



**Investigating the instability of the verb second phenomenon in
English: A multifactorial approach to language change**

Sophie Whittle

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School of English

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Declaration

I, the author, confirm that this thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Abstract

This thesis explores the instability of the ‘verb second’ (V2) phenomenon in historical English texts, from a multifactorial perspective that considers the nuances of change in its structure and use over time. It analyses the interaction of a number of grammatical, discourse-related, and sociohistorical factors and their impact on the use of V2 word order from a parsed corpus-based lens, and a case study of Geoffrey Chaucer’s prose works. While there has been a wealth of scholarship that has contributed heavily to the understanding of how and why the V2 phenomenon declined in frequency across the history of English, specific examination of cases of V2 within their textual and non-textual environments is required, particularly related to the texts’ type, dialect, and rhetoric/argumentation in late medieval English.

To understand why language users select varying types of verb-movement, we must appeal to the interaction between interfaces of linguistic domains (syntax, morphology, and information structure), the sociohistorical context of the time (dialect variation and language contact), as well as the culture of textual practices in the medieval period (provenance, author, and text-type). I highlight this interaction via three analysis chapters. Chapter 3 shows how cases of V2 that counter the general trend in Old English can be explained by the presence or absence of syntactic and information-structural pressures in specific sentences. Chapter 4 investigates these unexpected patterns of V2 further, by exploring the interaction of grammatical (i.e. type of subject, verb and initial constituent) and sociohistorical variables (i.e. dialect and provenance of the text) in late medieval English, a period of instability for the phenomenon. It also estimates the extent of Norse influence on V2 syntax following language contact with English, narrowing down the analysis to specific syntactic contexts. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a case study on the frequent use of V2 in Chaucerian prose works with different types of discourse, by considering the referential status of the sentence, as well as the origin of the texts and their author. These lines of inquiry combine to provide a refined picture of the stability of V2 usage in medieval England, and can be adapted to explain why syntactic change begins cross-linguistically.

Keywords: Chaucer, dialect variation, discourse relations, historical syntax, information structure, language change, language contact, medieval studies, Middle English, Old English, verb second, text-type

To Ruby, a furry friend who crossed the Rainbow
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List of abbreviations

Adj	Adjective
AdjP	Adjective Phrase
Adv	Adverb
AdvP	Adverb Phrase
Agr	Agreement
AgrP	Agreement Phrase
Astrolabe	A Treatise on the Astrolabe
C	Complementizer
CD	Communicative Dynamism
Comp	Complementizer
ContrP	Contrastive Phrase
CP	Complementizer Phrase
CP-V2	Verb-movement to C
D	Determiner
DP	Determiner Phrase
EME	Early Middle English
EModE	Early Modern English
EPP	Extended Projection Principle
Equatorie	The Equatorie of the Planetis
F	Functional head
FamP	Familiarity Phrase
FinP	Finiteness Phrase
FocP	Focus Phrase
ForceP	Force Phrase
FP	Functional Phrase
FrameP	Frame-setting Phrase
I	Inflection
Infl	Inflection
IP	Inflectional Phrase
IP-V2	Verb-movement to I
IS	Information structure
ISWOC	Information Structure and Word Order Change in Germanic and Romance Languages
KTR	Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (2000)
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LME	Late Middle English
M1	Time period c.1150-1250
M2	Time period c.1250-1350
M3	Time period c.1350-1420
M4	Time period c.1420-1500
ME	Middle English
Melibee	The Tale of Melibee
MMM	Maximise Minimal Means
N	Noun

NegP	Negation Phrase
NP	Noun Phrase
OE	Old English
OF	Old French
OHG	Old High German
ON	Old Norse
OV	Object-Verb
P	Preposition
ParsT	The Parson's Tale
PCEEC	The Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence
PDE	Present-Day English
PIC	Phase Impenetrability Condition
PLAEME	A Parsed Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English
PLD	Primary Linguistic Data
PP	Prepositional Phrase
PPCHE	Penn Parsed Corpora of Historical English
PPCME2	The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English, edition 2
pro	Expletive pro
PROIEL	Pragmatic Resources in Old Indo-European Languages
RAH	Rich Agreement Hypothesis
SDRT	Segmented Discourse Representation Theory
ShiftP	Shift Phrase
SOV	Subject-Object-Verb
SVO	Subject-Verb-Object
T	Tense
TP	Tense Phrase
TR	Trochaic Requirement
UG	Universal Grammar
v	Little verb
V	Verb
V1	Verb first
V2	Verb second
V3	Verb third
VO	Verb-Object
vP	Little verb phrase
VP	Verb Phrase
XP	Any type of phrase
XSV	XP-Subject-Verb
XVS	XP-Verb-Subject
YCOE	The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose

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Chapter 1:

An introduction to the study of English verb second

1.1. Evidencing language change

Language change is inevitable, yet evidencing and explaining the evolution of languages is a challenging feat, one in which scholars have previously taken sides—is it the *I-language*, the internal underlying grammar, or the *E-language*, the external linguistic pressures shared by a single community, that drives language change (Chomsky 1986)? Yang (2000), in an account demonstrating how courses of language acquisition might lead to change, highlights the interplay of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ forces involved in the process; an interaction which, in recent years, has unravelled as an explanation for documented changes occurring cross-linguistically. This thesis investigates the many forces that interacted to explain the use and frequency of the verb second (V2) phenomenon in the history of English, which, in the present-day, has largely ceased to exist. Specifically, it is an investigation into how speakers and writers chose between a range of options when producing the verb second phenomenon during the medieval English period, and why the use of the different V2 options changed over time, across varying syntactic and sociohistorical contexts.

Broadly speaking, this study involves an examination at the interface of morphosyntax and information structure; processes occurring at the internal level which arise from the individual English speaker or writer. It also involves an exploration of the contextual changes occurring in late medieval England, such as dialect and language contact, the demand for texts of different types, and the specific authorial choices made when structuring an argument or narrative. I demonstrate that understanding the reasons behind the evolving use of V2 in English (and beyond) requires nuanced consideration of these interfaces. There are three ways in which I investigate how and why speakers or writers varied in their use of the V2 phenomenon. First, I argue that an investigation of the interplay of syntactic and information structural factors is required to understand why V2 was lost in specific environments, and determine precisely when and where the tendency to place given before new information affected the use of the V2 structure from as early as Old English (Chapter 3). Second, I propose that multiple syntactic and sociohistorical

variables affected the use of V2 in Middle English, represented by variation across V2 sentences with different subjects, verbs, and initial constituents, as well as within different dialects. Here, I show that only very specific environments of V2 could have been affected by English-Norse contact. Lastly, I highlight how each of these factors (related to the combined effect of syntax and information structure, discourse relations, and dialect) interacted to explain why late medieval authors varied in their use of V2 across their own texts, and why they used V2 at different rates to other authors at this time. Thus, this thesis is an in-depth survey of the precise nature of change occurring across a range of verb second contexts in English, both syntactically and sociohistorically.

1.1.1. Research questions

The three sets of research questions I address in this thesis are as follows:

- 1) What can counterexamples to the general trend of V2 and V3 order in Old English tell us about the types of verb-movement occurring at this time? Do these movement patterns rely on syntactic and information-structural processes, or a combination of both?
- 2) What are the syntactic and sociohistorical environments that most reflect instability of V2 in Middle English, and how is this period of high variation linked to English-Norse language contact?
- 3) How does the use of V2 differ in Geoffrey Chaucer's prose works? Are the type of text and the type of rhetoric present within the text important factors for explaining variation in the use of V2 in Middle English?

Research question 1) relates to an examination of the counterexamples to the general tendencies of V2 beginning in Old English. The general patterning of V2 is said to have occurred due to information-structural pressures—the tendency for given and/or familiar information to be placed before new and/or focused or emphasised information. When pronominal and/or given subjects occurred preverbally in Old English, they did so in order to be as close as possible to their antecedent or referent in the preceding discourse. The verb in this case therefore acted as a barrier between the given information, expressed by the initial constituent and given subject, and the new or focused/emphasised information, expressed by the object (if there was one) or following adjuncts. However,

sometimes this information-structural-syntactic link did not transpire, and the verb may or may not have moved to higher structural positions based on whether the tendencies of information structure were present. It is these interesting counterexamples, collected from a parsed corpus of Old English prose (YCOE), that I investigate, to determine why they might occur, but also to shed further light on the overall hierarchical structure of English V2, particularly the positioning of the verb. The investigation of these counterexamples, and subsequent proposal of a split CP structure to accommodate these examples, foreshadows the instability of V2 in the Middle English period. I therefore argue that the verb-movement patterns noticeable in ME have their origins in earlier English.

Transitioning into the Middle English period, research question 2) then analyses the precise impact of different sentential and sociohistorical variables across the study of English V2. This period represents when much of the variability and instability of V2 occurred, and this question provides an opportunity to explore whether Norse, following both language and dialect contact, affected V2 in specific ways (e.g. in sentences with different types of subject, verb and/or initial constituent). I use statistical tests to predict whether different combinations of variables led to the appearance of V2 over V3 word order at different periods of time in ME, using data from a parsed corpus of Middle English prose. I then map which dialectal texts were adopting V2 at particularly high rates, to further track which sociohistorical contexts were at the centre of variation. Prior accounts rarely use a multivariate analysis to explain change in the use of V2 occurred in English, and here I show why a nuanced exploration of several factors is necessary to illustrate the trajectory of the phenomenon in medieval English.

From this quantitative analysis of ME texts, I select Geoffrey Chaucer's prose works for examination in research question 3), which allows for an investigation into how different types of text, with different types of argumentation and styles of discourse referencing, impact the use of V2. I explore three texts that employ V2 for varying types of rhetorical effect: the astronomical handbook *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, the morally didactic and sermon-like text *The Parson's Tale*, and the morally didactic apologue of *The Tale of Melibee*. There are few case studies that investigate factors at the level of text-type, often appealing to the type of audience to explain why V2 varied across different texts. However, I argue that it is the intricate makeup of the text's type – involving information-structural and discourse-related factors – which drove the use of V2 within and across

individual authors. It is a timely case study highlighting how V2 structure might be used to varying extents across different discourses, and whether or not these types of discourse rely on information-structural tendencies. The study of individual Middle English texts, overall, reflects variation in use of V2 in the late medieval period, but the existence of different types of text at this point also contributes to variation in V2 usage within the written mode.

These three avenues of study target different issues arising from the analysis of English V2, as well as language change more generally. Analysing language change at these interfaces shows how we, as historical linguists, can make the best use of the written data available to evidence why the English language exists the way it does today, and to predict future usage of syntactic phenomena. In particular, analysis of the language of historical literature gives us further insight into the use of specific structures for one of the main outputs of entertainment and education during the medieval period, and highlights potential reasonings behind writers' use of particular discourses.

1.2. The verb second (V2) phenomenon of historical Englishes

Verb second, or V2 for short, occurs when the verb appears in the second position of the sentence, following one constituent in initial position. If the initial constituent is not a subject, the subject and verb are inverted (subject-verb inversion); a structure which is the focus of this thesis. In sentences with subject-verb inversion, the verb moves to the highest possible domain, the Complementizer Phrase (CP), which can also be referred to as V-to-C movement.¹ I have included two examples of V2 below, one in Old English (OE) and the other in Middle English (ME):

(1)

- a. [Da] **geswutelode** *God hu miccle lufe he hæfde. and hæfð to us*
[then] **manifested** *God how much love he had and has for us*
'Then God manifested how much love he had, and has, for us'

(Ælfric's Catholic Homilies II, 1: 3.23.16, YCOE)

¹ Although, see Section 1.5.1 where I discuss accounts of English V2 that suggest the verb moves to the Inflectional Phrase (IP) in some environments.

- b. [With herte] **takes** false crystyn men it in vayne
 [with heart] **takes** false Christian men it in vain
 ‘With heart, false Christian men take it in vain’

(Richard Rolle’s Prose Treatises, 11.300, PPCME2)

In (1a-b), the verbs *geswutelode* ‘manifested’ and *takes* occur in the second position of the sentence after the use of a non-subject initial constituent, in these cases, the adverb *ða* ‘then’ and the prepositional phrase *with herte* ‘with heart’. Note that the subjects *God* and *false crystyn men* ‘false Christian men’ occur after the verb.

This thesis focuses on the (in)stability in use of the verb second (V2) phenomenon in English, a verb-movement process often differing in its syntactic behaviour from past and present Germanic languages. English V2 has often been referred to as a ‘constraint’ or a ‘rule’, implying that a) the phenomenon is used systematically in all sentences; b) that it is consistently constrained by one or more particular factors, or c) that failure of it to occur would result in ungrammaticality of the structure. I draw attention to prior uses of ‘constraint’ and ‘rule’ here, as the V2 phenomenon of Old and Middle English was not consistently applied in all contexts.² Haeberli refers to verb second in the history of English as “reminiscent of languages characterized by the V2 property”, and that “the syntax of inversion in OE and EME does not fully correspond to that found in genuine V2 languages” (2010: 144). English V2 cannot be considered ‘genuine V2’ for two main reasons: in sentences introduced by objects, PPs, and most adjuncts (e.g. adverbs or adjectives), nominal (or new and focused) subjects generally occurred after the verb, while pronominal (or given and familiar) subjects preceded it; and, beyond this general tendency, V2 sometimes did not occur, resulting in verb third (V3) word order, with the subject preceding the verb. On the contrary, Germanic languages such as Old Norse either had verb first (V1) or V2 word order, and cases where the subject and verb were not inverted (V3) were rare. I also reference the combined pressure of syntax and information structure on the use of verb second throughout the history of English. In sentences introduced by a constituent

² I would like to thank and acknowledge an attendee of a research seminar I led who asked whether V2 might have existed at all in English. This question certainly had me thinking about how the verb in the second position of the sentence has been documented for medieval English. I therefore treat the V2 phenomenon throughout as just that – a phenomenon – one which we know very little about pre-Old English, and whether it existed in a more stable state. There are certainly cases where the verb is ambiguously in second position in medieval English sentences, due to the ‘late subject’ constraint placing subjects at the very end, which I discuss in more detail later on.

affected by information-structural factors, such as a focused or anaphoric initial constituent, the verb followed given/familiar subjects, and preceded new/focused subjects. This ordering of subject and verb was driven by a tendency for given information (perhaps denoted by the initial constituent and the subject) to be placed before new information exhibited in the rest of the sentence, with both types of information separated by the finite verb. Throughout, I agree with approaches which theorise a mapping of these linguistic levels onto one another for Old English V2. I also discuss the incorporation of information structure into the underlying representation of the V2 phenomenon in English, and the consequences of the weakening link between syntax and information structure, in more detail from Section 1.5.2 onwards.

I focus on the (in)stability of V2, as opposed to solely its decline in frequency, for two main reasons.³ First, high variation, and therefore instability in the use of a syntactic phenomenon, creates the ultimate conditions for change to occur. If a phenomenon such as V2 is used consistently in one context, such as in a specific dialect, or alongside one specific type of subject or verb, and not at all in another context, the phenomenon is showing signs of decay. Second, as noted in the prior section, there were signs in Old English that V2 was being used inconsistently, with the (often unexplained) lack of subject-verb inversion in contexts that tended to give rise to V2. In addition to increased V3 word order, some V2 contexts with pronominal subjects (which generally did not occur in OE) increased in frequency in the Middle English period, especially in Northern and East Midlands texts. It is this seemingly sudden change in the later medieval periods that I delve into in particular, especially as the increase in use of V2 has often been associated with English-Norse language contact due to the near-categorical use of V2 in Old Norse (Kroch & Taylor 1994, 1997; Kroch Taylor & Ringe 2000). I argue that the increased use of V2 is reflective of the instability of the phenomenon in the late medieval period, despite the high frequency to which the change in V2 has been reported as an overall decline. I also argue that it is driven

³ I refer to (in)stability, and stable/unstable rates of V2, frequently in Chapter 4, where I explain how these are identified and discussed in the context of the Middle English period. Generally, I show that high variation in the use of V2 throughout the history of English is the primary factor which led to its overall decline, but it also led to a temporary increase in the usage of the phenomenon, especially in the late medieval period. In multiple dialects of the Middle English period, the use of V2 was used inconsistently (e.g. broadly, there was a high usage of V2 in the North and East Midlands, and lower usage in the West Midlands and the South). Thus, V2 was, across the entirety of dialects, declining in terms of its systematicity, compared to Old English when it was affected by tendencies of information structure to place given before new information. One of the main challenges is identifying where, how, and why variation began for the phenomenon, which then led to change in the consistency of its application across a range of syntactic and sociohistorical contexts.

partly by English-Norse language contact following evidence of variation across Middle English dialects, but also by factors related to the weakening link between syntax and information structure, and text-type. This increased V2 usage, and overall instability of the phenomenon, might be reflected in individual authors' own usage, either through their own upbringing in Norse-settled areas, or due to the specific discourse relations present within the text affecting its V2 syntax.

To explain why the instability in use of V2 led to change, I adopt a generative approach to syntactic structure, specifically that of the minimalist program (Chomsky 1995). Looking ahead to the key data findings presented in Chapters 3-5, while they may be compatible with non-generative approaches to syntax, I present arguments that they are best captured in a generative model which assumes a hierarchical structure. This minimalist approach helps to explain why high variation and change occurs in individual speakers/writers—in this case, the inconsistency to which V2 structure was used in the history of English. Intrapersonal variation occurs when the underlying grammar does not hold a one-to-one semantic relationship with a surface form, because there are uninterpretable features that do not have an impact on the meaning of the sentence (see Adger's 2006 theory of 'Combinatorial Variability'). The coexistence of multiple surface forms (for example, the existence of both V2 and V3 word order) presents a situation of high variability that might then lead to change.

There is a wealth of prior research analysing the English verb second phenomenon, and I wish to acknowledge the contributions that they have provided, and continue to provide, to the field. We now know more about how and why the frequency of V2 may have declined, from the earliest data we have access to, Old English, to the present-day. Those who have contributed to the creation of, and worked with, parsed corpora of historical English have uncovered a wide range of explanations for changes to the use of V2, including potential morphological influences (i.e. changes to inflectional/pronominal/demonstrative paradigms), dialectal influences (i.e. Northern and Southern differences in V2 usage), and information-structural influences (i.e. the weakening link between information structure and syntax and the pressure this change placed on the position of the verb). The work I conduct complements this research and examines the precise changes in the nature of V2, across specific dialects, text-types, and sentences, that may have led to some of these wider changes. I detail much of the research

that has been carried out in the current chapter, and position my own research within this prior work.

1.2.1. The V2 of present-day English

(2)

- a. [Which pictures of herself] **will** Mary buy?
- b. [At none of her parties] **did** Kim actually show up.

(Adapted from Sailor 2020: 127)

In present-day English, remnants of V2 with initial non-subject constituents appear in contexts of subject-auxiliary inversion, such as *wh*-questions (2a) and negative declaratives (2b). In these cases, T-to-C movement occurs in sentences introduced by a *wh*-word/phrase and a phrase with negation in it (Sailor 2020: 128).⁴ (2a-b) show this specific type of movement of the auxiliary, which demonstrates the lack of lexical verb-movement to C in the present-day. In (2a), the initial *wh*-phrase ‘which pictures of herself’ occurs alongside the modal ‘will’ in second position.⁵ In (2b), the initial PP includes the negative quantifier ‘none’, also occurring alongside the past-tense periphrastic ‘did’ in second position. As shown, both cases include either a modal or an auxiliary verb, and rarely do lexical verbs, hosting semantic content, move to second position.

Cruschina and Sailor (2022) refer to the distinction between ‘partial’ and ‘residual’ verb second. The term ‘partial V2’ might reflect the restricted use of V2 in modern English, in that non-declarative, T-to-C auxiliary movement occurs rather than lexical verb-movement. Alternatively, ‘residual V2’ may reflect situations whereby a vestige of the use of V2 of earlier historical periods might be represented in the language of analysis today, which no longer appears to have its earlier formal V2 properties. One example they provide is the subject-verb inversion occurring alongside ‘Resumptive or Anaphoric Preposing’ in Italian, which has been considered a vestige of a medieval V2 system as it is now limited

⁴ *Wh*-words and negative adverbs have a *WH*- or *NEG*-operator; see Section 1.4 where I detail this movement operation and/or Rizzi (1990) and Haegeman and Zanuttini (1991).

⁵ Note that modal verbs such as ‘will’ are Tense heads in present-day English sentences, and therefore these sentences are primarily known as subject-auxiliary inversion.

to specific stylistic situations of formal or high registers. They ask the question as to whether residual V2 is “merely the superficial shape of V2 that has been preserved, with some other (non-V2) syntax responsible for producing it in the present-day languages” in cases where V2 is used in very specific circumstances (Cruschina and Sailor 2022: 7).

While the intention of the current project is not to delve into the status of ‘V2’ in modern English, the discussion in Cruschina and Sailor (2022) begs the question as to whether there are vestiges of earlier V2 patterns existing in the present-day. They state that one of the most important issues to tease apart is “the surface properties we often rely on as V2 diagnostics from the underlying syntax that generates them” (Cruschina and Sailor 2022: 8), because they can reveal potential extensions of earlier V2 patterns. They show that there is recent evidence by Sailor (2020) for the extension of the use of V2 in some British and Irish dialects, who describes the situation where an unpronounced initial negative element, followed by subject-verb inversion involving a pre-predicate taboo element, is used:

It's St. Patrick's Day tomorrow, but [Ø]_{NEG.OP} **will** I fuck be wearing anything green.

= I definitely won't be wearing anything green.

(Sailor 2020, cited by Cruschina and Sailor 2022: 19)

What I show in this thesis is that there is an early, frequent, auxiliary V2 pattern in Middle English which might have led to the use of auxiliaries in second position in English today. The situation of English contact with Norse, as well as the grammaticalisation of verbs (see upcoming work referred to in van Kemenade 2022), may have led to the English subject-auxiliary inversion pattern exhibited today, which is a vestige of the earlier auxiliary pattern and is used in specific contexts (such as in negative emphatic constructions, interrogatives, and for literary/stylistic purposes).

1.3. The interfaces present within the process of syntactic change

One question and problem for language change, which is partly reflected by the challenges I pose here, is whether syntactic change exists as an individual process. Longobardi's (2001) Inertia principle is based around the premise that syntactic change does not occur

on its own accord: “syntactic change should not arise, unless it can be shown to be *caused*” (2001: 278, cited in Roberts 2022: 348). Biberauer and Walkden’s (2015) introductory chapter to their edited collection, *Syntax Over Time: Lexical, Morphological, and Information-Structural Interactions*, emphasises the importance of the interface between syntactic processes and other linguistic domains. They refer especially to the cartography of the left-periphery of the sentence (Rizzi 1997), which affects main clause V2 syntax. I complement approaches that introduce information-structural pressures into the generative syntactic model. These models show how underlying structural processes, based on syntax and discourse, affect one another in a bidirectional manner. Initially, approaches began by considering how the context of language use – pragmatics – could be used to explain the frequency of V2 in Old English (see Bech 2001). Multiple approaches have now arisen that show how the trajectory of V2 into Middle English was affected by the weakening link between information structure and syntax, especially how the loss of the multifunctional initial constituent may have affected the V2 phenomenon and vice versa (see Los 2009, 2012; Los and Dreschler 2012; Los et al. 2023; Hinterhölzl 2009; Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade 2012; Bech 2014, among others). I provide more detail on this interaction in Sections 1.5.2 and 1.6.3, as well as in the analysis chapters.

An investigation of the sociohistorical context can also highlight the interactions between different linguistic domains, explaining how and why change is diffused within and between communities. As Moore (2012: 121-122) acknowledges, “the need to more fully contextualise language internal evidence has driven some historical scholars to develop innovative approaches which permit them to more fully reconstruct a sociolinguistic picture of the past”, thus “expos[ing] ‘anomalies’ rather than suppress[ing] them”. Furthermore, Walkden (2021b: 21) argues that ‘mechanisms’ of language change are “epiphenomenal [...] after-the-fact descriptions of particular events, or types of events”. He argues that “population-level events and properties should be derived from a specification of the properties of individuals and the ways in which they relate and interact with one another” (2021b: 21). For instance, the use of the term ‘reanalysis’ – and how it might shape frequencies of use of a syntactic feature – should be accompanied by explanations as to why language changed within individuals or between communities, thus bringing in insights from language acquisition and historical sociolinguistics. Linguistic change necessarily involves people, i.e. how they navigate the social and political events of the time, and how this amalgamation of factors impacts their syntactic usage. For the

study of the English V2 phenomenon, I therefore ensure to delve into the specific details of use across different contexts – the dialectal, textual, and sociohistorical nuances wherein linguistic change occurs – to gather a fuller picture of why the V2 phenomenon was driven to be used inconsistently across a range of environments, and to highlight interaction between several potential (socio)linguistic domains.

1.4. The syntax of verb-movement in verb second structures

Recall that non-subject-initial verb second, or V2, occurs when the verb moves to the second position of the clause, which results in the inversion on the surface of the subject and verb (also known as ‘subject-verb inversion’). This verb-movement occurs in tandem with the fronting of a constituent to the left-periphery of the clause. Non-subject-initial V2 is present in most modern-day Germanic languages (other than English), such as German, Dutch, Mainland Scandinavian (Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish), Icelandic, Yiddish, Faroese, Afrikaans, and languages from a range of families such as Estonian (Finno-Ugric), Breton (Celtic), Sorbian (Slavic), Kashmiri (Indo-Aryan), and some Rhaetoromance varieties (see Holmberg 2015: 343 for a detailed summary of these V2 languages). Examples of verb second in modern-day Swedish are provided below:

(3)

- a. [*Huggormar*] **har** jag ärligt talat aldrig sett i den här skogen
[adders] have I honestly speaking never seen in this here forest
- b. [*I den här skogen*] **har** jag ärligt talat aldrig sett huggormar
[in this here forest] have I honestly speaking never seen adders

(Adapted from Holmberg 2015: 343)

In (3a-b), the auxiliary verb *har* ‘have’ occurs in the second position of the sentence, regardless of the initial constituent. In the above examples, non-subject constituents are fronted (a direct object, *huggormar* ‘adders’ and a prepositional phrase *i den här skogen* ‘in this here forest’). The two movement processes, and how they changed, are therefore the primary focus of the current project.

In modern-day Germanic languages, a subject can be fronted, and the sentence is often considered V2 as a result, with the verb often having moved from an underlying verb-final position. However, it is unclear whether SVO sentences could be considered V2 in all languages, especially if the subject is unmarked and does not have a special information-structural status attached to it like in English. As Holmberg (2015: 363-364) states, some scholars suggest the subject does not move to the leftmost position of the sentence (the Complementizer Phrase, CP) when the subject precedes the verb and object, and thus the sentence would not be considered V2. Furthermore, XVS constructions, where X refers to a non-subject constituent, declined in favour of XSV (or V3) structures in Middle English, and are of importance to the current project. I do not analyse SVO orders as it is unclear as to whether SVO word order is strictly V2 in OE (because the verb may not have moved as high as the CP). SVO also remains high in frequency in present-day English, and I therefore do not analyse this word order in the history of English.

The seminal analysis of verb-movement within V2 clauses comes from den Besten (1983), who proposed that the finite verb moves to the Complementizer head (C), with one constituent moving to Spec, CP. In languages where V2 is driven by this verb-movement to C, there is an asymmetry of the appearance of V2 in main and embedded clauses.⁶ In embedded clauses, movement of the verb to C is blocked by a base-generated complementizer. Languages such as Scandinavian (including Danish, Swedish, Norwegian), Modern German, Modern Dutch, and Old French are considered to have verb-movement to C (Hulk and van Kemenade 1995: 229). As Walkden (2012: 88) outlines, with reference to Roberts (2010), it is the V-feature in C that triggers the verb to be spelled-out in C.⁷ Furthermore, the CP has an Edge Feature (Roberts 2010: 168-169), which prompts constituents to move to the edge of a syntactic phase, in Spec, CP, before they are phonetically realised. Phase domains consist of CPs or vPs, with the complements of the heads within these domains shipped off to the Phonetic Form (PF), also known as the ‘Phase Impenetrability Condition’, or PIC (Chomsky 1995). Thus, constituents are triggered to move to the left-periphery before they form part of the PIC, a motivation for their

⁶ It has also been suggested that V2 can occur symmetrically, i.e. in both main and embedded clauses, such as in Icelandic, Yiddish, and some dialects of Faroese (Holmberg 2015: 356).

⁷ Discussion of theories on verb-movement to different heads within C, and the articulation of the left-periphery, is detail that goes beyond the scope of the thesis. However, I direct the reader to Walkden’s (2017: 60-65) approach capturing the left-periphery of modern Germanic languages generally, and more specifically, the V3 word orders present in certain Germanic vernaculars, which may be of interest.

movement. Not only can they be syntactically triggered, in the case of *wh*-questions and negation when this movement of the constituent is obligatory, but also information-structurally, for instance, for focus and emphasis or anaphoricity.

A schematic of the highest portion of a German main clause with V2, illustrating the finite verb that has moved to C and the topicalised phrase to Spec, CP, is provided in Figure 1.

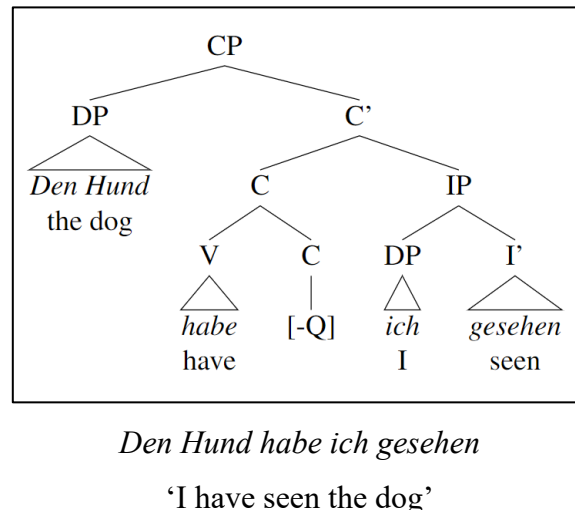


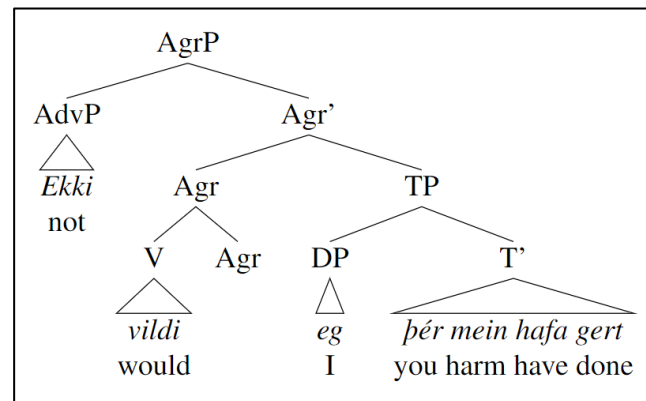
Figure 1: A tree structure showing the highest portion of a German main clause with V2 (adapted from Walkden 2012: 88).

Walkden's analysis for the raising of the object *den Hund* 'the dog' to the highest phrase in CP is triggered by the Edge Feature, occurring alongside movement of the finite auxiliary verb *habe* 'have', to C. Both the initial phrase and the verb originated in VP (not pictured), and the lexical verb occurs string-finally.⁸

There are also proposals that suggest verb-movement occurred to I in specific languages, based on the apparent symmetry of V2 in main and embedded clauses (e.g. Pintzuk 1993, 1999 for Old English, Rögnvaldsson 1996 for historical Icelandic, and Santorini 1989, 1992, 1993 for historical Yiddish). These are often named 'IP-V2' languages, and verb-movement to I occurs alongside movement of the initial XP to the specifier position of IP, rather than the CP as in CP-V2 languages (Hulk and van Kemenade

⁸ Unlike German, it is unclear as to whether the lexical verb originated in a medial or final position in Old English, and Pintzuk and Taylor (2006) discuss this variation in word order before the overall loss of OV order in English. This does not necessarily affect discussion of whether verbs moved to C or I.

1995: 229, citing work by Santorini 1989). An example of what V-to-I movement would look like in a main clause in Old Icelandic is provided in Figure 2 below.



Ekki vildi þér mein hafa gert
'I wouldn't want to do you any harm'

Figure 2: A tree structure showing the highest portion of an Old Icelandic main clause with V2 (adapted from Rögnvaldsson 1996: 56).

The tree structure above represents accounts by researchers that analyse verb-movement as occurring to the IP-domain, because of the existence of 'symmetric' V2 in main and embedded clauses in these languages. In Figure 2, different levels of the IP domain (AgrP and TP) have been articulated to show the proposed landing site of the Old Icelandic verb *vildi* 'would' following movement (in Agr within I) and the position of the subject *eg* 'I' after the verb (in this case, Spec, TP). The negative adverb *ekki* 'not' in these accounts is also proposed to have moved to Spec, IP (Spec, AgrP).

However, it is not clear as to whether true symmetry of V2 in main and embedded clauses can exist in a language. Scholars such as Walkden and Booth (2020: 553) have identified that 'raw' embedded V2, categorised by the fronting of a non-subject argument, and a verb in second position taking a complement (a list of which is provided in Walkden and Booth 2020: 539), is rare in languages such as historical Icelandic and Yiddish, occurring at 6% and 2.3% respectively. I readdress whether structures that incorporate verb-movement to C or I can capture the data available in Old English in the following section. This includes insights from other languages in the Germanic family, and whether V2 is attested in both main and embedded clauses in these languages.

1.5. The verb second of Old English

This section focuses on the syntactic structure of V2 sentences in Old English, outlining different theoretical approaches to the verb-movement that derives it, and the role of information structure in driving this verb movement. This understanding of V2 in Old English underpins further discussion in Chapter 3 on deviations from the general and expected patterns of OE V2 and V3 word order, as well as Chapter 4 on the instability of V2 structure in Middle English. I begin by presenting some of the Old English data that is necessary for understanding the range of variation possible in this time period. I then attempt to answer two questions in this discussion: a) what is the most likely landing site of the verb in Old English (the CP- or IP-domain), and b) what is the role of information structure (IS) in positioning discourse referents in V2 sentences? Here I also explore the split CP-domain analysis as an appropriate examination of differences in verb-movement, based on whether movement was influenced by information structure within the left-periphery of the sentence.

The difference in frequency and distribution of V2 depending on the type of subject in Old English has been firmly established. As Pintzuk (1993: 393) reports (along with van Kemenade 1987; Fischer et al. 2000; Haeberli 2000, 2002a, 2002b, among others), there is a difference between the position of pronominal and nominal (full-argument DP/NP) subjects in relation to the finite verb, with “pronominal subjects [...] normally appear[ing] before rather than after the finite verb”. The specific contexts in which pronominal subjects occur after the verb include *wh*-questions, and declarative sentences introduced by negation (e.g. *ne*), as well as a specific set of adverbs, *þa/þonne* ‘then’, *þus* ‘thus’, *nu* ‘now’ and *swa* ‘so’. In all other contexts of fronting, which do not include these constituents, pronominal subjects primarily precede the verb. Alternatively, nominal subjects could vary much more in terms of their position alongside the verb. Specific examples of the differences in distribution of pronominal and nominal subjects alongside the verb are provided in (4a-b).

(4)

- a. [*Þa*] *wæs þæt folc þæs micclan welan ungemetlice brucende* ...
[then] **was** the people the great prosperity excessively partaking ...
‘Then the people were partaking excessively of the great prosperity’

(Orosius, 1.23.3, adapted from Fischer et al. 2000: 106)

- b. [Ne] *sceal he naht unaliefedes don*
 [not] **shall** he nothing unlawful do
 ‘He shall not do anything unlawful’

(Cura Pastoralis, 10.61.14, adapted from Fischer et al. 2000: 106)

The above examples of V2 in Old English are introduced by negation (*ne*) in the case of (4b), and the adverb *þa* ‘then’ in the case of (4a). In generative literature, initial *wh*-words and negation are considered ‘operators’; they are non-arguments that obligatorily move by way of A-bar dependencies (Chomsky 1981).⁹ In literature on historical English V2, scholars such as van Kemenade (1987) and Haeberli (2002a, 2002b) group initial *wh*-words and negation with the small subset of deictic adverbs meaning ‘then’, ‘thus’ and ‘now’. Van Kemenade and Los explain that, while these deictic and temporal adverbs do not form a natural class with *wh*-words and negation, “Old English discourse marking is tied up with morphosyntactic marking to a much larger extent than has so far been realized” (2006: 226). It is therefore understandable as to why verb-movement may have occurred to the highest domain near-categorically in cases with initial deictic adverbs, which aid in the continuation of the text. I refer to their behaviour in driving English V2 in more depth in the upcoming analysis chapters.¹⁰

(5)

- a. [On *twam þingum*] *hæfde God þæs mannes sawle gegodod*
 [with two things] **had** God the man’s soul endowed
 ‘With two things God had endowed man’s soul’

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 1.20.1, adapted from Fischer et al. 2000: 107)

⁹ For instance, see Zanuttini (1997) for consideration of adverbial negation as non-arguments eligible for A-bar movement.

¹⁰ There is some disagreement with studies that group several different deictic adverbs (namely ‘then’, ‘thus’ and ‘now’) to explain how they all drive use of V2 to the same frequent extent, especially in Middle English, despite their individual contributions to the frequency of V2 (see Trips and Fuß 2009; Cichosz 2017). Therefore, in Chapter 4, I analyse V2 sentences with initial ‘then’ separately, and do not group all these adverbs together to explain use of V2 in this context.

- b. [*Be ðæm*] *we* ***magon*** *suiðe swutule oncnawan ðæt...*
 [by that] we **may** very clearly perceive that ...
 ‘By that, we may perceive very clearly that ...’

(Cura Pastoralis, 26.181.16, adapted from Fischer et al. 2000: 107)

The frequency of V2 in OE was exceptionally varied when anything other than interrogative and negative elements, as well as the small subset of discourse-anchoring adverbs, were fronted, and this variation is unlike other Germanic languages at the time (for instance, Old High German). Initial constituents such as objects, PPs, and other types of adverbs usually triggered inversion of the verb and subject if it was a nominal subject, as in (5a) with the subject *God*.¹¹ Alternatively, subject pronouns such as *we* in (5b) remained in a preverbal position. The considerable variation in use of V2 and V3 order with both pronominal and nominal subjects has been explained in terms of morphosyntax, the structure of discourse relations (information structure), and prosody, which is covered in the following sections.

1.5.1. The locus of verb-movement in Old English: Was English a ‘CP-V2’ or ‘IP-V2’ language?

As noted, one of the main areas of discussion for the history of English V2 is where the verb was located following movement to a higher structural position. This point has implications for understanding how V2 changed throughout the course of the medieval period, both with respect to its structure and frequency, but also why these changes occurred. There are several proposals (e.g. Hulk and van Kemenade; van Kemenade 1997) for English as a V2 language with verb-movement to C (CP-V2); a structure characteristic of other Germanic languages too. On the other hand, there are approaches which suggest OE V2 involved verb-movement to both C and I, to be able to account for variation of V2 as shown in (4-5). For instance, Pintzuk (1993: 392) suggests that, in Old English main clauses, “both Infl and Comp are available as landing sites for the verb” since pronominal subjects occurred before the verb, and nominal subjects after. Pintzuk develops this point by stating:

¹¹ However, information-structural pressures should be considered too—see Section 1.5.2.

“The position of the pronominal subject with respect to the verb thus serves as a diagnostic for the landing site of the verb: if the subject is to the left of the verb, then the verb has remained inside IP, in Infl; if the subject is to the right of the verb, then the verb has moved out of IP to Comp.”

(Pintzuk 1993: 393-94)

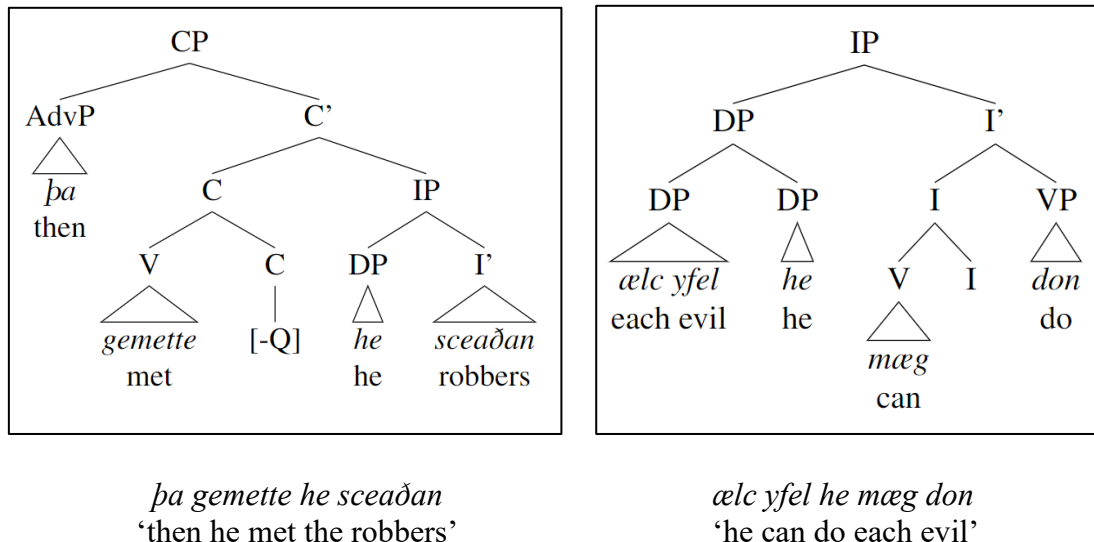


Figure 3: A tree structure to show the difference in verb-movement in Old English as proposed by Pintzuk (1993: 394).

The differences in types of V2 structure in English, depending on whether an ‘operator’-like element was fronted, compared to a constituent such as a direct object (especially those with anaphoric properties), are provided in Figure 3. The leftward movement of the adverb ‘then’ to CP occurs alongside movement of the verb *gemette* ‘met’ to C, while the leftward movement of the direct object *ælc yfel* ‘each evil’ is said to have promoted movement of the verb *mæg* ‘can’ to I. Earlier accounts (van Kemenade 1987; Pintzuk 1991, 1993) also propose that there is ‘cliticisation’ of the subject pronoun *he* to the right of the initial constituent. Clitics are morphologically similar to a word or affix, but are phonologically dependent on a word, its host, by attaching to it.

Following Pintzuk’s (1991, 1993) proposals regarding the existence of V-to-I movement in some contexts of V2 in English, Fischer et al. (2000) and Haeberli (2002a) identified possible positions for the verb, to explain the difference in distribution and frequency of pronominal and nominal subjects in OE V2 structures. For instance,

Eythórsson (1995) proposes a lower position than C for verb-movement in cases with initial anaphors, due to the appearance of the finite verb in a much higher position than the particle, which is instead stranded at the end of the sentence:

(6)

- a. & *on his dæge* **cuom** *micel sciphære* **up**
 and in his day **came** great naval fleet **up**
 ‘and in his day a great naval fleet arrived’

(Example from Eythórsson 1995: 321)

- b. & *þæs ymb III. niht* **ridon** *II. eorlas* **up**
 and afterwards during third night **rode** two men **up**
 ‘and afterwards, during the third night, two men rode inland’

(Example from Eythórsson 1995: 321)

In (6a-b), the verbs of *cuom* ‘came’ and *ridon* ‘rode (by horseback)’ have been separated from the particle *up*, suggesting the verb has moved leftward and out of the VP, where the verb and particle were first merged.

Fischer et al. (2000) propose that the verb moves to a Functional Phrase (FP) within IP, which can be seen by the discrepancy in subject position between pronominal and nominal subjects, evidenced by the placement of negation:

“when the subject is a pronoun, it appears on the left of *na*; when the subject is a noun, it appears on the right of *na*”

(Fischer et al. 2000: 125)

(7)

- a. *Ne het* **he** *us* **na** *leornian heofonas to wyrçenne*
 not ordered **he** *us* not learn heavens to make
 ‘He did not bid us learn to make the heavens’

(Ælfric’s Lives of Saints, Memory of the Saints, 127, adapted from Fischer et al. 2000: 125)

- b. *Nis* **na** **se halga gast** *wuniende on his gecynde ...*
 not is not **the holy ghost** existing in his nature ...
 ‘The Holy Ghost is not existing in his nature ...’

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 22.322.17, adapted from Fischer et al. 2000: 125)

In (7a), the subject pronoun *he* precedes negation, while in (7b), the longer nominal argument *se halga gast* ‘the holy ghost’ follows negation, which complements earlier work by Rissanen (1994, 1998). Haeberli (2002a) also agrees that the structural position of subjects in OE must be disparate, given this negation evidence, and proposes that pronouns occur above Agreement (Agr), while nominal subjects remain below Agr (Haeberli 2002a: 94). Referring specifically to the position of the verb, Haeberli states that the verb moves to Agr, resulting in the distinct subject-type distributions.

This amalgamation of evidence regarding verb and subject positioning suggests there may have been a position between C and VP to which the verb moved depending on the status of the initial constituent. These accounts represent the earliest beginnings of capturing the apparent difference in verb-movement in contexts in which an ‘operator’-like element was fronted, versus initial constituents with some sort of anaphoric or focused content.

However, there is recent criticism of the existence of a symmetric V2, and verb-movement to I, both in OE and cross-linguistically. First, Walkden (2021a: 7) confirms that there is “a robust clause type asymmetry between matrix and embedded clauses in Old English”. Specifically, it is evident that V2 existed in main clauses in OE, but not in embedded clauses. Studies by Salvesen and Walkden (2017) and Walkden and Booth (2020) note that the only instances of embedded V2, as initially described in Pintzuk (1991, 1993), appear to be cases of ‘accidental V2’. For instance, Salvesen and Walkden (2017: 176) explain that cases of surface postverbal subjects in embedded clauses only occur if the verb is unaccusative, impersonal, or a copula, and in passive, presentative, and modal constructions. They refer to work by Salvesen and Bech (2014), who conclude that the verb in these ‘accidental V2’ cases has not moved to the C-domain, even if V2 did appear on the surface. In actuality, the subject is initially merged low in the embedded clause, with the verb remaining within the vP shell, not yielding V2 word order. These instances, as van Kemenade (1997: 334) identifies, “do not assign a thematic role to an external argument”, so instances of surface V2 in these cases can be excluded. Salvesen and Walkden (2017: 179) find that other cases of apparent embedded V2 happen less than 0.3% of the time, meaning their existence is not frequent enough to be able to label OE as a symmetric V2 language. Furthermore, Walkden and Booth (2020: 543) note that there are few instances

that could be considered embedded V2 in the entirety of the YCOE corpus, an example of which is in (8):

- (8) ... *ðæt [hine] tæle ðæs folces gesomnung*
 ... that [him] **blame** the people's assembly
 '... that the people's assembly should blame him'

(Cura Pastoralis, 5.45.2.249, adapted from Walkden and Booth 2020: 543)

Given instances of embedded V2 were extremely rare in OE, Walkden and Booth conclude that OE was not an IP-V2 language at all. In fact, none of the early Germanic languages they analysed (Old English, Old Saxon, Historical Icelandic, Historical Yiddish) exhibited V-to-I movement in all clauses, and could also not be considered symmetric V2 languages. This finding complements work by Wolfe (2015: 149, referenced in Walkden and Booth 2020: 537) who, because of the lack of completely unambiguous instances of V2 in embedded clauses cross-linguistically, states that “the widely-assumed class of truly ‘symmetrical’ V2 languages may not exist at all”. To be able to explain potential disparities in verb-movement within Germanic languages, Walkden and Booth (2020: 533) instead point toward a ‘split CP’ approach. They reference the work of Hrafnbjargarson and Wiklund (2009), who propose movement to the lower Finiteness node within the CP depending on the syntactic environment, and Vikner (2017), who advocates for a cP domain above CP, with verb-movement occurring to the lower C position in some cases.

Finally, independent evidence from Biberauer (e.g. 2002, 2017) and Biberauer and Richards (2006) regarding the V2 of Afrikaans suggests that the language cannot be regarded as either an asymmetric or symmetric V2 language, because it has optional V2 in embedded clauses. This phenomenon is demonstrated in the below Afrikaans sentence:

- (9) *Sien hoe sy haar kop skuins draai om te hoor hoe skinder 'n trossie*
 see how see her head sideways turn INF-C to hear how gossip a cluster
voëls in 'n tak langs hulle
 birds in a branch beside them
 ‘Observe how she inclines her head to listen how a flock of birds gossips on a branch beside them’

(Example from Biberauer 2003, cited in Biberauer 2017: 94)

In the embedded clauses of (9), there are cases of both verb-final and V2 word order. These alternate word orders are evidenced following *hoe* ‘how’ in the respective clauses:

hoe sy haar kop skuins draai ‘how see her head sideways **turn**’ and *hoe skinder ‘n trossie voëls in ‘n tak langs hulle* ‘how **gossip** a cluster birds in a branch beside them’. The fact that V2 occurs optionally in Afrikaans embedded clauses calls into question the validity of the wider categorisation of V2 languages. If V2 occurs optionally in Afrikaans embedded clauses, there is neither consistent asymmetry nor symmetry of V2 in main clauses and embedded clauses. This evidence, alongside that of Salvesen and Walkden (2017) and Walkden and Booth (2020), who suggest that verb-movement always occurred beyond the IP domain, means that labelling Old English as a CP- or IP-V2 language is potentially unnecessary. If clear asymmetry or symmetry does not exist cross-linguistically, it may be beneficial to refer to verb-movement in V2 clauses as consistently toward the C domain. For the purposes of the current study, I continue this line of argument for English, i.e. that verb-movement, in a V2 structure, always occurred to C in main clauses, with room to investigate a possible split CP approach. This suite of evidence is, overall, crucial for considering what happened to English V2 in the late medieval period, particularly when investigating the influence from other languages the phenomenon encountered, and, for instance, how the structure of English might have changed due to pressures from information structure. The following sections consider these pressures on the syntax of Old English, to provide a fuller picture of the structure of verb-movement in English, as well as context to the situation of Middle English.

1.5.2. Pressures from information status and prosody on the structure of verb second in Old English

In recent years, studies have incorporated the notion of information structure (IS) into the syntax of V2 to explain changes in its frequency across various periods of English (e.g. Bech 2001, 2014; Westergaard 2009c; Los 2012; Hinterhölzl 2009; Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade 2012; van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012). The complexity of the V2 phenomenon cannot be satisfactorily explained by (morpho)syntax alone. This is because of the lack of motivation as to why pronominal subjects would occur before the verb in cases of topicalisation, and in a high position preceding negation, as identified by Rissanen (1998) and Fischer et al. (2000). Information structure, and its role of navigating hearers and readers through the discourse of speech or text, can be defined as the following:

“Information structure is about placing pointers to hearers that allow them to keep track of referents, and to link pragmatically unrecoverable information (new information) to what is already known or presupposed [given information].”

(Los 2009: 98)

What Los notes in particular is that, while IS and syntax could be considered different linguistic levels, they interact in a way whereby the IS system is mapped onto the syntactic underlying representation. This mapping means that tendencies of IS, pertaining to the givenness or familiarity of information and its placement before new information, were often satisfied in Old English (2009: 98).

One of the earliest studies that identified how the pragmatics of the sentence could influence the use of V2 in English comes from Bech (1998, 2001). As Bech (1998: 79) summarises, few of the earlier studies focus on the effect that pragmatics can have on language change, which instead appeal to the study of syntax, semantics, and phonology. Nonetheless, pragmatics, by way of information structure, can be regarded as a contributing factor driving changes in the V2 of historical English texts. In an analysis of subjects, verbs, and adverbials in V2 (XVS) and V3 (XSV) word orders, both in Old English and moving through to Middle and Modern English, Bech (1998) examines changes in the status of pragmatics to show how a verb-medial, or V3, structure became the prominent word order of the present-day. Bech uses communicative dynamism (CD), “the relevant extent to which a linguistic element contributes toward the further development of the communication” (Firbas 1992: 8, cited in Bech 1998: 81), to explain the placement of elements with different information-structural statuses within the sentence. Specifically, information provided in the preceding context has low CD, while information new to the context has high CD. Bech (1998: 98) concluded that the OE V2 pattern had an equal rate of given (low CD) and new (high CD) subjects, while the V3 pattern resulted in frequent given and low CD subjects.

To summarise Bech’s study, pragmatic and prosodic tendencies drove the V3 or XSV pattern, namely because of a) the need for given subjects to occur close to the beginning of the sentence, to refer back to preceding context rather than to look forward; b) the weight of lexical verbs occurring in a lower structural position; and c) because of the marked nature of XSV which involved initial anaphoric elements with emphasis (Bech 1998, 2001). Clearly, as shown by the evidence provided by Bech (1998, 2001), IS

tendencies affected the use of V2 in OE, which evidently must have changed throughout the course of English.

Moreover, Los (2009) outlines the way in which each syntactic element of XVS and XSV orders in Old English were encoded for information structure. In OE, the initial constituent could be considered multifunctional, encoding “marked and unmarked topics, as well as marked focus” (Los 2009: 99). As a result, the remainder of the main clause needed to be encoded for these communicative and discourse requirements. Trips and Fuß (2009: 172) note that OE was discourse-configurational, meaning that “word order was determined by discourse-related factors such as anaphoricity, or the distinction between old/new information”. In Germanic languages such as Dutch, as well as OE, Los (2009: 100) explains, with reference to Koster (1975) and van Kemenade (1987), that V2 developed initially as an optional word order, from underlying SOV order, in response to the pressures of IS, drawing attention to the multifunctionality of the initial constituent. Later, V2 and the finite verb in second position developed from a way to mark focus, to a way to mark modality (i.e. the likelihood of an expression), especially with initial interrogatives or negation (as in OE V2), or narrative advancement (like ‘then’ in OE, or another type of topic). Los references the process of ‘entrenchment’ (or syntacticisation, as I use throughout) of the IS-driven V2 word order introduced by initial interrogatives and negation as a syntactic device to mark modality.¹² The difference, then, between OE, and a V2 language such as Old High German, is that not all instances of non-subject fronting resulted in V2 word order, partly driven by information-structural pressures. Specifically, given subjects generally occurred preverbally, while new subjects were often postverbal, especially in sentences with initial anaphoric or emphasised constituents. There is therefore a strong link between the type of initial constituent, as an element with high multifunctionality, and the ordering of verb and subject. The purpose of V2 in OE is neatly summarised in Los and Dreschler (2012: 860), who cite Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2010: 319): when a familiar topic (such as an object or adverbial) is fronted, the aboutness topic and background elements, the given information, must be distinguished from the new information, which is often the nominal subject. However, when the subject itself exhibits

¹² Similarly, I demonstrate in Chapter 3 that some of the information structural tendencies driving verb second also ‘syntacticised’ as early as OE (specifically, the link between syntax and information structure in driving verb-movement to a lower C head ceased to exist).

given information, in addition to the initial object or adverbial, the verb must occur after the subject to separate given from new information.

There are also notable links between the role of information structure and syntax on the appearance of V2 in OE, and that of prosody. I begin by mentioning work by Speyer (2005, 2008, 2010) who links the syntactic distribution of V2 main clauses in OE to prosodic requirements. In line with work by Prince (1986, 1999), Speyer states that topicalised constituents link to referents “evoked earlier in the discourse, but recently enough that it is still salient”. If this link was not clear, these constituents could not be topicalised (Speyer 2005: 491). Topicalisation then leads to the encoding of focus on this initial constituent, with the rest of the sentence expressing “an open proposition with a variable at the position from which the topicalised element has been moved”, also known as a focus-presupposition-structure by Prince (1986, 1999) (Speyer 2005: 492). What this means for Old English is that each of the elements that followed the fronted constituent were generally affected by the given-before-new tendencies of information structure, to promote this anaphoricity. Thus, given subjects occurred before the verb, while new subjects appeared after. Prosody also reinforces the ordering of such elements in relation to the initial constituent. Specifically, as Speyer (2005: 493) highlights, “topicalised sentences are typically connected to a Bridge Contour, i.e. a sequence of a rising and a falling tone”. Given that one cannot recognise accent placement as easily in historical texts, compared to spoken data, the identification of the contours of the sentence falls on the role of information structure (Speyer 2005: 493). Speyer goes on to explain the Trochaic Requirement (TR), the ordering of specific elements in relation their prosodic weight. In particular, the initial constituent, due to the Bridge Contours of English (and German), contains an accent, and the constituent in the remainder of the sentence that marks the variable (e.g. the object in SVO word order), is also accented (2005: 494). The following examples from German and English highlight whether the ordering of prosodic elements appear to be natural (with the accented elements in bold):

(10)

- a. *Hans hasst Bohnen. Erbsen hasst Maria.*
John hates beans peas hates Mary
- b. *John hates beans. Peas, Mary hates.*

(Speyer 2005: 494)

The ordering of strong and weak elements in German in (10a) is permitted due to the intervention of a weak element between two strong elements. However, the ordering of elements in the English sentence in (10b) is more awkward due to the adjacency of the two strong elements in the second sentence, with this topicalisation requiring a break between the two pieces of new information ('peas' and 'Mary') (Speyer 2005: 494). The TR, arising from prosodic requirements, thus drives the ordering of information, explaining why some subjects intervene between two prosodically strong elements.

One of the issues of explaining the variation in V2 and V3 word order, even in OE, is its similarity to other Germanic languages in relation to systems of syntax, discourse, and prosody. As shown by Speyer (2005), the intonational patterns of English and German are the same, even in the modern-day. So, why is it the case that V2 was extremely varied in OE, compared to other Germanic languages, if the phenomenon did not differ syntactically to some of these Germanic systems? Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade (2012) investigate the specific differences between Old English and Old High German (OHG), with respect to the interaction of the three systems listed here. OHG and OE both had a variable V2 grammar, but in different contexts. In OHG, there was variation between V1 and V2 word order in main clauses, due to the alternation of subordinating and coordinating discourse relations. Whereas verb-initial placement marked the beginning of an episode, to advance the narrative and provide a sequence of continuation, verb second placement was used to encode the aboutness topic, which is related to the subject matter of the sentence. OE also exhibited the same distinction, namely with V1 main clauses and the use of V2 main clauses with the initial adverb *þa* 'then' (Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade 2012: 814-816). However, as Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade show, OE differed from OHG due to the expression of subordinating discourse relations via variability in use of V2 word order. The difference between OE and OHG is because OE had two preverbal positions for anaphoricity: the initial constituent and the preverbal subject (2012: 817). As discussed above and in Speyer

(2005, 2008, 2010), these two positions in OE are affected by both IS and prosody, due to given-before-new tendencies and accent placement via the Trochaic Requirement. Not only are these findings important for showing how and why OE differed from other Germanic languages in terms of the use of V2 (versus V1 and V3, for instance), but they are also important for discussing why there was even more instability of V2 in ME.

Similarly, Bech and Salvesen (2014) compared the use of V2 in Old English and Old French (OF), finding that the V2 of OE was influenced by the tendencies of information structure than the V2 of OF, which was instead “the result of a syntactic operation, [...] accounted for in terms of the V2 requirement” (Bech and Salvesen 2014: 256). Thus, the movement of the verb in OE is often due to the need to check for information-structural features, over the syntactic requirement of an EPP feature, like in OF. Furthermore, Bech and Salvesen (2014: 264) state that OF allowed for adverbials to occur externally to the main clause, resulting in V2 orders despite their surface appearance as V3. This external position is referred to as “Scene-Setting”, as part of the cartographic model incorporating the hierarchy of the left-periphery (e.g. see Rizzi 1997), and did not form part of the V2 scheme. On the other hand, OE adverbials occurred within the CP of the clause, resulting in more frequent surface and underlying V3 word order. An example of the OF Scene-Setting adverb, followed by an adverb and the finite verb, is provided in (11).

- (11) [*Quant li rois ot ceste parole*], *si* **retret** *sa men arrieres*
 [when the king heard this word] SI **withdrew** his hand backwards
 ‘When the king heard these words, he withdrew his hand’

(Tristan 252; adapted from Bech and Salvesen 2014: 248)

The initial clause in (11) is external to the main clause, and thus the verb *retret* ‘withdrew’ is in the second position, following the initial adverb *si* (roughly meaning ‘so/thus’).

There is therefore considerable variability in the use of V2 in OE compared to other V2 languages, due to information-structural pressures causing movement of the verb to a lower position, compared to the more common verb-movement to the highest CP position.

1.5.3. The ‘split CP’ structure of Old English verb second

The prior section on information structure, prosody, and discourse relations within V2 sentences in Old English has shown that V2 was affected by a number of pressures on its syntax. In Section 1.5.1, I showed that it is challenging to decide on the structural position of the verb following its movement out of VP, if only a syntactic approach is considered. The lack of embedded clause V2 in OE (as per van Kemenade 1997; Salvesen and Walkden 2017; Walkden and Booth 2020) meant asymmetric V2 must have existed and that verb-movement to C is the most viable option. In addition, evidence from Biberauer (2002, 2017) and Biberauer and Richards (2006) showed that optional V2 could occur in Afrikaans embedded clauses, thus questioning the usefulness of the asymmetric-symmetric V2 approach more generally. If verb-movement to I likely does not occur in any language, and if there are languages with optional V2 in embedded clauses, making it difficult to categorise the V2 language as inherently asymmetric or symmetric, the categorisation thus may not be appropriate for languages’ verb-movement patterns. Instead, for OE, it is important to recognise the impact that information structure and prosody, as well as the type of discourse, had on the syntax of V2, especially with different types of subject. One of the issues that remains for some analyses of OE V2 is therefore determining the structural position of the verb following movement, given the disparity in the positioning of different types of subject either pre- or postverbally, depending on their information structure. Van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012: 91) propose a structure for XP-V-S and XP-S-V word orders in OE, incorporating the pressures of information structure into the syntactic model.

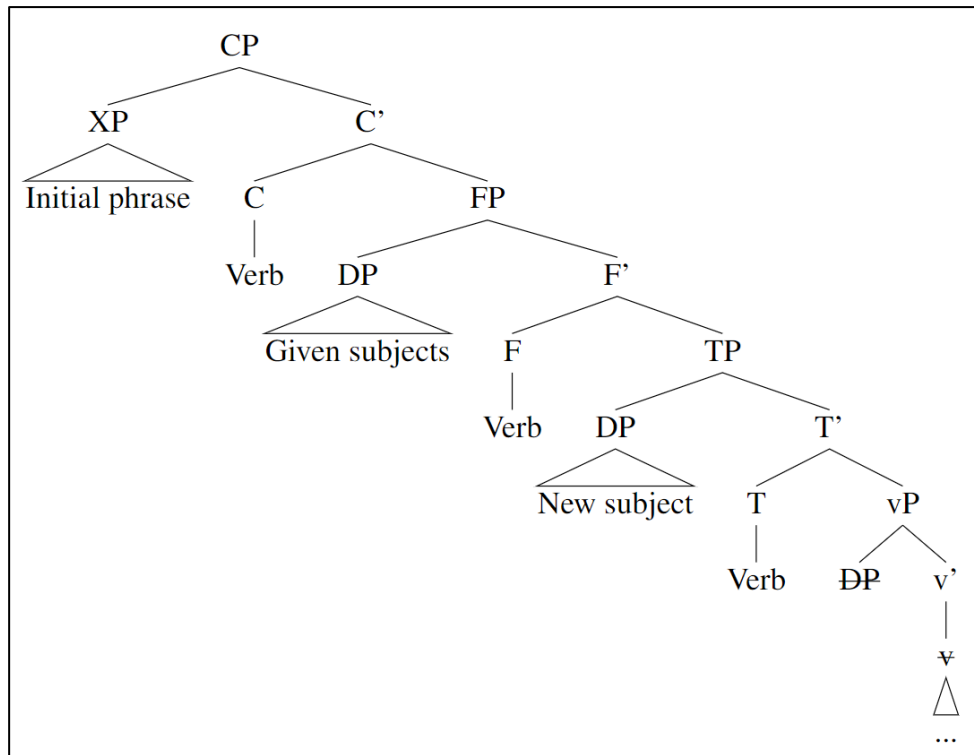


Figure 4: The different structural positions of verbs and subjects depending on the pressures of syntax and information structure, adapted from van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012: 91).

The proposal of verb-movement in Figure 4 from van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) has three landing sites for the verb: C, F (Functional head), and T. They suggest that the verb is triggered to move to C for syntactic reasons, for instance, if the EPP feature in C requires a phrase to move there, such as *wh*-expressions and negation, which then requires a verb to be spelled out in C. In these cases, van Kemenade and Westergaard propose that the verb lands in C, repeatedly occurring above the position of subjects, and resulting in near-categorical V2 structure. In order to incorporate the influence of IS within the underlying OE V2 representation, the landing site of F is proposed in contexts when any other constituent is fronted, particularly familiar direct objects, PPs, AdvPs (other than temporal and/or discourse-advancing adverbs), and AdjPs. The verb landing in F when these types of initial constituents were fronted results in given subjects preceding the verb, and new subjects following it. Given subjects, either pronominal or nominal, are said to have occurred in the specifier of the functional projection below C, FP, which is said to relate to givenness. New subjects were then merged in the lower specifier position of TP. Finally, if neither syntactic or IS verb-movement was triggered, the verb was said to move to T. Van Kemenade and Westergaard's description of the difference in verb and subject

positions has therefore been used to explain the distribution of given and new subjects in structures with verb-movement.

The main issue that is not necessarily articulated within the IS-V2 approach is why syntactic and information-structural pressures would not always trigger verb-movement to C or F each time. Furthermore, prior approaches such as that of Fischer et al. (2000) also refer to FP, which is treated as separate to the CP and as part of IP. It is important to articulate that verb-movement always occurred to the CP domain, given evidence suggesting there is a lack of V2 symmetry in main and embedded clauses in OE, and that verb-movement always occurred to C. Thus, a structure incorporating two types of verb-movement, to CP (i.e. a split CP approach), is likely the most appropriate, which I detail briefly below and in Chapter 3.

Since Rizzi (1997) developed the cartography of the left-periphery – the separation of the CP into a hierarchy of phrases related to information structure – a ‘split CP’ approach has emerged. Walkden (2017b: 62) posits the split CP approach for the Germanic urban vernacular of Kiezdeutsch, which is then speculated for OE. The split CP structure involves positing a lower projection (CP1), combining the Finiteness Phrase (FinP), determining the finiteness of the clause, and Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl’s (2007) proposal for the Familiarity Phrase (FamP) for familiar topics. The structure also involves a higher projection (CP2), which combines the Focus Phrase (FocP), involving new information which is strong prosodically, and Force Phrase (ForceP) determining whether the sentence is interrogative, imperative or declarative. CP2 also incorporates the Shift Phrase (ShiftP), hosting multiple constituents that have been shifted to the left-periphery, and the Contrastive Phrase (ContrP), hosting contrasting information from the prior discourse. The hierarchy of these phrases are broken down below from Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007: 112-113, as cited in Walkden 2017b: 60).

ForceP > ShiftP > ContrP > FocP > FamP > FinP

The split CP approach is picking up traction in many other generative accounts in order to explain some types of V2 cross-linguistically. Bech and Salvesen (2014: 251) refer to the position of subjects in the high position of a split CP, as opposed to within IP as in Fischer et al. (2000) and Haeberli (2002a). Haeberli and Ihsane (2016: 503) refer to FinP as the lowest projection in the split CP system that the verb could move to in OE.

Westergaard (2007, 2009c) refers to a split CP approach for V2 which also incorporates cue-based language acquisition. Specifically, Westergaard (2007) outlines the cues that children pick up on within the Primary Linguistic Data that would suggest the language has a certain type of V2. For instance, children acquiring Norwegian in Nordmøre might be exposed to a cue for V2 in declarative sentences which “must be a non-subject XP followed by a verb in the [Topic Phrase]” (Westergaard 2007: 202). Furthermore, Poletto (2019) states that a split CP is necessary for some V2 languages but not others. For instance, a split CP might be necessary in languages such as German where the complementizer and the verb are in complementary distribution with one another in embedded clauses (Poletto 2019: 52). Poletto also notes that many scholars analysing the V2 of German maintain that the CP layer is minimal and contains only one projection. A lack of a split CP in these languages would also be understandable given the effect of information structure on the V2 syntax of languages such as Old English as opposed to other Germanic languages; proving that the split CP approach can be challenging to convey in certain contexts.

Chapter 3 outlines that one of the remaining issues concerns the occurrence of V2 with given subjects, in contexts with initial anaphors, and V3 with new subjects in all contexts. Here I use a combination of the above approaches to capture the OE data, and show how ME then evolved from the structure of OE, involving a structure influenced by tendencies of information structure to place given before new information, and a structure which was no longer motivated by these pressures. Overall, the split CP approach, for OE at least, can explain the different patterns of V2 with different types of subject, without changing the fundamental syntactic pressures driving verb-movement to C.

1.6. The instability of verb second in Middle English

The primary focus of studies examining V2 in Middle English has been explaining its decline in frequency, from a range of perspectives within historical linguistics and (morpho)syntactic theory. Los (2009) notes that studies analysing the rate of V2 from the widest perspective, without delving into the nature of V2 sentences themselves, has resulted in much disagreement in the literature as to whether the change was gradual or abrupt. She provides a summary of how scholars have treated the evolving syntax of V2 in the history of English:

“The decline of verb-second (‘inversion’) presents a diffuse, confusing picture. Jacobsson (1951) and Schmidt (1980) report a steep decline from the late fourteenth century onwards, with a short-lived revival in the sixteenth century. Nevalainen (1997), on the other hand, reports a *steady* decline from 37 per cent in the fifteenth century to well below 10 per cent at the close of the seventeenth century. Bækken’s (1998) extensive corpus research spans the relevant period (1480-1730), but in spite of presenting over two hundred tables of figures, she cannot report any definite trend apart from the fact that verb-second becomes really uncommon only after 1630.”

(Los 2009: 108)

There is a clear inconsistency in reports of English V2 that incorporate the entire picture, rather than the nuances related to: varying constituents (types of subject, verb, initial constituent), varying contexts (location and/or dialect of the text, genre and text-type, author of the text), and information structure, some of which are acknowledged in Los (2009) as important factors to consider. As Poletto (2019: 76) states, there is likely more than one factor “conspiring to keep V2 stable or to destabilize it”, in relation to her study examining the large number of changes that might have led to a less frequent V2 in Rhaetoromance dialects spoken in Switzerland and northern Italy.¹³ As is the case with English, the lack of V2 in the present-day could also be attributed to a range of factors.

In addition to studies failing to recognise the nuances of V2, most studies generally investigate the ‘loss’ of V2 in English. However, there are specific syntactic environments and time periods in which a rise of V2 has been reported. For instance, Haeberli (2010) investigated why there was frequent V2 with pronominal subjects in ME texts, compared to OE. He reports frequent inversion with subject pronouns in Chaucer’s prose texts as a whole (50%), Capgrave’s *Chronicle* (51.7%), and *The Mirror of St. Edmund* from the northern Thornton manuscript (52.5%) (Haeberli 2010: 147). He concludes that this innovative type of V2 in English (which, was unlike OE, given the pressures of IS on V2 syntax in producing given before new subjects) was potentially a result of English writers calquing their syntax on that of Continental French and/or Anglo Norman V2 usage, which had a much higher rate of V2 in prose texts than ME. Haeberli also acknowledges potential interactions with other language-external factors, such as contact with Norse (Kroch,

¹³ These routes included the loss of inversion with nominal subjects and later subject clitics, the increase in recursive topics within V2 constructions, and the effect of the complementizer in the Finiteness domain which blocked embedded V2, all of which could have influenced the decline of V2 in these Rhaetoromance dialects.

Taylor and Ringe 2000), and language-internal factors, such as accommodation of L1 learners to an input that no longer made use of V2 (Haeberli 2010: 155, citing Haeberli 2002b: 104).¹⁴ Moreover, van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) refer to the revival of V2 in contexts with auxiliary verbs and pronominal subjects, based on the overgeneralisation of a syntactic V2 by L1 learners. Again, there appears to be more to say beyond the decline in frequency of V2 usage, as periods of temporary revival of the phenomenon mean there was high variation in its use, and thus an overwhelming instability of the phenomenon in English which some of the V2 languages of today did not necessarily undergo as extensively.

Second, the syntactically-driven verb second of OE, involving a near-categorical V-to-C movement based on the V feature in C (Roberts 2010), was far from stable to begin with. This instability is due to the multiple options for verb-movement within individual speakers, many of which were driven by information-structural tendencies—making the trajectory of V2 in English different to other Germanic languages. Walkden (2017b) refers to the scenario of contact with Brythonic Celtic speakers pre-Old English which may have contributed to an unstable V2 in early medieval England, and a high occurrence of V3. Tristram (2007) also summarises that the innovations present in ME, in this case, the beginnings of instability in the use of V2, may be due to “syntactic calques initiated by the large number of shifters from Late British to Old English” (Tristram 2007: 213).¹⁵ It is possible that this scenario represented periods of diglossia in OE, whereby the low variety of OE did not appear in writing until after the Norman Conquest (Tristram 2004). This meant that the high variation in use of V2 in early ME may have reflected the early signs of an inconsistent usage of V2 in OE. The possibility of diglossia in OE also supports the idea that it may be more appropriate to focus on why the V2 phenomenon was unstable, rather than solely on its decline. This is because of the differences between OE and other Germanic languages in terms of their use of V2, in that there were further information-

¹⁴ This final point regarding accommodation of L1 learners to their input is considered further in Chapter 6, where I argue that the learner’s input may not have been the only factor driving acquisition of non-V2 word order (e.g. see the MMM model as outlined by Biberauer 2019).

¹⁵ Here, ‘Late British’ is a term used by Schmidt (1990), as cited in Tristram (2007) to refer to Common Brittonic (a Celtic language existing up until the middle of the 6th century), which preceded “the emergence of the neo-Celtic languages” (Schmidt 1990: 138).

structural pressures placed on the use of V2 that affected the positioning of verbs following movement, and the positioning of subjects.

The following sections detail the wealth of research that has been conducted on the decline of V2 in English, and the feasibility of these approaches in encompassing a range of issues throughout the trajectory of V2 in ME. I show how approaches have moved toward the role of information structure in accounting for why V2 declined in English, and that the change cannot be explained by theories at the intersection of morphosyntax alone. I explain where new insights and interfaces are required to explain individual areas of variation in V2, depending on the syntactic environment, the individual ME text and the type of discourse present within this text. I also highlight where further research is required to broaden knowledge of how high variation in different types of V2 led to its instability, comparing the nature of late medieval V2 with the time periods that came before it.

