

THE WORD ORDER OF OLD ENGLISH AND OLD HIGH GERMAN
NON-CONJOINED DECLARATIVE CLAUSES
IN DIFFERENT TEXT TYPES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present paper is to compare word-order patterns of two West Germanic languages, English and High German, at the early stage of their development, on the example of one clause type, namely non-conjoined declarative clauses. The word-order patterns have been analysed for three basic text types (poetry, authentic prose and translated prose) in order to check whether text type has a similar influence on word order of those closely related languages. The paper is a fragment of a more detailed Ph. D. project entitled: *A corpus-based comparative study of Old English and Old High German word order in different text types* (to be completed in 2009). The most interesting results of the first stage of the study have been presented here. All details and aspects of the analysis which have not been included in the presents paper (e.g. word order of other clause types, the behaviour of objects and complex verb phrases) can be found in the forthcoming dissertation.

1. Introduction: Aims of the project

Linguists analysing word order in dead languages seem to be quite used to the idea that authentic prose texts constitute the only representative source of syntactic information. This is what our modern language intuition suggests: both poetry and translations are subject to different types of constraints that distort the syntactic structure and make the text less natural and less representative. As a consequence, it would be ideal if syntactic studies were based on authentic prose works. Yet, there is one problem that cannot be so easily solved: such sources very often do not exist. Some old languages happen to be relatively well codified, but this is not always the case, and the number of available texts is very often scarce. As a consequence, the choice is seriously limited and some-

times the only possible solution is to use every text that survived. The point is that linguists simply cannot afford to exclude certain texts on the basis of their form, because it would mean losing a substantial part of information about a given language.

Old English and Old High German are no exceptions, but their word order has usually been studied with the use of prose texts. In the case of Old English, the most common texts seem to be *The Anglo-Saxon chronicle*, analysed, e.g., by Bean (1983), and religious prose, usually homilies by Ælfric or Wulfstan, studied by Davis (1997) and Kohonen (1978). Old High German is very much neglected in this respect and its word order has hardly ever been a subject of linguistic research. The only exceptions are: a study by Bernhardt and Davis (1997), a book by Dittmer (1998), both based on the *Tatian Gospel translation*, and a study by Robinson (1996) that makes use of the *Isidor translation* (all these works are based on translations; this problem will be discussed later). There is no study that gives a thorough statistical analysis of word order patterns in various text types, and only one work compares OE and OHG syntax (Davis and Bernhardt 2002). The purpose of the present study is to fill in this gap. To be more specific, the project has three basic aims:

- to compare word order patterns in Old English and Old High German, taking into consideration different text and clause types;
- to see to what extent text type determines word order and check if this phenomenon is universal (similar behaviour in both analysed languages);
- to check what exercises a more powerful influence on word order at this stage of development of Germanic languages: text type or language itself.

Davis and Bernhard (2002), in their pioneering work on West Germanic syntax, claim that Old English and Old High German should be considered dialects of the same language and that their syntax is virtually identical. The present study aims at examining this hypothesis in a more diversified sample of texts (Davis and Bernhard based their analysis on the *Tatian Gospel translation* and homilies of Ælfric).

2. Methodology

2.1. Overview of existing sources

The study of word order in dead languages is a painstaking struggle against the lack of representative sources. Old English is a relatively well codified language, with ca. 3 million words in the entire corpus of texts dating from the period between the 7th and the 11th century. Old High German is in a definitely

worse situation, for monks living in the area of the present Germany chose to use Latin as the major written medium of communication; German vernacular was thought to be substandard. This language did not have its Alfred the Great, who did more than anyone else for preserving Old English in writing, and to whom we owe our knowledge of the 9th century English. Even Otfrid from Weissenburg, the author of the famous *Evangelienbuch*, a gospel harmony considered to be the first substantial literary work in the German language, calls vernacular poems *laicorum cantus obscenus* ('obscene song of the laity'), and models his work on antique literature.

As a result of such an attitude in the nation, there is no work in Old High German comparable to *The Anglo-Saxon chronicle*, and the basic source of our knowledge concerning this region are Latin works such as *Annales Fuldenses* (*Annals of Fulda*). In fact, the *Chronicle* is an extremely important text both from the linguistic and the historical point of view, as it covers a very long period of time, from the Anglo-Saxon invasions to the times after the Norman Conquest, presenting different stages of the development of English. Apart from historical records, Old English was used for writing sermons that were understandable to the public (the most famous works were written by two bishops: Wulfstan and Ælfric). Again, Old High German was less explicitly used for this purpose. There are a few sermons written in this language (e.g. *Wessobruner Predigt*), but most of them are quite heavily influenced by Latin models, unlike OE texts, which were by no means translations, even though the influence of Latin on learned clergy should not be underestimated.

As for poetry, there exists scarcely any truly Germanic poem. Only *Hildebrandslied* is written in alliterative verse, reflecting the Germanic spirit of pre-Christian times. The rest of OHG poetry is rhymed and modelled on Latin verse. In the case of Old English, the list of alliterative works is quite long and it covers the greatest treasures of the Anglo-Saxon literature, e.g. *Beowulf*, *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *The battle of Maldon*, and the famous Anglo-Saxon riddles.

