

The Qualitative Decline of Object-Verb Order in Late Middle English: A Minimalist Approach*

Harumasa Miyashita
University of Tokyo

harumasa@attglobal.net

Abstract

The object-verb order in the 15th century was on decline in quality as well as in quantity. Recent studies have shown that the object-verb order is restricted to negated and quantified objects in the Aux-Obj-V sequence and topicalized objects in the Obj-Ø_{Subj}-(Aux)-V sequence. Further investigation into the 15th century object-verb order, however, reveals that pronominal objects are also attested in the Aux-Obj-V and Obj-V sequences. In this paper, it is argued that this syntactically limited word order is derived by Object Shift accompanied by DISL (i.e. phonological dislocation rule) or further A'-movement. It is also shown that under the minimalist approach, the change in question is simply attributed to the loss of formal features that drive the relevant movement and the weakening of the phonological operation.

Keywords: object-verb order, Late Middle English, Object Shift, A'-movement, DISL

1. Introduction

It is well known that earlier English exhibited object-verb (henceforth, OV) order, which is impossible in Present-day English (henceforth, PE). The OV order in Old English and Early Middle English (henceforth, OE and EME, respectively) is exemplified in (1) and (2), respectively:¹

(1) OLD ENGLISH

þæt ic **þas boc** of Ledenum gereorde to Engliscre spræce *awende*
that I this book from Latin language to English tongue translate
'that I translate this book from Latin language to the English tongue'

(*AHTH*, I, pref, 6 / Kemenade (1987: 16) cited in Roberts (1997: 400))

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The following are the historical periods of English standardly assumed: Old English (700-1100), Early Middle English (1100-1300), Late Middle English (1300-1500), Early Modern English (1500-1700), Late Modern English (1700-1900), and Present-day English (1900-). Throughout this paper, the example sentences are represented with the (grammatical) objects boldfaced, lexical verbs italicized, and auxiliary/modal verbs underlined when they are present.

(2) EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH

þat he ~~deap~~ scolde *þolizen*

that he death should suffer

'that he should suffer death'

(*Vices & V.* 113.21 / Fischer et al. (2000: 161))

This word order was on the decline in number after the OE period (cf. Fries (1940)). Recent studies on OV order in Late Middle English (henceforth, LME) show, however, that while it was declining in number, the object types and the syntactic context involved in the OV order were also restricted in the 15th century. For instance, Ingham (2000), Moerenhout & Wurff (2000) and Koma (2001), investigating the *Paston Letters*, establish that the OV order was mainly found with a negated object (henceforth, Neg-Obj), and that this was possible only in the Aux-Obj-V sequence. Conducting a survey on various texts in LME, Wurff (1999) and Fischer et al. (2000) also maintain that the OV order in the 15th century was restricted to the Neg-Obj and quantified object (henceforth, Q-Obj) in the Aux-Obj-V sequence and the topicalized object (henceforth, Top-Obj) in the Obj- \emptyset_{Subj} -(Aux)-V sequence, where \emptyset_{Subj} is understood to be an empty subject. Based on the work of Foster & Wurff (1995), however, Foster & Wurff (1997) hold an opposing claim that the OV order in LME was motivated by the discourse-related factors such as givenness, specificity and definiteness, which are considered to be the characteristics of pronominals. Thus, Foster & Wurff (1995) indicate that in the Aux-Obj-V sequence the OV order in LME favors pronominal objects (henceforth, Prn-Obj). Furthermore, Wurff & Foster (1997) show that even the OV order in Early Modern English exhibits a preference for the Prn-Obj. Obviously, there are two different observations concerning the OV order in LME, and they need to be clarified. Moreover, the qualitative decline that took place in the 15th century needs an adequate account.

The aim of this paper is twofold. First, this paper re-investigates into the OV order in the 15th century, with special reference to Miyashita (2001). Specifically, further investigation into the OV order in the 15th century shows that those two different observations mentioned above can indeed be clarified: the OV order is attested with a Prn-Obj as well as a Neg-Obj/Q-Obj/Top-Obj. Second, this paper shows that the qualitative decline of OV order in the 15th century is best analyzed under the minimalist approach. More precisely, the change in question is naturally explained by Chomsky's (2001a) account on Object Shift and the Chomsky's (1993, 1995b) proposal that the movement is morphologically driven. Maintaining the universal base hypothesis proposed by Kayne (1994), more specifically, it is claimed that OV order is derived from the VO base order by various kinds of movement, and that the change in question resulted from the demise of some of the movement, hence from the loss of the formal feature(s) that drive(s) the movement in question and the weakening of the phonological operation.

This paper is organized as follows: §2 presents the basic facts of OV order in LME; §3

reviews previous accounts on OV order in LME; §4 analyzes the derivation of OV order in LME under the minimalist approach; §5 gives an account on the qualitative decline of OV order in the 15th century and afterwards from the minimalist perspective; §6 concludes this paper.

