

**Word order tendencies
in mediaeval English against
the Indo-European background**

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the Indo-European background**

Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego



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Introduction

The aim of the book

The principal aim of the book¹ is to discuss diachronic word order tendencies in the English language in the context of some Indo-European languages. We take into account selected prose texts taken from the two large periods of the history of English, namely Old English and Middle English, and we make a detailed analysis of their word order structure. The central point of our analysis is the change from OV to VO in the history of English word order. We try to establish when this change took place, what the difference was between the behaviour of nominal and pronominal objects in the change, how much external influence there might have been in the change, and what was actually responsible for the change. This analysis has been greatly facilitated by the computer-based tagged corpus that we constructed in order to be able to investigate the word order phenomena that are of interest to us. The construction of our own tagged corpus for the analysis of word

¹ We would like to note the fact that some parts of the book have already been published in the form of articles which we include in the bibliography at the end. We also give special credit to the original publishers of: KIDA I., 2010: 'How Norman-French hindered the development of English word order towards VO'. In: FISIĄK J., ed.: *Studies in English Mediaeval Language and Literature*, Vol. 25; IMAYAHASHI O., NAKAO Y., OGURA M., eds: *Aspects of the History of English Language and Literature, Selected Papers Read at SHELL 2009, Hiroshima*. Frankfurt am Main—Berlin—Bern—Bruxelles—New York—Oxford—Wien: Peter Lang 2010, pp. 285—291; KIDA I., 2007: 'The construction of a tagged corpus and the investigation of the change from OV to VO in English'. In: *Academic Papers of College of Foreign Languages. Vol. 4: Linguistics*. Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo WSL, pp. 82—85.

order changes also enabled us to take into account the entire texts of some manuscripts, like that of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (both the Parker and the Peterborough Manuscript) and the Old English *Orosius*, as well as some lengthy samples of other texts. Moreover, thanks to the tagged corpus we were able to make a parallel comparison of those texts. Apart from the presentation of the results that we obtained, we also present, and this is one of the crucial points of this book, the way in which we constructed the corpus itself. We hope that due to the fact that we focused only on prose texts, and that they were quite lengthy, we were able to obtain more objective results as to the phenomena of word order change in English. Although the word order changes that took place within two large periods of time in the history of English were of our main concern, we situated them within the broader historical context of word order changes that extends from the Proto-Indo-European period up to the late Middle Ages. This wider context was meant to provide some background for the analysis of the changes in English word order so as to avoid their being treated in isolation, as we believe that if a given problem is placed into a larger context, it can be understood better and more objectively.

The structure of the book

The book consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 starts with a short outline of the most influential word order theories, and then we discuss the way in which we constructed the tagged corpus for different texts, both English and non-English, that we used in our analysis of word order changes. The purpose of the discussion is to demonstrate how one can create one's own tagged corpus for a systematic and large-scale approach to the phenomena of word order change. We would also like to encourage the construction of tagged corpora, as corpus linguistics is a very recent phenomenon and comparatively little has been done in this field. However, by the demonstration of how a tagged corpus can be constructed we do not mean to suggest that it is the best corpus for the analysis of word order changes. On the contrary, we leave a lot of space for the reader's creativity in the construction of his own tagged corpus, and what we hope to do is to somehow guide him through this task. By the presentation we would also like to imply that in the construction of a tagged corpus it is necessary to choose criteria that will not be too numerous, too complicated and too elaborate, but which at the same time, by using a minimal number of codes, will allow one to encode as many syntactic structures as possible. In other words, we insist

that in the construction of a tagged corpus it is necessary to assume an economical, uniform and universal approach, because only then is it possible to reflect the true nature of language. Moreover, one of the basic features of our tagged corpus is that it takes into account the dynamic aspect of language change, that is, how language changes can be reflected in the corpus. In other words, it is a flexible corpus and, apart from being able to describe the synchronic state of word order, it also takes into account its diachrony. We explain the details of its flexibility while discussing parataxis and hypotaxis in Old English. Towards the end of the first chapter we give our own definition of the object, both direct and indirect, and we also discuss some problems that we encountered in the process of the construction of the tagged corpus.

