

*Anglo-Scandinavian Language Contacts  
and Word Order Shift in Early English – Final Arguments*

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# Points discussed

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- ▶ Research questions
- ▶ Hypotheses
- ▶ Focus of the study
- ▶ Method
- ▶ Results & interpretation (incl. latest additions)
- ▶ Final arguments\*

Anglo-Scandinavian language contacts  
in the light of some models of linguistic change:  
A study of subject vs. object inflections

# Research Qs

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- ▶ How much morphological simplification (LOSS OF CASES ON NPS) in early English had its share in subsequent syntactic shift: change from synthetic to analytic (SVO)?
- ▶ What role did the early Anglian & Scandinavian contact situation play in the morpho-syntactic change here discussed? (CONVERGENCE) (eg. CF. IGLESIAS – RÁBADE 2003; GÖRLACH 1997)
- ▶ Can *wave theory* (e.g. WOLFRAM & SCHILLING-ESTES 1998) (CONVERGENCE MODEL) be used to facilitate the explanation of the syntactic change, occurring on account of (PARTIALLY) externally motivated morphological simplification?
- ▶ Can parsed diachronic databases available (YCOE & PPCME2) be used to make arguments on the topic? (COMPARISON PERSPECTIVES)

# Hypotheses

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- ▶ Identify a convergence point on the dialectal map of parsed corpora material between the morphological simplification & the rising SVO word order (predominantly in ME - North)
- ▶ The convergence point can be regarded as the starting point of new syntactic tendencies (as confirmed by repetitive highest/regular output in one particular dialect/sector; visible contrast in output values between the most innovative dialects and the remaining sectors )
- ▶ The convergence point correlates with dialects affected by the contact with early Scandinavian population (North & East Midlands)
- ▶ The pattern of change advocated by the *wave model* can be distinguished (*focal areas or influential centre vs. peripheries*)
- ▶ The character of material available (YCOE & PPCME2) facilitates the research on the topic (dialect, date, translation, genre; clause levels, nominal vs. pronominal)

# Focus of the study

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- ▶ **Full SVO sequence** - explore the changing *surface* representation of **S** and **O**:
  - merging of various structural tendencies into single, more consolidated units (e.g. STOCKWELL & MINKOVA IN KASTOVSKY 1991)
  - positional fixity under new syntactic conditions: **SV**, **VO** (e.g. FISCHER & VAN DER WURFF in HOGG & DENISON 2006)
- ▶ **Sequence components**:
  - **S** – nominal & pronominal
  - **V** – finite & non-finite
  - **O** – nominal & pronominal
- ▶ **Rise of SVO as reinterpretation due to identification problems on NPs** (HOCK 1986; ALSO LIGHTFOOT – PARAMETRIC RESETTING 1991)

# Method

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- ▶ Samples **divided by *dialect information*** (provided by corpus creators)
- ▶ Output available at **3 levels**:
  - > **sentence level** – total of all IP-MATs and IP-SUBs
  - > **matrix clause level**
  - > **subordinate clause level**
- ▶ Raw frequencies: statistical significance
- ▶ Normed frequencies:
  1. **F. measured per 25 clauses** (to include the biggest number of texts in dialect sets) (cf. BIBER ET AL 1998).
  2. Multiple ***common base*** perspective (100 ... 400 IP) - to check whether the overall pattern of distribution of the feature has remained stable throughout
  3. **CV** (coefficient of variation) – filter (FRANK & ALTHOEN 1994)
- ▶ Comparison perfectives include the potential impact of translations, MS dating and genre (groups)