2. Basic Facts

As pointed out by the previous studies (Fischer et al. (2000), Wurff (1997) among many others), OV order in the first half of LME (i.e. the 14th century) is attested with any type of nominals, including the definite full nominal objects (henceforth, FN-Obj). The following are instances of OV order with a definite nominal:²

- (3) a. I may my persone and myn hous so *kepen and deffenden*

I may myself and my house so keep and defend

‘I can keep and defend myself and my house in such a way’

(Chaucer *Melibee* 1334 / Fischer et al. (2000: 163))

- b. And Absolon his gyterne hath *ytake*

and Absolon his guitar has taken

‘And Absolon has taken his guitar’

(Chaucer *Miller’s Tale* 3353 / Wurff (1997: 490))

The sentence in (3a) exhibits the Aux-Obj-V order while the sentence in (3b) exhibits the Obj-Aux-V order.³ According to Fischer et al. (2000), the latter word order is not so frequently attested. The overall frequency of OV order was falling since the beginning of EME, as the following table illustrates:

TABLE 1: DECLINE OF OV ORDER

	c.1000	c.1200	c.1300	c.1400	c.1500
OV	52.5%	53.7%	40+%	14.3%	1.87%
VO	47.5%	46.3%	60-%	85.7%	98.13%

(Fries (1940: 201))

Recent studies on OV order in LME have revealed, however, that the object types and the syntactic context involved in the OV order were also restricted in the 15th century. For instance, Ingham (2000), Moerenhout & Wurff (2000) and Koma (2001) investigate into the

² According to Foster & Wurff (1995), the Obj-V-Aux sequence, which is frequently attested in OE, was already non-existent in LME.

³ In what follows, the notation ‘Aux’ is understood to be referring to auxiliary or modal verbs, and ‘V’ to non-finite verbs or past participles. In the absence of an auxiliary or modal verb, ‘V’ refers to finite verbs.

OV order in the *Paston Letters* written in the 15th century, and show that the OV order was mainly found with a Neg-Obj in the Aux-Obj-V sequence. This is exemplified as follows:

- (4) I will **no thyng** *grawnt* with-out the vnder-shreves assent
 I will nothing grant without the undersheriff's assent
 'I will grant nothing without the undersheriff's assent'

(PL 59.15 / Ingham (2000: 20))

Wurff (1999) and Fischer et al. (2000) also maintain that the OV order in the 15th century was restricted to the Neg-Obj and Q-Obj in the Aux-Obj-V sequence and the Top-Obj in the Obj-Ø_{Subj}-(Aux)-V sequence. The latter sequence is exemplified by the relative clause with an empty subject and the coordinate clause with an empty subject. The following are instances of the Aux-Obj-V sequence with a Q-Obj and the Obj-Ø_{Subj}-(Aux)-V sequence with a Top-Obj:

- (5) he haþ on vs mervy, for he may **al þynge** *do*
 he has on us mercy for he can all things do
 'he has mercy on us, for he can do everything'

(Barlam 2740 / Fischer et al. (2000: 163))

- (6) a. al them [that **this litel werke** shal *see, here or rede* to have me excused]
 all them that this little work shall see hear or read to have me excused
 'all those that will see, hear or read this little work to forgive me'

(Caxton 46a.29 / Wurff (1999: 242))

- b. þat here kynge dede such reuerence and worschyp vnto þe poore men,
 that their king did such reverence and worship unto the poor men
 [and **such shame** *dede* vnto his dygnyte]
 and such shame did unto his dignity
 'that their king showed such reverence and respect to the poor people and caused
 such shame to his own dignity'

(Barlam 757 / op.cit.)

Foster & Wurff (1995), however, make a different observation. In their subsequent work (Foster & Wurff (1997)), they argue that the OV order in LME is related to the discourse-related factors such as givenness, specificity and definiteness, which are considered to be the characteristics of pronominals. Thus, "in main clauses the categories Modal O Inf and Aux O V_{non-fin} contain more pronominal objects in both verse and prose (Foster & Wurff (1995: 321))." In other words, they observe in Foster & Wurff (1995) that the Aux-Obj-V sequence favors Prn-Obj. They give only one relevant example, though:

- (7) how hi ssolle ham-zelue ssiriue
how they shall themselves thrive
‘how they must thrive themselves’ (Ayenbite 5.13 / Foster & Wurff (1995: 321))

It is apparent now that there are two different observations concerning the OV order in LME. Some observe that the OV order in LME is restricted to the Neg-Obj and Q-Obj in the Aux-Obj-V sequence and Top-Obj in the Obj-Ø_{Subj}-(Aux)-V sequence, while the others observe that it favors the Prn-Obj in the Aux-Obj-V sequence. Obviously, these two different observations must be clarified. In order to ameliorate the situation, let us refer to the survey conducted by Miyashita (2001). Specifically, Miyashita has collected the OV tokens in the texts from M4 (1420-1500) and MX4 (composition date unknown; manuscript date 1420-1500), by using the second edition of the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English* (Kroch & Taylor (1999); henceforth, PPCME2).⁴ The result of the survey in Miyashita (2001) is summarized in the following table.

