Adjuncts and the Syntax of Subjects in Old and Middle English

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Old English shows characteristic properties of a Verb Second (V2) language. However, certain phenomena can be found in Old English which suggest that V2 in this language cannot be dealt with in terms of analyses that have been proposed for the Modern Germanic V2 languages. Different alternative analyses have therefore been explored in the recent literature which account for the distinct properties of Old English. Although there seems to be a general consensus on the central points, the different analyses vary with respect to several issues. In this chapter, some of these issues will be addressed and it will be argued that important evidence can be obtained from a comparative analysis of Old English, later stages in the history of English, and the Modern Germanic languages with respect to phenomena concerning the distribution of adjuncts and subjects. In addition, it will be shown not only that the comparative evidence used provides information for the analysis of Old English, but also that the Old English data contribute to a more detailed understanding of a general Germanic word-order phenomenon.

5.1. Introduction: V2 and the Syntax of Subjects in Old English

Apart from Modern English, all the Modern Germanic languages exhibit what has been called the Verb Second (V2) phenomenon, at least in main clauses. The characteristic property of this phenomenon is that any type of constituent can be moved to the beginning of the clause and the verb immediately follows this constituent. At first sight, Old English seems to share this property with the Modern Germanic languages (example from van Kemenade 1987: 17).

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In (1), an object is fronted and it is immediately followed by the finite verb, in line with the V2 constraint.

However, there is one aspect of the syntax of V2 in Old English which cannot be found in the Modern Germanic languages and which suggests that V2 in Old English cannot be analysed in exactly the same way as V2 in the Modern Germanic languages. In Old English, pronoun subjects generally precede the finite verb even when another constituent has been moved to the front (cf. e.g. van Kemenade 1987: 109 ff., Pintzuk 1991: 133 ff., 201 ff., 1993). This is illustrated in (2) (example from Pintzuk 1991: 202).

(2) [wice utirimseas] [he] wæl gæwægan on his bëtnan
their weakness he shall atone in his heart
'He shall atone in his heart for their weakness.'
(Cara Passowrlic 60.17)

The example in (2) is parallel to that in (1) in that an object is fronted. But in (2), the subject and the finite verb are not inverted, and instead the pronoun subject also precedes the finite verb, giving rise to a V3 order.

Yet, there is a restricted context in which subject pronouns do follow the finite verb, namely in interrogative clauses, negative clauses, verb-initial clauses and clauses introduced by some adverb like for ('then') (cf. van Kemenade 1987, Pintzuk 1991, 1993). One of these contexts is illustrated in (3).

(3) [lofr] sceal we eþra manigum manum
why should we another man's take
'Why should we take another man's?'
(Ælfwic. Lives of Saints 24.188)

In (3), subject-verb inversion applies although the subject is pronominal.

On the basis of the word-order patterns in (1) to (3), it has been concluded in the recent literature that V2 in Old English cannot be analysed simply along the lines generally proposed for the Modern Germanic languages, i.e. in terms of XP-movement to [Spec,CP] and verb movement to C. Instead, the standard analysis within most recent work is that (1) to (3) can be accounted for under the assumption that different types of subjects occur in different structural positions (pronouns, being clitics or weak pronouns, in a higher position than non-pronominal subjects) and that V-fronting in Old English targets two possible positions. C in some contexts (cf. (3)) and a lower inflected head, which I will label X for the moment, in cases of topicalization of other elements (cf. Cardinaletti and


\[ L \rightarrow C \rightarrow [\text{Spec,CP}] \rightarrow \text{SU} \rightarrow \text{X} \rightarrow \text{SU} \rightarrow \text{pro} \rightarrow \text{pro} \]

C and X in (4) are two head-positions for verb fronting which are used according to the type of element that gets moved to [Spec,CP], SU, and SU, are two subject positions which are used by different types of subjects. In terms of (4), (1) is the result of topic fronting, V-fronting and the occurrence of the subject in position SU. In (2), a topic is fronted again and V moves to X but the subject now occurs in position SU. In (3) finally, the verb moves to C and therefore all types of subjects occur postverbally.

Despite the agreement of several authors with respect to the analysis of Old English along the lines of (4), there are certain theoretical issues for which there is no general consensus. Three main issues are listed in (5).


In this chapter, I will argue that by considering the distribution of subjects with respect to adjuncts in Old English and Middle English, we can shed some light on the issues in (I) to (III). Furthermore, I will show that a contract which corresponds basically to that in (4) can also be found in the Modern Germanic languages, but that the contrast in Old English/Middle English provides additional information for the syntactic analysis which cannot be obtained from the Modern Germanic languages.

The remainder of the chapter is organized as follows. In Section 2, the word-order phenomenon that I will focus on in this chapter will be introduced on the basis of the Modern Germanic languages, and its relevance for Old English will...
5.2. Adjacency of the finite verb and subjects in V2 clauses

5.2.1. A source of cross-linguistic variation...

The starting point for my discussion is an aspect of the syntax of the Modern Germanic V2 languages, and more precisely the variation which can be found with respect to the occurrence of adjuncts in a position immediately preceding subjects. In some languages, we can find word orders of the type ‘XP-subject’, whereas such orders are impossible in other languages. This variation is illustrated in (6) with a temporal adverb (but other types of adverbs or adjunct PPs exhibit the same variation; cf. Haefeli (1999: chapter 4), Vikner (1995) for more details).

(6) (a) Wahrscheinlich wird (später) Hans dieselbe Uhr kaufen (German)
    (b) Misschien gaat (vóór) Jan treftste orlogse knopen (W. Flemish)
    (c) Waarschijnlijk zal (vóór) Jan hetzelfde horloge gaan kopen (Dutch)
    (d) Viertunkuuk ulv (fóre) Jan sititke hoxoajjie tregaje (Frisian)
    (e) Waarskylyk zal (vóór) Jan dieselde oudeste gaan koope probably will (later) John the same watch (go) buy (Afrikaans)
        ‘Probably, John will buy the same watch (later).’
    (f) Minustum vet (fóre) Moyahe koyu deen zeltkin zeyer (Yiddish)
    (g) Senntiga mnn (*sense) yön kaupa sama idit (Icelandic)
    (h) Dette er vil (*sense) min for købe probably will (later) John/M. buy the same watch (Danish)
        ‘Probably, John will buy the same watch later.’
    (i) Den bit klækkun hade (sense) min gómle far köpt (Swedish)
    (j) Deune klokkka háske (sense) min gómle for kjøpt (Norwegian)
        this watch will/had (later) my (old) dad buy/bought
        ‘This watch my dad will buy/had bought later.’