1.6.1. The role of the loss of inflectional morphology on Middle English verb second

The idea that syntactic change is motivated by change occurring in other domains in linguistics has been used as an explanation for change to the nature and frequency of the verb second phenomenon in English. As outlined in Section 1.3.1, Biberauer and Walkden (2015: 2) note, with reference to the ‘Inertial Theory’ of Longobardi (2001), that syntactic change must be “‘a well-motivated consequence of other types of change’ and ‘may only originate as an interface phenomenon’ (2001: 278)”. The idea is that syntactic change does not arise on its own accord but is “parasitic on a change in other linguistic domains”, leading diachronic syntacticians to investigate the impact of linguistic domains on one another (Biberauer and Walkden 2015: 2). The theory of Inertia is particularly relevant for the upcoming sections that discuss the role of inflectional morphology on the increase in variation in the use of V2 in Middle English, and whether change in the syntax of V2 was reliant upon its interaction with other domains, such as morphology and information structure. Ultimately, as Biberauer and Walkden describe, these kinds of questions are beneficial for understanding whether syntax, as its own “autonomous module” within a minimalist framework, can change on its own accord, or instead is “responsible for its interfaces”, which generative syntacticians appear to be moving toward (2015: 13).

Los (2015: 209) states that “the story of English is the story of the loss of inflection – verbal inflection, case inflection”. Thus, many scholars have proposed that the loss of V-to-I movement may have contributed to the loss of verb-movement to the high C position. As Los implies, some believe it is the loss of the inflectional cues that English had V-to-I movement that forced children to acquire a language without it. The following sections detail the analyses that link the instability of V2 syntax to a decaying morphology in English, contributing to the notion that the syntax of a language is responsible for its interfaces, signalling how change in syntactic structure begins.

1.6.1.1. The loss of clitics

The loss of clitics, or decliticisation, was one of the initial analyses for the loss of verb second in English. Clitics can be defined as the following:

“... [an] item which exhibits behaviour intermediate between that of a word and that of an affix. Typically, a clitic has the phonological form of a separate word, but cannot be stressed and is obliged to occupy a particular position in the sentence in which it is phonologically bound to an adjoining word, its host.”

(Trask 2013: 46)

Pioneered predominantly by Ans van Kemenade, the loss of clitics was said to have been spurred on by the overarching loss of inflectional morphology, proposing that clitics “represent a case-feature of their governing head, which is adjoined to that head”, making clitics “part and parcel of the fairly rich system of inflectional morphology” in Old English (van Kemenade 1987: 141). Decliticisation could be considered a process akin to “demorphologization” and linked to the loss of agreement inflection, involving clitics moving “out of morphology into phonology or syntax” (Joseph and Janda 1988: 196, cited in Brinton 2004: 229), or, when clitics “emerge, or re-emerge, as independent words” (Jeffers and Zwicky 1980: 223, cited in Brinton 2004: 229). Van Kemenade states that subject pronouns, as clitics, began to behave similarly to nominal subjects in the latter half of the fourteenth century, when they optionally inverted with the verb in a wider range of contexts (1987: 198-199). However, it is uncertain as to whether clitics existed in English to begin with, and this section is devoted to understanding the proposals that have argued

for and against the decliticisation view, which, in turn, either strengthen or weaken the theory that decliticisation led to the decline in frequency of V2.

Van Kemenade (1987: 127-129) states that, in order to explain the disparity between the presence of V2 with pronominal versus nominal subjects, pronouns must have been proclitics, occurring on the left of the inflectional head—the position for nominative case markers. She suggests that procliticisation is responsible for the frequent occurrence of subject pronouns on the left of the finite verb, specifically in cases with initial anaphors. In cases where an operator triggers verb-movement (a *wh*-word, negation, or *ba*), she proposes that procliticisation is blocked and encliticisation to the right of the INFL/I projection, explaining near-categorical V2 in sentences with operators, regardless of the type of subject (van Kemenade 1987: 140).¹⁶

Pintzuk (1991, 1999) provides an alternate analysis which challenges the seemingly bi-directional nature of van Kemenade's (1987) proposal of cliticisation in OE, suggesting there is no real motivation as to why cliticisation should be blocked in specific contexts, and occur in two distinct positions in two different cases of movement to the beginning of the sentence. Pintzuk proposes, using an analysis of *Beowulf*, that cliticisation occurred to the left of I (or at the CP/IP boundary), to account for cases when the subject pronoun preceded the finite verb (1999: 157-158). In cases where the pronominal subject followed the finite verb, the verb had raised from I to C, with subject clitics remaining attached to the left of I. Both orders, where the subject clitic is proposed to have attached to the left of I, yet instead occurs pre- and postverbally, are provided in (12a-b), with the proposed clitics in bold:

(12)

- a. ***ic mid elne*** *sceall gold gegangan*
 I with strength shall gold obtain
 'I shall obtain gold with strength ...'

[_{IP} [***ic*** [*mid elne*]] [_{I'} [_I [*sceall*]] [_{VP} [*gold gegangan*]]]

(*Beowulf* 2525-2536, adapted from Pintzuk 1999: 158)

¹⁶ COMP + INFL is described in van Kemenade (1987: 140) to have combined to form one projection.

- b. *nolde ic sweord beran*
 not-would I sword carry
 ‘I would not carry a sword ...’

[CP [C' [C nolde] [IP [ic [sweord] [I' [I] [VP beran]]]]]

(Beowulf 2518-2519, adapted from Pintzuk 1999: 159)

(12a-b) are examples and structural representations of Pintzuk's (1991, 1999) proposal of cliticisation, showing that clitics always attached to the left of IP. In (12a), the subject pronoun *ic* ‘I’ occurs preverbally as the verb had not moved up to C based on the absence of any sort of operator phrase. However, in (12b), *ic* occurs postverbally as the negator *ne* has triggered movement of the verb to C, before the subject pronoun in IP. It is important to articulate structure as it contextualises why the decliticisation approach may not be beneficial for understanding why V2 was used inconsistently in ME.

(13)

- a. [*And by thys conclusioun*] **maist** *thou take ensample*
 [and by this conclusion] **may** you take example
 ‘May you take example from this conclusion’

[A Treatise on the Astrolabe, I.21.68]

- b. [*For at such houre*] **shal** *he despoyle the world*
 [for at such hour] **shall** he despoil the world
 ‘Within this hour he shall despoil the world’

[Mandeville's Travels, 67.35]

(Adapted from van Kemenade 1987: 199, who cites Schmidt 1980)

How would the loss of these types of clitics then lead to the declining use of V2 in late medieval English? As mentioned, van Kemenade (1987: 204) proposes that the growing impoverishment of the inflectional system in English led to the instability of clitics, referred to as case affixes dependent on this system. She proposes that this instability began with object clitics, with the loss of subject clitics occurring later. Around the latter half of the fourteenth century, van Kemenade reports that there was much variation in the use of subject pronouns either pre- or postverbally, that did not follow the general pattern described above depending on the initial constituent. For instance, the word order as in (13) from *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* and *Mandeville's Travels* at this time is said to have

occurred more frequently, mimicking the behaviour of nominal subjects that inverted with the verb optionally (and may have been affected depending on the dialect of the text). What these approaches therefore suggest is that the loss of clitics led to a situation where there was high variation in the use of the verb in either second or third position, thus contributing to a period of ambiguity for learners as to whether the language used V2 consistently, and in which contexts the phenomenon was used to a large extent.

It is evident that clitics are most likely to be identified by its prosodic features, particularly the fact they cannot be stressed and are bound to an adjoining word, the former of which is most easily identified in spoken rather than written language. Nevertheless, Koopman (1997a) uses Kayne's (1975) criteria for French clitics as a starting point to identify whether Old English pronouns had clitic-like behaviour, despite the difficulty in identifying them. Kayne proposed that the following set of rules could be applied to French pronouns:

1. a clitic occupies a special position (full NPs do not occur there)
2. it must occur in this special position
3. it must be adjacent to its host (V in French)
4. the host must be present (the clitic cannot occur on its own)
5. it cannot be modified
6. it has no stress
7. it cannot be conjoined
8. clitics occur in a fixed and special order, which often deviates from the order of corresponding full NPs.

(Kayne 1975: 77ff.; cited in Koopman 1997a: 75)

Again, it is evident that a number of these points, especially criterion 3, 4 and 6, are most easily identifiable from spoken data, making it difficult to identify clitics in Old English. 3 and 4 relate to the identification of a potential host for 'clitics' to adjoin to, and there is possibly a wide range of candidates in OE (as shown by the varying positions of subject pronouns) 6 relates to stressed subject pronouns, and it is not always possible to determine the stress pattern of OE sentences (Koopman 1997a: 86).

One of the few pieces of evidence that does exist for the presence of subject clitics in OE texts is in inverted clauses with the pronoun *þu* 'you', as in (14).

- (14) *Petrus lufastu me?*
Peter love-**you** me
'Peter, do you love me?'

[Cura Pastoralis, 43.3]

(Adapted from Koopman 1997a: 78)

However, Brinton (2004) argues that these examples of supposed enclitics, such as *-tou/-tow*, similar to (14), were merely reduced forms rather than clitics. The loss of these reduced forms could be attributed to the loss of a phonological rule (the sandhi rule, which assimilated thorns to a preceding dental), resulting in their replacement by the pre-existing strong *thou*. Thus, the minimal textual 'evidence' that is available for subject clitics in OE could a) only apply to enclitics and not proclitics, and b) may not be evidence of cliticisation at all.

1.6.1.1.1. Criticism of the decliticisation approach

I now detail some of the accounts from the literature which criticise decliticisation approaches, and that either explore the feasibility of decliticisation leading to a decrease in the use of V2, or investigate whether clitics originally existed in OE.

There are issues with the underlying theory within which van Kemenade (1987) and Pintzuk (1991, 1999)'s cliticisation approach is based. This cliticisation structure is reliant upon the verb having moved to I (and not to C) in some contexts of fronting, namely with initial anaphors, which is incompatible with many approaches advocating for verb-movement to C as considered above.

Bech (2001) began to question the existence of clitics in OE, aptly summarising whether cliticisation of subject pronouns occurred in OE (cited in Walkden 2012: 95):

"The fact that one fifth of the subjects in the XSV pattern cannot be clitics, but nevertheless occur in exactly the same position as the clitic elements, can hardly be overlooked, especially if a clitic position is defined as a position where only clitics can occur."

Bech (2001: 98)

The distributional tests carried out by Bech are enlightening with respect to whether a discrepancy in the use of V2 actually occurs across different types of subject. The fact that both nominal subjects and subject pronouns could occur preverbally suggests that there is no order that is reserved solely for subject pronouns in OE. In fact, in Section 3.3.1 I highlight a number of other counterexamples which show that V2 sentences introduced by initial anaphors were possible with pronominal subjects too, complementing Bech's work here and calling into question the driving factors behind verb-movement in different syntactic contexts. As Bech (2001: 142) explains, "the concept of clitics is useful in the way that it takes care of a number of counterexamples to the V2 hypothesis in the OE period, particularly XSV clauses with a pronominal subject". However, she also recognises that the analysis of V3 surface orders as V2 word order with subject clitics obscures the overall development from the use of V2 to V3 structure (2001: 142). Discussion surrounding whether subject clitics existed in OE can provide further insight onto how and why V3 word order began to rise in Middle English.

Although new approaches are starting to exclude the potential influence of decliticisation within their analyses, the discussion that arises from critiquing such approaches continues to reveal more about the distribution of V2 in OE. For instance, Kayne's (1975) criteria for French clitics allows one to delve into the patterns of V2 in different environments.¹⁷ Specifically, discussion of the positionings of subjects can shed further light on the domains where the verb moved to in English, the counterexamples to the main patterns of V2 with specific types of subjects, and how these can be accounted for. Furthermore, approaches considering sociohistorical variables such as the dialect of the text, and potential links to language contact, have directed attention toward theories of verb-movement in English, and generative syntax more widely. The main proposal for V2 instability within this vein, from Kroch, Taylor and Ringe, generally maintains that clitics existed, and that they were in the same position regardless of whether the ME text was Northern or Southern (2000: 373-374). Again, this analysis is very much dependent on whether one believes clitics existed. As Eitler makes clear, pronominal subjects have an "unorthodox behaviour", resulting in analyses treating them as clitics, and this behaviour can act as a diagnostic for understanding changes in the syntax of V2 in English (2006: 49).

¹⁷ Note, however, that it is also uncertain as to whether French clitics existed, too. For instance, see work by Roberts (1993) and Wolfe (2021).

It is evident that considering the position of different types of subject can lead to a further understanding of the position of the verb in English. Some reconsideration surrounding the nature of dialect variation, whether clitics existed and might have impacted the course of use of V2, and how these two are related, are all pertinent to discussions surrounding change in English V2, and language change and its interfaces more generally.

1.6.1.2. Additional approaches linked to the loss of inflectional morphology: empty expletives and rich agreement

There have been a number of approaches that have continued to use the loss of inflectional morphology to explain the lack of verb-movement to I and C in the late fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. Some narrow down the syntactic environment to the loss of V2 with nominal subjects, especially in contexts without an initial operator, as this is the context which most commonly exhibited inversion in OE. For instance, Haeberli (2002a, 2002b) observes that there must be differences in the movement of verbs in English, depending on the type of initial constituent. He also shows that nominal subjects must have remained in a lower position to subject pronouns, on the basis of evidence of non-adjacency between the verb and nominal subject. This apparent non-adjacency is said to highlight parallels between OE and modern Germanic languages such as German, where adjuncts can intervene between the verb and subject:

- (15) *Wahrscheinlich* **wird** [später] *Hans* *dieselbe Uhr kaufen*
probably **will** [later] **John** the-same watch buy
'Probably, John will buy the same watch later'

(Adapted from Haeberli 2002a: 94)

Haeberli states that the reason why nominal subjects were licensed in this low subject position was due to the existence of an empty expletive, the unpronounced subject *pro*, in the high position. The low position would therefore give rise to V2 word order in contexts with an initial anaphor (16a). However, in ME these empty expletives were lost and resulted in increased incidences of V3 with nominal subjects (16b). A visualisation of these different orders is provided below.

(16)

- a. [_{CP} XP C [_{AgrP} *pro* V [_{VP} **DP** ∇]]]
- b. [_{CP} XP C [_{AgrP} **DP** V [_{VP} ∇]]]

(Adapted from Haeberli 2002a: 98)

As shown in (16b), without the proposed licensing of the empty subject in the higher position, the nominal subject would need to occur in this higher position, before the finite verb. Similar to languages such as German, Dutch, Frisian and Yiddish, whereby adjunct-nominal subject orders were also possible, an unpronounced subject in the higher position would mean that nominal subjects could occupy a lower position, and an overt nominal subject need not be required.

Alternatively, Fuß (2003: 219) states that the reason why V3 rose with nominal subjects is due to the introduction of an EPP feature in Spec, TP, requiring nominal subjects to move there (like in the empty expletive account). Prior to this change, a number of V2 orders could have been considered ‘pseudo’, which Fuß states is the result of linear adjacency between clause-initial anaphors and the finite verb residing in T. The proposed reason as to why both empty expletives were lost in V2, or why an EPP feature might be introduced, is, similar to the loss of clitics—i.e. the overarching loss of inflectional morphology. Haeberli (2002a: 99) states that empty subject pronouns are linked to the existence of a rich agreement system. For Fuß, the introduction of the EPP feature arises from “the loss of case and verbal agreement morphology” which “led to a situation where subjects could only be licensed in a Spec-head relationship with their case-assigning head, T” (2003: 219). Nawata (2003) also lends support to this view by narrowing down the loss of inflectional morphology and subsequent decline of V2 to the loss of the plural agreement morpheme *-en*. Kroch and Taylor (1997) and Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (2000) also relate these changes to Scandinavian settlers’ imperfect learning of agreement inflection, leading to the loss of V-to-I movement. Specific to the empty expletives approach, Haeberli compares the impoverishment of the morphological paradigm in West Flemish to what might have happened in late ME:

“As in the case of West Flemish, the presence of an infinitival form in the singular paradigm of late ME could be argued to impoverish agreement in such a way that empty expletives are not licensed any more. [...] V2 structures then cannot be derived any more, because V2 structures depend on the presence of an empty expletive in the highest subject position.”

(Haeberli 2002a: 101)

To reiterate, there are challenges to approaches that suggest the verb did not move beyond the inflectional domain in an account of V2. There are asymmetries between main and embedded clauses which would suggest verbs always moved to C in main clauses. There are also several challenges to accounts that link the impoverishment of agreement inflection to the loss of verb-movement, which I detail below. With regard to Haeberli's account, there are questions that remain unsolved, particularly, why pronominal subjects would cease to occur in a postverbal position, after their high frequency in specific texts and dialects in the ME period. Not only is the loss of postverbal nominal subjects a useful context for determining how V2 was lost overall, but the loss of postverbal pronominal subjects, beginning with high variation in their use in ME, is just as enlightening. I return to the issue of pronominal subjects and their occurrence alongside the verb in later chapters.

1.6.1.2.1. Criticism of the link between the loss of subject-verb agreement and the loss of verb-movement in English (RAH)

There are a number of proposals for the Rich Agreement Hypothesis (RAH) and its impact on syntactic change. The RAH is a theory which “states that there is a relation between verb movement to I (or INFL, or T) and the richness of subject agreement morphology” (Walkden 2021: 1). One of the commonly accepted proposals comes from Bobaljik (2002), a weak version of the hypothesis which advocates that “rich agreement and *only rich agreement* causes V-to-I movement” (Bobaljik 2002: 131). Instead, Bobaljik proposes that “verbal inflection is rich iff finite verbs may bear multiple distinct inflectional morphemes” (2002: 134), suggesting that it is the wide range of inflectional endings on the verb that determine an agreement paradigm's richness. One of the issues with strong proposals of the RAH is that while “morphology does not drive syntax in the linguistic model, morphology does determine syntax through acquisition” (Koenenman and Zeijlstra 2014: 572). Koenenman and Zeijlstra (2014: 572) believe learners require multiple morphological

cues to determine whether the paradigm is rich, including the pronominal paradigm features of \pm speaker, \pm participant, and \pm plural. If the language exhibits all three distinctions in the morphological paradigm, it is considered to have rich agreement.

There are, however, proposed issues with the RAH. First, Fuß (2003: 220) states that, despite the fact a language may have rich verbal and nominal inflection, it may still lack free word order, meaning morphology does not always drive syntax. With regard to nominal inflection, Fuß includes the example of Icelandic which has a rich agreement system but “crucially lacks free reordering of nominal arguments (in contrast to e.g. Modern German or OE)” (2003: 220). A similar criticism is proposed by Heycock and Sundquist (2017), as referenced by Walkden (2021a: 18), who state that despite the lack of rich agreement in Early Modern Danish, V-to-I movement persisted, which is a problem for Koenenman and Zeijlstra (2014). Regarding dialect variation in particular, Walkden (2021a: 11) states that many scholars suggest Northumbrian OE and ME northern dialects were rich in agreement (depending on their definition of richness). For instance, according to Platzack and Holmberg (1989) and Vikner’s (1997) accounts of richness, which both refer to person distinctions within verbal morphology, Northumbrian OE would be considered rich as it is found in all tenses. This supposed richness of Northern dialects directly contrasts what is proposed in the literature—Northern dialects of English were considered to have an impoverished morphology due to contact with Norse (e.g. see Warner 2017).

Rather than correlating the loss of inflectional morphology and changes with the syntax of English, Haeberli and Ihsane (2016: 538) suggest that the loss of verb-movement was due to an accumulation of changes in English, primarily linked to the loss of the subjunctive mood and the rise in periphrastic *do* which weakened the status of Mood and Aspect heads in triggering verb-movement, alongside the effect of subject-verb inversion itself which caused great instability in the production of verb-movement in sentences. This change in Mood and Aspect may also have been a result of the lack of an acquisitional ‘cue’ on the landing site of the verb that the language had verb-movement, with a bias toward simpler structures (referring to work by Roberts 2007), as well as the impact of dialect contact accelerating these changes in the North during ME. While the input-driven model of language change is not without its criticism (see Chapter 6), Haeberli and Ihsane clearly show that a multifactorial account is required to explain the loss of verb-movement, which

will be intrinsically linked to the loss of verb-movement to multiple landing sites in the case of V2 order, and that the RAH and the effect of the loss of inflectional morphology is not necessarily the sole answer.

Haeberli and Ihsane's (2016) study is inspired by Biberauer and Roberts' (2010) work on the link between mood and aspect. Walkden (2021a) unifies these two analyses and presents an alternative to the proposed correlation between morphology and syntax. Specifically, Walkden (2021a: 19) suggests that finite verbs were compounds of (V)erb+(Asp)ect+(M)ood, and different types of verb-movement related to the elements of these compounds were lost in succession, first starting with V-to-M, and then V-to-Asp. Eventually, these verbs ceased to move to Asp. He proposes that these changes were correlated with the loss of the indicative-subjunctive mood distinction, given PDE no longer has a morphological ending for the subjunctive.

There are also issues with the simplification and complexification terminology as used by Trudgill (1992) initially, but also by a number of the scholars with regard to Norse acquisition of the English morphological paradigm. To answer the question of whether different societies produce different types of language structure, and language change as a result, Trudgill (1992: 197) describes simplification in general terms as a "reduction in overt case-marking and an increase in prepositional usage; reduction in conjugations, declensions, and inflections; loss of the dual number; increase in periphrastic verb forms; more restrictions on word order; and so on" when comparing change typologically across languages such as Scandinavian, English and French. Some of these processes, in particular the loss of inflection, overt case-marking, and increase in periphrastic verb forms, have been highlighted here in relation to the loss of verb-movement. As discussed, it is unlikely that there was a strong link between the loss of inflection and the loss of verb-movement, especially as there is disagreement as to the level of richness of Northern agreement inflection, and whether the loss of inflection led to the loss of verb-movement. Furthermore, using the terms 'simplification' and 'complexification' to describe the morphosyntactic systems of any language is potentially problematic and contributes to ideology on the superiority of particular languages. For instance, DeGraff (2005: 318-319) explains that Haitian Creole, or Kreyòl, underwent similar processes in its history, including the loss of V-to-I raising, yet, in comparison to its lexifier French, has been considered to have undergone an exceptional language change process. Even though scholars may be factually

describing processes whereby inflectional endings are no longer used within a paradigm, these descriptions may be contributing to the idea that Creole languages as a whole are reduced or simplified in nature and do not follow ‘typical’ language development, despite undergoing similar processes to that of French and English. While these terms are used widely in historical linguistics, I refrain from using such labels to explain the nuances of verb second in English, following contact with Scandinavian languages.

This section highlighted the need to move away from the proposed correlation between morphology and syntax, as referred to in earlier work. In contrast, I align with proposals that link the role of information structure, specifically how referents are linked and organised using sentence structure, to partly explain the destabilisation of V2 in ME. This is a suitable approach to take given the numerous counterexamples that have been identified in the Old and Middle English data. It can also pinpoint where specific syntactic and/or IS pressures were at play in certain structures of V2. I move onto these theories in Section 1.6.3, highlighting potential places of interaction between different factors of language change.

1.6.2. The role of dialect variation and language contact on the instability of Middle English verb second

Dialect variation and language contact have been incorporated into several approaches to the loss of inflectional morphology and its impact on the frequency of V2 usage in English, including Kroch and Taylor (1994, 1997) and Kroch, Taylor and Ringe’s (2000) work (henceforth, KTR) on potential imperfect learning of the English morphological system by Norse speakers who settled in England following invasion. This work has largely focused on differing V2 systems within the Northern and Southern dialects of Middle English. For instance, Haeberli (2002a) suggests that the Northern dialect lacked an Agreement node, which figures directly into the notion that the morphological system of late medieval English was impoverished and resulted in a lack of V-to-I movement. KTR’s (2000) approach is complementary of this morphosyntactic approach, who suggest that it is the acquisition of Norse learners that might have caused instability in the use of V2 in English, with the landing site of the verb shifting to C as opposed to I. As noted in the above sections, there are two classes of criticism that morphological approaches face. First, the idea that

the loss of verb-movement in English was impacted by a lack of a rich morphological system (the ‘Rich Agreement Hypothesis’ or RAH) is criticised particularly because of the existence of languages that do not necessarily fulfil this link (e.g. Icelandic and Danish). In response, scholars have proposed that the link between mood and aspect might provide a more nuanced outlook on how verb-movement might have been affected in the history of English (e.g. Biberauer and Roberts 2010; Haeberli and Ihsane 2016; Walkden 2021a). Second, the approach incorporates the notion that there were two separate grammars in Middle English, CP- and IP-V2, yet I have shown that the locus of verb-movement in Old English can be argued to be the CP domain in all contexts, given the asymmetry between main and embedded clauses with respect to V2 usage (Section 1.5). I have therefore rejected both the RAH and the IP-V2 analysis of V2, and in this section I reconsider the extent to which Norse influence existed in medieval English – which have often relied on the RAH and IP-V2 analyses – along with the precise nature of this influence on the use of V2.

1.6.2.1. The extent of Norse influence on English (morpho)syntax

I begin by describing the situation of Norse influence in England during the late medieval period, followed by its potential impact on the English grammatical system as proposed by prior scholars. Dawson (2003), following work by Siegel (1985), suggests that English underwent a process of ‘koineization’, after contact with Norse in the late 8th to early 11th centuries. This process can be defined as “the stabilized result of mixing of linguistic subsystems such as regional or literary dialects”, which “usually serves as a lingua franca among speakers of the different contributing varieties”, and, potentially, can be “characterized by a mixture of features of these varieties and most often by reduction or simplification in comparison” (Siegel 1985: 363, cited in Dawson 2003: 46). This influence was particularly prevalent in the North and East of England where the Vikings held strong sociopolitical influence following their invasions and establishment of the Danelaw, as well as during the reclamation of land in Wessex (the West Midlands and South) by the English armies in the middle of the tenth century (Dawson 2003: 42). A map of the Danish and Norwegian settlement patterns is provided in Figure 5 below.

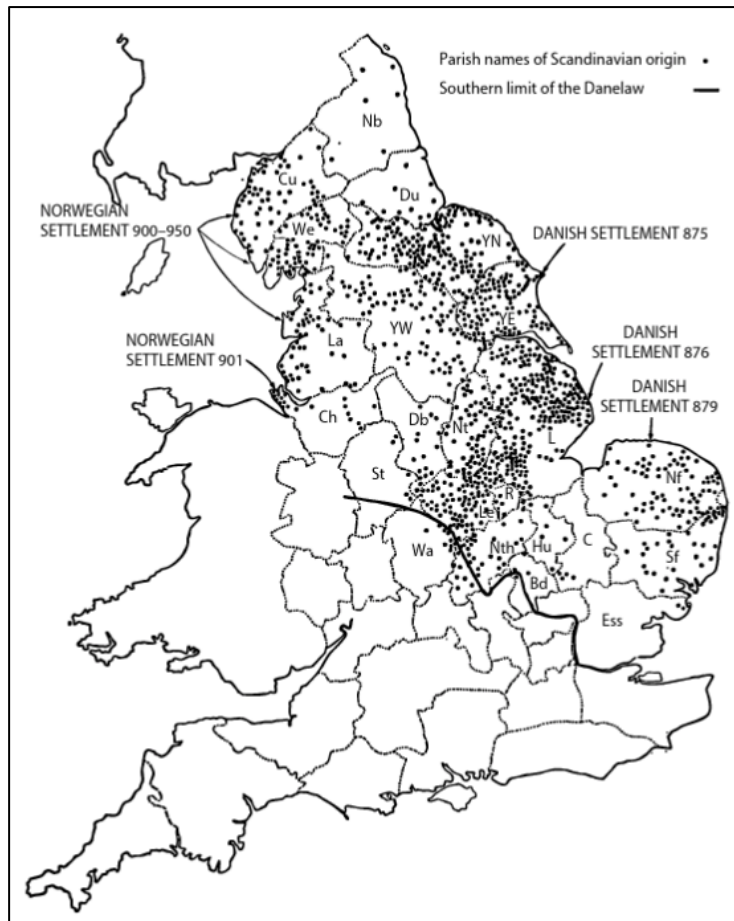


Figure 5: A map of Norse (Danish and Norwegian) settlement in the ninth and tenth centuries in England (van Gelderen 2014: 101).

Figure 5 shows the concentration of settlement patterns in the North and east coast of England (including Lincolnshire and East Anglia); locations where several Middle English prose works were produced. These are also areas where contact between English and Norse speakers would have been most strong. Recent archaeological excavations, related to the uncovering of Scandinavian metalwork in the North and East of England, such as brooches, amulets, and silver, belonging to those of Scandinavian ancestry, suggest that English and Norse settlers had combined their communities in a much more significant way than first assumed (Richards and Haldenby 2018: 324). They note that Norse impact must have been quite substantial because of the number of sites that were identified in southern Northumbria as a result of metal-detecting (2018: 344). It is clear that the influence of Norse settlers must have been profound in many walks of life, and that their use of the V2 phenomenon may have impacted language forms. There are four main reasons why the process of ‘koineization’ might be able to reflect the situation following contact between English and Norse: a) there was potential mutual intelligibility of the two

languages following contact; b) there was an abundance of words loaned from Norse; c) there was a reduction of the number of inflectional forms in the English morphological paradigm following contact with Norse; and d) the language arising from contact expanded as the language of literature and was established as the standard language (Dawson 2003: 46-48).¹⁸

Some of the potential morphological Norse influences on English are listed by Miller (2012: 128). The “well established and reasonably secure” Norse influences on the English morphological system include the pronoun *they*, verbal suffixes such as *-n*, in *harden*, *quicken*, *whiten*, *loosen*, etc., and *-l-* as in *twinclian* > *twinkle*, *dreflian* > *drivel* (2012: 128). Warner (2017) uses additional dialectal data from the Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English (LAEME), and finds that the geography of reduced Middle English inflectional forms largely corresponds with Norse settlements, especially regarding the loss of verbal morphology (e.g. the *-i/ij-* formative in weak verbal endings, which rarely occurred in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Yorkshire and Lancashire). Warner also refers to koineization as a process that would have contributed to this ‘simplification’, but also explains that some changes may have occurred as part of dialect-internal reduction processes (e.g. the rise of determiners such as *þe* as opposed to demonstratives such as *þone*) (2017: 349). In addition to some types of inflectional morphology that might have been affected by contact with Norse, words and place-names were particularly impacted. Pons Sanz (2013: 279) found that some of the terms acquired from Norse had an “initial association with a foreign culture and had a limited life as far as their diachronic and/or diatopic use is concerned”, whereas in some cases, Norse terms became a central part of their lexico-semantic field in the medieval period. Norse words were therefore loaned in a range of different contexts and were used at varying frequency levels. Since there is a clear possibility that Norse contact impacted the English language across different areas of linguistics – potentially visible via dialectal data – Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (2000) developed an approach for the loss of V2, building on the work advocating for the impact of the morphological paradigm on verb-movement.

¹⁸ Walkden (2021a, in press; with reference to Townend 2002), has also noted that Old Norse might have been intelligible to speakers of Old English, and that mass-second language learning of Norse learners might not have happened, given the presence of multilingualism in England at the time. I argue that it is not necessarily the case that multilingualism does not create favourable conditions for language change in Chapter 6, returning to the nature of Norse acquisition here.

KTR's (2000) study explores the specific type of linguistic influence that Norse might have had on the use of V2, especially in Middle English when its use became unstable. It is one of the first to incorporate the notion that language acquisition might drive language change in communities, specifically with reference to the V2 phenomenon in English, which is proposed to have occurred via the imperfect learning of Norse settlers acquiring English. This idea is largely based around evidence of dialect variation in Middle English texts, suggesting that contact between these varieties would have led to the loss of V-to-I movement beginning in the North, spreading across the entirety of England, and resulting in the decline of V2 in English. They propose that a new Northern 'CP-V2' grammar arose, similar to that of modern Scandinavian, German, and Dutch, evidenced by the occurrence of V2 with both pronominal and nominal subjects; a feature uncharacteristic of the English V2 syntax as a whole. To recap, a CP-V2 language is said to involve movement of the verb to the Complementizer domain, as opposed to the Inflectional domain (IP-V2), because of the asymmetry in use of V2 in main and embedded clauses. Given the differences present in ME texts, KTR claim that the general V2 grammar of Old English was IP-V2, following Pintzuk (1991, 1993), which allowed for rich agreement inflection, and thus verb-movement to I. Because of the lack of rich agreement inflection in the North, resulting from the collapsing of the paradigm, the verb could no longer land in I, moving to C instead.

They conclude that this apparent simplification of verbal agreement was due to contact between English and Norse speakers, and a result of the imperfect learning of English by Norse settlers, who used a reduced morphological system and thus a lack of V-to-I movement (2000: 378). They then suggest that speakers of English were exposed to both a CP- and IP-V2 grammar following contact with Norse, especially when the Northern features spread into the South (2000: 377). They postulate that Chaucer's use of V2 in his prose works, which exhibit a near-categorical rate of inversion in the majority of syntactic contexts, evident with both pronominal and nominal subjects, is representative of the spread of the Northern V2 grammar in London in late medieval English. It is this minority grammar that KTR present as the first step toward an overall non-V2 grammar—competition between both grammars resulted in the unmarked order, non-V2, winning out over the marked order, CP-V2, and a growth of V3 order into Early Modern English.

KTR's evidence for the impact of Norse contact on V2 is based around dialectal data, and the identification of potential 'relic' areas in England whereby a Norse-influenced V2 was able to flourish. In particular, they suggest that the Central West Yorkshire text *The Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet*, one of the oldest prose works in the Northern dialect, displays a high incidence of V2 word order in comparison to V3, which is especially notable with pronominal subjects (with 67-100% inversion rate with a number of initial constituents) (KTR 2000: 372). They posit that this high occurrence of postverbal subject pronouns is due to the text's proximity to Norse settlement in the North, with the strict V2 grammar surviving longest in this location. They also state that the status of pronouns might be due to decliticisation in the North arising from the introduction of the Norse pronoun *they*, originally a demonstrative, making subject pronouns behave similarly to nominal subjects. However, they also note that subject pronouns in Northern texts generally do not behave differently from subject pronouns in Southern texts, and that differences tend to occur when the V2 phenomenon is being considered (KTR 2000: 372). Thus, they emphasise that any changes in the status of pronouns is typical of dialects as a whole, and generally occurred alongside the change in VO order in the history of English (resulting in pronouns not moving beyond the verb to initial position).

An alternate, yet complementary, view on the dialect and language contact situation of V2 variation in Middle English comes from Prasad (2000), who emphasises the importance of contact between Northern and East Midlands varieties, with factors independent of language contact affecting the V2 of West Midlands and Southern dialects during this time. Prasad explains the need for dialects to be broken down further into these distinct areas in relation to the use of V2, especially as KTR primarily focus on the North and South, with some reference to texts of other dialectal areas. This distinction is necessary because Prasad finds that there is a very high inversion rate in East Midlands dialects up until 1500 (80-100%), versus a much lower rate in the South and West Midlands (34%). Given these figures, it is possible that competition between different dialects would not have set in until 1500, especially in the East Midlands where the use of V2 remained high as in Northern dialects, potentially to accommodate to the proposed Northern CP-V2 grammar (Prasad 2000: 376). Prasad also refers to potential changes in clitic status in the South and West Midlands, to explain the observed lower incidences of V2, in that pronoun subjects would move to Spec, VP, rather than attached to the CP/IP boundary (2000: 377).

The idea that contact began between the North and East Midlands especially provides room for discussion with respect to Norse influence in these areas.

It is certainly possible that Norse influence would escalate any changes already emerging as a result of internal grammatical and discourse-related pressures. Los (2015: 209-210) highlights that there is potentially both internal and external pressures on the use of V2 in England at the time, leading to the overall demise of V2. Regarding Norse influence, she notes the increase in wool trade in London and thus mobility in and out of the capital would have provided the conditions necessary for the mixing of the near-categorical Northern V2 grammar, which had no distinctions between V2 with different subject-types, and the V2 grammar of the South, affected by IS, making it potentially undeniable that there was dialectal and Norse influence of some form. Moreover, these changes arising from language contact would still be visible in the early part of Middle English, and perhaps within long lineages of families who settled in once-Norse populated areas. As Dawson (2003: 43) notes, significant contact between Norse and English speakers would have continued into the late eleventh century, as the northern Danelaw was repopulated by settlers of Scandinavian and Irish parentage. This influence would then have been evident in early Middle English texts, due to the lag in producing written materials until after the Norman Conquest. Tristram (2004: 103) refers to diglossia in Old English, meaning that the low variety spoken by the majority of the population would have only surfaced in writing after the Normans invaded. Thus, early Middle English texts may indeed reflect this earlier instantiation of writing which largely represented both the British and Danelaw areas, and it is entirely possible that Norse influence amongst the population would not be seen until ME when there is more clear-cut information on the provenance of such texts. It is understandable that texts from the North and East Midlands in modern-day corpora might reflect a highly frequent, Norse-influenced V2, which did not discriminate between the types of subject in the sentence, whether pronominal or nominal.

1.6.2.2. Criticism of the dialect variation and language contact approach

I now refer to the necessary precautions related to using the dialect variation and language contact approach, by itself, to evidence change in the frequency of V2 in English. Even though it is viable that Norse influenced the English language via language contact, as

evidenced by Norse loan words, and the effect on some types of inflectional morphology, language contact is not the only explanation for the loss of English verb second syntax. For instance, van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) do not focus on the effect of Norse syntax on English in their work on V2, and instead explore the internal changes within Middle English V2 syntax related to the role of information structure, as well as the acquisition of the IS-influenced structure by younger generations of speakers. Furthermore, in recent work, van Kemenade (2022) acknowledges that Norse influence on V2 syntax must be important, yet there are nuances to this influence, showing how only certain types of V2 might have been impacted. The V2 contexts likely affected by Norse influence were those with auxiliary verbs, and van Kemenade explains that investigating the wider grammaticalisation of verbs may be crucial (see Chapter 4). Biberauer and Roberts (2018: 247) also mention that the loss of V2 coincided with the rise of auxiliaries as a “distinct class of ‘T-elements’”, a class that is now one of the few elements permitted to occur in the second position of the sentence, following non-subject constituents. This restriction of non-subject-initial V2 to sentences with auxiliaries and modals is a result of their ability to undergo v-to-T raising or be base-generated in T in present-day English, which coincided with the loss of V-raising with lexical verbs. This explanation is complementary to the dialectal approach I present in this thesis, and that of van Kemenade’s, in that the only V2 sentences which were likely influenced by Norse were those with auxiliary verbs. Furthermore, Biberauer and Roberts (2018) situate their argument within the idea that syntactic change must occur at interfaces (e.g. see the Inertia Principle in Longobardi 2001), thus highlighting the need for dialectally-focused explanations for change to show potential interactions with internally-driven explanations for change.

A further challenge for approaches that investigate possible Norse influence on English V2 is related to the insufficiency of morphosyntactic explanations for the change, and the lack of evidence available to show the extent of Norse influence. As I present in Section 1.6.1.2.1, the loss of subject-verb agreement within the inflectional paradigm did not necessarily drive the loss of verb-movement in English (i.e. the Rich Agreement Hypothesis, or RAH). The RAH has often been used by scholars to advocate for Norse influence on English V2 syntax, which suggests that a different interface should be explored. Furthermore, Miller (2012) argues that the introduction of the verbal 3sg. suffix *-s* did not arise from English contact with Norse—rather, it was a result of an internal process that spread from the second person singular form, to the plural, making its way to

the third person singular. Dance (2017: 216) supports this idea (referring to Miller's (2002) research), by stating that the introduction of *-s* may have been a result of analogy and levelling of the verbal paradigm, which was only partly simplified by contact with Norse. Dance also emphasises that the only evidence available to modern historical linguists to highlight the effect of Norse on the English language comes from dialectal data. Consequently, this source may be limited for showing the effect of Norse on English V2 syntax, when not considered in conjunction with the effect of different types of grammatical and discourse-related variables (as well as morphosyntactic variables).

Additionally, the date of the 'CP-V2' grammar of Northern Old English (a proposed V2 grammar introduced by KTR 2000) – evidenced by the Lindisfarne and Rushworth 2 Gospel glosses (10th century Northumbrian texts) – occurred before potential imposition (the transfer of morphosyntax from the L1 to the L2 language), and simplification (of the morphological paradigm) by Norse learners. The Northumbrian OE glossal translations would have occurred in the "settlement" phase (Pons-Sanz 2013, cited in Walkden in press: 19-20), prior to the phase of potential drastic change. The glosses are thought to have been produced in Bernicia, at the northern most point of Northumbria, which Walkden identifies as not "a core area of Scandinavian settlement in Britain" (2021a: 5, citing work by Thomason and Kaufman 1988; Samuels 1989), referring to a range of evidence that suggests this location would have been scarcely populated. Along with the fact KTR's (2000) study relies on the RAH and the notion that there are distinct CP- and IP-V2 grammars in Middle English, the language contact approach requires a necessary readdressing of the impact on Norse influence on V2. As Walkden (in press: 29) mentions, "Old English may not have many good candidates for such influence, but Middle English has several, many of which seem to involve the increase in use of a structure that is common to the two languages", suggesting some sort of acceleration of V2 arising from contact between English and Norse existed. In relation to ME, then, this is an important route to follow in trying to understand V2 instability and variation, that eventually led to its demise in later English.

In addition to contact with Norse, it is well-known that English was enriched by contact with French and Anglo-Norman, following the Norman Conquest of 1066. Many scholars have reviewed the impact that this historical situation may have had on the V2 syntax of English, which might have also contributed to both declining and increasing V2

usage tendencies in late medieval English. For instance, Haeberli (2007: 30) suggests that Chaucer's use of V2 may be connected to his links with French via family connections, business, and his role as an administrator, which is potentially evidenced by his adaptations of French exemplars in both *Boethius* and his prose works in *The Canterbury Tales*. Nevertheless, a consideration of the strength of the links of medieval scholarship to French exemplars appears to be a distinct matter to focusing on the more overt evidence available in the history of English (e.g. data on the frequency of specific (morpho)syntactic structures). Haeberli (2010) also explains that some of the individual changes under the umbrella of the loss of V2 in English may only loosely be connected to Anglo-Norman influence. He investigates the increase in V2 usage with pronominal subjects and attributes the change partly to contact with French, given the reported rate of inversion with pronominal subjects in Continental French was 61.9% with an initial object (data arises from Ingham 2006), meaning that the use of this innovative type of V2 may have been calqued on Anglo-Norman syntax post-Conquest. Due to the difficulty of quantifying the effect that French and adaptation or translation had on the syntax of ME texts, the more frequent discussion on the influence of Old Norse morphosyntax, the fact that the impact of French on the syntax of English is more unknown compared to its influence on the English lexicon, as well as the general lack of resources with dialectal metadata for medieval texts, I do not focus on French.¹⁹ I instead reserve the impact of Anglo-Norman and French on English V2 syntax for future research, directing the reader to some of the work that has been completed on this French influence for V2 and syntactic change more generally (e.g. Haeberli 2007, 2010, 2014, 2018; Ingham 2006, 2012; Wagner 2003; Roberts 1993).

¹⁹ Despite the scarcity of data for evidencing Norse influence on English syntax, it is possible, to an extent, to use Middle English dialectal data to quantify the impact of Norse on V2. This type of data is not available to show the impact of Anglo-Norman on English syntax, given AN impact on the English language (e.g. on loan words) came from above rather than below in this contact scenario, unlike the intense contact between Old English and Old Norse speakers. Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) scale of influence, from one language to another, shows that lower levels of contact are only influence grammatical words and affixes, loan words, and some parts of the morphological system, while strong cultural pressures can impact word order. Van Gelderen (2014: 112), citing Thomason and Kaufman (1988), argues that the former reflects the situation of Anglo-Norman contact, which was between speakers of a high social standing (i.e. in the courts and bureaucracy). The latter cultural effect reflects the situation of English-Norse contact, as it was speakers on the ground who interacted and drove a cultural shift to the way in which English was spoken. Thus, while I do not dismiss the extensive Anglo-Norman influence on the English language, and the possibility that certain writers calqued their V2 syntax on Anglo-Norman (e.g. see Ingham 2006), here I recognise the advantages to exploring Norse contact in relation the trajectory of English V2.

A final point with respect to the use of V2 in English following contact with Norse is that few accounts have considered both IS and dialect variation as interacting and explanatory factors for the change in V2. The differences between the two languages may therefore come down to how they are structured in relation to information status. Both English and Norse have been considered as languages involving V-to-C movement, and V3 is rarely found in Norse (see e.g. Eythórsson 1995; Faarlund 2004 and Ingason et al. 2011, cited in Walkden 2012: 79), yet English in particular might have a split CP domain that is driven by IS-based pressures and given-before-new tendencies, especially since the V2 phenomenon was not strictly applied in all sentences where it could occur in OE. As opposed to assuming an obvious morphosyntactic difference between the two languages, it may therefore be accounts of IS and its effect on V2 that provide the closest answer regarding intra-dialectal variation and the use of the phenomenon.

In this section, I outlined the prior accounts that have aimed to document the extent to which Norse impacted the English language, and demonstrated how this language contact scenario might have affected the use of verb second. Dance (2017: 215-216) suggests that “Norse influence on inflectional morphology is more difficult to trace with confidence” compared to lexical influences, and it is also evident that syntactic changes cannot easily be subsumed under the Norse-English contact and dialect variation approach either. Thus, my view is that the impact of Norse on the use of V2 in English has potentially been overestimated up until this point, which may be partly reflected by the movement of scholars toward the impact of information structure on V2 syntax. The current study therefore reassesses whether Norse had any influence on V2 syntax, particularly by analysing the syntactic and sociohistorical variables present within Middle English texts (e.g. type of subject, verb, initial constituent, and their interaction with the dialect/provenance of the ME text). As originally noted by KTR (2000), there is a clear dialectal difference in the use of V2 which cannot be overlooked; however, the question as to whether this difference can be seen across the entirety of V2 contexts – both syntactic and dialectal – must be explored further.

1.6.3. The diminished pressure of information structure on Middle English verb second

The Old English period saw numerous pressures on the syntax of V2, one of these coming from the realm of information structure. Recall that subjects occurred in different positions depending on the type of information they exhibited, especially when the initial constituent was anaphoric. New subjects generally occurred in a low structural position, as the verb acted as a barrier between the familiar information expressed by the initial anaphor and the new or focused information toward the end of the sentence. On the other hand, familiar or given subjects were placed higher, to be closer to preceding discourse and to more easily refer to their antecedent within this prior context. These information-structural tendencies meant that V2 occurred most frequently with new subjects, while given subjects preferred to be in a preverbal position. Those studying the potential links between the loss of inflectional morphology and the rise of a strict word order in the history of English also noted the need to articulate distinct positions for pronominal (usually given) and nominal (often new, but also given) subjects, yet until the focus shifted to the role of pragmatics and IS on syntax, the forces driving these specific positions for subjects was unknown. Thus, in recent years it has become evident that any account analysing changes to the use of V2 in English must incorporate the role of IS in that change. In this section I therefore pick up from Section 1.5.2 which discussed the impact of IS on OE V2, highlighting how IS led to high variation of V2 in ME, and demonstrating how such variation might figure into future analyses of V2 in English.

In an analysis of the change from OV to VO word order in German, Hinterhölzl (2009: 49) proposed that it is “the expression of different IS categories within one grammar” that explains variation in syntax. This interaction between IS and syntax opposes the idea that speakers have two individual grammars for OV and VO order. A similar stance has been taken by scholars examining the loss of V2 over the history of English, instead referring to changes in the status of IS to explain how speakers may vary in their use of V2 and V3 in the same grammar during the late medieval period. Van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) found that “many successive small changes” contributed to the growing use of a non-V2 word order, one of which was likely the extent to which IS influenced V2 syntax. In contexts with initial anaphors, they find that the use of V2 with pronominal subjects and auxiliary verbs increased in the latter stages of Middle English

(2012: 101). They consider V2 sentences with initial *wh*-words, negation, and discourse-advancing adverbs to be sentences that are triggered by a syntactic requirement; the fronting of an operator-like element is linked to the movement of the verb to second position. Conversely, V2 sentences introduced by anaphoric constituents, as mentioned, were influenced by IS, and would ordinarily result in a low frequency of V2 with subject pronouns, which nearly always exhibited given information. They therefore suggest the increase in V2 with pronominal subjects in late ME in these contexts would be due to a syntactic requirement, potentially linked to learners' overgeneralisation of the syntactic trigger for V2, especially due to the high variation in use of types of V2 driven by both syntax and IS. Likewise with nominal subjects, they find that the rise in their appearance preverbally, resulting in V3 word order, was likely due to the lack of correlation between IS and syntax in late medieval English, again arising from learners choosing syntactic V2 options instead. They conclude that the decline in inversion with nominal subjects was because "the IS systematicity underlying the choice of subject position ha[d] become disrupted" (2012: 110), resulting in the opposing pattern occurring: a higher rate of V2 with pronominal subjects and a lower rate of V2 with nominal subjects. Clearly these two scenarios signal great instability in the use of V2 in ME. As Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade make clear, the occurrence of V3 with both pronominal and nominal subjects in late medieval English is a result of "the neutralization of the IS status of the preverbal subject position: the preverbal subject position becomes a syntactic requirement" (2012: 817), thus paving the way for the use of non-inversion and V3 word order.

One of the many potential interfaces within the study of English V2 is the acquisition of L1 speakers of English and their interaction with the information status of constituents within the sentence. Van Kemenade and Westergaard incorporate insights from L1 acquisition into their work, referring specifically to input-driven and cue-based accounts of acquisition. They state that "children are generally sensitive both to minor syntactic distinctions and patterns of IS, and very early produce differential word orders in appropriate contexts, e.g. V2 and non-V2 dependent on clause type of the IS status of the subject" (2012: 111). They propose that children might have acquired a V2 driven solely by syntax over IS, due to various economy principles in the acquisition process. I reserve discussion of how acquisition might have impacted the syntax and structure of discourse relations for Chapter 6.

As a result of the neutralisation of the preverbal position and its IS status, arising from the weakening link between IS and syntax, the preverbal subject, rather than the initial constituent, became responsible for maintaining discourse relations. Los (2012: 41) describes the move from a bounded to an unbounded system in English, where the number of options for speakers to use in order to position “discourse linkers, contrastive focus, and [...] new information” were drastically reducing. In particular, the multifunctionality of the initial constituent for discourse linking was lost, a role which was instead taken by the preverbal subject. One intriguing point is the ordering in which these changes occurred, and whether the loss of V2 was a process that prompted changes to the status of IS in English, or vice versa. Los summarises these questions as follows:

“The challenge is to find out what triggered what. Did the ability of deictic elements to convey specific reference decline because of the loss of a dedicated first position for linking (i.e. the loss of verb second)? Can the loss of that dedicated first position be reduced to a loss in functional flexibility of the first constituent, which made it difficult to use that position for local anchors?”

(Los 2012: 41)

Here I assume that there is a bidirectional process whereby these changes affected one another; specifically, that the loss of V2 and the loss of the multifunctionality of the initial constituent reinforced one another and led to the growing use of V3. However, as Los makes clear, the most important aspect to note is that the initial constituent is crucial for the status of the verb in its second position. Without the space for discourse-advancing at the beginning of the sentence in earlier English, there is little need for the verb to occur in second position to separate given from new/focused information.

Following what has been described as the loss of “local anchors”, such as adverbials which link to the immediately preceding discourse, the instability of V2 and the growing use of V3 is representative of a shift in perspective particularly with respect to narratives. For instance, Los and Dreschler find that there is not only a discourse-advancing use of the increased preverbal subjects, which also act “as an expression of the protagonist”, but also that these subjects can act as “players” making inanimate subjects agents in the sentence (2012: 871). The present-day English sentence “the wind is blowing him off the board”, related to the sentence “a young man is surfing” (Los and Dreschler 2012: 869) entails that external forces can be given nominative case and the role of agent in an event. Furthermore,

Komen et al. (2014) found that the number of protagonists used as subjects decreased when analysing subjects exhibiting referential information, with the number of inanimate subjects increasing, along with a steady decline of clause-initial constituents exhibiting discourse-advancing information from 60% in ME to 20% in late modern English. It is likely that, during the loss of V2 and the multifunctional first constituent, including the move from inversion to non-inversion, subjects may have been increasingly used to refer to preceding discourse regardless of its position in the sentence, with a period of overlap as these changes began to occur. It is therefore unclear as to whether the loss of local anchors or the loss of V2 came first in English, however, Los et al. (2023) point toward the decline in the anaphoric referential status of initial PPs preceding the loss of V2. They conclude the following:

“In Los & van Kemenade (2018), we speculate that the loss of V2 meant the loss of a multifunctional first position (multifunctional in terms of information-structural status as well as in terms of syntactic function), which worked in tandem with an articulate, gendered, demonstrative pronoun paradigm to enable unmarked links to the immediately preceding discourse. [...] the loss of local anchors started earlier, and its timing suggests that it was due to the loss of that gendered paradigm, and later reinforced by – and possibly kickstarting – the loss of V2.”

(Los et al. 2023: 23)

There is a growing body of evidence surrounding the link, or lack thereof, between information structure and syntax in the later medieval period and its contribution toward the decline of use in V2. It is therefore crucial that analyses, especially qualitative ones, consider this link. I thus incorporate the interaction into Chapter 5 when discussing the differences between different types of text, their rhetoric, and their lack of reliance upon information structure in late medieval English.

1.6.3.1. The structuring of discourse relations and links to V2

An issue related to the evolving link between IS and syntax in the history of English is the potential changes in discourse relations between sentences from Old to Middle English. Bech (2012: 67) refers to “Segmented Discourse Representation Theory” (SDRT), originally proposed by Asher and Lascarides (2003) and Asher and Vieu (2005), which outlines the dichotomy of coordinating and subordinating *discourse* relations between

sentences in a text (distinct from *syntactic* coordination and subordination), with some aspects of the text playing a subordinate role to other parts. In particular, Bech summarises that “foregrounding basically corresponds to SDRT’s coordinating relations, and backgrounding to subordinating relations”, which is especially important for considering the use of V2 in individual texts (e.g. see Chapter 5).²⁰ One of the primary issues identified by Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2005) was the insufficiency of solely focusing on information structure to identify the type of discourse relations across the entirety of the text; for example, some V1 sentences included referents that looked backward within the discourse, alongside those looking forward. Instead, it is most appropriate to establish the overall purpose of using given and new referents within each V1 and V2 sentence, to be able to work out the way in which ideas were communicated across the whole text. Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2005: 3) found that, in Old High German (OHG), the use of V2 sentences linked to “the rhetorical relation of *Elaboration* viewed as the prototype of subordinating linkage of discourse segments”, whereas V1 sentences established new situations, occurred primarily at the start of new narrative sequences, and drove “the continuation of the story” (the rhetorical relation of *Narration*). They propose that, in OHG, the verb occurred in second position only after given discourse referents (DR), and to separate the topic from the comment, while the verb occurred in first position before given *and* new discourse referents, as below:

Verb-second sentences:

[DR_{GIV}]_{TOP} [Vfin...]_{COMMENT/FOCUS}

Verb-initial sentences:

[Vfin...DR_{NEW/GIV}...]_{COMMENT/FOCUS}

(Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2005: 2-6)

²⁰ The exploration of subordinating and coordinating discourse relations can show how the entire rhetoric of a text is structured (i.e. the way in which ideas are communicated across an entire text, especially to persuade or convince a reader), and how one entire topic or concept leads onto another. On the other hand, analysis of information structure is more specific – at the level of the referent within the sentence – and shows how one referent links to another across sentences, or how a referent is introduced for the first time. The study of discourse relations and information structure within a text can provide more information on why the text is structured the way it is.

- (17) *ih bin guot hirti. [guot hirti] / tuot sina sela furi sinu scaph*
 I am good shepherd. [good shepherd] **gives** his soul for his sheep
 ‘I am a good shepherd. A good shepherd gives his soul for his sheep’

(Tatian Translation 225, 16-17, adapted from Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2005: 2)

In the above OHG 9th century *Tatian Translation* sentence (17), the use of the verb *tuot* ‘gives’ separates the aboutness topic (the initial subject *guot hirti* ‘good shepherd’) from the rest of the sentence exhibiting new information (the direct and indirect object *sina sela furi sinu scaph* ‘his soul for the sheep’). The initial familiar subject *guot hirti*, along with the verb in second position separating the given and new information, signals a subordinating discourse relation with the previous sentence. It is the positioning of the verb in second position, along with the given discourse referent, which facilitates analysis of the entirety of the second sentence as elaborating on a previous statement.²¹ Thus, the positioning of both the subject and its information structural status, and the positioning of the verb, contribute to analysis of the discourse relations of the entire text, and is something I explore further in Chaucer’s prose works (Chapter 5).

Relatedly, while Bech (2012) mainly focuses on the outcome of verb-final order for discourse segmentation, she briefly refers to a comparison she made in Bech (2001), where XVS and XSV patterns are compared in Old English. Unlike OHG, she found no pattern emerging associated with the dichotomy of subordinating and coordinating relations, instead noting that the information-structural status of the subject (whether given or not) was most crucial for the position of the verb (Bech 2012: 82). Even though there has been no definitive pattern found for Old English, the breakdown of the link between IS and syntax (said to have driven the position of the verb in OE) may show that V2 word orders in ME, especially those which increased temporarily, look more like that of Germanic languages in terms of their discourse subordination, and may facilitate arguments within texts of an exhortative nature.

²¹ Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2005: 2) explain that “the position of the finite verb serves to distinguish the information-structural domains of Topic and Focus in sentences of the Old High German period”—thus, additional analysis of the position of the finite verb, as well as the position of given and new referents, can provide further information about the way in which different discourse relations are structured within the entire text.

To summarise, the findings from prior studies on information structure, and subordinating/coordinating discourse relations, are relevant for understanding how the structure of a text is linked to the type of rhetoric, and especially, which constituents were responsible for the encoding of these information structural and discourse relations. Furthermore, IS and discourse-related analysis is important for understanding whether V2 and V3 structures might be showing signs of the weakened link between syntax and information structure in individual texts, based on whether given and/or new subjects occurred pre- or postverbally in sentences with different types of initial constituent. These methods are utilised in the case study on Chaucer's prose works and use of V2 (Chapter 5), in combination with an analysis of the provenance of ME texts to ascertain whether there were certain factors to do with origin (e.g. location of the text or the author's dialect) that might have impacted their use of V2 (Chapter 4). As Eitler and Westergaard (2014) make clear, there is certainly room to analyse the strength of the link between information status and syntax in individual texts in combination with other sociohistorical variables (in the case of Eitler and Westergaard's study, the role of audience design). In the following sections I demonstrate how this analysis can be implemented for these types of case studies, to understand the nuanced reasoning behind the use of V2 in different sociohistorical contexts and for different discourse-related purposes.

1.6.4. The nuances of English verb second in different sociohistorical contexts: The impact of genre/text-type and information structure on the instability of V2

In combination with information-structural theories, and in order to move beyond solely (morpho)syntactic theories of change, few analyses have been conducted that incorporate insights from the impact of text-type and/or discourse relations on the use of V2 of a specific author. Few case studies have been conducted on individual Middle English texts, despite the fact that they can lead to a deeper understanding of why specific authors vary in their use of V2, depending on the type of text and their rhetoric, and how these textual aspects interact with information structure.

Two notable studies focusing on the rate of V2 within a single authors' works are Eitler (2006) on Geoffrey Chaucer and John Capgrave's works, and Eitler and Westergaard (2014) on Capgrave. Generally, these studies relate the structuring of discourse relations to

the role of audience design as a factor driving rates of V2 in prose works, specifically the (un)familiarity of the audience—whether the text was written for a local, regional, or national readership. They also incorporate perspectives from language contact, and Chaucer and Capgrave’s own dialect, to explain the use of V2, in particular, whether there was strict V-to-C movement like Norse (CP-V2), a V-to-I movement affected by IS (IP- or IS-V2), or whether they adopted an infrequent V2 usage representative of the growing V3 grammar in English at the time. For instance, Eitler and Westergaard (2014: 225) proposed that Capgrave’s *Sermon* generally adopted ‘V-to-C’, as V2 was used in all contexts regardless of the information status of the subject in these contexts. They suggest that Capgrave used a typical East Anglian V2 grammar since the sermon was initially written to be preached at a local congregation. In contrast, they found that the two Saints’ lives, the *Life of Saint Augustine* and the *Life of Saint Gilbert*, exhibited a V2 affected by IS pressures. The V2 in this text occurred generally with new, rather than familiar, subjects, which they propose to be representative of a regional audience based in the East Midlands—an area that was not affected by the rise of the innovative non-V2 grammar generally occurring in the South. Finally, they found that the text *Abbreviacion of Cronicles* had the highest rate of V3 out of all the texts (a non-V2 grammar), as it was written for a national audience because of its dedication to the King. They report that there was a statistically significant correlation between whether the audience was local or national, and the presence of a V2 or non-V2 grammar, insinuating that audience may play a role in the appearance of a specific type of V2 syntax.

As noted in prior sections, there are challenges to the V-to-I movement proposal for English used in these studies. The idea that English likely adopted V-to-C movement in all syntactic environments means that there may not be two distinct ‘V2 grammars’ across Middle English dialects (i.e. one entire dialect with V-to-C movement and another with V-to-I). There might instead be a range of possibilities for V2 word order within each dialect of ME, due to the information-structural tendencies present within the syntax of English that began to break down in some dialectal areas faster than others. Furthermore, there are two issues with the audience design model posited by Bell (1984, 2001) which is used by Eitler (2006) to explain potential accommodation toward the syntax of Chaucer and Capgrave’s readership. First, Bell’s audience design model is based on intra-speaker rather than intra-writer variation. Second, recent studies have found that speakers do not necessarily adapt their syntax to meet the needs of their interlocutors (e.g. see a recent study

by Morgan and Ferreira 2022 on resumptive pronouns), meaning that late medieval writers may also not model their syntax based on the familiarity of the audience. As Eitler (2006: 200) recognises, there is a hierarchy in terms of the effect of different factors on linguistic variation, as below:

social effects (regional effects > gender effects) > audience effects > text-type effects

(Adapted from Eitler 2006: 200)

Rather than positing that the familiarity of the audience was a driving factor behind variation in the V2 of individual author's works, the nuances of text-type can more accurately explain this variation, occurring as a product of the creation of genres based on readership interest.

The differences between genre and text-type can appear vague in the literature. Lee (2001) synthesises the definitions for both terms, referring to Biber's (1988) and EAGLES' (1996) work on the criteria that characterises these terms:

A *genre* [...] is defined as a category assigned on the basis of **external** criteria such as intended audience, purpose, and activity type, that is, it refers to a conventional, culturally recognised grouping of texts based on properties other than lexical or grammatical (co-)occurrence features, which are, instead, the **internal** (linguistic) criteria forming the basis of *text type* categories.

(Lee 2001: 38)

'Genre' encompasses the author's reasons for writing the topic, and categories are assigned based on this external criterion (Biber 1988: 170, in Lee 2001: 38). 'Text-type' then refers to the internal linguistic features that make up the text (EAGLES 1996, in Lee 2001: 38). In addition, Taavitsainen (2001: 88) refers to different types of text within the genre of medical recipes, and also uses the term 'text-type' as a factor that is defined by its internal co-occurring linguistic features. In the case study I present later, I argue that text-type categories are created based on linguistic features at the level of the discourse (i.e. an author (un)consciously decides on a text-type category based on the rhetoric and styles of discourse referencing they wish to use)—a factor which then bears upon the frequency to which V2 syntax is used in a text. I show that it is the level to which the syntax is affected by tendencies of information structure or the type of discourse – properties that then

determine the text's type – that impacts the use of V2. Below I add further detail to Eitler's (2006: 200) flowchart above:

audience effects > type of discourse > text-type

type of discourse + text-type > V2 syntax

Audience design is often used as a factor that drove the use of V2 in the history of English. It is likely that the wider audience of late medieval texts, in terms of the demand for texts of specific types, was the reason for the creation of genres and text-types. For instance, the growing need for translations of scientific handbooks from Latin into English could be considered a factor leading to the instability of the V2 phenomenon, especially as I show that their pedagogical and instructional nature gave rise to high levels of V2 in the late medieval period (Chapter 5). If such demand did not exist, use of V2 in this time period may have appeared less erratic. However, it is the text's type that provides more nuance as to why V2 was being used—text-type reflects the type of information structure or discourse adopted, which, in turn, impacts the frequency to which V2 is utilised in the text.

One issue is proposed by Eitler (2006: 210), with reference to Haeberli's (2002b) study, who notes the similarities between text-types and their rates of V2 in ME parsed corpora. However, I would argue that the categorisations used in his study, such as 'fiction', 'religious prose', 'history and geography' are too broad to be able to explain why V2 varied in ME, and largely refer to the external linguistic criteria that would have been considered from the outset of writing these texts. Instead, the texts' discourse relations, and whether sentences were organised into coordinating and subordinating levels (e.g. Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2005); the use of specific discursive features in the form of the initial constituent (as shown by the move from bounded to unbounded systems by Los 2012, Los and Dreschler 2012, and Bech 2014); and the information-structural status of the subject (e.g. Los 2009; van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012), would be more appropriate descriptors for a text's type and how these impacted the frequency of V2. Regarding the first of these factors, Hinterhölzl and Petrova, in their study of V1 and V2 in Old High German (OHG), found that verb second placement marked a move toward discourse subordination of sentences, triggering "a sequence of subordinated units within one and the same level of dependency", also known as "continuation" (2005: 74). In particular, the verb in second position, in conjunction with the referential topic, was used to provide more detail about referents introduced in the prior sentence, with the verb also serving as a boundary marker

between given and new information. As discussed, this concept of discourse subordination, as linked to V2 word order, is equally important for analysing the rate of V2 compared to V3 in late ME texts, with the use of V2 potentially linked to the need to link topics in the sentence to preceding context, and maintain a specific type of argument or rhetoric. This idea, along with the theory that some word orders no longer relied on the link between information status and syntax, are both important factors for understanding the nuances of variation in use of V2 across different types of ME text and rhetoric.

1.7. A consideration of historical data as evidence for English syntactic change in the context of verb second

I now address the strengths, as well as the potential caveats, to using historical data in explaining the frequency of verb second in the medieval period, particularly relating to the amount of data accessible, and the extrapolation of results to the wider population. There are well-known challenges to the generalisation of historical data, and as Walkden (2012: 21) states with reference to Labov, “it has long been known that historical linguistics can be thought of as ‘the art of making the best use of bad data’ (Labov 1994: 11)”. For instance, Hough indicates that much of the data from before 1500 includes “chance survivals and finds”, some of which are manuscript texts that are only representative of southern populations and “ecclesiastical and secular administrations” (2012: 37). Fitzmaurice and Smith (2012: 23) also speak to this problem by emphasising how methods borrowed from variationist sociolinguists need to be adapted to determine what could be plausible given the scarcity of data in some historical periods. While sociolinguists working on modern-day languages have spoken data at their disposal, historical linguists are confined to using written data, yet there are benefits to working with it. Rissanen (1986) explains that researchers are often conscious about drawing upon evidence that is as close as possible to the spoken language of the time. He says:

“The basic paradox of the student of the history of language is that his work must be based almost exclusively on evidence drawn from written texts. At the same time he knows that many changes can only be explained with reference to spoken expression: he is plagued by the uneasy feeling that his descriptions and conclusions would be much more adequate and accurate if he had a better knowledge of the spoken language of the period he is studying.”

(Rissanen 1986: 98)

Despite the advantages of having access to spoken data of the time, there are many beneficial discussion points that arise from investigating textual issues, which might not be possible with spoken data. Factors such as the provenance of the text and its dialect, which might be a result of the author’s life or upbringing, or the production of the manuscript; discourse relations and how argumentation and rhetoric is structured throughout medieval texts; and how these issues feed into the creation of specific genres or text-types, can provide further insight into the reasons for use of V2 in the written mode. In fact, Rissanen (1986: 97) proposes that one of the main and crucial sources of syntactic variation historically is “the textual one”, which encompasses factors such as “style, medium, subject-matter, the author’s social and educational background, etc.”. A number of the studies discussed throughout this chapter, especially those exploring the decline in frequency of different types of V2 and how these might be linked to changes to do with the inflectional paradigm, are primarily concerned with how speakers (intra-dialectally) might have sparked changes widely across the entire grammatical system of English. Studies using quantitative parsed corpus-based methods have oftentimes lacked detailed discussion on the qualitative aspects of text, and instead appear to be guided solely by the underpinnings of theories of language change. Yet, there is much nuance to be explored with respect to how individual writers might have varied their use of V2 in specific contexts, depending on the topic they were writing on and their stance on these issues, which in turn could contribute to norms of discourse-structuring in the late medieval period. Such textual issues are considered in more detail in the analysis of the current project, and explanations as to why there may be a higher or lower frequency of V2 are provided with respect to the nuances of individual historical texts.

In addition to some of the benefits of using written data as it is presented to historical linguists, it may indeed be the case that the spoken mode may reflect the written mode in some contexts in the history of English. As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, Tristram

(2004) notes the existence of diglossia of the Old English period with respect to high and low varieties of English, the former spoken by the elite and the latter by the general population. The constancy of OE writing is reflected by the fact that the grammatical system was relatively unchanged over a period of 300 years (from the 7th-8th centuries to the 11th-12th centuries). This stability potentially means that there were efforts to record and keep constant the written mode of the time, namely that of the elite (Tristram 2004: 89). Toward the end of OE, Tristram describes a tripartite division of modes, specifically:

1. The written language of the elite, the norms of which were carefully maintained (OE_W)
2. The spoken vernacular of the elite (OE_H)
3. The vernacular of the bulk of the population, which was largely of British and in Danelaw areas also of Scandinavian extraction (OE_L)

(Adapted from Tristram 2004: 103)

As Tristram notes here, neither the high nor low variety of spoken Old English would have surfaced in writing until after the replacement of the elite at the time by William the Conqueror, meaning that significant changes can be seen in Early Middle English writing which appear sudden as opposed to gradual, following a long period of constancy in terms of the written mode. Generally, it is the low vernacular variety which would have surfaced in writing, a variety which “rose to the status of a strongly regionalized middle class written language” according to Tristram (2004: 104). She also suggests that these changes in EME reflect an earlier Brittonic language spoken by the Celts, in particular the loss of case/gender inflection, the rise of definite articles, and fixed word order in the North, and the rise of the periphrastic aspect in the Southwest of England (although, there are scholars who argue this suite of changes is due to contact with Norse). The most important aspect of this discussion is the fact that some written modes could have reflected the spoken mode, especially in the context of EME, and that frequency levels of V2 in Middle English texts may reflect the language of the main population in earlier situations of diglossia.

Despite the benefits of investigating earlier structural systems via the medium of medieval texts, many scholars have reassessed the validity of written data as evidence for spoken forms of English. Fitzmaurice and Smith (2012: 21) identify that while the uniformitarian hypothesis, i.e. the idea that the “forces” behind language processes and variation in the present are not overly different to those of the past (first mentioned by

Romaine 1982: 122-23), is certainly possible, the same methods used by sociolinguists and variationists in the present when collecting data from human participants cannot be used to study the past. The data is often considered “impoverished”, particularly as there are time periods lacking in texts written by authors other than those with a high level of literacy – generally wealthy, educated, white men – as well as a lack of preservation of texts written in English. This paucity of data is particularly evident in the transitional period from Old to Middle English following the Norman Conquest, when English was no longer the language of monastic administration. Scholars have referred to the lack of texts in this period as due to deliberate physical destruction of English libraries post-conquest, as inferred by Lapidge (2006: 24, also cited in Faulkner 2008: 6), which has been a common understanding amongst historical linguists. However, Faulkner (2008: 30) suggests that “there is no evidence that disdainful Norman churchmen encouraged or permitted the destruction of pre-Conquest manuscripts”, in order to reuse the parchment for new manuscripts. It may have been the case that scribes post-Conquest assumed English manuscripts were not void of profanity and were instead erased to make way for Latin writing, or, the margins of pre-Conquest manuscripts were ruined to obtain vellum as the basis of new parchment (Faulkner 2008: 32). However, while the pool of data used to study the syntactic phenomena of the past may not be as rich as the data that can be collected today, conclusions on different aspects of diachronic change can still be achieved in historical linguistics. This can be done by studying written language “in its own right” and “not just as a representation of spoken language” (Laing and Lass 2013: I.1.5, cited in Leuckert and Buschfeld 2021: 7), meaning that it is not a necessity to extrapolate findings to a whole speech population. Thus, I work with both physical data and metadata to make assertions within the boundaries set when examining historical texts for the frequency and nature of use of verb second, and with an understanding that there are limits to applying these findings to spoken populations.

Overall, it is unlikely that written data can be considered completely ‘representative’ of a population. As Walkden (2021: 7) puts it, “...diachronic corpus evidence is always biased to varying extents: it only represents the written language of a small (usually non-representative) sample of the population”. While this bias likely exists, the analysis of V2 within specific types of contexts may provide detail about the text-types available at the time, offering important discussion about why different levels of V2 usage existed in different types of historical text, and why authors were making specific choices

based on their background, the location of manuscript production, type of discourse, and individual biases—all of which feed into uncovering important findings on V2 patterns. A consideration of these issues ultimately leads to necessary qualitative discussion, which solely quantitative studies on syntactic change do not always elaborate on. Studies on English V2 have also often made assumptions about wider speech populations that were utilising different V2 grammars (for instance, CP-V2, IP-V2, and more recently, IS-, or ‘information-structural’, V2), which may only be tied to specific types of speakers/writers. The current study therefore further explores the individuality of specific writers and their use of V2, within dialect areas in England during the late medieval period, while also recognising some of the broader syntactic changes occurring across English as a whole.

1.8. Next steps: Why is the continued study of English verb second important?

I have shown in this chapter that the primary focus of prior studies on English V2 is often to investigate why it declined in frequency, and provide an answer that attempts to explain this change from its roots in earlier English and Germanic more generally. Due to the nature of the change, in that V2 varied in a range of syntactic and sociohistorical environments, and the wide range of perspectives that can be explored to be able to explain its decline, understanding exactly why the change occurred as a whole may not bring us closer to a solution. Some of these perspectives, which often interact, have included: morphosyntax and the loss of inflectional morphology; information structure and how the V2 syntax of English texts became dissociated from discourse relations; dialect variation in the use of V2 and its links to Norse and/or Anglo-Norman contact; and changes on the textual level, predominantly related to audience design. I conclude by summarising some of the questions remaining following this assessment of prior studies, and select areas in which investigation of the periods of V2 instability, especially during Middle English, would demonstrate how the evolving status of syntax and discourse relations has impacted medieval texts and the English language over time.

- 1) **Old English verb-movement approaches, split CPs and the breakdown of syntax-IS relations.** There is a growing body of evidence related to the theory that verb-movement always occurred to the CP-domain in English V2 structures, as opposed to the IP domain (e.g. Schwartz and Vikner 1996; van Kemenade 1997;

Salvesen and Walkden 2017; Walkden and Booth 2020). As I have demonstrated, the use of the labels ‘CP-V2’ and ‘IP-V2’ may be unhelpful for explaining the use of V2 in a language, a) due to the low likelihood of verb-movement occurring solely to the IP-domain and existence of true symmetry in main and embedded V2 across languages as a whole, and b) due to the use of optional V2 in embedded clauses in Afrikaans (e.g. Biberauer 2002, 2017), which suggests the V2 language cannot be categorised as asymmetric or symmetric. One of the most recent theories that was explored, because of the interaction of syntax and discourse within the same domain, was that of the split CP approach (e.g. Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Westergaard 2007, 2009c; Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2010; Haeberli and Ihsane 2016; Walkden 2017b; Poletto 2019; etc.). This approach suggests that the pressures of IS on the V2 syntax of Old English resulted in verbs moving to different heads in a split CP-domain, depending on whether they were affected by syntactic or discourse-related factors. Despite the split CP approach coming closest to explaining variation in types of V2 in English, there remains some vital deviations to be explained. It is also clear that any analysis of V2 in English should steer away from articulating the IP-domain as the landing site for the verb.