TABLE 2: OV ORDER ATTESTED IN THE TEXTS FROM M4 AND MX4

	SENTENCES SEARCHED	OV TOKENS FOUND
cmaelr4	766	6 (0.78%)
cmcapchr	4175	10 (0.24%)
cmcapser	91	0 (0.00%)
cmedmund	300	0 (0.00%)
cmfitzja	228	9 (3.95%)
cmgregor	2631	6 (0.23%)
cminnoce	208	1 (0.48%)
cmkempe	3853	56 (1.45%)
cmmalory	4997	22 (0.44%)
cmreynar	740	12 (1.62%)
cmreynes	703	27 (3.84%)
cmsiege	733	55 (7.50%)
cmthorn	674	2 (0.30%)
TOTAL	20099	206 (1.02%)

(Miyashita (2001: 197))

⁴ The following are the texts investigated by Miyashita (2001): from M4, *Aelred of Rivaux's De Institutione Inclusarum in Bodley ms.* (cmaelr4), *Capgrave's Chronicle* (cmcapchr), *Capgrave's Sermon* (cmcapser), *Life of St. Edmund* (cmedmund), *Fitzjames' Sermo die Lune* (cmfitzja), *Gregory's Chronicle* (cmgregor), *In Die Innocencium* (cminnoce), *The Book of Margery Kempe* (cmkempe), *Malory's Morte Darthur* (cmmalory), *Caxton's History of Reynard the Fox* (cmreynar), *The Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes* (cmreynes), and *The Siege of Jerusalem* (cmsiege); from MX4, *The 'Liber de Diversis Medicinis' in Thornton ms.* (cmthorn). For reference, I indicate which dialect these texts belong to: *The 'Liber de Diversis Medicinis' in Thornton ms.* (cmthorn) is written in the northern dialect; *Malory's Morte Darthur* (cmmalory) and *The Siege of Jerusalem* (cmsiege) are written in the West Midland dialect; *Gregory's Chronicle* (cmgregor) is written in the southern dialect; the rest of the texts are written in the East Midland dialect. Note that there is no major dialectal difference with respect to OV order (contra the dialectical difference in V2 pointed out by Kroch & Taylor (1997) and subsequently by Haeberli (2000)). See Table 2.

In a nutshell, the finding in Miyashita (2001) is that the OV order in the 15th century is attested with a Prn-Obj as well as a Neg-Obj/Q-Obj/Top-Obj, and hence the two different observations can indeed be clarified. Note that the total ratio of the attested OV tokens in Table 2 (i.e. 1.02%) nearly coincides with the data on the 15th century OV order that Fries (1940) gives (i.e. 1.87%). This means that the OV order in 15th century English was indeed on the decline in quantity (see Table 1 above). Table 3 below shows the attested OV tokens sorted by object types.

TABLE 3: OBJECT TYPES INVOLVED IN THE ATTESTED OV ORDER

	FN-OBJ	PRN-OBJ	NEG-OBJ	Q-OBJ	TOP-OBJ	TOTAL
cmaelr4	0	1	3	1	1	6
cmcapchr	1	1	3	1	4	10
cmcapser	0	0	0	0	0	0
cm Edmund	0	0	0	0	0	0
cmfitzja	1	3	1	2	2	9
cmgregor	1	2	0	1	2	6
cmminnoce	1	0	0	0	0	1
cmkempe	12	5	20	3	16	56
cmmalory	2	9	3	1	7	22
cmreynar	3	4	2	0	3	12
cmreynes	6	10	4	0	7	27
cmsiege	2	48	0	0	5	55
cmthorn	0	0	0	0	2	2
TOTAL	29	83	36	9	49	206

(Miyashita (2001: 198) with slight modification)

Aside from FN-Obj, the OV order is dominant with Prn-Obj, Top-Obj and Neg-Obj (40.29%, 23.79% and 17.48% of the total OV tokens, respectively).⁵ It follows that the two different observations in previous studies are indeed clarified: the OV order in 15th century English is mainly found with Prn-Obj, Top-Obj and Neg-Obj. The instances of the OV order with a Prn-Obj are given in (8) below. Note here that with Prn-Obj, both the Obj-V and Aux-Obj-V sequences are frequently found in the 15th century.

- (8) a. and I mekely *hit kyssyd* and allsoo þe heme of þe clothe þat he werryd.
and I meekly it kissed and also the hem of the cloth that he wore
‘and I meekly kissed it and also the hem of the clothes that he wore’

(CMSIEGE, 78.225 / PPCME2)

⁵ The OV order with an FN-Obj in the 15th century is excluded from the discussion below. This is because some of the attested OV instances of this type (15 out of 29 instances) are, in fact, analyzed as synthetic compounds or other constructions. Thus, their apparent OV order is an epiphenomenon, and the OV order with an FN-Obj counts as a minority pattern. See Miyashita (2001) for details.

- b. and fro his enmyes I shall hym defende.
 and from his enemies I shall him defend
 'and from his enemies, I shall defend him' (CMREYNES, 266.509 / op.cit.)

In the following section, previous accounts on the LME OV order are briefly reviewed.