In German, Dutch, Frisian, Yiddish, Swedish, and Norwegian an adjunct can intervene between a fronted verb and a definite subject, whereas this option is not available in West Flemish, Afrikaans, Icelandic, and Danish. At first sight, it is surprising that a distributional option for adjuncts which occurs in certain languages cannot be found in some other, very closely related languages. The question that arises therefore is how the cross-linguistic variation with respect to V-subject (non)-adjacency can be accounted for. One possibility would be to relate this variation to variation with respect to the placement of adjuncts. Thus, we could assume that the languages which allow ‘XP-subject’ orders license adjunction to, say, IP whereas in the more restrictive languages such adjunction is banned (cf. e.g. Holmberg (1993), Vikner (1995) for proposals along these lines).

But such an analysis would raise two important problems. The first problem is an acquisitional one which concerns the languages in which ‘XP-subject’ orders are ungrammatical. Given that, in terms of such an approach, IP-adjunction would be illegitimate in principle and given that negative (i.e. ungrammatical) evidence is not part of the language learner’s input, it would not be clear how in some languages a ban on IP-adjunction could be acquired on the basis of the overt evidence available to the language learner. In other words, we would have what has been referred to as a ‘poverty of stimulus’ problem because there is no overt evidence for the ungrammaticality of ‘XP-subject’ orders in the input of learners who acquire the more restrictive languages. Apart from this acquisitional problem, an adjunct analysis would also raise another problem. If the data in (6) simply illustrated a variation with respect to the availability of IP-adjunction, then the choice made by each language basically seems arbitrary and the way in which the Germanic V2 languages are divided into two groups would therefore be random. In other words, no genuine explanation could be provided for the cross-linguistic pattern found in (6).

In order to account for the variation in (6) and its acquisition, it therefore seems necessary to derive it from factors which are independent of properties of adjunct placement. An analysis along these lines is proposed in Haefeli (1999: chapter 4). The two main hypotheses made there and adopted here are: (a) adjunction to maximal projections is highly restricted universally, and in particular to functional projections such as IP or, within a richer clause structure, A/gS and TPs are ruled out, and (b) contrasts as shown in (6) are obtained through differences with respect to the syntax of subjects; more precisely, there are (at least) two structural positions available for subjects, and adjacency between the finite verb and the subject occurs when the subject has to occupy the highest structural subject position whereas non-adjacency is possible when the subject can remain in a lower subject position in the overt syntax. This variation is illustrated in (7) (ε = empty position).

(7) (a) [\text{ε} \text{XP V \{ε \text{SU}_{1}, \ldots, \text{ε} \text{SU}_{n} \}}]
    (b) [\text{ε} \text{XP V \{ε \text{SU} \}}] (V-subject adjacency)
    (c) [\text{ε} \text{XP V \{ε \text{SU} \} \ldots, \text{ε} \text{SU}_{n} \}}] (V-subject non-adjacency)

One question that remains in terms of (7c) is what position an adjunct occupies when it occurs between a fronted finite verb and a subject. Given that an adjunct to a maximal projection is restricted by hypothesis (c) (as above), two main options are available. First, the adjunct could occupy the specific position of an independent functional projection (FP), in line with
proposals made by Alexiadou (1997), Cinque (1999), Kayne (1994). The second option is that the adjunct is \( X \)-adjacent, an option which is assumed to be available for example by Chemnitz (1995: 235). These options are summarized in (8).

\[(a) \quad I_{v} \ ZP \ V \ [_{x} \ e \ X \ [_{x} \ \text{adjunct} \ F \ [_{x} \ \text{SU} \ . . . \ [_{x}]]] \]

\[(b) \quad I_{v} \ ZP \ V \ [_{x} \ e \ X \ [_{x} \ \text{adjunct} \ F \ [_{x} \ \text{SU} \ . . . \ [_{x}]]] \]

The main difference between the two theoretical options in (8) is that in (8a) the adjunct follows the head \( X \), whereas in (8b) it precedes the head. But given that the verb moves out to \( C \) in the Modern Germanic V2 languages and that \( X \) is therefore not overtly filled, there is no clear empirical evidence from the Modern Germanic languages for choosing between the two options in (8).

Assuming that adjuncts can occur in one of the two positions shown in (8), the variation with respect to 'XP-subject' orders among the Germanic languages can be analyzed in terms of the structures in (7) and hence in terms of variation with respect to the syntax of subjects. Languages of the type (7b) show adjacency effects whereas languages of the type (7a) allow V-subject non-adjacency. As argued in Haegelen (1999: chapter 4), this structural variation provides the basis for deriving the variation in (6) to a large extent from independent properties of the grammars of the different languages, such as the status of verbal agreement morphology or the licensing of non-overt expletives. For reasons of space, the analyses of the different Modern Germanic languages cannot be discussed here, and I refer the reader to the references cited above for more details. What will be central for our discussion, however, is the structural analysis in (7) and (8) and the observation that this structural analysis provides the basis for an analysis of a word-order variation among the Modern Germanic languages.

5.2.2. ... and its relevance for Old English

Given the variation in (6), it would already be of interest from a purely typological point of view to consider what the status of Old English is in this respect, in particular since Old English has a relatively peculiar status with respect to the syntax of V2 (cf. § 5.1). However, the data in (6) are also immediately relevant for another reason. In the Modern Germanic languages, there is one important additional restriction with respect to 'XP-subject' orders. As observed for example by Vikner (1995: 103ff.), pronominal subjects (weak pronouns) generally have to occur in a position which is adjacent to the finite verb even in languages like German which license 'XP-subject' orders with non-pronominal subjects. This property of subject pronouns is shown in (8a) which should be compared to (6a), repeated here in (9).

\[(a) \quad \text{Wahrscheinlich wird (später) du dieselbe Uhr kaufen.} \quad \text{(German)} \]

\[(b) \quad \text{probable will (later) buy the same watch} \]

The contrast between (9a) and (9b) can be analyzed by assuming that weak subject pronouns have to occupy the highest subject position even in languages like German ([Spec, XP] in (7c) and (8)). This means that we get exactly the same kind of contrast in the Modern Germanic languages as the contrast shown in (4) for Old English. The only difference is that the presence of two subject positions is not determined on the basis of a head position between the two subject positions as in Old English when the verb does not move to \( C \) but on the basis of the presence of an adjunct position. This parallelism is illustrated in (10), where (10a) represents the Old English contrast based on the data in (1) and (2) and (10b) represents the Modern Germanic contrast based on data such as (9a) and (9b) for German.

