



Chapitre de livre

2014

Accepted version

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How to cite

HAEBERLI, Eric. When English meets French : a case study of language contact in Middle English. In: Papers dedicated to Jacques Moeschler. Blochowiak, J., Grisot, C., Durrleman-Tame, S. & Laenzlinger, C. (Ed.). Genève : Université de Genève, 2014.

This publication URL: <https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:75058>

WHEN ENGLISH MEETS FRENCH

A CASE STUDY OF LANGUAGE CONTACT IN MIDDLE ENGLISH^{*}

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Abstract Although it is often suggested in the literature on historical syntax that a translated text may be influenced by its source language, there is little work that has examined the nature of this potential interference in detail. This paper provides a comparative analysis of the Middle English prose *Brut* and an Anglo-Norman version of the same text in order to determine the way in which the Anglo-Norman source text may have influenced the syntax of the Middle English version. The focus is on two syntactic phenomena with respect to which the Middle English *Brut* differs from other texts from the same period, namely adverb placement and the placement of object pronouns. Whereas in the first case no link to the Anglo-Norman source can be established, the second distinctive property is most plausibly accounted for in terms of language contact. However, the Middle English translator does not slavishly follow the syntax of the source. This is shown most clearly by the fact that he generally avoids an Anglo-Norman word order that can be considered as ungrammatical in late Middle English. The effects of contact are largely of a quantitative nature. Word orders that are only marginally present in other late Middle English texts occur with high frequencies in the Middle English *Brut*. These findings confirm that translation effects must be seriously considered as a potential source of interference at least in quantitative diachronic studies.

1. INTRODUCTION

The syntax of Middle English (ME) is characterized by a considerable amount of variation. Different factors can be identified as plausible sources of this variation, such as diachronic change or dialect variation. In this paper, I will focus on another aspect that has to be taken into account, namely the potential effects of the multilingual situation found in medieval England after the Norman conquest (cf. e.g. Townend 2006). More specifically, I will consider the extent to which the syntax of a translated English text may be influenced by the source language. Although interference from a source language is often mentioned in the literature as a potential factor affecting the syntax of a translated historical text, relatively little work has been carried out that examines the nature of syntactic transfer on the basis of a close analysis of a text in both the source and the target language (but cf. e.g. Taylor 2008, Timofeeva 2010 for Old English translations from Latin). The aim of this paper is to make a contribution towards filling this gap by providing a comparative analysis of an ME text and its French source with respect to two areas of the syntax.

^{*} It is a pleasure for me to contribute to this collection of papers in honour of Jacques Moeschler, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and thanks for the excellent contacts between French linguistics and English linguistics in our department.

This paper grew out of research supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation under grant no. 124619.

The case to be examined is that of the prose *Brut*, a chronicle that gives a comprehensive account of the history of England from its first discovery and settlement to the middle ages and that occurs in over 240 manuscripts in the three major literary languages of medieval England, i.e. English, French/Anglo-Norman, and Latin (Matheson 1998:1). Although “the development and interrelationships of the texts of the Anglo-Norman, Latin, and English *Brut* are complicated” (Matheson 1998:3), it is generally agreed that the earliest versions of the prose *Brut* were written in Anglo-Norman (AN). On the basis of the historical events reported, different stages in the development of the AN prose *Brut* can be distinguished (Matheson 1998:4): (a) Stage I, events up to 1272 (the original form of the text, sometimes referred to as the Common Text); (b) Stage II, events up to 1307 (first continuation); (c) Stage III, events up to 1333 (second continuation, either in a short version or in a long version). The original texts representing the different stages are likely to have been written shortly after the events they recorded. In the late 14th century, the long version of Stage III was translated into English. This initial translation then gave rise to most texts of the family of the ME *Brut*, with later versions regularly bringing the historical records up to date independently of an AN source.