There is evidently an increase in unexpected patterns in later Middle English due to the breakdown in pressure of IS on V2 syntax, which is said to have partly caused the decline in the use of English V2 on the whole, (e.g. Los 2009, 2012; Hinterhölzl 2009; Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade 2012; van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012). This breakdown additionally occurred alongside the loss of bounded discourse relations and multifunctionality of the initial constituent in English, which may have had a bidirectional relationship with the decline of V2, although it is not necessarily clear whether one change affected the other (e.g. Los 2012; Los and Dreschler 2012; Bech 2014; Komen et al. 2014). However, some of these patterns unexpectedly existed before the syntax-IS collapse, and explaining their existence is necessary for understanding interactions at this interface. The issue that remains is to what extent this approach can be applied to Old English and the early part of Middle English, due to the range of types of V2 with both pronominal and nominal subjects (of different IS statuses) and how any potential deviations can be addressed by this approach if they do not follow the general tendencies of OE. For instance, I show in Chapter 3 that there were many early medieval examples of given/familiar subjects occurring in a postverbal position in

sentences which were not fronted by an ‘operator’, despite their general trajectory of appearing preverbally. Thus, the areas in which information structure was incorporated into the underlying syntactic model, and how this interface affected the use of V2, must be articulated to explain the range of patterns available in early medieval texts, as well as demonstrate how the use of V2 changed in later medieval periods. As articulated by van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012), the verb second phenomenon in English, by the end of the Middle English period, was no longer driven by the tendencies of information structure to place given before new information—a change which may also be linked to variation occurring dialectally. The following Chapters 3 and 4 distinguish between the pressures of information structure within the underlying syntactic model, as shown in Old English, and some of the more unexpected patterns that begin to rise in frequency in Middle English, and how they contributed to the instability of V2 as a whole.

- 2) **Rich agreement inflection does not necessarily precede syntactic change.** There are many approaches linking the loss of inflectional morphology to the decline of V2 in English, specifically how the loss of clitics, empty expletives, and rich agreement (linked to the Rich Agreement Hypothesis) preceded the loss of V2. However, there are some challenges that these approaches do not necessarily tackle, and there is now a general recognition that a multifactorial account would be most appropriate to explain the trajectory of V2 in English (e.g. Haeberli and Ihsane 2016). One of these challenges includes the fact that, in some languages, there is a lack of correlation between the existence of a rich agreement system (which also consists of the underlying issue of what kinds of inflectional paradigms count as ‘rich’) and free word order. For instance, Fuß (2003) refers to Icelandic, which lacks free ordering of nominal arguments yet could also be considered to have rich agreement, and Heycock and Sundquist (2017) refer to Early Modern Danish, which had persistent V-to-I movement in the face of a lack of rich agreement. The fact that there are languages which do not follow this proposed trajectory means the correlation may also not be applicable to the history of English. In addition, it is entirely possible that the instability of V2, the focus of this project, rather than the overall decline, began before the estimated loss of V-to-I movement, something which has instead been linked to changes to Tense, Mood and Aspect as opposed to

subject-verb agreement, occurring anywhere between 1400 and 1800 (Walkden 2021: 19, referencing Biberauer and Roberts 2010).

With regard to the decliticisation approach specifically, Bech (2001) raises the issue that the subject position within XSV patterns can house both pronominal and nominal subjects, and is thus not a position exclusively for clitics (one of the requirements of clitics as proposed by Kayne 1975 and Koopman 1997). There are also scholars who articulate distinct subject positions for pronominal and nominal subjects based on the position of negation (e.g. Rissanen 1997; Fischer et al. 2000), and the recent movement toward information structure and prosody further supports the need for subject pronouns to occur in a high position, due to their link to referents in preceding discourse, and their prosodic weight. Thus, it is clear that the current project should encompass a range of factors to explain why the V2 phenomenon became increasingly unstable in late medieval English (i.e. used to varying extents), in particular, those that combine grammatical, discourse and sociohistorical factors, given the nuances of English V2 which cannot be explained by focusing solely on morphosyntax. These prior approaches related to inflectional morphology have primarily been concerned with analysis of the entire decline of V2. The purpose of the current study is to determine the numerous conditions for V2 which would have caused high variation and change, rather than identifying one underlying cause.

- 3) **The impact of dialect variation on change in English V2 is more nuanced than first proposed.** Given the approach adopted by Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (2000) is centred around a comparison of the morphological systems of English and Norse following language contact, and how the lack of rich agreement in Northern varieties might have led to increased movement of the verb to the CP-domain (as opposed to the IP-domain), it is clear the analysis of dialect variation requires an overhaul. Both of these elements to the approach have been challenged; an ‘impoverished’ morphological paradigm does not necessarily lead to a lack of V-to-I movement, and verb-movement solely to the IP-domain likely did not exist, following analyses of the asymmetry of V2 in English. Thus, the idea that Norse impacted the entire character of V2 in English is unlikely—a notion that has caused scholars to move toward explanations of change in the structure of discourse relations as the reason for decline in use of V2. Nevertheless, the discrepancies in

frequency of V2 across texts of different dialects in Middle English cannot be ignored, and thus the current project takes a nuanced approach to understanding the extent of Norse influence on late medieval texts and their use of V2, in a range of syntactic environments (e.g. with different types of subject, initial constituent, and verb).

One of the few studies that has investigated some of these grammatical and discourse-related interactions is that of van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012), who conduct the study alongside investigation of the information-structural status of the sentence, specifically in unaccusative, intransitive and transitive sentences with different types of initial constituent and subject. However, analysis of V2 in some of these sentential and discourse-related environments in different sociohistorical contexts is important, due to evidence from late medieval texts that there is much variation in the use of V2 depending on dialect and provenance-related factors. Van Kemenade and Westergaard do additionally recognise the impact of dialect variation on V2, yet focus primarily on the impact of information structure, making the study of the interaction between grammatical, discourse and social factors of continued interest.

- 4) **Text-type and the structure of discourse relations, rhetoric and argumentation is crucial to the study of V2.** An under-researched area is intra-writer variation in use of V2, especially in relation to different text-types. The specificity of the text-type factor may show why certain types of V2 structure are used to create a particular type of argument by medieval authors, while also recognising that the background, dialect, and education of the author may equally affect the rate of use of V2. The study of Eitler and Westergaard (2014) combines both the effect of information structure and dialect variation on the V2 of an individual author, John Capgrave, focusing on the audience design of his prose works. However, the audience design model proposed by Bell (1984, 2001) has been used to explain intra-speaker variation, and may not be applicable to intra-writer variation. I conduct analysis of the discourse relations in the prose works of Geoffrey Chaucer in Chapter 5, like Eitler and Westergaard (2014), yet refer to the impact of text-type and structure of argumentation and rhetoric to explain the substantial variation in V2 across his texts. Focusing on the factor of text-type is also a necessary deviation from Eitler (2006), who links the familiarity of the audience to the type of V2 syntax

present in Chaucer's works. With these range of factors in mind, the current project analyses the wider impact of these factors on the V2 of a collection of medieval texts, in combination with the nuanced impact of discourse and rhetoric factors on a more specific, textual level. It is crucial to investigate these wide and narrow routes due to the erratic nature of use of V2 in late medieval English, especially as many approaches have failed to recognise the discrepancies in use of V2 across different contexts.

There is still much to be discovered with respect to why verb second changed in English, which is made evident by the wide range of fields in linguistics that can interact to explain its instability during the medieval period. In this project, I therefore not only build on and complement the work of scholars that highlight variation in V2 based on a number of different factors to answer the above questions, but also show the interaction between these fields, reassessing their impact using a large-scale quantitative study of medieval texts, and a mixed-methods case study on the use of V2 by a single author, Geoffrey Chaucer. In addition, breaking down the type of V2 based on different types of grammatical or sociohistorical variant remains of importance, as few studies have looked at the impact of the interaction between these on the rate of V2 or V3 in different time periods. For instance, grammatical variables include the type of subject (pronominal vs. nominal); type of verb (lexical vs. auxiliary); and type of initial constituent (e.g. initial objects, prepositional phrases, and the adverb 'then'). Discussion of the type of initial constituent, whether anaphoric or focused (i.e. referential to prior or upcoming discourse), and the information-structural status of the subject (whether a given/familiar or new/focused subject) is equally crucial given the need to investigate V2 at the intersection of syntax and discourse. The following chapter highlights how these factors are investigated from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective, and summarise the individual studies I undertake, which broadly relate to the four challenges proposed above.

Chapter 2:

A mixed methods approach to the study of English verb second

2.1. Introduction

This project investigates the high variation in frequency of the verb second (V2) phenomenon in the medieval English period, including the reasons why the phenomenon was used inconsistently across specific syntactic environments, sociohistorical contexts and text-types, and why language users and learners selected between different verb-movement patterns, taking into account these interactions. I analyse the use of V2 in the history of English by examining a collection of medieval texts quantitatively from parsed corpora (primarily the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose*, or YCOE, and the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English, edition 2*, or PPCME2), as well as a selection of prose works by Geoffrey Chaucer to form a case study of intra-writer variation in the use of V2. In the former, I gather data on the general trends of use of V2 in Old and Middle English (OE/ME), to highlight how deviating patterns can be explained by factors such as (morpho)syntax, information structure and discourse relations, dialect variation, and text-type. In the latter case study, I analyse the background of the selected author – including the provenance and localisation of the specific prose works – and highlight how information structure and use of a specific rhetoric impacted V2 frequency and how this interaction alters depending on the type of text. Few studies have analysed the interaction of the wide range of variables established in the preceding section, especially properties at the interface of syntax and information structure, alongside sociohistorical factors such as dialect and provenance. In addition, few scholars have presented a case study on how these differ within the prose works of the same author, and within those that have, the focus is predominantly on the role of audience design, as opposed to the more specific factor of the structure of discourse and argumentation across different text-types. The current project therefore offers a novel contribution to the study of V2, which combines large-scale quantitative analysis of a range of syntactic, information-structural and dialectal and geographical variables, with close analysis of the use of V2 across different types of rhetoric.

The structure of this methodology chapter is as follows. First, I describe the three studies of English verb second throughout this project, relating to three analysis chapters, and how these inform one another to highlight why instability of V2 existed during the medieval period. In these sections I also explain why I place focus on exploring the existence of high variation in V2 during this time. Rather than explaining the overall decline in V2, which has appeared gradual on the surface in earlier studies, I provide deeper analysis of specific sentential environments, sociohistorical contexts, text-types and individual authors, and how these situations led to increased variation and instability; the conditions within which syntactic change can flourish. Second, I describe the parsed corpus-based methodology used, specifically the time periods of analysis, and the reasons for the selection of specific corpora. I then go into detail about the instances of V2 and V3 (verb third) that I collect via the use of queries to search for parsed structure in the three studies, describing the specific environments of V2 (and its comparative word order, V3), the use of data visualisation and statistical testing throughout each of the studies, why some data was excluded, and some of the common errors in search query outputs. I end the chapter by summarising the multiple facets to this methodology for understanding the nuances of V2 in the history of English, and how it serves as an exemplar for studies exploring the history of the language's structure, especially as there might not always be one notable and sole cause of syntactic change.

2.2. The three studies of verb second and its instability in the history of English

In this section I introduce the three studies of English verb second that I conduct in order to analyse its instability historically, and that correspond to Chapters 3, 4, and 5. Across these studies I answer the following research questions:

- 1) What can counterexamples to the general trend of V2 and V3 order in Old English tell us about the types of verb-movement occurring at this time? Do these movement patterns rely on syntactic and information-structural processes, or a combination of both?
- 2) What are the syntactic and sociohistorical environments that most reflect instability of the V2 phenomenon in Middle English, and how is this period of high variation linked to language contact with Norse?

- 3) How does the use of V2 differ in Geoffrey Chaucer's prose works? Are the type of text and the type of rhetoric present within the text important factors explaining variation in the use of V2 in Middle English? Could Chaucer's dialectal background, with its links to Norse settlement, have affected his use of V2, and is this reflective of the Middle English period as a whole?
- 4) Overall, how do these factors combine to highlight how and why speakers/writers select between different verb-movement patterns?

In answering this final question, one can then adapt the combination of factors presented throughout this study to explain syntactic change cross-linguistically, especially, why certain languages have a stable or unstable V2 phenomenon, or not at all.

2.2.1. Study 1

In the first study, I reassess the general trends of V2 and V3 in Old English. This process involves examining the syntactic environments, specifically the constituents present in the left-periphery, that lead to the existence of V2 and V3 with different types of subject, whether pronominal or nominal. This study is particularly crucial given the different types of analyses of English V2 structure (as mentioned in the previous chapter), which debate whether verb-movement in English occurred to the CP- or IP-domain (or both), as well as the existence of clitics in OE, and how the phonological dependency of these clitics might have controlled their position alongside the verb.

There are also prior approaches that link this syntactic verb-movement to the pressures of information structure, and how the IS status of the initial constituent and subject motivated the landing site of the verb (e.g. Bech 2001; van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012; Eitler and Westergaard 2014). These approaches often incorporate the IP-domain into their analysis of verb-movement, despite the issues that have been highlighted by scholars who found a lack of V2 in embedded clauses and true 'symmetric V2' (e.g. van Kemenade 1997; Wolfe 2015; Salvesen and Walkden 2017; and Walkden and Booth 2020). This suite of evidence meant that IP-V2 likely did not exist in OE (and potentially in Germanic languages more generally). Consequently, an account combining the pressures from syntax and IS, which also acknowledges that verb-movement always

occurs to the CP-domain, is required. Proposals that have integrated a split CP domain into their analysis of verb-movement in English and languages such as Norwegian, Old French, and Romance dialects/varieties (e.g. Westergaard 2007, 2009c; Bech and Salvesen 2014; Haeberli and Ihsane 2016; Poletto 2019) come closest to explaining the distribution of verb and subject in different environments. However, in this study I identify patterns which have not yet been incorporated into this split CP analysis (e.g. V2 with given subjects in contexts introduced by constituents with focus or anaphoric properties, and the existence of V3 with new subjects more widely). By doing so, I determine which patterns of V2 and V3 can be explained by appealing to syntactic, feature-driven operations, information-structural tendencies, the weakened link between syntax and IS, or specific IS, prosodic and stylistic tendencies affecting surface structure. Specifically, I reconsider the distribution of the verb alongside the subject depending on the context of fronting by drawing on specific examples, highlighting the general trends of V2 in OE, as well as identifying patterns that deviate from these trends. As a result, I adapt proposals of verb structure in OE to incorporate these deviating patterns, which have not necessarily been addressed in prior work, and re-emphasise the insufficiency of the IP-analysis as an explanation for English verb-movement alongside scholars that have evidenced the lack of true embedded and symmetric V2. I additionally show whether the distribution of the verb and subject would have provided the appropriate conditions for clitics to exist in OE. Overall, I confirm that a combined syntactic and information-structural account is required to explain variation, highlighting the specific ways in which syntax and IS are involved in the use of V2 in OE, and provide novel discussion of V2 distribution in OE which complements this model.

2.2.2. Study 2

Study 2 primarily concerns the trajectory of V2 into the Middle English period, a reassessment of how the frequency of the phenomenon changed, and in which environments V2 was used most inconsistently. I investigate sharp declines in the trajectory of V2, as well as temporary increases in its use, both of which contributed to its high variation in Middle English. While work has been conducted on the individual impact of grammatical and discourse-related variables on the use of V2 in ME (e.g. type of subject, verb and initial constituent, and the IS status of these grammatical elements), as well as interaction between some of these variables, this discussion has rarely been paired with its

sociohistorical context, specifically the dialect and/or provenance of the text (as first introduced by Kroch and Taylor 1994, 1997). Thus, the study addresses two broad research questions, both descriptively and statistically: which grammatical behaviours (related to the type of subject, verb, and initial constituent) predict the appearance of verb second over verb third structure over time, and does the dialect of the text impact the appearance of V2 (over V3) word order in Middle English? In order to answer these questions, I produce search queries to combine and search for V2 and V3 sentences with different types of subject, verb and fronted phrase, and record in which dialectal texts – whether Northern, East Midlands, West Midlands or Southern – this grammatical variation can be seen the most. I conduct binomial logistic regression testing to understand the impact of the interaction of these variables on the appearance of V2 in Middle English, and narrow down the environments which were particularly impactful on the rate of V2 across the different dialects.

In the second part of this study, I categorise the use of V2 in Middle English texts as ‘high’, ‘low’, or ‘expected’, based on standard deviation testing that examines the overall frequencies of V2 in different grammatical contexts. I then map these findings geographically based on the dialect or localisation of the text. In particular, I spotlight the texts which are high in their use of V2, and examine those that go against the expected pattern of V2 extending from the Old English period, which generally favoured sentences with nominal subjects. This study therefore determines whether there are any specific patterns of V2 arising from particular texts and/or authors across different areas of England at the time. Discovering the different texts that are particularly high in their use of V2, or that deviate from other texts at the time in terms of their usage, sets up the opportunity for individual case studies to be conducted on intra-writer variation in V2. It also highlights the environments where variation is most obvious, and that might have contributed to the overall instability of Middle English V2. This quantitative study of ME V2 therefore neatly informs the chapter that follows it, which assists in identifying why the same author varies in use of V2 across different types of text.

2.2.3. Study 3

Following an analysis of the rate of V2 across a range of dialectal texts and syntactic contexts in ME, I conduct a case study of the prose works of an individual author, Geoffrey

Chaucer. Chaucer adopts a frequency of V2 that departs from the use of V2 in Old English generally (which preferred nominal subjects, especially in contexts with initial anaphors) as well as the overall declining trend of V2 in ME, making his use of syntax particularly suitable for indicating why variation existed in late medieval English, especially after a period of V2 in OE which was driven by information-structural pressures. Furthermore, Chaucer's background is interesting socioculturally; his family hailed from Ipswich, while Chaucer himself was brought up in London and is said to have written in an East Midlands dialect. These are two areas that underwent dynamic changes in the structure of its dialects due to the extensive social and work mobility during this time period. Kroch and Taylor (1997) also introduce the possibility that Chaucer had an East Midlands syntax (similar to his phonology), because of his frequent usage of V2 with pronominal subjects. This high usage might be linked to Norse settlement, given East Midlands was a part of the Danelaw and was heavily invaded by Norse speakers during OE. These different aspects of Chaucer's background also make his prose works intriguing avenues to explore with respect to his use of V2.

Rarely have prior studies combined quantitative methodology of the frequency of V2 with the in-depth analysis of a specific set of texts from the same writer, and from those that have, focus is generally placed on the possibility that the familiarity of the audience impacted the rate of V2 in late medieval texts (e.g. Eitler 2006 on Chaucer and Eitler and Westergaard 2014 on Capgrave). As identified in the previous chapter, the audience design approach is likely too broad of a factor to explain the nuances of use of V2 in specific contexts. Eitler (2006) recognises that 'text-type' is the least broad category influencing linguistic variation (after social effects, regional effects and audience effects, for instance), and I propose here that text-type is key to understanding why V2 varies in different contexts. Specifically, the role of text-type might highlight how information structure played a role across different types of argumentation in ME, and how this interaction affected the frequency of V2. As discussed in Section 1.6.3.1, V2 structure can be used in Germanic languages to structure an explicit – and perhaps, exhortative – rhetoric as a sequence of subordinating levels, which might be the case in Chaucer's prose works. In Old English, information structure often drove V2 syntax, with the verb acted as a boundary marker between given and new information in the sentence (Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2005; Hinterhölzl 2009; Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade 2012; Los and Dreschler 2012). In Middle English, the use of V2 is said to have syntacticised in some contexts (as identified

by van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012), meaning there was a weakened link between IS and syntax, resulting in an increase in the use of given and new subjects in both pre and postverbal position in late medieval English. The role of the verb as a boundary marker separating these two types of information structure was thus redundant at this time. The use of specific types of discursive features, predominantly the initial constituent and the role it plays in referring anaphorically to preceding contextual information, or advancing the narrative (e.g. see Bech 2014 for different constituents which adopt these roles), is central to this case study on Chaucer's use of V2 across prose works that perpetuate different types of rhetoric.

Given this point of departure for the analysis of specific text-types, authors, rhetoric and their use of V2, in Study 3 I re-examine the rate of V2 in each of Chaucer's prose works, and categorise each of the instances of V2 and V3 based on the information and/or referential status of the subject in the sentence, as well as whether the initial constituent was used for discourse-advancing purposes and to introduce a new referent, or for anaphoricity. Specifically, I compare the rate of V2 in the Chaucerian works *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, *The Parson's Tale*, and *The Tale of Melibee*. Analysis of discursive features within these specific texts then provide the opportunity to examine the link between the presence or absence of a V2 driven by information structure, and the type of argumentation present in the Chaucerian text, allowing for a reassessment of whether the V2 present in Chaucer's prose works was motivated by the link between syntax and information structure. I then end on a discussion of whether individual author's dialect might partly accelerate change in the use of V2 across entire communities. I examine Chaucer's background and show that his own dialect might have affected his usage of V2, and how this impact might also be reflective of the use of V2 in Northern and East Midlands dialects in ME (which were possibly affected by the V2 of Norse settlers). This case study overall reflects the interaction between V2 syntax, the tendencies of information structure, and dialect variation during the ME period.

2.3. A parsed corpus-based methodology

In this section, I summarise the use of parsed corpus-based methods to answer the three main research questions, which encapsulate the studies introduced above. I begin by

referring to the time periods of study (Old and Middle English), and a brief discussion of the general syntactic changes that have been reported for these eras, as well as the specific changes in relation to the loss of V2 in English. These time periods also directly translate to the two corpora tagged for part of speech that I use in these studies: YCOE and PPCME2, which I describe here. Furthermore, I detail the search queries written to retrieve and analyse instances from the different syntactic environments of V2 across each of these studies, and explain some of the common errors present in the parsed corpora and why certain types of V2 data were excluded.

2.3.1. The time periods of study

I collect data on the frequency of V2 using historical English texts of varying genres and types, from parsed corpora ranging from the Old to Middle English periods (c.890-1500). I analyse both time periods given the substantial changes that took place during the medieval period, which have been documented by early studies on V2 and syntax more generally in English. As introduced in Chapter 1, V2 was a common yet inconsistent word order in Old English, and generally declined in frequency during Middle English. The decline came at a time when, (un)coincidentally, other substantial changes were occurring in English (such as the levelling of the inflectional paradigm, the loss of V-to-I movement and increase in *do*-support, the possible loss of clitics, and the weakening link between information structure and syntax). Furthermore, the trajectory of V2 in English followed a rather different pattern to that of other Germanic languages. Comparison of the use of V2 between historical English and that of its Germanic counterparts is necessary for understanding the pressures that affected English V2 compared to other languages, such as the effects of information structure and how this pressure drove the appearance of V2 in specific syntactic environments. The study of V2 instability in English could therefore be framed as an exemplar for syntactic change, in particular, the different interactions of factors which lead to instability. Why was it that Old English V2 differed from its Germanic counterparts, and even more so in the Middle English period? What kinds of conditions, in comparison to other V2 languages, did Old English V2 undergo, to force such a change? These questions are particularly pertinent when discussing the impact of dialect variation and language contact on the trajectory of English V2 in later chapters.

Not only is there a recognised decline in V2 over the ME period, but there has also been speculative discussion about patterns which did not follow this expected trajectory, and instead increased temporarily during ME. For instance, Haeberli (2010) and van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) refer to situations of language and contact, and the interaction between syntax and information structure, to explain this deviation, respectively. While the potential influence of dialect variation and its impact on different frequencies of V2 across England in the late medieval period has been recently acknowledged (e.g. van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012: 29-30), these approaches focusing on the increase in V2 in specific environments lean toward a singular cause. Even though there is certainly an influence of information structure on the syntax of V2, there is more to be said about the influence of dialect and language contact on variation in V2 frequency in the late medieval period. At the same time, examining different dialectal texts in terms of their type and rhetoric can emphasise the weakening link between IS and syntax which is more generally said to have led to the declined usage of V2 in English. Thus, focusing particularly on texts with the highest variation in use of V2 appears to be the most appropriate avenue when examining the Middle English period.

In terms of the specific time periods of analysis within the different studies, I examine the Old English period in its entirety in Study 1, especially due to the difficulties in dating OE texts precisely. For the Middle English period, I utilise the categorisations formed by the compilers of the Penn parsed corpora: ‘M1’, ‘M2’, ‘M3’, and ‘M4’, which map onto the approximate time periods 1150-1250, 1250-1350, 1350-1420 and 1420-1500. In Section 2.3.2 below I detail the reasonings behind these categories, and why I include them in the current project.

Overall, these two time periods are central to discussion on evolving V2 structure, which not only occurs most rapidly in ME, but is also informed by the high variation present from its early beginnings in the OE period.

2.3.2. A description of the parsed corpora utilised

The analysis of historical texts via parsed corpus-based methodology has allowed researchers to capture trends in syntactic patterns over time. A corpus is parsed if constituents have been identified and tagged according to the type of phrase, allowing

quantitative searches to be conducted. To conduct such a study, Taylor (2007: 197) states that “each syntactic unit of the text (usually a sentence) is represented using a limited tree representation in the form of labelled parentheses”, which outlines the range of possibilities for analysing syntactic structure. However, there is a limited number of parsed corpora centred around historical English prose, due to the complex parsing process (Taylor 2007: 203). I therefore use the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose* (YCOE; Taylor et al. 2003) and the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English, second edition* (PPCME2; Kroch, Taylor and Santorini 2000-) to conduct analyses of Old and Middle English prose.

A Parsed Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English (PLAEME; Truswell et al. 2018) is also available for selection in this study, especially as the selection of texts in this corpus bridge the gap between the period 1250-1350—a time period which is sparsely populated with prose works in PPCME2. However, much of the corpus is made up of verse, and a number of these texts include both verse and prose, making it difficult to distinguish between the two. This could present a problem for historical syntactic studies similar to this project, especially those considering multiple variables, because the factors of metre and rhyme in verse may impact syntactic structure. Truswell et al. (2019: 21) explain that verse texts are “dispreferred by syntacticians”, particularly as word order can often be altered to reflect the rhythmic requirements of the poetry and may vary substantially from author to author. Ringe and Eska (2013: 43) also refer to situations whereby learners of English begin to recognise that syntax can be manipulated for verse and songs, further centring the role of the author when making syntactic choices based on their own dialect, or because of the popularity of verse in a particular time period. Lastly, Fischer (2013: 38) refers to one of the main influences that French had on the English language, which was the “changes in style including the use of metre and rhyme in poetry”, meaning that verse texts of the ME period may be particularly affected by changes to style caused by Anglo-Norman contact. Thus, given the potential influence of rhyme and rhythm on the V2 syntax of poetic texts (e.g. Bech 2001: 6), this project solely analyses the syntax of prose texts.²²

²² Nevertheless, PLAEME remains a useful resource for the study of historical syntax especially for those interested in the impact of verse on syntax. Walkden (2012: 20) refers to the work of Dewey (2006: 17-21), who argued that poetry is likely to be more conservative in nature and therefore findings in poetic texts can shine a light on more traditional features of syntax (as Lass 1997: 60 raises, conservatism can be “a good

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

Prior to the launch of *The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose*, the only corpus available to scholars analysing English syntactic change was *The Brooklyn-Geneva-Amsterdam-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English* (The Brooklyn Corpus; Pintzuk et al. 2000). The Brooklyn Corpus was launched in 2000 and is derived from a selection of 16 texts in the Old English Section of *The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (Rissanen et al. 1991). The word count of the Brooklyn Corpus is 106,210, which is much smaller than YCOE, with a word count of 1.5 million words. It is now recommended that scholars download the YCOE for research, given the parsed corpus has “much more detailed annotation” (Pintzuk et al. 2000). It is worth noting that the studies conducted before 2003 in Chapter 1 utilised the Brooklyn Corpus, and had access to fewer texts than more recent studies which use YCOE to retrieve the frequency of V2 in OE. The analysis I conduct in Chapter 3 is therefore based on a dataset extending across a multitude of texts, and there is therefore a higher possibility of finding patterns that might diverge from the general trends of V2.

The YCOE contains a selection of 100 prose texts, which formed a larger project created for *The Dictionary of Old English* (Healey 1986-, cited in Taylor 2007: 201). As a result, the YCOE is said to be “a complete record of surviving Old English between 600 and 1150 AD” and has included “as many of the prose works of syntactic interest as possible”, consisting of long pieces of prose as opposed to small fragments of text (Taylor 2007: 201). This endeavour demonstrates the volume of workload involved in parsing as many texts as is accessible from the OE period. The number of words in the syntactically annotated corpus amount to 1.5 million, which are grouped into larger constituents and sentence structure. These sentences can be extracted using a bracketed annotation system that is largely based on generative models of X-bar theory (Taylor 2009).

indicator of change, and provide internal comparative evidence for earlier states”). In addition, Dewey (2006: 17-21, cited in Walkden 2012: 20) refers to how the use of varying prosodic features can help identify certain syntactic elements within poetry. Walkden also mentions a study by Pintzuk & Kroch (1989), who used poetry to find disparities between “extraposition” and “Heavy NP shift” in *Beowulf*. In sum, despite the major advances in parsing both prose and verse data for a gap in the EME period, there is still much disagreement in the literature about the influences of verse on historical English syntax.

As mentioned, the possibilities for Old English V2 analysis following the launch of YCOE are wide-ranging. YCOE is a corpus “designed particularly with historical syntacticians in mind and, more particularly, those who use quantitative methods in their work” (Taylor 2007: 197), meaning this corpus is ideal for working with changes to syntactic phenomena over a long period of time, particularly regarding the nature and frequency of V2 in interacting sentential environments. The YCOE also allows for close analysis of specific V2 examples from lengthy prose texts, for the purposes of identifying the position of the verb in various contexts, alongside different types of subjects and their syntactic makeup (pronominal or nominal), as well as their information-structural status (given/familiar or new/focused). Because of the detailed part-of-speech tags attached to initial constituents (e.g. whether the constituent is a preposition, direct or indirect object, specific type of adverb, etc.) qualitative investigation of the entire sentence and its information status can be undertaken alongside the use of search queries—for instance, analysis of the parts of the sentence that refer to prior context, or the elements that have been focused and moved to initial position. One can also establish whether a constituent has been placed within the main clause (or CP), due to the clear labelling of conjunctions or adverbs, which, alongside deeper analysis, may not sit within the boundaries of the CP.

- (1) *Ɔyssum tidum Constantinus, [...] ferde he forð on Breotone*
 this time Constantius [...] set he forth upon Britain
 ‘This time, Constantius, [...] set forth upon Britain’

(Bede’s History of the English Church, 1: 8.42.13.353)

An example of the complexity of syntactic tagging in YCOE can be found in (1), which includes a temporal indirect object in initial position, *Ɔyssum tidum* ‘this time’ (labelled as NP-DAT-TMP), followed by left-dislocation of the nominal subject, *Constantinus* ‘Constantius’ (labelled as NP-NOM-LFD).²³ The corpus software identifies that this sentence as an instance of V2, due to the position of the verb *ferde* ‘set/travelled’ following left-dislocation. In the current project I add left-dislocation to the ignore list of the search query, so the search query can consider the position of the initial temporal adverb as part of the main clause, and categorise the sentence as V2. Without the detailed labelling

²³ Left-dislocation has been defined as a phrase that has moved leftward in the sentence for emphasis, unlike topicalisation whereby anaphoric material is fronted (although, see more nuanced behaviours in Bousquette et al. 2021). Since left-dislocation has been described differently depending on its behaviour in specific languages, I do not use the term to describe the movement operations present in V2 sentences.

of left-dislocation, it would be difficult to identify the role of each element of the sentence (especially as there is an entire finite clause within '[...]').

While there are no explicit tags expressing, for example, the information status of a subject, there are clues within the tagging to be able to adjudicate between whether given or new information is exhibited by the subject, due to the existence of labels for resumptive pronouns, and whether an NP is a pronoun or longer argument.

(2)

- a. *Laðlice eardunge hæfde ic on þe*
loathsome dwelling have I in thee
'I had a loathsome dwelling in thee'

(Vercelli Homilies [ScraggVerc_4]: 284.784, adapted from Walkden 2017b: 72)

- b. *Þa ferde se eadga Ioseph fram Galilea*
then travelled the blessed Joseph from Galilee
'Then the blessed Joseph travelled from Galilee'

(Vercelli Homilies [ScraggVerc_5]: 16.846)

(2a-b) contain two different types of subjects occurring after the verb from YCOE. The subject *ic* 'I' in (2a) is labelled as a pronoun (PRO^N) and the subject *se eadga Ioseph* 'the blessed Joseph' in (2b) is labelled as a nominal subject, with each individual word tagged for its category (NP-NOM (D^N *se*) (ADJ^N *eadga*) (NR^N *Ioseph*)). Further qualitative (yet, oftentimes subjective) analysis can then be conducted to determine whether the above subjects also map onto the IS descriptors of given or new, especially with access to the preceding context to determine if the referent has been activated there.²⁴

While one of the strengths of this quantitative approach is that it allows for large trends to be uncovered across a range of texts, Taylor (2007: 197-200) mentions that it is difficult to determine whether such results are representative of a time period without delving into the texts themselves. The YCOE corpus, along with other parsed corpora using the same syntactic annotation, allow for the retrieval of both quantitative and qualitative

²⁴ This type of qualitative analysis highlights the potential for future directions for parsed corpus annotation that is tagged for information structure. However, see recent projects such as PROIEL (Pragmatic Resources in Old Indo-European Languages; see Haug et al. 2012) and ISWOC (Information Structure and Word Order Change in Germanic and Romance Languages; see Bech et al. 2014), who created corpora of a selection of texts which are annotated for pragmatic and information-structural considerations.

data to be able to study English syntactic change in this way. Both the exploration of the language of the texts and their purpose, as well as the analysis of the frequency of V2 instances, were important facets within the present study.

2.3.2.2. The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English, second edition (PPCME2)

The most comprehensive parsed corpus of Middle English prose data is *The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English, second edition*, the text samples of which are based predominantly on “the Middle English section of the Diachronic Part of the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts” (Kroch, Taylor and Santorini 2000-), including additions made by the compilers. Overall, the corpus consists of around 1.2 million words of text. PPCME2 is part of a wider project named *The Penn Parsed Corpora of Historical English* (PPCHE, Kroch, Taylor and Santorini 2000-; Kroch, Santorini and Delfs 2004; Kroch, Santorini and Dierani 2016) which consists of syntactically parsed corpora for different stages of the history of English. Like YCOE, PPCME2 is aimed at researchers interested in analysing historical English syntax, around the period 1150-1500 (Kroch 2017). As with YCOE, I conduct a quantitative study of the trajectory of V2 in the Middle English period in a range of syntactic contexts.

One of the main features of PPCME2 that I utilise is the philological metadata, in particular, the dialect of the texts, which provided further information on geographical localisation. The dialect of each text was determined by either the production location of the manuscript, or the general location/dialect of the author. For instance, there are two versions of the Old English translation of *The Mirror of St. Edmund* (the Latin of which is *Speculum S. Edmundi* by Edmund Rich): one from the Thornton manuscript (Lincoln Cathedral Library 91), considered Northern, and one from the Vernon manuscript (Bodleian Library), considered to be from the West Midlands. Alternatively, an example of a text localised based on the dialect of the author is John of Trevisa’s *Polychronicon*, which is based on the Southern dialect of John of Trevisa born in Cornwall, who was also potentially based in Exeter, Oxford and Berkeley, Gloucestershire throughout his time as a fellow and vicar. The differences in placing Middle English texts within PPCME2 were considered carefully throughout my analysis of V2, in order to capture a clearer picture of

English V2 and its variation during this period. By studying ME V2 in this way, I am able to capture large trends across the period, and analyse synchronic aspects of V2 in detail, across different dialects.

Truswell et al. (2019: 21-25) refer to some shortcomings of the Penn Parsed Corpora of Historical English (henceforth, PPCHE). First, PPCHE uses published editions rather than the manuscripts themselves, as they are more difficult to acquire for large-scale parsed corpus-based projects. The use of editions means that the data is not based on a primary source, and editorial changes may have been made to the syntax. Another issue identified by Truswell et al. is the occasional imprecision when it comes to provenance, meaning the exact origin of the manuscript cannot necessarily be assumed by using the philological data alone. This means that further exploration of debates in the literature as to the authorship, or localisation of the text, can highlight the influences on the frequency of V2 at the level of the text. Even then, discovering the provenance of early manuscripts can be a challenging feat, as described by Hough (2012: 42). Truswell et al. (2019: 22) argue that there is more specific information in PLAEME as to the county, or sometimes the town, where the text originated. Lastly, as mentioned, Truswell et al. (2019: 21) indicate that the data for the period c.1250-1350 is sparse in PPCHE, with only one text in the late thirteenth-century (*Kentish Sermons*). The earliest text in the fourteenth-century does not appear until 1340 (*Ayenbite of Inwyt*). This sparsity is an issue for prose data more generally in this period, and does not reflect specific shortcomings of PPCHE.

Regardless of the potential pitfalls of PPCHE2, it is currently the only extensive parsed corpus for Middle English prose, which offers detailed annotation for historical syntacticians to investigate the evolving nature of structure. As mentioned, I use PPCHE2 to conduct a mixed methods approach to the study of ME V2, focusing on the impact of both dialect variation on a quantitative and qualitative scale, and that of information structure, rhetoric and discourse on a specific set of Chaucerian prose works, which is made easier by the labelling of part-of-speech and the searchability of the corpus.

2.3.3. Search queries

In this section I detail some of the types of V2 that were extracted for the different studies in this project. Note that V2 is analysed in non-subject initial declarative main clauses,

where the verb and subject are in second and third position, respectively.²⁵ Initial *wh*-words drive V2 to a categorical extent throughout the history of English, as well as in present-day English, and did not decline in frequency.²⁶ In YCOE and PPCME2 (consisting of Old and Middle English texts, respectively), the verb occurred in the second position before the subject in the 229 *wh*-questions that I examined. This finding is also confirmed in Los (2015: 187), who states that *wh*-questions in the history of English generally give rise to a V2 structure. Thus, I examine only declarative sentences in the current project, and not interrogatives.

I also collect the inverse word order, i.e. cases of the verb in third position preceded by the subject (V3, or non-inversion), primarily to provide a comparison to calculate the frequency of V2 in each time period. Where V2 is not used in a historical text, V3 is often used instead, with the verb moving as high as T and not to C. V2 and V3 are thus contingent upon one another.

As mentioned, I provide examples of V2 and V3 throughout to highlight the evolving structure in V2 throughout the history of English. They come from the returned results of the search queries, and provide information on the text, the page or section the instance came from, and the line number. For instance, an example from *The Book of Margery Kempe* has the ID CMKEMPE, 25.541. Each in-text example of V2 or V3 includes a bolded verb (either in second or third position), and a bracketed initial constituent within the original sentence and the gloss, so that different arguments and constituents can

²⁵ The ‘late subject’ construction has also been considered in the study of V2, especially in the later medieval periods. As illustrated by Warner (2007: 85), unambiguous cases of the late subject construction might involve intervention of a non-finite verb, verbal complement, adverbial adjunct, or personal pronoun object, in between the verb in a second position and the subject. Hence, the subject occurs much later than immediately after the verb in second position. Warner finds that most of the remaining instances of V2 in the sixteenth century were examples of the late subject constraint, and that V2, involving verb-movement to C, had largely been lost. Much work has already been conducted on this particular type of verb second (e.g. Haeberli 1999, 2000; Warner 2007; Eitler and Westergaard 2014), and would involve an additional factor to consider in this already multi-layered quantitative study on the interaction of grammatical and sociohistorical variables. However, I acknowledge in the analysis of V2 in OE and ME that the late subject construction can result in V2 orders that are analytically ambiguous (see Los 2009: 104), which “complicates attempts to chart the decline of verb-second in the fifteenth century”. Thus, all references to specific examples also investigate whether the late subject constraint may have played a role in the appearance of V2 in specific contexts, and is not considered in analysis of the deviating patterns of V2.

²⁶ Although, see dialects of English such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), which frequently place the verb in the third position in *wh*-questions, e.g. ‘Why she took that?’ (Martin and Wolfram 1998: 29).

be easily identified in these examples. An example of these notations is provided in (3) below:

- (3) [Laðlice eardunge] **hæfde** ic on þe
[loathsome dwelling] **have** I in thee
'I had a loathsome dwelling in thee'

(Vercelli Homilies [ScraggVerc_4]: 284.784, adapted from Walkden 2017b: 72)

In the following sections I detail the specific queries that were written within each study to search for different types of V2 and V3. I also provide examples of outputs after searching within different sentential environments.

2.3.3.1. Study 1

As discussed, in Study 1 I consider the distribution of Old English V2 and V3 word order with different types of subject and initial constituent, based on their grammatical and information-structural status. The study ascertains the most appropriate structural representation for OE verb-movement, that combines both syntactic and IS-related issues, and considers patterns that deviate from the general patterning in OE. This method of finding an appropriate structure for verb-movement also includes determining whether clitics would have existed in OE given the distribution of subject pronouns, in relation to criteria formed previously regarding the syntactic nature of clitics. Some examples of the outputs and types of V2 I analyse in this study are provided below.

In order to find the different types of V2 in Old English across a range of syntactic environments, I begin by searching for V2 across OE texts based on the type of subject in the sentence, whether pronominal or nominal. I retrieve c.2741 instances of V2 in declarative main clauses and c.1538 instances of V3 from YCOE. Two examples of typical V2 usage with both subject-types are provided below:²⁷

²⁷ The general search query for V2 broken down by type of subject (in this example, with subject pronouns) was as follows (note that these queries differ slightly in terms of their conventions depending on the corpus, i.e. whether YCOE or Penn). I refer the reader to the original annotation manual by Santorini (2016) at <https://www.ling.upenn.edu/hist-corpora/annotation/index.html>, which explains any conventions used in further detail and if these are of interest.

(4)

- a. [*Dis ærendgewrit*] **sende** *sum Cristes þegen to mæssepreostum ...*
[this message] **sent** some Christ's servants to high-priest ...
'Some of Christ's servants sent this message to the high-priest ...'

(Chrodegang of Metz, 1: 79.84)

- b. [*Þa*] **besargode** *he ðære sorhfullan meder*
[then] **pitied** he the sorrowful mother
'Then he pitied the sorrowful mother'

(Ælfric's Catholic Homilies II, 10: 89.288.1827)

(4a) is an example of V2 with the nominal subject, *sum Cristes þegen* 'some of Christ's servants', which follows the direct object, *ðis ærendgewrit* 'this message' in the left-periphery, and the verb *sende* 'sent'. Nominal subjects occurred postverbally in most contexts in OE, in this case with a topicalised direct object. (4b) on the other hand is an example of V2 with the pronominal subject, *he*, which follows the temporal adverb, *þa* 'then', one of the few initial adverbs that drove V2 order with subject pronouns, and which was predominantly used for discourse- and narrative-advancing purposes. Thus, both outputs here represent typical usage of V2 in OE.

To determine whether cases of V2 included given or new subjects, I use the preceding context in individual texts to investigate whether or not the referent has been activated in prior discourse. The referent has been activated in prior discourse if it has been introduced in the same chapter or section, also known as 'prior mention' in McCarley (2021), adapted from Gregory and Michaelis' (2001) study who capped the distance to five clauses (cited in Dreschler 2015: 85). The referent may also have an antecedent that has been introduced earlier in the text (also known as 'identity' in Komen et al. (2023)'s Pentaset categories), or if the referent is a known entity to the general readership, such as 'God'. This type of referent is known as 'hearer old' in Taylor and Pintzuk (2014), even if the subject had not been previously mentioned in the text. All other cases could be categorised as 'new' or 'inert' (see Section 2.3.3.3 below for more specific categories,

(IP-MAT* iDomsNum 2
*MDP | *MDD | *HVP | *HVD | *DOP | *DOD | *BEP | *BED | *AXP | *AXD | *VBP | *VBD)
AND (IP-MAT* iDomsNum 3 NP-NOM*)
AND (NP-NOM* iDoms PRO^N)

based on the Pentaset). (4a-b) here can be categorised as ‘new’ and ‘given’, respectively, reflecting the general trend for nominal and pronominal subjects, although some nominal subjects could exhibit given information, and are labelled as such throughout.

To discover whether atypical forms of V2 were possible in OE (i.e. those word orders that did not follow the general tendencies of information structure to affect verb-movement), I combine two approaches. First, I form search queries that are inclusive of all left-peripheral environments, which differ based on their type of subject. I then investigate these outputs to determine the types of constituents possible in the left-periphery. Next, I form search queries which are broken down by the type of constituent in the left-periphery, such as different types of adverbs, PPs, and objects. One of the issues with the latter approach is that adverbs are not always labelled based on their type, and sometimes come under the generic ‘ADVP’, as opposed to locative adverbs ‘ADVP-LOC’ or temporal adverbs ‘ADVP-TMP’. This categorisation is problematic as temporal discourse-advancing adverbs such as ‘then’, ‘now’ and ‘thus’ generally occurred alongside V2, whereas other types of adverbs introduced V3 sentences frequently in OE. Two examples that fall outside of the expected patterning in OE are provided below:²⁸

(5)

- a. [Scortlice] **hæbbe** we nu gesæd be þam gesetenum iglandum þe in ðæm
[briefly] **have** we now spoken about the inhabited islands that in the
Wendelsæ sindon
Mediterranean-Sea are
‘We have now briefly spoken about the inhabited islands which are in the
Mediterranean Sea’

(Orosius, 1: 1.21.21.428)

- b. [Þæs cyninges rices þy þridan geare] Theodor biscop **gesomnade** biscopa
[the king’s reign the third year] Theodore bishop **assembled** bishop’s
gemot ...
meeting ...

²⁸ An example of a search query narrowing V2 down by subject-type and initial constituent is below (which, in this case, searches for V2 with subject pronouns and initial direct objects):

```
(IP-MAT* iDomsNum 1 NP-ACC*)
AND (IP-MAT* iDomsNum 2
*MDP|*MDD|*HVP|*HVD|*DOP|*DOD|*BEP|*BED|*AXP|*AXD|*VBP|*VBD)
AND (IP-MAT* iDomsNum 3 NP-NOM*)
AND (NP-NOM* iDoms PRO^N)
```

‘In the third year of the King’s reign, bishop Theodore assembled the bishops together...’

(Bede’s History of the English Church, 4: 5.276.3.2799)

(5a) exhibits V2 word order with the subject pronoun *we*, which follows the verb *hæbbe* ‘have’ and the initial adverb *scortlice* ‘briefly’, a temporal adverb which is not expected to occur directly before the verb in prior literature (generally this was reserved for shorter discourse linking adverbs as outlined above). (5b) also exhibits an unexpected word order, a case of V3 with the nominal subject *Theodor biscop* ‘bishop Theodore’ before the verb *gesomnade* ‘assembled’, and following the indirect object *Pæs cyninges rices þy þriddan geare* ‘in the third year of the King’s reign’. The following chapter is devoted to incorporating these unexpected types of V2 into structural representations of the phenomenon.

To determine whether clitics might be possible in OE, especially in V2 and V3 structures, I reassess two of the points from Kayne’s (1975: 77ff.) criteria for French clitics, which Koopman (1997a: 75) outlines is a challenge for OE. These were:

1. A clitic occupies a special position (full NPs do not occur there)
2. It must occur in this special position

For these two points in Kayne’s criteria, I use the previously written search queries to find the distribution of OE V2 with different types of subjects, to determine whether subject pronouns differed from nominal subjects in relation to their ordering alongside the verb. As Koopman (1997a) does not conclude whether subject pronouns occupy a special position distinct from longer nominal arguments, I use these queries to reaffirm the possibilities for the two subject-types and whether they could occur pre- and postverbally alongside a range of fronted contexts.

2.3.3.2. Study 2

In Study 2, I examine the verb second phenomenon diachronically across the Middle English period, in a range of syntactic environments (by the type of subject, verb, and initial constituent in the sentence), and within different types of texts grouped together based on dialect. The study reassesses the interactions between grammatical and sociohistorical

variables and their impact on the use of V2, especially during a period of high variation, involving both declining and inclining trends. The texts in PPCME2 are separated into categories based on the general time period of their composition date (or if the date was unknown, the general time period their manuscript is from), and are broadly labelled, M1, M2, M3, and M4, corresponding to the dates, c.1150-1250, c.1250-1350, c.1350-1420, and c.1420-1500. Within these categories, there are occasions when there is some uncertainty with respect to when the text was composed, or whether the manuscript was produced much later than the original date of composition. Generally, the older of the two dates, whether that be the date of composition or the manuscript, was used to categorise the date of the text. Overall, I retrieve c.3780 instances of V2 and c.6015 instances of V3 across these time periods in PPCME2.

Above, I outline two cases where V2 is broken down into either the type of subject within the sentence, or the initial constituent in the left-periphery. The third grammatical variable is verb-type, specifically whether the verb is lexical or auxiliary. Two example outputs are provided below, with modal auxiliary verb ‘may’ and lexical verb ‘say’:²⁹

(6)

- a. [*His powere*] **may** *bou see by paire gretness ...*
 [his power] **may** you see by their greatness ...
 ‘You may see his power due to their greatness ...’

(The Mirror of St. Edmund, Thornton Ms., 21.134)

- b. [*This words*], **sayse** *Saynte Paule, in his pistyll*
 [these words], **says** Saint Paul, in his pistle
 ‘In his pistle, Saint Paul says these words’

(The Mirror of St. Edmund, Thornton Ms. 16.5)

The reason for separating V2 and V3 sentences into whether a lexical or auxiliary verb was used mainly stems from the work of van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012), who

²⁹ An example of two queries which would retrieve cases of V2 with auxiliary and lexical verbs (using the Penn annotation system for the ME period) is provided below.

```
(IP-MAT* iDomsNum 2 *MD|*DOP|*DOD|*HVP|*HVD|*BEP|*BED)
AND (IP-MAT* iDomsNum 3 NP-SBJ*)
```

```
(IP-MAT* iDomsNum 2 *VBP|*VBD)
AND (IP-MAT* iDomsNum 3 NP-SBJ*)
```

show a difference in V2 usage based on whether the verb was an auxiliary, or a lexical verb that was also either unaccusative, transitive, or unergative intransitive. In a number of their studies, transitive and intransitive unergative verbs were collapsed into one category, and the differences between this category and that of unaccusative verbs was marginal (especially in cases of V2 with pronominal subjects, which appeared to rise in frequency only in auxiliary verb contexts). Consequently, I separate instances of V2 in ME into lexical or auxiliary. A further reason for this separation was due to the limits of the Penn annotation system. The verbs in the corpus can be easily collated based on whether they are lexical (e.g. the annotation would be VBP or VBD based on whether it was a present- or past-tense verb) or auxiliary (e.g. MD for a modal verb, DOP or DOD for periphrastic *do*, HVP or HVD for auxiliary *have*, or BEP or BED for auxiliary *be*). However, it is much harder to search based on whether a verb is intransitive or transitive, as they are not labelled as such, but can be obtained using the overall structure of the query. Nevertheless, since there is little difference between the types of lexical verb in the ME V2 study of van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012), they are not considered in the current project.

Finally, I form maps of the location of different texts (based on the dialect of the author and/or the location of the manuscript, as identified in PPCME2), along with whether they have a high, low, or expected level of V2. These maps are also divided into whether they follow an unexpected trend, i.e. whether the rate of pronominal V2 was higher than nominal V2 (which generally was not the case in ME texts generally, or in the OE period). The type of test, variables and their interactions, and the model that is used to discover the impact of predictors on the appearance of V2 over V3 can be found in Chapter 4.

2.3.3.3. Study 3

The final study is a qualitative analysis of Chaucer's prose works: *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, *The Parson's Tale*, and *The Tale of Melibee*. Generally, this study involves using the outputs from the search queries that are written for Study 2, specifically V2 and V3 environments broken down by type of subject and initial constituent. The factor of verb-type could not be included as an additional layer in the Chaucerian study, as there are fewer clauses to analyse in these texts compared to the large-scale quantitative study, and it would therefore narrow down the dataset considerably. Overall, I retrieve c.205 instances of V2

and c.56 instances of V3 across the three texts, having narrowed down the dataset based on some necessary exclusions (see Section 2.3.3.4 below).

In addition to separating instances of V2 and V3 by the syntactic nature of the subject, I manually categorise each subject and initial constituent within the sentences depending on their referential status. I use a more specific methodology compared to Study 1, which is similar to that of Los et al. (2023), and includes the use of Komen, Los and van Kemenade's (2023) Pentaset categories, as below:

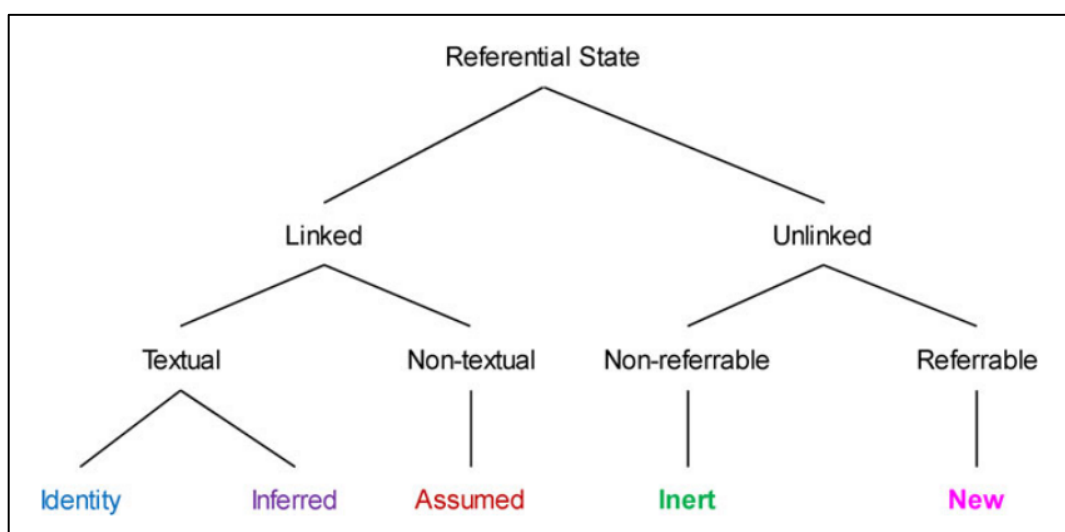


Figure 6: The Pentaset categories (Komen, Los and van Kemenade 2023, cited in Los et al. 2023: 7).

Identity, *Inferred*, and *Assumed* are categories of referents with a textual or non-textual link to another referent, its antecedent. *Identity* is a category of referent that has a recently evoked antecedent, e.g. the directly preceding sentence. *Inferred* means the referent was evoked at some point in the text, or the referent can be inferred by the reader based on the properties of the referent (e.g. it can be inferred that a house has a door, a chimney, a window, etc.). *Assumed* means the referent represents shared knowledge amongst the readership, for example ‘the Pope’ or ‘our Lord’. *Inert* and *New* are categories that do not refer to an antecedent (e.g. a bare noun) or introduce a new referent, respectively. More information about how these are implemented in the case study can be found in Chapter 5.

As elaborated in Chapter 1, the occurrence of pre- and postverbal subjects and their information-structural status is especially important for understanding whether the use of

V2 was driven by IS tendencies in some way. If the study finds that given/linked subjects inverted with the verb frequently in Chaucer's texts (i.e. a higher rate of V2 compared to V3 with given subjects), given-before-new tendencies are not present within the text's structure, and information structure likely had little influence on the syntax. Alternatively, if the rate of V2 with given/linked subjects (either pronominal or nominal subjects) is low, as is evident in Old English according to prior accounts, the IS status of the subject likely motivates the ordering of subject and verb throughout the text. Additionally, a high frequency of non-inversion with new/unlinked subjects may reflect what happened in late Middle English more generally, when a non-V2 word order was rising in frequency. Thus, these hypotheses, similar to Eitler and Westergaard's (2014) study of John Capgrave's texts, provide a foundation for establishing conclusions about the impact of IS on the syntax of Chaucer's different prose works.

One issue with using Chaucer's prose works is the potential influence of translation and/or scribal interference. The three prose works (*A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, *The Parson's Tale*, and *The Tale of Melibee*) each draw on exemplar texts and are adapted for English readers in the late medieval period. For example, Benson (2008: 923) states that *The Tale of Melibee* "is a close translation of the *Livre de Melibée et de Dame Prudence*, written by Renaud de Louens sometime after 1336" which may have an impact on the use of V2 in the text. Haeberli (2007, 2010) discusses the possible effect of translation on use of V2, and I refer the reader to this work to highlight the potential impact. Furthermore, the use of multiple original manuscripts in the creation of critical editions of Chaucer's work, and thus the number of scribal versions of the texts, might have impacted the syntax of V2. It is a challenge to be able to ascertain the precise nature of the influence of these factors on the use of V2, however, I acknowledge this impact and do not suggest that the syntax was wholly reflective of Chaucer's syntax.

2.3.3.4. Exclusion of data from corpora

I now detail some of the crucial exclusions within both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the studies. I exclude conjunctions from sentence-initial position within V2 and V3 search queries. This exclusion is necessary to avoid V1 constructions appearing in the output, especially given conjunctions occur outside the left-periphery and do not lead to V2—i.e., preceding the highest clausal node, CP. The query programme would otherwise

assume the verb occurs in a second position following the conjunction, despite the structure actually being V1. For example, OE instances such as, & *ga ge on minne wingearð*, meaning ‘and you go on my vineyard’ (cowsgosp,Mt_[WSCp]: 20.7.1323), would affect the analysis, as it is an imperative with the verb *ga* in first position. Even though I exclude conjunctions from initial position, those outside of the left-periphery are still included within the output, and are instead followed by an initial phrase that occurs alongside V2 or V3. For instance, the following sentence includes a conjunction outside of the main clause and is retrievable from the corpus: *...and seyd, “Dowtyr, now am I be-kome þe Modyr of God”* ‘...and said “Daughter, now I have become the mother of God”’ (cmkempe, 18.385). In this case, the conjunction falls outside of the main clause containing the verb *am*, which moves to the second position of the sentence alongside the fronting of the temporal adverb ‘now’. While Dreschler (2015: 237) argued that conjunct-clauses exhibit V2 less frequently than non-conjunct clauses, I ensure they are included in the analysis to highlight the rates of V2 in historical English texts as accurately as possible.

In searches where I narrow the use of V2 by the type of subject within the sentence, the indefinite subject denoted by MAN is excluded, due to disagreement in the literature as to whether indefinite subjects should be considered pronominal or nominal subjects. Van Bergen (2000) identifies that the indefinite subject *man* has been considered a nominal subject as the indefinite patterns similarly with respect to inversion (e.g. van Kemenade 1987, and Koopman 1997a), yet is treated as a pronominal in Haeberli and Haegeman (1995: 86). Van Bergen (2000: 118) concludes that, while *man* is in similar distribution to nominal subjects, it is difficult to explain why there is a lack of inversion following fronted topics, which is alike the distribution of pronominal subjects with respect to V2 or inversion. Los (2002: 182) explains that while *man* is often referred to as a pronoun, “it formally wavers between a noun and a pronoun”. Thus, given that the indefinite subject has both similarities and differences with pronominal and nominal subjects, I exclude them when categorising instances of V2 and V3 based on the type of subject (falling into pronominal or nominal), due to the distinct syntactic characteristics and distribution of indefinite subjects which do not neatly represent either pronominal or nominal subjects. Indefinite subjects are included in all other analyses of English V2.

As noted by Los (2009, 2012), there is the potential for analytically ambiguous examples of V2 to slip through in quantitative analyses of the phenomenon in English,

especially in later medieval periods. These relate to the ‘late subject constraint’, whereby informationally-new subjects may appear in end-focus position, or exhibit presentational focus (Los 2009: 104). In these cases, the subject remains down in the specifier position of the VP, and the finite verb does not move up to the IP or CP domain. These are most likely in cases where the verb is unaccusative (i.e. does not take an external argument, and the subject is not involved in completing the action), or in cases with lexical verb ‘be’. Los states the following sentence from Warner (2007) as a “derivationally ambiguous” (2009: 104), since the verb *comen* ‘come’ is unaccusative and the new subject *alle manere of synnes* ‘all manner of sins’ has a heavy end-weight:

- (7) [Of þese seuene heuedes] **comen** *alle manere of synnes*
 [from these seven heads] **come** all manner of sins
 ‘From these seven heads spring all manner of sins’

(Vice and Virtues, 11.8, adapted from Los 2009: 104 and Warner 2007)

While it is not possible to remove these from quantitative analyses, I exclude them from the qualitative analysis of Chaucer’s prose works due to their derivational ambiguity.³⁰

In the qualitative study of Chaucer’s prose works, I exclude some instances which were picked up unavoidably by the corpus queries as cases of V2 or V3. This exclusion includes expletive and existential subjects (in addition to indefinite subjects which, unlike expletives, are more easily searchable using queries), as these two types of subject do not bear a thematic role, meaning the verb they occur alongside is generally the unaccusative ‘be’ (e.g. ‘it is raining’). As noted above, these cases of V2 are derivationally ambiguous, since the verb likely remained in the verbal domain even though they appear on the surface in a second or third position.. These cannot necessarily be removed from search queries as part of the quantitative analysis, as not every case of expletive or existential subject within V2 and V3 structures are labelled as such. Furthermore, there were cases where initial constituents are considered in the left-periphery within the search query, yet can be

³⁰ Spelling variation for individual lemmas cannot be accounted for when using PPCME2 (unlike PLAEME). Thus, it would be near-impossible to remove all cases of unaccusative verbs from the second and third position in the sentence, as searches would need to be conducted for specific unaccusative verbs and their spelling variants. I instead reserved the exclusion of unaccusative verbs for the qualitative study, especially as it is unclear as to whether the verbs had moved out of the verbal domain in the structural representation.

considered external to the CP. For instance, conjunctions or text-structuring devices, such as ‘and’, ‘but’, ‘or’, ‘moreover’, ‘furthermore’, ‘also’, ‘next’, and ‘yet’, and emphatic constructions, such as *for certes* ‘certainly’ and *for sothe* ‘truthfully’, are all discarded from the qualitative study.

I use Los (2015: 205-206), who clearly outlines a diagnostic to determine which elements are outside of the left-periphery, and thus, which observed structures are underlyingly verb second or verb third, and those that should be excluded from the analysis. Specifically, adverbs such as those listed above (including ‘furthermore’, ‘also’ etc., but also ‘certainly’), are used as “a text-structuring device, to mark the beginning of a new section” (Los 2015: 206). Towards the end of Middle English, it is particularly clear that these adverbs are used to demarcate a new section, because they are a resurrected (or ‘exapted’) form of V2 while the canonical structure begins to decline. On the other hand, the adverb ‘thus’ marks the end of a section, linking one piece of discourse to the other, and ‘then’ and ‘now’ are temporal, meaning their role is to advance the discourse as opposed to introducing a new section. While these diagnostics involve an element of subjectivity, it is useful to think about whether the initial adverb introduces a new topic, compared to linking one piece of discourse to another.

2.4. A novel methodological approach to the study of historical English verb second

This chapter brings together three approaches to the study of V2 instability in the history of English, which presents a multi-layered and multi-factorial methodology exploring the phenomenon. It begins with an essential reassessment of the representation of V2 structure in English, incorporating types of V2 usage which appear because of the combined syntactic and information-structural pressures present as early as Old English. With this structure in mind, I turn to specific analysis of the interactions of both grammatical and sociohistorical variables and their impact on the frequency of use of V2 in Middle English. These interactions are then mapped geographically in order to pinpoint where instability is occurring most, specifically, the dialectal texts exhibiting the most variation, especially those favouring the most unexpected types of V2 occurring at the time (e.g. with pronominal subjects, a type of V2 that was often driven by the tendencies of information structure during OE). Lastly, I bring together each of the issues of analysis in a case study

of Chaucerian prose works. The final study intertwines with a number of the issues mentioned here and addresses the challenges that have been established in scholarship that came before. Rather than solely answering the question of why texts generally vary in their usage of V2, this study additionally explores why late medieval writers themselves do so too. In particular, it investigates the combined effect of text-type, rhetoric, and discourse, and the pressures of information structure on the use of V2, while also considering the authors' own background in relation to why V2 may differ from general trends. To summarise, these studies represent changes that occur on the basis of a number of factors, incorporating different linguistic domains to be able to explain syntactic change. It also differs from many prior studies by moving away from the oftentimes overestimated effect of morphology on syntactic change, and additionally begins to refocus the narrative back toward sociohistorical considerations.

Chapter 3:

The distribution of verb second in Old English: An examination of unexpected counterexamples to the general pattern

To date, analysis of the decline in frequency of English verb second has generally received three broad categories of treatment. This includes perspectives focusing on: the influence of the levelling of inflectional morphology on the loss of verb-movement to the IP- (Inflectional Phrase) and CP- (Complementizer Phrase) domains; the deteriorating link between the information-structural status of different elements of the sentence and the occurrence of the verb in second or third position; and the link between the loss of verb second (V2) and language contact with Old Norse or Anglo-Norman, as well as contact between dialects of Middle English. In this chapter, I reassess the combined effect of syntax and information structure on the presence or absence of V2 word order in Old English (OE), against several unexpected cases of V2 and V3 (verb third) that I have collected from the York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE). The structures I highlight in this chapter are counter to the expected positioning of the verb, which is linked to the information-structural (IS) status of the initial constituent and subject. These movement processes have been examined at-length in prior research (e.g. Bech 2001, 2014; Warner 2007; Los 2009, 2012; Hinterhölzl 2009; Westergaard 2009c; Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade 2012; van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012; Eitler and Westergaard 2014). While these IS-based accounts aim to account for the most frequent patterns of V2 and V3, there are further cases of V2 and V3 word order in Old English which demonstrate the ability to place information structure – specifically, the way in which discourse elements of focus, emphasis and familiarity are structured – within the underlying syntactic representation. The extent to which IS was consistently impacting OE verb-movement is worth investigating, because if this force was not stable, in particular environments one might expect to see counterexamples to the general IS-based trend driving the use of English V2.

In addition, (morpho)syntactic accounts of V2, including those that consider dialect variation to be a viable explanation for V2, advocate that changes in subject clitic status

might have led to changes in verb positioning, even though there are questions surrounding whether subject pronouns differed from nominal subjects in terms of their distribution (see Koopman 1997a and Bech 2001). Thus, in this reassessment of verb-movement in English, I offer the most likely structure for V2, a split CP which encompasses the range of possible word orders and counterexamples in OE, while also taking into consideration a combined syntactic-IS pressure that drove verb-movement. To explain the factors contributing to instability in the V2 phenomenon in Middle English (ME), it is important to fully articulate how the structure might have changed from Old English. By providing data on the existence of counterexamples to the general trend, both in this chapter, and in later analysis on the properties of V2 in ME, I argue that understanding the trajectory of English V2 loss requires nuanced consideration of its continually evolving syntactic and information-structural properties, as distinct processes that other Germanic languages did not undergo. I also show that some of the verb-movement processes that increased in frequency in Middle English, existed as early as the Old English period, including patterns that were not sensitive to information-structural pressures and their ability to drive the position of the verb.

3.1. The evolution of verb-movement in English, and the impact of information structure

In Old English, there were two main types of verb-movement to the left-periphery, or the CP. One type of verb-movement to C was motivated by a syntactic operation, involving the movement of a non-argument to the initial position of the sentence. Typically, this type of movement to initial position was driven by A-bar dependencies (Chomsky 1981), for example, to express a question or negation (also see Rizzi 1996 and Haegeman 1995; cited in van Kemenade and Los 2006: 226). It is the V-feature in C which triggers verbs to be spelled out in the left-periphery, as per Roberts (2010, cited by Walkden 2012: 88). However, sentences introduced by short deictic or temporal adverbs, such as ‘then’, ‘thus’, and ‘now’, are also considered to be motivated by a syntactic operation, due to their near-categorical status in introducing verb second word order (the movement of the verb to C, preceding the subject). For instance, van Kemenade and Los (2006) explain that – while initial adverbs such as *þa/þonne* do not form a natural class with *wh*- and negative-operators, they have a similar syntactic behaviour in terms of driving verb-movement to C.

This similarity is due to the closely-connected forces of morphosyntax and discourse-related factors in triggering syntactic movement in Old English:

“We suggest, following up further ideas in van Kemenade and Milicev (2005), that in Old English discourse marking is tied up with morphosyntactic marking to a much larger extent than has so far been realized. This leads us to resume the much criticized idea in van Kemenade (1987) that [...] *þa/þonne* is a discourse operator which triggers movement of the finite verb to C in much the same way as a *wh*-operator or a negative operator. Given that the CP domain of the clause is typically where clause type and discourse linking is encoded, this is no cause for surprise.”

(van Kemenade and Los 2006: 226)

Thus, while this type of verb-movement could be motivated by a solely syntactic operation, it is also closely tied to discourse-continuity in the case of initial deictic adverbs such as temporal ‘then’. This close-knit operation involving syntax and discourse typically led to near-categorical V2 word order in Old English, with both pronominal and nominal subjects.

The other type of verb-movement to C in Old English was driven by information-structural factors, a motivation that I, like others in the field, place within a syntactic model due to the ability to clearly articulate their movement within an underlying representation. These factors involved the movement of an initial constituent for the purposes of referring to old or new information presented at different points in the text (or externally). Thus, when an anaphoric constituent, or a constituent presenting new or focused information, was fronted to the beginning of the sentence, the verb moved to a lower position within the left-periphery (see e.g. van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012: 91). Since subjects were also positioned based on their information-structural status, i.e. whether they exhibited given information (linking to an entity introduced previously, or externally), or new information (introducing information for the first time), the ordering of the verb and subject on the surface often relied on the IS status of the subject used in the sentence, as well as the underlying position of the verb. Thus, new subjects usually followed the verb, and given subjects preceded the verb, as in examples (1a-b) below, respectively.

(1)

- a. [*Ðam ylcan Iohanne*] **sealde** *sum hæðengylða attor drincan*
 [the same John] **gave** some heathen poison drink
 ‘A heathen gave poison to the same John to drink’

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 37: 505.247.7508, YCOE)

- b. [*Be ðæm*] *we* **magon** *suiðe swutule oncnawan ðæt...*
 [by that] we **may** very clearly perceive that ...
 ‘By that, we may perceive very clearly that ...’

(Cura Pastoralis, 26.181.16, adapted from Fischer et al. 2000: 107)

To motivate the movement of the finite verb and the distinct structural positions for subjects, van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) refined the structure of V2 to incorporate the pressures of information structure (2). This ordering was based on the tendency of IS to place given before new information (e.g. see Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade 2012), for instance, with the verb acting as a barrier between the given information expressed by the initial constituent and/or familiar subject, and the new information expressed by the rest of the sentence.

- (2) [CP XP_[operator/topic] C’ [C Vf₁ [FP SU₁ [given subjects] F’ [F Vf₂ [TP SU₂ [new subjects] T’ [T Vf₃ ...]]]]]]

(Adapted from van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012)

The information-structural pressures mentioned here – while generically consistent – were tendencies, and did not always result in V2 or V3 word order depending on the IS status of the subject. It is these counterexamples to the general tendency that I examine in this chapter—marked orders which then grew in frequency in late medieval English. Word orders which resulted in the verb preceding or following the subject, regardless of the status of the subject, are particularly crucial for diagnosing changes in the use of different types of V2 and verb-movement throughout the history of English, based on the syntactic, discursive, and information-structural makeup of the sentence. Some of these word orders could be considered innovative word orders which had their roots in Old English, when they occurred less frequently.

In Middle English, both the use of a syntactic-discourse operation (wh-questions, negation, initial deictic adverbs), and a syntactic-information-structural operation (initial anaphors, focused/new information), in motivating verb-movement to the relevant layers

of the left-periphery, began to break down. Later in this chapter, as well as in following chapters, I argue that the breakdown of the former led to a rise in V3 word order, and the breakdown of the latter led to a rise in a solely syntactically-driven V2 and V3 order. The loss of verb-movement to the typical position for information structure (which I show here is linked to the lower part of a split CP) might have also been affected by (and may have equally drove) the loss of the multifunctionality status of the initial constituent as a place for discourse- and IS-related content (see e.g. Los 2012; Los and Dreschler 2012; Bech 2014; Los et al. 2023). I particularly focus on Middle English structural patterns and the change from Old to Middle English in Chapters 4 and 5.

The counterexamples I present in this chapter refer to two positions where the verb moved to in Old English, and thus two types of verb-movement that increased in frequency in Middle English. The first marked word order involved verb-movement to the highest position in C, originally demarcated for syntactic operations (but also a subset of discursive operations, in the form of deictic adverbs), as mentioned above. This marked V2 word order is evident with given/familiar subjects in cases with initial anaphors, an environment which generally gave rise to V3 word order in OE due to the high position of given subjects. The word order is thus counter to the general trend motivated by IS, a trend which initially included verb-movement to the lower part of the split CP (see Section 3.4 for further discussion of the left-periphery). I show in the following analysis that it was the lack of sensitivity to information structure in V2 sentences with given subjects and initial anaphors, that caused the verb to move to the highest point of the left-periphery or split CP, a verbal position which was not originally for IS-driven movement. To describe the loss of an IS-motivated factor within the underlying representation of verb-movement to C, I use the term ‘syntacticisation’ (a term also used by Los, López-Couso and Meurman-Solin 2012; van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012: 113; Taylor and Pintzuk 2012; and Los 2015: 194-195). I note that the use of the term ‘syntacticisation’ is not without its issues, because a) the notion of information structure is already incorporated into the syntactic model, and b) many have referred to the ‘syntacticisation of discourse’ (e.g. Haegeman and Hill 2013; Poole 2016) to explain the process of incorporating pragmatics and information structure into the syntactic framework, or to show the interplay of the two factors. For lack of a better word, which would be unambiguous between its uses in the literature, I specifically use ‘syntacticisation’ throughout to refer to the loss of information-structural factors driving lexical verb-movement to C.

The second marked word order involved verb-movement to T only (verb-movement for the purposes of Tense/Agreement feature-checking), and not to C. This landing site for verb-movement occurred in two cases of V3 word order driven by different factors. The first case is in sentences which would ordinarily have driven verb-movement to C due to certain syntactic and discursive operations as mentioned above (e.g. with *wh*-words, negation, and deictic adverbs). For reasons which are not entirely clear – but may be linked to syntactic optionality (see Section 3.4 onwards) – the verb does not appear before the subject in a small number of cases in OE. Thus, the verb must have remained in T where it checked the feature of Tense/Agreement, due to the higher positions of the subject in Spec, CP1 and Spec, TP. The second case is in V3 sentences with a new (usually, nominal) subject, which would have ordinarily occurred after the verb due to the IS status of the subject placing it in a low position. Again, the verb must have reached as far as T to receive Tense/Agreement, because of the position of the new subject in Spec, TP.