\[(a) \quad [_{T} \ . . . \ [_{x} \ SU_{t} \ _{t} \ \text{adjunct} \ F \ [_{x} \ \text{SU}_{t} \ _{t} \ [_{x} \ \text{pro} \ . . . \ [_{x}]]] \]

\[(b) \quad [_{T} \ . . . \ V \ [_{x} \ SU_{t} \ _{t} \ \text{adjunct} \ F \ [_{x} \ \text{SU}_{t} \ _{t} \ [_{x} \ \text{pro} \ . . . \ [_{x}]]] \]

\[(\text{Old English}) \]

\[(b) \quad [_{T} \ . . . \ V \ [_{x} \ SU_{t} \ _{t} \ \text{adjunct} \ F \ [_{x} \ \text{SU}_{t} \ _{t} \ [_{x} \ \text{pro} \ . . . \ [_{x}]]] \]

\[(\text{Modern German}) \]

Thus, the Old English variation with respect to pronominal vs. non-pronominal subjects has a very close equivalent in the Modern Germanic languages. But note now that Old English can provide additional evidence for the analysis of the Modern Germanic languages and more particularly for the open issue concerning the placement of adjuncts shown in example (8), repeated below.

\[(a) \quad I_{v} \ ZP \ V \ [_{x} \ e \ X \ [_{x} \ \text{adjunct} \ F \ [_{x} \ \text{SU} \ . . . \ [_{x}]]] \]

\[(b) \quad I_{v} \ ZP \ V \ [_{x} \ e \ X \ [_{x} \ \text{adjunct} \ F \ [_{x} \ \text{SU} \ . . . \ [_{x}]]] \]

In (8), two options for adjunct placement are presented. One of the two options involves a maximal projection between XP and \( YP \) (8a), and the second option involves adjunction to \( X \) (8b). These two options make different predictions for Old English now. As mentioned above, Old English has V-fronting to two distinct positions, C (in interrogative clauses etc.; cf. (4)) and the functional head \( X \) which occurs right below \( C \) in all other types of clauses, cf. examples (1), (3), and the structure in (10b)). This means now that if a pre subject adjunct could only occur in an \( X \)-adjacent position (cf. (8b)), then V-subject non-adjacency could only occur in cases in which the verb moves to \( X \). In all other contexts in which the verb only moves to \( X \), V-subject non-adjacency would not be possible because a constituent adjacent to \( X \) would precede rather than follow the verb. In terms of a functional projection between \( X \) and \( YP \) however (cf. (8a)), V-subject non-adjacency should be possible regardless of whether the verb moves to \( C \) or to \( X \). Old English therefore allows us to test at least one of the two hypotheses shown in (8).
Thus, we have seen two initial motivations for considering the status of Old English with respect to the variation shown in (6). First, the question arises as to whether Old English is situated in this typological split and, secondly, Old English can provide evidence for the structural analysis of this variation. However, we will see that several additional results can be obtained on the basis of an investigation of V-subject (non)adjacency in Old English (and Middle English), in particular results which are relevant for the open issues raised in (5) above.

5.3: V-subject non-adjacency in Old English

Let us start by considering the typological issue, i.e. the question whether Old English is a language in which verb fronting leads to adjacency between the verb and a non-pronominal subject or whether Old English belongs to the group of Germanic languages which allow 'XP-subject' orders after a fronted finite verb.

5.3.1: Some preliminary remarks

A brief look at the Old English data shows that subjects do not need to be adjacent to fronted finite verbs. However, not all data are of equal importance for the cross-linguistic issues raised in §5.2. I will distinguish three main types of constructions in which a subject is not directly right-adjacent to the finite verb:

A. Another predicative element intervenes between the finite verbal form and the subject (generally the participle in passives as in (11), but sometimes also other non-finite verb forms, adjectives, or particles).

(11) |... he can gese weto greoren Ethelheard abbed to bisece the same year was chosen Ethelheard abbot to bishop

"In the same year, the abbot Ethelheard was chosen as bishop." (CHIRO2.54:790.1)

B. An argument (generally a pronoun) occurs between the finite verb and the subject.

(12) |... wore mot beine se blyford gefreogan then may him the master liberate

"Then, the master may liberate him." (LAW2.120:74.1)

C. The subject follows an adjunct.

(13) |... bleon nihtere tiule se bispocdon then ceased much time the bishopric

"Then, the bishopric was vacant for a long time." (BEDE.357.7)

If not mentioned otherwise, the Old English data are taken from the 1998 version of the Brooklyn-Georgetown-Amsterdam-Helsinki Paricle Corpus of Old English, a syntactically parsed and morphologically tagged corpus of Old English, and follow the referencing conventions of that corpus.

For our comparative analysis of the syntax of subjects in Old English, only Type C is crucial. As for Type A, it presumably involves a different position from the [Spec,VP] subject position in the structures in (4) or (10). For example, in the passive construction in (11), it can be argued that the subject occupies an underlying object position if we assume (as e.g. Roberts 1997; Putsz 1998) that Old English allows V0 base order. As for Type B, its occurrence may not be related to the syntax of subjects but rather to distributional properties of pronouns. This observation is based on the fact that in languages like Icelandic and West Flemish which generally require V subject adjacency (cf. examples (6b) and (6g)) object pronouns nevertheless can intervene between a fronted verb and a subject (cf. e.g. Helleen and Platzer 1995: 59 for Icelandic, Heggeman 1996: 142 for West Flemish). The most plausible analysis for these two languages is that, since V subject non-adjacency is restricted to contexts involving pronouns, the properties of subjects create an adjacency configuration but that pronominal objects have properties which allow them to intervene between the verb and the subject, possibly as the result of head movement. Given these cross-linguistic observations, data of Type B may not be central for determining the syntax of subjects.

Given these observations, I will consider neither Type A nor Type B constructions here in my discussion of the syntax of subjects in Old English (but cf. Haebeli 1998 for additional observations concerning these constructions). Instead, I will focus on Type C constructions. But since, as discussed in §5.1, V-fronting targets two positions in Old English, we have to distinguish two contexts with respect to V-subject (non)adjacency, namely V-to-C movement contexts and contexts involving V-movement to the projection below CP (cf. structure (4)). The next section deals with the former context.

5.3.2: V-subject non-adjacency with V-movement to C

V-movement to C occurs in interrogatives, negative and VP clauses and in clauses introduced by adverbs like ãa. Subjects do not have to be adjacent to the fronted verb in these contexts has already been observed sometimes in the literature. Putsz 1991: 214) and Koopman (1996) for example point out that adverbs can intervene between a verb and the subject. This option is shown in (14).