In Chapter 2 we start with the discussion of the reconstructed Proto-Indo-European word order, and afterwards we concentrate upon the reconstructed Proto-Germanic word order. We try to arrive at our own conclusions as to what it might have looked like. In order to do that we perform an analysis of quite a large number of runic inscriptions from all the three runic periods, and we analyse them for word order, namely for the position of the object, both nominal and pronominal, with respect to the verb, and for the V2 and the SV2-within-V2 phenomena. Apart from that, we take some prose texts written in the oldest Germanic languages (Gothic, Old High German and Old English) and analyse them for their word order structure. Since these texts are translations of the Bible, we also do a parallel analysis of their counterparts in the languages from which they were translated, that is Latin and Greek. Such an analysis allows us to establish, on the one hand, to what extent the word order in Gothic was influenced by Greek, and, on the other, to what extent the word order in Old High German and Old English were influenced by Latin. Afterwards, we make a parallel comparison of all the data that we obtain from all of the texts. Towards the end of Chapter 2 we discuss Proto-Germanic word order as implied by our analysis. One of the most interesting observations, contrary to what has generally been claimed, is that Proto-Germanic word order was basically VO as far as the position of the nominal object with respect to the verb is concerned.

Having established some ground for further discussion concerning the diachrony of word order change in Germanic languages, in Chapter 3 we discuss the Old English word order. We start the discussion with what some authors tell us with respect to that, and afterwards we get down to our own analysis of some Old English prose texts. We concentrate upon the analysis of the word order found in the Old English *Orosius*, Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*, and in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. As for the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, we analyse two manuscripts, the Parker Manuscript and the Peterborough Manuscript, up to the entry for 1066 and compare the results. One of the

most interesting observations here is that, although the Peterborough Manuscript is a northern copy of a chronicle written in the West Saxon dialect, and thus is ‘more modern’ as regards word order because the northern dialects of English were generally more VO, one can find in it the reflexion of the word order changes that were going on in the West Saxon dialect. Towards the end of Chapter 3 we perform an analysis of a sample of *Heimskringla*, an Old Norse text, and bearing in mind the data that we obtain from its analysis, as well as from the analysis of the runic inscriptions coming from the second period, i.e. the Viking Age, we try to establish to what extent the word order in English was influenced by Old Norse. One of our observations here is that Old Norse played an enormous role in the development of VO word order in English.

In Chapter 4 we concentrate mostly upon Early Middle English and Late Middle English texts. We begin by analysing the entries 1067—1121 of the *Peterborough Chronicle* and then we analyse the two remaining parts of it, namely the First Continuation and the Second Continuation. Although the entries 1067—1121 are still written in Old English, we thought it a good idea to analyse them before a further analysis of the *Peterborough Chronicle* in order to see the contrast between these entries and the two Continuations where noticeable gradual changes in the spelling, vocabulary and word order can be observed. After the analysis of the Peterborough Manuscript, we analyse the texts of *Juliana*, *Ancrene Wisse*, the *Prose Treatises* of Richard Rolle, the *Astrolabe* of Geoffrey Chaucer, and some fragments of Wycliffe’s *Bible*. This analysis allows us to trace some further novelties in the changing English word order to VO. Towards the end of Chapter 4 we discuss the possible influences of Anglo-Norman upon the development of VO word order in English. This discussion is based on the analysis of two texts written in Anglo-Norman, namely *Foedera* and the *Oxford Psalter*. One of the most interesting observations here is that Anglo-Norman had many more OV word order configurations than the English language at that time. This observation refers especially to the position of the pronominal object with respect to the verb. Although Anglo-Norman was OV to quite a large extent, it nevertheless boosted the further development of VO word order structures in English but in a different way than Old Norse did.

In Chapter 5 we make a summary of the word order analysis that we did in the previous chapters and we try to arrive at some conclusions that this analysis offers. The aim of this summary is to discover some regularity in the change from OV to VO in English word order. This regularity, however, can only be observed on the basis of a conscious selection of only a few analysed texts dating from different periods in the history of English and not on the basis of all of the texts that we analysed. The texts that did not fit this regularity very well are simply disregarded here, but this does not mean that

they should be considered as being of secondary importance, as they offer very interesting results that are discussed in their analysis at different points of the book. Apart from the summary and the general conclusions that we make, we also discuss the problem of what kind of clauses, main or dependent, were the locus of the spread of VO word order patterns in the English language. Along with mentioning what some linguists tell us with respect to this problem, we also provide our own views.

Ireneusz Kida

Tendencje w szyku wyrazów średniowiecznej angielszczyzny w kontekście wybranych języków indoeuropejskich

Streszczenie

Celem niniejszej książki jest zaprezentowanie autorskiej metody tworzenia korpusu tekstowego, służącego do badania zmian szyku zdaniowego z OV na VO w języku angielskim oraz w wybranych językach indoeuropejskich, jak również przedstawienie rezultatów wykorzystania tej metody.