Both Old English and Old High German were used in translations of various Latin works, although the latter language is, again, less developed in this respect. English monks managed to render the Gospels as an interlinear gloss (*Lindisfarne Gospels*) and as a free translation (*West Saxon Gospels*). Apart from that, there is an OE translation of *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*The ecclesiastical history of the English people*) and several minor works. The most important translations in Old High German concern religious matters: the treatise *De fide catholica* of Isidor de Sevilla and the *Tatian Gospel translation*, which is in fact a gospel harmony drawing from various sources. The quality of the *Tatian translation* has often been questioned, and some scholars go so far in their criticism that they choose to call the text a gloss.

This overview of the oldest literature in English and German makes it possible to divide the existing sources into three main categories: poetry (alliterative and rhymed), translated prose (glosses and free translations) and authentic prose texts (more or less influenced by Latin). There is nothing more than that, the corpus is closed. Thus, a linguist who tries to analyse syntax, and to be more exact: word order of those languages, faces a real difficulty. It needs to be determined which of those texts can be considered a valid source of linguistic information and what criteria should be used in order to select the best sample for the analysis.

2.2. Poetry as a source of linguistic information

Scholars are very far from agreeing upon the use of poetry in linguistic research. Some of them regard verse as totally unsuitable for a syntactic analysis, as e.g. Gardner: "A study of poetic patterns, however, contributes little to an understanding of prose structure" (1971: 15) or McLaughlin: "[W]e are not likely to be able to tell from an examination of poetic sentences what the normal, or dominant sentence order in standard Old English discourse was" (1983: 66). However, some of them point to a very interesting aspect, noticing that "OE poetry preserves native syntax relatively unaffected by Latin influence" (Rynell 1952: 39). Old prose, as it has already been emphasised, relies on Latin models, which are bound to affect syntactic structures. Thus, poetry may be treated as the place where linguists should look for the most ancient structures of Germanic languages.

Many scholars are not so radical in their views, choosing to treat poetry with certain distance, but not disregarding it. It is obvious that poetry is different from casual speech, but:

We must not think that element order in the poetry is more chaotic than that in the prose; it is subject to metrical and other considerations which either do not arise, or which play a less prominent part, in the prose

(Mitchell 1985: 982).

Problems related to poetry are manifold and include:

- the influence of the metrical structure on the order of elements (smaller syntactical units often coincide with metrical units);
- alliteration and rhymes affecting the choice of words;
- the priorities accorded to various parts of speech in the allotment of stress;
- modern punctuation, which "is a tool unsuitable for editors of OE poems" (Mitchell 1985: 989); it can suggest an incorrect syntactic interpretation of a given fragment.

The word order of poetry is certainly affected by the abovementioned restrictions, but we should not disregard such a huge source of textual evidence only because it may be different from other text types. As Fischer et al. (2000) admitted:

Some people would say that prose sources yield the only reliable data. This is not necessarily true. In some cases, poetry, translations, and even word by word glosses, may provide evidence that comes closer to our modern grammaticality judgments than the evidence just discussed

(Fischer et al. 2000: 31).

Of course, Fischer et al. mention this in the context of their work, but these words support one basic hypothesis: Poetry may prove useful for a linguistic analysis. What is more, sometimes verse is the only possible choice. It is especially true in the case of Old High German, where authentic prose texts virtually do not exist. Old English cannot be idealised in this respect, either. Monks who decided to write in Old English certainly looked up to Latin literature and considered it the best possible kind of prose writing. They must have drawn from ancient sources and employed syntactic structures that sounded "elegant" but not necessarily natural for Old English. This phenomenon was studied by Scheler (1961) who concluded his research on syntactic borrowings in Old English with such a statement:

Als sich die christlichen Übersetzer Altenglands an die Arbeit machten, einen Teil der lateinischen Kirchenliteratur in ihre Muttersprache zu übertragen, besaß das Altenglische noch keine Prosa, and der sie ihren Stil hätten schulen können. Der parataktisch-einfache ae. Satzbau reichte nicht aus, die prägnante nominale Ausdrucksweise der Vorlagen wirkungsvoll wiederzugeben. So ahmten sie, speziell in den sich eng an die lateinischen Quellen haltenden Übersetzungstexten, den lateinischen Satzbau nach, übernahmen aber auch einen Teil der entlehnten Konstruktionen in die freiere Übersetzungsliteratur und stellenweise sogar in das heimische Schrifttum

(Scheler 1961: 103).

[When the Anglo-Saxons started to translate religious literature from Latin into their mother tongue, Old English had no literary tradition of prose writing and they could not model their style on any previous works. The simple paratactic clause structure was not enough to render the full meaning of the complex style of the original. Thus, they copied Latin syntax, especially in translations that were very closely related to the source text, but they also used some of the borrowed structures in free translations, and sometimes introduced them into their native writing.]¹

¹ Translations of all quotations have been provided by the author of the present paper.