(14) a) |... no lote swa þraen se maestrepse; bone bispoc geaxian then not dared however the mass-priest the bishop ask

for hwan . . .

why . . .

"However, the priest did not dare to ask the bishop why . . ." (GREGI3.32:58.3)

b) |... gealden syðan his megete þene wer pay afterwards his male-kinsmen the man's legal value

"Afterwards, his relatives should pay the man's legal value." (LAW2.120:74.1)
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In (16a–b) an object is fronted and the verb therefore only moves to the inflectional head below C (cf. §5.1). Finally, in (16c–d), adjuncts are fronted which do not trigger V-movement to C, either. We can therefore conclude that 'XP-subject' orders are possible when the verb moves to the head below C.

In summary, the data in (14) to (16) show that 'XP-subject' orders occur in Old English regardless of the position to which the finite verb moves. Old English thus clearly pattern with the more permissive Germanic languages in (6) which do not require adjacency between a fronted verb and the subject.1

### 5.3.4. A theoretical consequence: the placement of adjuncts

As discussed in §5.2.2, both Old English and the Modern Germanic languages show evidence for two subject positions in the overt syntax, one occupied by pronominal subjects and one occupied by non-pronominal subjects. But the diagnostics for the presence of these two subject positions are not the same. In Old English, the distributional contrast can be identified on the basis of the position of the finite verb, whereas in the Modern Germanic languages, it is the placement of adjuncts which allows us to distinguish the two subject positions. This contrast is repeated here in (17) (cf. (10)).

**Example (17)**

\[ (VXP(SU1(SUS) ) \quad \text{V} \quad [ SU1(C-PRO) \ldots ] ] \]  

**Old English**

\[ (VXP(SU1(SUS) ) \quad \text{adjunct}(SU1(C-PRO) \ldots ] ] ) \]  

**Modern German**

As discussed in §5.2.1, the Modern Germanic languages do not provide clear evidence for establishing the position occupied by the adjunct in (17b). Given that the cross-linguistic variation with respect to V-subject non-adjacency may

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1. For some of the Old English examples of V-subject non-adjacency, it could be argued that they do not illustrate the syntactic structure shown in (10b) for the Modern Germanic languages but that they are obtained as the result of rightward movement of the subject. Such a conclusion certainly would be plausible for clause-final heavy subjects as for example in (g).

2. The sequence object noun subject implies that we may assume that the subject is fronted.

3. The contrast in (17b) is therefore not always decisive as it may be that the subject is fronted in clause-internal positions as for example in (17a).

4. The contrast in (17b) is therefore not always decisive as it may be that the subject is fronted in clause-internal positions as for example in (17a).

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**Example (18)**

\[ (VXP(SU1(SUS) ) \quad \text{V} \quad [ SU1(C-PRO) \ldots ] ] \]  

**Old English**

\[ (VXP(SU1(SUS) ) \quad \text{adjunct}(SU1(C-PRO) \ldots ] ] ) \]  

**Modern German**

As discussed in §5.2.1, the Modern Germanic languages do not provide clear evidence for establishing the position occupied by the adjunct in (17b). Given that the cross-linguistic variation with respect to V-subject non-adjacency may
best be analyzed in terms of a restrictive system of adjunction, i.e. a system in
which adjunction to XP and YP in (10b) is ruled out, there are two remaining
options for the placement of the adjunct in (10b): Either it is adjoined to X or
it occupies a specifier position of an independent functional projection between
XP and YP (cf. example (8)). As pointed out already in §5.2.2, Old English can
shed some light on this issue.

As the data in (16) show, the order ‘XP-adjunct’ is possible in Old English
even if the verb only moves to X and not to C. This means that the adjunct in
pre-subject position cannot occur in an X-adjointed position but must occur in
an independent projection between X and YP. Thus, we obtain the following
structure for ‘XP-adjunct’ orders with V-movement to X:

(18) ... [X  Y  [\[\[ V \[\[ [\[\[ X_{\[\[ \text{adjunct}\] X_{\[\[ SU \ldots X\] X_{\[\[ \] X_{\[\[ }}]]}}]

The structure in (18) corresponds to the option shown in (8a) above. The Old
English data thus show that an adjunct in pre-subject position must be able to
occupy an independent functional projection between XP and YP. Old English
therefore provides evidence for the details of the structural analysis of adjectives
which cannot be obtained from the Modern Germanic languages. The reason why
Old English allows us to draw more precise conclusions is that in Old English
we can combine the distribution of adjectives with the distribution of a head,
given that Old English has V-movement into the domain which is relevant for our
purposes. Old English thus contributes to a more detailed understanding of a
general word-order phenomenon found in the Germanic languages.4

4 The fact that PPs can precede the subject cf. (16a-d) suggests that a pre-subject adjunct also
cannot simply be an element which has been cliticized to the verb, for example Cf. also Vickers
(1993: 106) for arguments against treating per subject adjectives as clitics in the Modern Germanic
languages.

5 There may be some additional data which are relevant for the issues discussed here, however.
The observations made in the text show that option (8b), i.e. adjunct placement in a projection
between X and YP, must be available, but they of course do not mean that option (8b), i.e.
X-adjunction, must be ruled out. X-adjunction cases could indeed be argued to exist in Old English.
Consider the following example:

with that thing began everyone living increase
‘With that, numerous living things began to increase.’
(Bede 48: 27; Pfitzner 1931: 113)

In (i), the adverb occurs between a topic and a fronted finite verb. Assuming that the verb is in X
and that, as argued in the following subsection, the topic occurs in [Spec,CP], we could say that the
adverb is adjoined to X in such examples. The conclusion that there would not be one of the two
options for adjunct placement shown in (8) is not available in the grammar but both options occur.
Moreover, there may be an alternative analysis for (i) which does not depend on X-adjunction
of the second adjunct. It could be argued that the topic position in the CP domain is not a unique
position but that multiple topics are possible cf. e.g. Ritter 1997: 240–1, 243 f. on recursive topic
positions in the CP domain. Hence, both adjectives in (i) occupy topic positions, i.e. specifier posi-
tions in the CP domain, and (i) would therefore not provide evidence for X-adjunction.

5.3.5. An additional observation: pronoun subjects and topics

In the previous section, I showed that V-subject non-adjacency in Old English
provides evidence for the analysis of a more general Germanic word-order
phenomenon. In this section, I will argue that the Old English data concerning
V-subject non-adjacency are also relevant for one of the issues raised in (5)
which are specific to Old English, i.e. the question as to what position topics
occupy.

