this pattern in the only South-Western text, as the Kentish Homilies has no postverbal particles at all. All V-prt orders show up in the texts from the North-East: V-prt order occurs in 8 out of the 9 postverbal examples in the Peterborough Chronicle, and in 72 out of the 91 postverbal examples in the Ornulum.

The situation in period M2 is more diverse than that of period M1, as the figures in Tables 5 and 6 show.

For the South-West, the only example with a particle verb in the Kentish Sermons has a postverbal particle. The Avenible of Inwyt excepts actually has more examples with postverbal particles (19) than with preverbal particles (4), but note that this is a text from the late M2 period. The manuscript is dated 1340, so it is very well possible that the V-prt pattern had already spread to Southern regions by this time (18 out of the 19 postverbal examples have the V-prt pattern). The other text I studied is the poem Cursor Mundi (not included in PPCME2). I collected data (first 5000 lines) from the Southern Arundel manuscript and the Northern Cotton manuscript, which allowed me to

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Table 5: The position of the particle in early ME subclauses. M1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>11</th>
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Table 6: The position of the particle in early ME subclauses. M2

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<th>prt-Vef</th>
<th>prt...Vf</th>
<th>prt...Vef</th>
<th>Vf-prt</th>
<th>Vef-prt</th>
<th>Vf...prt</th>
<th>Vef...prt</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Kent.Ser.</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Asym.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>CM. Amin.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>CM. Cott.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Emergence of the Veh-Particle/Object Order in English
compare the position of the particle in the same text from two different areas. If we turn to the South-Western Arundel manuscript first, we see that the numbers for preverbal and postverbal particles are almost equal (11 preverbal, 13 postverbal). Note that the manuscript is dated around 1400, which strictly speaking falls outside period M2. This late date makes the occurrence of preverbal particles all the more interesting.

A comparable diffuse picture is displayed by the figures for the Northern Cotton manuscript of the Cursor Mundi, though the preverbal particle slightly outnumber the postverbal particle order (9 preverbal against 8 postverbal). If we compare the number of preverbal particles in the Cotton manuscript and the Arundel manuscript, there are 5 examples with p-pt-V object order in Arundel and only 2 such examples in Cotton. Note that the examples do not always ran parallel (though mostly they do): where one manuscript has a particle, the other manuscript may not. This is why the numbers for both manuscripts differ somewhat. The two other Northern texts from period M2 I have studied are Rolle’s Epistyles and Rolle’s Prose Treatises. The manuscript dates for both texts are period 1420-1500 (M4), but the dates of composition are M2, probably around 1348/50. The particle patterns in these texts are very modern, in that particles invariably occur in postverbal position (except two cases in Rolle’s Epistyles).

Table 7 gives the position of the particle with respect to the object in early ME.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SW</th>
<th>NE</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V-obj-p</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-p-obj</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-p-obj</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: The order of the particle and the object in early ME subclauses.

The figures show that the order verb-particle-object (V-obj-p) is more frequent than the order verb-object-particle (V-obj-p-obj, V-obj-p). Moreover, it shows that the order verb-particle-object is more frequent in the North-Eastern part of England than in the South-West.

In sum, there is a notable contrast in occurrence of preverbal particles between South-Western and Northern texts, though the picture is rather diffuse for the Ayenbite and the two versions of the Cursor Mundi. A fair number of preverbal particles shows up in the South-Western texts studied, while these are less represented in the North-Eastern texts. Moreover, the order verb-particle-object is more frequent in the North-Eastern part of England than in the South-Western part of England.

It should be noted here that the "modern" particle word orders in these examples could reflect the language of the manuscript date rather than the language of the date of composition. I have nevertheless included the two texts by Richard Rolle, because of the shortage of other North-Eastern texts in the period 1290-1300.

4 Issues in analysing the change to postverbal particles

In this section I will briefly touch upon some issues that an analysis of the change to postverbal particles has to account for. As was shown in this paper, the small clause order surfaces postverbally from early ME onward. Moreover, the order in which the particle is immediately postverbal becomes very frequent. This word order alternation still exists in PDE.

(18a) a. Lucy tore the gift wrap off.
   b. Lucy tore off the gift wrap.

