

OBJECT MOVEMENT AND VERB MOVEMENT IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

ABSTRACT. This paper presents the evidence for a rule of object shift in Middle and Early Modern English, and shows what the consequences of the existence of this rule are for (a) the English pronominal system, (b) the analysis of Scandinavian object shift, (c) the historical development of English. In Section 1 we present the basic facts about Scandinavian object shift, drawing on Holmberg (1986, 1991) and Vikner (1989, 1994). We sketch an analysis of this phenomenon which treats object shift as A-movement of the pronoun. This approach makes the right connection between object shift and verb movement in terms of the theory of locality in Chomsky (1993). Section 2 discusses Early Modern English and shows that, *modulo* independent differences concerning verb movement, object shift here exactly parallels MSc. Section 3 gives a more detailed version of the analysis. Here we also give several arguments against a head-movement approach to object shift.

0. INTRODUCTION

This paper provides evidence that an earlier stage of English had a rule 'object shift', similar to that found in the Mainland Scandinavian (MSc) languages. The evidence of object shift in English sheds light on the nature of object shift in general and provides a new perspective on the well-known loss of overt verb movement in the history of English.

We begin by illustrating the phenomenon of object shift from Swedish and Danish, drawing on the important work by Holmberg (1986, 1991) and Vikner (1989, 1994). In our discussion of MSc, we underline the central fact about object shift: the object moves just when the verb moves. This is section 1.

Having illustrated object shift in MSc, we turn in section 2 to the English data. What we show is that Early Modern English (ENE) of the 16th century had object shift of a type very similar to that found in MSc, in particular in that the connection between object movement and verb-movement is attested. The ENE facts are thus amenable to analysis parallel to that of MSc. Similarly, the loss of object shift since ENE can be naturally connected to the loss of overt verb-movement, and we can thus explain the absence of shifted objects in NE in terms of the absence of overt verb-movement.

Section 3 elaborates on the analysis, showing how a small extension of Chomsky's (1993) system of feature-checking, head-movement and locality can provide a straightforward account of object shift in MSc and ENE, and of the diachronic development of English. The analysis also extends, at least in part, to Icelandic and Faroese.

We are led to two main conclusions on the basis of the observation that

object shift is attested in English for as long as verb-movement is. First, we see that the English pronoun system is essentially parallel to that of the MSc languages. In particular, English pronouns are not cross-linguistically unusual in any sense. Their cross-linguistically unusual syntax derives from the fact that, in the absence of overt verb-movement, they never (or almost never) occupy a 'special' syntactic position. Similarly, the English pronouns have not changed since ENE; what has changed in English is AgrS, in that overt verb-movement is no longer possible (for main verbs).

1. OBJECT SHIFT IN MAINLAND SCANDINAVIAN

Holmberg (1986, 1989, 1991) and Vikner (1989, 1994) discuss the phenomenon of object-shift in MSc. In these languages, unstressed pronominal objects are obligatorily moved leftward out of VP if the main verb moves out of VP (here and throughout, object pronouns are assumed to be unstressed). Taking the negative adverb *ikke* to be at the left margin of VP (whatever its precise position may be), the following Danish examples illustrate:

- (1) a. Hvorfor læste studenterne ikke [t artiklen]?
 Why read the-students not the-articles?
 b.*Hvorfor læste studenterne artiklen ikke [t t]?
 Why read the-students the-articles not?
 'Why didn't the students read the articles?'
- (2) a.*Hvorfor læste studenterne ikke [t den]?
 Why read the-students not it?
 b. Hvorfor læste studenterne den ikke [t t]?
 Why read the-students it not?
 'Why didn't the students read it?'

In all these examples the inflected verb has moved to C, as is usual in both declarative and interrogative main clauses in MSc since these are V2 languages (see Vikner to appear, ch. 2)). In (1), the non-pronominal direct object DP *artiklen* cannot be moved out of VP, as the ungrammaticality of (1b) shows. In (2), we observe the converse behaviour of the pronominal object: where the verb leaves VP, so must the object pronoun. (2a) is ungrammatical because the object has remained in VP while the verb has moved out of VP.

In (2b), the object pronoun, although it has left VP, has not 'followed' the verb to C. This is evident from the relative positions of the object pronoun and the subject DP here. There is no reason to say that the subject