3. Previous Accounts

Under the minimalist approach (Chomsky (1993, 1995b, 2000, 2001a, 2001b)) which subsumes the universal base hypothesis proposed by Kayne (1994), OV order is generally treated as a derived configuration.⁶ Especially under its earlier version (Chomsky (1993, 1995b)), OV order is often analyzed as the configuration resulted from Object Shift (henceforth, OS), the movement required by overt feature checking of the object.⁷ For instance, Zwart (1993, 1997, 2001a, 2001b) takes up this approach for Dutch, Roberts (1997) for OE, Fischer et al. (2000) for OE, EME and 14th century English, and Wurff (1997) for LME. Overt feature checking of the object is required by the strong D-feature on AgrO in Chomsky (1993) or *v* in Chomsky (1995b). The strong (categorical) feature on a functional head must be eliminated prior to Spell-Out for some reason.⁸ Hence overt movement of the element that can delete the strong feature on the relevant functional head is required. In this way, Fischer et al. (2000) analyze the 14th century OV order exemplified in (3) above. With the phrase structure proposed by Chomsky (1993), the VP-internal subject hypothesis and the assumption that the auxiliary/modal verb heads its own projection and subsequently moves to the higher functional projection, the derivation of (3) can be schematically illustrated as follows:⁹

⁶ But see Fukui & Takano (1998) for a view under the minimalist approach that VO order is the derived configuration.

⁷ There is another approach to analyzing OV order as a derived configuration: V-movement subsequently accompanied by the remnant VP preposing. See Hróarsdóttir (2000a, 2000b, 2000c) for an analysis on Old Icelandic under this approach and Haegeman (1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2001) for an analysis on West Flemish under this approach.

⁸ The reason may be that the strong (categorical) feature is uninterpretable either at PF or LF, hence its existence causes the derivation to crash at either of the levels. Alternatively, it may be that the strong feature must simply be eliminated upon its introduction. The space limitation prevents us from going further into this. See Lasnik (1999a) for details.

⁹ Since the notion of equi-distance, which is a prerequisite for object movement in Chomsky (1993), is ignored in most of the previous accounts on OV order, it is abstracted away from the discussion on the derivation of (3).

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(11) [TP he [T may [AuxP t_{may} [VP al pyngc [VP t_{he} do t_{al} pyngc]]]]]

↑ |
 OOR

[illegible]

Turning now to the OV order with a Prn-Obj, no account is given from the generativist perspective. Foster & Wurff (1997) instead give an account from the functionalist perspective. They argue that the OV order in LME is motivated by the discourse-related factors such as givenness, specificity and definiteness. Thus, the Prn-Obj, which tends to bear given, specific and definite information, is mainly found in the Aux-Obj-V sequence. An obvious question to ask is how such notions as givenness, specificity and definiteness are integrated into the generative framework. The answers are already supported in the recent studies on OV order such as Diesing & Jelinek (1995), Diesing (1996, 1997), Thráinsson (2001) and Vikner (2001). Chomsky (2001a) also incorporates these notions into his account on OS, to which we will turn shortly.

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TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

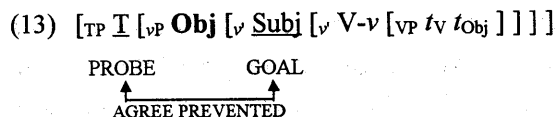
	OBJECT TYPE	CONTEXT	LANDING SITE
14TH CENTURY	any object	anywhere	Spec AgrOP
15TH CENTURY	Neg-Obj / Q-Obj	Aux Obj V	Spec NegP / Adjunct of VP
	Top-Obj	Obj \emptyset_{Subj} (Aux) V	Spec TopP
	Prn-Obj	(Aux) Obj V	?

In the following section, we will recast the previous accounts on the LME OV order presented in this section, in terms of Chomsky's (2001a) proposal on OS.

4. An Analysis: OS+DISL/A'-movement

As shown in §2, the OV order in 14th century English is attested with any object type in any syntactic context, whereas the OV order in the 15th century is restricted to the following object types and syntactic contexts: Neg-Obj, Q-Obj and Prn-Obj in the Aux-Obj-V sequence; Top-Obj in the Obj- \emptyset_{Subj} -(Aux)-V sequence; Prn-Obj in the Obj-V sequence. With respect to the Neg-Obj and Q-Obj in the Aux-Obj-V sequence and the Top-Obj in the Obj- \emptyset_{Subj} -(Aux)-V sequence, it was shown in §3 that they are derived by NM, OQR and Topicalization, respectively. But why these operations were possible in the 15th century is a puzzle. How the Aux-Obj-V and Obj-V sequences with a Prn-Obj are derived was also left unclear. It is just known to be motivated by such notions as givenness, specificity and definiteness. In what follows, it is demonstrated that the existence of NM, OQR and Topicalization is well-motivated by Chomsky's (2001a) proposal on OS. Under his proposal, moreover, the derivation of the Aux-Obj-V and Obj-V sequences with a Prn-Obj is clarified.

Chomsky (2001a) argues that in the following configuration, the operation called Agree is prevented by the shifted intervening object.¹¹



In (13), an object intervenes between the probe (i.e. T) and the goal (i.e. the subject). The unvalued uninterpretable features in the probe seek for matching interpretable features, and the ones in the object are possible candidates. The interpretable features in the subject are also possible candidates for valuation of unvalued features in the probe. But for the probe,

¹¹ Although Chomsky's (2001a) argument is presented here, I follow Chomsky (1995b, 2000) for the notation of the light verb in (13).

the object is closer than the subject.¹² Thus, the object induces the so-called intervention effect, and the probe cannot enter into an agree relation with the goal. Note that the configuration in (13) can be yielded in any language even in the ones where the object movement is not found (henceforth, [-OS] language). This is because the phase impenetrability condition (henceforth, PIC), in a nutshell, states that C can only have access to the specifier and head of *vP*, but not its complement.¹³ When the object is moved to Spec CP by *wh*-movement, for example, it must move to Spec *vP* on its way because C does not have direct access to the complement of *vP*. This means that the intervention effect may prevail in any language, and this is an unavoidable problem.