In order to examine whether French may have an influence on the syntax of a translated ME text, I will compare an ME version of the *Brut* to an AN version. For ME, I will base myself on the sections of the *Brut* contained in the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English* (PPCME, Kroch & Taylor 2000a). These are taken from the first part of Brie’s (1906) edition, which corresponds to a manuscript written around 1400 in the West Midlands dialect area. As Brie (1906:ix) observes, this “first part of our Chronicle is a mere translation of the French *Brut d’Engleterre*” (cf. also Matheson 1998:79). A close comparative analysis of the ME and AN texts is not entirely straightforward, however. One reason for this is that “[n]one of the English manuscripts preserves the original translation” because “they represent copies written some time after the presumed date of composition of any portion of text” (Matheson 1998:84). Thus, a perfect match between an ME version and its immediate AN source is impossible. A further difficulty that arises when trying to compare the ME *Brut* to the AN one is that, to my knowledge, printed editions of the AN texts are only available for Stage I of the AN version (Marvin 2006) and the short version of Stage III (Pagan 2011). But the content of the early ME translations suggests that their original source was the long version of Stage III (cf. Matheson 1998:6, Pagan 2011:4). A comprehensive account of the influence of AN on the ME *Brut* would therefore have to include an examination of AN manuscripts that contain a long version of Stage III.

This is not what I will be able to do here. Instead, what I propose is to compare the ME *Brut* to the short AN version of Stage III, more precisely the version edited by Pagan (2011). In my view, such a comparison can still provide important insights into possible influences of AN on the ME text. One reason is that for large parts Brie’s ME edition reads like a very close translation of Pagan’s AN edition. The main differences between the short and the long version of Stage III only concern the events from 1307 onwards. Brie (1905:26) therefore claims that there is no doubt that the writer of the long version based himself on a common text of the *Brut* up to the death of Edward I (i.e. 1307).¹ There are only very minor differences between the long version and the short version of Stage III for the period before 1307. Brie mentions changes in the names of towns where kings are buried, the reported lengths of the reigns of kings, and some factual details as well as some minor additions and omissions. No indications can be found in the literature as to any significant linguistic differences between the different versions. In this connection, it can also be pointed out that, at least with respect

¹ “Die Art der Abweichungen lässt keinen Zweifel darüber, dass der Redaktor der Langen Version einen gewöhnlichen Text des Brute, der mit Eduards I. Tode abschloss, vor sich hatte ...” (Brie 1905:26)

to the two syntactic phenomena considered in this paper, the Stage I text edited by Marvin (2006) and the short version of Stage III edited by Pagan (2011), do not show any differences (cf. e.g. fn. 8 below). Although spellings may vary in the two texts, the syntax essentially remains the same, suggesting that from the point of view of studying syntactic issues the choice of a specific AN manuscript may not be absolutely crucial.

Given these observations, I will assume that the manuscripts in Pagan's (2011) edition of the AN *Brut* are representative for the AN text that provided the basis for the ME translation, at least from a syntactic point of view and for the events up to 1307. I will therefore use this edition to explore to what extent the AN *Brut* may have influenced the syntax used in the ME translation. More precisely, I will focus on two areas where the ME *Brut* has somewhat unusual syntactic properties compared to other ME texts, namely adverb placement with respect to finite main verbs and the syntax of object pronouns.

2. S-ADV-V ORDER IN THE ME *BRUT*

As is well-known, present-day French and present-day English (PDE) differ with respect to the distribution of adverbs and finite main verbs (cf. e.g. Emonds 1976, Pollock 1989). Whereas French allows certain adverbs to occur postverbally, the corresponding word order is not possible in English. Instead, the adverb has to precede the finite main verb in English, an order that is ruled out in French. This is shown in (1) (adverbs in italics, finite main verb in bold print).

- (1) a. Jacques **achète** *toujours* des Macs.
 b. * Jacques **buys** *always* Macs.
 c. * Jacques *toujours* **achète** des Macs.
 d. Jacques *always* **buys** Macs.

This contrast between French and English has been analyzed in the literature as a parametric difference with respect to verb movement (cf. again Pollock 1989 and much subsequent work). Assuming that the adverbs in (1) occur at the VP-edge, the French word order in (1a) can be analyzed as involving verb movement out of the VP into the inflectional domain. Such a movement is not possible in English (1b). Instead, a finite main verb has to remain in V and therefore occurs to the right of certain adverbs.