The conditions of Old and Middle English V2 patterns are markedly different from other Germanic languages, both past and present, because of the information-structural tendencies described here, and the way in which these changed to favour a syntactic operation no longer affected by IS-based pressures. Languages such as Old Norse had consistent verb-movement to the highest position of C (e.g. see Faarlund 2004: 192-193), resulting in a surface order where the verb preceded the subject, and thus were not affected as frequently by an information-structural tendency to drive verb-movement to different positions, as well as the placement of subjects within the sentence. The amalgamation of discourse- and IS-based forces thus form part of the syntactic model, in a way that affects the frequency of V2 word order in OE compared to other Germanic languages. Overall, English presents a unique opportunity to analyse such interfaces and how they evolve.

Another strength of the combined syntactic-IS model is that it articulates a tendency for the verb to move to different positions depending on the information-structural status of specific elements within the sentence. It also motivates the positioning of subjects based on their prosody (e.g. see Speyer 2005, 2010) and whether they are linked to a referent in the preceding discourse. As Biberauer and Walkden (2015) summarise, there are several approaches that productively incorporate information-structural concerns into their explanation of diachronic syntax. For instance, the collection of chapters by Meurman-Solin, López-Couso and Los (2012) aim to resolve syntactic problems present in English,

including the phenomena of verb second, the move from OV to VO word order, topicalisation, left-dislocation, and passivisation, by explaining the link between syntax and information structure. Some consideration of why verb-movement occurs to various positions is therefore more evident in this approach to OE V2.

There is also the perspective that information-structural processes are solely a surface phenomenon; stylistic and pragmatic choices by the author of a text that may not interact with underlying syntactic processes. While many have turned to the combined syntactic and information-structural representation to explain the general tendencies of V2 in OE, the messiness of data in OE is still evident. This messiness, including the counterexamples I present throughout this chapter, does not neatly fit the proposals for the positioning of subjects and verbs, as the ‘pressures’ of information structure are merely tendencies for the ordering of given and new information. Section 1.5.2 introduced initial ideas regarding the pressures of pragmatics on syntax, and Bech (2001: 32-38) refers to some of this earlier work. Of particular relevance, Comrie (1981) states, with regard to the impact of pragmatics, that the structure of sentences “can be understood only in relation to semantics and pragmatics, or more specifically that grammatical relations cannot be understood in their entirety unless they are related to semantic and pragmatic roles” (1981: 60, referenced in Bech 2001: 32). While it is therefore hugely beneficial to be able to articulate a structural representation of V2, with the combined impact of syntax, and the information status of these grammatical elements, the style of the author, texts’ genre and/or type, and specific use of anaphoric or focalized elements may also affect the syntax of a given OE sentence. Specifically, structural representations must be able to accommodate any situational factor affecting the use of V2 in a given context.

Furthermore, there is the issue as to whether the same pressures would be evident in the spoken as well as the written mode in OE. In particular, work on diglossia as presented by Tristram (2004) might shed light on whether the effects of IS on the syntax of V2 in OE (i.e. a lower verbal position driven by information structure, resulting in given subjects occurring before the verb) was present in spoken as well as written OE. She proposes that earlier OE texts primarily represent the high variety of OE, while EME texts may represent the low variety of OE spoken by the general population. This line of inquiry is particularly used as an argument for the apparent sudden changes occurring in the transition period from OE to ME. If the same pressures are found in early ME texts (c.1100-

1300) it might be the case that the general population of OE speakers had a limited V2, however, if this information-structural tendency is not found then it begs the question as to whether the spoken mode of OE was similarly affected by such discourse considerations. Then, as scholars working at the intersection of English syntax and IS argue, much of this variation, governed by IS tendencies, likely dissipated in later medieval English when the written mode more closely reflected the spoken mode. I therefore also introduce a further discussion point with respect to the distribution of OE V2 across various syntactic environments, while also bringing in arguments for the sociohistorical context of the time.

Finally, recent evidence has also shown that verb-movement likely occurred beyond the IP-domain, due to the lack of V2 in embedded clauses. Thus, English did not have a ‘symmetric’ V2 syntax (e.g. van Kemenade 1997; Salvesen and Walkden 2017; Walkden and Booth 2020, among others). Given this evidence against a V-to-I analysis of V2, a reassessment of the structure of verb-movement in English is evidently required, especially as the approaches above (2-3) generally incorporate movement of the finite verb to a lower position within IP. An analysis of verb-movement as V-to-C (or has been commonly described as ‘CP-V2’) might alleviate some of the concerns surrounding the lack of symmetric V2, while incorporating a larger range of types of V2. This chapter additionally readdresses the distributions of V2 in a range of environments, and proposes a structure that could a) be adapted to accommodate deviations from the general patterning of V2 syntax in OE (that is also governed by information-structural tendencies) and b) take into account the fact that embedded V2 did not occur consistently in OE, demonstrating continual V-to-C movement.

Overall, a large number of recent studies on V2 assume that both syntactic and IS processes should be combined to produce a model that explains the use of V2 in different scenarios. Since there was a given-before-new *tendency* in OE sentences, I also acknowledge that there is some variation in the use of V2 to be expected, which may be linked either to preferences for particular structures (e.g. whether prosodic or stylistic), or the lack of sensitivity toward information-structural processes in some circumstances. The sentences that went against the general information-structural tendencies of Old English V2 syntax, and thus form diagnostics for identifying counterexamples, are as follows:

- Sentences introduced by a syntactic operation (by way of A-bar movement), or a short, deictic adverb (e.g. negation, or *þa/þonne*), with a finite verb that occurred

after the subject (both pronominal and nominal), thus resulting in V3 word order. These contexts would predominantly give rise to V2 in Old English.

- Sentences introduced by an initial focused or anaphoric constituent, especially those for the purposes of discourse-linking, with a finite verb that occurred after given subjects (V2 word order), and before new subjects (V3 word order). Given the strong sensitivity to information structure as a factor driving verb-movement to a lower position, and in placing subjects in a high or low position based on their IS status, these patterns would have usually resulted in the opposite structure in OE (V2 with new subjects, and V3 with given subjects).

The following sections are therefore dedicated to highlighting the messiness and variation in V2 usage present in OE texts, which might be explained by various underlying processes at the interface of syntax and information structure, and/or surface prosodic or stylistic choices made by the speaker/writer. These patterns underscore the changes in use of V2 in the Middle English period, and how the link between syntax and information structure, in driving verb-movement to a low C position, weakened.

3.2. The environments of Old English verb second

Given the strengths and pitfalls of prior approaches, which focus either solely on the syntactic pressures within V2 sentences, or that incorporate information-structural pressures into the syntactic model, it is important to reassess the possibilities for OE verb positioning following its movement. Central to this reassessment is the understanding of the range of types of V2 that were attested in OE texts, and ensuring their existence is represented in a combined syntax- and IS-based model. It is equally crucial to compare the structure of V2 and its opposing structure, V3, especially as the syntactic-IS processes at work to drive V2 in English were not consistently productive, thus resulting in frequent V3 word order, too. Hejná and Walkden's (2022: 197) recent summary of English V2 word order, especially as an introductory concept, is particularly relevant in this regard:

“...whether we find the verb in second position or not (in clauses with an initial non-subject) depends on the discourse status of the subject. If the subject is given information, i.e. refers to something that was mentioned in the previous discourse, it may precede the finite verb, giving rise to a V3 word order. If it is new information, it must follow the finite verb, giving rise to a V2 word order.”

(Hejná and Walkden 2022: 197)

The fact they mention given subjects *may* precede the finite verb would suggest there is an alternative word order to discuss here. V2 with given/pronominal subjects may also occur postverbally, but prior scholars have generally stated that postverbal pronominal subjects appear in the specific set of environments fronted by what they often term an ‘operator’. If information-structural pressures are being considered, could given/familiar pronominal *and* nominal subjects also occur postverbally in environments with an initial anaphor? This question has yet to be considered from accounts considering the interaction of syntax and IS, particularly because they do not acknowledge the possible occurrence of V2 with given subjects in OE, due to the high position of subject pronouns, and the low position of the verb in I. In addition, Hejná and Walkden state that new information *must* follow the finite verb. Haeberli (2002b) and van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) acknowledge that nominal subjects may have occurred in a high structural position (like pronominal subjects) preceding the verb, which might explain some of the V3 word orders with nominal subjects, especially if they exhibit given information. However, do some of these cases of OE preverbal nominal subjects exhibit new information? There are therefore some remaining questions that are left unanswered with respect to the attestation of V2 and V3 in different environments and their consideration within a syntactic-IS based model. Re-examining these possibilities for verb-movement in OE is also key to establishing why verb-movement evolved in Middle English.

3.3. The distribution of subject-types within different environments of verb second and verb third in Old English

Using YCOE (Taylor et al. 2003), in this section I determine in which environments V2 and V3 occurred with different types of subject (pronominal vs. nominal). As noted, V2 generally occurred with nominal subjects and less frequently with pronominal subjects in Old English. While it is important to recognise this trend existed in OE, prior studies have

aimed to account for this variation by suggesting the verb moved to the lower IP domain in specific contexts (i.e. when a constituent was topicalised due to IS-based pressures). Given recent evidence regarding the lack of symmetric V2 in OE, it is important that verb-movement is always articulated as occurring to the CP domain in OE. Due to the uncertainty surrounding current structural representations and their analysis of verb-movement, it seems necessary to reassess the distribution of V2 in different environments.

Frequency of V2 (compared to V3) in YCOE (%)			
Initial XP		Pron. subject	Nom. subject
Operators	Negation	100 (372/372)	100 (37/37)
	Adverb <i>þa/þonne</i>	99 (584/590)	94.1 (985/1047)
Other types of initial constituent	Direct object	1.8 (4/225)	74.2 (69/93)
	Indirect object	7.7 (2/26)	66.2 (47/71)
	Adverb (other)	4.1 (10/242)	33.5 (172/514)
	Prepositional phrase	0 (0/171)	62.9 (144/229)

Table 1: A table to show the frequency of V2, compared to V3, with different initial constituents and types of subject (pronominal vs. nominal), from YCOE.

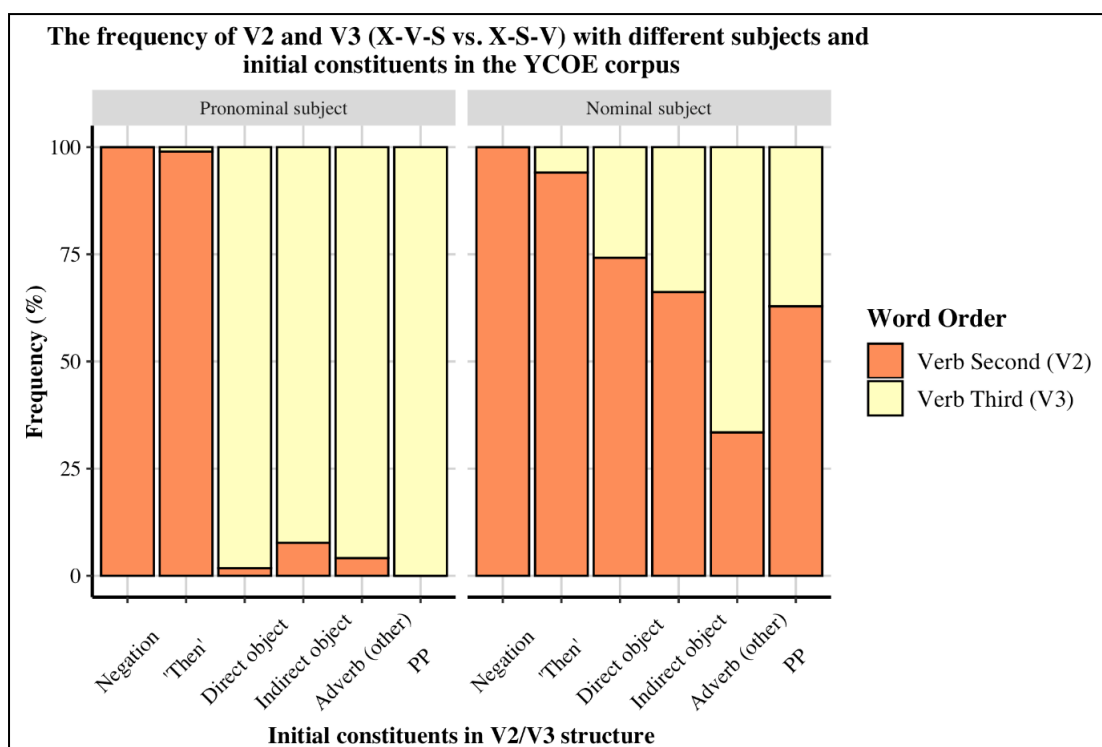


Figure 7: A bar chart showing the frequency of V2, compared to V3, with different initial constituents and types of subject (pronominal vs. nominal), from YCOE. The x-axis lists the types of initial constituents analysed along with the frequency of V2/V3 along the y-axis. The colours are coded based on V2 and V3 word order, and the bars are grouped into subject-types.

Here I compare the distribution of pronominal and nominal subjects alongside the verb, in particular, noting those environments that are uncommon, yet can be considered legitimate examples of V2 or V3. The below examples include a range of initial constituents to explore the distribution of V2 and V3, including: the discourse-advancing adverbs *þa* and *þonne*, other types of adverbs (excluding the aforementioned set of short temporal adverbs), direct and indirect objects, and PPs. Negative adverbs drive V2 categorically in OE with both subject-types (see Figure 7), so are not included in the below comparative distribution analysis. Initial PPs, adjectives, and other verbal/adjectival passive participles also drove V2 and V3, but they were infrequent (e.g. with initial adjectives, there were only two instances of V2 with pronominal subjects, and one with a nominal subject in the YCOE corpus), so these types of V2 sentences were not included in the below analysis. I have supplemented this distributional analysis with commentary regarding the typical use of V2

within each syntactic environment, and whether individual examples could be considered legitimate instances of V2.³¹

Table 1 and Figure 7 present the frequencies of V2, compared to V3, with different initial constituents in YCOE. There was a clear disparity between the occurrence of postverbal pronominal and nominal subjects in OE, as shown by the frequent use of V2 with nominal subjects across each of the syntactic contexts. Nevertheless, some cases of V2 with pronominal subjects and initial anaphors do occur. In relation to these syntactic distributions, I go into detail regarding whether they match the criteria for clitics as first introduced in Chapter 1. I then delve into the information-structural aspects of the subject-types and their patterning within V2 and V3 structures. In later sections, I examine nominal subjects based on their IS properties, i.e. whether they exhibit given or new information. Pronominal subjects generally exhibit given information unless they are reactivated for a specific type of focus. As Eitler and Westergaard (2014: 213) recognise, new pronominal subjects occur rarely (finding no instances of such in their corpus of John Capgrave in ME), and are, by definition, usually given, making it challenging to identify reactivated pronouns within Old English texts. At this point, I therefore do not separate instances of pre- and postverbal pronominal subjects into whether they exhibit given or new information.

Initial ‘then’:

(3)

- a. [Pa] *besargode he ðære sorhfullan meder* V2-PRON
 [then] **pitied** he the sorrowful mother
 ‘Then he pitied the sorrowful mother’
 (Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies II, 10: 89.288.1827, YCOE)
- b. [Pa] *wundrade Alexander hwy hit swa æmenne wære* V2-NOM
 [then] **wondered** Alexander why it so desolate was
 ‘Then Alexander wondered why it was so desolate’
 (Orosius, 3: 9.73.8.1436, YCOE)

³¹ Translations of V2 and V3 have been glossed and translated into present-day English by me unless otherwise stated.

- c. [Ða] *he hæfde befæst Gode his synna* V3-PRON
 [then] he **had** confessed God his sins
 ‘Then he confessed his sins to God’

(Cura Pastoralis, 53.419.8.2910, YCOE)

- d. [Ða] *eal þæt folc þe þæt wundor geseah herede God mid* V3-NOM
 [then] all the people who that miracle saw **praised** God with
micelre onbryrdnysse
 great intensity
 ‘Then all the people who saw that miracle praised God intensely’

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 10: 259.21.1827, YCOE)

(3a-d) exemplify instances of V2 in contexts with fronted *þa/þonne*, which occurred as part of a set of temporal, deictic adverbs, and are said to have formed a natural class with *wh*-words and negation with regard to their frequency in introducing V2 sentences (van Kemenade and Los 2006). Here, pronominal subjects occur postverbally 99% of the time, compared to nominal subjects occurring postverbally 94.1% of the time (see Table 1). Even though V3 occurred with pronominal subjects more generally, nominal subjects could equally occur in a preverbal position with initial ‘then’, and in fact occur in this position and context by around 4% more than pronominal subjects. For instance, both the subject pronoun *he* and the longer argument *eal þæt folc þe þæt wundor geseah* ‘all the people who saw that miracle’ occur before the finite verbs *hæfde* ‘had’ and *herede* ‘praised’, respectively (3c-d). Thus, both subject-types appear to be similar with regard to their distribution and frequency alongside the verb in contexts with initial deictic adverbs, in the early stages of the development of V2. These cases of V2 and V3 are straightforwardly accounted for by van Kemenade and Westergaard’s (2012) structural representation of V2 as outlined in Section 3.1 above (2). Given these deictic adverbs appear to come under the category of ‘operators’ – due to their near-categorical status in introducing V2 word order – the existence of V2 within this context is validated by a syntactically-driven operation of verb-movement, to the highest part of the CP domain. The question as to why V3 might occur in this context is addressed in the later Section 3.3.2, and while V3 does not occur productively, it does occur with both types of subject at relatively similar frequencies, suggesting there is not the same disparity with regard to subject-type happening in other environments. This therefore leads me to compare the distribution of both subject-types in contexts where V2 does not occur as productively.

Initial adverb:

(4)

- a. [Scortlice] **hæbbe** we nu gesæd be þam gesetenum V2-PRON
[briefly] **have** we now spoken about the uninhabited
iglandum þe in ðæm Wendelsæ sindon
islands that in the Mediterranean-Sea are
‘Now we have briefly spoken about the uninhabited islands which
are in the Mediterranean Sea’

(Orosius, 1: 1.21.21.428, YCOE)

- b. [Georne] **wiste** se ælmihtiga scyppend ær þan ðe he V2-NOM
[well] **knew** the Almighty Father before then that he
þa gesceafta gesceope hwæt toward wæs
the creatures created what future was
‘The Almighty Father knew well, before he created his creatures,
what was approaching...’

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 7: 237.162.1301, YCOE)

- c. [Mihtiglice] he **mihte** mid his worde hine geclænsian buton V3-PRON
[mightily] he **could** with his word him cleanse without
Hrepunge
touching
‘Without touching, he could have cleansed him mightily with
his word’

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 8: 242.32.1416, YCOE)

- d. [Vneaðe] Isaac **geendode** þas spræce ... V3-NOM
[uneasily] Isaac **finished** the speech ...
‘Isaac finished the speech with difficulty’

(Heptateuch, Gen: 27.30.1103, YCOE)

Other types of adverbs, such as longer temporal adverbs and adverbs of manner, tended to introduce V2 sentences less frequently, compared to the deictic, discourse-advancing adverbs, which often look forward to the following discourse (e.g. see Bech 2014: 515 for an explanation of narrative-advancing ‘then’). A comparison of the distribution of nominal subjects alongside the verb in YCOE, in relation to different types of adverbs, shows that deictic ‘then’ leads to V2 word order 60% more than other types of adverb (Table 1). A further comparison with pronominal subjects shows there is a wider difference between initial ‘then’ and other types of adverbs, with around 4% of ‘other’ adverbs driving V2 compared to nearly 99% with initial ‘then’. One of these examples of

initial adverbs introducing V2 with subject pronouns is shown in (4a), with the adverb *scortlice* ‘briefly’ occurring alongside verb-movement to second position, which is then followed by the subject pronoun *we*. Los (2015: 205) explains that sentences fronted by ‘stance’ adverbs, such as *soplice* ‘truly’ and *witodlice* ‘certainly’ should be excluded from an analysis of V2, as they “are not as integrated into the clause as adverbials of place, time or manner, and do not ‘count’ as the first constituent in terms of Verb-Second”. In this case, *scortlice* expresses time, serving as a discourse marker to highlight the length of the discussion on islands in the Mediterranean Sea in the Old English *Orosius*, a book documenting history with references to time and geography, and would thus be incorporated as part of the main clause. Adverbs also introduce V2 sentences with nominal subjects, as shown in (4b) with the initial adverb *georne* ‘well/earnestly/readily’, an adverb of manner which could also occur prior to a verb in second position. Equally, these different types of adverbs introduced V3 sentences with both subject-types (4c-d), which again is not necessarily explained in any depth in the literature. The main thing to note is that, while nominal subjects more frequently occurred in a postverbal position in sentences not introduced by ‘operators’, there is the possibility in OE that pronominal subjects acted similarly. If one was to also incorporate IS pressures, given/familiar nominal subjects might also occur in this position and environment (see the later Section 3.3.2 for this discussion).

Initial accusative:

(5)

- a. [*Laðlice eardunge*] **hæfde** *ic on þe* V2-PRON
 [loathsome dwelling] **had** I in thee
 ‘I had a loathsome dwelling in thee’

(Vercelli Homilies, 9: 284.784, YCOE, adapted from Walkden 2017b: 72)

- b. [*Dis ærendgewrit*] **sende** *sum Cristes þegen to ...* V2-NOM
 [this message] **sent** some Christ’s servants to ...
mæssepreostum
 high-priest
 ‘Some of Christ’s servants sent this message to the high-priest...’

(Chrodegang of Metz, 1: 79.84, YCOE)

Initial dative:

(6)

- a. [*Ðyssum tidum, Constantinus ...*], **ferde** *he forð on* V2-PRON
[these times, Constantius ...], **died** he forth in
Breotone
Britain
'In these times Constantius died in Britain'

(Bede's History of the English Church, 8.42.13.353, YCOE)

- b. [*Ðam ylcan Iohanne*] **sealde** *sum hæðengylða attor drincan* V2-NOM
[the same John] **gave** some heathen poison drink
'A heathen gave poison to the same John to drink'

(Ælfric's Catholic Homilies I, 37: 505.247.7508, YCOE)

In OE, objects (accusative or dative) could be topicalised, especially if they a) related to the discourse of the preceding context, or b) were required to be fronted for emphasis or focus. Again, there was a difference between the frequency of different types of subject in pre- vs. postverbal position in the context of initial objects, even more so than with initial adverbs. With both initial direct and indirect objects, nominal subjects occurred postverbally 70.7% of the time, while pronominal subjects occurred after the verb 2.4% of the time. Nevertheless, it is interesting that a marked word order can be identified, whereby pronominal subjects occur postverbally, and I therefore present some of these here.

Nominal subjects occur in a relatively strict postverbal position in this context, as shown by the subjects *sum Cristes þegen* 'some of Christ's servants' and *sum hæðengylða* 'a heathen' occurring after the finite verbs *sende* 'sent' and *sealde* 'gave', respectively (5b) and (6b). Both the accusative *ðis ærendgewrit* 'this message' in (5b) and the dative *ðam ylcan Iohanne* 'the same John' in (6b) have been topicalised for emphasis, occurring alongside V2 word order with the above nominal subjects. A similar process has occurred with the pronominal subjects *I* and *he* in (5a) and (6a), which follow the finite verbs *hæfde* 'had' and *ferde* 'died'. (5a) is introduced by the initial direct object *laðlice eardunge* 'loathsome dwelling' and (6b) by the indirect object *ðyssum tidum* 'these times', again, both of which have been focused. The latter example here also includes left-dislocation of a phrase to within the specifier position of the CP, yet there is still inversion of the resumptive pronoun *he* (relating to the subject 'Constantius') and the finite verb *ferde* 'died'.

As established prior to this project, environments with initial objects (and other types of phrases that are not considered ‘operators’), occurred in tandem with verb-movement to a lower position, due to IS-based pressures (of focus or anaphoricity). It is clear there is an overall disparity between the frequency of use of postverbal pronominal and nominal subjects in OE that can be addressed by verb-movement to a lower position, yet this movement must have occurred to the CP-domain. However, how can cases such as (5a) and (6a) be accounted for if pronominal subjects occur in a high structural position, which must have been located above the finite verb following its movement to a lower position? Despite the variation in frequency of use of V2 with different types of subject in OE, there still appear to be some cases deviating from this general pattern that have not yet been addressed. In addition, how does the IS status of nominal subjects, particularly those exhibiting given information, figure into the structural representation? And, given the occurrence of both pronominal and nominal subjects in pre- and postverbal position, could subject clitics have existed in Old English, and contributed to change in the frequency of V2? These questions are addressed in the following sections, starting with a reassessment of accounts who suggest the loss of clitics contributed to a loss of V2 in English. Here I refer to Koopman (1997b), who emphasises the importance of unearthing instances of V2 which go against the expected trajectory of postverbal nominal subjects and preverbal pronominal subjects, particularly in sentences introduced by a constituent with referential status and anaphoric material. I thus show that exceptions to the general tendencies of V2 in English pose challenges for approaches aiming to systematise the structure of English V2, which is no exception for the current project. I also show that some of these exceptions then proceed to increase in frequency in late medieval English, forming innovative word orders in Middle English.

3.3.1. Could clitics have existed in Old English?

Following the short comparative and distributional analysis of different types of subject alongside the finite verb, I now determine whether Old English subject pronouns could have been clitics. As introduced in Section 1.6.1.1, clitics fit somewhere between an affix and a word; they have the phonological form of the word but are bound to an adjoining word which acts as its host. It has been posited that OE had clitics, and for the word orders

of V2 and V3, it has been said that subject pronouns either underwent encliticisation or procliticisation to the finite verb. Whether subject pronouns were clitics has implications for understanding where subjects were positioned alongside the verb in the history of English, and how this positioning changed moving into the Middle English period. More recently, the position of subjects has been considered from an information-structural perspective, which suggests that given subjects (usually pronominal subjects, but also nominal in some contexts) generally occurred in the higher position preceding the finite verb in order to link to preceding discourse. However, the discussion as to whether OE subject pronouns were clitics remains relevant given a number of prior approaches argue that decliticisation had an impact on the stability of V2 in English (e.g. van Kemenade 1987; Platzack 1995; Prasad 2000). The existence of clitics is also referenced in the main set of dialectal studies exploring the loss of V2 – Kroch and Taylor (1994, 1997) and Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (2000) – and the current project contributes insights on the use of V2 across various dialects of ME. In this section I therefore compare the syntactic behaviour of clitics generally against the syntax of subject pronouns in V2 and V3 structures.

In Section 1.6.1.1, I delved into the criteria used by Koopman (1997a) to reassess whether OE pronouns were clitics, as proposed by Kayne (1975). These criteria are restated below:

1. a clitic occupies a special position (full NPs do not occur there)
2. it must occur in this special position
3. it must be adjacent to its host (V in French)
4. the host must be present (the clitic cannot occur on its own)
5. it cannot be modified
6. it has no stress
7. it cannot be conjoined
8. clitic occur in a fixed and special order, which often deviates from the order of corresponding full NPs.

(Kayne 1975: 77ff.; cited in Koopman 1997a: 75)

In order to address whether clitics existed, Koopman (1997a) questioned whether pronominal and nominal subjects shared the same syntactic environments in OE, or whether they occupied distinct positions from one another (as per criterion 1 and 2). This might refer to their position within a structural representation, which would then link to their appearance on the surface alongside the verb. Koopman concludes the following for pronouns in OE with respect to the first two points:

“...personal pronouns show syntactic behaviour that differs from that of full NPs, but not all of them do and those that do, not in every position in which they occur. [...] If we want to use a term for this special behaviour of personal pronouns, we should perhaps call them clitics after all, though we must keep in mind that they are unlike the French-type clitics of Kayne (1975).”

(Koopman 1997a: 90)

It is unclear from my distributional analysis as to whether the behaviour of pronominal and nominal subjects in OE differs substantially enough to confirm that subject pronouns were like clitics. I therefore investigate these two points on the criteria, to conclude whether subject clitics occurred in OE, or at least occurred frequently enough to be able to argue that decliticisation led to the decline in use of V2 in English. The other points on the criteria, linked to stress, modification, and adjacency to the host, either do not reflect the behaviour of OE subject pronouns or there lacks sufficient historical evidence to explain the behaviour (see Chapter 1 for this discussion).

From prior analyses of the frequency of V2 with subject pronouns in OE, and the distributional analysis conducted in the preceding section, there is a distinction between the frequency of use of postverbal subject pronouns compared to nominal subjects in a selection of environments (e.g. with initial objects and PPs). However, on the surface, it was possible for subject pronouns to occur in the same places as nominal subjects, even if subject pronouns did not occur productively in some of these environments. For instance, with initial ‘then’, the occurrence of subject pronouns after the verb was higher in frequency compared to nominal subjects, despite nominal subjects generally occurring more frequently in a postverbal position (99% vs. 94.1%). It was also possible for subject pronouns to occur postverbally in contexts with fronted objects (and other types of constituents that were not ‘operators’), albeit infrequently, and for nominal subjects to occur preverbally. The fact that subject pronouns were permitted to occur in environments where nominal subjects could also be found, and vice versa, builds up further evidence against the OE ‘subject pronouns-as-clitics’ case.

Nominal subjects could similarly exhibit given information like pronominal subjects, and would thus reside in a higher structural position on this occasion (e.g. see Bech 2001, van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012). This positioning might therefore explain some of the unexpected uses of V3 with nominal subjects in OE, while also highlighting a structural position that pronominal and nominal subjects share in specific IS-

related circumstances. This distinction between subject positioning is another argument against the existence of clitics in OE, especially because no other type of subject could occur where a clitic does (it is a 'special position'). Furthermore, the idea that subject pronouns could be clitics some of the time, but not others, has been explored for specific sentential environments. Koopman (1997a: 78) points toward this idea, especially in cases where pronominal subjects *did* invert in sentences with initial anaphors, contrary to what is expected in OE given the low rates of V2 with pronominal subjects in this context. Nevertheless, if clitics did occur in a minority of environments, their existence clearly was not frequent enough to accelerate the loss of V2. This point is important to note, especially as decliticisation approaches support the claim that the process was productive enough to trigger an entire change in the nature of the English V2 system.

Lastly, Bech (2001: 85) also makes the point that, if subject pronouns were treated as clitics, most cases of 'XSV' word order would in fact need to be treated as if they were 'XV', since the finite verb moves to the second position of the sentence before clitics are adjoined to the left of the verb. Thus, the development of V2 in OE, moving into early Middle English, would appear quite opaque if subject pronouns were treated like clitics, and it is therefore not the clearest explanation for change in the use of V2 in late medieval English.

To summarise, nominal subjects could occur in the same position as pronominal subjects with respect to the verb, and pronominal subjects did not always occur in the same position alongside the verb. The ordering of pronominal and nominal subjects alongside the verb in OE was interchangeable, albeit at different frequencies depending on the constituent in the left-periphery. Instead, the more recent movement toward the effects of information structure on the status of the subject, and the position of the finite verb, is a much likelier explanation for OE subject pronoun positioning. I therefore build on prior explanations that suggest subject clitics did not exist widely, and that the specific structural positioning of different types of subjects was instead driven by the pressures of information structure. Cases in which the verb did not move to second position unexpectedly would suggest the information-structural processes were not productive all the time. While the position of either subject was often disparate (either a high or low position syntactically), this position often changed depending on whether the subject exhibited given or new information, so there was no rule as to which position either subject must occupy. In this

regard, rules 1 and 2 of Kayne's (1975) criteria, in that clitics must always occur in the proposed 'special position', was undoubtedly not applicable to all OE subject pronouns, which contributes to the growing list of arguments against the existence of subject clitics in OE.

3.3.2. Counterexamples to the general pattern of verb second in Old English: A consideration of non-strict V2 and V3 word order

Once we conclude that subject pronouns were likely not clitics in the Old English period, it becomes important to reassess how prior explanations for the decline of English V2 fare in accounting for the range of attested syntactic contexts for V2 over V3 word order (Section 3.3). Thus, I now examine a subset of counterexamples in more detail, to understand the extent of divergence of structures from the general trend of V2, which particularly favoured contexts with nominal subjects. It is necessary to consider the possibilities for OE verb-movement to account for the changes occurring in Middle English, and more specifically, whether processes related to the combined effect of syntax and information structure were always productive throughout the history of English. As I noted in Section 3.3, while nominal subjects generally occurred postverbally, and pronominal subjects preverbally in OE, there remain alternative possibilities for V2 and V3 word order to explore.

Following the work of Bech (2001), and later van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012), the fact that information structure exerted much pressure on the ordering of verb and subject when an initial anaphor was fronted is generally accepted in recent studies on English V2. However, there are some questions left unanswered with respect to the attestation of specific types of V2. In particular, given it was possible that pronominal subjects could occur postverbally in these contexts, despite their tendencies to exhibit given information often requiring them to occur preverbally, it begs the question as to whether other types of subject exhibiting given information (i.e. nominal subjects) possibly deviated from the expected trajectories of OE V2. Thus, approaches focusing on verb-movement to the IP-domain in contexts with initial anaphors would benefit from further consideration of the occurrence of these cases of V2. Approaches that argue for the high position of the subject and the low position of the verb in I do not explain why counterexamples of V2

word order occurred in OE (and led to the innovative word orders of Middle English). Additionally, the occurrence of nominal subjects, which generally exhibit new information, and their position before the finite verb in OE, is similarly not given enough attention in preceding literature. Scholars such as Haeberli (2002b: 259) and van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012: 91) acknowledge that nominal subjects might exhibit given information and occupy a higher position preceding the finite verb, yet there is little consideration as to why new subjects do not occur postverbally too. I therefore consider whether cases where V2 did not occur can be incorporated into the overall structural representation of V2. Overall, in this section I investigate the extent to which processes of syntax, information structure and prosody contributed to the presence and absence of V2 structure in both Old and Early Middle English (OE and eME), using specific counterexamples of V2 and V3 to show what is required from a representation of such structures.

3.3.2.1. Old and Early Middle English verb second with given subjects

Recall that prior studies examining the decline of English V2 conclude that pronominal subjects, which were generally linked to a referent in the preceding discourse, occurred postverbally only in cases where the sentence was introduced by a *wh*-word, negative adverb, or short, deictic adverb (i.e. ‘then’, ‘now’, ‘thus’), specifically, contexts with an operator that, due to a syntactic process, required them to occur in the CP-domain. In any other case, particularly sentences introduced by a topicalised constituent (due to their anaphoric or focused, IS-based, properties), given subjects occurred preverbally, with the finite verb acting as a boundary between the leftward given information and the rightward new information (Hinterhölzl 2009; Hinterhölzl and van Kemenade 2012; Los and Dreschler 2012). Nevertheless, counterexamples to this general pattern do exist, and this section addresses whether a wider range of subjects exhibiting given information, occurred postverbally in OE. So, how can the 1-2% of postverbal pronominal subjects in initial anaphoric contexts be explained, and why do they exist in YCOE? Are there given nominal subjects that also occurred after the verb in OE? How does this ordering change in early Middle English texts? The following sections are dedicated to investigating these counterexamples of V2.

3.3.2.1.1. Old English (YCOE) examples of V2

The following examples highlight the occurrence of V2 with given subjects in sentences introduced by a topicalised constituent such as an object, adverb, or PP.

(7)

- a. [eaðe] **mihte** *he arisan of deaðe for ðan þe he is God* V2-GIVEN
 [easily] **might** he arise from death because that he is God
 ‘He might arise from death with ease, because he is God’

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 15: 304.130.2859, YCOE)

- b. [Geornlice] **gebinde** *ge eow tosomne mid anmodnesse* V2-GIVEN
 [willingly] bind you yourself together with unity
 & mid sibbe
 & with peace
 ‘You bind yourselves together willingly with unity and peace’

(Cura Pastoralis, 46.345.16.2324, YCOE)

Examples (8a-b) highlight cases where an initial adverb of manner occurs in tandem with inversion of the given pronominal subject and the finite verb. Recall that Los (2015: 205) advises to exclude examples of V2 sentences introduced by adverbs such as *soplice* ‘truly’ and *witodlice* ‘certainly’, as they are not “adverbials of place, time or manner” and would not be part of the CP-domain or main clause. According to the Bosworth Toller’s *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, the initial adverbs *geornlice* and *eaðe* can be translated to present-day ‘willingly’ and ‘easily’, respectively, and do not fall into the category of stance adverbs mentioned here. Each of these examples occur alongside the given subject pronouns, *he* and *ge* in a postverbal position, all of which require contextual information to understand who the referent is. For instance, postverbal *he* in (8a) links to the referent ‘God’, which was referenced in context occurring directly before its use (in fact, *he* relates to the ‘God’ referent in the following subordinate clause). The existence of this type of V2 word order still poses issues for the structural representation, as the finite verb has been proposed to move to lower positions following given subject pronouns in cases with initial discourse-linking adverbs.

Initial adverbs of manner also drive V2 with nominal subjects in OE, as in the sentence, *Yfele behreowsode se arleasa læwa his manfullan dæda...* ‘Evilly repented the merciless traitor his wicked deed’ (Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies II, 14.1: 142.159.3163), with

the adverb of manner *yfele* ‘evilly’ driving the nominal subject *se arleasa læwa* ‘the merciless traitor’ to occur postverbally. Given such adverbs of time and manner occur with both postverbal pronominal and nominal subjects, there is nothing exceptional about these instances of V2 with pronominal subjects, and they can be considered legitimate cases.

One explanation for the use of V2 in these environments with postverbal pronominal subjects is that the verb potentially moved to a higher structural domain reserved for focal information (e.g. see Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2010). Like the shorter adverbs ‘then’, ‘now’, and ‘thus’, the adverbs of manner presented above are also fronted for emphasis, and to draw attention to how the action was performed. In the case of (7a-b), the actions denoted by the verb are performed ‘easily’ and ‘willingly’. These therefore may be behaving similarly to cases with the shorter, discourse-advancing adverbs, and thus permit pronominal subjects to occur postverbally due to the higher position of the verb.

(8)

- a. [Ðæt] **wille** ic gecyþan, þæt þa ricu of V2-GIVEN
 [that] **will** I declare, that the kingdoms of
nanes monnes mihtum swa gecræftgade ne wurdon ...
 no man’s powers so strengthened not were ...
 ‘I will declare that the kingdoms were not strengthened by
 the powers of any man...’

(Orosius, 2: 1.37.2.723, YCOE)

- b. [þa] **cwede** ic scyr V2-GIVEN
 [that] **declare** I free
 ‘I declare that free’

(Anglo-Saxon Chronicle E [Plummer], 963.42.1419, YCOE)

Examples (8a-b) are sentences of V2 with given pronominal subjects introduced by direct objects. The demonstratives *ðæt* and *ða* occur initially, yet refer to information expressed in the following or preceding discourse. Koopman (1997b: 315) also identifies example (8a) as anticipating the following clause: *þa ricu of nanes monnes mihtum swa gecræftgade ne wurdon* ‘the kingdoms were not strengthened by the powers of any man’. Similarly, example (8b) includes an initial resumptive object, referring to the left-dislocated phrase, *ðas land & ealla þa oðre þe lin into þe mynstre* ‘these lands and all the others which belong to the monastery’. As Koopman (1997b: 315) puts it, these are not “ordinary” objects, but clearly require information from the discourse for the reader to make sense of

them. I additionally identified examples of V2 with nominal subjects within this syntactic context, such as *þis geaxode se dema* ‘the judge learned this’ (Ælfric’s Lives of Saints [Julian and Basilissa], 341.1148), which equally require information from the context, making the existence of V2 with these given pronominal subjects legitimate, too.

The cataphoric initial object *ðæt* in (8a), referring to following information rather than preceding, is introducing a new entity, and thus is placed to the front of the sentence for emphasis or focus. Again, this sentence may therefore represent verb-movement to a higher structural domain, like the shorter discourse-advancing adverbs introduced previously. The anaphoric use of the initial constituent in (8b), however, is interesting because of its rare use in OE alongside V2 word order, and I come back to these kinds of cases below.

(9)

- a. [*Þæt*] ***tacnade*** *Leoniða on his þæm nihstan gefeohte ...* V2-GIVEN
 [that] **indicated** Leonidas at his that next battle ...
 ‘Leonidas indicated that at his next battle’

(Orosius, 2: 5.48.32.936, YCOE)

- b. [*hit*] ***hæfde*** *Agustus him to onwalde geseald* V2-GIVEN
 [it] **had** Augustus him to power give
 ‘Augustus gave power to him’

(Orosius, 6: 1.134.2.2821, YCOE)

I now turn to cases of V2 in Old English whereby a constituent other than an ‘operator’ was topicalised, with the nominal subject following the finite verb. In these cases, the subject exhibited given information linking to a referent in the preceding discourse.³² As discussed earlier, van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) propose that nominal subjects exhibiting given information occurred in a preverbal, high position when an anaphor was fronted to the beginning of the clause, like given pronominal subjects.

³² For pre and postverbal OE nominal subjects, I have primarily taken examples from the *Old English Orosius* and *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I*, as there is a large volume of instances of V2 in both texts (although not necessarily the highest rate of V2 across the texts in YCOE). I have chosen specific texts primarily because parsed corpora are not tagged for information status and require further investigation as to whether subjects (especially nominal subjects) have a referent in the preceding discourse. Thus, if such corpora were to be created in the future, a quantitative analysis of the occurrence of postverbal given pronominal and nominal subjects could be carried out within OE texts. Here, I largely conduct qualitative analysis of specific examples.

There are evidently instances of given nominal subjects occurring postverbally that are yet to be considered in an underlying structural representation (9-10). These include sentences introduced by objects, such as *þæt* ‘that’ (9a), *hit* ‘it’ (9b), *fela wundra* ‘many miracles’ (10b) and *sume beladunge* ‘some excuse’ (11), and PPs, such as *on twam þingum* ‘with two things’ (10a), all of which are constituents fronted for emphasis, focus or anaphoricity. Each of the nominal subjects in these sentences exhibit given information. In (9a-b), the proper nouns of *Leoniða* ‘Leonidas’, king of the Spartans, and *Agustus* ‘Augustus’, first Roman emperor, were regularly evoked either in the same chapter, or earlier on in the discourse. *Leoniða* and *Agustus* are referenced within the same section, for instance, *hie wæron cumen Leoniðan to fultume* ‘they came to support Leonidas’ (2: 5.47.19) and ... *þa hwile þe Agustus þa eaðmetto wiþ God geheold* ‘...then while Augustus maintained the humility toward God ...’ (6: 1.133.30). Related to this type of information status, Eitler and Westergaard (2014: 213) employ methods for identifying the impact of information structure on word order in late medieval texts, and categorise proper nouns as given information (other than when they are first mentioned).³³

(10)

- a. [*On twam þingum*] **hæfde** *God þæs mannes saule gegodod* V2-GIVEN
 [with two things] **had** God this man’s soul endowed
 “God endowed this man’s soul with two things”

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 1: 184.161.166, YCOE, adapted from Fischer et al. 2000: 107)

- b. [*Fela wundra*] **worhte** *God and dæghwamlice wyrcoð* V2-GIVEN
 [many miracles] **wrought** God and daily works
 ‘God wrought many miracles and daily works’

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 12: 277.54.2233, YCOE)

Similarly, I categorise the postverbal nominal subject *God* in (10a-b) as exhibiting given information, especially as this is a referent often not formally introduced in the

³³ Eitler and Westergaard (2014: 213) also acknowledge work by van Kemenade and Westergaard who refer to the difficulty of categorising proper nouns as exhibiting given or new information. Often these have a “unique referent”, occurring as either a repetition or reactivation of the same referent (van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012: 109). This could also relate specifically to whether the referent is ‘discourse old’ or ‘hearer old’, both of which come under given information. Due to the subjectivity involved in categorising proper nouns, I have therefore categorised all cases of proper nouns as given information unless it is their first mention, similar to Eitler and Westergaard (2014).

discourse. Here it is used as a world-known referent amongst the readership (as demonstrated in van Kemenade et al. 2008 and Taylor and Pintzuk 2014).³⁴

- (11) [Sume beladunge] **mihte** *se rica* *habban his uncysste* V2-GIVEN
 [some excuse] **might** the rich-man have his parsimony
 ‘The rich man might have had an excuse for his parsimony’
 (Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 23: 366.49.4568, YCOE)

Finally, example (11) includes the postverbal nominal subject *se rica* ‘the rich man’, an entity which is mentioned regularly in the same section, and can also be considered as exhibiting given information in either a ‘discourse old’ or ‘hearer old’ sense. Specifically, *se rica* is mentioned in the lines prior: *cuð is eow þæt se rica bið namcūpre on his leode...* ‘a rich man is known more by name amongst his people...’ (23: 366.46). These cases of postverbal nominal subjects are thus also legitimate cases of V2 word order with given subjects, similar to the distribution of the postverbal pronominal subjects as introduced above.

However, if any of the initial constituents present emphasised or focused information (e.g. example 10a), again, it is evident verb-movement was occurring to the higher domain in these cases. Even though it has previously been discussed that only syntactic operators (*wh*-words and negation) and short discourse-advancing adverbs occurred alongside a syntactic verb-movement to C, it may be the case that longer and weightier constituents fronted for emphasis began to equally feature alongside this type of verb-movement. Thus, consideration of some of these stylistic tendencies, and how they changed and adapted despite the general tendencies, is required for understanding the shift in Middle English toward a more unstable V2 phenomenon.

³⁴ Examples of the hearer-old, familiar subject *God* have been evidenced as appearing in a high structural position, as shown in the below example provided by van Kemenade et al. (2008):

Hu God þa þa mæsten offermetto gewræc on þæm folce
 how **God** then the greatest pride advanced on the people
 ‘How God then advanced the greatest pride on the people’ [continued]

(Orosius, 6: 2.134.24.2833)

The subject *God* in this example occurs before the object and the final verb in this example (the verb has not moved to a higher position alongside the subject), thus demonstrating that these types of hearer-old subjects can occur in a high structural position, like ‘discourse-old’ subjects.

3.3.2.1.2. Early Middle English (PPCME2) examples of V2

Frequency of V2 with pronominal subjects (compared to V3) (%) ³⁵		
Initial constituent	YCOE corpus	PPCME2 corpus
Direct object	1.8 (4/225)	32.6 (152/467)

Table 2: A table showing the frequency of V2 (compared to V3) with pronominal subjects and initial direct objects, in YCOE and PPCME2.

Table 2 shows the frequency of V2, compared to V3, with pronominal subjects and initial direct objects in YCOE and PPCME2. The table reflects the situation of Middle English, whereby the number of instances of V2 with pronominal subjects introduced by constituents other than an operator increased exponentially. For instance, the frequency of V2 sentences introduced by direct objects and containing a pronominal subject (which generally exhibit given information) increases from 1.8% to 32.6% from YCOE (c.600-1150) to PPCME2 (c.1150-1500) (Table 2). The fact that these types of V2 sentences were used with increasing frequency in ME texts suggests that it is necessary to capture the nature of its changing structure (i.e. the positioning of the verb in relation to the subject) during the transition period between Old and Middle English. However, during this period of transition, there must have been a time when the same pressures from information structure apparent in OE were occurring into the early portion of ME. Various examples of the use of V2 within this syntactic context (with initial objects/adverbs/PPs and given subjects) are provided in (12-14) below from EME texts. These sentences are taken from texts within the M1 period of PPCME2 (c.1150-1250), the earliest possible period of analysis following OE texts and potentially signalling the transition era.

³⁵ Note that these rates of V2 have not been broken down based on the information status of the subject, but instead they include sentences with a subject pronoun. Given the difficulty in calculating the number of given vs. new subjects in V2 and V3 sentences in the entire parsed corpora, this information has not been included for this particular table. The actual number of postverbal given subjects may be higher since nominal subjects can occasionally exhibit given information, too.

- (12) [to *goder heale*] **were** *ze iborene* V2-GIVEN
 [to great blessing] **were** you born
 ‘it is a great blessing that you were born’

(Ancrene Riwe 1, II.145.1951, PPCME2)

- (13) [*Al swo diepliche*] **hafð** *godd us forboden alle heaued-sennes* V2-GIVEN
 [all so deeply] **has** God us prohibited all cardinal-sins
 ‘God has so deeply prohibited us from all cardinal sins’

(Vices and Virtues I, 7.69, PPCME2)

- (14) [*Purh swylcne smið & purh swylce tol*] **geclænsað** V2-GIVEN
 [through such skill & through such tool] **cleanses**
ure Drihten þære halgena sawlen
 our Lord the saint’s soul
 ‘Using his skills and tools our Lord cleanses the saint’s soul’

(Kentish Homilies, 141.201, PPCME2)

Examples (12-14) highlight the existence of V2 with given pronominal and nominal subjects in eME, similar to those cases occurring in OE texts (7-11). These examples include initial PPs, *to goder heale* ‘to greater blessing’ (12) and *purh swylcne smið & purh swylce tol* ‘through such skill & through such tool’ (14), and V2 with an initial quantifier plus adverb, *al swo diepliche* ‘all so deeply’ (13), alongside inversion of the finite verb and given subjects. Again, each of the postverbal nominal subjects were checked to determine whether they were evoked earlier in the discourse, or whether the subject would be known to the reader elsewhere. In (13-14), the postverbal given nominal subjects are *godd* ‘God’ and *ure Drihten* ‘our Lord’, entities that are well known to the reader. These examples of V2 are not out of the ordinary; each constituent clearly occurred in the left-periphery and occurred alongside a verb in second position followed by a given subject. Thus, these cases raise the question as to why they would be permitted to occur despite the proposed high impact of IS on the syntax of V2 in OE. Whether there are any additional forces driving the use of these examples is something to be investigated further. For now, I propose that van Kemenade and Westergaard’s (2012: 113) description of ‘syntacticisation’, regarding the increase of V2 with pronominal subjects and auxiliary verbs in ME, regardless of the original pressure of information structure to place given before new information, might also be applicable as early as the late Old English period. As noted in Section 3.1, I use ‘syntacticisation of verb-movement’ here to refer to the breakdown in the link between syntax and information structure, which was connected to the loss of the multifunctionality

of the initial constituent. Thus, there were cases as early as OE that permitted verbs to move to the highest point of the CP domain, above given subjects, regardless of the existence of an anaphor in initial position. I discuss this point in further detail in Section 3.4 in relation to the change in the nature of V2 syntax in the Middle English period.

To demonstrate the rate of V2 in contexts with given subjects in eME, I have selected the text *Vices and Virtues* for deeper analysis. This text was chosen as it includes a large volume of instances of V2, much like a number of the OE texts, and is part of the M1 categorisation (c.1150-1250) as it is a text with a manuscript date of a.1225.³⁶ It is a religious treatise localised to the East Midlands according to PPCME2, yet may have retained some Southern forms (Hall 1963).

Frequency of V2 (compared to V3) in <i>Vices and Virtues</i> (c.1200) (%)		
Initial XP	Given subject	New subject
Negation/ 'Then'	100 (34/34)	100 (6/6)
Objects, PPs, adjectives	30.4 (62/204)	91.1 (41/45)

Table 3: A table showing the frequency of V2, compared to V3, in *Vices and Virtues*, in sentences with subjects exhibiting given and new information, and introduced by either operators (negation/adverb 'then') or other types of constituent (e.g. objects, PPs, and adjectives).

Table 3 summarises the results from this small case study, where I separate sentences of V2 and V3 in *Vices and Virtues* into whether they were introduced by a constituent that commonly occurred in tandem with V2 (specifically negative adverbs and 'then'), and all other types of initial constituents such as objects, PPs and adjectives. I also categorise the information status of the subject in each sentence as either given or new, based on the existence of potential referents in the preceding context linked to these subjects. The EME texts exhibits a similar divide in the frequency in use of V2 with different initial constituents as shown in OE texts: there was a categorical rate of V2 with the typical 'operators' of 100% (regardless of the subject-type), and more infrequent use of

³⁶ *a* (= *ante*) is included before a date when the manuscript might have been produced from up to 25 years prior to the date stated. *c* (= *circa*) is used for a date that could occur in the period 25 years either side of the given date (see PPCME2 documentation for further information).

V2 with initial constituents not considered to be an ‘operator’ in the V2 literature. In this latter environment, there was a further split in the frequency of V2 depending on whether the subject was given (30.39%) or new (91.11%), again, like OE texts. There is therefore a preference in this EME text to use a postverbal new subject over a given subject in these environments. Without initiating a full-scale quantitative study of EME texts, the preference for V2 with nominal subjects present in *Vices and Virtues* could signal that EME texts potentially continued to be affected by the same IS tendencies (given-before-new) as OE, with given subjects primarily occurring before the finite verb. A similar finding can be seen in van Kemenade and Westergaard’s (2012) study of the impact of IS and language acquisition on ME V2, who also outline this influence of IS in EME syntax based on the distribution of given and new subjects:

“the data for the M1 period confirm our hypothesis that the variation is keyed to subject type: a preverbal nominal subject has specific reference to an entity that is previously mentioned in the context and represents given information, whereas a postverbal subject may be new, focused, or may represent an entity reactivated in the discourse.”

(van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012: 106)

However, there is a much higher percentage of postverbal given subjects in the EME *Vices and Virtues* (30.39%) compared to the rate of postverbal pronominal subjects in YCOE which was at 1.78% (although, I recognise that the percentage presented here may be much less than actual figures, as it does not include given nominal subjects). If EME texts did reflect an earlier spoken variety of OE (as per Tristram 2004), there may be a much higher rate of postverbal given subjects compared to what is described for prior accounts of OE structure. This therefore raises the question as to whether spoken OE differed from written OE with regard to the use of V2, and whether the same level of pressure from information structure and discourse choices on the syntax was evident in spoken versus written V2. This proposal necessarily involves some speculation. I therefore reserve this discussion for later, and return to discussion regarding what the existence of these cases of V2 with given subjects in the transition period from OE to EME means for structural representations of V2, before turning to look at what happened when V2 did not occur in OE.

The environment of V2 dealing with given pronominal and nominal subjects in these marked syntactic contexts has not been at the forefront of discussion when accounting

for V2 structure in Old to Early Middle English, mainly due to its low frequency in corpora. However, the word order is clearly permitted as a legitimate form of V2 in OE texts, despite it occurring irregularly, which increases substantially in ME (and which is prevalent in the EME text *Vices and Virtues*, a text with a manuscript date around 100 years after the theorised end date of OE). Explanations that propose the verb did not move beyond the IP-domain in OE are yet to consider or incorporate why high given subjects could logically follow the finite verb in I. It is possible that information structure did not drive the movement of the verb to the lower position in some cases, resulting in given subjects occurring preverbally, in which case the structural representations no longer combined information structure within the underlying syntactic model. On the other hand, there may well be a stylistic choice playing a role on the surface which would not necessarily interfere with the authors' 'grammar' of V2. While it is challenging to find a sole reason for a specific use of V2 in OE, I continue to summarise some of the possibilities following further analysis of cases of V3, with the aim of incorporating some of these ideas when examining how V2 changed in ME and its dialects. Below, I recognise some of the forces possibly involved in driving the unpredictable variation of V2 in OE, demonstrated by the above examples with postverbal given subjects, which might be linked to prosodic and/or stylistic surface phenomena. Overall, I determine whether a structural representation for OE V2 could be adapted to account for such cases where a given pronominal or nominal subject occurred postverbally.

3.3.2.2. Old and Early Middle English verb third with nominal and/or new subjects

Until recently, few accounts representing the structure of Old English V2 explain why V2 did not occur in situations where it might be expected, especially with nominal/new subjects. Much thought is given to the occurrence of preverbal pronominal/given subjects, especially as they occurred in a high structural position preceding the verb. It is likely that an underlying representation of OE, due to the high variation in types of V2 in the data, cannot completely consider each existence of V2 in different sentential environments. Nevertheless, it is crucial to continue examining specific counterexamples to the general pattern to determine why these occur, and overall, which forces are likely to alter the surface representation of V2.

Some of the earliest work emphasised the almost definitive effect of ‘operator-like’ elements driving a near-strict V2 pattern. Van Kemenade (1987: 111) states that “when the first constituent is an interrogative *wh*-constituent or *þa* ‘then/when’, or the negative particle *ne* ‘not’, we always find ‘subject-verb inversion’, even when the subject is a pronoun”. Fischer et al. (2000: 106) also assert that “it does not matter whether the subject is nominal or pronominal; it is always inverted”. Trips and Fuß (2003: 2-3) mention that there was obligatory V2 order with initial operators and *þa* and *þonne*, as the verb always moved to a higher position than the nominal subject. This common proposal insinuates that the existence of V3 was generally not possible with nominal subjects in these specific ‘operator’-like left-peripheral contexts, including with pronominal subjects.

Despite deictic adverbs such as *þa* regularly occurring alongside V2 with both types of subject, due to their ability to structure the direction of narrative texts (e.g. see Warner 2007 and Bech 2012), there was variation in whether the finite verb and subject inverted. Considering V2 was not the only grammatical word order in the majority of syntactic contexts, proposals explaining the structure of V2 should factor in when V3 occurred instead of V2 in OE. More recent work has begun to acknowledge why V2 did not occur with initial objects, other types of adverbs, and PPs. As discussed with regard to the pressures of IS, Haeberli (2002b) and van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) explain that non-inversion is driven by the discourse status of the nominal subject in these environments. These nominal subjects exhibited givenness and a tendency to be nearer to preceding discourse, a force that was potentially greater than the prosodic weight of the subject forcing them to occur in a low syntactic position. Whether V2 or V3 occurred might also be impacted by a range of factors to do with different grammatical and prosodic elements of the sentence, as investigated by Warner (2007) for late medieval texts. For instance, Warner summarises that the length of the nominal subject, whether the verb was an auxiliary or lexical transitive verb, and the type of initial constituent, are all relevant factors impacting late medieval V2 (2007: 107), and it could be possible these also operated in OE. I therefore reassess these cases of where V2 did not occur and whether they can be answered using a structural representation of V2 or by looking at the surface forces on the use of V2 in different discourse-related environments, in relation to a range of grammatical, information-structural, and prosodic factors.

3.3.2.2.1. Old English (YCOE) examples of V3

The following examples highlight the occurrence of V3 with nominal and/or new subjects in OE texts. These examples counter the general pattern of new subjects occurring postverbally in OE, because of their high prosodic weight and the likelihood that these subjects had not been mentioned prior or reactivated within the discourse. The instances demonstrated below are introduced primarily by PPs or direct objects, for a range of reasons to do with emphasis, focus and/or anaphoricity. All of these examples represent a marked V3 word order in OE, because the general tendency in these circumstances would be for new nominal subjects to occur postverbally as a result of their prosodic weight and distinctiveness from given/familiar subjects. To ensure that each example below is unambiguously V3, I do not analyse instances of V3 which end on a verb, given the frequent use of verb-final sentences in OE following the transition from OV to VO word order. While these instances might indicate the verb is in the third position on the surface, they may actually involve a lack of verb-movement beyond the VP-domain.³⁷ I have additionally provided the rates of V3 with nominal subjects in YCOE and PPCME2 in Table 4 below, which show how this particular word order changed in frequency from OE and ME in two different environments (with initial PPs and direct objects).

Frequency of V3 with nominal subjects (compared to V2) (%)³⁸		
Initial constituent	YCOE corpus	PPCME2 corpus
PPs	37.1 (85/229)	56.3 (1069/1898)
Direct object	25.8 (24/93)	15.8 (41/260)

Table 4: A table showing the frequency of V3 (compared to V2) with nominal subjects and initial PPs and direct objects, in both the YCOE and PPCME2 corpora.

³⁷ I have discarded any instances that are ambiguous between verb-final and V3 word order from the brief quantitative case study.

³⁸ Note again that the rates of V3 in this table have not been broken down based on the information status of the subject, and instead include sentences with a nominal subject, due to the difficulty in calculating the number of given vs. new subjects in V3 vs. V2 sentences. Thus, the actual number of preverbal new subjects in either time period may be higher (given this can also include pronominal subjects).

(15)

- a. [*On ðæm æfterran geare*] *þæs Minutia* **hatte** *an wifmon* ... V3-NEW
 [in the second year] this Minucia **named** a woman ...
 ‘In the second year this woman named Minucia ...’

(Orosius, 3: 6.60.8.1154, YCOE)

- b. [*Æfter þæm*] *Atilius se consul* **aweste** *Liparum &* V3-NEW
 [after that] Atilius the consul **destroyed** Lipari &
Melitam Sicilia iglond
 Melita Sicilian islands
 ‘After that Atilus the consul laid waste to the Sicilian islands
 of Lipari and Melita’

(Orosius, 4: 6.96.16.1970, YCOE)

Table 4 shows the frequencies of V3, compared to V2, with nominal subjects and initial PPs/direct objects in the YCOE and PPCME2 corpora. The figures presented in Table 4 show that there is an existence of nominal subjects occurring preverbally in OE texts when a constituent such as a PP or direct object is topicalised (although, some of these cases exhibit given rather than new information, thus warranting their position preverbally). There is a higher presence of V3 with nominal subjects and initial PPs in ME compared to initial direct objects, yet again, it cannot be reliably concluded as to whether these cases all exhibit new information (and therefore there may well be an increase in V3 word order with direct objects, too). For current purposes, it is important to examine some of these counterexamples to determine the reasons for their marked existence, and in which circumstances the structural representation for OE V3 might be adapted to incorporate these surface discourse choices. Each nominal subject in examples (15-16) has been checked to determine whether they exhibit new information. (15a-b) exhibit V3 word order with initial PPs, yet the new subjects in these sentences might be expected to occur preverbally rather than postverbally. In (15a), the first mention of the proper noun *Minutia* occurs prior to the finite verb *hatte* ‘named’, yet structurally, this nominal subject would appear in a low position due to given-before-new tendencies in OE. The verb must therefore occur in a much lower position than the nominal subject. Why would the verb move to the lowest possible position in this case (which is underlyingly represented as T in van Kemenade and Westergaard’s combined syntactic and information-structural model), if the strong familiarity of the initial anaphor (the PP *on ðæm æfterran geare* ‘in the second year’) would predominantly drive verb-movement up to a position higher than the TP-domain?

An interesting explanation for this marked order with initial PPs comes from McCarley (2021). In an analysis of three Old English texts (*Orosius*, *Gregory's Dialogues*, and *Lives of Saints*), McCarley found that nominal subjects in V3 structures were generally given, but that there were exceptions to the given-before-new tendency (2021: 15). McCarley states that the existence of episode boundary markers at the beginning of a sentence might partially explain the order of nominal subject and verb in these cases, with OE authors “less likely to use an anaphoric expression to refer back across episode boundaries” (2021: 37). In fact, McCarley (2021: 34) refers to Dreschler (2015), who points out that *æfter þæm* ‘after that/afterwards’ (e.g. as shown in example 15b) may have developed into an adverb by the time *Orosius* was produced, meaning it acted as an episode boundary as opposed to referring to preceding discourse. In examples (15a-b), it might be the case that a low nominal subject exhibiting new information was selected to avoid the subject having a referent in the preceding context over an episode boundary in the form of an initial PP. This stylistic choice of initial constituent, specifically a PP that did not exhibit any sort of givenness, must therefore have forced the verb to occur after the new nominal subject, as its position was neither driven by syntactic V-to-C movement, nor information-structural verb-movement to a lower functional projection. In relation to this latter point, the IS tendencies of given-before-new, or the prosodic weight of the subject, might have no longer played a role in determining where the verb would move in these examples.

(16)

- a. [*Ðone Iacobum*] *se wælgrimma hyrde* ***acwealde*** *mid sweorde* V3-NEW
 [That Iacobus] that cruel guard **killed** with sword
 ‘The cruel guard killed Iacobus with his sword’

(Martyrology [Kotzor]: Jy25, A.14.1265, YCOE)

- b. [*Ða*] *Allmachius Romeburge gerefa* ***nedde*** *mid witum* ... V3-NEW
 [That] Almachius Romeborough reeve **urged** with wisdom ...
 ‘Almachius, the Rome boroughreeve urged that with wisdom...’

(Martyrology [Kotzor]: Ap14, A.3.552, YCOE)

Examples (16a-b) also present an interesting marked V3 word order with new subjects which would be mostly expected with given subjects. The familiarity of the initial direct objects, as explained above, would primarily occur alongside the finite verb in second position followed by a new subject, or alternatively, the finite verb would occur after a given subject. Both *ðone Iacobum* ‘that Iacobus’ and *ða* ‘that’ refer to information

frequently activated in the preceding context, and according to van Kemenade and Westergaard's (2012) study, would result in verb-movement to a lower functional projection, as driven by IS-based factors related to the initial constituent. However, movement must have occurred to a lower position than this, given the newness of the nominal subjects. In Warner's (2007) study of late medieval V2, he considers a range of factors that might be driving frequent variation at this time, and one of these is related to the length of the nominal subject. He summarises that longer subjects "disfavour[ed] inversion in internal contexts" when the transitive verb had a complement, meaning the longer the subject, the higher the chance that this subject would appear preverbally. Warner (2007: 105) proposes that the occurrence of longer nominal subjects preverbally in OE might be due to the ease of language processing, in that a lengthy subject might impose more load on parsing and production of the sentence as it would ordinarily intervene between the finite verb and its complements. This pressure occurred despite the preference for longer subjects to occur toward the end of the sentence due to their 'weight'—Warner thus states lengthy nominal subjects have an "anti-weight effect" in cases where there is a transitive verb (2007: 105). Even though the nominal subjects *se wælgrimma hyrde* 'the cruel guard' and *Allmachius Romeburge gerefa* 'Almachius, the Rome boroughreeve' in (16a-b) exhibit new information, these contexts may disfavour inversion due to their length compared to, for example, one-worded proper nouns. These cases are infrequent in YCOE, but may signal the increase in V3 word order occurring in ME in this context as identified by Warner. V2 word order is therefore more likely to be avoided in cases with lengthy subjects and transitive verbs in English. There are therefore potential motivations for verb-movement to a lower node than the CP-domain (e.g. T), and a marked V3 word order, which may be related to either grammatical, prosodic or information-structural pressures, that could be formed as part of underlying or surface structure in OE.

Verb-movement to C, and T in cases of V3 word order, were both permitted in OE likely due to syntactic optionality. Like Adger's (2006) theory of 'Combinatorial Variability' – which was applied to Scottish *was/were* variation – variability in use of V2 and V3 in OE could reflect "non-deterministic variation in form with no corresponding variation in meaning", rather than positing distinct and multiple grammars for V2 and V3 (Adger 2006: 527). At this point in the history of English, whereby some forms of V2 could be seen as near-categorical (especially those driven by a syntactic operation), variability in the underlying syntactic system can be captured via a theory of optionality, which is not

always a “realization of an underlying category as a number of surface forms” (Adger 2006: 528). As Adger clarifies, while some of this underlying variability can still result in stability of particular structures, it can also lead to linguistic change, which is the case for Middle English, especially as V3 became highly preferred over V2. Given the high variation present in Old English with regard to word order patterns, I do not focus on differentiating between different cases of V3. Instead, in the following section I refer to possible optionality and the idea that an IS-based trigger for V2 ceased to exist as early as the OE period, and gave rise to seemingly sudden changes to the V2 phenomenon in the ME period.

3.3.3. Summarising the problem of representing Old English verb second: Do prior syntactic and/or information-structural-based studies account for variation?

It is clear the pressures of information structure must be factored in for OE V2. The tendencies of V2 in OE to occur with new subjects over given subjects, in sentences with a topicalised element, are clearly widespread in OE texts as demonstrated in prior work (e.g. Bech 2001; Warner 2007; Los 2009, 2012; van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012, etc.). Thus, verb-movement based on syntactic pressures (largely in the case of initial operators), verb-movement based on IS and prosodic pressures (given/light vs. new/heavy subjects) and cases when verb-movement is no longer sensitive to syntactic and IS-based verb-movement to C, should all be considered (presented as V-to-C, -F, and -T in van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012, but presented as V-to-Split CP and V-to-T below). In relation to this, any structural explanation of V2, covering the general tendencies for verb-movement, should also incorporate the circumstances within which V2 might have varied beyond its underlying structure, given the grammaticality of, and possibilities for, a range of V2 and V3 word orders. These might encompass a (dis)preference for specific orderings of the subject and finite verb, related to prosodic and stylistic-based pressures on the surface. These have been outlined by the counterexamples to the unmarked V2 and V3 word order in OE throughout this chapter. In sum, a proposed structure for OE should take into account a) verb-movement to the CP-domain, and b) what happens when syntactic, IS and prosodic tendencies for verb-movement interact or cease to exist across different usages. The following sections are dedicated to articulating these two main challenges.

3.4. Verb-movement to a ‘split CP’, incorporating both syntactic- and information-structural-based pressures

I propose that, in order to account for V2 structure and verb-movement to the CP-domain in OE, and the possibility that the link between syntax and IS may have weakened as early as OE, the verb must have moved to different levels within a split CP (see Section 1.5.3 for its first introduction). Here I build on the work of Walkden (2017b: 60), who follows the tradition of Rizzi (1997) on the hierarchy of the left-periphery, and Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl’s (2007: 112-113) split CP structure.

Walkden (2017b: 62), provides a hierarchy of a double left-peripheral projection for the Germanic urban vernacular of Kiezdeutsch. This structure proposes a lower CP projection (CP1), combining a Finiteness Phrase (FinP) with Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl’s (2007) FamP for familiar, or given, topics, and a higher CP projection (CP2), combining FocP (Focus) and ForceP (clausal force), which can be broken down into a range of IS-based phrases.³⁹ A bracketed structure of V2 and V3 word order incorporating the split CP can be found in (17), along with tree structures in Figures 8-10 which account for instances of V2 in prior examples.

(17) ForceP > ShiftP > ContrP > FocP > FamP > FinP

(Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl’s (2007: 112-113) structure of the left periphery)

Following work by Frey (2004: 29), the split CP of modern Germanic V2 languages might combine a higher, base-generated discourse-related constituent, with contrasting and/or finiteness projections lower down. Wolfe and Woods (2020: 4) also refer to the recent problem of the ordering of different projections within the left-periphery, or pre-field, in relation to the discourse-pragmatic status of constituents. The split CP of Old English, as I outline below, could be seen as the reverse—there is a syntactic operation deriving movement of the verb to the higher position, with the position that is sensitive to an information-structural effect (e.g. for familiar topics) occurring in the lower portion of the CP. This description of verb-movement to the split left-periphery does not differ entirely

³⁹ Referring to the precise nature of this split CP structure goes beyond the focus of the current study; however, more detail can be found in Roberts (1996); Rizzi (1997); Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007); Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009); Walkden (2012, 2014, 2017b), Haeberli and Ihsane (2016), most of which are cited in Walkden (2021).

from what Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) propose above, but with the addition of syntactic *wh*-words and negation forcing movement of the verb to the high position. In fact, cases of V2 with an initial focused adverbial such as *geornlice* ‘willingly’ (example 8b, above) and a given subject/subject pronoun (e.g. *ge* ‘you’) can be explained by verb-movement to the higher portion of the CP. It would also explain why deictic adverbs such as *þa/þonne* ‘then’ drive verb-movement to C frequently, given their focused status and force in pushing the continuation of discourse. It is an idea that Walkden (2017b: 62) also adopts in his explanation of modern Germanic vernaculars, with a higher position for discourse-sensitive elements for the purposes of Force/Focus, and a lower position for Familiarity. Thus, there may not be too many dissimilarities between the prefield of Old English and modern Germanic, with IS-sensitive verb-movement occurring to the lower portion of the split CP, which I detail further below.

Like van Kemenade and Westergaard’s (2012) structure from Section 3.1, given subjects generally preceded the verb in the specifier position of CP1 in sentences introduced by objects, PPs, and certain types of adverbs (e.g. stance/manner), and new subjects followed the verb in the specifier position of TP. The verb in this environment was in the lower CP layer, C1. When operators were fronted to initial position, and a purely syntactic movement due to A-bar dependencies (see Chapter 1) occurred, the verb moved to the higher CP layer, C2, preceding both given and new subjects in their respective positions. When the structure was no longer sensitive to either the syntactic operation driving verb-movement to the higher part of the CP, or information-structural tendencies driving verb-movement to the lower part of the CP, the verb did not move higher than T (exhibiting V3 word order), where it could still receive its Tense/Agreement properties. As mentioned above, V-to-C movement and V-to-T movement could co-occur in the same time period, due to syntactic optionality (see Adger’s (2006) theory of ‘Combinatorial Variability’).

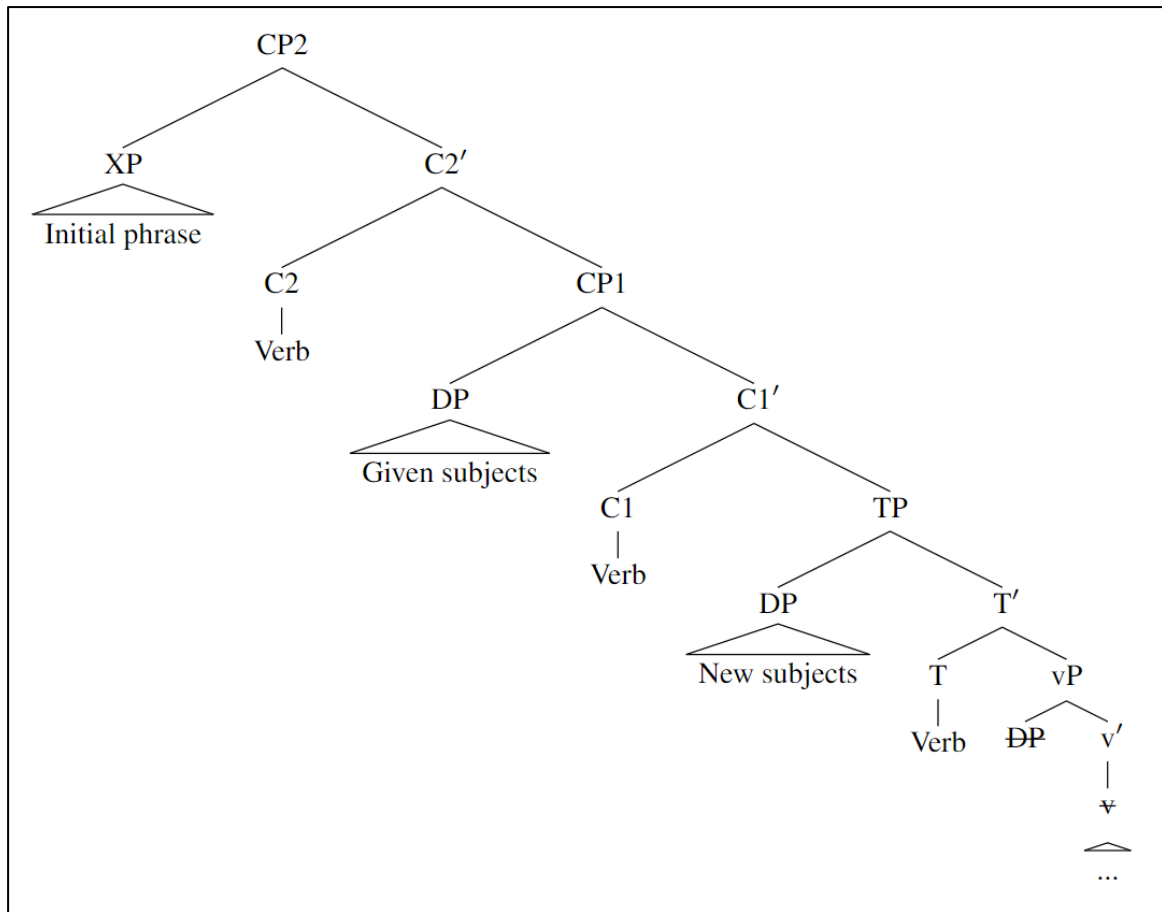


Figure 8: Proposal of OE V2 and V3 structure, adapted from Walkden (2017b: 62), representing a split CP approach initially posited by Roberts (1996).