In order to ameliorate the situation, Chomsky (2001a) proposes that the shifted object must vacate higher Spec *vP* by further movement. "Icelandic, for example, also excludes OS without further raising of the object, either A'-movement or DISL (Chomsky (2001a: 30))." DISL is a phonological dislocation rule that raises the shifted object to a higher position. Thus in any language where the object movement is observed (henceforth, [+OS] language), OS must be subsequently accompanied by A'-movement or DISL. Otherwise, derivation will be illicit. Given the PIC, OS must take place when the object is moved by A'-movement such as *wh*-movement, even in languages where the object movement is not found. In other words, the object must move to Spec *vP* when its movement targets a higher functional projection.

Recall that the OV order with a Neg-Obj, with a Q-Obj and with a Top-Obj in 15th century English is derived by NM, OQR and Topicalization, respectively. Surprisingly, they are generally regarded as the instances of A'-movement in the literature. It follows that under Chomsky's (2001a) proposal, they are also considered to be involving OS. Hence, the operations involved in the derivation of the 15th century OV order must be OS+NM, OS+OQR and OS+Topicalization. If we follow Beghelli & Stowell (1997) and Szabolcsi (1997) in assuming a functional projection for Q-Obj, namely ShareP, the full clause structure will be the following one:^{14, 15}

¹² The notion of closeness is defined in terms of c-command. Thus, if α asymmetrically c-commands both β and γ , and β asymmetrically c-commands γ , then β is closer to α than γ is.

¹³ The configuration relevant to the PIC and its definition in Chomsky (2001a) are given in (i) and (ii), respectively:

(i) [_{CP} Z ... [_{HP} XP [H YP]]]

(ii) The domain of H is not accessible to operations at ZP, the smallest strong phase; only H and its edge are accessible to such operations. (Chomsky (2001a: 14))

Given the definition of PIC in (ii), Z in (i) can only have access to XP and H, but crucially not to YP.

¹⁴ If Lasnik (1995, 1999a, 1999b, 2001a, 2001b, 2002) is correct in that PE also has OS, the verbal structure in (14) will be more complex. The space limitation prevents us from going further into this matter here. See Miyashita (2003) in this volume for details.

¹⁵ In (14), Share is located above Neg. This is because the Q-Obj can generally have either wide or narrow scope with respect to negation. Under the assumption that the negative marker occupies a fixed position, the Q-Obj has wide scope when interpreted in Spec ShareP, whereas it has narrow scope when interpreted in its first merged position.

- (18) a. NM (cf. Nishioka (1999), Watanabe (2001a, 2002a, 2002c))¹⁸
- i. Neg (Probe): [*u*Neg] --- [–interpretable]
 - ii. N-Obj (Goal): A. [Neg] --- [+interpretable]
B. [*u*Foc] --- [–interpretable]
- b. OQR (cf. Beghelli & Stowell (1997), Watanabe (2002c))
- i. Share (Probe): [*u*GRef] --- [–interpretable]
 - ii. Q-Obj (Goal): A. [GRef] --- [+interpretable]
B. [*u*Foc] --- [–interpretable]
- c. TOPICALIZATION (cf. Ishikawa (2001), Watanabe (2002c); contra Watanabe (2001b))
- i. Top (Probe): [*u*Top] --- [–interpretable]
 - ii. Top-Obj (Goal): A. [Top] --- [+interpretable]
B. [*u*Foc] --- [–interpretable]

With the features in (18), NM, OQR and Topicalization are forced. In the case of NM, the uninterpretable Neg-feature of Neg seeks for an active Neg-Obj with an interpretable Neg-feature and an uninterpretable Foc-feature, thereby NM is driven. OQR is driven when the uninterpretable GRef-feature of Share seeks for an active Q-Obj with an interpretable GRef-feature and an uninterpretable Foc-feature. Topicalization is also driven with the uninterpretable Top-feature of Top and the interpretable Top-feature and uninterpretable Foc-feature of Top-Obj in the same manner. Thus, the derivations in (15)–(17) are motivated by the need to eliminate the uninterpretable features in the computational system.

What remains unexplained at the moment is the OV order in the 14th century and the OV order with a Prn-Obj in the 15th century (cf. (3) and (8)). They are also naturally explained under Chomsky's (2001a) proposal. Modifying the proposal by Holmberg (1999) and incorporating his well-known generalization called Holmberg's generalization, Chomsky (2001a) also proposes the following universal principles and parameter:¹⁹

- (19) a. *v* is assigned an EPP feature only if that has a semantic effect on outcome.
b. The EPP position (i.e. phonological edge) of *v* is assigned INT.²⁰
c. At the phonological border of *v*P, XP is assigned INT'.²¹

(Chomsky (2001a: 35))

¹⁸ Thus, the Neg-criterion proposed by Haegeman (1995) is reformulated simply as the need for the valuation of unvalued features (see footnote 10). This is what Watanabe (2001a, 2002a) argues.

¹⁹ Holmberg's generalization states that OS is contingent on V-raising (out of VP).