Thus, poetry may be the only chance of looking at the language without those additions, as no prose text, be it Old English or Old High German, can be totally free of Latin influences.

2.3. Translations as a source of linguistic information

The aforementioned problem applies to the greatest extent to translations. Even nowadays, it is not uncommon to find some “language copying” in translated works, where the translator was so heavily influenced by the source text that he (or she) bound the natural syntax of the target language, consciously or not, in order to make the two texts as similar as possible. Such a phenomenon must be taken into consideration in the case of religious prose, and there is no text that illustrates it better than the Bible. The holiness of the original makes the role it plays in the society so special that the translator must be extremely careful in the choice of words and structures, and the desire to stay as close to the source text as possible is of primary importance. Suffice it to say that the English bishop Wycliffe was expelled as a preacher from Oxford, his writings were banned and his manuscripts burned, only because he and his followers translated the Bible in such a way, and using such words, that in some fragments it acquired a slightly different meaning and could be interpreted according to his theological views, which were not in accordance with the official position of the Church (Crystal 2004: 238-239). Therefore, translations of religious texts, and in the case of Old English and Old High German the source texts were written in Latin, could not have been created freely and without any constraints. The constraints were different than those applying to poetry, but they did exist. According to Scheler (1961) the most important examples of syntactic structures borrowed from Latin are:

- the absolute constructions (e.g. *ablativus absolutus*);
- the construction Accusative + Infinitive;
- periphrastic verb forms (e.g. progressive tenses);
- inflected infinitive.

Apart from that, Latin word order influenced the word order of translations, but the extent to which this phenomenon applies to individual works is a matter of controversy. Different scholars represent different views on the quality (or independence), and as a consequence – the representativeness, of translations created in Old English and Old High German. As for Old English, it is agreed that *Lindisfarne Gospels* are a gloss, whereas *West Saxon Gospels* can be treated as a more or less free translation, where language copying is more limited. The situation in Old High German is less clear. Most linguists agree that

the OHG *Isidor* is a high-quality work, very much independent of the original, and the best translation ever created in this language. Yet, all OHG translations are perceived as imperfect, the reason being the inability of the language to express complex senses of the Latin source text:

Viele meinten auch, dass die deutsche Sprache nicht die Fähigkeit besitze, sakrale Inhalte zu erfassen, da der Wortschatz ganz einfach zu klein sei. Als eine Folge hiervon würden die Übersetzer, so meinte man, mehr oder weniger gezwungen werden, unzutreffende Ausdrücke in ihre Übersetzungen zu verwenden, was im schlimmsten Fall zu einer Fälschung des Originaltexts führen könnte
(Brundin 2004: 39-40).

[A lot of people thought that the German language was not able to render sacral contents, for its vocabulary was simply too limited. As a consequence, the translators, as it was thought, were more or less forced to use unfitting phrases in their translations, which could lead, in the worst case, to a distortion of the original text.]

It is true that the language of all OHG translations seems a bit artificial, even to a person who is no native speaker (e.g. because of a very frequent use of participial structures). The greatest controversies concern the *Tatian Gospel translation*; a text which is used by Davis and Bernhardt in their book *Syntax of West Germanic: The syntax of Old English and Old High German*. Many scholars represent views similar to Labrum, who claims that *Tatian* is “a translation from a Latin original, and in general an extremely literal one, with the German corresponding almost word for word to the Latin” (1982: 17). A more detailed analysis, however, shows that:

... certain parts of the translation are so close to the Latin as to resemble an interlinear gloss (for example Chapters 77-82), while others (such as the first seventeen chapters) undoubtedly show a certain independence and skill which cannot be explained by different readings in the original

(Bostock 1976: 164-165).

Therefore, it can be claimed that also translations can provide valuable data for linguistic research, even though their dependence on the original can never be fully excluded. They cannot be treated on a par with authentic prose texts, as they belong to a text type that is subject to very peculiar constraints. Yet, they constitute a huge body of texts, in the case of both Old English and Old High German, and the price for excluding them from the sample would be very high.

2.4. Sources used in the present study

The discussion presented above leads to the following conclusions:

- Available sources for the study of Old English and Old High German are limited;
- The sources fall into three categories: poetry, translated prose and authentic prose;
- All three categories can provide useful information, but they cannot be treated as equal.

In this situation, there are two possible ways of choosing source texts for the analysis: one can either focus on a given text type, or take samples from all three text types and check whether the intuitive differences between them are really as substantial as they are thought to be. The present study makes use on the latter approach. The corpus of texts selected for the analysis is presented below:

Table 1. The structure of the corpus used in the present study

Text type	OLD ENGLISH	OLD HIGH GERMAN
POETRY	<i>Widsith</i> <i>Caedmon's Hymn</i> <i>Beowulf</i> (excerpts) <i>The Wanderer</i> <i>The Seafarer</i> <i>The battle of Maldon</i>	<i>Merseburger</i> <i>Zaubersprüche</i> <i>Hildebrandslied</i> <i>Wessobruner Gebet</i> <i>Muspilli</i> <i>Petruslied</i> <i>Ludwigslied</i> Otfried's <i>Evangelienbuch</i> (excerpts)
	876 clauses	471 clauses
PROSE	AUTHENTIC	
	<i>Laws of Alfred</i> (excerpts) <i>The AS Chronicle</i> (excerpts) Ælfric's homily <i>Alia visio</i> Wulfstan's <i>Sermo Lupi ad Anglos</i>	<i>Wessobruner</i> <i>Predigt</i> <i>AHD Physiologus</i> Notker's <i>Prologue</i> <i>WienerHundesegen</i>

	774 clauses	405 clauses
TRANSLATED	<i>West Saxon Gospels</i> (excerpts) <i>Genesis</i> (excerpts)	<i>Straßburger</i> <i>EideAHD Isidor</i> (excerpts) <i>Tatian Gospel Translation</i> (excerpts)
	448 clauses	629 clauses
	2098 clauses	1505 clauses

Such a structure makes it possible to discover similarities and differences between languages and between text types in order to realise the aims of the project mentioned at the beginning of this paper.

3. Word order in declarative clauses

The corpus contains 1898 declarative clauses, 1371 of which are non-conjoined. Their distribution among text types is as follows: OE poetry (466), OE authentic prose (137), OE translated prose (162), OHG poetry (239), OHG authentic prose (160), OHG translated prose (207).

3.1. Basic positions of the finite verb

As the finite verb constitutes the basic part of any clause, its position is the central part of the analysis. Six distinct categories have been created in order to analyse the position of the finite verb. Examples of those categories are listed below (finite verbs are shown in italics, phrases are separated with a slash):

only V:
pohte (Alia visio)

V-initial:
wili / *mih* / *dinu speru* / *werpan* (*Hildebrandslied*)

V-2:
To *ðam wife* / *cwæð* / *God* / *eac swylce* (*Genesis*)

V-2 = final:
Gode / *thancodun* (*Ludwigslied*)

V-final:

Soplice / ic / eow / secge (*West Saxon Gospels*)

other:

he / mid gare / stang / wlannc wicing (*The battle of Maldon*)

Table 2 illustrates the frequency of those patterns in all the samples.

Table 2. The position of the finite verb in non-conjoined declarative clauses

Text type	OE		OE prose				OHG		OHG prose			
	Poetry		authentic		translated		poetry		authentic		translated	
	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ
only V	2	7	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
V-initial	19	87	11	14	3	5	20	47	1	2	28	54
V-2	34	158	41	53	62	97	58	135	80	122	41	79
V2=final	8	35	5	6	10	16	4	9	6	9	3	5
V-final	15	69	15	19	10	15	10	24	1	2	10	19
other	23	104	28	36	15	23	8	18	12	8	18	36

The first important difference is the fact that Old High German is more V-2 than Old English, which may be observed in poetry and authentic prose:

Table 3. V-2 non-conjoined declarative clauses

Text type	Old English		Old High German	
	%	Σ	%	Σ
poetry	34	158	58	135
authentic prose	41	53	80	122
translated prose	62	97	41	79

The discrepancy between Old English and Old High German in this respect ranges between 20 and 40%. This would suggest that the V-2 rule was stronger in Old High German.² The only exception to this pattern is translated prose, where

² This phenomenon will be analysed in detail in section 3.5.

the situation is reverse, and the difference reaches almost 20%. In fact, OHG translations behave in a very surprising way in most cases. One of the most striking observation concerns the V-initial pattern. Table 4 shows that its distribution across the samples is very uneven and, in some cases, rather surprising.

Table 4. V-initial non-conjoined declarative clauses

Text type	Old English		Old High German	
	%	Σ	%	Σ
poetry	19	87	20	47
authentic prose	11	14	1	2
translated prose	3	5	28	56

In both OE and OHG poetry the frequency of V-initial clauses is significant and the samples may be treated as almost identical in this respect.³ However, the very high frequency of V-initial clauses in OHG translations is a rather unexpected phenomenon. This order was quite rare and unnatural for both Old English and Old High German, and it was usually marked and used to enhance the dramatic force of a given utterance (especially in poetry):

Sometimes the V-1 construction also occurs in OE, but it denotes an exceptionally marked, or even formulaic style

(Onesti 1993: 90).

The verb-initial pattern [in OHG], then, represents a marked order used principally in imperatives, clauses with dramatic force, and conjoined clauses including relatives

(Smith 1971: 96).

The exceptionally high percentage of V-initial clauses in OHG translations may be due to the influence of Latin word-order, where the first position in a clause was very prominent and it was used for emphasis. This is the traditional view argued by most scholars, e.g.

Unter dem Einfluß des Lateinischen kann das Verb nicht nur in subjektlosen Aussagesatz in Anfangstellung vorkommen

(Penzl 1986: 101).

[Under the influence of Latin, the verb could occupy the initial position not only in subjectless declarative clauses.]

³ The chi-square test was applied to all results in order to check the statistical significance of differences between the samples.