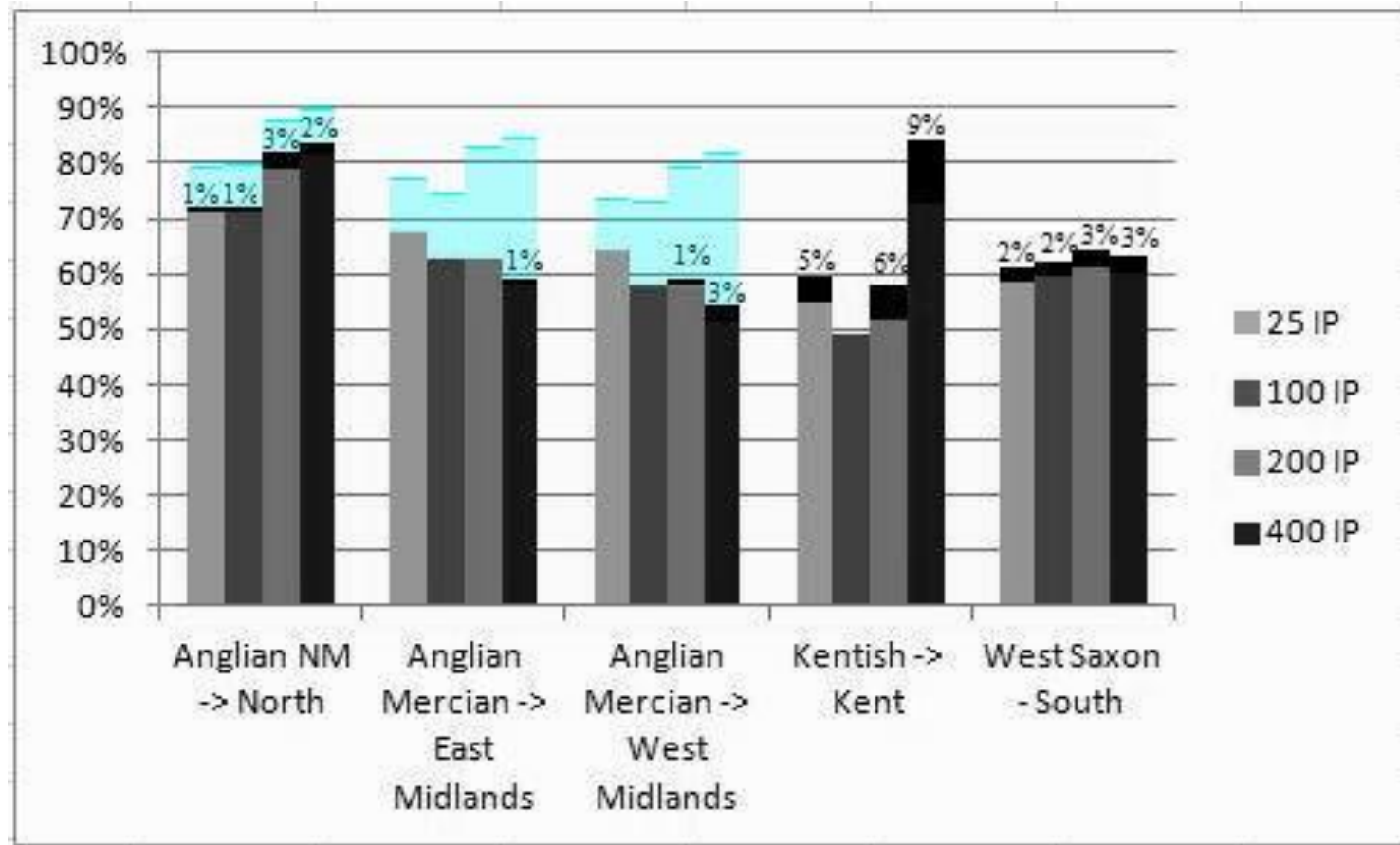
# Results

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- ▶ Convergence point found:
  - OE→ME: the biggest growth in frequency values found in northernmost sectors (CF. GRAPH)
  - ME: high or highest freq. & most regularly distributed SVO in the North (majority of investigated configurations)
- ▶ Convergence point is included in the contact zone (Scandinavian North)
  - Scandinavian influenced dialects score highest for SVO at IP-SUB (North & East Midlands) (cf. SUBs as the basis for change – STOCKWELL & MINKOVA 1991) (CF. IP-MAT VS. IP-SUB TABLES)
  - highest preference for postverbal nominal objects found in East Midlands (& North)
  - highest preference for pronouns in 'new' distribution in North & East Midlands
  - marked contrast between Scandinavian influenced dialects and the rest
- ▶ North as the influential centre – the most innovative in all configurations (*focal area*)



# Results



SVO growth OE → ME – sentence level

# Results

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## IP-MAT

Sequencing F/ Common base	Including empty categories			Excluding empty categories		
	25 IP	100 IP	200 IP	25 IP	100 IP	200 IP
N	8,56	32,99	60,05	7,98	31,28	54,87
EM	7,78	31,14	62,28	6,68	26,71	53,42
WM	8,10	32,40	64,80	6,73	26,90	53,81
K	7,42	29,66	57,10	6,94	27,76	54,62
S	9,18	26,74	73,54	7,55	30,19	57,19

## IP-SUB

Sequencing F/ Common base	Including empty categories			Excluding empty categories		
	25 IP	100 IP	200 IP	25 IP	100 IP	200 IP
N	6,46	25,86	54,72	4,27	17,08	35,99
EM	6,16	24,65	49,29	3,72	14,86	29,73
WM	5,20	20,82	41,63	3,25	13,00	26,00
K	4,93	19,72	39,44	3,01	12,03	24,05
S	5,92	23,70	47,40	3,72	14,88	29,77

# Results – latest additons

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Exploring factors influencing distribution of SVO – dialect vs. time (sub-periodisation), translations, genres:

1. Dialect overrides all – text doublets
  2. Time greatly influences the level of variation – resampling strategies to check for representativeness revealed extraordinary homogeneity of CV values once the time factor is respected
  3. Exclusion of translations increases regularity of SVO:
    - in particular dialect sectors (Scandinavian influenced)
    - within genre(s)
- ICEHL paper (August 2012, Zurich)

# Final arguments

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## ▶ Morphological simplification as a force behind the syntactic shift:

- Many of developments contributing to the rise of new syntax reinforced by the loss of inflections
- Inflectional (case) loss >> identification problems on NPs (SV; S vs. O; O vs. O; V & O)
- ME witnesses surface consolidation of major syntactic units and their fixed position (particularly SVO (cf. FISCHER & VAN DER WURFF in HOGG & DENISON 2006))
- Surface consolidation most visible in the sectors where inflectional erosion was first noted (merged nominal & pronominal NPs appear most readily in the new layout in the North (& East Midlands))

# Final arguments - significance

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- ▶ External (Scandinavian) influence instrumental in the change towards SVO
  - New syntactic layout most prominent in contact areas (IP-SUB: SVO rendered **not** with underlying V2)
  - Drift cannot explain rampant regional variation in the distribution of 'new' SVO
  - Cause vs. 'manner of change' (HARRIS in FISIAK 1981; KASTOVSKY in KELLERMAN & MORRISSEY 1992 also KASTOVSKY in SWAN ET AL 1994)

# Final arguments - significance

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- ▶ Parsed diachronic corpora & observing major syntactic changes:
  - Tracing the shift from a more *all-inclusive* perspective
  - Dialect marking allows to investigate possible external influences through repetitive patterns of pronounced regional variation
  - Influencing factors: dialect, time, presence of translation, genres
  - Comparing various aspects of formal grammar: structural representation (NOMINAL VS. PRONOMINAL), syntactic levels (IP-, IP-MAT, IP-SUB)