One of the observations that we can make with respect to V-subject non-
adjacency in Old English is that in cases where (weak) pronominal subjects
occur postverbally (i.e. in Y-to-C contexts) the subject pronoun is always adja-
cent to V. I have not found a single example in my corpus in which a constituent
intervenes between the finite verb and a postverbal pronominal subject. Thus, it
seems that the following restriction holds even in contexts where V occupies C.

(19) *V(finite)-adjunct-pronominal subject

This observation is relevant for issue (5 II) which concerns the position occupied
by topics in Old English as for example in (1) above, repeated here in (20).

(20) [EAdl θa] areθæd ne reccere swide råhle
All this arranged the order very rightly
(Cena Pastoralis 169: 3)

One option that has been proposed, on the basis of analyses of languages like
Icelandic and Yiddish, is that topics occupy a position between CP and X in Old
English ([Spec,CP] in the structures used so far, [Spec,CP] in Pfitzner’s 1991, 1993
analysis, and [Spec,AgP] in Cardinali and Roberts 1991). Thus, [Spec,XP] in
(20) is an X-position. Furthermore, in order to obtain the order Topic-
pronominal subject–V (cf. (2) above), it has to be assumed that the pronominal
subject somehow can occur between the specifier and the head X. Pfitzner (1991,
1993) and Cardinali and Roberts (1991) therefore argue that subject pronouns
can cooccur to a position between [Spec,XP] and the verb in X. However, such
an assumption is problematic for deriving (19). (19) should be possible as the
result of: (a) placement of an adjunct in [Spec,XP] given that [Spec,XP] is an
X-position; (b) cliticization of the subject pronoun to the right of the element
in [Spec,XP]; (c) movement of the verb to C. Given these possible derivational
steps, it seems to be difficult to rule out the word order pattern shown in (19).7

7 The point made in the text does not depend on the status of (i), however. Old English provides
evidence for the option of inserting an adjectum in a specifier position between XP and YP and such
evidence cannot be found among the Modern Germanic languages. As for the status of X-adjunction
and of adverbs like X, I will leave it open for future research.

8 Some cases of (19) could possibly be ruled out if a Relativized Minimality violation. For ex-
ample a wh element generally cannot move past a topic cf. e.g. Vickers 1995: 236 f. However, for
Vocative cases, such an approach is more difficult to motivate. If V is analyzed in terms of an empty
In terms of an alternative analysis of topicalization in Old English, however, i.e. in terms of topicalization to [Spec, CP], the adjunction requirement between the verb in C and a pronounial subject can be accounted for straightforwardly in terms of a restrictive system of adjunction to maximal projections. Assuming still that adjunction to XP is restricted (cf. §5.2.1), the adjacency required by (19) is obtained through movement of the pronounial subject to [Spec, X] (i.e. position SU1, in example (4), which is repeated below) and movement of the verb to C.

\[(C \:\text{CP} \:\text{SU} \:1 \:\text{prv} \:X \:\text{CP} \:\text{SU} \:2 \:\text{prv} \:\ldots)\]

In summary, the distribution of adjuncts and pronounial subjects supports an analysis of topicalization in Old English in terms of movement to CP.

5.4. V-subject non-adjacency in Middle English and dialect variation

Having considered the status of Old English with respect to 'XP'-subject orders, let us now turn to the distribution of adjuncts and subjects in Middle English. I will focus here mainly on the two Middle English dialects that Kroch and Taylor (1997) have identified on the basis of the syntax of V2, and I will show that the two dialects also seem to vary with respect to the phenomena discussed here, i.e. with respect to the occurrence of adjuncts between a frontal verb and the subject. Furthermore, I will argue that the Middle English data also provide evidence for dealing with the issues (I) and (II) raised in (5) above.

5.4.1. The southern dialects

Kroch and Taylor (1997) show that the V2 syntax of Old English as illustrated in (1) to (4) is maintained to a large extent in the Early Middle English of the West Midlands and the South. Pronounial subjects still follow the finite verb in the contexts shown in (3) (interrogatives etc.) but they precede the finite verb in all other contexts. Non-pronounial subjects generally follow the frontal verb in both contexts. Thus, southern Early Middle English can still be analysed in terms of V-movement to C or to X and in terms of different positions for pronounial and non-pronounial subjects (cf. (4)).

\[\text{opposite in [Spec, CP] (e.g. an interrogative operator in yes/no questions or different types of operators in declarative and negative V2), the most straightforward assumption would be that this empty operator is generated in [Spec, CP] (in the same way that even certain wh-elements seem to be generated in CP, cf. Vikner 1995: 55 ff. on how). Thus, it would not be clear why and from whose empty operator would have to move past the topic for ruling out (19).}

\[\text{The Middle English data are all taken from the first edition of the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English, a syntactically parsed corpus of Middle English, and follow the referencing conventions of that corpus (cf. http://www.ling.upenn.edu/mindlab).}

5.4.2. The northern dialect

Considering the Northern Poste Role of St Benet, a text from around 1400 which is the oldest surviving prose document from the North, Kroch and Taylor (1997) argue that the northern dialect of Middle English differs significantly from the southern dialects with respect to the syntax of V-movement. The Benet text exhibits basically a regular V2 syntax as found in the Modern German languages, instead of the complex V2 pattern found in Old English and southern Early Middle English. Thus, when some constituent is fronted in the Benet text, subject–verb inversion applies regardless of whether the subject is a pronoun or a full DP. The Old English/southern Early Middle English contrast between subject pronouns (no inversion except in certain syntactic contexts) and
non pronounal subjects (generally inversion) therefore cannot be found in the northern dialect?

As Kroch and Taylor (1997: 314) point out, the categorical subject-verb inversion pattern of the northern dialect can best be accounted for by assuming that the verb always moves to C in this dialect, as it has been proposed for Modern Germanic V2 languages. The difference between the southern and the northern dialect would therefore be that while in the southern dialect (and Old English) the verb can occur in two distinct positions when it is fronted (C or X), V-fronting always targets C in the northern dialect.

What is interesting for our purposes now is that the dialect variation described by Kroch and Taylor (1997) also seems to reflect in the distribution of adjuncts and subjects. As discussed in §5.4.1, the southern dialect behaves like Old English with respect to this issue, since adjuncts can still occur in position between the finite verb and a postverbal non-pronounal subject in contexts of V-movement to C as well as in contexts of V-movement to X. In the northern text, however, the situation is substantially different. Within the entire text, not a single instance of the word order pattern V-adjunct-subject can be found. The only examples in which a subject is non-adjacent to a fronted finite verb are cases which I classified as Type A and Type B in §5.3.1, i.e. cases with passivized verbs and with intervening pronouns. Illustrations of these two constructions are given in (23).