This would suggest that the OE translators were more independent and copied the Latin syntax less slavishly, since they hardly ever used this structure. Yet, there may be another explanation. Perhaps OHG translations behave similarly to poetry, where the verb was fronted in order to draw the hearers' attention (e.g. when reading a sermon) and the influence of Latin is of secondary importance here. However, this line of thinking would suggest a similar behaviour of OE translations, which is not true. A possible explanation would be that the V-initial order may have been more marked in Old English at that time and this is why OE translators were more willing to avoid it and substitute it with more neutral syntax.

3.2. The influence of Latin on the V-initial pattern in Old High German

The only way of checking which of those two hypotheses is true is to analyse the OHG word-order against the corresponding word-order of the Latin original. The analysis presented below takes as its object the *Tatian Gospel translation*. All verb-initial declarative clauses from the sample were compared to their Latin equivalents. The results are presented in Table 5 (finite verbs are shown in italics):

Table 5. Verb-initial declarative clauses in the *Tatian Gospel translation*

Latin structure	No.	Latin text	Old High German text
V-initial (14)	1.	<i>Dixit</i> autem Maria ad angelum:	<i>Quad</i> tho Maria zi themo engile:
	2.	<i>inventa</i> est in utero habens de spiritu sancto	<i>uuas</i> siu fundan so scaf-faniu fon themo heilagen geiste.
	3.	<i>voluit</i> occulte dimittere eam	<i>uuolta</i> tougolo sia for-lazzan.
	4.	<i>cognoverunt</i> de verbo	<i>forstuontun</i> fon demo uuorte,
	5.	<i>tulerunt</i> illum in Hierusalem	<i>brahtun</i> sie inan tho in Hierusalem,
	6.	<i>sciscitabatur</i> ab eis	<i>eisgota</i> fon in,
	7.	<i>confitebatur</i> domino	<i>lobota</i> truhtin
	8.	<i>antecedebat</i> eos	<i>forafuor</i> sie,

	9.	<i>accepit</i> puerum et matrem eius	<i>nam</i> then kneht inti sina muoter
	10.	<i>timuit</i> illo ire	<i>forhta</i> imo thara faren.
	11.	<i>habitavit</i> in civitate	<i>artota</i> in theru burgi,
	12.	<i>Ascendit</i> autem Ioseph a Galilea de civitate	<i>Fuor</i> tho Ioseph fon Galileu fon thero burgi
<i>et</i> + V-initial (5)	13.	<i>invenerunt</i> puerum cum Maria matre sua	<i>fundum</i> then kneht mit Mariun sinero muoter
	14.	<i>exiit</i> edictum a Cesare Augusto	<i>framquam</i> gibot fon demo aluualten keisure,
	15.	Et <i>ait</i> angelus ei:	<i>Quad</i> iru ther engil:
	16.	et <i>timuerunt</i> timore magno	<i>giforhtun</i> sie im tho in mihhlero forhtu.
	17.	Et <i>venit</i> in spiritu in templum	<i>Quam</i> tho in geiste in thaz gotes hus,
	18.	Et <i>erat</i> pater eius et mater super his quae dicebantur de illo	<i>Uuas</i> tho sin fater inti muoter vvuntoronti ubar thi
	19.	Et <i>erat</i> Anna prophetissa, filia Fanuel de tribu Aser	<i>uuas</i> tho thar Anna uuizzaga, dohter Fanuelles fon cunne Aseres,
participle + V (8)	20.	Et reversi <i>sunt</i> pastores	<i>Vvurbun</i> tho thie hirta heimuuartes
	21.	reversi <i>sunt</i> in Galileam in civitatem suam Nazareth	<i>vvurbun</i> tho zi Galileu in ira burg Nazareth.
	22.	turbatus <i>est</i>	<i>uuard</i> gitruobit
	23.	gavisi <i>sunt</i> gaudio magno valde	<i>gifahun</i> mihhilemo gifehen thrato
	24.	iratus <i>est</i> valde	<i>balg</i> sih harto
	25.	turbata <i>est</i> in sermone eius	<i>uuas</i> gitruobit in sinemo uuorte
	26.	impleti <i>sunt</i> dies	<i>vvurdun</i> taga gifulte,
	27.	vocatum <i>est</i> nomen eius Ihesus	<i>uuard</i> imo ginemit namo Heilant;

other (6)	28.	Et pastores <i>errant</i> in regione eadem vigilantes	<i>Uuarum</i> tho hirta in thero lantskeffi uuahhante
	29.	Et ecce angelus domini <i>stetit</i> iuxta illos	<i>Quam</i> thara gotes engil inti <i>gistuont</i> nah in
	30.	et responsum <i>acceperat</i> a spiritu sancto	<i>inphieng</i> tho antuuurti fon themo heilagen geiste,
	31.	ecce <i>apparuit</i> angelus domini in somnis Ioseph in Aegypto	<i>arougta</i> sih truhntines engil in troume Iosebe in Aegypto
	32.	Factum <i>est</i> antem in diebus illis	<i>Uuard</i> tho gitan in then tagun,
	33.	Et factum ut	<i>Uuard</i> tho