W rozdziale pierwszym szczegółowo omówiony został sposób, w jaki konstruowany był nasz korpus. Rozdział drugi poświęcony jest analizie struktury szyku wyrazów w najdawniejszych inskrypcjach runicznych oraz w tekstach najstarszych języków germańskich pisanych prozą, a także omówiony został w nim pragermański szyk zdaniowy. W rozdziale trzecim i czwartym dokonujemy diachronicznej analizy szyku wyrazów, najpierw w języku staroangielskim, a potem w średnioangielskim. Prowadzi nas ona do wniosku, że definitywna zmiana na szyk VO w języku angielskim zaszła w XII i XIII wieku oraz że zmiana na szyk VO generalnie dokonywała się szybciej w zdaniach głównych niż w zdaniach pobocznych. Odkrywamy także, że na pewnym etapie rozwoju języka, a konkretnie we wczesnej średnio-angielszczyźnie, wspomniane zmiany szyku w zdaniach pobocznych stały się bardzo dynamiczne i po pewnym czasie nie było już większych różnic między szykiem wyrazów zdań głównych a pobocznych w okresie średnioangielskim.

W rozdziale trzecim i czwartym dokonujemy analizy tekstów staronordyckich i anglo-normańskich, aby prześledzić, w jakim stopniu języki te przyczyniły się do utraty szyku OV przez język angielski. Jeśli chodzi o język staronordycki, to okazuje się, że miał on ogromne znaczenie w tym procesie, ponieważ w dużo większym stopniu niż w języku staroangielskim dominowała w nim składnia VO, co bezpośrednio przyczyniło się do rozwoju struktur VO także w języku staroangielskim. Ważnym czynnikiem był tu również fakt, że obydwa języki były do siebie bardzo zbliżone. Język anglo-normański natomiast odegrał olbrzymią rolę w kompletnym załamaniu się angielskiego systemu fleksyjnego oraz ostatecznym wyłonieniu się szyku VO w języku średnioangielskim. Mówimy także o pośrednim wpływie języka anglo-normańskiego na język angielski. W kończącym naszą pracę rozdziale piątym, opierając się na własnej analizie, dochodzimy do końcowych wniosków dotyczących trajektorii zmian szyku wyrazów w języku angielskim w szerszym kontekście niektórych języków indoeuropejskich.

Ireneusz Kida

Les tendances de l'ordre des mots dans l'anglais médiéval dans le contexte des langues indo-européennes choisies

Résumé

Le but de ce livre est de présenter une méthode originale de créer un corpus de recherches textuel qui sert à examiner les changements de l'ordre des mots de OV à VO dans la langue anglaise et dans des langues indo-européennes choisies ainsi que la présentation de l'application pratique de la méthode.

Dans le premier chapitre l'auteur présente précisément comment le corpus a-t-il été construit. Le deuxième chapitre est consacré à l'analyse de structure de l'ordre de la phrase dans des inscriptions runiques les plus anciennes ainsi que dans des textes des plus vieilles langues germaniques en prose; l'auteur y analyse également l'ordre des mots pré-germaniques. Dans le troisième et le quatrième chapitre l'auteur fait une analyse diachronique d'ordre des mots, d'abord dans le vieil anglais, ensuite dans le moyen anglais. De ces recherches il résulte que le changement définitif vers l'ordre des mots VO avait lieu en XII^e et XIII^e siècles et que le changement du VO avait généralement lieu plus vite dans les propositions indépendantes que dans les propositions subordonnées. En plus, l'auteur découvre qu'à une certaine époque du développement de la langue, à savoir à l'aube du moyen anglais, les changements en question devenaient très dynamiques et après un certain temps il n'y avait plus de différences dans l'ordre de la phrase entre les propositions indépendantes et les propositions subordonnées en moyen anglais.

Dans le troisième et le quatrième chapitre l'auteur soumet à l'analyse des textes en vieil islandais et en anglo-normand pour examiner dans quelle direction ces langues provoquaient le déclin de OV dans la langue anglaise. En ce qui concerne le vieil islandais, il jouait un grand rôle dans ce processus puisque l'ordre VO y avait été présent beaucoup plus que dans le vieil anglais. Une facteur importante était le fait que les deux langues étaient très proches l'une à l'autre. La langue anglo-normande contribuait profondément à détruire complètement la flexion anglaise et à faire ressortir l'ordre VO dans le moyen anglais. Cette influence de l'anglo-normand sur la langue anglaise est aussi appelée indirecte. Dans le cinquième chapitre, qui clos cette dissertation, en suivant les résultats de l'analyse, l'auteur conclut sur la trajectoire des changements de l'ordre des mots dans la langue anglaise dans un contexte plus large de certaines langues indo-européennes.

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