²⁰ "INT is an interpretive complex which consists of specificity/definiteness, [old] information, focus, etc. (Chomsky (2001a: 31))." This is the semantic interpretation that the shifted object receives.

²¹ "The phonological border of a phrase is a position not c-commanded by phonological material in that phrase (Chomsky (2001a: 34))."

(19a) and (19b) are universal principles, and (19c) is a parameter. The phonological edge and the phonological border are illustrated in the following structure:

(20) [TP ... [T [_v V-v]-T] ... [_{vP} **Obj** [_v Subj [_v *t_v* [_{vP} *t_v* **Obj**]]]]]]

PHONOLOGICAL EDGE PHONOLOGICAL BORDER

According to (19b), the phonological edge of *vP* is assigned INT in any language. Whether the phonological border is available or not is contingent on the verb movement out of *vP* (see footnote 21). Suppose the verb has moved out of *vP* to T as in (20), then the phonological border is assigned INT' in [+OS] languages, according to (19c). Thus, there is a semantic difference between the phonological edge and the phonological border, and hence OS is licit in this case, according to (19a). In [-OS] languages, on the other hand, the phonological border is assigned either INT or INT' because the parameter in (19c) is not 'turned on' in these languages. There is no semantic difference between the phonological edge and the phonological border. Under the principle in (19a), OS is obviously illicit in this case. Suppose the verb has not moved out of *vP*, then the phonological border is unavailable. Under the principle in (19b), the first-merged position of the object is assigned either INT or INT' in any language. Under the principle in (19a), OS is again illicit in this case. Thus, Chomsky (2001a) naturally captures Holmberg's generalization under the minimalist approach.

The derivation of OV order in the 14th century is also explained in the same way. But the mere application of OS under (19) leads to VO order. Recall, however, that under Chomsky's (2001a) first proposal mentioned above, OS must be subsequently accompanied by further A'-movement or DISL. Further A'-movement or DISL may lead to OV order. The former is evidenced above by the derivation of the OV order with a Neg-Obj, with a Q-Obj and with a Top-Obj. I argue that the 14th century OV order is derived by OS+DISL. Since DISL is a PF dislocation rule, the position this operation targets is unclear. To settle this state of affair, let us assume that DISL allows 'tucking in' in the sense of Richards (1997) and it targets any existing functional projection. Given this assumption, the derivation of (3) is illustrated as follows:²²

²² Note that the configurations in (21) do not observe Holmberg's generalization. Consequently, another parameter has to be devised to accommodate this case. This parameter is given below:

(i) At the first-merged position of the object, it is assigned INT'.
While the positive setting of (19c) leads to [+OS] languages where OS is possible in the absence of Aux, the positive setting of (i) leads to OV language where OS is possible even in the presence of Aux. If both of the parameters are positively set, again OV order is yielded. In other words, the positive setting of (i) overrides the effect of parameter in (19c). If Holmberg's generalization must be subsumed under the current generative theory, the parameter in (i) is needed in any case to derive OV order under Kayne's (1994) universal base hypothesis. Alternatively, one may argue that V has, in fact, moved out of *vP* in (21). But this argument needs both conceptual and empirical justification.

- (21) a. [TP I [T may [ShareP **my persone and myn hous** [Share' Share [NegP Neg
 ↑
 DISL
 [vP *t_{my persone...}* [v' *t_I* [v' v [VP *so kepen and deffenden t_{my persone...}*]]]]]]]]]
 ↑
 OS
 (cf. (3a))
- b. [TP Absolon [T his gyterne [T hath [ShareP Share [NegP Neg
 ↑
 DISL
 [vP *t_{this gyterne}* [v' *t_{Absolon}* [v' v [VP *ytake t_{this gyterne}*]]]]]]]]]
 ↑
 OS
 (cf. (3b))

In (21a), DISL raises the FN-Obj to Spec ShareP. This is licit movement under the assumption made above. Since DISL is a PF operation, it is not feature-driven. Hence, it may target Spec ShareP. It may also target Spec TP. This is what happens in (21b). In (21b), DISL tucks in the FN-Obj below the subject because Spec TP is already present. Thus, under the assumption that DISL allows tucking in and targets any existing functional projection, the derivation of the 14th century OV order can be explained.

If we assume that the target position of DISL is restricted to Spec ShareP, the 15th century OV order with a Prn-Obj is also derived by OS+DISL. The Aux-Obj-V sequence is derived by the movement of the Prn-Obj to Spec ShareP. In the case of the Obj-V sequence, DISL also targets Spec ShareP but V-movement is absent in this case. Thus, the derivations of (8) will be the following ones:

- (22) a. [TP I [T T [ShareP mekely [Share' **hit** [Share' Share [NegP Neg [vP *t_{hit}* [v' *t_I* [v' v
 ↑
 DISL
 [VP *kyssyd t_{hit} and ...*]]]]]]]]]
 ↑
 OS
 (cf. (8a))
- b. [TP I [T schall [ShareP **hym** [Share' Share [NegP Neg [AuxP *t_{schall}* [vP *t_{hym}* [v' *t_I* [v' v
 ↑
 DISL
 [VP *defende t_{hym}*]]]]]]]]]
 ↑
 OS
 (cf. (8b))

Note that the Prn-Obj in (22a) is tucked in below the sentential adverb (i.e. *mekely*) which is adjoined to ShareP. This movement is possible only under the assumption made above. Note that the account on OV order with a Prn-Obj given here is compatible with the claim made by Foster & Wurff (1997). Recall that they claim that the OV order in LME is motivated by such notions as givenness, specificity and definiteness. Thus, they observe in Foster & Wurff (1995) that the Aux-Obj-V sequence in LME favors the Prn-Obj. This is just what the present account predicts. Under (19), only given, specific and definite elements can be moved by OS, and the Prn-Obj is likely to bear these kinds of information.