Again, the chi-square test was used in order to check the significance of the perceived differences between the source text and the translation. The result for Table 5 is 26.68 (with 3 degrees of freedom, significance level ≤ 0.001), which confirms that the samples are different from each other. It is not possible to talk about slavish copying, since only 14 clauses out of 33 are word-by-word translations. On the whole, 19 Latin clauses are V-initial (though 5 of them are also conjoined, whereas the OHG translation omits the coordinating conjunction *et*). A very interesting technique is the “participle + V” pattern. As the examples 20-27 show, the original Latin order “participle + V” can be rendered in 3 typical ways. It may be reversed:

uuas gitruobit in sinemo uuorte (25)
(V) (participle) (adverbial)

It can also be completely changed, with a new constituent, e.g. the subject, framed by both parts of the complex verb-phrase:

vvurdun taga gifulte (26)
(V) (S) (participle)

The last option is the situation where the OHG equivalent does not contain a complex verb phrase, but rather a simple verb which is topicalised:

balg sih harto (24)
(V) (reflexive) (adverbial)

This proves that the very high frequency of verb-initial declaratives in OHG translations is only partly due to language copying. At least one half of all instances results from translation strategies aimed at rendering various Latin structures. Such strategies were not employed when translating the *West Saxon Gospels*, where the V-initial pattern is very rare (only 3% of all instances). Thus, it must be assumed that translations made in Old English and Old High German are indeed different, and the discrepancies are at least partially due to language claque in Old High German.

3.3. The expression of subjects

The expression of subjects depends very much on text type.

Table 6. Unexpressed subjects in non-conjoined declarative clauses

Text type	Old English		Old High German	
	%	Σ	%	Σ
poetry	22	99	18	41
authentic prose	13	16	7	10
translated prose	4	6	29	53

Unexpressed subjects are characteristic of poetry and the results presented in Table 6 confirm this tendency. In Old High German, however, subjects remain unexpressed quite frequently (almost 20% of all clauses) both in poetry and in translated texts, where subjects are omitted in almost 30% of all cases. This is a very interesting phenomenon since it illustrates, again, a totally different translation strategy in Old English and Old High German: in OE translations subjects remain unexpressed in only 4% of clauses. OHG translations, however, do not follow this tendency. A closer analysis sheds some light on this issue. First of all, 68% of those OHG clauses come from the OHG *Isidor translation*, which may suggest an idiosyncratic influence of the translator. Second of all, OHG translated sentences often go as follows:

34) *Sie* tho gisehente then sterron *gifahun* mihhilemo gifehen thrato inti ingangante in hus *fundun* then kneht mit Mariun sinero muoter inti nidar fallente *betotun* inan (*Tatian*).

[They then, seeing the star, felt great joy and entering the house, (they) found the boy with Mary, his mother, and falling down, (they) greeted them.]

The sentence is long and the syntax is very Latin-like, especially because of the frequent use of participles (*gisehente, ingangante, fallente*). The subject is used at the beginning of the sentence and it is never repeated, exactly as it was done in Latin. Old English seems to have required some sort of coordination in order to drop its subjects.⁴

3.4. The position of expressed subjects

As for the position of expressed subjects, Figure 1 makes it possible to observe that the 'inverted' V-S order is relatively more frequent in OHG texts, whereas in Old English the standard S-V pattern has already started to take over.

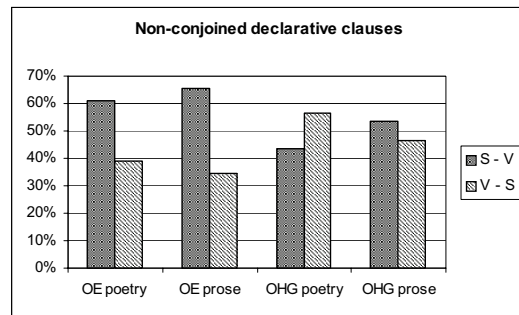


Figure 1. S-V relations in non-conjoined declarative clauses (poetry/prose)

The V-S pattern is slightly more frequent in OE poetry than in prose, but the discrepancy is virtually negligible. Figure 2 reveals utterly no difference between OE authentic and translated prose.

⁴ Between 40 and 60% of OE conjoined declaratives found in the sample have unexpressed subjects.

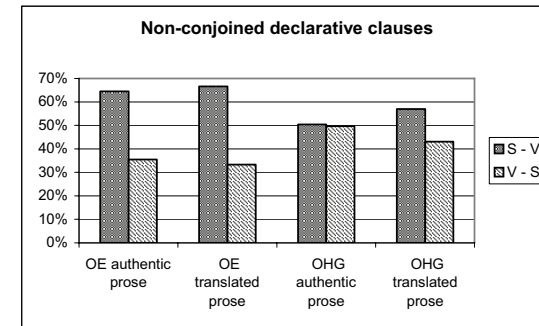


Figure 2. S-V relations in non-conjoined declarative clauses (authentic/translated prose)

The languages are quite uniform but the most striking result is that virtually all comparisons between languages have yielded statistically significant results, which confirms that Old English and Old High German behave in a very different way in this respect.