(23) (a) And after sael be redd be lescorn Ipapostis wid gode
And afterwards shall be read the lesson of the apostles with good devotion

(b) ‘And afterwards, the lesson of the apostles shall be read with devotion’ (Beaut 16.441)

(b) In his first sentence bides us sain benet
In this first sentence commands us Saint Benet

‘In this first sentence, Saint Beadon commands us’ (Beaut 1.3)

As discussed in §5.4.1, (23a) can be argued to involve a subject in its underlying object position, whereas (23b) may not be related to properties of subjects but

As Watson (1997: 589-590) points out, there may be an alternative to Kroch and Taylor’s (1997) conclusion, however: Since Kroch and Taylor’s claim is based on a single text, it could be argued that Beadon is simply a stylistically marked text rather than a text representing the grammar of a different dialect. Yet, the points discussed below may provide some support for analyzing the Beadon text as a text with a different grammar. As we will see, the distinct behavior of the Beadon text with respect to V2 seems to coincide with another syntactic peculiarity, namely the absence of ‘XP-subject’ orders. In terms of a stylistic interpretation of the V2 pattern in the Beadon text, the occurrence of the two phenomena would seem accidental. However, as I will argue below, an analysis of the Beadon text in terms of a distinctive grammatical property allows us to link the two phenomena to a common underlying source. I will therefore continue using Kroch and Taylor’s distinction between different dialects.

rather to the syntax of pronounal elements. Hence, neither of the two cases in (23) are genuine cases of V-subject non-adjacency as discussed in the earlier sections (i.e. ‘XP-subject’, Type C). As for Type C non-adjacency, it is entirely absent from the Beadon text.

The question that arises then is how to interpret the absence of Type C examples in the Beadon text. In particular, we may wonder whether the absence of ‘XP-subject’ orders in the northern dialect is the manifestation of an underlying grammatical property which bans such orders (as for example in West Plemish, Afrikaans, Danish, or Icelandic, cf. example (6)) or whether the absence of ‘XP-subject’ orders is simply due to a gap in the corpus, possibly because the corpus is not large enough. Based on statistical evidence, I will argue here that the latter option is not very likely.

In order to test whether the absence of ‘XP-subject’ orders in the Beadon text is simply due to the size of the corpus, I compared the northern text to several Old English and southern Early Middle English text samples with respect to the frequencies of V-subject non-adjacency. More precisely, I counted the number of examples in which the subject follows the finite verb and an ‘XP-subject’ order therefore could have occurred, and the actual occurrences of such orders. The relevant numbers are given in Tables 3.1 to 3.3. Four different figures are given in these tables. The first figure represents all the cases in which V-subject non-adjacency could have occurred because a non-pronounal subject follows the finite verb (listed under ‘Total V-SU’ in the tables). Then,

| Table 3.1: V-subject non-adjacency in some Old English texts |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
|                  | Total V-SU | Type A | Type B |
|                  |          |       |       |
| AElit            | 91      | 7     | 7.7%  |
| AElS             | 97      | 6     | 6.3%  |
| APL              | 99      | 7     | 7.1%  |
| Bede             | 92      | 4     | 4.3%  |
| Beowulf          | 78      | 2     | 2.6%  |
| Chaucer          | 304     | 15    | 4.9%  |
| GDC              | 57      | 2     | 3.5%  |
| ODH              | 48      | 6     | 12.5% |
| Laws             | 144     | 1     | 0.7%  |
| Orosius          | 95      | 8     | 8.4%  |
| Willeum          | 144     | 5     | 3.5%  |
| Average %        | 5.1%   | 3.8%  | 11.7% |

* Thus, VS orders with pronounal subjects are not included in any counts. Classes containing the indefinite element mens (one) are also not included in the totals of VS orders, since this element seems to have pronoun-like syntactic properties (cf. e.g. Beekes 1998).

* The average percentage is calculated purely on the basis of the percentages obtained for the individual texts and not on the basis of the total number of examples in all texts. The aim of calculating the percentage this way is to give each text sample the same weight, independently of its size. If the percentages were calculated on the basis of the total number of examples in the entire Old English corpus, the figures would be slightly lower. Total V-SU: 1289. Total Type A: 58 (4.5%). Total Type B: 42 (3.2%). Total Type C: 131 (10.1%).
I counted the number of occurrences of the three types of V-subject non-adjacency among the 'V-SU' cases (Type A, B, and C). As mentioned above, the crucial pattern is Type C, but I added Types A and B for comparative purposes. Apart from the absolute numbers for the different types of V-subject non-adjacency, I have also given their frequencies in each text, calculated on the basis of the total number of 'V-SU' orders. Table 5.2 shows the results for the Old English period, Table 5.3 for the results of the northern Middle English Benet text.

Table 5.2. V-subject non-adjacency in some southern Early Middle English texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Total V-SU</th>
<th>Type A</th>
<th>Type B</th>
<th>Type C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancre</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havel</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambe</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smythe</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vices</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3. V-subject non-adjacency in the Northern Dote Role of St Benet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Total V-SU</th>
<th>Type A</th>
<th>Type B</th>
<th>Type C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Benet</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 5.1 to 5.3 show that, compared to the other text samples, the number of contexts in which 'XP-subject' orders could occur (cf. 'Total V-SU') is relatively high in the Benet text. Several other texts have considerably lower figures for 'V-SU' orders but they nevertheless all contain at least two examples of Type C, in contrast to the Benet text which does not contain a single example of this type.

The contrast between the Benet text and the other texts can also be illustrated by calculating the expected number of occurrences of the different word-order patterns for the Benet text on the basis of the average frequencies found in the other texts. As shown in Table 5.1, the average frequency for Type A is 5.2%, for B 3.8% and for C 11.7% in Old English. For southern Early Middle English, the averages are 5.2% (A), 4.6% (B) and 12.3% (C) (cf. Table 5.2). For both

In terms of the total numbers of occurrences in all Early Middle English text samples together, the percentages would again be slightly lower (cf. also note 11 for Old English). Total V-SU: 453; Total Type A: 21 (4.6%); Total Type B: 18 (3.9%); Total Type C: 47 (10.3%)

### Adjuncts and the Syntax of Subjects

Old English and southern Early Middle English, this gives average frequencies of 5.2% (A), 4.1% (B) and 11.0% (C). On the basis of these frequencies, we would expect the following numbers of occurrences in the Benet text: 126. While the numbers for Type A and Type B constructions are very close to the expected numbers, there is a considerable discrepancy with respect to Type C constructions. Instead of the expected fifteen examples showing 'XP-subject' orders, we do not find a single example of this type.