Figure 8 shows the different layers of a split CP driven by information structure, which is adapted from Walkden’s (2017b: 62) demonstration of the structure. Walkden (2017b: 63) states that CP1 is reserved for familiar information, and generally this position houses given subjects. This phrasal node “does not bear an Edge Feature triggering formal movement”, and as linked to Chomsky’s (1986, 2015) Last Resort principle, this movement avoids the information-structural condition not being met—the tendency for given information to be placed before new information. The CP2 layer is said to be multifunctional, and is generally the position for ‘high’ topics and focused or contrastive material. As Walkden (2017b: 64) puts it, such a structure “does not suffer from the twin problems of failing to predict the clause-type asymmetry” (i.e. can account for OE as having main clause V2 only) and “failing to predict the nature of the preverbal elements” (i.e. can account for V3 word order in OE).

I now turn to the reasons why one might see word orders that fall outside of these general tendencies for V2 and V3 structure, based on some of the counterexamples I provided earlier (which I repeat here).

- (18) [*Scortlice*] **hæbbe** *we nu gesæd be þam gesetenum* V2-GIVEN
 [briefly] **have** we now spoken about the uninhabited
iglandum þe in ðæm Wendelsæ sindon
 islands that in the Mediterranean-Sea are
 ‘Now we have briefly spoken about the uninhabited islands which
 are in the Mediterranean Sea’

(Orosius, 1: 1.21.21.428)

First, as Los (2015: 194-195) suggests, some processes of V2 may have become “syntacticised”. As mentioned, I use ‘syntacticisation’ in this chapter to refer to the weakening of the link between information structure and syntax. In cases where given subjects occurred postverbally in sentences introduced by an initial topicalised element, verb-movement cannot have been sensitive to the information-structural properties of the familiar initial constituent and the subject. The ordering of ‘XVS’ as a ‘syntacticised’ pattern may have additionally arisen from its inherent “narrative-advancing function” (Bech 2012: 82), resulting in V2 word order (and verb-movement to the highest CP layer) no matter the type of subject, especially if the initial constituent signalled a change in narrative or episode boundary. Example (18) is introduced by the adverbial *scortlice* ‘briefly’ in initial position, followed by the verb in second position, and a given pronominal subject in third position. As acknowledged by Los (2015: 194) with the adverbial *egeslice* ‘sternly’, *scortlice* is similarly non-anaphoric and does not link to preceding discourse. In addition, given it is a temporal adverb, it could be acting very similarly to the short deictic adverbs of *þa/nu/swa* etc, yet holds more prosodic weight given its length. As Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2010) mention, the higher CP layer might be reserved for focal information, which would characterise the initial use of the adverbial *scortlice*. Thus, instances of V2 such as these include verb-movement to the highest CP layer (C2), followed by the given pronominal subject in the specifier position of the lower CP layer (Spec, CP1).

- (19) [*Laðlice eardunge*] **hæfde** *ic on þe* V2-GIVEN
 [loathsome dwelling] **had** I in thee
 ‘I had a loathsome dwelling in thee’

(Vercelli Homilies, 9: 284.784, YCOE, adapted from Walkden 2017b: 72)

- (20) [On twam þingum] **hæfde** God þæs mannes saule gegodod V2-GIVEN
 [with two things] **had** God this man's soul endowed
 'God endowed this man's soul with two things'

(Ælfric's Catholic Homilies, 1: 184.159.164, YCOE, adapted from Fischer et al. 2000: 107)

- (21) [Ðyssum tidum, Constantinus ...], **ferde** he forð V2-GIVEN
 [these times, Constantius ...], **died** he forth
 on Breotone
 in Britain
 'In these times Constantius died in Britain'

(Bede's History of the English Church, 8.42.13.353, YCOE)

- (22) [Ðæt] **wille** ic gecyþan, þæt þa ricu of nanes V2-GIVEN
 [that] **will** I declare, that the kingdoms of no
 monnes mihtum swa gecræftgade ne wurdon ...
 man's powers so strengthened not were ...
 'I will declare that the kingdoms were not strengthened by
 the powers of any man...'

(Orosius, 2: 1.37.2.723, YCOE)

Example (21), with the given pronominal subject *he*, and example (20), with the given nominal subject *God*, could be similar in the sense that the prepositional phrases occurring initially do not refer back to prior material, and the need for the given subject to precede the verb (i.e. exhibit given before new information) is not strong. In (21), the left dislocated subject 'Constantius' is intriguing since the given pronominal subject *he* also occurs within the sentence. In this case, the left-dislocated subject must have moved from the lower position for new subjects, to a position within the CP layer preceding the verb (see the outline by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl above for potential positions for the movement of constituents to the CP). Again, these word orders were likely not sensitive to information structure in affecting the ordering of verb and subject. Furthermore, the initial object *ðæt* 'that' in (22) clearly refers to following information as opposed to preceding information, i.e. from the embedded clause onwards *þæt þa ricu of nanes monnes mihtum...* 'that the kingdom of no man's powers', which would explain why information structure would not have an impact on the ordering of the given subject *ic* 'I' before the verb.

- (23) [*Fela wundra*] **worhte** *God and dæghwamlice* *wyrcoð* V2-GIVEN
 [many miracles] **wrought** God and daily works
 ‘God wrought many miracles and daily works’

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 12: 277.54.2233, YCOE)

- (24) [*Sume beladunge*] **mihte** *se rica* *habban his uncysste* V2-GIVEN
 [some excuse] **might** the rich-man have his parsimony
 ‘The rich man might have had an excuse for his parsimony’

(Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies I, 23: 366.49.4568, YCOE)

Finally, instances (23-24) are slightly different given they occur with a longer nominal object. Walkden (2017b: 72) also acknowledges the existence of sentences with a fronted nominal object, followed by the verb and a pronominal subject (however, in this case, the focus is on given subjects which can include nominal subjects), counting 28 examples in the YCOE corpus (which appear to include indefinite subjects such as *mon* ‘man’ according to Walkden’s analysis). There is no explanation for why such infrequent examples exist, given information status would normally force the given subject to occur on the left of the verb, with Walkden (2017b: 72) mainly referring to the lack of requirement for V2 to occur in this particular environment. The initial constituents *laðlice eardunge* ‘loathsome dwelling’, *fela wundra* ‘many miracles’, and *sume beladunge* ‘some excuse’ in the aforementioned examples all exhibit new and focused information, again linking to this idea that the verb moved to a domain demarcated for focal information in a higher structural position.

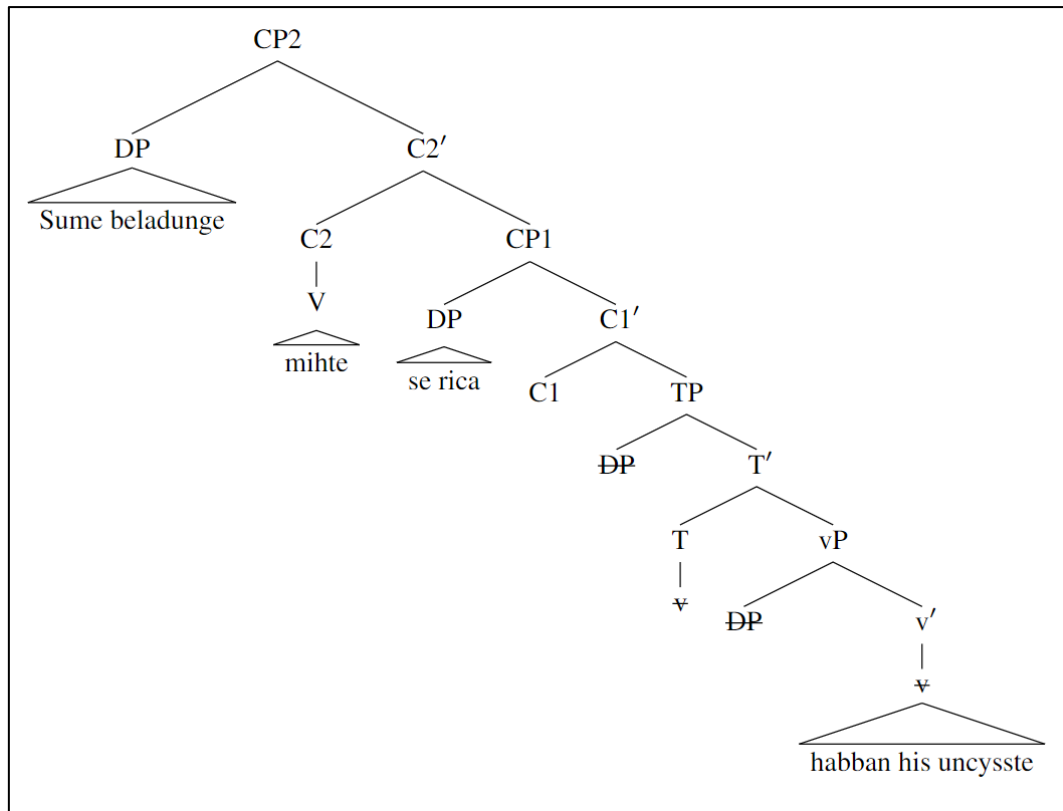


Figure 9: A tree structure of example (24), showing a type of syntacticised verb-movement (i.e. not impacted by the processes of information structure in exhibiting given before new information).

Example (24) is provided as a tree structure in Figure 9, to demonstrate verb-movement driven by a syntactic operation, or a syntacticised verb-movement that was not sensitive to information structure (i.e. to the highest layer, C2). This particular example of verb-movement might also be driven by the need to occur in the highest CP layer alongside focused/new information at the beginning of the sentence. Either way, this type of word order was infrequent in OE, and in its early stages before increasing into ME. The figure also shows the given nominal subject in its high position, within the specifier position of the lower CP1 layer, following the verb.

- (25) [*Æfter þæm*] *Atilius se consul **aweste** Liparum & Melitam Sicilia iglond* V3-NEW
 [after that] Atilius the consul **destroyed** Lipari &
 Melita Sicilian islands
 ‘After that Atilus the consul laid waste to the Sicilian islands
 of Lipari and Melita’

(Orosius, 4: 6.96.16.1970, YCOE)

- (26) [*Done Iacobum*] *se wælgrimma hyrde acwealde mid sweorde*
 [that Iacobus] that cruel guard **killed** with sword
 ‘The cruel guard killed Iacobus with his sword’

V3-NEW

(Martyrology [Kotzor]: Jy25, A.14.1265, YCOE)

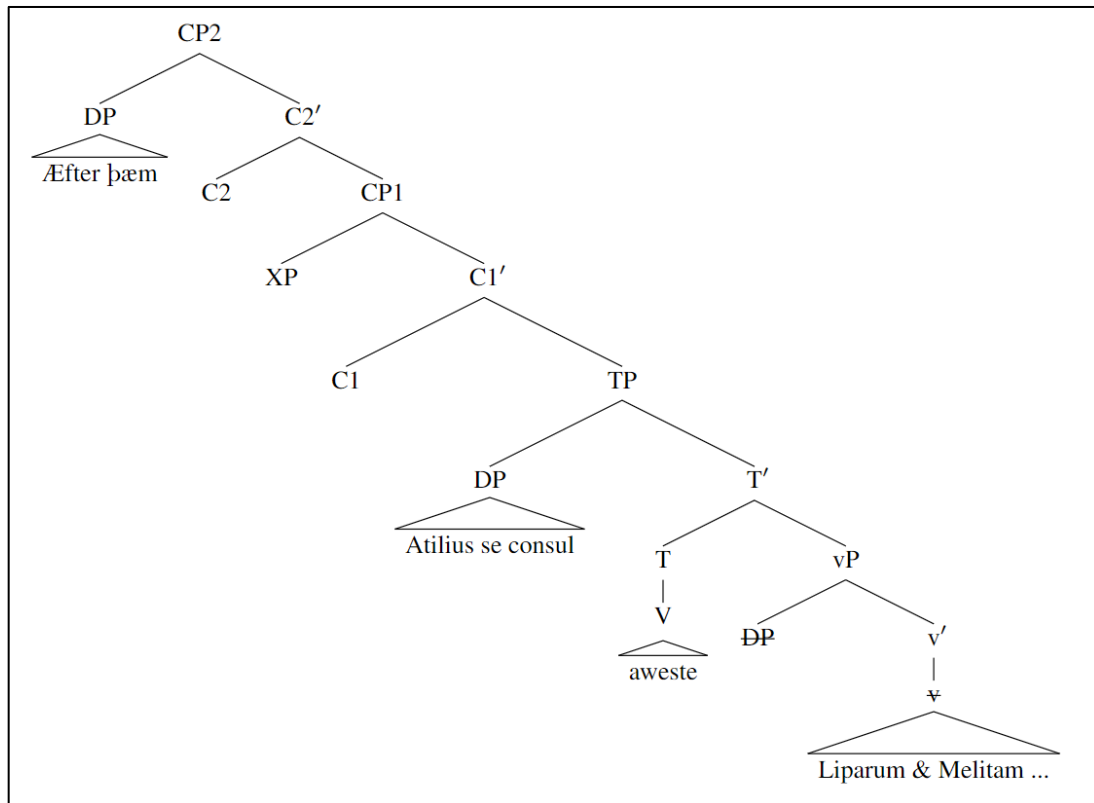


Figure 10: A tree structure of example (25), showing the occurrence of verb-movement to T regardless of the IS status of the initial constituent.

As I have discussed, V2 sometimes did not occur where it might have been expected to occur in OE, resulting in a relatively frequent V3 structure in OE. To summarise, example (25) above (represented by the tree structure in Figure 10) could be explained by the fronting of a prepositional phrase (or at this point in OE, an adverbial, see Dreschler 2015) at an episode boundary (i.e. a new section within the narrative). New nominal subjects usually occurred postverbally when a topic was fronted. However, since the fronted PP was also new information, the sentence was not affected by an information-structural given-before-new tendency (McCarley 2021), resulting in the new subject occurring preverbally in some cases in OE. Furthermore, sentences with initial direct objects (e.g. example 26) may not give rise to V3, due to the length of the subject and the type of finite verb. V2 is dispreferred when the finite verb is transitive and the nominal subject is lengthy, despite

the newness of the subject and likelihood of the finite verb moving to the lower edge of the CP layer because of the familiarity of the initial object.

The above examples describe scenarios when information structure was no longer impacting the underlying syntactic model, resulting in movement of the verb to T only (e.g. see Figure 10 and above discussion), but may also be a surface stylistic choice made by the author despite a potential discrepancy with the underlying word order. It is possible that authors manipulated (either consciously, or below the level of consciousness) surface structure in Old English, which would not have led to ungrammaticality. This manipulation of surface structure can be seen with modern English, on the word or sentence level. For instance, an author might use an older grammatical form to invoke a Shakespearian sound, by changing all verb endings to *-th* rather than *-s*). In terms of surface structure, it is common for modern speakers to use clefts or topicalise the sentence, despite the canonical word order of SVO. For example, Star Wars' Yoda speaks English, but uses topicalisation in his sentences (e.g. object fronting in, '*hungry*, you are'), which is understandable to a modern audience despite the lack of canonical SVO surface word order. By the late medieval period, clefts were also increasingly used—for example, Los and Komen (2012) show that, as the multifunctionality of the initial constituent was lost, clefts rose in frequency. In particular, there was a rise in *it*-clefts, which also occur in present-day English, as shown by the sentence, 'It's to avoid such a conflict of interest that I am resigning' (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 1046, cited in Los and Komen 2012: 887). The initial position was no longer available for discourse-linking purposes or for focus, and thus clefts were a way of altering surface structure to remedy the loss of the multifunctionality of this initial position.

Thus, a stylistic preference for a particular structure by an author, or a more general prosodic tendency, might affect the occurrence of V2 on the surface. As shown above, these can be on the level of prosody (e.g. a preference for lengthier subjects before the verb), or stylistics (e.g. the subject preceding the verb is nominal to avoid linking to a referent over an episode boundary). By late Old English, the status of the IS-sensitive V2 is vulnerable, due to the weakening link between syntax and IS. The position for the verb within the lower part of the split CP was therefore susceptible to change, and could explain why there was more variation in the use of V2 in late OE based on pressures from prosody and stylistics, which began to overwrite the general tendencies driving V2 word order present in OE.

Structures splitting the CP domain into two can account for the fact that verb-movement could have only occurred to C in the case of V2 word order. Yet, they also show how verbs, no longer driven by pressures of information structure to place given before new information, might have then resorted to movement to the highest CP position, rather than the lowest, in contexts of topicalization or initial anaphors. While the split CP structure, the sensitivity of syntax to information-structural properties, and its impact on the ordering of verb and subject, cannot immediately account for all attested word orders of V2 in OE corpora, the structure can be adapted to show how various word orders undergo the process of syntacticisation (i.e. resort to verb-movement to the highest CP layer), regardless of the initial constituent occurring alongside inversion of subject and verb. This syntacticised V2 word order occurred especially when information structure no longer became a necessary part of the process of verb-movement, for instance, if the initial constituent was not anaphoric or merely acted as a narrative device.

3.5. A baseline for understanding the instability of verb second in Middle English

There is a wealth of literature encompassing the reasons for variation in V2 and V3 word order in Old English, related to the pressures of syntax, information structure, and prosody. As I have demonstrated throughout this chapter, there are various counterexamples that can be explored which complement prior articulated structures for variation in OE V2, such as the combination of syntax and IS in a structural model of V2 by van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012), and the split CP approach refining the impact of IS on V2 syntax (e.g. Roberts 1996; Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Walkden 2017b).

Additionally, as part of my analysis of the distribution of pronominal versus nominal subjects in relation to their position alongside the verb, I reassess whether subject pronouns could be clitics, and conclude that these did not exist frequently enough to have triggered the overall loss of V2. It was important to be able to establish whether the current study would continue with a clitic approach, especially as the approach has implications for language contact approaches (e.g. KTR 2000) who partly suggest the difference in types of subject pronoun (i.e. clitics vs. non-clitics) between English and Norse may have led to northern Middle English dialects adopting a similar subject system to Scandinavian languages. This distributional analysis also provided the opportunity to identify any

uncommon or marked word orders existing in OE texts, to determine whether they could be accounted for in prior structural representations of OE V2.

In the latter half of the chapter, the counterexamples I presented show that there were several instances of V2 and V3 that were driven by the weakened link between syntax and information structure. The occurrence of this syntacticised word order (i.e. the lack of information-structural influence within the syntactic representation), surface preference for structures based on grammatical factors – such as whether the verb takes a complement and the length of the subject (Warner 2007) – and whether the initial constituent signals anaphoricity or for discourse-advancing purposes, were all factors involved in moving away from an unmarked V2 or V3 word order. I thus built on work introducing a split CP approach, which involves movement of the verb to different CP layers, given asymmetric V2 has been confirmed in studies such as Salvesen and Walkden (2017) and Walkden and Booth (2020).

To summarise, there are three main components to identifying the verb-movement processes when analysing different patterns within the Old English data. First, the type of initial constituent must be identified—whether it could be considered a syntactic operator (e.g. negation), a deictic adverb (e.g. ‘then’), a focused element (e.g. an adverbial of manner such as *egeslice* ‘sternly’), or an anaphoric, or even cataphoric, element (e.g. *þæt* ‘that’). The type of subject also must be identified, whether pronominal or nominal, and given/familiar or new/focused. Finally, the verb position alongside the subject should be identified, whether it occurs before or after the subject. These elements then act as diagnostics for the four types of verb-movement pattern as below, which correspond to different positions for the verb:

- **Traditional verb-movement to the highest C (C2):** characterized by a syntactic operation driving verb-movement (or the V feature in C; Roberts 2010), which traditionally drove V-to-C movement near-categorically. These include sentences introduced by *wh*-words, negation, short discourse-advancing adverbs (such as ‘then’), and increasingly (in the OE period), constituents that introduced new material or were placed at the beginning of the sentence for focus.
- **Innovative verb-movement to the highest C (C2):** a ‘syntacticised’ verb-movement, whereby initial anaphoric constituents occur alongside verb-movement

to the highest C domain with given subjects. This movement is not sensitive to information structure.

- **Traditional verb-movement to the lowest C (C1):** characterized by an ‘information-structural’-based verb-movement, whereby an initial anaphor occurs alongside the verb, with given subjects to the left of it, and new subjects to the right.
- **Innovative verb-movement to T:** this word order results in verb-movement to the lowest possible domain, TP, either due to syntactic optionality underlying the choice of movement to C versus T (the latter of which is driven by feature-checking of Tense/Agreement), or due to the weakening of the combined syntactic and information-structural link in driving verb-movement to C1. The former occurred with both pronominal and nominal subjects, and the latter with new subjects (which would have generally occurred after the verb when driven by IS tendencies).

All verb-movement options might have been represented in the grammar of an individual speaker, which, as more speakers began to adopt the innovative verb-movement patterns, would have changed across an entire community, leading to SVO and V3 word order overall. Originally, all movements would occur at the level of the syntax, with one verbal position for the purposes of feature checking, and the other for information structure. When both verbal positions were vulnerable to change, mainly due to increased syntactic optionality and the weakening of the IS sensitivity of the lower CP verbal position, the speaker might transition to using the highest portion of the CP layer to convey all types of V2 word order, and the lower TP for cases of V3 word order. Speakers were choosing amongst a wide range of options in late OE and ME, some of which co-existed in the underlying representation (as noted above), and some of which co-existed on the surface (in relation to stylistic and prosodic preferences).

Additionally, in the ME period, there was a movement toward a merged subject position for both discourse-old and discourse-new subjects, within Spec, TP, which came to host only subjects (and not scrambled objects too, see Biberauer and van Kemenade 2011: 61). This merging of subject positions may have also contributed to a higher number of V2 instances in the ME period, especially with subject pronouns originally occupying the higher position in Spec, CP2 and thus occurring preverbally often. These additional variables also show how speakers might have then been choosing between both verbal and subject positions during a period of constant change. This change may also help explain

why there is a general rise in the use of V2 across all dialects (see the upcoming Chapter 4), yet further nuance is required to explain why there is a substantial rise in specific syntactic contexts within specific dialects. The following chapter investigates this issue further.

One fundamental question remains regarding whether English can be categorised as having a specific type of V2, especially due to the fairly frequent rate to which sentences resorted to V3 word order, in comparison to the history of Germanic languages such as German, Dutch and Mainland Scandinavian. Thus, I provide important discussion in Chapter 4 regarding whether English V2 could realistically be considered a CP-V2 language, in the sense that English had *both* asymmetric V2 (main clause but not embedded V2) and a near-categorical frequency of V2 in different environments of fronting. Such a discussion has implications for whether Norse, for example, had any kind of impact on the V2 of English, specifically the instability of V2 in Middle English. Thus, this chapter has clearly outlined the presence of any marked word orders in V2 in Old English texts, which feeds into following discussion regarding unexpected variation in ME and especially across texts of different dialects.

Chapter 4:

The instability of the verb second phenomenon in Middle English: A syntactic and sociohistorical quantitative account⁴⁰

The main focus of prior studies examining the use of verb second (V2) across the history of English has predominantly been on explaining the reasons for its decline in frequency, especially in the Middle English (ME) period. However, as identified by Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (2000), there was a divergence in the use of V2, including an increase in its frequency in specific dialects of Middle English. The North and East Midlands appeared to be contributing to an inconsistency in the use of V2 across different dialects in Middle English following contact between these varieties, resulting in a decreased systematicity, and an overall instability of the phenomenon in English. Northern and East Midlands texts exhibit a highly frequent use of the phenomenon regardless of other types of pressures, such as that of information structure on the V2 syntax. This dialectal pressure follows the substantial contact between English and Norse in earlier medieval periods, evidence of which comes from texts localised to areas settled by Norse speakers (Kroch, Taylor and Ringe 2000: 368-369).

One of the remaining questions surrounds whether this Norse influence potentially affected the V2 of these dialects in very specific contexts. Little work has examined the interaction between syntactic variables of V2 (e.g. type of subject, verb and initial constituent in the sentence) in conjunction with the sociohistorical variables of the dialect and provenance of the text. Recent work has examined the impact of information structure and prosody on the use of V2 in different sentential environments in ME (e.g. Warner 2007; van Kemenade 2012; van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012), yet, the dialectal differences in use of V2 has received little attention in recent years. Since I have established that Old English had verb-movement to the CP domain (specifically a split CP), the idea of contact between a CP-V2 Norse language and an IP-V2 English language was not possible, meaning the impact of Norse influence on English requires a re-examination. With these

⁴⁰ All raw and frequency data for the trajectory of V2 in this chapter can be consulted in Appendix A. These numbers are referenced in the text where appropriate. All tables include raw data underneath the frequency data, which is demarcated by the instances of V2, over the total number of instances of V2 and V3, in brackets.

ideas in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to reassess the extent of Norse influence on English V2, and whether the influence might appear with specific grammatical variables. It therefore contributes to discussion regarding the view that high variation in V2, including periods of temporary revival, led to the instability of the phenomenon in ME, while offering further nuance as to the specific environments within which this variation arose. This chapter shows that it is necessary to incorporate several variables to evidence nuanced change in use of V2 in Middle English, and introduces some of the core linguistic domains where high variation in V2 is most visible.

To do so, I conduct a quantitative parsed corpus-based study of the frequency of V2 in different syntactic environments, across texts of different dialects, looking specifically at the proportion of V2 with pronominal versus nominal subjects; lexical versus auxiliary verbs; and, in contexts with initial emphasis and focus (generally short, discourse-advancing adverbs) versus those with initial anaphoric status (generally direct objects and PPs). Building on the large body of work on English V2, I delve into the interaction between syntactic variables and their impact on the frequency of V2, linking to the location of the manuscript and/or the author's roots, from both descriptive and statistic viewpoints. The result is an in-depth study of the role that contact with Norse played in the instability of V2—a timely discussion which has implications for dealing with individual texts of different dialects and types. While the V2 phenomenon is not a purely syntactic one, it is necessary to first deal with the sentential environments in which V2 appears unexpectedly, especially from a sociohistorical perspective, and then delve into the referential status of those grammatical elements in specific texts.

4.1. The influence of syntactic and sociohistorical factors on the frequency of verb second in Middle English

Several earlier studies have documented both abrupt and gradual changes in the historical use of English verb second, with differing views on when the most substantial variation began. As Los (2009: 108) identifies, a range of conclusions on the trajectory of V2 can be reached depending on the type of sentence being examined. Los refers to Schmidt (1980), Nevalainen (1997) and Bækken (2000) who all report varying trajectories for V2. First, Schmidt (1980: 298), reported a “swift” and “dramatic decline in V2, becoming less

obligatory in the early stages of the ME period (c.1100-1300), followed by a temporary revival of V2 in the sixteenth century. Schmidt considers some specific syntactic contexts, noting the differences between pronominal and nominal V2, as well as V2 fronted by *þa* ‘then’, drawing attention to issues of stress, literary style and speech register, and how they affect the use of V2 (1980: 300). These findings highlight the earliest considerations of syntactic context for the study of English V2 and how it interacts with literary elements such as style and register, without necessarily combining variables to explain how these types of interactions could impact the trajectory of V2. On the contrary, Nevalainen (1997: 207) reported a much steadier decline of V2, occurring later in the ME period (c. the fifteenth century), with the rate of V2 declining from 37%, to below 10% by the end of the seventeenth century. Nevalainen examined V2 with initial adverbs and negators (discovering a temporary revival of V2 with fronted negation) but did not consider how the initial constituent may have interacted with other syntactic variables. Lastly, Bækken (1998, 2000), focusing on Early Modern English, also highlighted the importance of the type of initial constituent on the ordering of verb and subject, reporting a substantial decrease in V2 to 8.8% in the seventeenth century (Bækken 2000: 394). These are just a few of the studies that differ in their reports of V2 trajectory in ME, as highlighted by Los (2009), suggesting that it is important to consider as many grammatical variables as possible within the trajectory of V2, as well as examine the interaction between these varying grammatical properties.

There are several studies that have also examined the increase of V2, particularly in late ME (1300-1500) and how this temporary revival of the V2 phenomenon might have contributed to its demise in this period. For example, Haeberli (2010) looks explicitly at the use of V2 with subject pronouns in this period, analysing how this type of V2 emerged in the ME period counter to its low frequency in OE in with initial ‘non-operators’ (or initial anaphoric constituents). He notes that this trajectory falls in line with the high frequency of this type of inversion in Continental French, thus arguing for contact with Anglo-Norman as a driving factor behind the increase of V2, and suggesting that the word order could have been “calqued on Continental French/Anglo-Norman usage” (2010: 155). Alternatively, van Kemenade and Westergaard argue that “the loss of (IS-based) V2 results in an increase of syntactic V2”, affecting the use of auxiliaries and unaccusative verbs (2012: 114)—they state that the use of V2 in the context of pronominal subjects with initial anaphors emerged as a syntacticised word order, driven by children’s acquisition of English. A syntacticised

V2 word order is one that was no longer driven by information-structural tendencies to place given before new information. They argue that this syntacticised V2 word order (i.e. a verb position no longer driven by the need to display given before new information, affecting the use of V2 with subject pronouns), “may be caused by children’s conservative strategy to language acquisition, where they make finer syntactic distinctions than the adult grammar” (2012: 113). One of the main aspects of their research to note here is that they focus on general instability of V2 in late ME, rather than simply a gradual decline. This point is vital for understanding why the change occurred; the many factors involved in driving the occurrence of V2 in ME created the ideal conditions for change – increased variation – leading to an overall decline in the phenomenon.

Analysis of the dialect of the text is also pertinent for discovering which areas exhibited the most variation in V2 in late medieval England. Few studies have then combined this dialectal approach with specific analysis of grammatical variables. Given upward trajectories for the use of V2 is generally unexpected, due to the overall decline of V2 witnessed across the entire period, as well as the influence of IS-based pressures on V2 in OE, I also undertake analysis of variation in some of these areas. Not only does analysis of these interactions place the current study in line with studies analysing the impact of dialect variation and information structure, but also considers how such factors then interact with a range of syntactic variables, a process not undertaken in much depth previously.

4.1.1. A description of the statistical model for the study of verb second instability in Middle English

The current quantitative study, on the instability of verb second in English, studies how specific syntactic and sociohistorical variables interact to drive different rates of usage in V2. The main research questions are thus:

- a) Which grammatical behaviours predict the appearance of verb second (V2) over verb third (V3) structure over time within the Middle English period?
- b) Does the dialect of the text impact the appearance of V2 (over V3) word order in Middle English?

Variables	Variants	Dummy coding	Type of variable	Type of data (categorical/continuous)
Structure	Verb third (V3)	0	Outcome	Categorical (binary)
	Verb second (V2)	1		
Date of the text (Date)	1150-1250 (M1)	0	Predictor, fixed effects	Categorical
	1250-1350 (M2)	1		
	1350-1420 (M3)	2		
	1420-1500 (M4)	3		
Type of subject (Subject)	Nominal	0	Predictor, fixed effects	Categorical (binary)
	Pronominal	1		
Type of verb (Verb)	Lexical	0	Predictor, fixed effects	Categorical (binary)
	Auxiliary	1		
Type of initial constituent (Fronted Phrase)	Adverb ‘then’	0	Predictor, fixed effects	Categorical
	Direct object	1		
	Prepositional phrase	2		
Dialect of the text (Dialect)	East Midlands	0	Predictor, fixed effects	Categorical
	Northern	1		
	West Midlands	2		
	Southern	3		
Text	Various	N/A	Predictor, random effects	Categorical

Table 5: A table to show the properties of the different outcome and predictor variables of the current quantitative study.

Table 5 provides a breakdown of the individual variables I study, highlighting the outcome variable (the overall structure of the sentence, i.e. V2 over V3 word order), and the predictor variables used in various models across the quantitative study. The predictor variables consist of the date of the text; the type of subject, verb or initial constituent within the individual sentence; and the dialect of the text. The date of the text is a categorical rather than continuous variable, due to the divisions created by Kroch et al. (2000b) when compiling the corpus, and since there is little certainty around the specific dates of the texts.⁴¹ The categorisations made here, of either 80- or 100-years, mean that there is a sizeable number of texts to work with in each time period.

⁴¹ ‘The date of the text’ predominantly encompasses the manuscript date, however, if the composition date was known, the text was categorised based on this date (see the PPCME2 documentation; Kroch et al. 2000b).

All variables are fixed effects predictors, but I also include a random effects variable, namely the individual Middle English texts themselves. This is because each text is being tested multiple times, and there are therefore numerous data points for each text (Winter 2020: 236). In this study, I use the same V2 or V3 sentences several times to determine the impact of different grammatical behaviours (e.g. the type of subject or verb) or the dialect of the text, on whether V2 or V3 is used, so it is also important to understand the random effect that each text had on each sentence of V2 or V3. The random effects variable of ‘text’ includes the variations in V2 across different authors, genres and text-types, which cannot be as easily measured compared to the impact of grammatical behaviours on V2, particularly as some of this data, such as the author of the text, is missing. Crucially, Booth and Beck (2021: 12-13) found in their study of V1 and V2 in the history of Icelandic that models with the random effects of ‘text’ were better at predicting their data, compared to when only fixed effects were used (at a statistically significant rate: $p < 0.001$). I therefore follow in similar footsteps, incorporating a mixed effects model to explain the combination of factors that predict the rate of V2 the most.

To ascertain whether there are any issues of high collinearity, specifically the extent to which predictors could be explained by other predictors, I use variance inflation factors (VIFs) (Winter 2020: 114). According to Zuur et al (2010) and Winter (2020: 114), the general rule of thumb is that variables with no collinearity issues have a VIF of under 3 or 4, and certainly below 10. Each of the predictors above have a VIF under 10, and generally under 4, except for the type of initial constituent in the sentence (either an adverb ‘then’, direct object, or PP), with a VIF of 5.19. This slightly higher VIF might suggest that the use of a different grammatical behaviour (such as a type of subject or verb), or the date of the text, could be predicting the use of the initial constituent. This finding is understandable given the long history of subject pronouns in English occurring in a specific position alongside the verb, depending on the type of constituent that was fronted. In fact, when the type of subject or verb is specified, along with the initial constituent in the model, the VIF is reduced to less than 2. Generally, however, I continue with the initial constituent as part of the statistical model, ensuring to exercise caution when it comes to interpreting any findings interacting with initial constituent.

Model	Variables and interactions ⁴²
1 (Dataset 1)	Date
	Subject
	Verb
	Date * Subject
	Date * Verb
	Date * Subject * Verb
2 (Dataset 1)	Subject
	Verb
	Dialect
	Subject * Verb
	Subject * Dialect
	Verb * Dialect
	Subject * Verb * Dialect
3 (Dataset 2)	Date
	Subject
	Verb
	Fronted Phrase
	Date * Fronted Phrase
	Date * Fronted Phrase * Subject
	Date * Fronted Phrase * Verb

Table 6: A table to show the interactions used to predict the appearance of V2 in the different statistical models (mixed effects binomial logistic regressions). The variables come from two datasets; dataset 2 is a subset of dataset 1, due to the selection of specific initial constituents from the data.

Given the outcome variable is binary (the sentences of analysis are either V2 or V3), I use a mixed effects binomial logistic regression model, adopting a forward stepwise method to select the most statistically significant variables to include in the model. This method includes comparing nested models (models with or without a variable or interaction) using ANOVA likelihood ratio testing (the *anova()* function in R), to determine whether the new model, with the new variable, is statistically significant compared to the null model. Two datasets are required: one including all sentences of V2 or V3 with different types of subject and verb, from texts of different dates and dialects, and one as a subset of this larger dataset, including the three initial constituents of analysis. Table 6 highlights the interactions between the predictor variables, across the three different statistical models, which are included in the models as a result of likelihood ratio testing. A maximum of three predictors are used in each interaction, to avoid unnecessary

⁴² In some places I refer to the terms ‘pronominal V2’, ‘nominal V2’, ‘auxiliary V2’ and ‘lexical V2’ to refer to V2 with different types of subject and verb. This is to avoid unnecessary repetition when describing some of the interactions between grammatical variables, which tend to occur in different syntactic environments.

complications within the models. The models identified from the two datasets are outlined below:

- Model 1 refers to the interaction between grammatical behaviours, including type of subject and verb, and their impact on appearance of V2 over time (from c.1150-1500 across 80- to 100-year intervals).
- Model 2 refers to the interaction between grammatical behaviours of type of subject and verb, with the dialect of the text, to predict appearance of V2 across the entire Middle English period, as opposed to across different intervals of time. This separate model is necessary as the variables of ‘date’ and ‘dialect’ were individually insignificant predictors of V2, however, in combination with different grammatical behaviours, could separately predict the use of V2.
- Model 3 refers to the interaction between the three grammatical behaviours within the sentence (type of subject, verb and initial constituent), over time. These interactions occur in the subset of the larger dataset, where the type of initial constituent of analysis is chosen from a larger range of initial constituents.

The findings arising from these models are weaved throughout the following sections, using probability, odds ratio, and significance testing, particularly with the ‘Estimated Means’ (*emmeans*) function in R, to explain the interaction between predictors and their effect on use of V2 throughout Middle English. The overall predictive power and statistical significance of variables and their interactions on the appearance of V2 over V3 is calculated using the *glmer* function for generalised mixed effects regression models, set up for a binary response variable. Finally, I primarily focus on the contexts that have been examined the least (particularly verb-type), and their interaction with sociohistorical variables of dialect and provenance. For instance, it is clear that V2 sentences should be broken down by at least one grammatical variable (e.g. subject-type has been analysed the most extensively). Thus, the fine details of some of the interactions included in the model were not necessarily discussed.

I now outline the implications of specific findings arising from this study. An interaction between both grammatical and sociohistorical variables would be seen if different dialectal texts differ in their use of different types of V2 sentence, with varying subjects, verbs and initial constituents. Prior work has shown there are dialectal differences in the use of V2 on the whole (with some exploring the variable of subject-type), but few

have delved into the full range of syntactic environments. If there is no variation in the use of V2 and V3 at similar time periods across different dialectal texts in ME, instead reflecting a gradual decline in the use of V2 over time across all dialects, then there was likely no impact of the wider geographical context on the use of V2 syntax in the ME period. I take the interactions one by one, beginning with the interactions between different grammatical elements (V2 with different subjects and initial constituents, verbs and initial constituents, and subjects and verbs), and then bring in the dialectal variable.

4.2. Recap of the frequency of English verb second as a whole

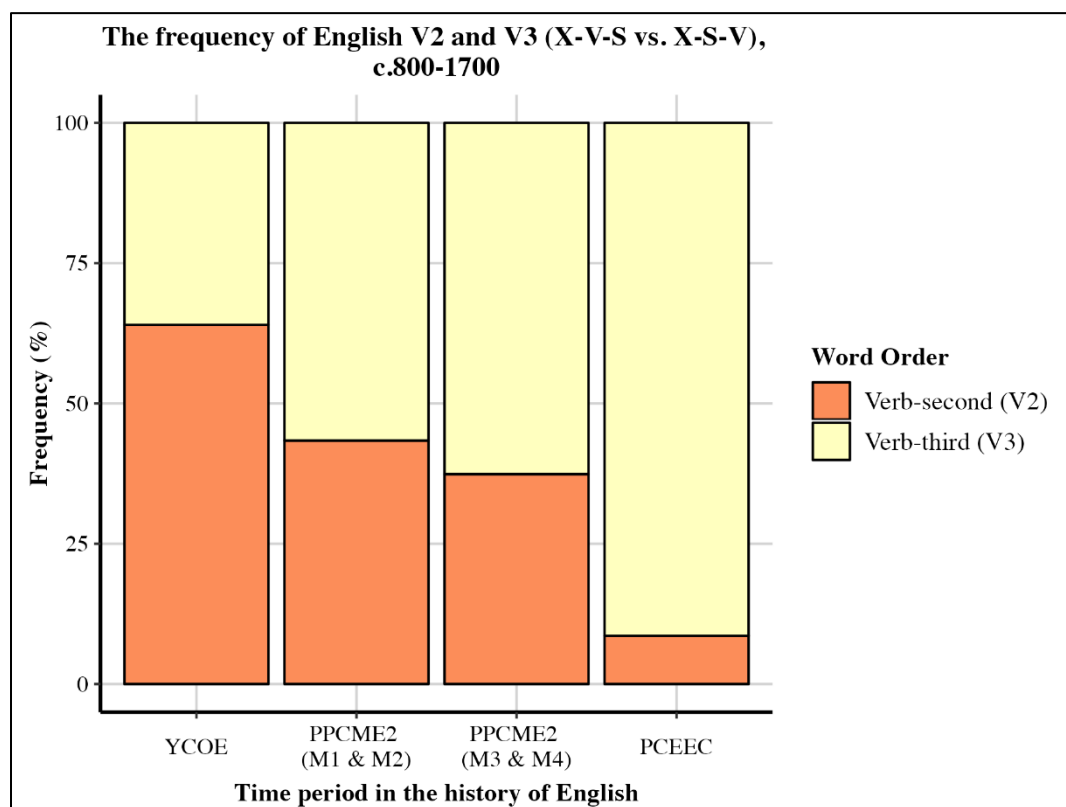


Figure 11: A stacked bar chart to show the frequency of V2 and V3, in non-subject fronted main clauses, across historical corpora compiling texts from different English time periods.⁴³

Figure 11 shows the frequency of V2 and V3 across YCOE, PPCME2 and PCEEC, and serves as a reminder of the declining trajectory of English V2 in non-subject-fronted

⁴³ Note that the tables of data for each of the figures in this chapter can be found in Appendix A.

main clauses (XVS versus XSV word order).⁴⁴ The V2 data from PPCME2 is split into two time periods, from 1150 until 1350, and from 1350 until 1500, given the high amount of variation when transitioning from the earlier to the latter part of this time period. The *x*-axis of the bar chart in Figure 11 highlights the different corpora, and the *y*-axis shows the frequency and proportion of both V2 and V3 word order. The stacked bar chart also considers the trajectory of V2 compared to V3 across the history of English, without consideration of different grammatical behaviours in the sentence. The frequency of V2 generally declined across each of the time periods, with an overall decrease of around 55%. It is therefore unclear from this wider context alone as to how and why variation might have occurred across the history of English.

There is no statistically significant effect of each of the Middle English time periods (M2, M3, and M4, compared to M1), on the use of V2 over V3, with all results returning a *p*-value of >0.05 . These results occur prior to adding the grammatical predictors to the model, at which point the specific effect of time on use of V2 becomes clearer. Both the descriptive and inferential results presented here make it evident that the answers to which factors affected the frequency of V2 the most lie in the interactions between variables.

4.3. Variation in the frequency of Middle English verb second, by type of subject and initial constituent

In comparison to the use V2 in Old English, driven by the pressures of information structure (see Chapter 1 and 3), the frequency of V2 with pronominal and nominal subjects began to shift drastically in Middle English. Pronominal V2 rarely occurred with initial anaphoric constituents compared to nominal V2, due to the need for given information to be placed toward the beginning of the sentence, and for weaker prosodic elements, i.e. subject pronouns, to intervene between the strong initial element and verb. Conversely, new information was placed toward the end of the sentence, which primarily included nominal

⁴⁴ Note that I solely use PCEEC (the Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence) to show the increasing lack of verb second in early modern English contexts. PCEEC is built of letter collections, in contrast to the fictional, administrative, religious, and philosophical texts of YCOE and PPCME2. Correspondence in the late medieval and early modern period is often considered ‘speech-like’ (e.g. see Culpeper and Kytö 2010: 62–64), which could explain the much lower frequency of V2, compared to that of the specific genres used in the other corpora.

subjects, leading to their frequent postverbal placement. Even though there is a wealth of research that analyses the frequency of V2 depending on the type of subject in the sentence, these interactions are not always explored in great detail. Instead, throughout this section I show how temporary revivals of V2 can be explicitly linked to the interaction of different grammatical behaviours, as well as influences regarding the dialectal origin of the text.

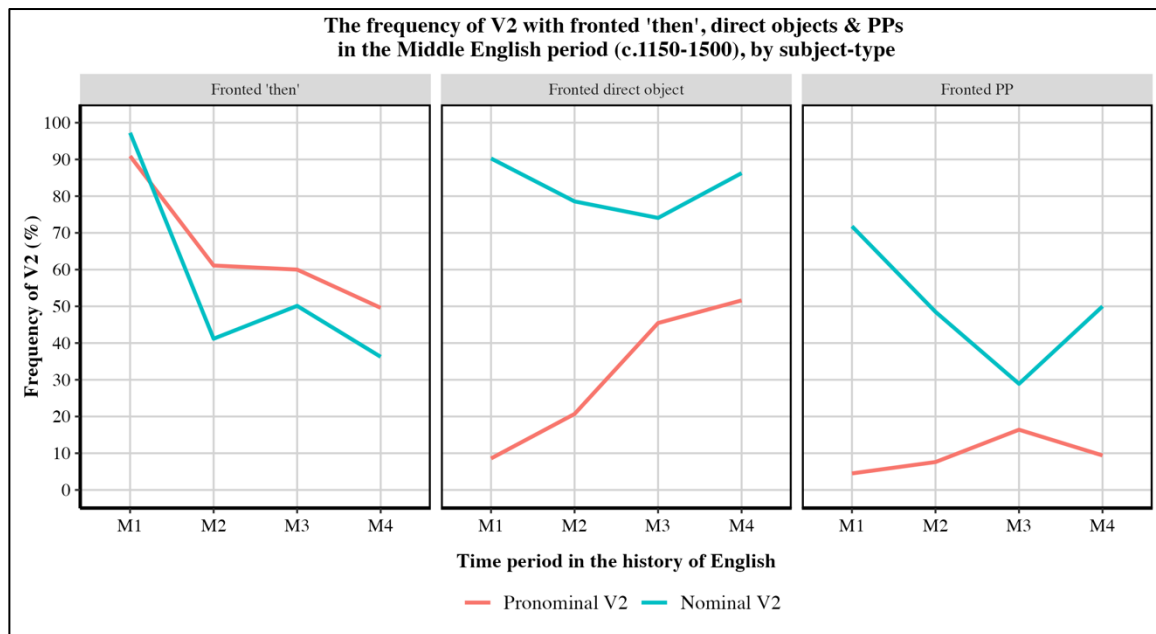


Figure 12: Three line graphs to show the trajectories of V2 with different subject-types across the ME period, introduced by different initial constituents, namely initial adverb 'then', direct objects, and prepositional phrases.

In Figure 12, I show the difference between the trajectories of pronominal and nominal V2 in ME, occurring alongside movement to initial position of the adverb 'then', direct objects and prepositional phrases. As noted in prior studies of V2, the differences between types of V2 introduced by each of these initial constituents are staggering, and here I also emphasise the unexpected growth of V2 with pronominal subjects in certain environments. Even though there were few instances of pronominal V2 with initial anaphors and referential/focused constituents in OE, their frequency increased substantially in ME compared to contexts with the initial temporal adverb 'then', which declined to frequencies of 49.6% and 36.3% with pronominal and nominal subjects. This finding is confirmed by odds ratio testing, with nominal subjects becoming increasingly unlikely to occur in a V2 structure compared to pronominal subjects in this context (going from 3.9

times more likely, to 0.6).⁴⁵ On the other hand, the rate of pronominal V2 temporarily increased when occurring with initial direct objects and PPs, especially between the periods M2 and M3 (by 24.8% and 8.8%, respectively). From M1 to M4, nominal subjects go from 134.6 times more likely than pronominal subjects to occur postverbally when the sentence is introduced by direct objects, to 8.8 times more likely, which also highlights the change in the likelihood of pronominal subjects occurring postverbally in this context. The temporary increase in use of V2 with pronominal subjects, seen specifically in V2 sentences introduced by constituents other than those considered as operators in the V2 literature (reflected by initial objects and PPs in the M3 period in Figure 12), might also be linked to the move of the position for both informationally old and new subjects to Spec, TP (as noted in Biberauer and van Kemenade 2011). However, there are many more substantial revivals of V2 in specific contexts, as noted here with initial objects in particular, thus there must be additional factors contributing to this rise in frequency.

- (1) ‘[*Thys harte*] **woll** I chace,’ *seyde kynge Arthure*
 ‘[this heart] will I chase,’ said king Arthur
 ‘King Arthur said, “I will chase this heart”’

(Malory’s *Morte D’Arthur*, 33.1037, PPCME2)

- (2) [*Des sowndys & melodijs*] **had** *sche herd* ...
 [these sounds and melodies] **had** she heard ...
 ‘She had heard these sounds and melodies’

(The Book of Margery Kempe, 88.1985, PPCME2)

- (3) [*bis bred*] **bidde** *we*
 [this bread] **ask** we
 ‘We ask for this bread’

(The Book of Vices and Virtues, 111.282, PPCME2)

Sentences (1-3) exemplify the existence of pronominal V2 in ME with initial constituents, specifically direct objects, that link to a referent in the preceding discourse—a type of V2 that did not exist widely in OE. I choose to focus solely on pronominal V2 here, as pronouns generally exhibit given/familiar information (e.g. have an antecedent, either textually or non-textually); a context that was infrequent in OE. The growth of this

⁴⁵ Although, the influence of nominal subjects over pronominal subjects on the rate of V2 was insignificant in M1, with a *p*-value of 0.12.

particular type of V2 is said to be a result of the weakening link between syntax and information structure in the history of English. Interestingly, this change also coincided with the loss of the multifunctionality of the initial constituent (see Los 2009, 2012; Los and Dreschler 2012; Los et al. 2023)—a place for information that locally anchored the sentence to the previous one (i.e. local anchors), and for information that contextualised the sentence (i.e. frame-setters). (1-3) are all examples of sentences introduced by these local anchors, a number of which were direct objects, and these sentences all include inversion of the subject and verb. The initial objects, *thys herte* ‘this heart’, *þes sowndys & melodijis* ‘these sounds and melodies’ and *þis bred* ‘this bread’, all link to antecedents introduced in the preceding discourse, identifiable by the use of the demonstratives ‘this/these’. Initial direct objects, as well as PPs, could also act as frame-setters that provided context for the sentence or introduced new referents, as in (4-6) below, which also introduced V2 sentences frequently in this time period:

- (4) [*þe mercy of þis fadur*] **kan** we not telle fully
 [the mercy of this father] **can** we not tell fully
 ‘We cannot understand fully the mercy of this father’

(English Wycliffite Sermons, 236.239, PPCME2)

- (5) [*In a shamefull oure*] **were** thou borne
 [in a shameful hour] **were** you born
 ‘You were born in a shameful hour’

(Malory’s Morte D’Arthur, 208.3457, PPCME2)

- (6) [*In pees*] **shal** ich slepe, and in þat ich resten
 [in peace] **shall** I sleep, and in that I rest
 ‘I shall sleep in peace, and because of that, I rest’

(The Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter, 4.117, PPCME2)

Each of the above cases of ME V2 introduce new referents at the beginning of the sentence. For instance, (4) includes an initial direct object, which refers back to the antecedent of ‘the father’, yet focuses specifically on ‘the mercy’ of this father, making it a newly introduced referent. (5-6) are introduced by the initial PPs, *in a shamefull oure* ‘in a shameful hour’ and *in pees* ‘in peace’, which set the context for the rest of the sentence and put emphasis on the location or state of the subject. A future challenge would be to understand whether V2, during this period of temporary revival, primarily began with local

anchors (1-3) or frame-setters (4-6).⁴⁶ These examples demonstrate that the analysis of V2 in the history of English is more than just a syntactic phenomenon, especially as the same grammatical element can indicate several types of referential information. This appearance of IS emphasises the importance of conducting case studies to qualitatively analyse specific examples of V2 and V3 during this period—a reason why I continue to do so in Chapter 5 with Chaucer’s prose works. For now, it is clear that unexpected types of V2 were on the rise during this period of high variation, in contrast to OE, and that some of these examples may surface in texts of specific dialects and types.

Text	Dialect	Frequency of pronominal V2 with initial direct objects and PPs		
		Instances of V2	Instances of V2 & V3	%
The Equatorie of the Planetis	East Midlands	1	1	100
Chaucer’s A Treatise on the Astrolabe	East Midlands (London)	4	6	66.7
The Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet	Northern (Central West Yorkshire)	87	142	61.3
The Mirror of St. Edmund (Thornton Ms.)	Northern	36	66	54.6

Table 7: A table to show ME texts with the highest rates of pronominal V2 with initial direct objects and PPs in the M3 (1350-1420) period.

Frequency of V2 with pronominal subjects, in contexts with initial direct objects & PPs (M3 period)			
Dialect	Instances of V2	Instances of V2 & V3	Frequency of V2 (%)
Northern	123	209	58.9
East Midlands	58	303	19.1
West Midlands	16	231	6.9
Southern	8	195	4.1

Table 8: A table collating the instances of V2 with pronominal subjects in contexts with initial direct objects and PPs, along with the overall frequencies of V2 in the different dialectal areas.

⁴⁶ Since V2 occurs frequently in the M3 period with initial direct objects and PPs, as outlined in Figure 12, it would be interesting to determine the proportion of local anchors vs. frame-setters within these sentences. While a number of these will be local anchors, many of them will be frame-setters, since local anchors may have declined in favour of frame-setters (see Los et al. 2023). I reserve this for future research.

It is equally important to understand which Middle English texts, and which properties of these texts (e.g. dialect, provenance, author, text-type) could be driving variation in V2 in the entire period. To preface this investigation (occurring in Chapter 5), in Table 7 I provide the four texts from the M3 period with the highest rates of V2, to discuss the possibility that specific texts were contributing to high levels of V2 frequency during this time.⁴⁷ Here, I choose to focus on contexts with initial direct objects and PPs, as these contexts of V2 increased in the M3 period in particular, and roughly consist of initial local anchors and frame-setters as outlined above. The texts in Table 7 exhibit a frequency of V2 more than one standard deviation (SD) above the mean total of the text's frequencies listed here (in this case, more than 50.3%, which is 1 SD more than the mean frequency of V2). These texts are of Northern or East Midlands origin, one of which is Chaucer's *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*. Additionally, Table 8 summarises the frequencies of V2 from each of the dialectal areas. These findings outline that the dialects contributing the highest rates of pronominal V2 (with initial direct objects and PPs) in the M3 period are from the North and East Midlands (with frequencies of 58.9% and 19.1% respectively), in contrast to the West Midlands and South with frequencies of 6.9% and 4.1%. There is a clear contrast between the V2 of different dialects here, suggesting a potential effect of dialect variation on the revival of V2 with pronominal subjects and initial anaphoric constituents.

These frequent rates of V2 in the M3 period begin to show potential evidence of influence from of a Northern- and/or East Midlands-based V2 on the general use of V2, in particular, the idea that Old Norse, with its categorical rates of V2, might have impacted the syntax of English V2, transitioning into ME. The interaction between syntax and dialect here is therefore worth investigating further, alongside continuing to explore additional syntactic variables to understand which grammatical behaviours upheld the V2 phenomenon in ME.

However, the overall interaction of subject and initial constituent and its predictive power in relation to appearance of V2 over V3 was not statistically significant (with *p*-values of over 0.12 for each time period of text compared to M1, and initial constituent within the sentence). Nevertheless, the results displayed here have particularly highlighted

⁴⁷ I use the M3 period here as it contributes the highest rates of V2 across the entire corpus.

the need to delve into specific ME texts further to determine why V2 word order occurred frequently in different text-types (e.g. for specific discourse purposes, such as furthering narratives, maintaining a rhetoric throughout a text, etc.). I therefore continue to explore individual constituents and their involvement in driving occurrence of both V2 and V3 in the remainder of this chapter and in Chapter 5.

4.4. Variation in the frequency of Middle English verb second, by type of verb and initial constituent or subject

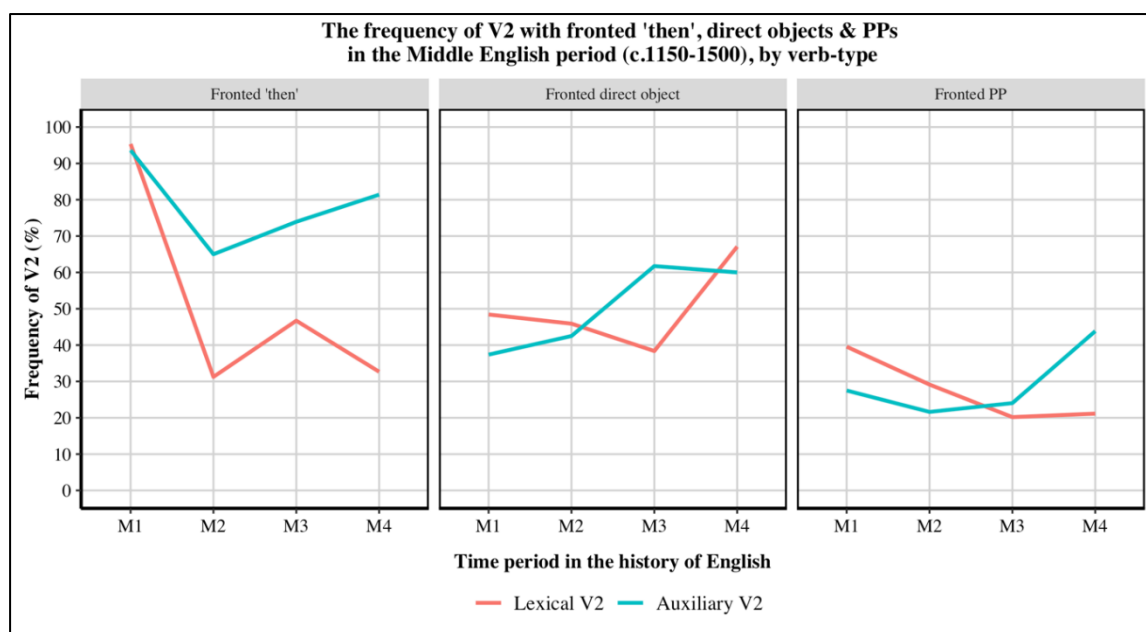


Figure 13: Three line graphs to show the trajectories of V2 with different verb-types across the ME period, introduced by different initial constituents, namely initial adverb ‘then’, direct objects, and prepositional phrases.

Compared to investigations into the variation of V2 depending on the type of subject in the sentence, there has been little focus on exploring the difference in the rate of V2 depending on the type of verb. Throughout this chapter I compare the frequency of V2 based on whether there was a lexical (i.e. containing semantic information) or auxiliary verb (i.e. containing grammatical information, specifically including modal verbs, auxiliary verbs *have* and *be*). Figure 13 shows the frequency of V2 (compared to V3) introduced by the adverb ‘then’, direct objects, and PPs, with different types of verbs (lexical vs. auxiliary). Overall, the probability of auxiliary verbs occurring in second position increases from 50

to 52% from M1 to M4, while for lexical verbs the probability decreases from 42% to 30%. Thus, auxiliary verbs were more likely to occur in second position toward the end of ME compared to lexical verbs, explaining why V2 in the present day is mainly characterised by an auxiliary verb in second position.

When pairing the analysis of verb-type in V2 and V3 sentences with types of initial constituent, the trajectory of V2 with auxiliary verbs appears to increase in all three of the contexts displayed here, namely, with the initial adverb ‘then’, direct objects, and prepositional phrases. For instance, the probability of a sentence introduced by a direct object (with the auxiliary verb in second position) increased from 48% to 79% across the ME period. The same can be said for sentences introduced by a PP, with the probability of the sentence having an auxiliary verb occurring in second position also increasing, albeit not as steeply, from 26% to 31%.

However, the overall predictive power of the interaction between the type of verb and the initial constituent on appearance of V2 is not statistically significant, with only sentences introduced by PPs (compared to adverb ‘then’) in the M2 and M3 period having *p*-values under 0.05. Turning to individual texts to determine the combination of syntactic and information-structural properties of elements driving a decreased systematicity in use of V2 might therefore be necessary.

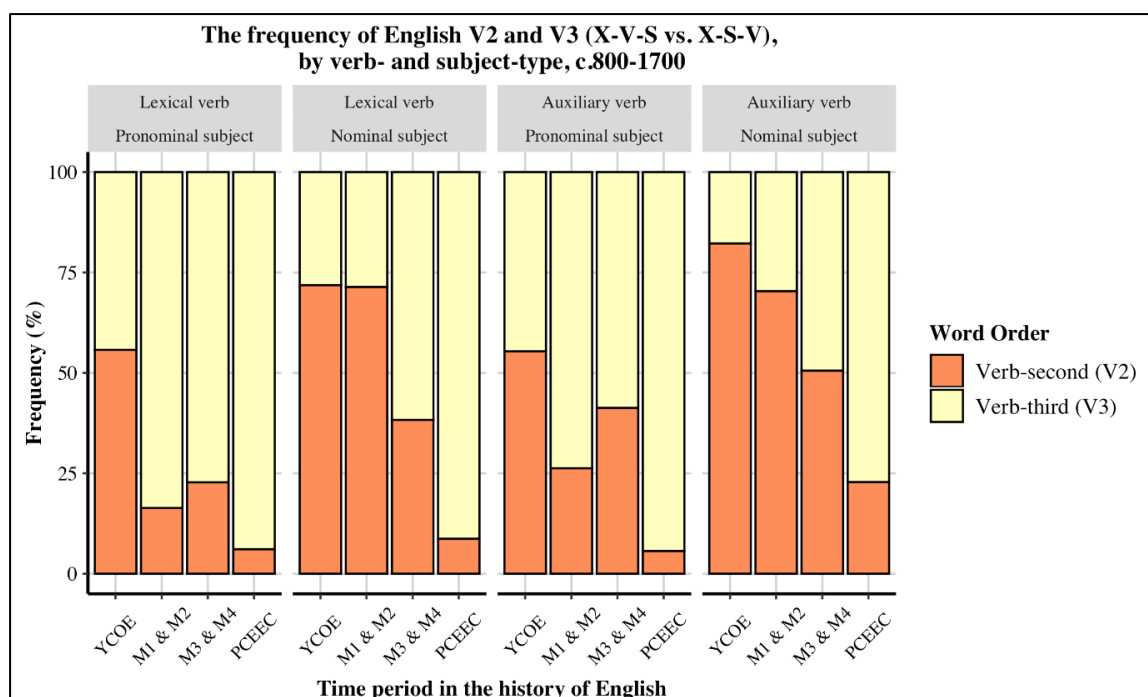


Figure 14: A series of bar charts showing the frequency of V2 and V3 with lexical and auxiliary verbs, and pronominal and nominal subjects, across each of the corpora of analysis.

To further reinforce the interaction of specific grammatical variables and how they maintained the frequency of V2 toward the latter part of ME, Figure 14 indicates the differences in V2 with different types of subject and verb, across YCOE, PPCME2 and PCEEC. There are striking differences that occur when combining the grammatical variables of subject and verb, in terms of their impact on V2 in each of the historical time periods. It is evident that, regardless of the type of verb, the trajectory of V2 increased with pronominal subjects in the latter half of the ME period (M3 and M4), whereas V2 with nominal subjects declined. However, the increase in pronominal V2 is most evident with auxiliary verbs compared to lexical verbs. Whereas auxiliary V2 with pronominal subjects rises by a frequency of around 15%, lexical V2 rises by around 6% in this context.

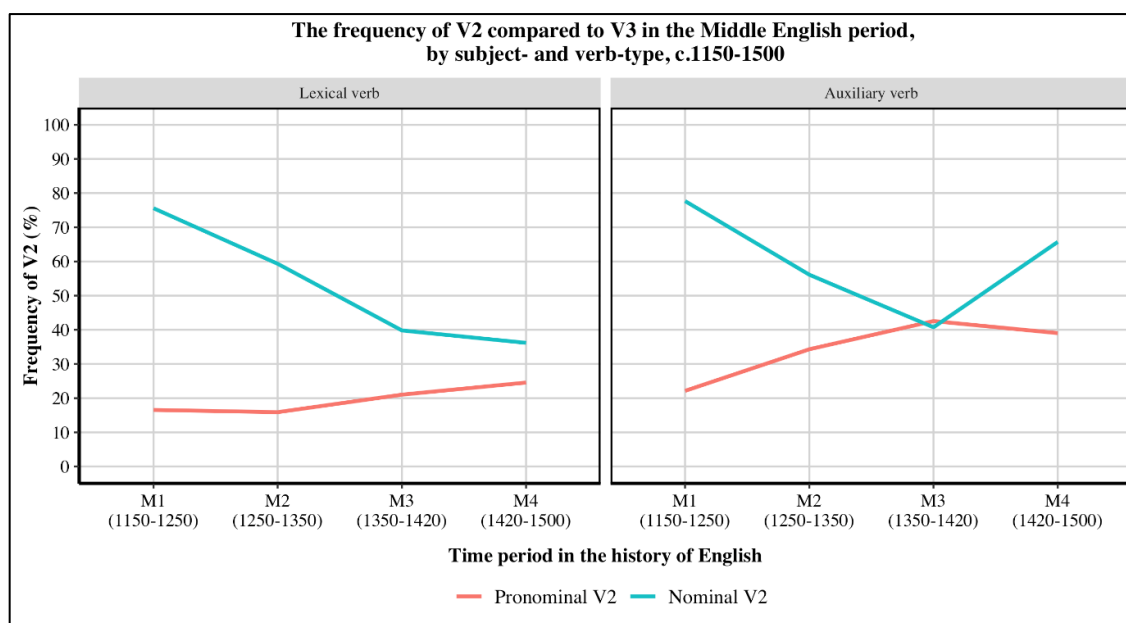


Figure 15: Two line graphs showing the frequency of V2 with lexical and auxiliary verbs, and pronominal and nominal subjects, across the ME period (PPCME2).

In the M3 period (c.1350-1420), and in contexts with auxiliary verbs specifically, nominal V2 declines and converges on a similar rate to that of pronominal V2 (Figure 15), with pronominal V2 at a slightly higher rate of 42.6%, compared to nominal V2 at a rate of 40.7%. In lexical verb contexts, the trajectories of pronominal and nominal V2 do not converge in the same way as in auxiliary verb contexts, with differences of 21% and 39.8%, respectively. In this time period, the odds of a nominal subject occurring in second position is 4.6 times higher than pronominal subjects in lexical verb contexts. Yet in auxiliary verb contexts, the odds of a nominal subject occurring in second position is only 1.8 times higher than pronominal subjects (both to statistically significant extents, with p -values of <0.001). Overall, the predictive power of the interaction between the type of subject and verb on the appearance of V2 over time is significant, particularly for the M2 and M3 periods in comparison to M1 (p -values of <0.001), where most of the instability was happening with both inclining and declining trends, however, this significance is not relevant for the M4 period (a p -value of 0.08).

- (7) [Thane] **sall** we be in bitternes of penance ...
 [then] **shall** we be in bitterness of penance ...
 ‘Then we shall be in a state of bitterness due to penance ...’

(The Mirror of St. Edmund, Thornton Ms., 34.448, PPCME2)

- (8) [His powere] **may** pou see by paire gretness ...
 [his power] **may** you see by their greatness ...
 ‘You may see his power due to their greatness ...’

(The Mirror of St. Edmund, Thornton Ms., 21.134, PPCME2)

- (9) [Purȝ þe life of obediens] **may** ye cum to heuin
 [through the life of obedience] **may** you come to heaven
 ‘Through this life of obedience, you may come to heaven’

(The Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet, 46.1412, PPCME2)

Cases of inversion of the type ‘auxiliary verb plus pronominal subject’ are common, such as *sall we* ‘shall we’ and *may pou* ‘may you’ (7-9). These highly repetitive cases of inversion assisted in sustaining an argument in Middle English texts. For example, the consistent use of postverbal first or second person pronouns might have encouraged the reader toward the value of penitence, or to familiarise themselves with scientific instruments; a moral kind of instruction facilitated by, and in the service of, God. Variation in the use of postverbal and preverbal subjects may not have the same rhetorical effect, and repetition in these types of texts is key. Chapter 5 deals with this topic in more detail, but in examples (7-9), it is clear the reader would be drawn into the argumentation of the text; the use of personal pronouns in the first- and second-person, followed by continual use of an auxiliary verb in second position, guide the reader by placing them and the author (with use of *I* and *we*) within the same religious context. For example, (7) makes use of the postverbal first-person plural pronoun *we* to centre both author and reader within the context of penance, and the use of modal auxiliary verb *sall* ‘shall’ before lexical *be* makes the state of *bitternes of penance* appear mandatory. According to the OED, *shall* as a lexical verb referred to owing something, such as money or allegiance (“shall, v.” OED Online 2023), highlighting the origins of a word that now, alongside a main verb, refers to a necessity to do something. In addition, the use of *may* in (8-9), derived from the main verb related to strength and power (“may, v.1.” OED Online 2023), also drives the reader toward a particular way of thinking, and in (9) this rhetoric encompasses a life of sin and the route to heaven, again drawing the reader in with the use of second-person *ye* ‘you’.

These findings are complementary to studies conducted by van Kemenade (2012) and van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012), who detail that the use of V2 in later medieval periods was especially preserved with auxiliary verbs and pronominal subjects at this time. As discussed, one of the explanations for the increase in pronominal V2 can be attributed to the rise of a syntacticised V2, as referred to in van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012: 113). This process involved the loss of a position for verb-movement once driven by the tendencies of information structure, especially in contexts with initial anaphors, impacting the use of V2 with pronominal subjects which increased in frequency in ME.

The interaction between subject and verb on the rate of V2 has the lowest *p*-values for each time period, especially compared to interactions with initial constituents. This difference could be due to the status of phrases in the left-periphery, such as information-structural/referential status. Whereas subjects are likely to fall into one of two categories (given/new, or linked/unlinked as per the Pentaset mentioned in Los et al. 2023), and pronouns, by-and-large, exhibit given information, they also neatly fit into grammatical categories (other than some given nominal subjects that occur in a higher structural position, like subject pronouns). On the other hand, initial constituents are more complex in terms of their referential status, and are potentially used for a variety of reasons (e.g. for emphasis, focus or contrast, to link to an antecedent, to introduce a new referent, etc.). It becomes clearer that there is more to the V2 phenomenon than a comparison of grammatical categories, and thus why I continue to appeal to sociohistorical and information-structural factors to gather a larger picture.

Frequency of V2 with auxiliary verbs & pronominal subjects, in contexts with initial direct objects & PPs (M3 period)			
Dialect	Instances of V2	Instances of V2 & V3	Frequency of V2 (%)
Northern	112	166	67.5
East Midlands	46	187	24.6
West Midlands	13	111	11.7
Southern	5	86	5.8

Table 9: A table collating the instances of V2 with auxiliary verbs and pronominal subjects, introduced by initial direct objects and PPs from the M3 period, calculating the overall frequencies of V2 in different dialectal areas.

Van Kemenade and Westergaard do not delve into detail about the impact of dialect variation on the use of V2 in different syntactic environments, although they do

acknowledge that “dialect contact may have been a factor in the development” (2012: 113). As noted in Table 8 from Section 4.3, the V2 of Northern and East Midlands texts (with pronominal subjects and initial objects and PPs) were the most frequent in the M3 period (when the frequency of V2 is overall highest in this context). The same can be said when adding on the variable of auxiliary verbs to this syntactic context, with Northern texts exhibiting the most frequent rate of V2 of all dialectal texts, at a rate of 67.5% (Table 9). The highest frequency of V2 during ME, with pronominal subjects and auxiliary verbs, as well as initial direct objects and PPs, therefore predominantly arises out of Northern and East Midlands texts. This finding regarding dialect variation cannot be overlooked, and thus further investigation into Northern and East Midlands dialects, with regard to V2 variation across different grammatical contexts, is necessary. I continue to look at dialect as a variable in the following sections, as a factor that could be contributing to inconsistent trajectories of V2 across late ME texts.

In sum, the grammatical variable that most strongly predicts the appearance of V2 over V3 in ME is the interaction of the type of subject and verb within the sentence. Initial constituents are certainly important with regard to V2 variation, yet more nuance is required to be able to distinguish exactly in which contexts of fronting V2 increased the most (and which ones contributed to overall V2 instability). The specific type of referential information that the initial constituent exhibits is crucial for explaining why different types occur alongside V2 versus V3 word order. Furthermore, by exploring the sociohistorical variables associated with specific ME texts (especially dialect/provenance of the text, and the texts’ type), I also uncover the impact of the initial constituent on the position of the verb, and the type of verb-movement patterns that authors adopt when putting together a specific type of argumentation. Chaucer’s prose works provide a suitable comparison of rhetoric to determine the influence of V2 in different textual environments, with scientific, religious and narrative works to explore in the upcoming case study.

4.5. Variation in the frequency of Middle English verb second, by dialect

The data presented in the previous sections highlights the differences between rates of V2 across varying syntactic conditions, and the interaction between these variables. In this section, I consider how variation across dialects, potentially arising from the hypothesis of

language contact between English and Norse, might have driven instability in the frequency of V2. I therefore dedicate the following discussion to highlighting the inconsistent and unstable trajectory of V2 in ME even further. It should be noted that data in these time periods become much sparser given the addition of a further variable, the dialect of the text, and caution should therefore be exercised when extrapolating the results to wider dialectal areas and their use of a V2 syntax. Nevertheless, there are varying patterns of V2 to be noted across the dialectal groupings of texts, especially depending on the type of subject, verb, or initial constituent that is used in the instance of V2. In this section I briefly outline the quantitative differences between the frequency of V2 in different syntactic contexts and dialects, and in the following section determine the geographical distribution of Middle English texts and their relative frequency of V2.