3.5. The V-2 rule

As for the existing differences and the noticeable dominance of the V-S pattern in Old High German, the question is whether this order is formed as a result of the V-2 rule, with an element at the beginning of the clause causing an inversion of the subject and the finite verb, or if it exists in isolation, with the finite verb at the beginning of the clause. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate this problem:

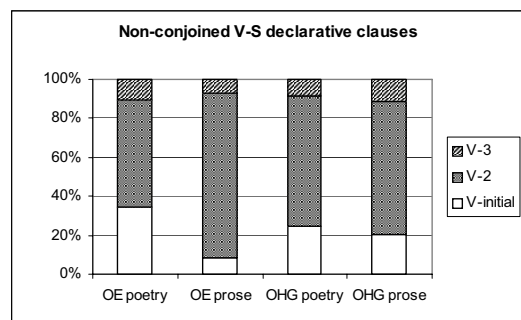


Figure 3. Word order in non-conjoined V-S declarative clauses (poetry/prose)

It is visible here that the ca. 25-30% of cases with the V-S order in poetry were formed as a result of emphatic verb-fronting, as e.g. in:

- 35) *Wæs se grimma gæst Grendel haten* (*Beowulf*)
 'Was this fierce enemy Grendel called'

or

- 36) *Huob her gundfanon uf.* (*Ludwigslied*)
 'Lifted he the weapon up'

This is a stylistic technique used to achieve a very dramatic and dynamic effect, common to both OE and OHG poets. As far as prose is concerned, the situation is more diverse:

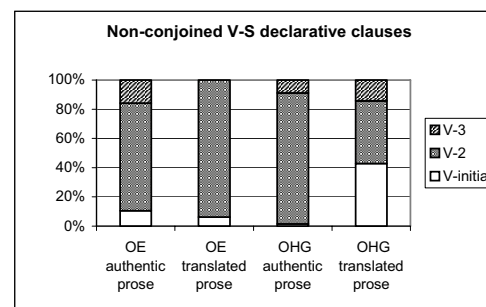


Figure 4. Word order in non-conjoined V-S declarative clauses (authentic/translated prose)

Verb-seconding is responsible for the best part of OE and OHG V-S clauses; the finite verb hardly ever takes the initial position in the clause. Nonetheless, OHG translated prose is an exception: 28% of non-conjoined declarative clauses (which makes 54 clauses in total) are V-initial. From those, 45% contain a subject which is inverted with the finite verb as e.g.:

- 37) *Quad iru ther engil* (*Tatian*)
 'Told her the angel'

- 38) *Brahtun sie inan tho in Hierusalem* (*Tatian*)
 'Brought they him then to Jerusalem'

- 39) *Quhad druhtin druhtine minemu:* (*Isidor*)
 'Told lord to my lord'

This is very similar to the stylistic device used in poetry, which has been mentioned above, and it is modelled on the Latin original, as e.g. in the sentence:

- 40) *Ait autem ad illum angelus*
Quad tho zi imo thie engil
 'Said then to him the angel'

The corresponding fragment from the West Saxon Gospel (Luke 2,10):

- 41) and se engil him to *cwæð*

Here, it is visible that the OE translator completely changed the original word order:

Latin: verb – adverbial – prepositional object – subject
 OHG: verb – adverbial – prepositional object – subject
 OE: conjunction – subject – prepositional object – verb

A thorough comparative analysis of both translations against the Latin original is not possible here, but this example, as well as the analysis of verb-initial patterns presented in Table 5, illustrate what one feels intuitively when looking at those texts – Old High German seems a lot more dependent on the source text than Old English, and this may be the reason for all the inconsistencies.

In the case of the S-V order, most clauses are introduced by the subject itself. Yet, it is visible in Table 7 that verb-seconding does not always work. In Old English ca. 40% of all S-V clauses (except for translations where it happens less frequently) are introduced by an element other than the subject (e.g. an adverbial, a complement or an object) and this does not cause verb-seconding, e.g.

42) *Æfter ðisum ic wearð gebroht (Alia visio)*
 ‘After that I was brought’

43) *be þam man mihte oncnawan (The battle of Maldon)*
 ‘by that one could know’

44) *þær ic ne gehyrde butan hlimman sæ, iscaldne wæg (The Seafarer)*
 ‘There I could here nothing but the roar of the sea, the ice-cold water’

Table 7. S-V clauses introduced by an element other than S

Text type	Old English		Old High German	
	%	Σ	%	Σ
poetry	42	91	17	14
authentic prose	42	29	13	9
translated prose	28	27	30	22

In Old High German, however, this percentage is visibly lower. It seems that the V-2 rule is observed more often in the case of Old High German. It is also interesting to see that both OE and OHG translations demonstrate almost identical proportions in this respect.

As for adverbials, which cause obligatory verb-seconding in Modern German, their influence is definitely stronger in Old High German.