However, there is one additional aspect which should be considered at this point. A closer investigation of the St Benet data shows that many 'V-SU' clauses are characterized by the fact that they contain a fronted constituent, the verb and the argument(s) but no additional adjunct(s) which could intervene between the verb and the argument(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total V-SU</th>
<th>Type A</th>
<th>Type B</th>
<th>Type C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While, however, there may arise some cases which are entirely comparable. As discussed earlier, 'V-SU' orders in Old English and southern Early Middle English can be the result of movement to X or to C. In northern Middle English, however, the verb always moves to C in 'V-SU' orders according to Knecht and Taylor's (1997) analysis. Thus, one may wonder whether the inclusion of V-to-X contexts in the Old English/Early Middle English data has undesirable effects for the comparison with northern Middle English since northern Middle English only has V-to-C.

If we distinguish between V-to-C contexts and V-to-X contexts in the Old English and southern Early Middle English text samples studied here, we obtain the following results with respect to Type C orders. In Old English, the likelihood of Type C is almost equally high in V-to-X contexts as in V-to-C contexts. In southern Early Middle English, however, there is a slight contrast between the two. Movement to X is found more frequently in V-to-C contexts than in V-to-X contexts roughly 5% vs. 15%. Thus, if V-to-X movement contexts were eliminated from the Old English/Early Middle English data, the expected number in northern Middle English for Type C would be slightly higher than shown in Table 5.4 (17.3 expected examples of Type C rather than 12.0). The distinction between V-to-X and V-to-C contexts would thus reinforce the point made in the text below, since the gap between the expected number of 'XP-subject' orders in northern Middle English and the observed number would be even higher.

However, given the fact that a contrast between V-to-C and V-to-X can only be identified clearly in the Early Middle English data but not in Old English, and given that the contrast in Early Middle English is relatively small, I tentatively conclude here that the contrast between V-to-C and V-to-X contexts is not a substantial general factor determining the status of 'XP-subject' orders, and I will therefore base my quantitative data for Old English and Early Middle English on both V-to-C and V-to-X contexts.

In terms of the total numbers for the Old English and Early Middle English texts (cf. notes 11 and 12), the expected figures would be slightly lower. Among the 172 'V-SU' examples in the Old English and Early Middle English text samples studied, 79 are of Type A (45.3%), 59 of Type B (34.3%) and 35 of Type C (20.3%). The expected numbers for northern Middle English would therefore be as follows: Type A: 5.7; Type B: 4.3; Type C: 2.9.
finite verb and the subject. Thus, many clauses contain no additional adjunct(s) at all or they only contain heavy adjuncts like adjunct clauses or adjuncts modified by an entire clause which generally do not occupy the XP-position in ‘XP-subject’ orders in Old English/Early Middle English. Leaving aside such heavy adjuncts, we can observe that in the Benet text only 31 out of the 126 ‘V-SU’ clauses or 24.6% contain an adjunct in a position following the finite verb, and hence that in terms of the elements which are available in the clause, only 24.6% of the ‘V-SU’ clauses could have given rise to a Type C order.

The question that arises then is whether the absence of ‘XP-subject’ orders in the Benet text is a consequence of the general low frequency of adjuncts in postverbal position. The answer to this question seems to be negative. A comparison with Old English and southern Early Middle English text samples shows that the low frequency of postverbal adjuncts among ‘V-SU’ orders cannot be identified as a clear factor determining the absence of Type C orders in the Benet text. Two observations are relevant here. First of all, although the frequency of postverbal adjuncts is indeed lower in the Benet text than in the Old English/Early Middle English text samples studied here (24.6% vs. 43.6%), the Benet text is by no means exceptional in terms of absolute numbers. Three Old English and five Early Middle English text samples contain fewer instances of ‘V-SU’ order with a postverbal (non-heavy) adjunct than the Benet text (Boethius 29 examples; OEC 13; ODh 27; Ancro 14; Kahle 20; Sawles 16; Trinit 13; Vices 21). Furthermore, three Old English and two Early Middle English text samples show similar numbers as Benet (AEL 38; APT 34; Bede 39; Hali 33; Lambeth 37). Finally, there are only five Old English text samples which show considerably higher numbers of ‘V-SU’ orders with postverbal adjuncts (ELet 52; Chronic 47; Laws 77; Ormnes 47; WKenn 66). Hence, most Old English/Early Middle English text samples have comparable or lower numbers of postverbal adjuncts in V-SU structures. On the basis of the absolute numbers, it would therefore not be expected that the Benet text is the only text among those considered here which does not contain any Type C orders.

The conclusion that the low frequency of ‘V-SU’ orders with postverbal adjuncts does not seem to be a clear source of the absence of Type C orders in the Benet text is supported by a calculation of the expected number of Type C orders on the basis of the Old English/Early Middle English data. For each Old English/Early Middle English text, I calculated the percentage of Type C orders among those cases of ‘V-SU’ which contain all the necessary elements for potentially giving rise to Type C orders (i.e. cases which contain at least one non-heavy adjunct following the finite verb). I then calculated the average percentages for Old English, Early Middle English and Old English/Early Middle English together. The results are as follows. Among the Old English text samples, the average percentage for Type C orders among the ‘V-SU’ clauses containing a postverbal adjunct is 29.5%. For Early Middle English, the average percentage is 29.5% and for Old English/Early Middle English together 27.1%.

### Table 5.5: Expected and observed occurrences of Type C in the Benet Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type C</th>
<th>V-SU with a postverbal adjunct</th>
<th>Expected</th>
<th>Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the discrepancy between the expected and the observed figures is smaller in Table 5.5 than in Table 5.4, the difference is still considerable.

In summary, the Old English and Early Middle English data studied here would lead us to expect 15 or, calculated in a more restrictive way, 8.4 examples of Type C in the Benet text (cf. Tables 5.4 and 5.5). Instead, we do not find a single instance of such an order. Although it is not possible to determine the ungrammaticality of a construction conclusively on the basis of positive evidence as found in corpus data, the difference between the expected and observed numbers of Type C is high enough to suggest that the absence of ‘XP-subject’ orders in the Benet text is not simply an accidental gap in the data, but that it is the result of a restriction on such orders in the grammar of the northern dialect of Middle English.

The conclusion thus is that the only Old English or Middle English text studied here which shows a clearly distinct V2 syntax (cf. Kroch and Taylor 1997) also shows a clearly distinct behaviour with respect to V-subject non-adjacency. The question that arises now is whether the two phenomena are related. In the remainder of this section, I will argue that a uniform account of the two phenomena is indeed possible on the basis of Kroch and Taylor’s (1997) proposals and the assumptions made so far.