But if the account on OV order with a Prn-Obj given here is on the right track, one may wonder why DISL cannot raise the FN-Obj in the 15th century. This is what we will turn to in the following section.

In sum, it was shown in this section that the OV order with a Neg-Obj, with a Q-Obj and with a Top-Obj in 15th century English is derived by OS+NM, OS+OQR, and OS+Topicalization, respectively. The OV order in the 14th century and the OV order with a Prn-Obj in the 15th century are both derived by OS+DISL. These derivations are motivated by Chomsky's (2001a) proposals on OS.

5. Change in the 15th Century and Afterwards

Recall that the OV order in the 14th century is attested with any object type in any syntactic context, whereas the OV order in the 15th century is restricted to the Neg-Obj and Q-Obj in the Aux-Obj-V sequence, the Top-Obj in the Obj- \emptyset_{Subj} -(Aux)-V sequence, and the Prn-Obj in the Aux-Obj-V or Obj-V sequences. An obvious question to ask is how this change is naturally explained. It is demonstrated in this section that this change is naturally explained with the derivations presented in the previous section.

To begin with, let us see how language variation is accommodated under the minimalist approach. The earlier principles-and-parameters approach attributes language variation to a set of parameters. The minimalist approach goes on to elaborate the notion of the parameter further. Language variation is restricted to the lexicon. More specifically, language variation under the minimalist approach is attributed to the variation in formal features of functional heads, as the following quotes from Chomsky's works clearly indicate.

... [B]eyond PF options and lexical arbitrariness, variation is limited to non-substantive parts of lexicon and general properties of lexical items. (Chomsky (1993: 3))

... [P]arameters are restricted to *formal features* with no interpretation at the interface... [T]hey are restricted to formal features of functional categories. (Chomsky (1995a: 6))

If we regard language change as language variation, then it is also attributed to the change in formal features of functional heads. This is, in fact, suggested by Pintzuk et al. (2000). In other words, "change can be described simply as the reorganization of the featural content of the lexical items of the language (Pintzuk et al. (2000: 7))." If the language change is restricted to the lexicon, it takes place in the course of language acquisition. This is indeed the case. Chomsky (2000, 2001a, 2001b) states that formation of the lexicon involves two processes: from a universal set of features, [F], a particular language L selects a subset of [F], namely {F}; L then assembles {F} to lexical items. Thus, Pintzuk et al. (2000) argue that

the origin of any syntactic change is located in these processes.²³

Bearing in mind the minimalist approach to language change, let us turn to the change under consideration. As mentioned at the onset of this paper and in §2, the OV order was attested with any object type since OE until the 14th century. For this fact, let us assume that it was not derived by a sole operation, namely just by OS+DISL, but by OS+DISL/NM/OQR/Topicalization. Thus, DISL could raise both the FN-Obj and Prn-Obj until sometime in the 14th century. Note that this assumption regards the frequently attested OV order in earlier English as an epiphenomenon: it merely reflects the existence of various kinds of movement in earlier English. Under this assumption, the change that took place in the 15th century is attributable to the change in the nature of DISL. Other things being equal, if DISL was weakened so that it could only raise unstressed light elements such as pronominals, then the remaining movement that derives OV order was OS accompanied by NM, OQR, Topicalization or weakened DISL. Hence, the resultant OV order was limited to the Neg-Obj, Q-Obj, Top-Obj, and, of course, Prn-Obj. I argue that this is what took place in the 15th century. Since DISL is a PF operation, however, its weakening cannot be attributed to the reorganization of formal features mentioned above. How it changed is not clear at all. But it is not implausible to suppose that the change involved in the phonological operation refers to such phonological terms as stress and heaviness. According to Chomsky (2001a), moreover, DISL is a language-particular operation. Thus, DISL may undergo language-particular change without recourse to the reorganization of formal features. But how the weakening of DISL is motivated left unsolved at the moment. As Pintzuk et al. (2000) state, movement is a marked option of language. Thus, we can speculate that language tends to reduce marked options, at least the ones outside of narrow syntax.

According to Fischer et al. (2000), the OV order with a Neg-Obj and with a Top-Obj was attested until sometime in the 16th century. If we put aside the OV order with a Top-Obj, this means that OQR was lost by the end of the 15th century and NM was lost sometime in the 16th century.²⁴ Under the minimalist view of language change, the loss of NM and OQR is simply attributable to the loss of their driving features. Thus, the loss of NM is due to the loss of the uninterpretable Neg-feature of Neg and the uninterpretable Foc-feature of the Neg-Obj. Similarly, the loss of OQR is due to the loss of uninterpretable GRef-feature of Share and the uninterpretable Foc-feature of the Q-Obj. What triggered the loss of these features is not obvious. In the case of V-movement, its loss is often related to the weakening of verbal morphology. When the verbal inflections are reduced, children

²³ In fact, Pintzuk et al. (2000) regard these processes as one. Hence, it is not clear whether the origin of the change should be located in one of the processes or both of them.