In earlier English, the situation is different. Just like French, Old and Middle English have word orders of the type (1a) that suggest that in these stages of the language, English had verb movement to the inflectional domain (Roberts 1985, 1993, Kroch 1989, Pollock 1989 among many others). This parametric option is then lost in the course of the history of English, a change that is examined in some detail in Haeberli & Ihsane (2013). One of the developments we investigate concerns the distribution of any kind of adverb with respect to the finite main verb, i.e. the development of the order SAdvV as opposed to SVAdv. It is important to note that SVAdv order is not a conclusive diagnostic for verb movement since PDE has such orders even though it does not have verb movement according to the evidence shown in (1). Hence, the development of the frequency of SVAdv order compared to SAdvV cannot be used as an exact measure of the decline of V-movement in English. The placement of adverbs with respect to finite main verbs nevertheless provides some information on this decline in that we can assume that a rise in the frequency of SAdvV order indicates the beginning of the loss of V-movement and a relative stabilization of this frequency signals its end.

Our findings concerning the development of SAdvV order are as follows. In Old English (OE), SAdvV order is very frequent (58.1% SAdvV vs. 41.9% SVAdv in main clauses, and

84.8% SAdvV vs. 15.2% SVAux in subordinate clauses). This high frequency can be related to the head-final syntax of OE. Just like SAdvV order, SOV and SVAux are very common in OE as well. In this period, adverb placement does not provide any information on the status of verb movement. Once head-final structure is lost in early ME, SAdvV order starts declining as well. In the period 1150-1250, the frequency of SAdvV order is reduced to roughly half of the OE figures (24.1% in main clauses, 53.8% in subordinate clauses), and a further decrease can be observed in the period 1250-1350 (14.5% in main clauses and 11.9% in subordinate clauses). Finally, in the periods 1350-1420 and 1420-1475, the frequency of SAdvV order reaches its all-time low with 9.9% and 8.5% respectively for main and subordinate clauses combined. From 1475 onwards, SAdvV order increases again, reaching 37.3% in the period 1500-1525. This frequency then remains relatively stable, suggesting that the time around 1500 is crucial for the decline of verb movement past adverbs. This conclusion is supported by independent evidence from verb-object non-adjacency and the behaviour of individual adverbs.

The question that arises then is why SAdvV order increases around 1500. As discussed in Haeberli & Ihsane (2013), the correlation that has frequently been proposed in the literature between verb movement and richness of verbal agreement morphology is not likely to give the right results here as there do not seem to be any developments concerning agreement morphology at this point that would turn English from a rich to an impoverished agreement language. Alternative explanations for the rise of SAdvV order are therefore needed. Haeberli & Ihsane (2013) consider two factors as important in this context. First, the evidence for verb movement in the learner's input is weakened due to the decline of subject-verb inversion in the late ME period. And secondly, language contact with northern varieties of ME may have strengthened SAdvV order. The latter point is based on the observation that when SAdvV order is least frequent in the history of English, i.e. between 1350 and 1475, we find considerably higher frequencies in northern texts. While the figures for most texts are well below 10%, those for the three northern texts from this period are between 25.0% and 47.6%. This suggests that northern influence, which has been observed in various other contexts, may have had played an important role in the decline of verb movement past adverbs.

There is just one text that does not quite fit into this general picture and that is the ME version of the *Brut*. It is a non-northern text from around 1400, but with a rate of SAdvV order of 26.6% it patterns with the northern texts.² We may wonder now what the reason for the high frequency of SAdvV order in the *Brut* may be. More specifically, does the *Brut* allow us to identify another factor that may have contributed to the decline of verb movement in English or is the high rate of SAdvV order in this text simply an idiosyncrasy that does not allow us draw any more general conclusions in this respect?

Given the role of dialect variation in ME, an initial hypothesis could be that the *Brut* represents another dialect area in which SAdvV order and, hence, the decline of verb movement is more advanced than elsewhere. However, such a hypothesis is problematic. It has been proposed that the version of the *Brut* that is contained in the PPCME is from South-West Herefordshire (Matheson 1998:79), i.e. from the dialect area of the West Midlands. If we consider the other West Midlands texts from the period 1350 to 1475, we can observe that they do not have any distinctive properties with respect to SAdvV order. They have frequencies of 4.3%, 7.8%, and 10.5% and thus fall well within the range of what is found with other non-northern texts. Dialect origin is therefore an unlikely cause of the particular behaviour of the *Brut* with respect to SAdvV order.