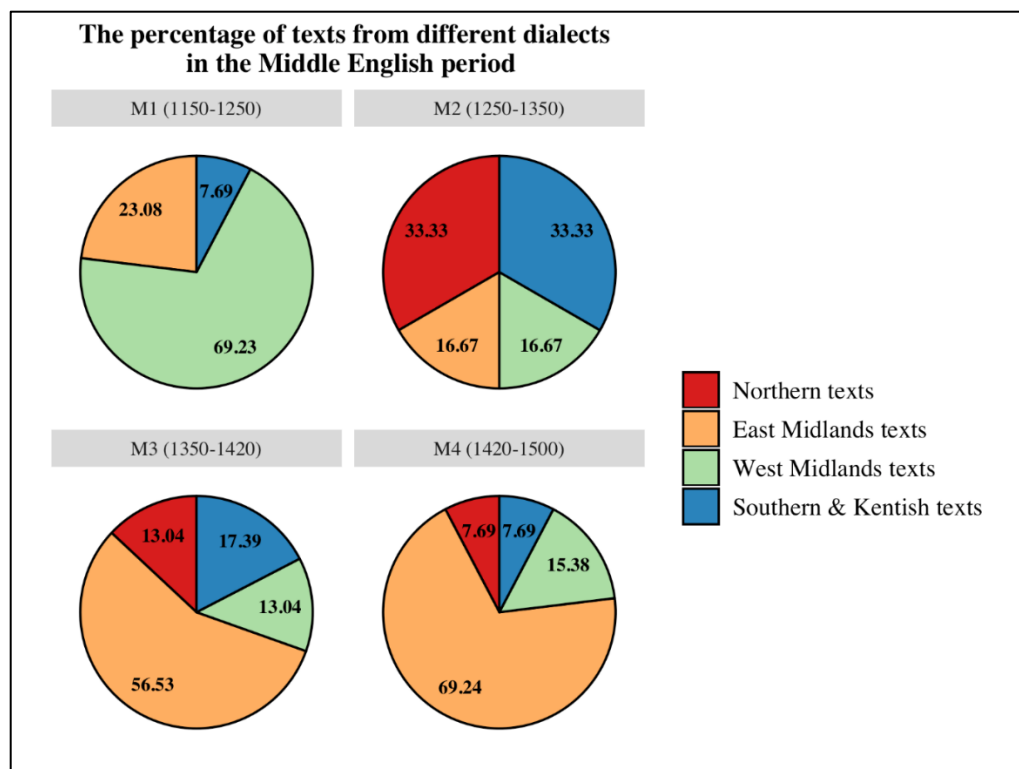


Figure 16: A series of pie charts showing the difference in distribution of texts from different dialects across each time period (PPCME2 categorisations), from c.1150 until 1500.

Figure 16 highlights the distribution of texts from different dialects across PPCME2. The distribution of texts varies substantially across the time period

categorisations M1 to M4.⁴⁸ The M1 period (c.1150-1250) primarily consists of West Midlands texts, particularly from the “Katherine Group”, a set of five texts arising from “the same local literary standard as the precursor of the Corpus manuscript of the Ancrene Riwe”, namely *Sawles Warde*, *Hali Meidhad*, *St. Katherine*, *St. Juliana*, and *St. Margaret* (Kroch et al. 2000b). In this time period, there are no ME texts from the North, due to their limited presence throughout the corpus. The M2 period (c.1250-1350) then contains some Northern texts, specifically Richard Rolle’s *Epistles* and *Prose Treatises*, as well as some Kentish texts (*Kentish Sermons* and *Ayenbite of Inwyt*). The proportion of dialectal texts in the M3 and M4 periods is fairly similar, with the main bulk of texts coming from the East Midlands. In M3, a large chunk of the texts is from the Chaucer canon (e.g. *Boethius*, *The Parson’s Tale*, *Tale of Melibee*), and also includes both Wycliffite biblical texts (*The Old Testament* and *The New Testament*), along with some religious treatises (e.g. *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Hilton’s *Eight Chapters on Perfection*, *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, and Julian of Norwich’s *Revelations of Divine Love*). The major Northern works (in that they include extensive prose) are also included in this time period, specifically *The Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet*, and the Thornton manuscript version of *The Mirror of St. Edmund*, directly contrasting the West Midlands Vernon manuscript version, also available from this time period. There is also a large chunk of Southern texts from this time period, including Purvey’s *General Prologue to the Bible* (who is said to be a “leader in the revising of the Early Version of the Wycliffite Bible that resulted in the Late Version”, Kroch et al. 2000b) and *Middle English Sermons* (Royal Ms.). Finally, the M4 period equally contains a high number of East Midlands texts, as well as some East Anglian texts, namely Capgrave’s *Sermon* and *Chronicle*, and *The Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes*.⁴⁹

The main reason for including the proportion of dialectal texts here is to understand that the results leading until this point may have been skewed in favour of the East Midlands dialect, especially in the latter time periods (M3 and M4). The Northern and Southern texts are also more thinly spread across the ME period, meaning their contribution to frequencies

⁴⁸ It should be noted that some texts have been included in categories even though their composition date is unknown (and the manuscript date fits into the time period), or if their composition date occurs some time before the manuscript date. Any texts that are analysed qualitatively for their frequency of V2, the difference in composition date and manuscript date is considered if this is the case.

⁴⁹ A full list of the texts from PPCME2 can be found in the documentation by Kroch et al. (2000b).

of V2 is much less.⁵⁰ This point emphasises the need for analysing dialect, especially from a qualitative perspective, in any study of English V2, given they are heavily skewed towards the East Midlands, as well as each text written by authors with their own writing style and discourse preferences, which may have an impact on the level of V2 in the text.

The frequency of V2 across different dialects				
Time period	Frequency of Northern V2 (%)	Frequency of East Midlands V2 (%)	Frequency of West Midlands V2 (%)	Frequency of Kentish & Southern V2 (%)
M1 (1150-1250)	N/A (0/0)	53.2 (445/837)	40.4 (457/1131)	31.1 (14/45)
M2 (1250-1350)	26 (63/242)	45.6 (99/217)	14.7 (10/68)	47 (178/379)
M3 (1350-1420)	66.7 (311/466)	42.1 (559/1328)	41.2 (42/1021)	11.2 (117/1049)
M4 (1420-1500)	75 (3/4)	45 (832/1848)	25.2 (200/793)	28.1 (27/96)

Table 10: A table to show the frequency of V2 across different dialectal texts (Northern, East Midlands, West Midlands, Kentish/Southern) throughout Middle English.

⁵⁰ I have grouped Kentish and Southern texts under the ‘Southern’ category, particularly as Kentish texts occur across the M1 and M2 periods, while Southern texts occur in the M3 and M4 periods. Therefore, there may not be a seamless transition from the M2 to the M3 period in terms of the trajectory of V2, and this difference in type of text is noted in any analysis throughout.

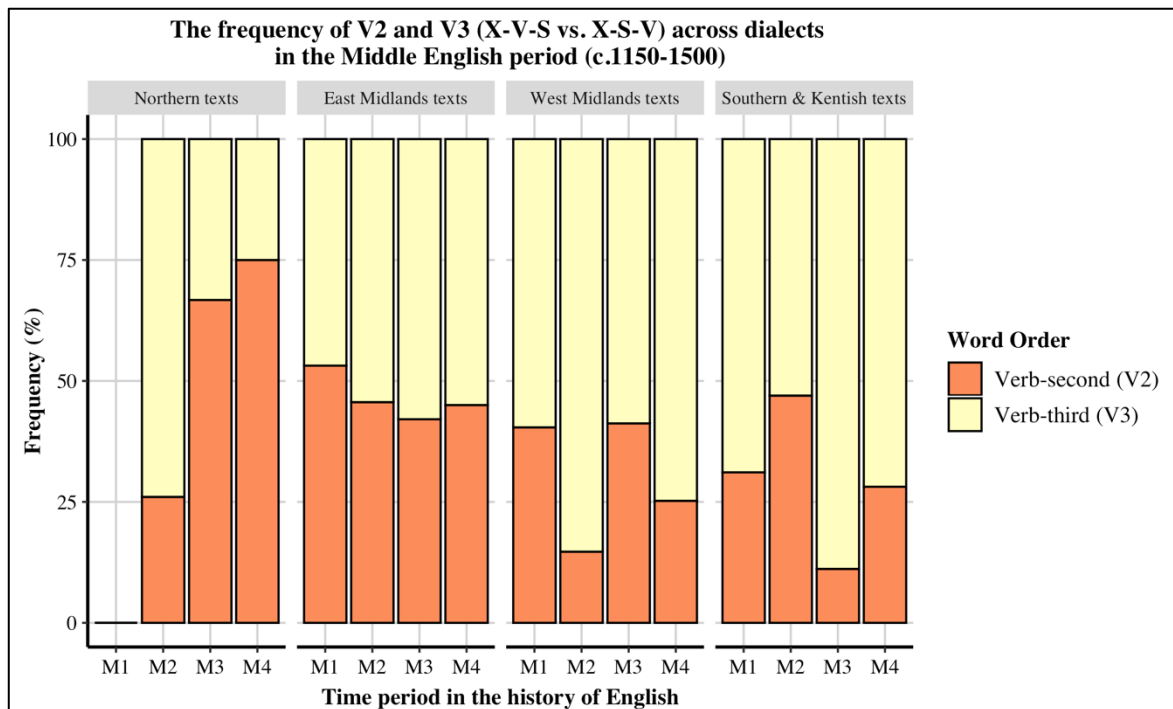


Figure 17: A series of stacked bar charts to show the frequency of V2 and V3 across different dialects in the Middle English period, from the PPCME2 corpus.

With the types of texts that make up the corpora of analysis in mind, I now present the trajectory of V2 and V3 in ME across different dialects, largely confirming what is found in Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (2000).⁵¹ Table 10 and Figure 17 show the frequency of V2 and V3 across different Middle English dialectal texts. First, the most visible difference across the dialects is the increase in V2 within Northern texts, compared to the trajectory of V2 in the other dialectal texts, from 25.9% in M2, to 75% in M4. As mentioned, while there are few Northern texts from the ME period, it is clear that the texts from the latter half of the ME period (M3 and M4) have a high level of V2 within them. Specifically, *The Rule of St. Benet* and *The Mirror of St. Edmund* have frequencies of 69.4% and 60.8% respectively, contributing to the perceived increase in V2 within Northern dialects here. In contrast, the East Midlands texts remain fairly constant in use of V2 across the ME period, with a slight dip in frequency in the M3 period. This dip could be a result of the high number of texts in this period, and the likelihood that the M1 and M2 periods comparatively have a more inflated frequency of V2 given there are fewer texts to analyse quantitatively.

⁵¹ It was important to capture the proportion of V2 to V3 in each dialect to show initially where texts may not have existed for specific time periods (or there were no instances of V2 or V3 in the text), as shown by the lack of Northern texts in the M1 period.

In the West Midlands, there appears to be a decline in frequency of V2 in the M2 period, however, there is only one text from this time period (*Aelred of Rievaulx's De Institutione Inclusarum*), which is said to contain a mixture of Southern, Northern and East Midlands features too (Kroch et al. 2000b), with a general influence from the South. As the following sections identify, the South is known for its relatively low rates of V2, which could explain the decline in frequency shown here. Lastly, there appears to be a distinct decline in frequency of V2 with Kentish and Southern texts. However, the Kentish and Southern texts across the ME period are quite distinct in their use of V2. For instance, the Kentish texts in the M2 period (*Kentish Sermons* and *Ayenbite of Inwyt*) have a frequency of 64.9% and 44.9% respectively, while some of the Southern texts in M3, e.g. John of Trevisa's *Polychronicon* and Purvey's *General Prologue to the Bible*, are much lower in their rate of V2 (10.4% and 6.1%, respectively). It is difficult to pinpoint whether this difference is a result of the decline of V2 over time, or whether Kentish and Southern texts differ substantially in the nature of V2 they exhibit. KTR (2000: 371) have argued that the Kentish dialect is archaic, representing a relic area in which V2 was preserved for longer than in other dialects. In fact, I show that *Kentish Sermons* in particular, is high in V2 compared to other ME texts written between 1250 and 1350. Nevertheless, without Kentish data from 1350 onwards, there is a challenge to ascertaining whether such a substantial decline in the South was the result of a significant change in Southern texts' use of V2, or whether it is simply that Southern dialects were generally low in V2 throughout the entire ME period (unlike Kentish dialects, but again, there is also data missing for Kentish in the latter periods). In the M4 period, the only Southern text of analysis is *Gregory's Chronicle*, with a rate of V2 at 27.5%. Again, with only one text to go off, it is uncertain whether there was a final increase in V2 in the ME Southern dialects.

Here, I have described the differences between trajectories of V2 across texts of different dialects, with an apparent instability in V2 depending on the origin of the text or author. However, as mentioned in Section 4.1.1, inputting the variables of the date and dialect of the text into the statistical model resulted in an overall insignificant model in terms of predicting rate of V2, following likelihood ratio tests between nested models. Therefore, caution should be exercised when comparing the rate of V2 across texts of different dialects over time. Additionally, the model that omitted the date of the text, but that was inclusive of dialect, found that the predictive power of the dialect of the text on the rate of V2 was insignificant, with *p*-values over 0.3, pointing toward the need to include

interactions with grammatical variables within the sentence in order to explain collective differences in rate of V2 amongst ME texts of different dialects. The following section therefore combines the syntactic and sociohistorical variables referenced in the chapter thus far, to determine the specific influences on the rate of V2 in ME.

4.5.1. The trajectory of verb second across Middle English texts of different dialects, and its interaction with syntactic variables

As noted in the previous section, the variable of the dialect of the text alone does not predict the appearance of V2 structure throughout ME to a statistically significant extent (p -value $= >0.05$). As opposed to solely comparing the trajectory of V2 across different dialects, this variable is combined with other predictors, namely different syntactic behaviours in the sentence such as type of subject and verb. While the comparison of different subject-types and their impact on the rate of V2 across different dialects was statistically significant across each of the conditions (p -value $= <0.001$), there were fewer dialects that showed a significant impact on rate of V2 when the type of verb varied. For instance, the likelihood of Northern, as well as Kentish and Southern texts, impacting the rate of V2 in lexical versus auxiliary verb contexts was not statistically significant (p -values of 0.38 and 0.06 respectively). Thus, in order to incorporate the impact of type of subject, verb and dialect of the text on the rate of V2, I analyse the three-way interaction of these variables, as opposed to the two-way interactions. With regard to the factors of dialect and time, I include descriptive rather than inferential findings to show the differences in frequency of V2 across this interaction.

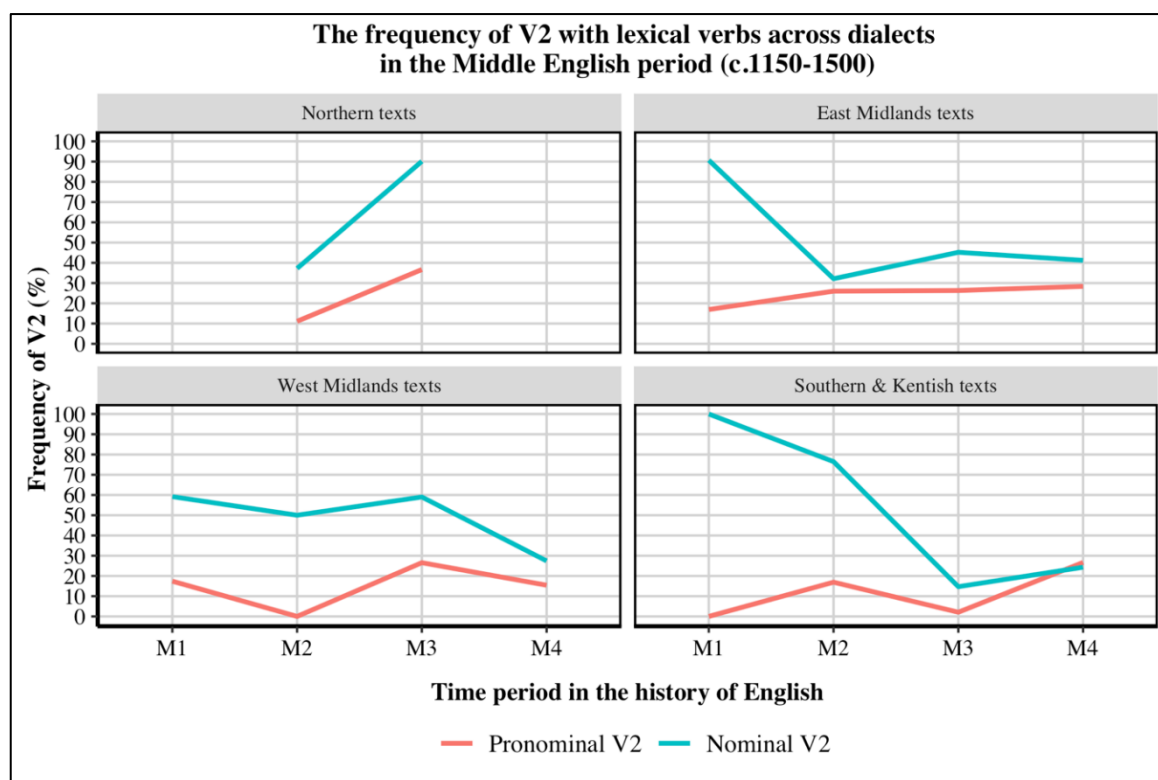


Figure 18: A series of line graphs highlighting the trajectory of the frequency of V2 with different types of subjects, compared to V3 across ME dialectal texts, in lexical verb contexts.

Figure 18 highlights the trajectory of the frequency of V2 with different types of subject (pronominal vs. nominal), and lexical verbs, across PPCME2. In lexical verb contexts, there are substantial differences between the trajectories of V2 across different dialectal texts, depending on whether there was a pronominal or nominal subject within the sentence. In both Northern and West Midlands texts, there is a clear disparity between pronominal and nominal V2 in all time periods displayed. The same can be said for Kentish texts in the M1 and M2 period (bearing in mind there is only one Kentish text in M1, *Kentish Homilies*), and East Midlands texts in M1. In Northern texts, the high frequency of V2 exhibited in the prior bar chart (Figure 17) comes from nominal V2 in the case of lexical verb contexts, but not so much pronominal V2 (for instance, in M3, the difference between nominal and pronominal V2 is a frequency of 52.2%). Nominal subjects are 8 times more likely than pronominal subjects to occur postverbally in Northern texts when the verb is lexical (a statistically significant prediction, with a p -value of <0.001). There is also a fairly high frequency of nominal V2 throughout West Midlands texts in lexical verb contexts, peaking at 58.8% (and intriguingly, nominal and pronominal V2 follow a similar trend throughout the ME period in terms of peaks and troughs). Nominal subjects are 3.9 times

more likely than pronominal subjects to occur postverbally in West Midlands texts when the verb is lexical (with a p -value of <0.001).

For East Midlands texts, nominal and pronominal V2 with lexical verbs reaches a similar rate in the M2 period, whereas this convergence happens around the M3 period for Southern texts. This is an interesting finding given the discussion surrounding whether subjects, in relation to the verb, begin to behave in a similar way structurally by the ME period, especially driven by the weakening link between syntax and IS (e.g. van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012). Looking at specific texts, in M2, the East Midlands text *The Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter* has a pronominal V2 of 37.3%, and a nominal V2 of 32.1%, a difference of only 5.2%. In M3, the Southern text, Purvey's *General Prologue to the Bible*, has a pronominal V2 of 6.8% and a nominal V2 of 6.2%. It is possible that the similarity in frequency between pronominal and nominal V2 in East Midlands (M2 period) and Kentish/Southern texts (M3 period), specifically with lexical verbs, comes at a time when the structural position of these types of subject merges, which can now be seen in present-day English. Furthermore, as discussed, the M3 period appears to mark a time when pronominal and nominal V2 became similar in frequency across ME texts generally (as a result of the decline of nominal V2, and slight increase in pronominal V2). However, the odds of either subject-type having an impact on the appearance of V2 for both sets of dialectal texts differs considerably when looking at the ME period as a whole. In East Midlands texts, nominal subjects are 3.7 times more likely to occur postverbally compared to pronominal subjects, when the verb is lexical. Conversely, in Kentish and Southern texts, nominal subjects are considerably more likely (11.8 times) than pronominal subjects to occur in a V2 sentence when the verb is lexical. This result could be taking into account the fact that Kentish texts had a disparity between the use of nominal and pronominal V2, compared to Southern texts in the later periods. Without the Kentish texts and Southern texts from all periods, it is unclear as to whether there is a difference between the positions of nominal and pronominal subjects alongside the verb more generally. Overall, the increase in pronominal V2 in lexical verb contexts across Northern and West Midlands texts in M3, and the similarity in frequency between both types of V2 in East Midlands and Southern dialects, all could have contributed to this general disparity between the frequencies of postverbal pronominal and nominal subjects.

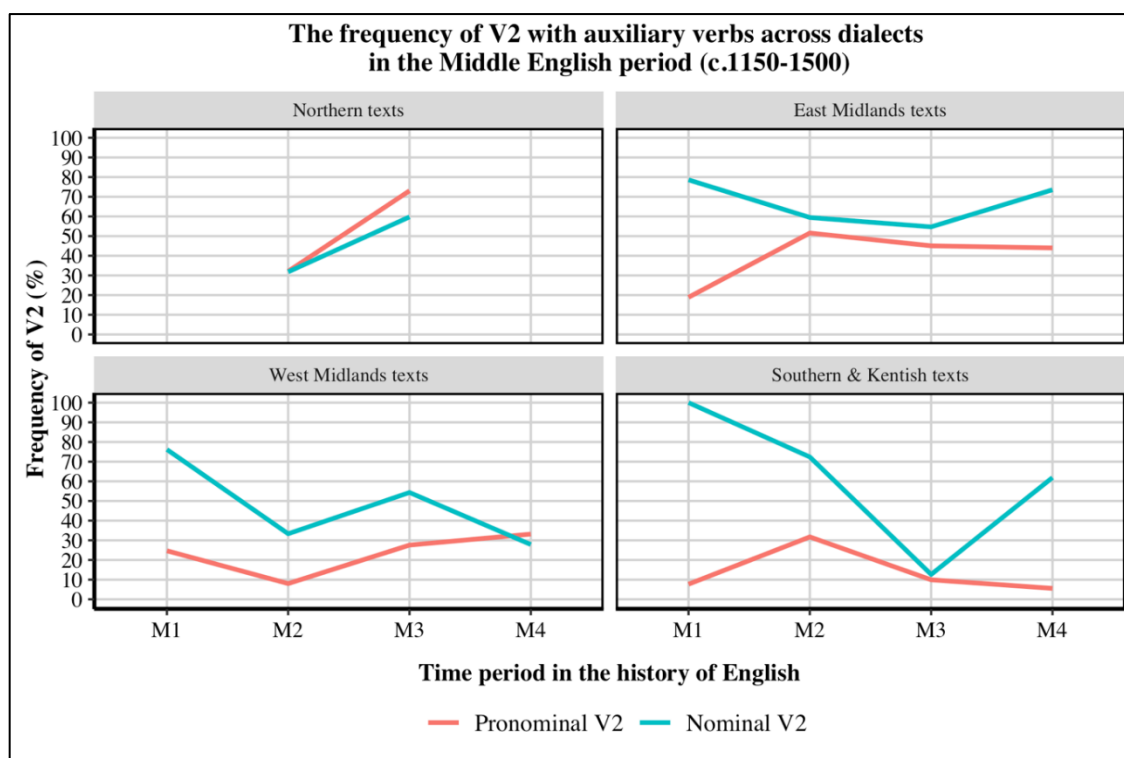


Figure 19: A series of line graphs highlighting the trajectory of the frequency of V2 with different types of subjects, compared to V3 across ME dialectal texts, in auxiliary verb contexts.

Figure 19 reports the findings of the trajectories of pronominal and nominal V2 in auxiliary verb contexts across PPCME2. One important point to note from the previous set of line graphs in Figure 18 is the general trend of a higher nominal V2 compared to pronominal V2 across all dialectal texts. This finding is also evident in a general sense, in that nominal V2 is generally more frequent than pronominal V2 throughout the entire ME period, extending from OE (the probability of pronominal subjects in Northern texts occurring in a V2 structure is 53% compared to nominal subjects at a rate of 43% in auxiliary verb contexts). The most surprising result in Figure 19 in auxiliary verb contexts is, then, the fact that pronominal V2 occurs more frequently than nominal V2 in Northern texts. In M2 and M3, pronominal V2 is more frequent by 7.2% and 14.3% respectively, which has doubled in the M3 period. This difference in frequency between V2 with different subjects is not visible in each of the other dialects. In Northern texts, nominal subjects are only 0.7 times more likely than pronominal subjects to appear in a V2 structure when the verb is an auxiliary, compared to 8 times more likely in lexical verb contexts. However, for auxiliary verb contexts, the odds ratio presented here is not statistically significant, with a *p*-value of more than 0.07, meaning caution should be exercised when reporting the effect of the type of subject in auxiliary verb contexts and Northern texts on

the rate of V2. The similarity in frequencies between types of V2 with different subjects, can also be seen in East Midlands dialects in M2 and M3, in West Midlands dialects towards the end of the period in M4 (again, bearing in mind M2 contains one text) and in M3 within Southern texts. This lack of disparity between pronominal and nominal V2 is also emphasised the most in M3, which was primarily driven by East Midlands and Southern texts. The odds ratios of each of the texts from the different dialectal areas are smaller in auxiliary verb contexts compared to lexical verb contexts. This means that nominal subjects are only marginally more likely than pronominal subjects to be in a V2 structure throughout the entire ME period, in auxiliary verb contexts across each dialect. For instance, in Kentish and Southern texts, in lexical verb contexts, nominal subjects are 11.8 times more likely to occur postverbally compared to pronominal subjects. However, they are only 5.4 times more likely to occur postverbally in auxiliary verb contexts. Moving forward, such a lack of disparity between types of V2, including the fact that, unexpectedly, pronominal V2 is higher than nominal V2 in Northern texts when the V2 sentence has an auxiliary verb, is of importance when mapping this variation geographically in Section 4.6.

Frequency of V2 with pronominal subjects, in contexts with initial direct objects & PPs (M3 period)			
Dialect	Instances of V2	Instances of V2 & V3	Frequency of V2 (%)
Northern	123	209	58.9
East Midlands	58	303	19.1
West Midlands	16	231	6.9
Southern	8	195	4.1

Table 11: A table collating the instances and frequency of V2 with pronominal subjects and initial direct objects and PPs, across different dialectal areas.

There are substantial differences in the frequency of V2 (both generally and across texts of different dialects) depending on the type of initial constituent in first position. Adding the variable of dialect to the interaction of ‘date’ and individual ‘initial constituents’, along with other syntactic variables, did not result in a significant effect of the predictor on the response variable of appearance of V2. Table 11 lists the texts that contributed to the instability of V2 in ME, specifically, the temporary revival of pronominal V2 with initial anaphors in the M3 period, where the trajectory of V2 with pronominal subjects reached its peak (repeated here from Section 4.3). As shown, the texts with the most frequent rates of pronominal V2 with initial direct objects and PPs are primarily in

the North and East Midlands, which possibly maps onto Norse settlements. Thus, I investigate the link between the dialect of the text, their proximity to contact with Norse, and the instability of V2 (in that there was a temporary revival, primarily with pronominal subjects) in the following section.

I also refer the reader to initial findings by van Kemenade (2022), who groups such constituents and examines the trajectory of types of V2 introduced by the adverb ‘then’, versus other types of adverbs (of manner, place, etc.), and their interaction with different types of verbs (specifically, intransitive, transitive and auxiliary verbs). The findings show that there is a visible higher rate of V2 with auxiliary verbs compared to other types of verbs, across Northern, East Midlands, and West Midlands texts, which is particularly prominent with sentences introduced by adverbs other than ‘then’. Comparing Figures 18 and 19, the rate of V2 with both types of subjects is generally higher with auxiliary verbs than with lexical verbs across each of the dialects. For instance, in West Midlands dialects, the rate of pronominal V2 in the final period of ME, ‘M4’, is 33.2% with auxiliary verbs, and 15.4% with lexical verbs, suggesting an upward trend in favour of auxiliary verbs generally). Van Kemenade attributes the overall increase in V2 with auxiliary verbs to the wider grammaticalisation of verbs, with light verbs with little semantic content occurring in a higher structural position (and thus exhibiting V2 over V3) (2022: 15). For the quantitative study, I do not delve into the effect of type of verb and initial constituent on the trajectory of V2, specifically as this interaction unnecessarily complicates the overall statistical model.

Finally, van Kemenade argues overall that, while the impact of contact with Norse is of importance to the study of ME V2, the idea that Norse influence was “pervasive” and was wholly responsible for its overall decline results in the nuances of V2 variation being overlooked (2022: 3). One of the issues of previous analyses that van Kemenade recognises is the reliance on the V2 of *The Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet* to represent the assumed categorical nature of V2 in Northern dialects. However, this ME text is, as van Kemenade mentions, an “outlier”, due to its lack of narrative, the multiple translations and revisions that occurred prior to its publication, and the number of repeated V2 phrases which provide no evidence for a strictly occurring V2 pattern that is adopted by the author (2022: 11). Since there are both issues that could have affected V2 across all dialects (such as the

grammaticalisation of verbs), as well as potential outlier texts affecting overall rates of V2, the dialect of the text cannot be the standalone factor affecting the instability of V2 in ME.

While dialect/language contact can only be one factor in a complex array of influences on the use of V2 in Middle English, there are certainly differences that show up when combining grammatical and dialectal variables together. As noted by KTR (2000), there are differences when examining the rate of pronominal and nominal V2 across ME texts of different dialects; the rate of V2 with subject pronouns is much more frequent in Northern and East Midlands texts, compared to that of West Midlands and Southern texts. To complement this finding, in this section I have also noted that this dialectal difference can be found in V2 sentences with different types of verbs; the rate of V2 with pronominal subjects in auxiliary verb contexts surpasses that of nominal subjects in Northern texts, and the frequencies of pronominal and nominal V2 in East Midlands texts are very similar. This finding is worth exploring further, specifically, in which texts can we see this unexpected pattern emerging? Which texts have a high rate of V2 with pronominal subjects, either surpassing that of nominal subjects or coming very close to it? Once these texts have been identified, they become suitable candidates for closer inspection, to determine the types of V2, and the verb-movement patterns, that occur within them. Each of these factors allow one to come closer to gathering an overall picture of the influences resulting in V2 instability in late medieval England.

4.6. The geographical distribution of Middle English texts and their frequency of verb second, with discussion of Norse influence

Analysing changes in the frequency of V2 geographically, regarding the location of the manuscript or the origin of the author of the text, across a variety of syntactic contexts, is equally as important as exploring V2 diachronically across the ME period. By doing so throughout this section, I incorporate necessary discussion regarding the historical conditions surrounding changes in V2 during the late medieval period. First, I begin by highlighting instances of ‘high’ and ‘low’ V2 across Middle English texts from PPCME2, which have been calculated as one standard deviation more or less than the mean frequency of V2 across all texts (irrespective of dialect) from each time period, to ascertain individual texts’ rate of V2 in line with the rate of V2 occurring generally across all dialects. ‘Expected

V2' refers to any text with a frequency of V2 less than one standard deviation away from the mean. Figure 20 shows the entire picture of ME texts with high, expected, and low V2, across a map of the British Isles.⁵²

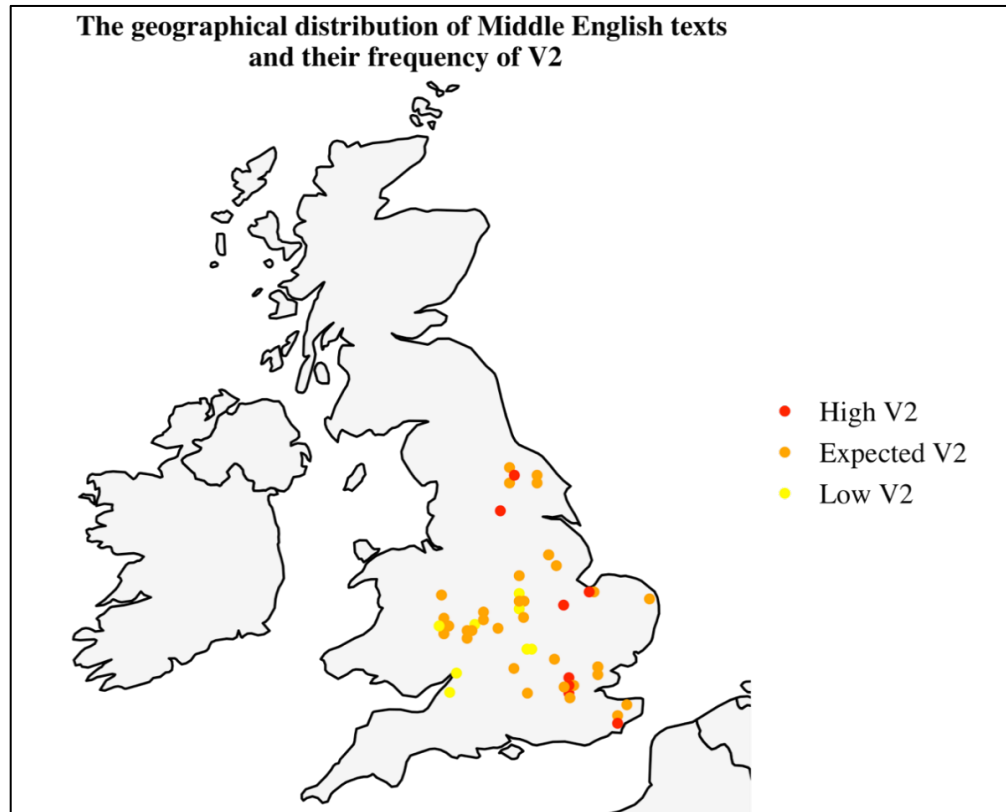


Figure 20: A map of the British Isles highlighting the geographical distribution of Middle English texts with 'high', 'expected' and 'low' levels of V2.

As shown in Figure 20, texts high in usage of V2, exhibited by the red dots, primarily occur in the North or East Midlands, with one Kentish text. Comparatively, texts low in use of V2 include both West Midlands and Southern texts, as well as a range of East Midlands texts (one of which, *The New Testament*, has Southern influences, see Table 12 below). These texts are listed below in Table 12, along with the time period they occurred in and further details about the origin of the text from the PPCME2 documentation (Kroch et al. 2000b).

⁵² Please note, the geographical markers for ME texts on each map provide an approximate location of the dialect of the manuscript or the author. Descriptions of the location of each text, manuscript or author can be found in the PPCME2 documentation (Kroch et al. 2000b).

Text	Time Period	Dialect (and comments on origin of text or author)	High/Low V2?	Frequency of V2		
				Instances of V2	Instances of V2 & V3	%
The Peterborough Chronicle	M1 (1150-1250), c.1131 & 1154	East Midlands (Peterborough, Northamptonshire). 1 st continuation marked by dialect of district in which it was written (Clark 1970).	High	85	118	72
Kentish Sermons	M2 (1250-1350), date of composition: pre-1250 (Wells 1916)	Kentish (“sermons translated from a French version of the Latin sermons by Maurice de Sully, [...] bishop of Paris, 1160-1196”. The translation is quite literal.)	High	23	36	63.9
The Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet	M3 (1350-1420)	Northern (KTR 2000: 371 localise the text to central West Yorkshire, due to the manuscript. Kock 1902 states this is not a close translation of the Latin rule)	High	232	334	69.5
The Equatorie of the Planetis	M3 (1350-1420)	East Midlands	High	20	21	95.2
Chaucer’s A Treatise on the Astrolabe	M3 (1350-1420)	East Midlands (London)	High	39	47	83
Boece	M3 (1350-1420)	East Midlands (London)	High	24	33	72.7
The ‘Liber de Diversis Medicinis’ (Thornton Ms.)	MX4 (comp. date unknown, ms. date 1420-1500)	Northern	High	3	4	75
Capgrave’s Sermon	M4 (1420-1500)	East Midlands (Lynn, Norfolk. Capgrave studied theology in London and Cambridge and	High	13	15	86.7

		became an Augustinian friar. “Capgrave’s English reflects little direct influence from his Latin sources”)				
Sawles Warde	M1 (1150-1250, date of comp. possibly 1200-1220)	West Midlands (Northern Herefordshire /Southern Shropshire)	Low	8	34	23.5
Aelred of Rievaulx’s De Institutione Inclusarum (Vernon Ms.)	M23 (date of comp. 1250-1350, date of manuscript 1350-1420)	West Midlands (half way between Worcester and Birmingham, according to Samuels 1963)	Low	10	68	14.7
John of Trevisa’s Polychronicon	M3 (1350-1420)	Southern (John of Trevisa was born in Cornwall, was a fellow of Exeter College and Queen’s College, Oxford, and then a vicar of Berkeley and canon in Gloucestershire. The Polychronicon is a translation of a Latin work).	Low	76	675	11.3
The Old Testament (Wycliffite)	M3 (1350-1420)	East Midlands (McIntosh et al. 1986 localises the text to Buckinghamshire. The revision of the Wycliffite Bible was likely conducted by John Purvey)	Low	4	106	3.8
The New Testament (Wycliffite)	M3 (1350-1420)	East Midlands (McIntosh et al. 1986 localises the text to Buckinghamshire, Helsinki Corpus provides a Southern localisation. The revision of the Wycliffite Bible was likely conducted by John Purvey)	Low	9	146	6.2

Purvey's General Prologue to the Bible	M3 (1350-1420)	Southern (likely born in Lathbury, was ordained as a priest, and from 1382 lived with Wycliffe at Lutterworth. After Wycliffe's death, he lived in Bristol)	Low	23	321	7.2
The Life of St. Edmund	M4 (1420-1500)	East Midlands	Low	2	12	16.7
In Die Innocencium	M4 (1420-1500)	East Midlands	Low	5	32	15.6

Table 12: A table of the texts labelled as 'high' or 'low' V2 (according to standard deviation testing).

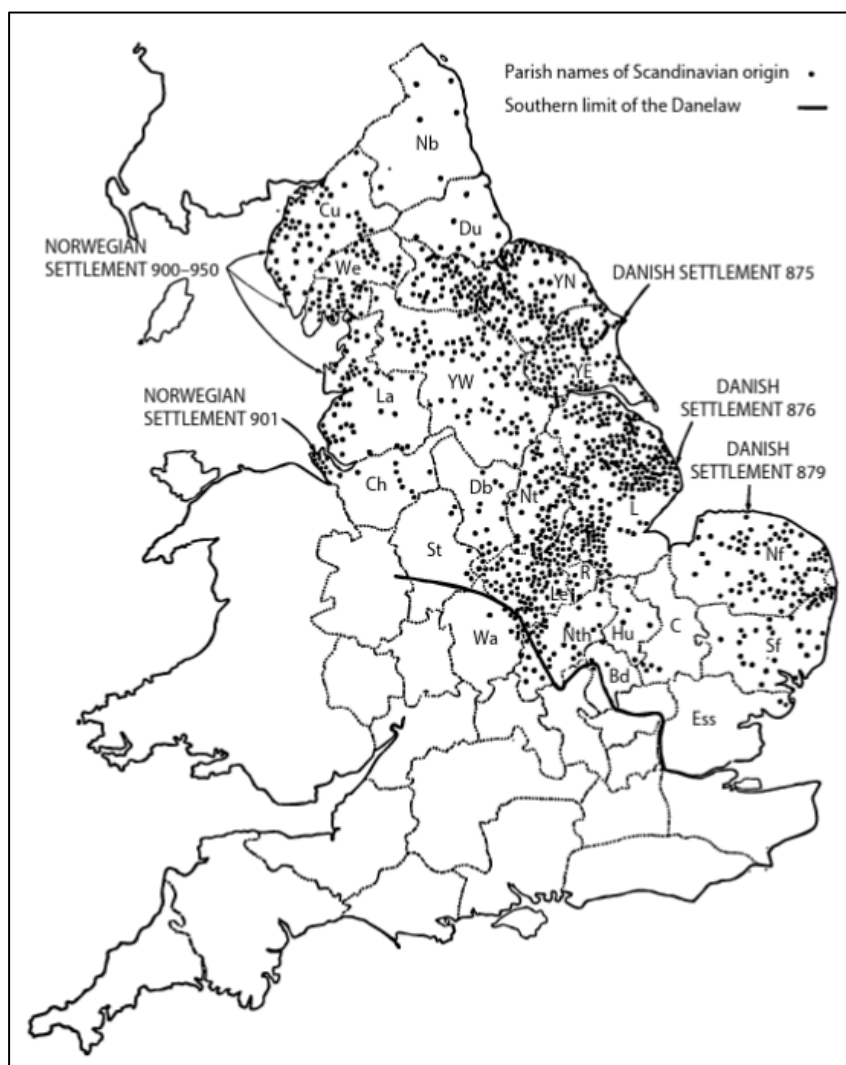


Figure 21: A map of Scandinavian settlement, from van Gelderen (2014: 101).

Figure 21 is a map of Scandinavian settlement in the Old English period from van Gelderen (2014: 101). It highlights that Danish settlements in particular were located in the North (particularly Yorkshire) from c.875, Lincolnshire and the East Midlands in c.876, and in East Anglia in c.879. Texts from PPCME2 that exhibit high levels of V2 usage, particularly the Northern texts *The Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet*, and *Liber de Diversis Medicinis* (Thornton Ms.), the East Midland texts *The Peterborough Chronicle* and Fitzjames' *Sermo die Lune*, and the East Anglian text Capgrave's *Sermons*, appear to map roughly onto where Scandinavian settlements were located. *The Peterborough Chronicle* is described as having preserved "distinctively Middle English accidence and syntax" according to Clark (1970: xxx). This preservation might also link to the disparity between high and low varieties of Old English, a diglossic situation as described in Tristram (2004), and how early ME syntax might mirror the spoken language of OE. As highlighted in Kroch and Taylor (1997) and KTR (2000), there are intriguing patterns with respect to both dialect variation (as shown by the differences in frequency of V2 between Northern and East Midlands texts, and Southern texts), and how these areas were potentially impacted by contact between Old English and Old Norse through Norse settlement. As noted previously, Walkden (forthcoming: 29) states that it is entirely possible for Norse influence to have played a part in "catalysing a rise of strict verb-second" during the later stages of the ME period, especially considering the high frequency of texts such as those listed above, even if the origins of OE V2 may have arisen from elsewhere. It is certainly possible that Norse syntax had some involvement in the instability, and potentially temporary revival, of V2 in ME.

Some texts with a peculiarly high V2 usage include Chaucer's *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, *The Equatorie of the Planetis*, and *Kentish Sermons*. The high usage of V2 in *Kentish Sermons* is understandable, given KTR (2000)'s extensive work on identifying Kent as a "relic area" for preserving V2 word order beyond OE (particularly with nominal subjects). For example, they found that the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* had a much higher frequency of V2 compared to other early Midlands texts (see KTR 2000: 370). There is also the issue of translation, which affects both *Kentish Sermons* and *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, and here I refer to the work of Haeberli (2007), who details the impact that translation might have had on V2 syntax in ME. Specifically, Haeberli refers to the high rate of inversion with nominal subjects, as found in Kroch and Taylor (1997)'s study of the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, and how the fact that it is a translation from French makes it even more likely that contact with

French during the production of ME texts influenced high rates of V2 in English, thus contributing to overall instability.

Furthermore, Chaucer's *Astrolabe*, and the more puzzling *Equatorie* (due to questions around its authorship, see Chapter 5) have the highest frequency levels of V2 in the M3 period, and the ME period as a whole. These texts are likely to have roots in the East Midlands. A number of arguments can be made for this origin, but notably, Chaucer himself had family of East Anglian origin (as evidenced by Chaucer's grandfather, Robert Malyn le Chaucer, also known as 'Robert of Ipswich', highlighted by Eitler 2006: 93), along with a dialect of the London mix (arising from East Anglian immigration in the late 13th century, see Eitler 2005, who cites Samuels 1963: 88-89). The dialect of East Anglian in the late ME period has often been regarded as maintaining more conservative morphological forms (i.e. with Northern features such as third person -s "bypassing" East Anglia, see Eitler 2006: 150, citing Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 179), while at the same time potentially preserving a high usage of V2, like Kentish (Eitler 2006: 150, citing Kroch and Taylor 1997). Additionally, while the authorship of the *Equatorie of the Planetis* is more highly debated, the astronomical genre is often linked to the East Midlands; for instance, Augustinian canons at Thurgarton Priory in Nottinghamshire held fragments of the *Astrolabe*, and certainly owned at least one astrolabe (Horobin 2009: 121). There are also suggestions that the *Equatorie* was written by a man named John Westwyk, who likely came from the Manor of Westwick in Hertfordshire, near St. Albans (Rand 2015: 19). Again, the mixed London dialect, largely influenced by immigration from East Anglia, could have been adopted by Westwyk. Lastly, even though Eitler (2006) points towards Chaucer's (potentially) Scandinavian-influenced East Anglian background, through both his grandfather and London dialect influenced by East Anglian immigration, not all of his works have the characteristically 'high V2' exhibited in *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*.

There must therefore be additional forces playing a role in the slightly lower frequency of V2 in the fictional and religious texts of *The Tale of Melibee* and *The Parson's Tale*, both of which are prose works included in *The Canterbury Tales*. One of these factors is the type of text, specifically the types of discourse functions used throughout these text-types, and whether they are affected by information-structural tendencies present from Old English, which could be influencing the high frequency of V2 in *Astrolabe* (more to come

in the following chapter). Moreover, the impact of translation could also be a factor in such high intra-variation of V2 in Chaucer. Both *The Parson's Tale* and *The Tale of Melibee* could have been impacted by French, through either French sources or direct translation in the case of *Melibee* (Haeberli 2002: 30). Haeberli (2002: 30) also refers to Rothwell (1998), who states that Chaucer was an administrator that “was in contact with both Anglo-French and Anglo-Latin for many years”, potentially explaining the overall high frequency of V2 in Chaucer's texts as a whole.

The location of ME texts displaying a low frequency of V2 is strikingly different to those displaying a high frequency of V2. Some of these texts are localised to the West Midlands and the South, and generally occur outside of Scandinavian settlement, specifically: *Sawles Warde* on the border of Northern Herefordshire and Shropshire, John of Trevisa's *Polychronicon* (with influences from Cornwall, Oxford, and Gloucestershire), and Purvey's General Prologue to the Bible (with influences at Lutterworth in Leicestershire, near to the West Midlands, and Bristol). Both biblical texts, the *Old Testament* and *New Testament*, are Wycliffite, meaning they were likely written by John Purvey, who resided in the West Midlands and the South. One important point to raise is the fact that genre could be the cause of unexpected (or expected) frequencies of V2; both *The Life of St. Edmund* and *In Die Innocencium*, as a biography and collection of sermons respectively, likely did not have the same discursive anchors and devices as that of, for example, an instructional treatise or narrative (more on this in Chapter 5).

Moreover, while Richard Rolle's *Epistles* and *Prose Treatises* are localised to Yorkshire, there are several factors that might have influenced the expected use of V2 in both texts, which were at a level of 28.46% and 23.21%, respectively (in comparison to other northern texts with a much higher rate of V2, such as *The Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet* and *The Mirror of St. Edmund* (Thornton Ms.)). First, Rolle's life trajectory is unique, in that he studied at the University of Oxford (Burton 1912), following his upbringing in Thornton-le-Dale, near Pickering (Fry 1999), and then became an English mystic and hermit in Yorkshire. He garnered much popularity within the English mystical tradition, writing about his own spiritual experiences and instructing others to “turn to the love of God” (McIlroy 2004: 1). While the genre he writes in, both exegetic and didactic, is possibly worth further investigation (and I reserve for future research), it is important to note that his mobile trajectory, and later life as a hermit, would have likely had an impact

on his frequency of V2 that did not match that of other Northern works. Despite his close proximity to Norse settlement in Yorkshire across much of his life, including in North Yorkshire (Pickering and Richmond), and later South Yorkshire (Hampole, near Doncaster) (Kroch et al. 2000b), Rolle's more Southern education and life as a hermit might have hindered the consistent use of V2 in the North, matching the general declining trend exhibited elsewhere in the country (e.g. in Midlands varieties). Rolle's prose texts are therefore worth investigating, to determine if pressures from either his dialect and life trajectory, or the type of text, might have affected his use of V2.

One important point to note is that Norse influence, through ME texts arising from Norse settlement areas (either through their manuscript production location, or through the roots of the authors themselves) is only one factor in a multitude of factors that might have caused instability in ME V2. There is growing scepticism with respect to Norse influence on syntactic change, namely, whether: the language contact situation that arose early in the OE period created the perfect conditions for transfer of syntactic features across both languages (see Townend 2002; Walkden 2021); the characteristics of the V2 of both OE and ON differentiated enough for Norse V2 to take effect in English; and, whether the changes in the use of V2 could be a result of internal motivations, particularly the weakening link between the ordering of verb and subject and information structure, or external motivations arising from language contact. The large number of perspectives within the literature would suggest that a more in-depth exploration into the individual texts exhibiting a varied rate of V2 is required. I therefore continue to analyse the geographical distribution of ME texts and their frequency of V2, depending on specific syntactic environments, and move through to specific examples analysing factors of text-type, information structure/prosody, and provenance, in the following chapter.

4.6.1. The expected and unexpected patterns of verb second with respect to type of subject

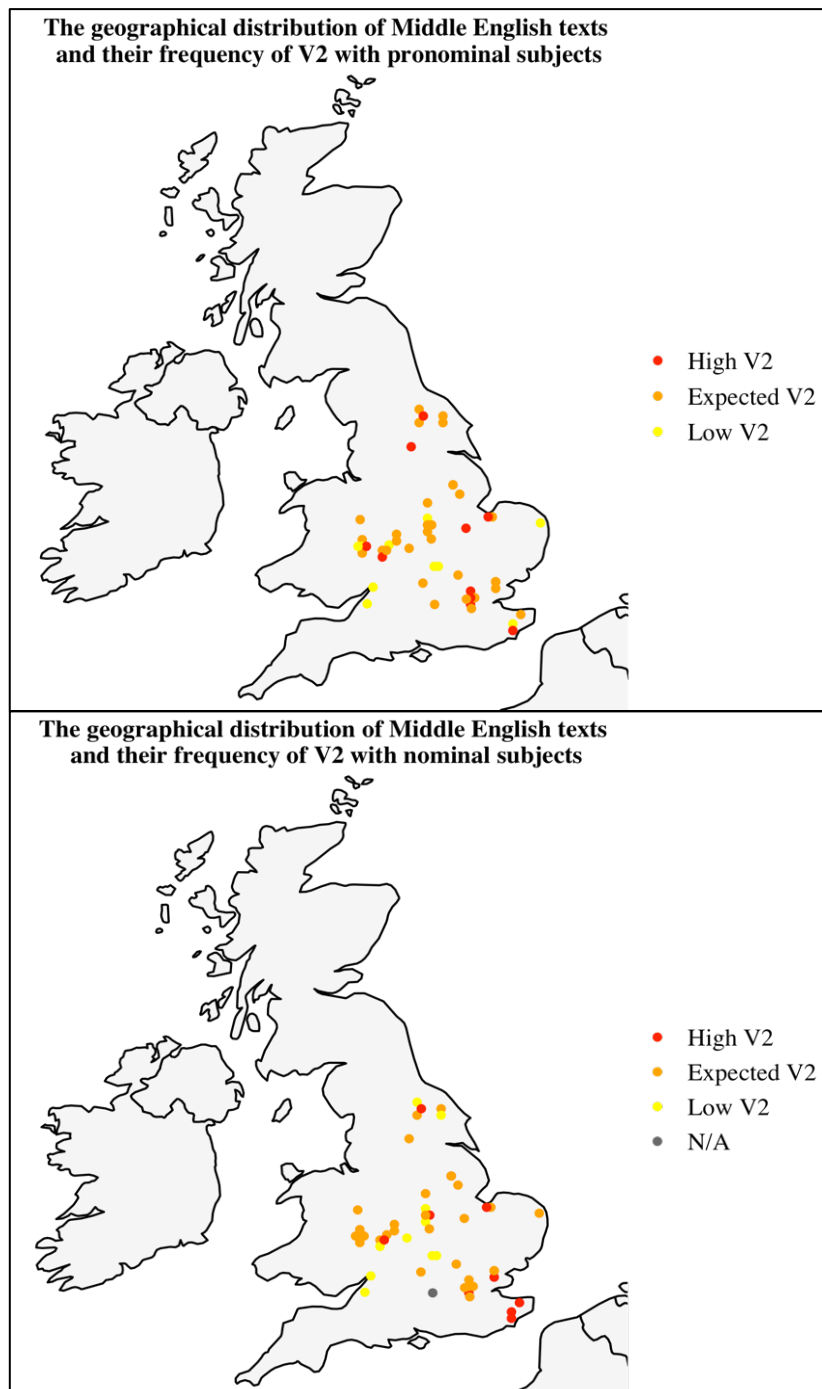


Figure 22: Maps of the British Isles highlighting the geographical distribution of Middle English texts with 'high', 'expected' and 'low' levels of V2 with pronominal subjects and nominal subjects. Texts on the map labelled as 'N/A' did not have any instances of V2 or V3.

Figure 22 is a wider map of Middle English texts with 'high', 'low' and 'expected' frequency levels of V2 (depending on whether texts fell within 1 s.d. either side of the mean). The figure highlights how the same distribution of texts applies when the syntactic

context is narrowed down to type of subject. The figure at the top shows the distribution of texts and their frequency level of V2 is narrowed down to sentences with pronominal subjects, and the figure at the bottom is narrowed down to sentences with nominal subjects. Generally speaking, the distributions are very similar; those high in V2 tend to be located in the North and along the east coast (with one exception in the West Midlands), and those low in V2 tend to occur around the West Midlands and the South (bearing in mind there are some exceptions, such as the East Anglian text for pronominal V2, and a Northern text for nominal V2). Analysing the distribution of ME texts in this way therefore does not provide any patterns specific to types of V2 with either subject, i.e. the patterns shown across both maps in Figure 22 are very similar, and generally, if a text is high in V2 in one context with a specific subject, it is high in V2 in the other context.

Thus, I analyse V2 from a different perspective, specifically, whether ‘expected’ versus ‘unexpected’ patterns could be identified within a selection of texts in the ME period, specifically with different subjects. ‘Unexpected’ patterns of V2 are those that have a higher rate of V2 with pronominal subjects compared to V2 with nominal subjects. I identify these patterns by determining the mean difference between each texts’ use of pronominal and nominal V2, and taking those with a difference of V2 that is one standard deviation more than the mean difference (in favour of pronominal V2), and labelling these as texts with an unexpected rate of V2. As I have discussed so far, and as has been argued in many prior studies, the frequency of V2 was predominantly highest with nominal subjects over pronominal subjects. As shown prior, while pronominal V2 does begin to rise from c.1150, with a sharp decline in nominal V2 (to a frequency level like that of pronominal V2 in 1350-1420), the frequency of V2 is consistently highest with nominal subjects across all dialects. However, in environments narrowed down by the type of subject, specifically in auxiliary verb contexts only, Northern dialects exhibit a higher pronominal V2 than nominal V2 from c.1250 until 1420. This finding is in stark contrast with lexical verb contexts, where the general pattern could be seen (nominal V2 higher in frequency compared to pronominal V2).

Similarly, KTR (2000: 372) concluded that the lack of variability between V2 with both nominal and pronominal subjects in Northern dialects (using both *The Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet* and the ‘mixed V2’ of the Thornton manuscript version of *The Mirror of St. Edmund* as examples) was potentially a result of contact with the categorical V2 of

Norse. They mention that Old English primarily varied in its use of V2, particularly with pronominal subjects, and therefore the general pattern would be that pronominal V2 largely differed to nominal V2 with lower frequencies with most initial constituents. Nevertheless, both *The Rule of St. Benet* and *The Mirror of St. Edmund* had a relatively high frequency of pronominal V2 (for instance, with initial prepositional phrase complements and adjuncts, the frequency of pronominal V2 in both texts was 100% and 70%, respectively). Overall, it could therefore be the case that texts influenced by Norse in some way (whether that be through the manuscript's location, or the origin of the author or scribe) would have either a high level of V2 usage with pronominal subjects, or have a frequency of pronominal V2 that is higher than that of nominal V2. This high frequency of V2 with pronominal subjects results in a lack of disparity between types of V2 with different subject-types, a feature of the categorical Norse V2 that English came into contact with.

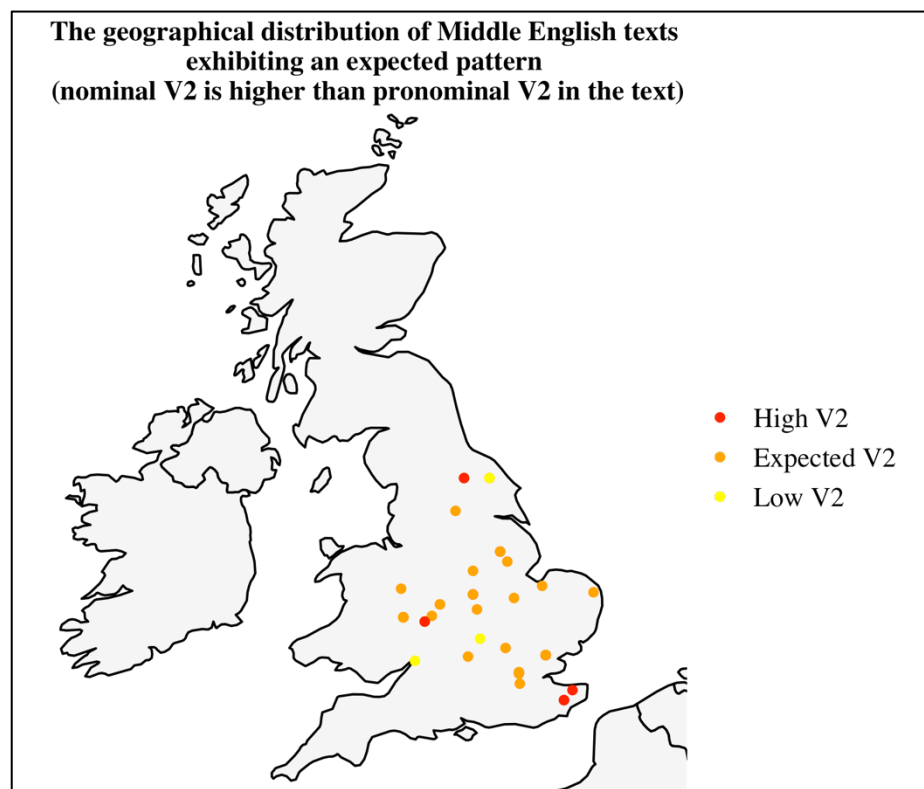


Figure 23: A map of the British Isles highlighting the geographical distribution of Middle English texts that follow an expected pattern of V2 with different subjects.

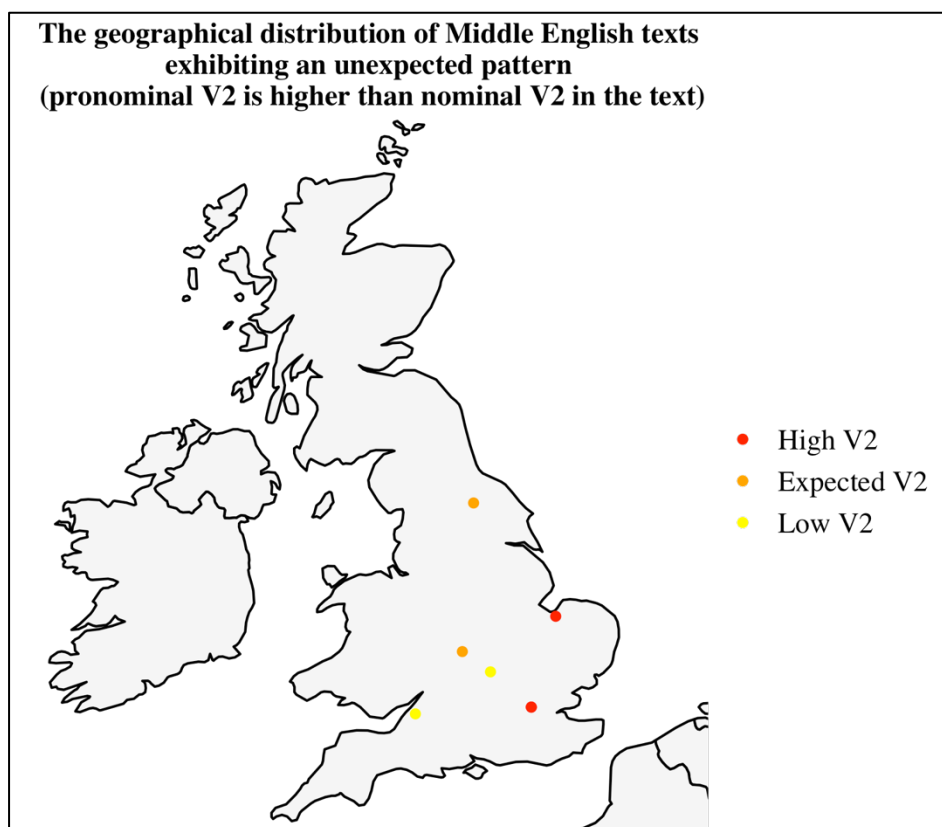


Figure 24: A map of the British Isles highlighting the geographical distribution of Middle English texts that follow an unexpected pattern of V2 with different subjects.

Generally, there are no noticeable dialectal patterns from examining the texts with expected versus unexpected rates of V2 (related to type of subject). As I have established, ME texts more commonly exhibited a higher nominal V2 than pronominal V2, as shown by the points across the whole of England. Figure 24 displays the Middle English texts exhibiting the unexpected pattern (a higher rate of pronominal versus nominal V2). Only a handful of texts are higher in pronominal V2. Most importantly, only one Northern text (*Dan John Gaytridg's Sermon*) falls under this unexpected patterning. Even though most of the Northern texts have a high usage of pronominal V2, this frequency does not surpass that of nominal V2. I determine whether the unexpected pattern appears in Northern and East Midlands texts when narrowing down the syntactic context to the type of verb. Recall that the pronominal V2 of Northern texts, specifically with auxiliary verbs, is higher in frequency than that of nominal V2. This pattern is surprising given that pronominal V2 does not appear higher in frequency compared to nominal V2 in lexical verb contexts.

Table 13 below breaks down the distributions of pronominal and nominal V2 by the type of verb, to determine whether any trends appear to emerge dialectally. As noted, the

temporary revival of V2 was particularly prominent when the syntactic context is narrowed to sentences with auxiliary verbs and pronominal subjects, and the texts with the highest rates of V2 in these contexts are those from the North and East Midlands. Consequently, we should expect to see a pattern in line with the findings from the prior sections, with higher frequencies of the unexpected pattern (a higher pronominal V2 than nominal V2) in auxiliary verb contexts, and especially in Northern and East Midlands texts. I also map the texts with expected and unexpected trends of V2, first with auxiliary verbs, and second, with lexical verbs.

Text ⁵³	Time Period (PPCME2 category)	Frequency of pronominal V2 with auxiliary verbs (%)	Frequency of nominal V2 with auxiliary verbs (%)	Frequency of pronominal V2 with lexical verbs (%)	Frequency of nominal V2 with lexical verbs (%)
Richard Rolle's Prose Treatises - N	M2	31.4 (11/35)	17.4 (4/23)	9.7 (3/31)	40 (8/20)
Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet - N	M3	71.8 (117/163)	59.4 (38/64)	53.6 (15/28)	94.8 (55/58)
Mirror of St. Edmund (Thornton Ms.) - N	M3	76.1 (51/67)	68.8 (11/16)	20 (6/30)	72.7 (8/11)
Treatise on the Astrolabe - EM	M3	85.7 (12/14)	66.7 (4/6)	85.7 (12/14)	100 (9/9)
Parson's Tale - EM	M3	63.9 (53/83)	50 (31/62)	45 (9/20)	89.5 (51/57)
Purvey's General Prologue - S	M3	10 (4/40)	6.3 (4/64)	5 (2/40)	7.3 (13/177)
Capgrave's Sermon - EM	M4	88.9 (8/9)	66.7 (2/3)	100 (1/1)	100 (2/2)
In Die Innocencium - EM	M4	12.5 (1/8)	9.1 (1/11)	14.3 (1/7)	25 (1/4)
Morte D'Arthur - WM	M4	34.1 (61/179)	27.3 (21/77)	16 (32/200)	26.1 (70/268)
Boece - EM	M3	83.3 (10/12)	66.7 (4/6)	83.3 (10/12)	0 (0/3)
New Testament - EM	M3	11.1 (3/27)	28.6 (4/14)	5.3 (2/38)	0 (0/72)
Middle English Sermons - S	M3	16.7 (2/12)	61.5 (8/13)	16.7 (1/6)	14.3 (1/7)
Gregory's Chronicle - S	M4	5.6 (1/18)	61.9 (13/21)	26.7 (4/15)	24.3 (9/37)

Table 13: A table to show the texts that have unexpected frequencies of V2 (i.e. a pronominal V2 more frequent than nominal V2 by more than 1 s.d.), and in which syntactic contexts (with lexical or auxiliary verbs) these occur in.

⁵³ **Table 13 Key:**

N: Northern

EM: East Midlands

WM: West Midlands

S: Southern

K: Kentish

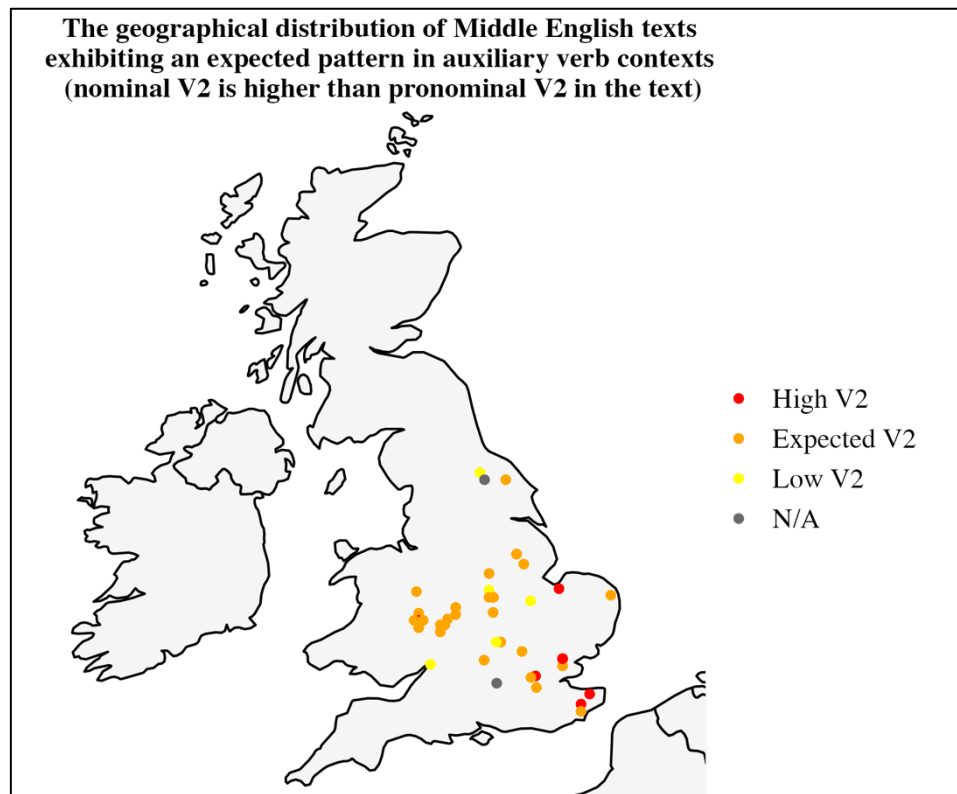


Figure 25: A map of the British Isles highlighting the geographical distribution of Middle English texts that follow an expected pattern of V2 with different subjects and auxiliary verbs.

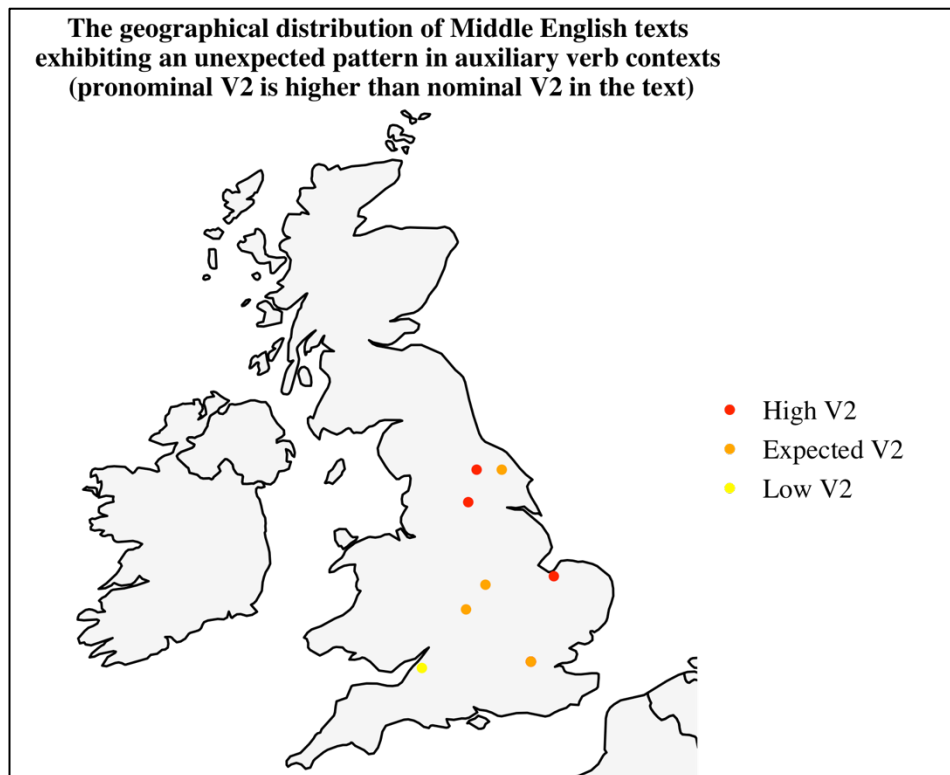


Figure 26: A map of the British Isles highlighting the geographical distribution of Middle English texts that follow an unexpected pattern of V2 with different subjects and auxiliary verbs.

Table 13 highlights the disparity between ME texts exhibiting the unexpected pattern in auxiliary verb contexts and lexical verb contexts. Figure 26 zooms in on the use of V2 with auxiliary verb contexts across texts in PPCME2, specifically, those that exhibit the unexpected pattern (pronominal V2 is higher than nominal V2), while Figure 25 focuses on the inverse, expected pattern. In auxiliary verb contexts, the distribution of ME texts exhibiting the unexpected pattern now includes three Northern texts from the corpus, namely *The Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet*, *The Mirror of St Edmund (Thornton Ms.)*, and Richard Rolle's *Prose Treatises*. *Benet* and *Edmund* are high in frequency of pronominal V2 in this context (71.8% and 76.1%, respectively) and are higher in pronominal V2 compared to nominal V2 by 12.4% and 7.4%, respectively. Richard Rolle's *Prose Treatises* comparatively has an 'expected' level of V2 (at a frequency of 31.4% which is higher than their overall frequency of V2 before narrowing down to this syntactic context), and have a higher pronominal V2 by around 14%. Moreover, all but one of Chaucer's prose texts within the corpus exhibit this unexpected pattern. I list each of these texts here, alongside their frequency of V2 with pronominal subjects in auxiliary verb contexts: *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* (80%), *Boethius* (83.3%), and *The Parson's Tale* (55.2%). In comparison, Figure 25 shows that the only Northern texts that exhibit the expected pattern in auxiliary verb contexts, with nominal V2 higher than pronominal V2, are those with low instances of V2 and V3 generally (*Dan John Gaytridg's Sermon* and *Liber di Diversis Medicinis*), and the other Rolle prose text (*Epistles*). Overall, this general expected trend is preserved within texts below Yorkshire (East and West Midlands, and the South).

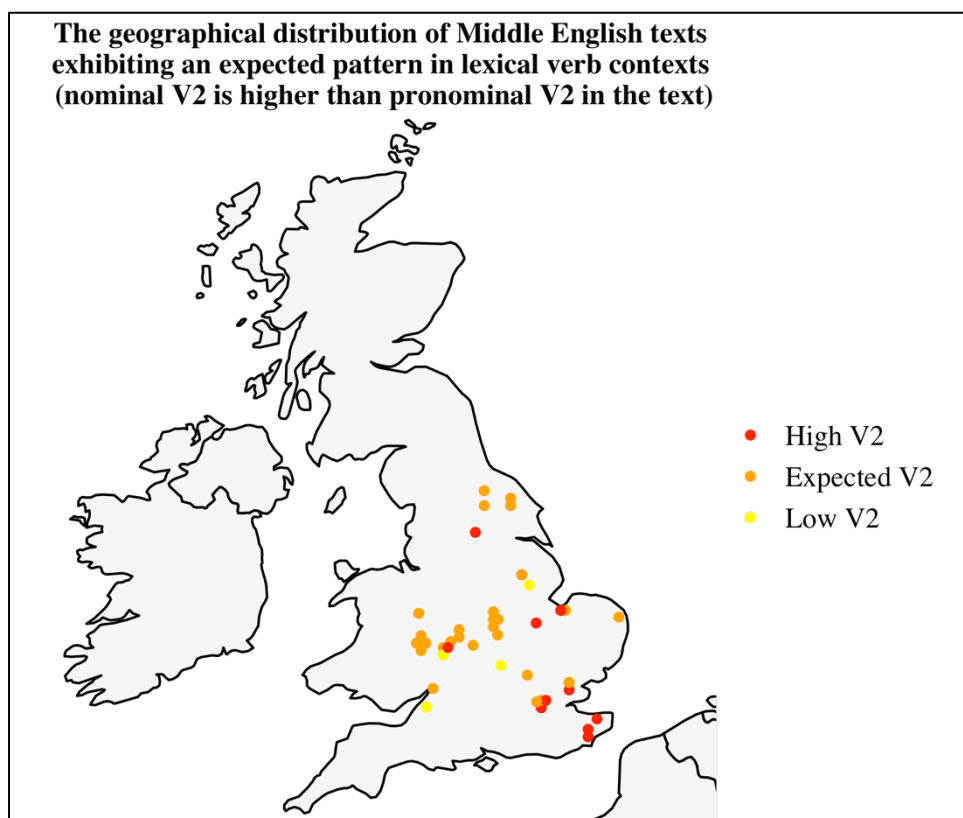


Figure 27: A map of the British Isles highlighting the geographical distribution of Middle English texts that follow an expected pattern of V2 with different subjects and lexical verbs.