I analyse the first order as a small clause pattern in which the particle functions as a secondary predicate taking the verb’s object as its subject (see §2.1). I will refer to the verb-particle-object order as the complex verb order, though I do so for descriptive purposes only: it captures the unitary character of verb and particle in this order.

The word order pattern in (18a) has two possible analyses for early ME: it can be analysed as an effect of finite verb movement from a postparticle position, or it can simply be analysed as having the small clause order in postverbal position. It is not immediately clear, however, how the complex verb order is derived (see §2.2). In a generative analysis, we would want to derive one order from the other, since both orders seem to be functionally equivalent (although evidence from information structure suggests there is a difference, at least in PDE; see Dehé 2002 for discussion).

On the other hand, the sudden rise of the complex verb order suggests that it arose fairly dramatically as a new pattern. These two scenarios do not necessarily exclude each other: even if the new verb-particle-object order came into being as the relatively sudden result of an intensive language contact situation, it could still be the case that the next generation of language learners accommodated the patterns in their grammar as derivationally related. Further research is needed to fully interpret the change in particle position in the transition from OE to ME.

5 Conclusion

The data presented in this paper show a contrast in particle position between the North-East and the South-West of England, even though the evidence we have is limited. The postverbal particle pattern shows up more frequently in North-Eastern texts from early ME and I have shown that this could have been the result of the language contact situation with ON at the end of the OE period.
Appendix

This Appendix contains a list of the source texts used for this study. For general references to YCOE and PPCME2 see the References.

York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE)

Ælfric’s Letter to Sigeward (B), Exodus, Genesis Crawford


Canons of Edgar

Chrodegang of Metz

Institutes of Policy

Laws of William

Martyrology

Mary of Egypt, Saint Euphrosyne, Saint Eustace and his Companions
Preface to St Augustine's Soliloquies, St Augustine's Soliloquies

Saint Christopher

Saint Margaret

Solomon and Saturn I

The Gospel of Nichodemus

The History of the Holy Rood-Tree

The Martyrdom of Saint Vincent (2nd half)

The Seven Sleepers

Vercelli Homilies, Homily 1/Homily IX

The Emergence of the Verb-Particle-Object Order in English
Vindicta Salvatoris

Vision of Leofric

Penn Parased Corpus of Middle English Version 2 (PPCME2)
Kentish Homilies

The Peterborough Chronicle

The Ormulum

Kentish Sermons

Ayebite of Inwy

Richard Rolle's Epistles

Richard Rolle's Prose Treatises
Additional Middle English Texts

**Cursor Mundi (Cotton ms.)**

**Cursor Mundi (Arundel ms.)**

References


NegV1 and Secondary Negation in Old and Middle English Religious Prose*

Richard Ingham

University of Central England

Abstract

A study of religious prose texts showed that negative inversion (NegV1), e.g. *Ne drifte is hine from me 'I shall not drive him from me' (St. Brefan, Add. Bk I 338,69) was predominant in main clauses in Old English and Early Middle English but had disappeared by Late Middle English 14th century works, even in those retaining around 95% use of the ne negator. This phenomenon is related here to the grammaticalisation of secondary negation. In OE texts a sharp asymmetry was found in the distribution of the secondary negator na in favor of main clauses as against subordinate clauses. In EME subordinate clause contexts frequencies of a secondary negator were quite similar across all clause types studied, which is taken to indicate that grammaticalisation of the forms neht/naht ('not') etc. was already underway. As a grammatical marker of negation, they stood in [prep,NegP], unlike ne in OE (contra van Kempen 2000). In this position the secondary negator became able to check an interpretable [-neg] specifier feature. This eventually replaced the OE grammar in which the interpretable [-neg] feature was a head feature checked by the negation prefix ne. As a result of this change, verb movement to C to check a strong but uninterpretable [-neg] feature (Pythieson 2002) was lost in later Middle English.

1 Introduction

Early Middle English finite verbs in negated root clauses were normally prefixed by ne and showed variation in whether they stood first in the clause, inverting around the subject (NegV1), as in (1), or else displayed SV order, as in (2):

*I thank Liliane Haegeman, Eric Haeberli and Paul Rewiess for some helpful discussion of background issues before this paper was researched. All errors, omissions and misinterpretations remain my own.

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