² Note that if we exclude the *Brut* and the northern text from the totals for the period 1350-1420, the average frequency of SAdvV order would just be slightly above 5%. The frequency in the *Brut* is thus five times higher than in other non-northern texts from the same period.

A second potential factor that immediately comes to mind is the fact, pointed out above, that the part of the ME *Brut* that is included in the PPCME is a close translation of a French text. This distinguishes the ME *Brut* from most other PPCME texts from the relevant period, and it is therefore tempting to relate any unusual features of the *Brut* to influence from French. Two scenarios could be distinguished here. One would be that the influence can only be detected in the particular context of a translation, i.e. when features of the contact language are particularly salient for the writer of the English text. Alternatively, and more interestingly, influence in a translation could be the sign of a more general impact of French on the development of English syntax, a possibility that can at least not be entirely excluded (cf. Haerberli 2010 for some discussion).

At first sight, influence from French may not look like a very plausible candidate when it comes to explaining an increased use of SAdvV order given that present-day French generally does not allow this word order in non-parenthetical contexts (cf. 1c above).³ However, to my knowledge, no detailed study of adverb placement in early French exists that would allow us to discard a contact scenario straight away. In the remainder of this section, I will therefore examine whether SAdvV order in the ME *Brut* can be traced back to the AN source.

As pointed out above, with the ME and AN versions of the *Brut* that I have consulted, we can compare the two languages up to the historical events in 1307. Since one of the two PPCME samples is based on events after that year, I cannot include the entire parsed text contained in the PPCME in my study, but the empirical basis is nevertheless substantial as it covers 124 pages of Brie's ME edition of the *Brut*.⁴ Focusing on main clauses containing an overt subject, a finite main verb and an adverb to the right of the subject, we find the order SAV 61 times and the order SVA 178 times.⁵ If we now compare the 61 cases of SAV to the AN text, we obtain the following picture. The most frequent scenario (31 examples) is the occurrence of SAV in ME with a corresponding AN sentence that does not contain an adverb. This is illustrated in (2) where the ME main clause is given on the first line, the corresponding AN clause on the second line, and the common gloss on the third line.⁶

- (2) a. Brut *þo toke* his wyf, & all his men ... (CMBRUT3,8.177)
 Et Bruyt **prist** sa femme, et toutz sez hommes (ANPB 104)
 (And) Brut (then) took his wife and all his men
- b. Tydyng *sone come* to Kyng Goffar ... (CMBRUT3,9.215)
 Novele **vint** a Goffar ... (ANPB 145)
 News (soon) came to (King) Goffar ...
- c. Cordeil þe Quene *anone nome* golde and siluer ... (CMBRUT3,19.572)
 Cordeille la royne **prist** or et argent (ANPB 492)
 Cordeille the queen (at-once) took gold and silver ...'

In 15 examples, the ME order SAV corresponds to an SVA order in AN.

³ A rare exception seems to be an adverb like *normalement* ('normally'), which can be found in preverbal position (Christopher Laenzlinger, p.c.):

(i) Cet outil *normalement* permet de réparer la machine.
 This tool normally allows to repair the machine.
 This tool normally allows one to repair the machine.'

⁴ The data correspond to pp. 5 to 128 in Brie (1906) for ME and to pp. 33 to 135 (lines 10 to 3841) for AN in Pagan (2011).

⁵ This corresponds to a frequency of 25.5% for SAV, which is only slightly below the 26.6% reported above for the entire *Brut* sample in the PPCME.

⁶ For ME, I follow the referencing conventions used in the PPCME. As for the AN *Prose Brut*, I will use the abbreviation ANPB followed by the line number in Pagan's (2011) edition.

- (3) a. and Brenne *shamefully* **fleye** þens (CMBRUT3,25.728)
 et Brenne **s'enfui** *hounte[u]sement* (ANPB 652)
 and Brenne (shamefully) fled (shamefully) (from-there)
- b. Engist *priuely* **sent** bi lettre ... (CMBRUT3,51.1520)
 Engist **maunda** *privément* par letre ... (ANPB 1516)
 Engist (secretly) sent-word (secretely) by letter
- c. and þe kyng *anone* **turnede** azeyne to Tyntagell, (CMBRUT3,67.2020)
 Et le roy **retourna** *tauntost* a Tintagel (ANPB 2041)
 And the king (soon) returned (soon) (again) to Tintagel

7 sentences have an identical SAV word order both in ME and in AN.