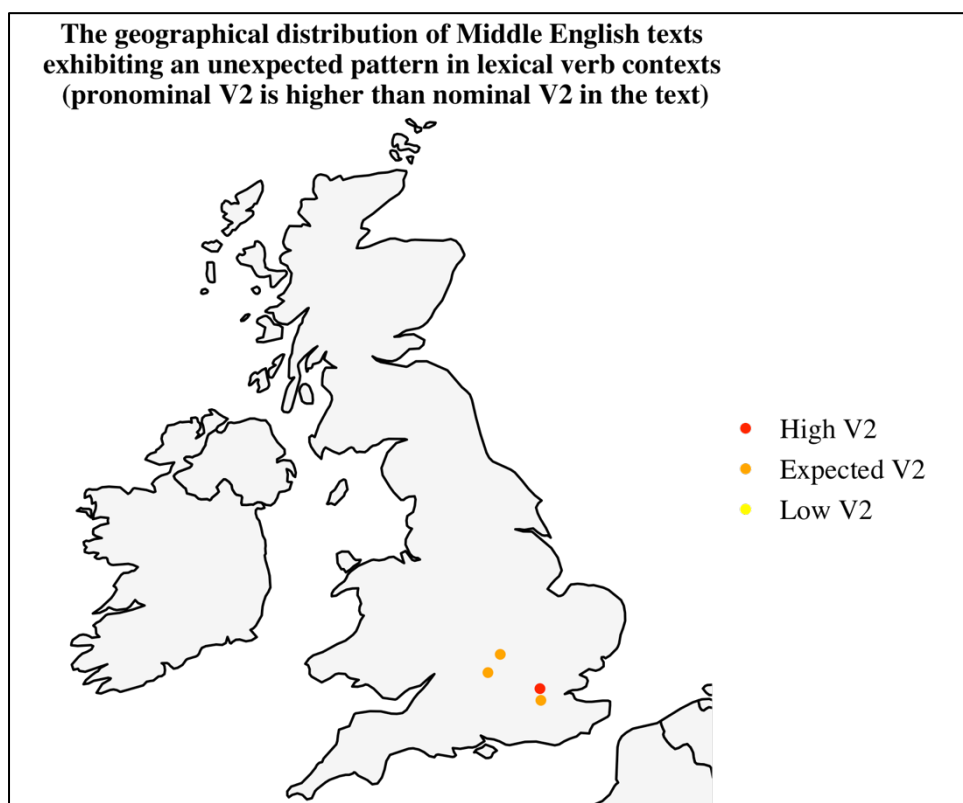


Figure 28: A map of the British Isles highlighting the geographical distribution of Middle English texts that follow an unexpected pattern of V2 with different subjects and lexical verbs.

Figures 27 and 28 show the PPCME2 texts that exhibit the expected and unexpected pattern in lexical verb contexts. Comparatively, the distribution of ME texts appears to exhibit an opposing pattern to what can be seen in auxiliary verb contexts. Whereas the expected pattern – a higher nominal V2 than pronominal V2 in ME texts – is now inclusive of Northern texts (along with other texts across England) (Figure 27), the unexpected pattern, i.e. a higher pronominal V2 than nominal V2, no longer includes texts above around Buckinghamshire (Figure 28). The texts exhibiting the unexpected pattern in lexical verb contexts, along with their frequency of V2 with pronominal subjects in this context, are as follows: Chaucer's *Boece* (83.3%), Gregory's *Chronicle* (26.7%), *The New Testament* (5.3%), and *Middle English Sermons* (16.7%). The only text out of this list which has a higher V2 with pronominal subjects compared to nominal subjects, in both auxiliary and lexical verb contexts, is Chaucer's *Boece*. All of these texts are distinctly higher in pronominal V2 in either auxiliary or lexical verb contexts, the former consisting of a number of Northern and East Midlands texts. The unexpected trend with different subjects (pronominal V2 higher than nominal V2) therefore provides an interesting pattern which includes specific texts depending on the type of verb that is specified in the sentence.

To summarise, there is a contrasting subset of Middle English texts exhibiting a higher pronominal V2 compared to nominal V2, which is dependent upon whether the syntactic environment contains an auxiliary verb or lexical verb. Texts higher in pronominal V2 – the unexpected trajectory – primarily include those from the North and East Midlands (with a few texts from the West Midlands and the South) in auxiliary verb contexts. Texts higher in pronominal V2 in lexical verb contexts solely include those south of Buckinghamshire. There is clearly a pattern that emerges when comparing the frequencies of pronominal and nominal V2 and narrowing down the syntactic environment to the type of verb. The initial question that arises is, therefore: what do each of the texts from each grammatical context (with varying verbs) have in common, and how might their appearance, within this unexpected trajectory of a higher frequency of pronominal V2, link to the sociohistorical context?

First, since the texts that appear higher in pronominal V2 in auxiliary verb contexts are primarily from the North and East Midlands, which have links to Norse settlement locations, there is the possibility that Norse influenced the high level of V2 with pronominal subjects exhibited here. For instance, Chaucer's London-based texts and East Anglian

roots, Northern texts and their proximity to Yorkshire, Capgrave's *Sermon* and its East Anglian roots, and the *Aelred of Rievaulx*'s text and its homogeneity with roots in the North and East Midlands, all display this unexpected pattern. Second, in lexical verb contexts, the texts that appear with a higher pronominal V2 have roots in the South.⁵⁴ For now, I conclude that there is a possibility that language contact with Norse could have been accelerating unexpected patterns of V2 (a higher pronominal V2 than nominal V2) in auxiliary verb contexts, with the North and East Midlands affected. It is interesting that, despite individual texts differing in their frequency of V2, it is predominantly Northern and East Midlands texts that have a higher pronominal than nominal V2 in auxiliary verb contexts. On the other hand, in lexical verb contexts, it is predominantly West Midlands and Southern texts that have a higher pronominal V2. I reserve explanation of the contrasting unexpected patterns of V2 in lexical verb contexts across the South for future research, however, Haeberli (2007, 2010) has written on the possibility that the V2 of Anglo-Norman and Continental French might have had an impact on declining levels of V2 in English.

An additional line of enquiry might involve investigating structures that exhibit this unexpected trajectory, which have initial constituents that typically introduced V2 to a high extent (e.g. for discourse-advancing purposes). On the flip side, there is also the proportion of structures with initial constituents which historically introduced V2 word order less frequently (e.g. initial anaphoric constituents). There is scope for analysing these texts in more detail regarding the referential and information-structural status of subjects and initial constituents in V2 and V3 sentences. I leave this analysis here, but it appears as though there is clearly a dialectal difference occurring regarding the use of an unexpected V2 (higher with pronominal subjects rather than nominal subjects) and different types of verbs. Future research might investigate whether the selection of texts with the unexpected V2 pattern presented in Table 13 and their use of the verb alongside the subject are similar, suggesting a potential comparison can be made with regard to the type of text (Chapter 5).

⁵⁴ This excludes Chaucer's *Boethius*, which has been discussed to have East Anglian influence through the mixture of dialects in London and Chaucer's ancestry, therefore, text-type could be an influencing factor on the level of V2 in *Boethius*.

4.6.2. The impact of Norse influence and diglossia on the use of verb second in Middle English

In Chapter 3, I ended on a note regarding whether the use of V2 in English could be labelled as ‘CP-V2’—a language with near-consistent verb-movement in main clauses to the CP-domain regardless of the type of grammatical properties or information-structural status of elements within the sentence. Given Old English had a V2 phenomenon driven by the pressures of information structure – meaning there was infrequent V2 with subject pronouns in cases with initial anaphors – it was not as consistent as other Germanic V2 languages. Furthermore, the fact that some languages have verb-movement with an ‘optional’ embedded V2, such as Afrikaans (e.g. see Biberauer 2002, 2017) blurs the picture with respect to whether V2 languages fit into CP- versus IP-V2. The issue that similarities in verb-movement between English and Norse poses for the language contact explanation, i.e. whether Norse may have impacted the rate of V2 in English, is thus: if both languages could be categorised as CP-V2, then how much of an effect would Norse have had on English V2?

As concluded in the preceding chapter, verb-movement in Old English likely occurred to the CP domain (due to consistent V2 in main clauses), which was a split CP due to the pressure of information-structural tendencies on verb-movement patterns in OE. Mainland Scandinavian today is considered a ‘narrow embedded V2 language’ (Walkden and Booth 2020: 536), meaning that V2 occurs in “a definable subset of embedded contexts (often linked to the possibility of ‘assertion’)”. V2 in Old Norse had regular verb-movement to C (e.g. Faarlund 2004: 192-193) and did not appear to be affected by IS. Thus, while Norse may not fit the category of “well-behaved V2 languages” (Walkden and Booth 2020), as the language does have some cases of embedded V2 related to assertion, verb-movement occurred frequently and to the CP-domain. Thus, the noticeable difference between OE and ON is that of information structure, which meant that V2 was not as consistent in OE. Studies such as KTR (2000) attribute the effect of Norse on English V2 to a potential difference in the V2 grammar of either language, in that OE had IP-V2 (V-to-I movement), yet this difference likely did not exist. As demonstrated throughout this chapter, Norse influence on English V2 likely occurred in a subset of sentences, those with auxiliary verbs and pronominal subjects, and potentially in specific types of texts; for instance, those with a strong and repeated rhetoric, requiring V2 to link subordinating discourse together (see

the following chapter). This influence is therefore concentrated to one area of the syntax, and in these cases, V2 is permitted to occur frequently because it is not driven by IS. The exact conditions under which these sentences were affected by Norse, for instance, through language acquisition, is up for debate (see Chapter 6). However, it is clear this type of V2 with pronominal subjects and auxiliary verbs must have been “syntacticised” (van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012; Los 2015), potentially following contact with Norse, to explain why V2 occurred more frequently than it did in OE. Overall, it is entirely possible that Norse accelerated a higher use of pronominal V2 into specific ME texts and syntactic contexts, in this case, with auxiliary verbs, as outlined by the distribution of texts with an unexpected V2 pattern originating from areas of Norse settlement.

I conclude this section by complementing discussion offered by Tristram (2004), which I have referred to frequently so far, regarding the lag in production of texts from the low Old English variety. The reason why V2 appears with a higher frequency in Northern and East Midlands dialects later in the medieval period may be because a) there are no dialectal texts available from the OE period to assess this Norse influence, and b) because of this lag in the production of texts from a time when Norse-English contact was most prominent. Thus, this disparity of seemingly different frequencies of V2 across late medieval England in specific syntactic contexts may be due to this diglossic situation being reflected much later, in Middle English. This type of discussion is, of course, speculative, and cannot necessarily be confirmed by additional evidence at this point. For now, it may help scholars come closer to an understanding of the extent of Norse influence, and why it appears, in the Middle English period.

4.7. A summary of Middle English verb second, and the need to transition to a qualitative perspective

This chapter has presented some of the changes in verb second occurring in Middle English, a period of considerable variability in its use in a range of syntactic and sociohistorical contexts. As noted in Chapter 3, pronominal subjects rarely occurred postverbally in OE, due to the tendencies of information structure to place given information higher in the sentence, compared to new information. However, in Middle English, this link between V2 syntax and IS broke down. The use of a ‘syntacticised’ V2 (characterised by the falling off

of a position for verb-movement driven by IS), in contexts with initial anaphoric constituents, was evident from the OE period, yet appeared rarely, and thus could be considered ‘unexpected’ given the general information-structural trends of OE V2. In ME, this word order grew in frequency, as shown by the rise in V2 word orders with pronominal subjects in auxiliary verb contexts in Northern and East Midlands dialects. There appears to be a dialectal difference when it comes to the growth in this unexpected word order, which could be attributed to Norse influence (as first introduced by Kroch and Taylor 1997, and Kroch Taylor and Ringe 2000).

While Norse influence on the use of V2 in later medieval English has been explored, the specific type of syntactic context in which the unexpected, syntacticised V2 occurred is less frequently represented in the literature. This chapter has therefore contributed to the debate on the specificity of Norse influence, suggesting that it may be prevalent in more precise contexts compared to when it was first introduced. The factor of verb-type seems especially relevant for quantitative analyses, and scholars such as Ans van Kemenade and Roland Hinterhölzl are conducting further work regarding the effect of the grammaticalisation of auxiliaries and their role in the instability of V2 in specific dialects.

There is clearly more to explore regarding the status of information structure in late medieval V2 structures across different dialects, an area which is also rarely investigated. Since quantitative parsed corpus-based analyses do not allow for an easily replicable study of the information status of grammatical elements, it is difficult to determine whether the initial constituent would have interacted with some of these other syntactic contexts. As concluded in this chapter, interactions between the type of subject/verb in the sentence and the initial constituent often produced statistically insignificant findings. Thus, the following chapters are devoted to examining this IS-based interaction between the status of subjects and initial constituents, in texts of a particular dialect, specifically in a smaller set of Chaucerian prose texts. Geoffrey Chaucer’s background is unique in that he had family hailing from East Anglia, and was brought up in London experiencing high social mobility of people with different dialects. He also wrote a range of types of texts, manipulating the style of these for underlying or overt purposes (e.g. to teach, to instruct morally, or to tell a story with a hidden narrative related to mercy and sin). His use of V2 is particularly fascinating for these reasons, and may reflect a syntacticised order in late medieval England no longer driven by tendencies of IS. Thus, the analysis conducted here leads to the

opportunity to be able to discuss some of the nuances of V2 during a period of high instability, for different types of rhetorical effect, and how this instability may be further reinforced in specific dialects.

Chapter 5:

Considering the impact of text-type, information structure, and discourse relations on Chaucer's use of verb second⁵⁵

Much of the research into the history of verb second (V2) in English is largely directed toward large-scale quantitative analysis of its decline, which has identified several important factors relevant to the change, related to how morphosyntax, information structure, and dialect variation/language contact might have affected the use of V2. Of those that have considered individual authors' use of V2, the focus has been on the wider issue of audience design to explain how writers might accommodate their syntax to their readership. However, there is no clear motivation as to why such audiences would solely drive the author's choice of syntax. There is a lack of a perspective that looks at the nuanced insights of the categorisation of text-type, and how V2 varies across these. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the extent to which Geoffrey Chaucer's use of V2 differed across his prose works, and specifically, which verb-movement patterns were prominent throughout these text-types based on the combination of different types of initial constituent and subject, based on their syntactic and information-structural status. I also examine the extent to which discourse relations drove the ordering of the subject and verb in these sentences of prose, and how these discourse relations and choice of syntax are linked to the type of rhetoric or argument occurring throughout the texts. To examine the relation between these different factors, I code the initial constituent and subject in sentences exhibiting verb-movement with their syntactic and information-structural or referential status, related to the Pentaset categories formed by Komen, Los and van Kemenade (2023), and provide discussion as to why elements such as local anchors (initial constituents linking to discussion in the preceding discourse) and frame-setters (initial constituents introducing new information or new topics), as well as shorter, discourse-advancing adverbs, might have led to varying V2 and V3 patterns across different types of text.

⁵⁵ A version of this Chaucerian case study of V2 has been submitted to the *Journal of Historical Syntax*. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of my article who have pointed me toward research that also features in this chapter, especially related to information structure and discourse relations.

Overall, this case study is an exploration of the intersecting pressures of syntax, information structure, and discourse relations on the appearance of verb second over verb third (V3) word order in late medieval English. To fully understand the reasons for the nuanced trajectory of V2, which is unique to English compared to other Germanic languages, an analysis of the cultural aspects relevant to V2, as well as an exploration of the textual tradition, is required. These sociohistorical areas likely interact with the grammatical and discourse-based variables mentioned throughout. This study also has implications for understanding the appearance of V2 in the written mode versus the spoken mode, and how the use of V2 in specific types of texts, and with particular authors, may be exceptional. Linked to the written mode, this type of study can deepen our knowledge of the ways in which authors (un)consciously manipulate syntactic structure for specific purposes (e.g. to educate, to preach, to persuade, etc.), and show how rhetoric plays a large role in the selection of these structures by language users.

5.1. A description of Chaucer's text-types

Text	Date	Author	Dialect	Genre	Text-type
The Parson's Tale	c.1390	Geoffrey Chaucer	East Midlands (London)	Religious treatise	Morally didactic, sermon
The Tale of Melibee	c.1390	Geoffrey Chaucer	East Midlands (London)	Philosophy/fiction	Morally didactic, apologue
A Treatise on the Astrolabe	c.1391	Geoffrey Chaucer	East Midlands (London)	Handbook, astronomy	Instructional, pedagogical
The Equatorie of the Planetis*	c.1392	John Westwyk (Rand 2015)	East Midlands	Handbook, astronomy	Instructional, pedagogical

Table 14: A table highlighting the provenance of each text of analysis in this case study (adapted from PPCME2 manual, see Kroch et al. 2000b). *Note, *The Equatorie of the Planetis* is included as a text of comparison, see Section 5.1.1 for discussion on the authorship of this text.

Table 14 shows the selection of Chaucerian prose works for analysis, alongside details of the date, authorship, dialect of the text, genre, and text-type. The texts of analysis are: the astronomical handbook *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* (henceforth, *Astrolabe*), and the prose

texts from *The Canterbury Tales*, specifically *The Parson's Tale* (henceforth, *ParsT*) and *The Tale of Melibee* (henceforth, *Melibee*). The texts arise from the 'M3' period as categorised in PPCME2, dated c.1350-1420. More specifically, while the 'Ellesmere' *Canterbury Tales* manuscript is dated as approximately 1390, *Astrolabe* is dated one year after; approximately 1391 (Kroch et al. 2000b). I also analyse *The Equatorie of the Planetis* (henceforth, *Equatorie*), which some scholars consider to be a Chaucer original (e.g. Price 1955). Additionally, Eitler's (2006) study of V2 also places the text under Chaucerian authorship. However, given recent evidence (e.g. Rand 2015) that *Equatorie* is distinct from the Chaucer canon and written by a different author, I use the text solely for comparison regarding the rate of V2 in the Chaucerian astronomical text *Astrolabe*, to further consolidate the impact of text-type, as well as dialect variation, on V2 syntax in Middle English. I provide further details on the authorship of *Equatorie* in Section 5.1.1 and how I treat the text differently in the current analysis compared to prior studies of English V2.

While the genre of the text is listed in PPCME2, I specify the type of text for each of the Chaucerian prose works in this analysis. Following Lee's definitions, who draws on work from Biber (1988), 'genre' can be defined as "the external criteria such as intended audience, purpose, and activity type, [...] a conventional culturally recognised grouping of texts based on properties other than lexical or grammatical (co-)occurrence features", which instead define the "internal (linguistic) criteria forming the basis of *text type* categories" (Lee 2001: 38). It is likely the texts' type that influences the type of V2 syntax exhibited in Chaucer's prose works, given the factor motivates the use of different grammatical features. PPCME2 categorises *Astrolabe*, *ParsT* and *Melibee* into three different genres, namely 'Handbook, astronomy', 'Religious treatise', and 'Philosophy/fiction'. Alternatively, I use the text-types 'Instructional, pedagogical', 'Morally didactic, sermon', and 'Morally didactic, apologue' to outline the structural nuances of each Chaucerian text.

Astrolabe, as a scientific handbook, is instructional, expository, and pedagogical in nature, almost as if the text were a lecture on astronomy. *Astrolabe* is a Chaucerian translation into English from Latin. It details the workings of an astrolabe which displays the positions of the stars. In a similar way, *ParsT* is an instructional text, yet for moral purposes, using "orthodox Christian doctrine" (Benson 2008: 21) to emphasise the negative

consequences of the Seven Deadly Sins. *ParsT* has been considered a sermon, preserved as such in many medieval religious libraries, suggesting Chaucer might have followed the long tradition of Old English sermons (Taavitsainen 1993, citing Fowler 1987: 13). Taavitsainen (1993: 191) further describes Chaucer as a “highly conscious stylist exploiting the features of religious prose for artistic purposes”, which indicates he might have considered the use of specific syntactic features during the writing process, which in turn might reflect the type of verb-movement occurring in sentences at this time. *Melibee* is also a morally didactic text, yet in the form of a philosophical and moral apologue, weaving its argument implicitly throughout its narrative. The idea of the need to be merciful in the face of adversity, seeking peace over war (Yeager 2014), is represented by the characters of Melibee and Prudence in the text. Consequently, the text encourages its readership toward the teachings of Christ via a frame narrative.

As Benson (2008: 956) acknowledges, there are a number of potential Latin sources from which Chaucer adopted material to write *ParsT*, such as the *Summa de poenitentia* by the Dominican St. Raymund of Pennaforte in 1222/29, and the *Summa vitiorum* by the Dominican friar William Peyraut. However, Cichosz (2010) implies that the impact of Latin on English, extending from the early medieval period, may be minimal. In fact, Cichosz points to the work of Ælfric and his *Genesis* translation, noting that Ælfric needed to change the structure of the Latin passages in order for readers to understand them, suggesting “Old English translators had a very modern attitude to their work and they did not want to produce glosses, but real translations” (2010: 49). The fact that translators did not calque English syntax on Latin might also extend to ME. There is also the possibility that Chaucer may have drawn on French rather than Latin sources, yet “no French treatise significantly close to *The Parson’s Tale* has been identified” (Benson 2008: 956). However, given absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, the lack of an identified French source does not mean that there was no French source from which Chaucer took inspiration, as acknowledged by Eitler (2006: 89). Furthermore, *Melibee* is regarded as “a close translation of the *Livre de Melibée et de Dame Prudence*” by Renaud de Louens who wrote the text shortly after 1336 (Benson 2008: 923), suggesting that *Melibee* is the most likely of the three texts to be affected by translation from Middle French (notably because the influence of a French source is more certain in *Melibee* than in *ParsT*), as addressed by Eitler (2006: 112).

There is an additional prose text written by Chaucer that could have been selected for analysis in this case study; *Boece*. However, there are two potential effects from translation present for this text. It is both an adaptation of the Latin *De consolacione philosophiae* by Boethius, and draws on material from the French translation by Jean de Meun. MacLeish acknowledges that the style of *Boece* is therefore “loose” and “the language somewhat diffuse” (1969: 13), explaining its exclusion from this case study.

5.1.1. The authorship of *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* and *The Equatorie of the Planetis* and its implications for the study of verb second

Before detailing the interaction of information structure and syntax and its implications for Chaucer’s different text-types, I now refer to the evidence surrounding the authorship of *The Equatorie of the Planetis*. It is important to review this evidence of authorship as *Equatorie* has been compared to *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* in terms of its astronomical content, dialect and writing style, which has led to the controversial claim that it was similarly written by Chaucer (as initially proposed by Derek J. Price in his 1955 edition of *Equatorie*). Given this case study is centred around the effect of text-type on the use of V2 in the late medieval period, it is especially relevant to determine whether the structure and discourse relations of *Equatorie* and *Astrolabe* are similar. *Equatorie* has also been examined for its use of V2 with the idea that Chaucer may have written it in mind (Eitler 2006). Thus, a comparison between Chaucer’s prose works and *Equatorie* for their use of V2 and how the syntax might be influenced by information structure is a timely one.

To gather an idea as to why *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie* are often considered in tandem, especially in relation to their language structure, here I demonstrate some of the similarities and differences that have been argued to exist between them. Both texts were written for a readership interested in astronomy in the 1390s, and more specifically, *Equatorie* was written to outline the creation and functionality of an equatorium, “a device to compute the positions of the planets using raw data provided in the accompanying astronomical tables” (Falk 2019: 329), following the introduction of astrolabes. *Equatorie* was written in English initially, as opposed to Latin as in *Astrolabe*, due to the rise in the vernacularisation of scientific and medical texts in the late medieval period (e.g. see Taavitsainen and Pahta 1998; Crossgrove 2000; Taavitsainen 2012). With respect to the dialect of the text, Eitler

(2006: 112) states that the *Equatorie* is reflective of the vernacular of Chaucer, an East Anglian dialect with a highly frequent rate of V2 structure, potentially influenced by Norse settlement. Furthermore, given Chaucer dedicated *Astrolabe* to his son Lowys, Eitler (2006: 181) also suggests that the *Equatorie* was written for his son and that this intended, familial audience, of an East Anglian dialect, may have influenced how the text was structured. In particular, Eitler argues that the familial East Anglian audience might have contributed to the near-categorical levels of V2 in both texts.

However, several arguments from scholars in the field of manuscript studies suggest that Chaucer was not the author. For instance, Edwards and Mooney identify that the author of the *Equatorie* did not have an advanced knowledge of astronomy, because of the numerous “cancelations and assertions of fallacy on folios 76 and 77” (1991: 39). They state that, in contrast, Chaucer’s astronomical expertise was considerably advanced by the time he wrote *The Complaint of Mars* in 1385, and the *Equatorie* came much later than that. Rand (2015: 17-18) also proposed that John Westwyk, a monk of Tynemouth and the donor of the piece, is the likely author of the *Equatorie*, especially as he had signed his name in the same hand as the rest of the text. With some of these arguments in mind, I consider the V2 of *The Equatorie of the Planetis* to be removed from Chaucerian authorship, with John Westwyk as the most likely candidate for authorship. It is evident that any conclusions regarding the nature of V2 in *Equatorie* and *Astrolabe*, especially in relation to how discourse influenced the syntax of both prose works, should not be motivated by familial audience design. Instead, I refer to the categorisation of text-type to explain the use of V2 in both texts.

Now that I have described some of the issues in relation to authorship, audience, genre/text-type and translation, the next section is devoted to recognising some of the wider issues impacting rate of V2 at the time, as discussed in Chapter 4, specifically, the impact of information structure and discourse relations on late medieval English V2 syntax.

5.1.2. Combining the study of Chaucer’s text-types with insights from information structure and discourse relations

Eckhart (2000: 184, cited by Pakkala-Weckström 2010: 226), states that Chaucer had an “extraordinary tendency to frame, modulate, combine, resist and otherwise reinterpret his

models [which] produces what may be called the creative derangement of genres". One of the questions regarding Chaucer's stylistic tendencies is therefore whether the use of specific structural patterns can be quantified, and more specifically, how the use of different types of initial constituents, subjects, and verbs interacted, including whether the syntactic and referential status of these elements affected the rate of V2 across different sentential environments. Since Chaucer's writing has been spotlighted for manipulating the stylistic possibilities for medieval genres and types of text, compared to other medieval works, it might suggest that there are unexpected syntactic and discourse-related effects on the syntax of V2 in his works.

Recall from the previous chapters that the link between information structure and syntax, by late medieval English, had weakened compared to Old English, and there was less of an effect of the referential status of different grammatical elements in the sentence on the position of the verb. In Old English sentences beginning with an anaphoric constituent, the verb often intervened between given (linked, anaphoric) and new (unlinked, focused) information, resulting in the postverbal position of new subjects and preverbal position of given subjects. In Chapter 3, I confirmed that the most likely verb-movement pattern occurred within a split CP structure, with the verb raising to the lower portion of the CP-domain (CP1) in sentences with an initial anaphor, with the given subjects in Spec, CP1 and new subjects in Spec, TP either side of the verb. By the late medieval period, this information-structural tendency driving verb-movement had diminished, resulting in one type of verb-movement when the verb occurred in second position on the surface (V-to-C2, the higher portion of the CP-domain), and verb-movement to T when the verb occurred in third position. These two types of verb-movement were partly innovated by the loss of the link between syntax and IS, which led to the loss of the lower portion of the CP-domain as a position for verb-movement. This change can be diagnosed by the occurrence of the verb in a second or third position regardless of the given or new information expressed by the subject and initial constituent. Specifically, if the verb occurs before a given subject in a sentence introduced by an IS-sensitive initial constituent (i.e. an anaphoric one), verb-movement has occurred to the highest C position. The verb once acted as a boundary marker between a given subject and the new information exhibited in the rest of the sentence, moving to a lower position in the CP, which would not be the case here. If the verb occurs after a new subject in a sentence introduced by an initial anaphoric constituent, the verb is no longer acting as a boundary marker between given and new information. The loss of an

IS-based tendency would thus result in two different types of verbal positions, to the highest available C position with a V feature, and to the lowest position for verb-movement, T, where it checks for Tense/Agreement features.

Recent work by Los et al. (2023: 13) has primarily linked the loss of local anchoring, specifically the ability of the initial constituent (especially PPs) to refer to preceding discourse, to the collapse of the grammatical gender paradigm and the loss of standalone demonstratives that could link to referents in sentences occurring prior. This change resulted in a shift in the encoding of anaphoricity to the subject, which began to occur more frequently preverbally, as well as a rise in initial frame-setters, which have a forward-looking perspective and ability to advance the narrative. As Freywald et al. (2015: 89) found in their study of contemporary Norwegian, Swedish, and German vernaculars, the subject that preceded the finite verb represented a familiarity topic, linking to preceding discourse. They quote Los (2009), who identifies that this preverbal position, in English, became “less and less often filled by deictic, inversion-causing adverbials but rather [...] confined to subjects”, a similar process to what is occurring in modern-day Germanic languages. They also mention that “pragmatically less prominent, preverbal elements must have the form of the subject, their function being that of ‘unmarked discourse linking’” (2015: 91-92). Additionally, Komen et al. (2014: 106) state that “the subject took over some of the discourse functionality that was lost [in Middle English]”. Overall, it appears there was a bidirectional effect of the loss of V2 in English and the loss of the multifunctionality of the initial constituent (Los 2012; Bech 2014). The instability of V2 (linked to a combination of grammatical factors, e.g. the tendency of IS to drive verb-movement to a low position, and sociohistorical factors, e.g. contact between varieties that were influenced externally by languages such as Norse) might have led to the decline of a multifunctional initial position in the sentence. Equally, the loss of the multifunctionality of the initial constituent or local anchoring (linked to the weakened link between IS and syntax, and/or the collapse of grammatical gender), which led to the need for the subject to provide the link to referents in the preceding discourse (Los 2009), might have reinforced a preverbal subject position and a decreased systematicity in the use of V2.

Consequently, the most important aspect when dealing with Chaucer’s prose works is to determine whether the weakened link between syntax and IS, driving the existence of a low position for verb-movement (i.e. the low part of the split CP), could have affected

Chaucerian V2 syntax, and in which types of text this effect can be seen most frequently. These effects could then contribute to the instability of V2 in late ME in different ways, either causing a decline in the use of V2 in favour of preverbal subjects (resulting in V-to-T movement), or, an increase in a syntacticised order which favoured the use of V2 with verb-movement to the higher CP-domain (CP2). Since the verb no longer acted as a boundary marker between given and new information, it was no longer driven to the lower portion of the split CP (C1). These verb-movement patterns coexist within a theory of syntactic optionality (see Adger's (2006) theory of 'Combinatorial Variability'), resulting in a V2 grammar that had a one-to-many mapping with V2 and V3 surface forms, which then led to high variation and change for the V2 phenomenon in English. An outline of these different types of verb-movement is recapped in more detail in Section 5.2 and 5.5.

One of the theories related to the effect of referential information on the use of V2 in specific text-types is that of 'discourse segmentation', introduced in Chapter 1. Recall that discourse segmentation (or Segmented Discourse Representation Theory, SDRT; Asher and Lascarides 2003, Asher and Vieu 2005, cited in Bech 2012: 67) relates to the dichotomy of coordinating and subordinating discourse relations (distinct from syntactic coordination and subordination) with some elements of a text playing a subordinate role compared to other parts. To demonstrate this theory, Bech refers to the following two scenarios:

"...if a sentence represents a new step in the narrative and thus pushes it forward, it operates on the main level of the text hierarchy, and the discourse relation is coordinating, whereas if it provides comments or elaborations, the sentence is on a sub-level in the hierarchical structure of the text, and the relation is thus that of discourse subordination."

(Bech 2012: 67)

These two scenarios were examined in Hinterhölzl and Petrova's (2005) study, who found that Old High German V1 clauses were primarily coordinating and narrative-advancing, while V2 word order was used to elaborate on prior context and was thus subordinating. Bech (2001), however, found in her study of Old English XVS and XSV (or V2 versus V3) word order that there was no distinctive pattern with regard to discourse coordination and subordination, and that XSV clauses primarily emerged because the subject exhibited given information. I refer to this theory briefly in the upcoming sections

as to whether Chaucer's prose works of the late ME period would potentially reflect such a dichotomy, between coordinating and subordinating discourse relations.⁵⁶

To summarise the possibilities for Chaucer's text-types, and how they might be impacted by information structure and discourse relations in the late medieval period, I end here on a note about whether Chaucer might have used a 'modern' approach to language and translation of his writings. As noted above, each of his prose works are a translation of a popular tradition of writing in the language of the elite; that of French and Latin. Chaucer is said to have been committed to the movement toward texts written in the English language, the vernacular of the general population. As Arner (2013: 2) neatly summarises, in relation to the rise of the transmission of texts written in English in the 1380s, "the late medieval vernacular turn meant that large portions of the nonruling classes no longer needed the more highly educated to dispense this knowledge or to interpret it for them". Consequently, Chaucer's writings marked a powerful turn toward centring "the language of the populace", which "simultaneously engaged in elaborate processes of constructing cultural expertise and definition gradations of cultural authority", giving the people the ability to engage in public debate (2013: 2). Furthermore, his ability to experiment with style, particularly in his *Canterbury Tales*' works, is also indicative of the innovative methods he employed to disobey the cultural and literary norms of the late medieval period. For instance, Taavitsainen explains that *The Parson's Tale* can be distinguished from other religious treatises or sermons in Middle English, "as it is written by a highly conscious stylist exploiting the features of religious prose for an artistic purpose, not for religious instruction in the real world but once removed from it" (1993: 191). Thus, while other morally didactic works at the time were interested in promoting the teachings of Christ as a realistic premise, Chaucer would do so via a tale or narrative. How might this then figure into his (un)conscious selection of syntactic structure? I use this idea, related to Chaucer's adoption of a specific writing style, to demonstrate that his use of verb second syntax was innovative and unlike other ME texts of the time, and differed depending on the type of text he wanted to promote to his audiences.

⁵⁶ Discussion of the type of rhetoric evident in Chaucer's different text-types might lend itself to further research to be conducted on the ways in which discourse relations are structured in Chaucerian texts. However, as noted by Bech (2012: 69), "the main problem with SDRT, or indeed any theoretical framework which largely bases itself on introspection, is that it is usually difficult to apply to [...] language in its older stages".

5.2. A methodology for examining Chaucer's use of V2 in his prose works

To assess the impact of information structure on the V2 syntax of the Chaucerian text-types presented in this case study, I examine specific information-structural variables and adopt close analysis of the discourse throughout the prose works.

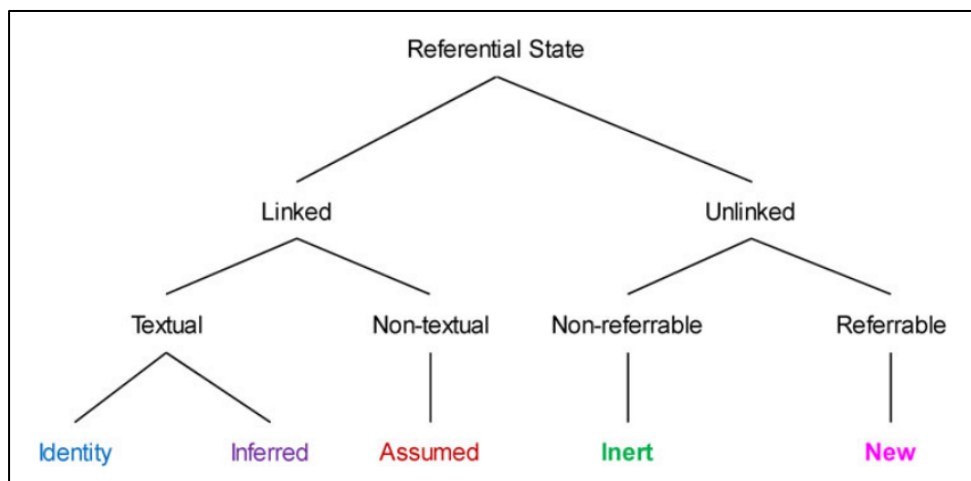


Figure 29: The Pentaset: categories pertaining to the referential status of NPs (Komen, Los and van Kemenade 2023, cited in Los et al. 2023: 7).

Figure 29 shows a hierarchy of concepts I use to categorise initial constituents and subjects in V2 and V3 sentences throughout the case study, as refined by Komen, Los and van Kemenade (2023; cited by Los et al. 2023: 7). These categories detail the referential status of NPs presented as arguments (subjects) or as part of the initial constituent of the sentence (e.g. within PPs), building on work by Prince (1981) regarding given and new information status. The first set of categories refers to constituents or arguments that are *linked* to a referent (i.e. have an antecedent), which have generally been labelled as ‘given’, although ‘linked’ more generally describes referents occurring within the text (textual) and externally (non-textual). *Identity* means that the NP and the antecedent refer to the same thing. Los et al. (2023: 8) use the initial demonstrative *pære* ‘that’ in (1) below to explain this link between referents:

- (1) & þa sealde he heom mid his agenre handa **ane trywene flascan wines**
and then gave he them with his own hands **a wooden bottle of-wine**

fulle, to þon þæt hi mihton heom þa on heora færelde to
full to that that they might for-themselves that in their journey for

underngeweorce habban. **Of þære** hi druncon, oð þæt hi to rauennam
breakfast have. **from that** they drank, until-that they to Ravenna

becomon.
came

‘and then, with his own hands, he gave them a wooden bottle full enough for breakfast during their whole journey. They drank from it, and it lasted all the way to Ravenna.’

(Gregory’s Dialogues_1_[C]: 9.66.12.742-743, adapted from Los et al. 2023: 2)

As shown in (1), the PP *of þære* ‘from that’ is linked to the wooden bottle of wine introduced in the preceding sentence, and thus the demonstrative can be *identified* as the ‘bottle of wine’ referent from the directly preceding context by the reader.

The second category is *inferred*, which Los et al. (2023) describes as:

“more indirect in that there is no exact match with a previously mentioned referent, but the referent’s identity can nevertheless be inferred from an evoked schema – once *a car* is mentioned, we can talk about *the driver*; once *a house* is mentioned, we can talk about *the windows*, in which case *driver* and *windows* would be linked to the earlier mentions of a car and a house, respectively, with the status of the link marked as *inferred*. This is Prince’s category of *inferrable*.”

(Los et al. 2023: 8)

An example of *inferred* would be *ðisses cyninges rice* ‘this king’s reign’, as a reign can be inferred to occur as part of the role of being a king (Los et al. 2023: 8).

The third and final set with ‘linked’ status is *assumed*. This encompasses any referent whose identity cannot be pinpointed within the text itself, or inferred as a result of the occurrence of another NP. These are generally world-known referents, such as ‘God’ or ‘the Lord’, to which the readership has a shared knowledge external to the text. Los et al. (2023: 8) explain that first- and second-person pronouns are always categorised as *assumed* because it is clear to the readership who the referent is with pronouns such as ‘I’, ‘we’, and ‘you’. Alternatively, unless focused or emphasised for a particular reason, third-

person pronouns generally come under *identity*, which is especially evident within the current case study as there were no cases of focused or ‘new’ pronouns.

Unlinked status means that the NP does not have a referent in the preceding discourse or cannot be assumed to refer to some external entity. *Inert* is used for NPs that do not introduce a referent and are known as “discursively inert” (Los et al. 2023: 7); these are generally bare or indefinite nouns such as ‘mankind’ or ‘a husband’. *New* status refers to an NP or referent that is introduced for the first time, and is not linked to a referent in the preceding discourse. This would mean that *ane trywene flascan wines* ‘a wooden bottle of wine’ is the referent in (1) that is introduced for the first time, whereas, as discussed, *of þære* ‘of that’ is the NP that refers to the bottle of wine.

These categories were applied to the pre- or postverbal subject in XVS and XSV main clauses throughout the Chaucerian texts, as well as the initial ‘X’ element in these sentences. If the initial element did not have a clear NP or referent, such as the discourse-advancing adverbs ‘then’ and ‘yet’, these were labelled as either focused/emphasised or contrastive, and came under the general label of ‘new’ information. In contexts with an initial ‘unlinked’ constituent, the subject was categorised with a syntactic category: pronominal, nominal, or indefinite. Indefinite subjects were categorised separately as their syntactic behaviour in V2 and V3 sentences does not neatly match that of pronominal or nominal subjects. Los (2002: 182) states that indefinite subjects (e.g. *man/men/me*) develop from nouns (e.g. ‘mankind’, ‘human being’), yet they “constitute an intermediate category of vague, generic, ‘light’ predications” and are prosodically weak like pronouns.⁵⁷ These subjects were separated based on their syntactic category, because in sentences with the verb in second position, and that were introduced by a syntactic or discourse operation (the latter reserved for focused information, see Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2010; Los 2012), the verb moved to the highest part of the split CP regardless of the information status of the subject.

⁵⁷ As I show in Table 18, even though indefinite subjects could be syntactically and prosodically similar to pronouns in ME, they occur postverbally at a similar rate to nominal subjects in *The Parson’s Tale* (91.7% for indefinite subjects, 93.8% for nominal subjects). Thus, it was unclear as to which category indefinite subjects would fit best, explaining their separate treatment in the presentation of the findings from this case study.

One of the main issues for this type of information-structural coding is the potential for cases of the ‘late subject’ constraint to appear (e.g. see Warner 2007; Los 2009). This constraint occurs when the subject in XVS and XSV sentences has not moved out of the VP and does not require nominative case (as they are not a semantic agent and do not undergo an action). The finite verb also does not move out of the VP-domain. While a number of these cases can be identified by some sort of complement intervening between the finite verb and the late subject (and thus would not appear in a corpus search of XVS and XSV clauses), some cases of late subject are “analytically ambiguous” (Los 2012: 23) and may not have an intervening complement serving as a diagnostic. I identified ambiguous cases by determining whether the verb in each sentence was a lexical unaccusative verb or lexical ‘be’; a diagnostic for these verbs is to determine whether the subject would have feasibly been involved in the action. For instance, the following two sentences involve an unaccusative verb and a late subject, which, on the surface, would appear to be cases of XVS or V2 word order:

- (2) [In this heved of Cancer] **is** the grettist declinacioun northward of the sonne
 [at the head of Cancer] **is** the greatest declination northward of the sun
 ‘The first point of Cancer is the greatest declination northward of the sun’

(A Treatise on the Astolabe, 666.C2.106, PPCME2)

- (3) [now] **comth** biwreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is defamed
 [now] **comes** betraying of counsel, through which a man is defamed
 ‘Now, a man is defamed through the betraying of counsel’

(The Parson’s Tale, 309.C2.897, PPCME2)

The verbs *be* and *come* in (2-3) above do not take a semantic agent as a subject, and thus do not have an external argument. Typically, verbs such as ‘come’, ‘go’, ‘die’, ‘fall’, etc. are unaccusative, “whose surface subject is usually analysed as a more abstract level as a verbal object” (Warner 2007: 91). Thus, these examples were excluded from the analysis, especially as they would not constitute true V2 or V3 word order given no finite verb-movement was involved.

	Information status of initial constituent	Type of subject (syntactic or referential)	Position alongside verb	Type of verb-movement	Occurred in OE?
1	‘Operator’ Focused Contrastive	Pronominal Nominal	Postverbal	V-to-C2	Yes
2	‘Operator’ Focused Contrastive	Pronominal Nominal	Preverbal	V-to-T	Infrequently, lack of syntactic V2
3	Linked/Given	Linked/Given	Postverbal	V-to-C2	Infrequently, possibly ‘syntacticised’, lack of information- structural V2
4	Linked/Given	Linked/Given	Preverbal	V-to-C1	Yes
5	Linked/Given	Unlinked/New	Postverbal	V-to-C1	Yes
6	Linked/Given	Unlinked/New	Preverbal	V-to-T	Infrequently, lack of information- structural V2

Table 15: A table showing the different types of verb-movement in OE and ME, based on the information status or syntactic properties of individual elements of the sentence.

Table 15 serves as a diagnostic for the different types of verb-movement denoted by patterns in the OE and ME data, based on the syntactic and information-structural status of different elements in the sentence. The overall purpose of categorising each sentence based on its referential status is to consider the change in the type of verb-movement from Old to Middle English, and whether Chaucer appeared to follow these within his prose works. This categorisation allows for a comparison between the different text-types related to the pressures of information structure. Old English was primarily affected by the information status of the subject (in contexts with an initial ‘linked’ constituent), i.e. linked/given subjects occurred preverbally, while unlinked/new subjects occurred postverbally, which diminished in ME. These cases involve movement of the verb to the lower portion of the split CP (V-to-C1), as mentioned (4-5 in Table 15 above). However, if there is a large number of cases with preverbal unlinked/new subjects in preverbal position, this ordering would suggest Chaucer primarily adopted V-to-T movement, or an innovative V3 word order that was not impacted by information structure, in the context of initial linked/given environments (6). If there is a large number of cases with postverbal linked/given subjects in this environment, this would also suggest there is a lack of

information-structural pressure on the syntax, and that V2 word order in this context had been syntacticised (e.g. van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012) and Chaucer was adopting an innovative V-to-C2 word order (3).

In addition, in contexts with an initial focused/contrastive or unlinked/new constituent, the unmarked word order in OE was V2 with both pronominal and nominal subjects. Thus, if there are a number of cases of V3/preverbal subjects in this context, Chaucer would have adopted V-to-T movement in these cases too, yet there would have been a lack of a syntactic effect, rather than a lack of an information-structural one (1-2). I have numbered each of these types of verb-movement patterns in Table 15 above, and whether they occurred in OE, potentially building a case as to whether these movement patterns were innovative. The purpose of labelling the different verb-movement patterns from OE to ME is for ease of reference throughout the case study.

Eitler and Westergaard (2014: 203) also use similar categorisations to diagnose different types of ‘grammars’; either a CP-V2, IS-V2, or non-V2 grammar. However, as noted, categorising English as having either a CP- or IP-V2 grammar (or IS-V2 grammar when verb-movement is denoted as occurring to the IP-domain) is problematic for the syntax—there is no embedded V2 in OE, and thus all cases of V2 must have involved V-to-C movement within a split CP. Furthermore, the idea that entire dialects can be described as fully or partially adopting a type of V2/non-V2 grammar in Middle English removes the nuance of the interaction between syntax and IS; there are different sentences within individual texts that might have been impacted by a syntactic, feature-driven motivation, an information-structural tendency, or a syntactic optionality causing verb-movement to the TP- as well as CP-domain; referring to multiple grammars within one text blurs this picture. There is also the question as to how much the audience design of a text, based on these wider categorisations of grammar, would impact the author’s syntax. I return to this issue in Section 5.6.

The following sections go into detail about the findings that compare each of the Chaucerian texts and their use of V2 in different syntactic and information-structural contexts, as well as discuss the reasoning behind these results.

5.3. The use of verb second in *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* and Westwyk's *The Equatorie of the Planetis*

Frequency of V2 with initial operator or discourse-advancing adverb (%) ⁵⁸				
Type of subject (syntactic)	Astrolabe	Overall rate of V2	Equatorie	Overall rate of V2
Pronominal	95 (19/20)	95.8	100 (16/16)	100
Nominal	100 (4/4)		100 (1/1)	
Indefinite	N/A		N/A	

Table 16: A table outlining the frequencies of V2 over V3, divided into the type of initial constituent in the sentence, as well as the syntactic property of the subject, in *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie*.

Frequency of V2 with initial anaphoric constituents (%) ⁵⁹					
Type of subject (IS)	Type of subject (syntactic)	Astrolabe	Overall rate of V2 (IS)	Equatorie	Overall rate of V2 (IS)
Linked (with antecedent)	Pronominal	100 (5/5)	100	100 (2/2)	100
	Nominal	N/A		N/A	
Unlinked (without antecedent)	Nominal	100 (2/2)	100	N/A	N/A
	Indefinite	N/A		N/A	

Table 17: A table outlining the frequencies of V2 over V3, divided into the type of initial constituent in the sentence, as well as the syntactic and information-structural property of the subject, in *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie*.

Tables 16 and 17 compare the frequencies of V2 with different types of subject, found in the texts *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* and *The Equatorie of the Planetis*, when introduced by operators or discourse-advancing/focused adverbs and anaphoric constituents. V2 sentences in *Astrolabe* are mostly introduced by discourse-advancing adverbs, with both pronominal and nominal subjects (95.8% of the time in *Astrolabe*). In

⁵⁸ This type of initial constituent includes discourse-advancing adverbs, such as *then*, *now*, *thus*, *therefore*, *so*, etc., as well as negation (*ne*) which drove V2 at a highly frequent rate in the medieval period, and have been considered ‘operators’. The category also includes constituents that do not have a referent in the preceding discourse, as shown by the ‘unlinked’ constituents in the Pentaset (Komen, Los, van Kemenade 2023). It does not include instances outside of the CP, which are used as conjunctions or text-structuring devices, such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *moreover*, *furthermore*, *also*, etc., and emphatic constructions, such as *for certes* ‘certainly’ and *for sothe* ‘truthfully’ (see Los 2015: 205).

⁵⁹ Anaphoric constituents relate to the ‘linked’ constituents outlined in the Pentaset (Komen, Los, van Kemenade 2023).

particular, the initial adverbs of ‘then’, ‘thus’ and ‘now’ consistently resulted in movement of the verb to second position in these texts (4a-b). The *Equatorie* displays a similar rate of V2 (a categorical rate of 100% in all environments) and likewise uses V2 primarily with these discourse linking adverbs (4c-d).

(4)

- a. [Now] **wol** *I preie mekely every discret persone that redith*
 [now] **will** I pray humbly every single person that reads
or herith this litel tretys ...
 or hears this little treatise ...
 ‘Now I will pray humbly that every single person that reads
 or hears this little treatise ...’

(A Treatise on the Astrolabe, 662.C2.16, PPCME2)

- b. [Than] **hath** *Januarie 31 daies ...*
 [then] **has** January 31 days ...
 ‘Then, January has 31 days ...’

(A Treatise on the Astrolabe, 665.C1.81, PPCME2)

- c. [thanne] **shaltow** *sette the fix point of thy compas ...*
 [then] **shall**-you set the fix point of your compass ...
 ‘Then you shall set the fixed point of your compass ...’

(The Equatorie of the Planetis, 22.70, PPCME2)

- d. [thus] **may** *thin instrument laste perpetuel*
 [thus] **may** thine instrument last perpetually
 ‘Thus, may thine instrument be everlasting’

(The Equatorie of the Planetis, 18.17, PPCME2)

The dialogic use of postverbal linked/familiar pronominal subjects is evident in both texts, which use first person pronoun *I* to teach the use of the instrument (4a), and the second person pronoun *tow* ‘you’ to show the intended audience how they should set their compass (4c), both of which can be categorised with the referential status *assumed*. The consistent use of auxiliary verbs (e.g. *wol* ‘will’ and *shal* ‘shall’), directly followed by the subject pronoun, “carefully guide[s] [the reader] through the process” of using the instrument (Taavitsainen 1994: 334-335). While there is no explicit dialogue, Falk refers to the conversational tone of the texts, which appear to address a specific readership and represents “a dialogue between a scholar and a craftsman within the persona of the author himself” (2019: 348). This feature is evident throughout both scientific handbooks with the

frequent use of dialogic personal pronouns occurring postverbally. Examples (4b) and (4d) also show the use of postverbal linked nominal subjects (*Januarie* ‘January’ and *thin instrument* ‘thine instrument’). These subjects are labelled as *assumed*, representing shared knowledge (*Januarie*), and discourse-old information (*thin instrument*), whereby the abstract use of the readers’ instrument refers to the equatorium in the preceding text. The use of the second person possessive pronoun *thin* ‘thine’ highlights how the author addresses the readership directly, as if it were a live instruction of the instrument.

The highly repetitive nature of the text, using consistent V2 word order with dialogic postverbal subjects, makes the treatises “truly pedagogical”, not only teaching the readership how to use the instrument, but also “giving the reader a profound understanding of what he is doing ...” (Falk 2019: 337). As noted above, the repetitive use of postverbal first and second person pronouns instructs the reader to pinpoint precisely which elements of the astrolabe or equatorium the author is discussing, to aid in understanding the functionality of the instrument. It is also reasonable to expect the use of temporal and discourse-advancing adverbs, such as ‘then’ and ‘now’, to be the most common initial constituents introducing V2 sentences in the scientific texts, which consistently look forward to the following discourse and guide the reader through the use of the instruments. As Freywald et al. found in their study of Germanic vernaculars, the initial temporal constituent acts as an “interpretational frame or anchor for the following statement” to represent “time, place, condition” and “discourse-advancing” (2015: 89). These initial adverbs are employed to a high extent to frame the propositions that follow, rather than for anaphoricity. As Bech (2014: 515) explains, English V2 sentences were often introduced by narrative-advancing ‘then’ in the time periods prior, and it is also evident here in the context of Chaucer and Westwyk. *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie* similarly adopted the discourse-advancing adverbs that drove V2 in Old English, in particular, to reinforce a specific type of pedagogy in the form of an expository handbook, and persuade its readers of the benefits of using these scientific instruments. In addition, the use of V2 introduced by these adverbs is embedded in the need for discourse-continuity throughout texts (van Kemenade & Los 2006).⁶⁰

⁶⁰ The high frequency of V2 introduced by these adverbs in the astronomical texts (as well as in ME texts generally, as per Chapter 4) could potentially be explained by earlier transitions from parataxis to hypotaxis in English. This process is not something I delve into detail here, but see van Kemenade & Los (2006: 230),

Comparatively, there is a lower proportion of sentences introduced by initial anaphoric, or ‘linked’, constituents in *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie*, but when they do occur, these sentences result in V2 rather than V3 word order. Intriguingly, there is no difference in the frequency of V2 depending on if there is a linked or unlinked subject, with a 100% rate of V2 compared to V3 with both subject-types in either text (minus the context of new subjects in *Equatorie*, where there is neither V2 nor V3). Some instances of V2, motivated by the use of initial anaphors, are provided in (5a-d).

(5)

- a. [*This tretis, divided in 5 parties*], **wol** *I shewe the under full*
 [this treatise, divided into 5 parts], **will** *I show thee under full*
light reules and naked wordes in Englissh
 light rules and naked words in English
 ‘This treatise, divided into five parts, I will write these words in English for thee’

(A Treatise on the Astrolabe, 662.C1.12)

- b. [*this cercle*] **wole** *I clepe the lymbe of myn equatorie* ...
 [this circle] **will** *I call the hand of my equatorium* ...
 ‘I will call this circle the hand of my equatorium’

(The Equatorie of the Planetis, 18.10)

- c. [*Next the cercle of the daies*] **folewith** *the cercle of the*
 [next the circle of the days] **follows** *the circle of the*
names of the months
 names of the months
 ‘Next, the circle of the names of the months follows the circle of the days’

(A Treatise on the Astrolabe, 665.C1.78)

- d. [*this lymbe*] **shaltow** *deuyde in 4 quarters by .2. diametral lynes*
 [this hand] **shall**-you divide in 4 quarters by 2 diametric lines
 ‘You shall divide this hand in four quarters by two diametric lines’

(The Equatorie of the Planetis, 18.11)

When V2 with initial anaphoric constituents occurred, albeit rarely, these were typically the types of late Middle English V2 sentences to which Bech refers, that describe

who refer to *syntactic* subordination and coordination of sentences (distinct from *discourse*) which were driven by sentences introduced by discourse-advancing adverbs such as ‘then’.

the existence of something (2014: 515), and in the case of *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie*, they are also linked to an antecedent in the preceding context. Here, the V2 sentences introduce certain aspects of the instruments or astronomy more generally. (4a), (4b) and (4d) are sentences with initial direct objects, all of which point to various entities within the astronomical text, specifically the *tretis* ‘treatise’, *cercle* ‘circle’, and *lymbe* ‘hand’, with the latter two referring to the hand of the equatorium. There is also a direct object within the initial constituent of (4c), which refers to the preceding discourse discussing the 365 days of the year that appear on the compass of the astrolabe. There is no distinction here between the position of linked and unlinked subjects when the sentence is introduced by an initial anaphor, with both subject-types inverting regularly (e.g. the assumed pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’, versus the subject ‘the circle of the names of the months’ which is introduced for the first time in 4c). There is again a consistent link between V2 word order, and the need to persuade readers of the instruments’ usefulness, regardless of the type of subject.

Given the frequent use of V2 over V3 with initial anaphoric constituents, and their occurrence with linked and unlinked subjects, it is unlikely that information-structural pressures affected the ordering of subject and verb in the astronomical handbooks. In OE, as discussed, this environment would generally cause linked/given subjects to occur preverbally, whereas unlinked/new subjects would occur postverbally. This disparity occurred due to the need to display given before new information, and have the verb act as a boundary marker between the two. However, the occurrence of linked subjects postverbally here would suggest this tendency is not borne out in *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie*, which may further signal the syntacticisation of V2 word order (i.e. more frequent V-to-C2 movement, in the context of a split CP) at this stage of the history of English (as described in Chapter 3). The use of V2 in (5a-d) is thus motivated by syntactic pressures rather than IS-based ones.

While the number of instances of V2 are low for contexts with initial anaphors, the fact that they exhibit a syntacticised V-to-C2 movement may be characteristic of the instructional theme of the text more generally. In cases with an initial operator or discourse-advancing adverb used for immediate emphasis or focus, the highly frequent rate of V2 could point toward the need to maintain the pedagogical nature of the discourse in the astronomical texts. Furthermore, the need to consistently push the narrative forward with initial discourse-advancing adverbs, as well as to use verb second order to link between

discourse, might highlight a dynamic movement between coordinating and subordinating linkage (see Bech 2012 on SDRT) in astronomical, and other types of pedagogical, texts. Contextually, *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie* are also a product of the increase in scientific and medical texts written in the vernacular compared to Latin; the high demand for these types of texts may additionally be a contributing factor for the rise of V2 witnessed in the figures of Chapter 4, to which Chaucer and Westwyk appeared to be pioneering.

5.4. The effect of text-type and information structure on verb second in *The Parson's Tale* and *The Tale of Melibee*

Frequency of V2 with initial operator or discourse-advancing adverb (%)				
Type of subject (syntactic)	ParsT	Overall rate of V2	Melibee	Overall rate of V2
Pronominal	64.1 (25/39)	76.1	55.3 (21/38)	54.9
Nominal	93.8 (15/16)		53.8 (7/13)	
Indefinite	91.7 (11/12)		N/A	

Table 18: A table outlining the frequencies of V2 over V3, divided into the type of initial constituent in the sentence, as well as the syntactic property of the subject, in *ParsT* and *Melibee*.

Frequency of V2 with initial anaphoric constituents (%)					
Type of subject (IS)	Type of subject (syntactic)	ParsT	Overall rate of V2 (IS)	Melibee	Overall rate of V2 (IS)
Linked (with antecedent)	Pronominal	70 (14/20)	75	0 (0/5)	28.6
	Nominal	100 (4/4)		100 (2/2)	
Unlinked (without antecedent)	Nominal	100 (5/5)	85.7	0 (0/1)	0
	Indefinite	50 (1/2)		N/A	

Table 19: A table outlining the frequencies of V2 over V3, divided into the type of initial constituent in the sentence, as well as the syntactic and information-structural property of the subject, in *ParsT* and *Melibee*.

Tables 18 and 19 compare the frequencies of V2 present in the two prose texts from *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Parson's Tale* and *The Tale of Melibee*, categorised by different types of subject and initial constituent. These tables are separated based on whether the sentence exhibits syntactic/discourse marking (operators and focused adverbs) or IS-based properties (anaphoric constituents), like Tables 16-17 in the previous section. Eisner states that “‘technical writing’ is not a medieval term. The medieval author looked on himself as a writer, usually, he hoped, in the service of God. The subject matter, what it was, remained a part of God’s provenance and was treated accordingly.” (1985: 179). The use of a discourse-advancing and pedagogical narrative in *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie* reflects a rhetoric that is very much aligned with a moral kind of instruction. The argumentation in these types of texts therefore might be similar to that of religious treatises and sermons—could we expect the same type of structure in *The Parson's Tale*, given it is equally based on the same moral instruction? Like *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie*, *The Parson's Tale* exhibits an overall rate of V2 (in comparison to V3) above 70% in all sentential environments, with both initial discourse-advancing adverbs and anaphoric constituents. As will be shown, *ParsT* employs highly repetitive explanatory and persuasive devices, in the form of V2 structure, to explicitly advance an argument regarding the teachings of penitence and the Seven Deadly Sins. On the other hand, *The Tale of Melibee* employs V2 at the lower rate of 54.9% within the focused, discourse-advancing group, which is even lower with initial anaphors (28.6% with linked subjects). It is a text that more implicitly instructs on the value of mercy, in the form of an apologue rather than a sermon. I now demonstrate examples of V2 and V3 from each text that uphold these different styles of argument, both explicit and implicit, as well as explore whether these text-types are driven by information-structural pressures on the position of subjects alongside the verb.

As mentioned, the V2 of *The Parson's Tale* occurs at a higher rate than that of *The Tale of Melibee*. Much of the tale serves as a reminder of Jesus’ suffering and the need to repent for one’s sins, as exemplified by the definition of penitence from the outset of the tale: “Penitence is the waymentynge of man that sorweth for his synne” (Benson 2008: 288). The following examples (6a-b) represent maintenance of this penitence rhetoric.

(6)

- a. [Now] **shaltow** *understande what is bihovely and necessarie to verray perfit*
[now] **shall**-you understand what is suitable and necessary to true perfect
Penitence
Penitence
'Now you shall understand what is suitable and necessary for true and perfect
Penitence'

(The Parson's Tale, 289.C1.41)

- b. [Now] **hath** *malice two speces*
[now] **hath** malice two species
'Now malice has two species'

(The Parson's Tale, 303.C1.601)

Chaucer consistently uses V2 structures introduced by temporal adverbs (6a-b) to encourage the reader toward the idea of penitence and the participation in such an act. For instance, in (6b), he specifically discusses the role of malice as part of the sin of envy. As shown in Table 18, *ParsT* has a rate of V2, within the context of operators/discourse-advancing adverbs, of 64.1% with pronominal subjects, and 93.8% with nominal subjects. These rates are comparable to Chaucer's *Astrolabe*, with a V2 usage of 95.8% and 100% respectively. Even though V2 is not as frequent in this context for *ParsT* compared to *Astrolabe*, which might reflect the scientific, pedagogical nature of *Astrolabe* as a consistently narrative-advancing text with specific instruction, there is still a V2 frequency of more than 50% with both types of subjects. Compared to the rates of V2 seen in Chapter 4, whereby some dialects and texts exhibited rates below 50% even with initial discourse-advancing adverbs such as *now* (considered to have driven V2 to a near-categorical extent in OE), the frequency of V2 in *ParsT* could be considered much higher.

There is also more frequent use of sentences introduced by initial "frame-setters" in *ParsT*, which, here, generally result in V3 word order. These frame-setters do not generally introduce sentences in the astronomical texts; texts which favoured the shorter discourse-advancing adverbs such as 'then' and 'now'. Los et al. (2023) mention that the loss of "local anchoring" – the loss of initial constituents which consistently linked to the preceding context – perhaps declined in favour of initial frame-setters, such as prepositional phrases which introduced the narrative in the following context. The following examples

reflect this use of initial frame-setters, which precede the subject and the verb in third position. Only one example occurred with a verb in second position (see 7c):

(7)

- a. [*Agayns three manere of wronges that his enemy dooth to hym*], he **shal**
 [against three manner of wrongs that his enemy does to him], he **shall**
doon three thynges
 do three things
 ‘Against three manner of wrongs that his enemy does to him,
 he shall do three things’

(The Parson’s Tale, 304.C2.666)

- b. [*Agayns hate and rancour of herte*], he **shal** love hym in herte.
 [against hate and bitterness of heart], he **shall** love him in heart
 ‘Against hatred and bitterness, he shall love him in his heart’

(The Parson’s Tale, 304.C2.667)

- c. [*Agayns the riches of this world*] **shul** they han mysese of poverté
 [against the riches of this world] **shall** they have misery of poverty
 ‘Against the riches of this world, they shall have misery of poverty’

(The Parson’s Tale, 292.C1.152)

In *ParsT*, a number of the sentences that are introduced by frame-setters (often followed by preverbal subjects) begin with PPs and the preposition ‘against’. These sentences occur in close succession with one another. The consistent use of sentences with an initial frame-setter as in (7a-c) demonstrates that we might be seeing a highly repeated, potentially syntacticised, word order in Chaucer, within a text that has an explicit rhetoric regarding penitence. These frame-setters assist in the flow of argumentation, with the same type of frame-setter occurring consistently. They generally occur with the verb in the third position, reflecting an innovative V-to-T movement pattern, even though pronominal subjects rarely occurred preverbally prior to this time period. Consequently, V3 word order might have been emerging in specific environments whereby there is repetition of the same initial frame-setter throughout.

Conversely, Chaucer might have adopted an innovative V2 word order with the use of initial local anchors in *ParsT*, especially with linked/given subjects, despite these types of subjects generally occurring preverbally in OE (due to their need to be close to their

antecedent in the preceding discourse). The following examples (8a-d) highlight cases of postverbal linked subjects (both pronominal and nominal) in contexts with initial local anchors, despite their rare appearance in the history of English generally, and their decline in late ME (as per, for example, Los 2009; Dreschler 2015; Los et al. 2023):

(8)

- a. [By the fruyt of hem] **shul** ye knowen hem
[by the fruit of them] **shall** you know them
'By fruit of them, you shall know them'

(The Parson's Tale, 289.C2.49)

- b. [After Pride] **wol** I speken of the foule synne of Envye
[after Pride] **will** I speak of the foul sin of Envy
'I will speak of the foul sin of Envy after Pride'

(The Parson's Tale, 303.C1.597)

- c. [thyn enemy] **shalttow** love for goddes sake, by his comandement
[thine enemy] **shall**-you love for God's sake, by his commandment
'By his commandment, you shall love thine enemy for God's sake'

(The Parson's Tale, 304.C2.664)

- d. [That] **suffred** Crist ful paciently in al his passioun.
[that] **suffered** Christ very patiently in all his passion
'In all his passion, Christ suffered that very patiently'

(The Parson's Tale, 310.C1.942)

As mentioned, linked/given subjects rarely occurred postverbally in contexts with an initial anaphor, due to the tendencies of information structure to position given before new information, and so that the verb could act as a barrier between given and new information. Thus, the fact that Chaucer positions linked subjects postverbally in sentences introduced by local anchors is surprising. This type of word order is also seen occasionally in *Astrolabe*, with linked subjects occurring more frequently postverbally than preverbally in this context. In contexts with an initial anaphor in *ParsT*, V2 occurs 70% of the time with linked subjects, and 100% of the time with unlinked subjects (Table 19), suggesting a preference for the verb in second position in this context with both subject-types. While postverbal unlinked subjects still occur more frequently than postverbal linked subjects in this environment, Chaucer is using a pattern of V2 that reflects the weakened pressure of information structure on the position of the verb and the subsequent rise of postverbal

linked/given subjects. Specifically, local anchors in (8a-d) are used in *ParsT* to strengthen the link with their antecedents, and weave an argument throughout. The use of local anchors additionally relates to the concept of discourse subordination as presented by Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2005) and Bech (2012). For instance, (8a-b) are introduced by PPs *by the fruyt of hem* ‘by the fruit of them’ (labelled *identity*) and *after Pride* (labelled *inferred*). These PPs are anchored to the antecedents *digne fruyt of Penitence* ‘the worthy fruit of Penitence’ and *men* (8a), and the discussion of ‘pride’ in the preceding sections (8b), respectively. Furthermore, (8c-d) are anchored to preceding discourse using the direct objects *thyn enemy*, labelled *assumed/inferred*, and *that*, labelled *identity*. *Thyn enemy* (8c) refers to the discussion of one’s enemy in the preceding sentences (but also, the use of the possessive pronoun ‘thine’ is in the second-person, which can be assumed by the reader to be related to themselves). *That* in example (8d) refers to the preceding sentence discussing a *thridde grievance* ‘third grievance’ regarding mankind having ‘harm in his body’. Both of these initial objects, and the two initial PPs, are thus anchored within the discourse, and precede the verb in its second position, even though the subjects in each of these sentences have an antecedent.⁶¹ These examples also highlight the relation of V2 to discourse subordination, linking a string of sentences to maintain a specific argument through the use of familiar initial anaphors, which is interestingly not dependent on the IS status of the subject.

It is clear that in *ParsT* there is a need to preserve the subordinating discourse relations forged by the verb being in second position, which is stronger than the tendency for given information to be placed closer to its preceding context. The frequent use of postverbal given/familiar subjects suggests that the verb does not fulfil the role of separating the ‘aboutness’ topic (denoted by the initial constituent), from the newer information. These are signs that the word order is becoming syntacticised, reflecting a categorical V2 syntax in which all types of subjects could invert, regardless of their information-structural status. As mentioned in van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012: 114), this type of word order may reflect a “syntactic V2” which is motivated by the

⁶¹ One of the interesting aspects of these postverbal subjects is that a large proportion of them are *assumed* (i.e. they have an antecedent that is known amongst the readership which is external to the text, such as ‘Christ’, ‘I’, ‘you’). This pattern is potentially something to investigate further in texts with a large number of sentences with initial local anchors, because it might help to explain why these structures appear to be syntacticised and occur repeatedly. Since there are much fewer sentences with local anchors in *Astrolabe*, *Equatorie*, and *Melibee* to be able to ascertain whether potential syntacticised structures have postverbal *assumed* subjects within them, I reserve this for further research.

acquisition of L1 learners. Here, I suggest this word order is borne out, but is also very much dependent on the type of text and the lack of reliance on IS. In the case of *ParsT*, this repeated, syntacticised order is because of the need to perpetuate the penitence rhetoric. Because this word order was not used extensively in OE, and generally was the result of verb-movement to the lower CP domain (with linked subjects occurring before the verb, and unlinked, after), this structure adopted by Chaucer must be innovative. Verb-movement instead occurred to the higher CP domain, often used for a categorical V2 syntax with initial operators. The same thing occurs in *Astrolabe*, but for the purposes of teaching astronomy (although, similarly, through the guidance of God), rather than to preach a sermon on penitence.

The Tale of Melibee presents a usage of V2 that is much lower compared to the other texts I have presented in this case study, with a higher use of V3 word order instead. I argue here that this lower usage is reflected by the fact that it is a fictional prose text and moral apologue, with frequent use of philosophical proverbs and an allegorical narrative.

As shown in Table 18, the rate of V2 with linked subjects in *Melibee*, in the case of initial discourse-advancing adverbs is 55.3% with pronominal subjects and 53.8% with nominal subjects—both subject-types occur postverbally at similar rates. In sentences introduced by anaphors, the rate of V2 with linked subjects is 28.6%, and 0% with unlinked subjects. However, it should be noted that there are much fewer instances of post- and preverbal new subjects in *Melibee*, compared to *ParsT* and *Astrolabe*. Nevertheless, the overall frequency of V2 is much lower than in the other texts, suggesting *Melibee* more readily used preverbal subjects where the more explicit rhetoric present in *ParsT* and *Astrolabe* might have placed them postverbally. (9a-b) are instances of V2 in *Melibee*, introduced by two different constituents.

(9)

- a. [Thus] **sholde** ye understonde the philosophre that seith ...
 [thus] **should** you understand the philosophy that says ...
 ‘You should therefore understand the philosophy that says...’

(The Tale of Melibee, 221.C1.154)

- b. [*To thise forseide thynges*] **answerde** *Melibeus unto his wyf Prudence*
 [to these foresaid things] **answered** Melibee unto his wife Prudence
 ‘Melibee answered to these foresaid things to his wife Prudence’

(The Tale of Melibee, 218.C1.43)

(9a) is a V2 sentence introduced by the adverb *thus*, a type of V2 that often occurred in *ParsT* and *Astrolabe*, where V2 was frequently driven by initial short discourse-advancing adverbs. Again, the use of the modal verb followed by the personal pronoun is dialogic (Taavitsainen 1994). However, the message of the tale is directed toward the character of Melibee via Dame Prudence, rather than toward the reader, as in *ParsT*. The use of V2 in these contexts in *Melibee* is over a half more than the use of V3, with a rate of 54.9% with both pronominal and nominal subjects.

(9b) represents a V2 sentence that is not affected by the pressures of information structure; the linked subject *Melibeus* ‘Melibee’ occurs postverbally despite the tendency for linked subjects to occur closer to preceding discourse in English. The use of the initial anaphor, *to thise forseide thynges* ‘to these foresaid things’, refers to the lessons taught by Melibee’s wife Prudence, and allows for the link to be made between the preceding narrative and the current narrative spoken by either character. However, this type of V2 is seen less frequently in *Melibee*, compared to *Astrolabe* and *ParsT*, with only two out of the seven sentences introduced by an initial anaphor including a postverbal linked subject. Instead, such subjects generally occur preverbally, as in the below examples (10a-c):

(10)

- a. [*Almost right in the same wise*] *the phisiciens* **answerden**
 [almost right in the same way] the physicians **answered**
 ‘In almost the same way, the physicians answered’

(The Tale of Melibee, 218.C2.62)

- b. [*By thise resons that I have seid unto yow, and by manye othere resons*
 [by these reasons that I have said unto you, and by many other reasons
that I koude seye], *I* **graunte** yow ...
 that I could say], I **grant** you ...

(The Tale of Melibee, 233.C1.623)

- c. [Whanne Melibee hadde herd [...]], his herte **gan** enclyne
 [when Melibee had heard [...]], his heart **began** turn
 to the wil of his wif
 to the will of his wife
 ‘When Melibee heard of [...], his heart turned to the will of his wife’

(The Tale of Melibee, 239.C2.852)

(10a) is a sentence with a preverbal unlinked subject – *the phisiciens* ‘the physicians’ – introduced for the first time in the discourse (and thus labelled, *new*). The subject also occurs before the verb *answerden* ‘answered’, which similarly occurred in (9b) but in second position, suggesting some variation in the use of V2 and V3 here. The sentence begins with a local anchor, as we have seen in *ParsT*. Similarly, the sentences in (10b-c) begin with local anchors, occurring before a preverbal (*assumed*) first-person pronoun, and the linked (*inferred*) nominal subject *his herte* ‘his heart’, respectively. These sentences are introduced by an entire clause occurring within the specifier of the CP. More specifically, the clause occurs in the specifier position of the FrameP, the frame-setting phrase, which modifies “the temporal coordinates” of the SV sentence (Haegeman & Greco 2018: 51). The fact that these sentences, introduced by entire clauses, make up the majority of sentences in the category of initial anaphors (five out of the seven sentences introduced by an initial anaphor), might reflect the texts’ categorisation as an apologue. The preverbal linked subjects here have a much more local antecedent – within the same sentence – compared to the pre- and postverbal subjects in *ParsT*. For example, in *ParsT* (8d), the postverbal subject ‘Christ’ has a non-textual antecedent as it is a world-known referent. Instead, the use of main-clause external initial constituents in sentences with linked subjects in *Melibee* may be beneficial for an apologue, especially one in which there is an implicit rhetoric embedded within the story. The higher rate of preverbal new subjects in *Melibee* potentially reflects the growing use of V3 in Middle English, affecting *Melibee* more than *ParsT*. Overall, the fact that linked subjects occur more commonly in a preverbal rather than postverbal position in contexts with initial anaphors potentially represents a stronger influence from the given-before-new tendency compared to *ParsT* (thus reflecting the traditional V-to-C1 movement in OE), although there are few sentences with initial anaphors in *Melibee* to be able to confirm this finding with any assurance.