One important property of northern Middle English is that, compared to Old English and southern Middle English, it has a very impoverished verbal agreement system. The only morphological ending that remains in the Benet text is an -(e) ending in the present tense of the second and third person singular and of the third person plural. In the past tense, no agreement distinctions are made in this text (cf. Kock 1902: xlvi; §120; Haebeli 1999: 391f). Kroch and Taylor (1997: 317ff) propose that the fact that the Benet text only exhibits V-movement to C but no V-movement to the position below C (i.e. X in structure (4)) can be

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13 In terms of the alternative method of calculation discussed in notes 11 and 12, the figures would again be slightly different. First, if we use percentages based on the total numbers of Old English and Early Middle English examples rather than average percentages (cf. notes 11 and 12), the expected number of occurrences of Type C in Benet would be slightly lower, namely 7.6. However, if only V-to-C movement contexts are taken into account in the Old English/Early Middle English text samples (cf. note 13), the expected number would be 9.4.
related to the impoverished agreement system of the northern dialect. Such a
constraint is possible under the assumption that the lower VP-fronting position in
Old English (i.e. XP) is Agree and that weak agreement does not trigger V-move-
ment to Agree any more. As a consequence, V-fronting can only be obtained
through V-fronting to C in the northern dialect. This dialect therefore does not
exhibit the characteristic properties of Old English illustrated in (1) to (4) because
these properties depend on the availability of two landing sites for V-fronting.

I will pursue Kroch and Taylor’s (1997) proposal here, but I will adapt it to
Thomason’s (1995) system according to which absence of verbal agreement can mean the absence of the AgreeP level (cf. also Bobaljik 1995, Bobaljik and
Thomason 1998). Assuming again that XP in (4) corresponds to AgreeP, the absence of AgreeP means that one of the two V-fronting options found in Old English have disappeared from the syntax of the northern
dialect, in line with Kroch and Taylor’s (1997) analysis. However, the absence of
AgreeP also has a second consequence. Reconsider first the structure (4) (re-
peated in (24a)) and the same structure in (24b) under the assumption that XP
is AgreeP and hence that XP is presumably VP (cf. also e.g. Bobaljik and Jonas
1996 for analyzing AgreeP and TP as distinct subject positions).

(24a) (a) \( \lambda r \ C \lambda s u \{s p \ (s p) x \ [r] s u \{s p \} \) 
(b) \( \lambda r \ C \lambda s u \{s p \} x \ [r] s u \{s p \} \)

Recall furthermore that I have been assuming that XP-subject orders occur
when the subject occurs in the lower one of the two subject positions in (24) (cf.
examples (8) and (18)). What is crucial now is that once AgreeP disappears, we
also lose a subject position. The lower subject position in (24) therefore becomes
the highest subject position and, assuming still that adjunction is restricted (cf.
§5.2.1), this position then becomes a position which is adjacent to V.

The change described above is illustrated in (25).

(25) (a) \( \lambda r \ Z P \ V \ \lambda s u \{s p \} \ V \ \{s p \} \) 
(b) \( \lambda r \ Z P \ V \ \{s p \} \)

\( \text{(Old English/Middle English (South))} \)
\( \text{(Middle English (North))} \)

Once AgreeP is lost in the North, we not only lose a position for V-fronting but
also lose the higher subject position. V-fronting therefore has to target C and
the subject in TP is now adjacent to V in C.

The phenomenon of V-subject (non-)adjacency and in particular its develop-
ment within Middle English thus provides evidence for the analysis of issues (5A)
and (5B), i.e. for the question of what the nature of the projections below CP is
in the structure in (4) (i.e. (24a)). By identifying XP as AgreeP and VP as TP, the
specific syntactic properties of the northern dialect can be directly linked to its
morphological properties, and the contrast to Old English and southern Middle
English can be accounted for.

One additional point remains to be addressed, however. V-subject adjacency

in (25b) means that VP, which occurs above TP and hosts adjuncts (cf. (8a) or
(18)), has to disappear together with AgreeP. I propose that this result can be
obtained in terms of an analysis of AgreeP as a ‘proxy category’ (cf. Nard and
Reuveret 1997), i.e. a category which has no features of its own but is created
in the course of a derivation for the purposes of feature checking. More pre-
cisely, I propose that VP in (8a) or (18) is a proxy category which is created for
AgreeP checking but which can be occupied ‘parasitically’ by an adjunct due to the
lack of intrinsic features of proxy categories. Hence, once no AgreeP checking is
necessary, no proxy categories above TP get created, and VP therefore disappears
together with AgreeP (cf. Haegeri 1999, chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion
of this point).

5.5. Summary

In this chapter, I have considered the status of Old English and Middle English
with respect to a word-order pattern which gives rise to considerable variation
among the Modern Germanic V2 languages, i.e. the occurrence of adjuncts
between a fronted finite verb and a subject (‘XP-subject’). I showed that Old
English and southern Early Middle English allows ‘XP-subject’ orders regardless
of the position to which the finite verb moves. The northern dialect of Middle
English, however, seems to be more restrictive in this respect, and ‘XP-subject’
orders cannot be found in this dialect. This dialect variation coincides with a
dialect variation identified by Kroch and Taylor (1997) with respect to the syntax
of V2.

I have argued that the data related to V-subject (non-)adjacency provide
evidence for several theoretical issues related to the analysis of Old English and
to the general structural analysis of adjuncts in pre-subject position. First,
I argued that the absence of ‘XP-subject’ orders with pronominal subjects can be
used as an argument in favor of analyzing topics as occupying a position in
the CP domain in Old English rather than a position in the inflectional domain,
as has been sometimes been proposed for symmetric V2 languages such as Icelandic
or Yiddish. And secondly, on the basis of the dialect variation in Middle English,
I proposed that the projection below CP in Old English and southern Early
Middle English should be identified as AgreeP, because such a clause structure
allows us to relate the peculiar syntactic properties of the northern dialect of
Middle English directly to the impoverished agreement morphology in this
dialect. Finally, the Old English data also provided evidence for the analysis
of pre-subject adjuncts as occupying a specifier position of an independent
projection, and I showed that this type of evidence can only be obtained from Old
English but not from the Modern Germanic languages. Hence, a comparative study
of V-subject (non-)adjacency in the history of English not only provides evidence
for the analysis of Old English, but also contributes to a better understanding of
a more general word-order phenomenon found in the Germanic languages.