- (4) a. and þe Britouns *anone* **assemblede** ham, (CMBRUT3,59.1747)
 et lez Brutouns *tauntost* s' **assemblerent** (ANPB 1777)
 and the British soon (themselves) assembled (themselves)
- b. And þus traitour Edrik *anone* **went** to þe Quene (CMBRUT3,120.3649)
 Cestui traitour Edrith *tauntost* s'en **ala** a la royne (ANPB 3580)
 (And) this traitor Edric soon went to the queen
- c. The Kyng *anone* **lete** calle a Danois (CMBRUT3,121.3674)
 Le roy *meintenant* **appella** un Daneis (ANPB 3608)
 The king at-once called a Dane
- d. But þe Erl Godwyne ... *falsely* **pouzt** to slee þo ij breþerne (CMBRUT3,126.3817)
 Meas le counte Godwin *traiterousement* **pensa** occire ambedeux lez freres (ANPB 3776)
 But the Earl Godwin treacherously thought to-kill the two brothers

Finally, the remaining 8 examples of SAV in ME fall into various minor categories: (a) AVS in AN (1 example); (b) SAuxAV in AN (1 example); (c) relatively free translation from identifiable AN sentences (3 examples); (d) no corresponding sentence in AN (3 examples).⁷

Two main conclusions can be drawn from these findings. First, the unexpectedly high frequency of SAV order in the ME *Brut* cannot be related to influence from the AN source text. Only in 7 out of the 61 cases of SAV can the same word order be found in AN. For a contact explanation to be plausible, the phenomenon would have to be considerably more pervasive in the source text.

A second conclusion we can draw from the above findings is that the status of SAV order in early French might deserve an independent investigation. Among the 22 AN clauses containing an adverb and a finite main verb in a position after the subject, 7 (31.8%) have the adverb between the subject and the main verb. This is too small a sample to draw any firm conclusions, but the data in (4) nevertheless suggest that the occurrence of an adverb between the subject and the finite main verb may not have been as constrained in early French as in present-day French.⁸ Adverbs like *tantôt* ('soon'), *maintenant* ('now') and *traîtreusement*

⁷ Two explanations are conceivable for option (d). One possibility is that the ME writer added some text. Alternatively, these might be passages where the long version of AN Stage III differs from the short version.

⁸ Note that the 7 cases of SAV I have identified in Pagan's (2011) edition have the same word order in Marvin's (2006) edition of an earlier AN manuscript. The sentences corresponding to (4a) to (4d) are given in (i).

(i) a. E les Brutons *tantost* **se assemblerent** ... (Marvin 2006, line 1359)

(‘treacherously’) cannot intervene between the subject and a finite verb in present-day French.⁹ What would have to be examined then is whether the data found in the AN *Brut* reflect a more widespread phenomenon in early French and, if so, how it developed over time.¹⁰ I will have to leave these questions for future research.

Before turning to another syntactic feature of the ME *Brut*, let us briefly point out that, as a consequence of the close analysis of individual SAV cases, another possibility emerges as a factor that may contribute to the increased frequency of SAV order in the ME *Brut*. A striking aspect of the data shown in (2) to (4) is that several examples involve the adverb *anone* (‘soon, at once’). This is not just an artefact of my choice of illustrations, but it is representative of the general situation. Among the 62 adverbs that can be found in preverbal position in the 61 examples with SAV order, *anone* is found in no fewer than 22 cases. A second adverb that is frequently found with SAV order is the adverb *þo* (‘then’; 14 examples). The two temporal adverbs *anone* and *þo* thus account for over half of the SAV cases in the *Brut* (36 out of 62). In this connection, it is interesting to point out that at least the equivalent of *þo* has a distinct syntactic status in OE already (cf. van Kemenade & Los 2006, Haeberli & Ihsane 2013). The high frequency of SAV order in the *Brut* could then be a combination of (a) certain adverbs having a higher likelihood of occurring in preverbal position, and (b) a genre (history) making particularly frequent use of such adverbs as it reports sequences of events and links them with temporal adverbs. If this conclusion is correct, the high frequency of SAV order in the *Brut* may be due to a rather superficial type of variation and may therefore not provide us with any substantial insights into how verb movement was lost in late ME.