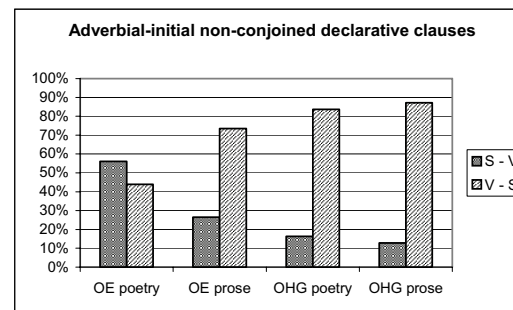


Figure 5. S-V relation in non-conjoined declarative clauses introduced by an adverbial (poetry/prose)

This clear tendency is dominant in all OHG text types, but rather less visible in OE poetry and authentic prose.

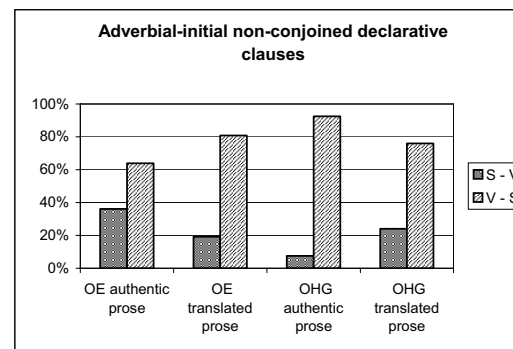


Figure 6. S-V relation in non-conjoined declarative clauses introduced by an adverbial (authentic/translated prose)

There are numerous examples of this pattern coming from various OHG texts, where the initial adverbial causes obligatory inversion:

- 45) *Hier* begin ih einna reda umbe diu tier (*AHD Physiologus*)
‘Here start I my story of an animal’.
- 46) *mit geru* scal man geba infahan, ort widar orte (*Hildebrandslied*)
‘With weapon should one gifts accept, sword against sword’.
- 47) *Thanne* sprah hluduig (*Ludwigslied*)
‘Then spoke Ludwig’.

Davis and Bernhardt (2002: 55) found out that in clauses with an initial adverbial 71% of OE and 75% of OHG non-conjoined declaratives demonstrate the V-S order. The results presented above give a less homogenous picture, with differences between the languages ranging from 44% (OE poetry) to 92% (OHG authentic prose). Thus, it seems that the frequency of this structure is very much dependent on text type, and that no generalisations concerning the whole language are possible here.

3.6. The influence of subject weight

Another aspect that must be taken into consideration in the case of subjects is weight. Light, or pronominal, subjects tend to behave differently from fully lexical phrases. Subjects have been divided into 3 types according to the following criteria:

Table 8. Weight criteria for subjects

Light	Medium	Heavy
personal pronoun	noun	adjective + noun
demonstrative pronoun	adjective	pronoun + adjective + noun
the impersonal pronoun <i>man/mon</i>	pronoun + noun	2 adjectives compounds all phrases with 3 or more elements

The fact that most (over 60%) subjects in OE S-V clauses (especially in prose texts) are light is a natural phenomenon, since light elements are less likely to be shifted towards the end of the clause, and they often stay in the position preceding the verb in clauses introduced by an adverbial, even though a heavier subject would be inverted in such a situation. This is also the reason why the pronoun *man* is grouped together with pronominal subjects:

The indefinite pronoun *man* should not be grouped together with nominal subjects. It patterns with personal pronoun subjects in that it does not normally invert with the finite verb in main clauses with topicalisation

(Van Bergen 2003: 211).

However, it seems that the rule saying that light elements tend not to be inverted in clauses with topicalisation is characteristic of Old English only. Table 9 illustrates this hypothesis:

Table 9. The behaviour of light subjects in non-conjoined declaratives with topicalisation

Text type	Old English				Old High German			
	inverted		non-inverted		inverted		non-inverted	
	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ
poetry	30	21	70	50	84	41	16	8
authentic prose	42	16	58	22	85	41	15	7
translated prose	44	19	56	24	50	7	50	7

It is visible that OE light subjects remain non-inverted in the majority of all cases (with the average rate of inversion ca. 40%), whereas Old High German inverts almost all its light subjects (ca. 85%), with translations behaving slightly differently (this phenomenon needs further investigation since the numbers are relatively low). This seems to confirm the previous conclusion, namely that the V-2 rule was definitely stronger in Old High German since even light subjects had to conform to it.

4. Conclusions

On the whole, the analysis of word-order patterns in non-conjoined declarative clauses clearly suggests that the division into text types is well-grounded and useful since certain features depend more on the formal constraints of a given text type than on the language itself. One of the most striking observations concerns numerous discrepancies between OE and OHG translations, which appear to be the most different samples in the whole corpus. OE and OHG poems, however, demonstrate many similarities, which may suggest that poetic constraints work in a similar way irrespective of the language used. Finally, there are also visible differences between Old English and Old High German which are not influenced by text type (e.g. the V-2 rule, which dominates in Old High German).

The forthcoming analysis of subordinate clauses will provide additional information, which will make it possible to draw more definite conclusions and to determine the most important factors which shaped word order in English and German at the beginning of their development.

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