²⁴ That OQR is lost by the end of the 15th century is supported by the investigation by Miyashita (2001). As shown in Table 3, the number of the OV tokens with a Q-Obj attested in the texts from M4 and MX4 is relatively small. This indicates that the OV order with a Q-Obj was already on decline in the 15th century.

acquiring the language deduce from this that the driving feature of V-movement is absent in the relevant language. In this way, V-movement is lost. But in the case of NM and OQR, there is no overt morphology related to the Neg-Obj nor Q-Obj. Hence the loss of the features under consideration cannot be ascribed to their morphological properties. We simply speculate that language's tendency to reduce marked options is at work here.

Concerning the OV order with a Top-Obj, its loss is also attributable to the loss of the features driving Topicalization, namely the uninterpretable Top-feature of Top and the uninterpretable Foc-feature of Top-Obj. But the context where the loss of the features in question took place is limited. Since Topicalization is still well attested in the matrix clause in PE, the features in question were lost only in the embedded context such as relative clauses and coordinate clauses.

The OV order with a Prn-Obj is still attested in the 16th century, according to Wurff & Foster (1997). Hence, it was lost sometime after the 16th century. Under the assumption given so far, we have two logical possibilities for the cause of its loss. It may be either the resetting of the parameter in (19c) above (more specifically, the parameter mentioned in footnote 22) or the loss of DISL. It is hard to think of the trigger for the former possible change: resetting of a parameter requires outstanding change in adults' production of the relevant language, which is hardly observable with respect to the parameter in (19c). If the argument on DISL above is on the right track, the latter possible change can be triggered by language's tendency to reduce marked options. Thus, it seems that the latter option is the possible cause for the loss of DISL sometime after the 16th century.

In sum, the following change took place in the history of English: weakening of DISL that led to the loss of the OV order with an FN-Obj (sometime in the 14th century); loss of the features driving OQR that led to the loss of OV order with a Q-Obj (sometime in the 15th century); loss of the features driving NM and loss of the features driving Topicalization in the embedded context that led to the loss of the OV order with a Neg-Obj and with a Top-Obj (sometime in the 16th century); loss of DISL that led to the loss of the OV order with a Prn-Obj (sometime after the 16th century). The summary of the argument presented in this section is illustrated as follows:

TABLE 5: QUALITATIVE DECLINE OF OV ORDER IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

	GRAMMAR CHANGE	LANGUAGE CHANGE
1300 - 1400	weakening of DISL	Obj-Aux-V (any object) Aux-Obj-V (any object) Obj-V (any object)
1400 - 1500	loss of [μ GRef] on Share / [μ Foc] on Q-Obj	Obj-Aux-V (Top-Obj) Aux-Obj-V (Neg-Obj, Q-Obj & Prn-Obj) Obj-V (Top-Obj & Prn-Obj)
1500 - 1600	loss of [μ Neg] on Neg / [μ Foc] on Neg-Obj & [μ Top] on Top / [μ Foc] on Top-Obj	Obj-Aux-V (Top-Obj) Aux-Obj-V (Neg-Obj & Prn-Obj) Obj-V (Top-Obj & Prn-Obj)
1600 - ?	loss of DISL	(Aux-)Obj-V (Prn-Obj)
? - PE		no OV order

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed the qualitative decline of OV order that took place in the 15th century and afterwards under the minimalist approach. It was shown that while the OV order in the 14th century was found with any object type in any context, the OV order in the 15th century was mainly found with the Neg-Obj and Q-Obj in the Aux-Obj-V sequence, the Top-Obj in the Obj- \emptyset_{Subj} -(Aux)-V sequence, and the Prn-Obj in the Aux-Obj-V and Obj-V sequences. Concerning these facts, it was claimed that the OV order in earlier English was derived by various kinds of movement, more specifically, by OS+DISL, OS+NM, OS+OQR and OS+Topicalization. It was also demonstrated that the change in question was due to the weakening of DISL. Moreover, the qualitative decline of OV order after the 15th century is attributable to the loss of features that drive NM, OQR, and Topicalization on the one hand, and the loss of DISL on the other.

There are two remaining questions to be addressed. The first question concerns the OV order with a Prn-Obj. Although this word order was shown to be attested in the 16th century, the exact period of its demise is yet to be identified. This task requires further investigation into the OV order in Early Modern English and Late Modern English. The second question concerns the claim made in this paper. As mentioned above, the qualitative decline of OV order is attributed to the loss of features driving movement and the weakening and subsequent loss of the phonological operation. For the former change, we must identify the trigger for the loss of the features in question, that is, how they are lost in the course of language acquisition. This is made possible by investigating into other syntactic changes that took place in the history English, especially the loss of movement. This task requires a larger-scale survey covering each historical period of English. For the latter change, we

must reconfirm that this change is attested in the history of other languages. Since DISL is a language-particular rule, it is hard to find similar cases. These questions will be explored in my future studies.

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