V3 word order also occurs regularly with initial frame-setters in *Melibee*. In *ParsT*, we saw that the initial frame-setters introducing new information, which gave rise to both

V2 and V3 word order, generally began with the preposition *agayns* ‘against’, resulting in the innovative V-to-T (V3) word order. Alternatively, in *Melibee*, the frame-setters are generally main clause-external (similar to above, as in 10b-c), or are initial PPs. Two examples are provided below:

(11)

- a. [*In muchel suffrynge*] **shul** *manye thynges falle unto thee*
 [in much suffering] **shall** many things fall unto thee
 ‘In much suffering, many things shall happen to thee’

(The Tale of Melibee, 230.C2.523)

- b. [*In wikked conseil*] *women venquisschen hir housbondes*
 [in wicked counsel] women vanquish their husbands
 ‘Women vanquish their husbands with wicked counsel’

(The Tale of Melibee, 221.C1.154)

The initial frame-setters in the above sentences exhibit new information, looking forward to the narrative to provide context for the rest of the sentence. In (11a), the verb occurs second, while in (11b) the verb occurs third. There are eight cases with initial frame-setters that have the verb in third position, while only one has the verb in second position (11a). As Los et al. (2023) allude to in their study of initial local anchors, there is likely a growing frequency of initial frame-setters in favour of local anchors, as the initial constituent begins to become less multifunctional. Furthermore, Middle English texts began to make use of preverbal subjects, both linked and unlinked, to refer to preceding discourse (within both XSV and SVO orders), especially as this initial constituent became less multifunctional (Los 2009; Freywald et al. 2015). In particular, these word orders helped structure narrative discourses, which often followed temporal adverbials as frame-setters (Freywald et al. 2015: 91-92). Given changes to the initial constituent began during the time that *Melibee* was written, it makes sense that the narrative would adopt an incoming V3 word order (or V-to-T movement), as subjects began to take over discourse-advancing properties and were required to occur preverbally. In OE, such contexts would result in a syntactic, feature-driven V2, with consistent verb-movement to the highest portion of the CP-domain. Additionally, frame-setters appeared in a wider variety of ways in *Melibee* compared to *ParsT* (e.g. they were PPs or clausal), which might also represent a coordinating discourse that allows for a narrative to advance (Bech 2012 on SDRT). This

discourse relation is unlike that of *ParsT*, which adopts a rhetoric requiring a continual link to the preceding discourse in order to argue for specific morals.

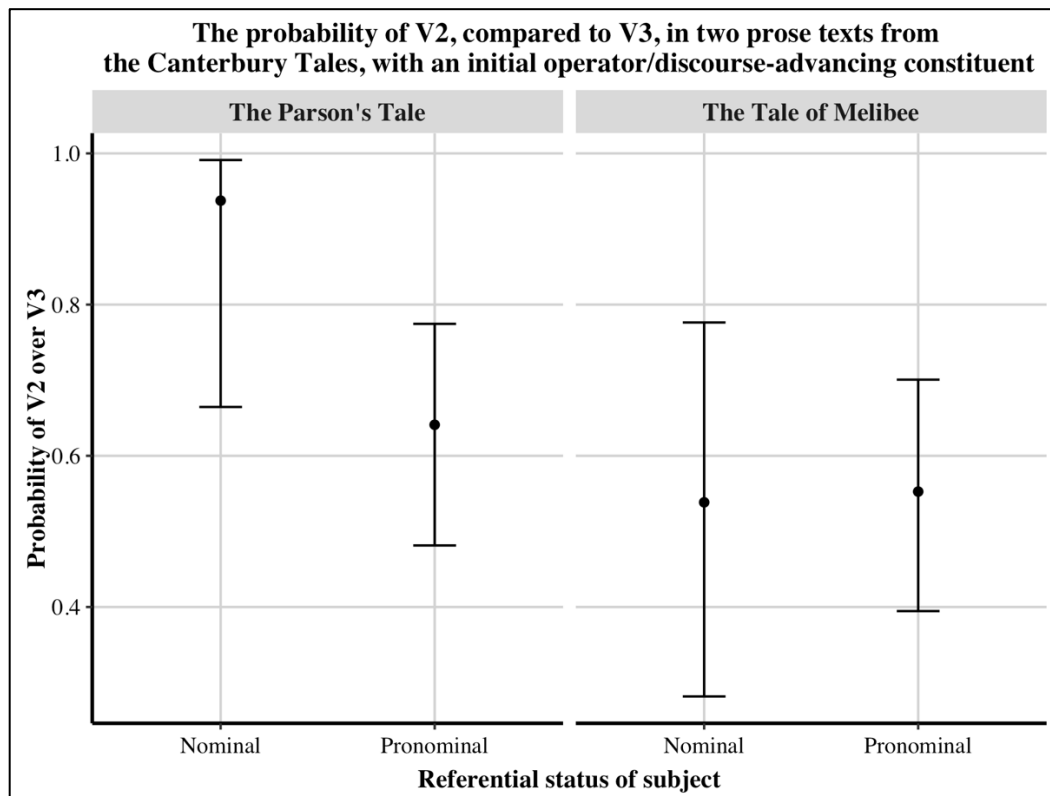


Figure 30: An error-bar chart showing the probability that the syntactic property of the subject (pronominal or nominal) predicts the appearance of V2 over V3 in *The Parson's Tale* and *The Tale of Melibee*, in contexts with an initial operator/discourse-advancing constituent.

In Figures 30-31, I provide a visualisation of the probability of the syntactic/IS status of the subject (either pronominal or nominal, or linked or unlinked) predicting the appearance of V2 over V3 word order in the two texts. Using binomial logistic regression tests, I compared the likelihood that the syntactic or IS status of the subject drove the placement of the verb (and resulted in a V2/XVS or V3/XSV sentence) in *The Parson's Tale* and *The Tale of Melibee*, in contexts with either an initial operator/discourse-advancing adverb or anaphor/linked constituent.⁶²

In contexts with an initial operator or discourse-advancing adverb (which was not linked to the preceding context in any way and frames the context of the sentence) the type of text (either *ParsT* or *Melibee*) was a significant predictor on the use of V2 over V3 (*p*-

⁶² I use the statistical model here specifically for *ParsT* and *Melibee*, given their more frequent instances of V2 and V3 throughout the text, especially with initial anaphors exhibiting linked information.

value = 0.03 when comparing *Melibee* to *ParsT*). The probability that *ParsT* used V2 over V3 was 83.8%, and for *Melibee* it was 54.6% in this context. In *ParsT*, nominal subjects were 8.4 times more likely to occur postverbally than pronominal subjects (a statistically significant finding, with a *p*-value of 0.05). In *Melibee*, the odds of nominal subjects occurring postverbally was lower in this context, with an odds ratio of 0.9, although this was insignificant (*p*-value = 0.9). The main aspect to take-away from these findings is that generally, the probability of V2 over V3 word order appearing was higher in *ParsT* compared to *Melibee*, and that this prediction based on type of text was statistically significant. Based on some of the specific examples that I have detailed above, this finding might suggest that there is an important discourse relation distinction to be made between either text, due to the way in which they utilise V2 word order, which could be linked to the type of rhetoric (whether explicit or implicit). Particularly, the use of V2 may provide subordinating discourse relations between sentences in *ParsT*, to perpetuate an explicit rhetoric regarding sinful behaviour, while the use of V3 in *Melibee* may allow the hidden messages of morality within the narrative to be advanced. The more frequent V3 word order in *Melibee* represents the innovative V-to-T movement that grew in frequency in the late ME, as the frequency of V2 began to decline.

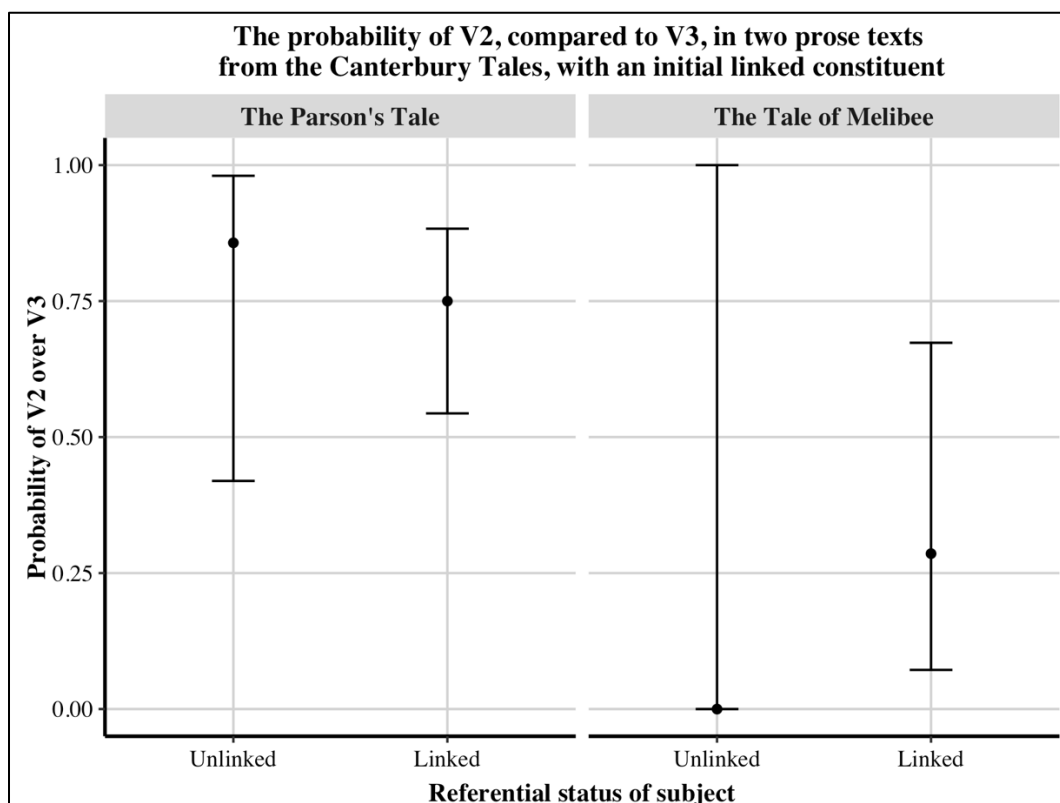


Figure 31: A error-bar chart showing the probability that the information status of the subject (given or new) predicts the appearance of V2 over V3 in *The Parson's Tale* and *The Tale of Melibee*, in contexts with an initial linked constituent.

In addition, I applied the statistical model to sentences with an initial anaphor/linked constituent, which may involve initial local anchors that provide links to the preceding context (Figure 31). The data in this context was sparser, especially for *Melibee*, which might explain some of the following findings. The probability of V2 over V3 occurring in *ParsT* in this context was 81%, yet was near 0% for *Melibee*. However, this finding was not statistically significant, with a p -value of 0.9. The probability of linked subjects occurring postverbally in *ParsT* was 75%, whereas in *Melibee* this probability was 28.6%, suggesting the use of V2 in *ParsT* relied less upon the tendencies of information structure, countering the historical tendency of English sentences to place given information high in the sentence. In *ParsT*, unlinked/new subjects were 2 times more likely to occur postverbally than linked/given subjects, however, this finding was not statistically significant, with a p -value of 0.6. In *Melibee*, the odds of unlinked/new subjects occurring postverbally was 0, although this was also insignificant (p -value = 0.9), and may be due to the lack of data for these types of subjects in this text.

There is therefore little to say statistically when analysing sentences introduced by initial anaphors across the two texts, but the types of V2 and V3 sentence present within them might suggest two things. First, as mentioned above, the higher rate of V2 in *ParsT* over *Melibee*, in contexts with initial anaphors, might be linked to the subordinating discourse relations between sentences, compared to a more coordinating discourse relation in *Melibee*. Second, the fact that there is a much lower rate of V2 with linked/given subjects in *Melibee* compared to *ParsT* in this context is also important, because there is potentially less of a move toward a syntacticised V2 word order that inverts the subject and verb regardless of the IS status of the subject. In *Melibee*, it is possibly the case that there is an IS tendency placed upon the V2 syntax, since linked subjects generally do not occur postverbally. Although, without the data for unlinked subjects, it is difficult to conclude this final finding with certainty.

5.5. Summary of the impact of syntax, information structure, and discourse relations in Chaucerian prose works

There are three main conclusions that this case study of Chaucerian text-types suggests in relation to historical V2 use in English: first, a weakened link between information structure (IS) and syntax is a driver for changes to V2 syntax in this time period; second, Chaucer's individual use of V2 mirrors the rise of a 'syntacticised' V2, occurring regardless of the information status of the subject and initial constituent; and finally, the growing inability of IS-based tendencies to make a lower structural position available for verb-movement within a split CP resulted in a coexistence of multiple options for V2 and V3, which led to change in the frequency of V2, as exemplified by texts with different types of rhetoric and argumentation. I will now recap the main arguments behind each of these conclusions in turn.

The weakened link between syntax and IS drove verb-movement in late medieval English led to a situation of syntactic optionality between V2 and V3 structure. This is reflected in the four potential verb-movement patterns present in the Chaucerian texts (and late ME generally). What drives these four verb-movement patterns? A 'traditional' V-to-C2 movement (movement to the highest portion of a split CP, with origins as far back as Old English) was driven by a syntactic, feature-driven operation—i.e. there was a V feature

in C requiring the verb to move there. Additionally, the highest verbal position in a split CP came to house verb-movement driven by the presence of a focused element in initial position, as the highest position was also linked to focus. Thus, sentences introduced by syntactic operators such as *wh*-words and negation, as well as discourse operators such as temporal ‘then’ and ‘now’, serve as diagnostics for verb-movement to the highest position, C2, when the verb appears in second position on the surface. Traditional V-to-C1 movement, which also occurred in OE and began to decline in frequency in ME, can be diagnosed by the presence of an initial anaphoric constituent, leading to the presence of the verb in the lower portion of the CP, and the occurrence of a surface given subject in pre-verbal position and a new subject in post-verbal position. In some dialects or texts, there was therefore the co-existence of a V-to-C2 structure introduced by a focus-centred or an anaphoric constituent; regardless of the IS status of the sentence, verb-movement occurred to the highest portion of the split CP.

At the same time as the decoupling of information structure and syntax was increasing the number of options available, there was a ‘syntacticisation’ of V2 which led to two additional word orders increasingly seen in some of Chaucer’s texts, and elsewhere in ME. These include the ‘innovative’ V-to-C2 movement and V-to-T movement. The former is diagnosed by the presence of an initial anaphoric constituent, and the verb occurring in second position on the surface regardless of the type of subject (e.g. with given subjects). This is a syntacticised word order which was not sensitive to information structure, which once drove the existence of a lower verbal position in the split CP in OE. The latter is the growing V3 word order, and can be diagnosed by the occurrence of the verb in third position on the surface, and the existence of a syntactic or discourse ‘operator’ in initial position (with any type of subject), or the existence of an initial anaphoric constituent and a new subject—highlighting the verb must have moved to a position lower than the lowest possible subject position.

The unavailability of a lower position for verb-movement, as a result of the weakened link between syntax and IS, led to a situation whereby multiple options could exist for writers who were forming texts with different types of rhetoric, as exemplified by Chaucer’s prose works. Both a near-categorical V2 syntax, driven by a syntactic operation (a process which is denoted by a verb position no longer sensitive to information-structural tendencies to place given information, high and new information, low), and the emergence

of a V3 syntax, represented by V-to-T movement (with the verb consistently occurring after the position of the subject), could coexist during the late medieval period due to syntactic optionality. As Adger (2006, 2016) states, it is possible for a syntactic grammar to have several surface forms, which do not alter the underlying meaning of the sentence. This theory, which comes from a minimalist perspective of intrapersonal variation, can also explain why the underlying grammar of a writer such as Chaucer might not hold a one-to-one semantic relationship with a surface form. Instead, there are patterns pointing to the existence of probabilistic variation between multiple surface forms. Adger refers to his theory of ‘Combinatorial Variability’ as the following:

“[...] when two syntactic elements are in an Agree/Checking relationship, one of them will bear uninterpretable features. Since those features are uninterpretable, their presence will not impact on the semantic interpretation of the structure.”

Adger (2016: 59)

The coexistence of different syntactic forms in the data, in this case, with Chaucer’s high use of V2 word order in some texts, and a higher use of V3 word order in others, can be explained by utilising uninterpretable features. In a grammar with V2 word order, V3 word order could exist because it was not interpreted differently on the surface. This variability is particularly relevant when discussing how the link between the ordering of the verb and subject and tendencies of information structure (i.e. a given subject occurring before the verb to link to a referent in the preceding discourse) weakened in Middle English: a syntactic representation could also have multiple surface options regardless of the IS status of different syntactic elements. Thus, the combined effect of syntactic optionality, and the lack of an IS-sensitive verbal position separating given and new information, led to the coexistence of V-to-C2 movement and V-to-T movement, and corresponding V2 and V3 surface forms.

Figure 32 below highlights the coexisting types of verb-movement present in the Chaucerian texts *Astrolabe*, *ParsT* and *Melibee*. As noted above, the positions for verb-movement during the late medieval period were probabilistically driven by information structure; the tendency to place given information before new information. The types of V2 and V3 word order shown in this case study showed signs of the weakening link between syntax and information structure, as V2 and V3 structures often occurred regardless of the information status of the subject and initial constituent.

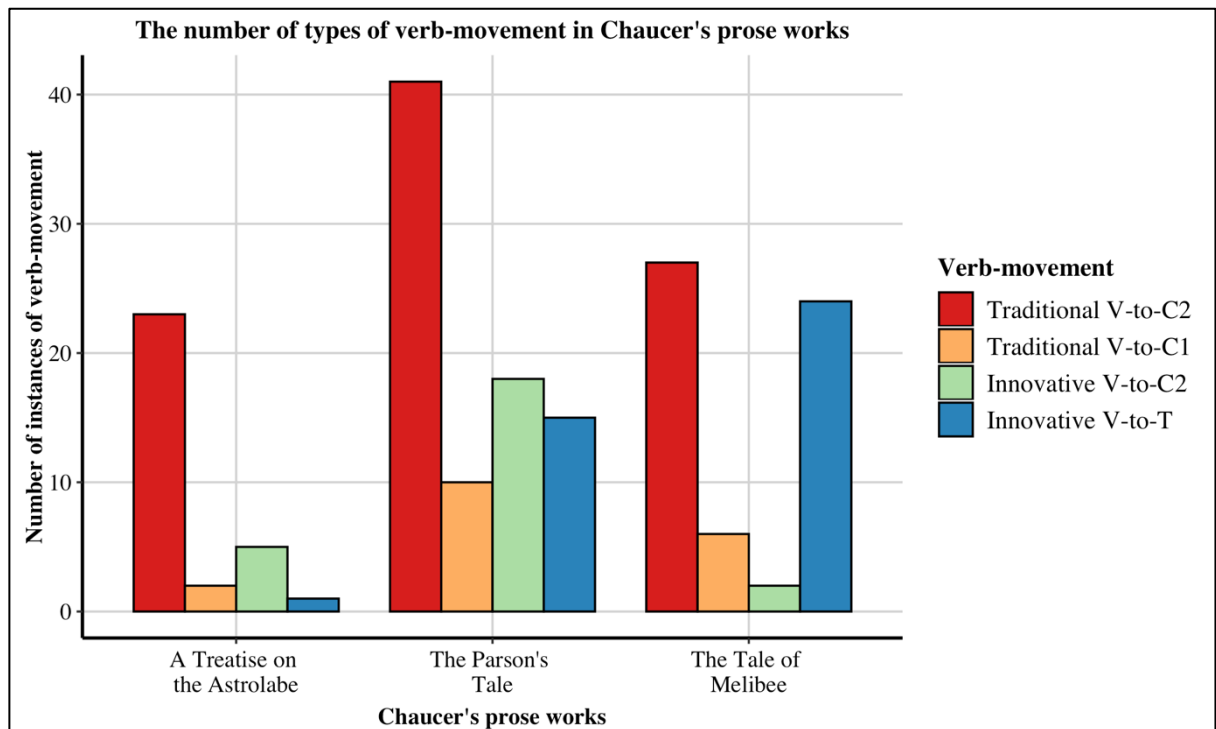


Figure 32: A series of bar charts to show the number of different types of verb-movement patterns in Chaucer's prose works.

Figure 32 summarises the discussion in the above sections regarding the pressures of syntax and information structure on verb-movement in Chaucer's different prose works. The x-axis represents the different Chaucerian texts, while the y-axis reflects the number of instances of the different types of verb-movement listed in the key. These verb-movement patterns are based on the motivation behind different verbal positions within the CP and TP domain, as described above.

Astrolabe primarily had a 'traditional' verb-movement to the highest point of the split CP (23 cases)—V2 primarily occurred in this text with initial discourse-advancing adverbs used for focus/emphasis and to move the teaching of astronomy forward. The second most common type of verb-movement in this text was an 'innovative' verb-movement to the highest point of the split CP again (5 cases, versus 2 cases of 'traditional' V-to-C1 movement). Here, linked subjects occurred postverbally despite there being an initial anaphor; historically, this type of verb-movement would have resulted in preverbal order. V3 word order occurs the most infrequently, with only one case. Thus, overall, verb-movement in *Astrolabe* is driven by a traditional V-to-C2 movement, a syntactic V2 order not impacted by IS.

For *ParsT*, there is a very similar situation in that there is frequent ‘traditional’ V-to-C2 movement (41 cases), thus exhibiting a syntactic, feature-driven verb-movement. ‘Innovative’ V-to-C2 also occurs frequently, a syntacticised type of V2, with 18 cases. In this text, there is more variability in the use of V3 on the surface, representing the optionality in verb-movement to C and T (15 cases). *Melibee* also has a fairly common syntactically-driven V2 (27 cases), yet has an equally frequent V3 word order (24 cases). The V3 word order present in *ParsT* and *Melibee* is driven by syntactic optionality/variability, as well as the weakened link between syntax and IS, which once drove a verbal position that acted as a boundary marker between given and new information in OE. Innovative V-to-C2 (2 cases) also occurs less than traditional V-to-C1 (6 cases), suggesting that V2 may be more frequently driven by information-structural factors, with the verb separating initial given constituents and linked/given subjects from the new information exhibited by the remainder of the sentence. This is unlike *ParsT* which has 8 more cases of innovative V-to-C2 than traditional V-to-C1. Even though the statistical model does not provide conclusive evidence with regard to the impact of IS on V2 in either of these texts, visually, there appears to be differences between the use of types of V2/V3.

While one might expect *ParsT* and *Melibee* to exhibit similar types of verb-movement patterns, as they are both morally didactic prose works, these findings suggest there is a difference in the types of syntactic pressures between them. The texts closest in their types of verb-movement patterns are *Astrolabe* and *ParsT*, given their high rates of V2 overall, as well as the use of both traditional and innovative syntactic verb-movement to the highest part of the split CP. I base these similarities and differences in verb-movement patterns across the texts on the interaction of syntax, information structure and discourse relations. Information structure does not tend to play a large role in texts where there is an exhortative rhetoric or subject to be guided through; the use of V2 here is to elaborate on the discourse that comes before, while also placing emphasis on the initial constituent and verb, which holds most of the semantic content. This is the case with the teachings of astronomy in *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, and the teachings of sin in *The Parson’s Tale*, using modal verbs and dialogic first- and second-person pronouns to draw the reader in. These are characteristic of elaborative and subordinating discourse relations to solidify the argument perpetuated throughout the text. In contrast, *The Tale of Melibee* frequently adopts an innovative V3 word order. Since *Melibee* has no real “definitive didactic meaning” (Yeager 2014: 310), as a result of its hidden argument via an apologue, V3 is

used more often to coordinate structures together to further the narrative. There is therefore more focus on telling a story and weaving an argument of morality via this narrative.

When there was high variation in the placement of the verb (i.e. in either the CP or TP domain) in the late medieval period – partly driven by the weakening link between syntax and IS which once drove verb-movement to the lower portion of the CP – there was also ambiguity as to where subjects should be positioned. Prior to this point, the positions of informationally old and new subjects were different, and were remerged in high and low specifier positions, respectively, due to their sensitivity to information structure. As noted by Biberauer and van Kemenade (2011: 55), in late ME, there would have been ambiguity as to whether the specifier position in TP remained a position driven by information structure, due to the existence of internal arguments within passive and unaccusative structures (where given internal arguments underwent raising and new internal arguments were unraised), and expletive *it* within clefts (pointing toward the existence of a specific or presupposed XP), for example. Amongst this ambiguity, in some Northern and East Midlands sentences, the verb might have continued to move to the highest portion of the CP domain (following the loss of the lower CP position for an information-structural motivation), while the subject position for both given and new subjects may have also moved to Spec, TP. These two changes, with verb-movement to a high C position and argument-movement to a low Spec, TP position (regardless of the IS sensitivity of either the initial constituent or the subject), would have reinforced a V2 structure in the dialect. Thus, the changes in the position of the verb, whether it should move to C or T, may have been interacting with the changes represented by the ambiguity of the positioning of the verb—whether different types of subject were sensitive to information structure, or alternatively, had moved to Spec, TP.

The different types of verb-movement patterns present in these prose works, and use of a range of types of initial constituents and subjects based on the pressures of syntax and IS, emphasise Chaucer's role in paving the way for innovative usage of V2 syntax. The way in which discourse elements are placed relative to one another is testament to his creative literary techniques and style. Chaucer's readerships are thus taught specific topics in a way that removes them from their own realities, absorbing them into the abstract 'classroom', or as part of a series of tales serving to entertain and educate.

5.6. Rethinking the role of audience familiarity on the use of verb second in Chaucer

It is necessary to address the idea that authors accommodated their syntax to their readership depending on whether their audience was familiar to them, specifically, whether the audience was on a local, regional, or national level (Eitler 2006; Eitler & Westergaard 2014). While readership interest would be considered by authors when employing specific rhetorical devices within a system of discourse-subordinating constructions, it is the specificity of text-type that influences the use of V2 in ME texts. As discussed, there are challenges to the audience design (Bell 1984, 2001) and accommodation approach (as used in Eitler 2006) for explaining the syntax of written modes, as the theory primarily reflects intra-speaker variation. Furthermore, Morgan & Ferreira (2022) found that speakers do not accommodate their use of resumptive pronouns to assist their interlocutor (as in the sentence ‘That’s the professor who I couldn’t understand a word *she* said’; Morgan and Ferreira 2022: 2). They concluded that audience design had little effect on the production of such syntactic structures. If audience design does not affect the syntax of speech, it is possible that the familiarity of Chaucer’s readership did not affect his use of V2. The proposed strong-tied accommodation present in *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, due to its local audience, and the proposed weak-tied accommodation present in *The Canterbury Tales*’ texts, due to their more national audience (Eitler 2006: 238), should not have influenced the different rates of V2 adopted by Chaucer.

It is also difficult to ascertain Chaucer’s actual audiences. As Strohm (1983: 142) makes clear, Chaucer’s fictional audience of Canterbury Pilgrims “has its own value as a reminder of the variety and idiosyncrasy of possible audience response”, so the specific needs or interests of Chaucer’s readership could not be fully determined. In addition, Chaucer’s primary and immediate audience of works such as *The Canterbury Tales* is likely to have been knights, esquires, and clerks related to the civil service of Richard II, with whom he communicated regularly (Strohm 1983: 143). Given the high variation in use of V2 across texts read by the educated, it cannot be assumed what their ‘V2 grammar’ would have been like.

Lastly, Chaucer’s *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* and Westwyk’s *The Equatorie of the Planetis* are astronomical and expository prose works that exhibit a similar rate and type of V2, despite the difference in authorship. There is a high frequency of V2 in both texts, which is predominantly driven by initial short discourse-advancing adverbs, such as *then*,

now, and *thus*. This syntactically-driven V2, which contributed to the continuation of a narrative, along with verb-movement to the highest CP domain no longer motivated by IS-factors, both encompass what van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) call a ‘syntactic’ V2. The readership of both texts is likely to be similar, due to the demand for scientific and medical texts in English as opposed to Latin, contributing to the wider vernacularisation of Latin texts. It has been argued that Chaucer intended to write *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* for his son Lowys, which could not have been true of *The Equatorie of the Planetis* as it was written by John Westwyk. The strong-tied accommodation approach posited by Eitler, under which Chaucer used his “indigenous East-Anglian based and [...] conservative CP-V2 order” (2006: 238) to accommodate his syntax toward a local and familial audience, cannot be used to explain the frequent use of V2 in *Equatorie*. The high rate of V2 in *Astrolabe* and *Equatorie* could instead be accounted for by the texts’ highly pedagogical and dialogic nature, driven especially by the repetitive use of inverted structures such as *wol I, rekned I, shaltow*, etc.

Rather than proposing that the (un)familiarity of the readership affected the frequency of specific syntactic structures, I conclude that text-type was a significant factor driving variation in the use of V2 in Chaucer. Even though Eitler (2006: 210), through Haeberli’s (2002b: 8-14) analysis of V2, found that wider categorisations of late ME genres did not result in wildly different frequencies of V2, the use of different text-types by individual authors may highlight V2 variation on a smaller scale, particularly when closely analysing whether subordinating structures were impacted by information structure. Even though readership interest may lead to the creation of specific text-types, which then influence grammatical co-occurrence features (Lee 2001: 38), the texts’ audience might only play a small role in the use of a specific V2 syntax.

5.7. Did Chaucer use a Norse-influenced verb second in his prose works?

I conclude this case study by considering whether the syntax of Chaucer was influenced by Norse, and relatedly, whether his own dialect might have been a factor in his high usage of V2 in his prose works (compared to East Midlands texts as a whole, see Chapter 4). Chaucer was born into a wealthy merchant family in central London on Thames Street, who “had been engaged in the export of wool and the import of wine in Ipswich” (Gray 2012). As

Eitler (2006: 145) notes, in the beginning of the 14th century there was frequent migration from East Anglia to London as a result of the wealth of the wool and cloth trade. Thus, individuals who lived in what was once a Norse settlement were migrating in large numbers to London. With increased mobility came increased contact between speakers of different dialects, highlighting potential growth in diatopic variation in the capital. It has been documented that Norse loans from Northern and East Midlands varieties were introduced into late medieval London, a hub for economic and intellectual growth (e.g. Lutz 2017). Eitler (2006: 95, citing Burnley 1992: 152), recognises that Chaucer has a mixture of Northern and East Midlands features, concluding that his language had “an East Midlands character”. This character is particularly reflected in his morphological use. Chaucer often used the Northern third-person plural nominative *thei* or *they* – alongside the use of the Southern accusative/dative form *hem* and genitive *hire* – in line with London English at the time. Yet, there is the question as to whether Norse syntax, in the form of a near-categorical V2 with verb-movement to the highest phrase in the left-periphery, was able to infiltrate the East Midlands dialect.

Some scholars have debated the transfer of Norse grammatical features when settlers migrated to the North and East of England. Walkden (2021a: 5) refers to Townend’s (2002) case for the likelihood of mutual intelligibility between Norse and English, and that imperfect acquisition of verbal morphology, leading to an impoverished agreement inflection and verb-movement to the highest structural position within the CP domain, would not have occurred. Rather than L2 acquisition driving this change, Walkden refers to Siegel’s (1985) explanation of koineization in the context of language contact, which might have led to a situation resulting in morphological simplification in English, introducing the mixture of Norse and English as a “compromise dialect” (Siegel 1985, in Walkden 2021a: 5). It is thus possible that Chaucer’s idiolect, through his origins in a Norse-settled East Anglia, might have been influenced by a highly frequent V2 in all syntactic contexts. In Chapter 4, I argued that Norse influence on the use of V2 in the late medieval period has been somewhat overestimated. The impact of dialectal variation on the use of V2 in late ME was likely in specific syntactic environments, with auxiliary verbs and pronominal subjects. Walkden (in press: 29) also states that Norse influence may have acted as a catalyst for a ‘stricter’ V2 (i.e. not impacted by the pressures of information structure), even if the roots for a strict V2 came from beyond Old English.

Text	Date of original/ manuscript	Dialect	Genre	Frequency of V2, compared to V3 (%) ⁶³
Chaucer's A Treatise on the Astrolabe, The Parson's Tale, The Tale of Melibee	c1390-1	East Midlands (London)	Handbook, astronomy	71.8 (135/188)
			Religious treatise	
			Philosophy/ Fiction	
John of Trevisa's Polychronicon	a1387	Southern	History	11.3 (76/675)
Purvey's General Prologue to the Bible	c1388	Southern	Religious treatise	7.2 (23/321)
A Late Middle English Treatise on Horses	a1450	Southern (Berkshire)	Handbook, medicine	40 (6/15)
Middle English Sermons (Royal Ms.)	c1425	Southern (Oxford)	Sermon	31.6 (12/38)

Table 20: A table comparing Chaucer's use of V2 in his prose works with Southern texts, made up of religious treatises, sermons, handbooks and historical works.

Table 20 details the overall rates of Chaucer's use of V2 in *Astrolabe*, *Parson's Tale* and *Melibee*, and compares them to Southern dialectal texts in Middle English, which have a much lower frequency of V2. As shown, the use of V2 in each of these environments is very high (71.8%) compared to some of the Southern texts' overall usage (7.2-40%). Regardless of how a Norse-like V2 might have arisen in English, there appears to be some sort of dialectal influence occurring in Chaucer, given the high frequency in rate of V2 across all his works (the initial reason for their inclusion in this case study), alongside the effects of text-type, discourse relations and information structure. Some of these Southern texts are like that of Chaucer – being religious treatises and sermons – yet have an overall lower rate of V2, suggesting that Kroch, Taylor and Ringe's (2000) account of dialect variation and language contact must hold true in some contexts of V2 variation. Might

⁶³ Note that the frequencies of V2 in the Southern texts here have not been screened qualitatively to determine whether each case of V2/V3 is legitimate, as they come from the quantitative study in Chapter 4.

Chaucer's use of a highly syntacticised V2 to the highest portion of the split CP domain, in environments which would have occurred alongside verb-movement to the lower portion of the CP domain in OE, reflect a dialectal variation in use of V2 in late ME? Across the three prose works examined here, there were 25 sentences with innovative V-to-C2 movement in cases with initial anaphors, compared to 18 cases of traditional V-to-C1 movement, meaning that 58.1% of the movement in this context was innovative—a stark contrast to the <10% cases in Old English (Chapter 3).

Chaucer's V2 syntax is a product of the overall instability of V2 exhibited in the late medieval period, given the way in which a range of verb-movement patterns are adopted in his prose works depending on the texts' rhetoric and argumentation. His work also shows how his own East Anglian dialectal influence might have contributed to rising rates of V2, because of the highly frequent use of V2 across his works (just under 70% when considering the texts' V2 syntax as a whole). Future research into the V2 of the late ME period would benefit from investigation into the use of V2 across different text-types produced in similar areas in late medieval England, especially texts of similar types to the prose works investigated here. All in all, the importance of incorporating insights from dialect variation, text-type/rhetoric, discourse relations and information structure should not be overlooked when analysing the effect of V2 on Middle English texts.

Chapter 6:

The interaction of verb second syntax with the pressures of information structure, dialect variation, and text-type

6.1. Summary of findings

This thesis has investigated the nuances of the verb second phenomenon in the history of English, with a view to uncovering some of the precise changes in its structure, use and frequency across a range of syntactic and sociohistorical contexts. I have investigated the instability of verb second (V2), and its origins in the Old English period, extending into the Middle English period. It is this high variability that I have explored in detail, by pinpointing some of the potential causes that affected specific sentences with verb-movement. I have also justified some of the ways in which speakers and/or writers might choose to use a particular sentence with V2 or V3 word order, related to syntactic and/or information-structural pressures, dialect (in particular, the provenance of the text), and the type of text. Overall, this detailed study of the verb second phenomenon in English provides an example of how change might arise at different interfaces, which can be used as a model for analysing why syntactic change occurs (or does not occur) in languages globally.

Chapter 3 examined the numerous counterexamples that can be found in Old English parsed corpora, that go against the general ‘trend’ of V2 word order at this time. The use of V2 in OE was frequently driven by information-structural pressures; in sentences introduced by anaphoric content, i.e. constituents that referred to antecedent in the preceding discourse, subjects exhibiting given information occurred in a high, preverbal position (verb third), while subjects exhibiting new information occurred in a low, postverbal position (verb second).⁶⁴ Thus, the verb, within the lower part of a split CP (a structure first introduced by Rizzi 1997), acted as a boundary marker separating given from new information. This pressure generally governed verb-movement to the CP in OE, yet there were several cases that exhibited verb-movement deviating from this trend,

⁶⁴ Recall that these differing subject positions were established based on pressures of information structure and prosody (i.e. light and heavy prosodic weight), and not due to the existence of subject clitics.

highlighting that syntactic and information-structural pressures no longer drove verb-movement to the CP domain. I noted four different types of verb-movement, based on my observations of counterexamples and initial work by van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012): traditional V-to-C2, traditional V-to-C1, innovative V-to-C2, and innovative V-to-T. In particular, I showed that innovative V-to-C2 word order represents a syntacticised word order (when the lower position for the verb, driven by information structure, was no longer available), which appeared in OE and grew in frequency in ME. This type of V2 with initial anaphoric constituents and given subjects would have ordinarily resulted in V3 word order in OE, due to the movement of the verb to the lower position, C1, and the high position of given subjects in Spec, C1. Furthermore, the breakdown of the syntactic and information-structural pressures driving verb-movement to a split CP in OE was represented by a growing V-to-T (V3) movement.. It was crucial to establish these differing verb-movement patterns for the OE period, considering their use evolved in ME and differed depending on a range of factors to do with dialect, text-type, and type of discourse/rhetoric, with varying syntactic variables (such as the type of subject, verb and initial constituent in the sentence).

Moving into the Middle English period, Chapter 4 highlighted the instability of these different verb-movement patterns further by examining the interaction between different syntactic and sociohistorical variables present when studying the frequency of V2 in parsed corpora. I found a growth in the use of V2 with pronominal subjects and auxiliary verbs, especially in contexts with initial direct objects (many of which would exhibit anaphoric referential properties). These syntactic patterns were primarily found in texts localised to the North and East Midlands, with rates of pronominal V2 coming close to or exceeding that of nominal V2. This lack of disparity between pronominal and nominal V2, in auxiliary verb contexts, insinuates that there is a specific type of Norse influence in interacting syntactic environments, arising from language contact as introduced by Kroch and Taylor (1997) and Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (KTR 2000). While the chapter could only focus on the syntactic processes of V2, I recognise that the V2 phenomenon involved information-structural processes too, and this discussion helped to identify the rise in potential unexpected patterns of V2 which had their origins in Old English, to allow for their further examination in Chapter 5. This analysis opens up the opportunity to explore the role of text-type, especially those written by a single author, and its impact on the use of V2 and its overall stability in the Middle English period.

Chapter 5 focused on the varying types of prose works written by Geoffrey Chaucer, a London-based author and poet with a family tree hailing from East Anglia, and his use of V2 across each of these. I specifically investigated the astronomical handbook *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* (*Astrolabe*), and the two prose works from the Canterbury Tales: *The Parson's Tale* (*ParsT*) and *The Tale of Melibee* (*Melibee*). Scholars have primarily focused on the impact of audience design on the use of V2, in particular, how the familiarity of the readership might have influenced an authors' choice of V2 syntax. However, by bringing in the astronomical handbook *The Equatorie of the Planetis* – which was once assumed to be written by Chaucer, but is now generally said to have been written by the author John Westwyk – I showed that the high use of V2 in *Astrolabe* is unlikely to have been driven by the fact the text was written for his son Lowys, especially as *Equatorie* exhibits a number of similarities in use of V2.

The graph in Figure 32 highlighted the differences in the types of verb-movement patterns used by Chaucer in each of his works. *Astrolabe* primarily used a V2 word order with consistent and traditional (or unmarked) verb-movement to the highest part of the split CP, shown by the continual use of V2 sentences introduced by discourse-advancing adverbs 'then', 'now', and 'thus', followed by modal verbs in second position to direct the reader in their use of an astrolabe, yet did not adopt many other types of verb-movement. *ParsT* similarly used a traditional verb-movement pattern to the highest part of the CP, yet frequently used innovative V-to-C2 movement, whereby given subjects primarily followed the verb in second position despite the sentences being introduced by initial anaphors. This type of verb-movement was seen less frequently in *Melibee*, and V-to-T movement was very common in comparison. As represented by the low frequency of a traditional V-to-C1 movement pattern across each of the texts, information structure no longer drove the positioning of the verb in Chaucer's prose works (like in OE), especially as there was a high use of syntactic (or *syntacticised*) word orders, as well as a frequent V3 (V-to-T) word order that occurred regardless of the syntactic and information-structural pressures that might have once driven verb-movement to C in English.

I concluded that the difference between *ParsT* and *Melibee* here was due to the difference in rhetoric or discourse between them both. *ParsT* is an exhortative sermon that clearly instructed readers toward the value of penitence and away from the Seven Deadly Sins, similar to the scientific instruction present in *Astrolabe*. On the other hand, *Melibee*

is an apologue, that similarly teaches religious morals and the value of mercy, but implicitly through a narrative of the characters Melibee and Dame Prudence. The higher use of V2 in *Astrolabe* and *ParsT* is therefore reflective of a V2 that employs discourse subordination (as per Segmentation Discourse Representation Theory, or SDRT, see Bech 2012) in order to weave arguments through a sequence of subordinating sentences, with the verb acting as an anchor to preceding discourse. I argued that the V3 word order present in *Melibee* does this much more implicitly, and primarily serves to advance the narrative using a sentential sequence of continuation.

Furthermore, the higher use of V2 across the entirety of Chaucer's prose works may reflect his origin; his family was from a Norse-settled East Anglia (specifically, Ipswich) and he grew up and worked in a city that experienced an influx of social mobility, with people travelling from the North and East Midlands to work. This complements the findings of Chapter 4 that suggest Norse impacted English V2 syntax in specific types of sentences, as well as that of KTR (2000).

This final chapter has sought to show the interaction of a range of factors introduced throughout; that of text-type, information structure, discourse relations and dialect variation/language contact on the use of V2 in medieval English. I therefore expand on the need to explore change at its interfaces; it is not enough to solely focus on one branch of linguistics when it comes to word order change. There are several reasons as to why speakers and writers might (consciously or unconsciously) choose to use a specific type of V2 word order (or not), which especially links to the sociohistorical context of the language at any given point in time.

6.2. The role of language acquisition in driving change in English verb second

I end by addressing some of the points that have arisen more speculatively throughout, by proposing that each of the changes leading to the instability of the verb second phenomenon are based on the acquisition of both first and second language learners during the history of English. This is a stance taken in recent years by a number of scholars, who have focused (either explicitly or implicitly) on how syntactic change is shaped by the acquisition of learners and their innovations (e.g. see Kroch 1994, 2001; Lightfoot 1995, 1999; Kroch, Taylor and Ringe 2000; Yang 2000; Zobl and Liceras 2005; Westergaard 2009b, 2009c,

2010, van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012; Walkden 2017b; Biberauer 2019). As noted by Duran Eppler and Ozon, “language change [...] needs to be studied from both a synchronic and a diachronic perspective, because innovation occurs at a specific point in time, but spread takes place over a period of time” (2020: 233). I have chosen to focus on the specific point in time of Middle English where the use of V2 structures was inconsistent, especially to demonstrate how authors may have exploited the evolving uses of V2 for specific rhetorical purposes. It is these moments of instability that likely arose from language acquisition and represent how acquisition drives change; a clear catalyst in the development of change which would disrupt the stability of language features. The following sections therefore speculate as to the conditions leading to change and innovation driven by learners, by bringing in some recent theories from the field, and summing up change in medieval English V2 syntax.

6.2.1. L1 acquisition and information structure

There are many approaches which suggest it is possible for language acquisition to drive language change. Historical relations between different ‘I-language’⁶⁵ grammars, via the process of L1 acquisition, are necessary for change to occur, which encompasses different ‘I-language’ grammars: the second grammar (I-language L2) must be unidentical to that of the first grammar (I-language L1) for change to occur (see Crisma and Longobardi’s 2009 formal version of the theory, as cited in Walkden 2012: 43). This theory is based on Andersen’s (1973) Z-model of change, specifically, that “the transmission of language must pass through the gulf between speaker and hearer, through a cloud of murky E-language” (Walkden 2012: 44): the outputs of the second grammar therefore arise from the outputs of the first. Rather than suggesting children aim to match their input, Lightfoot (1999) discusses a cue-based acquisition approach, which suggests that children search for abstract structures in their input, and following failure to find these cues, they converge on a new grammar. For example, Lightfoot (1999: 155-157) argues that contact between varieties of

⁶⁵ I-language refers to the “individual mental grammars, entities that are internal to each person” (Isac and Reiss 2013: 14), while E-language refers to the external—the way in which language is transmitted between communities, with the object of study being linguistic corpora, rather than a study of the individual (Isac and Reiss 2013: 78; both notions introduced by Chomsky 1986). As Isac and Reiss (2013: 79) note, E-language could be considered an incoherent notion, especially as these large datasets comprise multiple speakers and it is not always possible to determine one single grammar common across them all.

English may have led L1 learners in the North to posit non-V2 grammars, as there was no cue for V2 (SpecCP[nonsubject]) in the South. It is therefore possible to argue that L1 learners make innovations which lead to change, rather than implying stability, in the face of an impoverished input and the ‘cloud of murky E-language’.

Yet, there are multiple ways in which the use of V2 was affected, beyond contact between Middle English varieties, as I have argued throughout this thesis. The question arises as to how L1 children work with the multiple options available for them in the face of a highly variable input, beyond simply ‘V2’ and ‘non-V2’ grammars, incorporating, for example, the information-structural status of the initial constituent and subject. I will now discuss how errors and innovations might lead to change in V2 usage in the history of English, in line with recent approaches which suggest that L1 children adopt a maximal approach to the minimal features they posit, further centring the learner as the driver of change as opposed to evolving frequency patterns in input. These recent approaches also allow for an explanation that incorporates the weakening pressures of information structure on the use of V2 in late medieval English.

As noted throughout Chapter 3, Old English V2 syntax was largely driven by information-structural pressures, which determined the position of the verb in cases where an initial anaphoric constituent moved to the beginning of the sentence. In these cases, given/familiar subjects occurred preverbally, while new/focused subjects occurred postverbally, due to the structural positions of these subjects which expressed different types of information. Generally, given subjects were required to occur closer to preceding context, while new subjects could occur further away.

In Middle English, van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) describe a situation of change whereby first language learners drive the V2 syntax of later medieval periods. More specifically, they suggest learners acquired a different type of V2 syntax in Middle English via a cue-based acquisition approach, and that children acquire information structure/pragmatics from an early age. For instance, they point to the work of Westergaard (2008) who states that, in Norwegian, children consistently match the target language by producing two different subject positions dependent on information structure. The lower subject position for nominal subjects, as new subjects, is preferred for children, yet they also acquire the higher position for given subjects between ages 2;6 and 3. As a result of

the apparent sensitivity of children in noticing “fine syntactic nuances in the input” with regard to information structure, van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012: 97) conclude that:

“... it prevents children from overgeneralizations in syntax that would be hard to overcome. In that sense, it cannot be claimed that V2 word order is vulnerable. But this strategy also means that children are so-called conservative learners (e.g. Snyder 2007), and do not extend a syntactic pattern to a new context unless they have clear evidence for it in the input. Thus, in the acquisition process, children may have smaller V2 grammars than adults, with finer linguistically relevant distinctions. This means that certain *parts* of V2 syntax may be vulnerable.”

(van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012: 97)

They equally note that V2 syntax, as well as facing a decline in usage, underwent a shift in frequency with pronominal subjects, leading to ‘syntacticisation’ – the weakening link between information structure and syntax – which is also referred to on several occasions throughout this thesis. Linking back to what they perceive to be happening with children’s acquisition of IS and syntax, they suggest that children, being exposed to both a V2 and non-V2 grammar, would have looked for syntactic cues for V2 (given the IS-related cues were declining). They then mention that this lack of cues for IS-based patterns resulted in a rise in a syntactic-type of verb-movement, V-to-C, which, as I have highlighted, was rooted in Old English. Thus, the IS patterns would have been syntacticised (i.e. information structure no longer drove verb-movement to a lower position) because of syntactic overgeneralisation (verb-movement to the highest position of the CP), alongside economy of movement with respect to the declining use of V2 overall (van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012: 114). Here, ‘economy of movement’ refers to the lack of verb-movement to C (in the case of the current project, to either the higher or lower portion of the split CP) in a growing number of sentences in Middle English, resulting in V3 word order (and the verb not moving beyond the TP domain). This economical movement process also occurred alongside an overgeneralised and syntacticised V-to-C movement, which was not sensitive to information structure in placing given before new information (and thus the verb landed in the highest possible position in C).

High variation and instability of the verb second phenomenon thus represents a constantly changing input for L1 children, which, is rectified by children by syntactically overgeneralising verb-movement to the highest portion of the split CP (rather than recognising that the lower part of the CP was the position for the verb when information-

structural, given-before-new, tendencies were present) and by demonstrating economy of movement leading to a non-V2 grammar. However, it is well-known that children acquire language regardless of how extensively the input is enriched with cues (as per the ‘Poverty of the Stimulus’ argument; Chomsky 1980). Along these lines, Westergaard (2003, 2009b; cited in van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012: 95) demonstrates how children produce target-like V2 with *wh*-elements in Norwegian information; they acquire the distinction between phrasal and monosyllabic *wh*-phrases, and V2 and non-V2 word order, early on. Thus, there are two questions for the cue-based theory of acquisition. First, why is that L1 children are perceived to overgeneralise syntactic V-to-C movement in English, yet they are more frequently known for undergeneralising syntactic movement due to principles of economy (as per van Kemenade and Westergaard 2012: 31)? Second, is there a way to shift the onus of change further on the learner, rather than the input, given the impoverishment of the Primary Linguistic Data?

Biberauer’s (2019) discussion of the Maximise Minimal Means (MMM) model states that learners are both conservative, postulating “as few features as possible to account for the input”, and liberal, adopting a maximal distribution of the features they do posit (Biberauer 2019: 213). The MMM model could offer an interesting explanation that explores issues of economy and overgeneralisation by learners, and the centring of L1 learners in driving this abstract syntactic change over time. The MMM model combines with a learner’s underlying grammar and the input to reach a target grammar, and is not only active in children, but also adults. The process of maximising minimal means by the learner, at the initial stage of the actuation of change in the English verb second phenomenon, occurred in two scenarios, alongside L2 acquisition via language contact, forming a multifactorial explanation for change. Below I summarise two compatible reports of economy and overgeneralisation of V2 in van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) and Biberauer (2019: 216-217), and then speculate on the implications the MMM model has for the findings in this thesis.

The growing use of ‘syntacticised’ verb-movement to C in Middle English

- L1 learners, particularly in the North and East Midlands in the late medieval period, accelerated the weakened link between syntax and information structure, which once drove verb-movement to the lower position of the split CP in Old English. Learners first postulated that verb-movement to C (forming a surface V2 structure)

occurred to only one position within the CP. This verb-movement pattern to only one position within the CP was more economical than positing two based on different types of pressures (either a syntactic feature-driven movement or an IS-driven movement). This economy of movement by L1 learners reflected the V2 input which was in constant flux—an input that was affected by contact with Norse learners, who postulated a stricter verb-movement to C.

- Then, Northern and East Midlands L1 learners generalised this syntacticised word order – which was not sensitive to the given-before-new tendency of information structure – to more V2 sentences (i.e. including those which were introduced by a constituent with focus or anaphoric properties), particularly sentences with auxiliary verbs and pronominal subjects. This syntactic context was susceptible to overgeneralisation of the V2 pattern to contexts once driven by information structure, due to the increased grammaticalization of verbs and their link to higher functional positions. The environment was also susceptible to overgeneralisation, likely because of the prosodic preference to place nominal subjects before lexical transitive verbs due to an ‘anti-weight’ effect, as introduced in Chapter 3.

The growing use of V3 word order (V-to-T movement) in Middle English

- Alongside the use of a ‘syntacticised’ V2 word order – which resulted in the increased use of a V2 no longer driven by the tendencies of information structure in the North and East Midlands – V3 word order began to rise in frequency in ME. As van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012: 114) suggest, L1 learners might under-rather than overgeneralise syntactic movement, which might explain why there was not a complete shift from the use of V2 for the purposes of information structure, to a strict syntacticised V2 word order (like that of other Germanic languages), affecting all dialects. However, further nuance is required to show precisely why learners did not begin to use a strict V2 word order, instead turning to the use of V3. Explanations of the processes of economy and overgeneralisation as part of the MMM model shifts the focus to L1 learners’ innovations to explain why frequencies of the phenomenon began to change. First, L1 learners are economical with their verb-movement, as they began to posit V-to-T movement without subsequent movement to C. Second, L1 learners overgeneralise this movement pattern to all sentences (including sentences where the verb may not have moved out of the verbal

domain at all, resulting in V3 surface order), leading to a rise of V3 rather than V2 order across all dialects towards the end of ME.

Overall, I use this theory to a) speculate why overgeneralisation of V2 and V3 word order (as well as undergeneralisation of V2) occurred, and b) centre the learner, rather than the input, in explaining the actuation of change, which aligns with the idea that children go “beyond the input” (Biberauer 2019) to innovate new syntactic forms.

6.2.2. L2 acquisition and language contact

L2 learners make errors and innovations in different ways compared to L1 learners, which might also lead to change. Walkden and Breitbarth (2019: 188) adopt the ‘Interpretability Hypothesis’ (Hawkins and Hattori 2006; Tsimpli and Dimitrakopoulou 2007) to explain why languages change. The Interpretability Hypothesis demonstrates that uninterpretable features at the level of the syntax (which are not present in phonology or semantics) are universally difficult for L2 learners to acquire regardless of their L1. They emphasise the importance of not conceptualising change as “a monolithic transformation of one grammar into another, but rather as a process unfolding within populations along geographic and diachronic dimensions” (Walkden and Breitbarth 2019: 202). They state that syntactic transfer from Norse to Middle English (see Walkden and Morrison 2017) could reflect a scenario of L2-difficulty to acquire uninterpretable features, but there is not enough data to fully support it. As I outlined in Chapter 4, it is possible to overstate the impact that Norse had on English syntax. However, it is equally possible that information-structural properties (within the underlying syntactic representation) are difficult to acquire as an L2 learner. The below discussion speculates some of these difficulties for the L2 learner, while also summarising the overall impact of Norse on the nature of V2 in English.

One of the first accounts to consider the impact of second language learning and language contact on the trajectory of English verb second was Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (2000). They state that the difference in use of V2 between Northern and Southern varieties of English was due to the simplification of the inflectional paradigm in the North (in particular, the replacement of the *-th* verbal ending by *-s*) arising from the “imperfect second language learning of English by the Norse invaders of the ninth to eleventh centuries” (Kroch, Taylor and Ringe 2000: 379). The lack of a rich agreement paradigm is

then said to have led to the failure to acquire an agreement node, which in turn led to the loss of V-to-I movement (and movement to C instead), different types of V2 grammars in Middle English, and high variation and ambiguity following dialect contact. However, as noted in Chapter 1 and 3, this theory poses two problems. First, rich agreement does not always lead to changes within the syntax. Second, English likely always had V-to-C movement (and a split CP domain), and thus, this verb-movement was not limited to the North. If both Norse and English had verb-movement to C, how did their V2 grammars differ, and how might acquisition have been involved?

I pose here, speculatively, that language contact with Norse in the North and East of England might have accelerated syntacticisation of the V2 phenomenon, leading to its overall instability and downfall. As shown by the dialect evidence presented in Chapter 4, this difference in use of V2 in the North and East Midlands – a type of V2 that occurred regardless of the type of subject – was primarily restricted to contexts with auxiliary verbs. This finding is also confirmed by preliminary results by van Kemenade (2022), where she also links the grammaticalisation of auxiliaries (see upcoming work by van Kemenade and Hinterhölzl). What cannot be denied is the stark contrast in use of V2 in particular Northern and East Midlands texts, versus texts localised to further inland and in the South.

The difference between the V2 grammar of English and Norse was that English had a fairly strict tendency to place given information before new, which was beginning to break down in all dialects in Middle English. Following contact between the English and Norse V2 grammars, which was likely represented by the increase in use of V2 in ME texts linked to a situation of diglossia (see Tristram 2004), English no longer relied on information structure to drive use of V2—the verb was permitted to raise to the highest structural point regardless of the information-structural status of the subject. It is possible that Norse learners of English used a V2 grammar that frequently placed the verb before the subject, without the pressure of information structure attempting to place it after the subject in cases with pronominal and/or given subjects. This lack of syntactic-information structural relation is potentially linked to the overgeneralisation of syntactic movement as proposed by van Kemenade and Westergaard (2012) for L1 learners, too. Rankin (2009), in a corpus study of V2 transfer by German and Dutch speakers acquiring English as a second language, at an advanced level, found that these learners still transferred V2 into English, despite the specific discourse-pragmatic contexts in which V2 occurs in English

today. Rankin concludes that information-structural patterns are much more difficult to acquire than syntax, as shown by their use of a XVS word order in auxiliary verb contexts, and by their creation of a unique clause-initial position (Rankin 2009: 57-58). Rankin's study therefore falls in line with the Interface Hypothesis, developed by Sorace (2005) and Sorace and Filiaci (2006). This hypothesis suggests that syntactic domains interacting with other cognitive domains, in this case, the interface of syntax and discourse-pragmatics, are much less likely to be acquired by second language learners than narrow syntax alone.

While these theories of L2 acquisition, and the way in which it drives syntactic change, are necessarily speculative, as there is no second language learning evidence from the time, it could be the case that a similar situation happened with L2 Norse learners of English, who were acquiring a V2 syntax driven by information-structural pressures. This acquisition would have therefore facilitated the use of a syntactically-driven V-to-C movement process in the Northern and East Midlands dialects, whereby V2 occurred frequently in auxiliary verb contexts regardless of the type of subject.⁶⁶

Norse therefore had an influence on English, yet this influence is evident in only specific syntactic environments; we cannot postulate that Norse changed the entire character of the V2 system in English via L2 acquisition by Norse learners. Emonds and Faarlund argue that English developed from an earlier Norse system following contact between both languages in the early medieval period, resulting in an "Anglicized Norse" (2014: 30). Yet, I have demonstrated here that we must take a more nuanced approach to examining the effect of Norse influence on English syntax, one which investigates changes in specific syntactic contexts and dialects, and does not assume that the V2 syntax of English simply developed from an earlier Norse V2. There were processes occurring in English which did not necessarily occur to the same extent in Norse—verbal positions went from being tied up in given-before-new informational tendencies, to being solely driven by syntactic operations, to no longer occurring as high as C, as shown by their appearance in third position the surface. Some of these processes – including the decline of V2 – may have been partly accelerated by Norse (e.g. the move to a 'stricter' V2 regardless of the

⁶⁶ I point the reader to further research on the L2 acquisition of verb second and its interfaces, as well as the theory of parameter resetting within the acquisition of verb movement. These theories are developed particularly by White (1990, 1991, 2003), Sorace (2005, 2011), Bohnacker and Rosén (2007), Lozano and Callies (2018), Rankin (2009, 2011).

information status of the sentence, as noted above), yet there is little evidence that the entirety of English speakers began to use the same, frequently-driven, V2 structure in the medieval period. Bech and Walkden (2016) also agree that there is not enough nuance described in Emonds and Faarlund's account regarding syntactic change, as well as a lack of similarity between English and Norse (e.g. in that English had little inflection, while Norse was highly inflectional), to be able to consider English a North Germanic language.

Walkden (in press: 21) also makes clear that the evidence that has been brought to light for a 'strict' verb second (in Northumbrian Old English glossal translations) was likely not written in the optimum phase for "scenarios of imposition and simplification" by Norse learners to have occurred. The translations were potentially written in the 9th Century, which is not in line with the end of Pons-Sanz's (2013) Norse 'settlement phase' around 1000, meaning we cannot possibly know the full extent of Norse influence in Old English because the evidence is a chronologically poor fit. I therefore conclude here that, while English contact with Norse likely contributed to the scenario in which English now uses very little V2 structure, it cannot have affected the entirety of the English V2 system, given the many differences between both languages that I have reported throughout this thesis.

6.3. Future directions for the role of genre/text-type and dialect in driving use of verb second in English

I end here by highlighting some future directions related to the way in which the dialect and type of text (and its rhetoric or argumentation) might drive the use of English verb second across a range of different spatial and temporal contexts. As concluded in Chapter 5, Geoffrey Chaucer's prose works varied in their use of verb second, with different types of verb-movement depending on the syntactic and information-structural properties of the subject and initial constituent. This variation was linked to the strength of the rhetoric: those texts written for an educational purpose (*Astrolabe*), or that had an explicit moral discourse (*ParsT*), were high in the use of a syntacticised verb second, with V2 occurring regardless of the information-structural status of the subject. On the other hand, the text with the implicit rhetoric (*Melibee*) had higher incidences of V3 word order, which was linked to the move toward a verb-movement pattern that was no longer motivated by a syntactic or an information-structural tendency to drive verb-movement to C. Furthermore, Chaucer's

prose works were, on the whole, high in use of V2, which may link to his East Anglian and London-based background—areas which were affected by contact with Norse.

During the process of conducting the parsed corpus-based study of verb second across different syntactic contexts, I noted two other types of text to be investigated, which appeared to differ from the general trajectory of V2 in late medieval English. First, Richard Rolle's prose works (*Epistles* and *Prose Treatises*) were much lower in their frequency of V2 (a 39.8% and 30.2% rate of V2, respectively). This finding is surprising, as the texts are localised to the North where Rolle was born (Pickering, North Yorkshire) and lived as a hermit during his later years (Richmond, North Yorkshire and Hampole, South Yorkshire), so one might expect Rolle to have used V2 frequently due to the original proximity of these locations to Norse settlement. However, as noted in Section 4.6, it might be the case that Rolle's life trajectory, in that he was educated in the South (Oxford), and lived his life as a recluse, might have hindered the use of V2. Another aspect which requires additional investigation is whether the rhetoric of his prose works was used for subordinating or coordinating discourse relation purposes, and especially, whether the moral rhetoric of his exegetic works was primarily used to advance the narrative, rather than to tightly link sections to one another in the form of a strong and explicit rhetoric. If the former is the case, then it could be that the higher use of a V3 word order in comparison to V2 is linked to what can be seen in *The Tale of Melibee*, whereby the lower placement of the verb allowed the preverbal subject to advance the narrative (e.g. see Freywald et al. 2015).

Additionally, I noted that, while V2 structure had largely decayed by the end of Middle English, and into the Early Modern period, there were categories of correspondence that exhibited varying rates of usage of V2. Specifically, an initial parsed corpus-based search found that there was a rate of V2 of 9.9% in the Paston family letters, and 55.8% in the Cely family letters. The Pastons (with correspondence from 1425 to 1519) were a wealthy family in Norfolk, and the Celys (with correspondence from 1474-1488) were a merchant family in London. Despite the Pastons residing in Norfolk, where 9th century Norse migration occurred, it appears they did not use V2 consistently. Their influence in the courts, university education and establishment within the gentry might have contributed to their use of V3, potentially characteristic of Southern varieties at this time. That the Celys were based in London during increased socioeconomic growth (arising from migration of workers from the North and East Midlands) might have contributed to their higher usage

of V2, which might have arisen from contact with varieties of English influenced by Norse settlement. The correspondence genre may therefore provide an opportunity to conduct a historical sociolinguistic study into the interaction of factors related to social class and dialect and their effect on the use of specific structures. It may also allow for an examination of the genre and its use of V2, especially as letters have been considered closer to speech than much of the Middle English works presented throughout (e.g. see Säily, Vartiainen and Siirtola's (2017) study investigating the "usefulness of part-of-speech annotation" in parsed corpora).

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 1 and 4, it is possible to see earlier vestiges of the auxiliary V2 pattern found in Northern and East Midlands dialects, in the modern English of today. Subject-verb inversion is used almost exclusively with auxiliaries in present-day English, with the underlying structure undergoing T-to-C movement rather than lexical verb-movement. A footnote in Cruschina and Sailor (2022) summarises the changes I have demonstrated throughout this thesis:

"Note that this recent change to the V2 system of Modern English [in relation to the increase in patterns with 'emphatic negative clauses involving a pre-predicate taboo expression'] is the inverse of Weerman's (1989) description of the process by which Middle English 'lost' V2: 'English never became a [V2] language as strictly as the other Germanic languages are now. The non-[strict-V2 pattern] never died out... it seems that [the loss of strict V2] was not a complete innovation, but the reactivation of a pattern that was still present in the language' (Weerman 1989: 182; see also Kiparsky 1995). Putting this together with the recent changes argued for in Sailor (2020), we have a diachronic pattern reminiscent of a cyclic change: [partial V2 > extension of V2 > narrowing of V2 > extension of V2].

(Cruschina and Sailor 2022: 19)

The initial extension of V2 could be represented by the process of syntacticisation noted for the ME period, whereby V2 occurs regardless of the information status of the sentence, increasing the rate at which it was used in Northern and East Midlands dialects. While the use of V2 was then narrowed to contexts with auxiliaries in modern English, it has again been extended to further contexts, as shown by the negative emphatic taboo constructions (e.g. [*neg*] *will I fuck?*) in some British and Irish dialects. Further research into the process that has led to the current English V2 constructions is therefore timely and a topic I touch on here in relation to the instability of verb second in medieval English. Like Cruschina and Sailor (2022) state, it is not enough to focus on the 'loss' of V2, when there

are many other processes of *preservation* and *extension*, making the process of the use of V2 in each individual language unique.

Overall, there remains important routes to be taken following this multifactorial project, which I have conducted to understand the nuances of verb second changes in the medieval English period. Here, I have crucially linked high variation in the use of V2 to several factors, in particular, the dialect of the text, the type of text, and the reliance upon different syntactic and information-structural processes, which provide much-needed detail regarding why authors used specific types of V2. Without an understanding of these (once distinct and separate) areas, one cannot fully comprehend the scale of reasoning behind syntactic change. While there is, of course, a large gap between our perception of historical usage of V2 in England, and what was actually written and spoken at that time, exploring and combining these different factors is paramount for a closer understanding of why the V2 phenomenon behaved the way it did.

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Appendices

Appendix A: All raw and frequency data from the quantitative studies⁶⁸

Frequency of V2 in main clauses (OE – EModE)

V2 in main clauses			
Corpus & time period	Instances		Frequency of V2 (%)
	V2	V2 & V3	
YCOE (9 th – 12 th Century)	2741	4281	64
PPCME2 (M1 & M2 periods: 1150-1350)	1266	2919	43.4
PPCME2 (M3 & M4 periods: 1350-1500)	2470	6605	37.4
PCEEC (1410-1681)	1014	11797	8.6

Frequency of V2 in main clauses (ME)

V2 in main clauses			
Time period	Instances		Frequency of V2 (%)
	V2	V2 & V3	
M1	916	2013	45.5
M2	350	906	38.6
M3	1408	3864	36.4
M4	1062	2741	38.7

⁶⁸ This Appendix lists all raw and frequency data included in the quantitative studies on the trajectory of V2 conducted in this thesis (Chapters 3-4), some of which is included in graphs in the main body. In some cases, raw data is included in brackets under the frequency (%) data.

Frequency of V2 by type of subject and initial constituent (OE – EModE)

V2 by subject-type and fronted phrase-type						
Corpus	Frequency of V2 with fronted 'then' (%)		Frequency of V2 with fronted d. objects (%)		Frequency of V2 with fronted PPs (%)	
	Pronominal V2	Nominal V2	Pronominal V2	Nominal V2	Pronominal V2	Nominal V2
YCOE	99 (584/590)	94.1 (985/1047)	2.7 (6/225)	74.2 (69/93)	0 (0/171)	62.9 (144/229)
PPCME2 (M1/M2)	79.1 (72/91)	79.4 (85/107)	12.1 (24/198)	87.1 (135/155)	5.6 (30/540)	63.8 (309/484)
PPCME2 (M3/M4)	54.8 (269/491)	43.2 (355/822)	47.6 (128/269)	80 (84/105)	14 (164/1175)	36.8 (520/1414)
PCEEC	26.2 (27/103)	42.2 (19/45)	6.2 (32/516)	36.5 (23/63)	1.4 (58/4006)	9 (91/1014)

Frequency of V2 by type of subject and initial constituent (ME)

V2 by subject-type and fronted phrase-type						
Time period	Frequency of V2 with fronted 'then' (%)		Frequency of V2 with fronted d. objects (%)		Frequency of V2 with fronted PPs (%)	
	Pronominal V2	Nominal V2	Pronominal V2	Nominal V2	Pronominal V2	Nominal V2
M1	90.9 (50/55)	97.3 (71/73)	8.6 (12/140)	90.3 (102/113)	4.5 (16/355)	71.8 (229/319)
M2	61.1 (22/36)	41.2 (14/34)	20.7 (12/58)	78.6 (33/42)	7.6 (14/185)	48.5 (80/165)
M3	60 (147/245)	50.1 (206/411)	45.5 (80/176)	74.1 (40/54)	16.4 (125/762)	28.9 (257/888)
M4	49.6 (122/246)	36.3 (149/411)	51.6 (48/93)	86.3 (44/51)	9.4 (39/413)	50 (263/526)

Frequency of V2 by type of verb and initial constituent (ME)

V2 by verb-type and fronted phrase-type						
Time period	Frequency of V2 with fronted 'then' (%)		Frequency of V2 with fronted d. objects (%)		Frequency of V2 with fronted PPs (%)	
	Lexical V2	Auxiliary V2	Lexical V2	Auxiliary V2	Lexical V2	Auxiliary V2
M1	95.4 (82/86)	93.6 (44/47)	48.4 (76/157)	37.4 (40/107)	39.6 (161/407)	27.5 (88/320)
M2	31.3 (10/32)	65 (26/40)	45.9 (28/61)	42.5 (17/40)	29.1 (51/175)	21.6 (43/199)
M3	46.7 (221/473)	73.9 (156/211)	38.4 (33/86)	61.7 (92/149)	20.2 (179/887)	24 (207/861)
M4	32.7 (179/548)	81.4 (105/129)	67.1 (53/79)	60 (39/65)	21.1 (111/525)	43.8 (192/438)

Frequency of V2 by type of verb and subject (OE – EModE)

V2 by subject-type, in lexical verb contexts		
Corpus & time period	Frequency of pronominal V2 (%)	Frequency of nominal V2 (%)
YCOE	55.7 (964/1730)	71.9 (1377/1916)
PPCME2 (M1 & M2)	16.4 (109/666)	71.4 (489/685)
PPCME2 (M3 & M4)	22.8 (339/1489)	38.3 (813/2124)
PCEEC	6.1 (224/3673)	8.7 (86/987)
V2 by subject-type, in auxiliary verb contexts		
Time period	Frequency of pronominal V2 (%)	Frequency of nominal V2 (%)
YCOE	55.4 (216/390)	82.2 (134/163)
PPCME2 (M1 & M2)	26.3 (212/807)	70.4 (439/624)
PPCME2 (M3 & M4)	41.3 (624/1511)	50.6 (634/1254)
PCEEC	5.7 (273/4826)	22.8 (419/1836)

Frequency of V2 by type of verb and subject (ME)

V2 by subject-type, in lexical verb contexts		
Time period	Frequency of pronominal V2 (%)	Frequency of nominal V2 (%)
M1	16.6 (78/471)	75.6 (384/508)
M2	15.9 (31/195)	59.3 (105/177)
M3	21 (159/756)	39.8 (487/1223)
M4	24.6 (108/733)	36.2 (326/901)
V2 by subject-type, in auxiliary verb contexts		
Time period	Frequency of pronominal V2 (%)	Frequency of nominal V2 (%)
M1	22.1 (118/533)	77.7 (320/412)
M2	34.3 (94/274)	56.1 (119/212)
M3	42.6 (412/968)	40.7 (310/761)
M4	39 (212/543)	65.7 (324/493)

Middle English dialectal texts

Frequency of ME texts from different dialects		
Time period	Dialect	Frequency (%)
M1	Northern	0 (0 texts)
	East Midlands	23.1 (3 texts)
	West Midlands	69.2 (7 texts)
	Kentish	7.7 (1 text)
M2	Northern	33.3 (2 texts)
	East Midlands	16.7 (1 text)
	West Midlands	16.7 (1 text)
	Kentish	33.3 (2 texts)
M3	Northern	13 (3 texts)
	East Midlands	56.5 (13 texts)
	West Midlands	13 (3 texts)
	Southern	17.4 (4 texts)
M4	Northern	7.7 (1 text)
	East Midlands	69.2 (9 texts)
	West Midlands	15.4 (2 texts)
	Southern	7.7 (1 text)

Frequency of V2 across ME dialectal texts

Frequency of V2 (%)				
Time period	Northern	East Midlands	West Midlands	Kentish/Southern
M1	N/A (0/0)	53.2 (445/837)	40.4 (457/1131)	31.1 (14/45)
M2	26 (63/242)	45.6 (99/217)	14.7 (10/68)	47 (178/379)
M3	66.7 (311/466)	42.1 (559/1328)	41.2 (421/1021)	11.2 (117/1049)
M4	75 (3/4)	45 (832/1848)	25.2 (200/793)	28.1 (27/96)

Frequency of V2 by type of subject, in lexical verb contexts, across ME dialectal texts

Frequency of V2 by type of subject, in lexical verb contexts (%)								
Time period	Northern		East Midlands		West Midlands		Kentish/Southern	
	Pron. V2	Nom. V2	Pron. V2	Nom. V2	Pron. V2	Nom. V2	Pron. V2	Nom. V2
M1	N/A (0/0)	N/A (0/0)	16.9 (32/189)	90.7 (234/258)	17.4 (46/264)	59.2 (145/245)	0 (0/18)	100 (5/5)
M2	11.1 (7/63)	37.2 (16/43)	26 (13/50)	32.14 (9/28)	0 (0/17)	50 (2/4)	16.9 (11/65)	76.5 (78/102)
M3	36.7 (22/60)	90.1 (64/71)	26.3 (60/228)	45.2 (179/396)	26.6 (73/275)	59 (177/300)	2.1 (4/193)	14.7 (67/456)
M4	N/A (0/0)	N/A (0/0)	28.4 (143/504)	41.22 (237/575)	15.4 (33/214)	27.4 (79/288)	26.7 (4/15)	24.3 (9/37)

Frequency of V2 by type of subject, in auxiliary verb contexts, across ME dialectal texts

Frequency of V2 by type of subject, in auxiliary verb contexts (%)								
Time period	Northern		East Midlands		West Midlands		Kentish/Southern	
	Pron. V2	Nom. V2	Pron. V2	Nom. V2	Pron. V2	Nom. V2	Pron. V2	Nom. V2
M1	N/A (0/0)	N/A (0/0)	18.9 (37/196)	78.6 (136/173)	24.7 (80/324)	76.2 (176/231)	7.7 (1/13)	100 (8/8)
M2	32.1 (26/81)	31.8 (14/44)	51.6 (33/64)	59.5 (44/74)	8 (2/25)	33.3 (6/18)	31.7 (33/104)	72.4 (55/76)
M3	73 (168/230)	59.8 (49/82)	45.1 (164/364)	54.7 (140/256)	27.6 (67/243)	54.3 (88/162)	9.9 (13/131)	12.6 (33/261)
M4	66.7 ⁶⁹ (2/3)	N/A (0/0)	44 (146/332)	73.5 (289/393)	33.2 (63/190)	27.9 (22/79)	5.6 (1/18)	61.9 (13/21)

⁶⁹ Result not shown in corresponding graph (Figure 19) due to N/A result in the context of V2 with nominal subjects/auxiliary verbs.