3. THE PLACEMENT OF OBJECT PRONOUNS IN ME

Another distinctive property of the *Brut* is related to the placement of object pronouns. As is well known, OE has features that are reminiscent of an OV language (e.g. van Kemenade 1987 among many others). These head-final properties are then lost in the ME period. Various aspects of this development have been discussed in the literature. Kroch & Taylor (2000b) for example show that the frequency of head-final TP as measured on the basis of the word order variation auxiliary-verb/verb-auxiliary is already very low in the 13th century. Examining the distribution of nominal objects with respect to non-finite main verbs, Pintzuk & Taylor (2006) conclude that head-final VP is lost to a large extent in the first half of the 14th century. After that time, OV order with nominal objects is restricted to quantified and negative objects. Such cases are most plausibly analyzed as involving leftward movement of the object rather than underlying head-final structure. These observations taken together suggest that head-final structure does not play any role in ME syntax from the middle of the 14th century onwards.

The placement of object pronouns has not featured prominently in these discussions of headedness as it is well known that pronominal objects productively undergo leftward movement in early English and their distribution does therefore not allow one to draw any firm conclusions with respect to underlying structure. However, given that preverbal

b. Cesti traitre Edrich *tantost* **sen ala** a la reine (line 2749)

c. Le roi *meintenaunt* **appella** vn Daneis qe auoit anoun Walgar (line 2773)

d. Mes le Counte Godwyn *traiterousement* encounter son serment **pensa** occire ambedeux (line 2902)

⁹ *Tantôt* may not be very revealing, however, as its use with the meaning shown in (4) is obsolete today.

¹⁰ Given that we are dealing with an Anglo-Norman text here, a possibility would be that less rigid subject-verb adjacency is a feature of this variety and not of continental French. It should be pointed out, however, that Ingham (2006a, b) has found “strong evidence of non-divergence from the continental mainstream” (2006a:103) with respect to certain other syntactic features.

placement of object pronouns is ungrammatical in PDE, it is clear that this word order option must have declined during the ME period as well. In this section, I will examine this development in more detail and I will show that, once again, unexpected properties can be found in the ME *Brut* as well as in other translations from French.

3.1. Object pronouns and finite main verbs

Table 1 shows the distribution of object pronouns throughout the ME period. The data include all clauses containing an overt subject (S), a finite main verb (V) and an (unmodified) object pronoun (O(pro)). As is common practice, I have divided the data into the four major periods m1-m4 distinguished in the PPCME (Kroch & Taylor 2000a). Only texts that can be clearly assigned to one of these periods are included.

TABLE 1 *The distribution of object pronouns and finite main verbs in Middle English*

Periods	SO(pro)V	SVO(pro)	Total
m1 1150-1250	467 (43.2%)	615 (56.8%)	1082
m2 1250-1350	288 (45.7%)	342 (54.3%)	630
m3 1350-1420	111 (7.3%)	1420 (92.7%)	1531
m4 1420-1500	41 (2.9%)	1385 (97.1%)	1426

This table suggests that preverbal placement of pronominal objects is very common until the middle of the 14th century and then drops abruptly at the end of that century. Nevertheless, the frequency of SO(pro)V order remains non-negligible in period m3, and we see a further significant decline from period m3 to period m4 in the 15th century (chi-square = 28.98; $p < 0.001$).

However, once we consider the contribution of individual texts to this overall picture, our account of the decline of SO(pro)V has to be modified. Let us start by taking a closer look at period m3. Among the 16 texts included in this period, only half of them contain examples with SO(pro)V orders. But among those 8, only one has frequent occurrences of SO(pro)V, and that is the ME *Brut*. No fewer than 87 of the 111 cases listed in Table 1 come from this text. With 178 examples with SVO(pro) order, the frequency of SO(pro)V reaches 32.8% in the *Brut*.

A similar observation can be made for period m2. Prose material for this period is very scarce, and the PPCME therefore includes only three texts in this period: the *Kentish Sermons* (c1275), the *Ayenbite of Inwyrt* (1340), and the *Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter* (c1350). With respect to SO(pro)V, Table 1 hides a substantial imbalance in the way these texts use the different orders. Whereas the author of the *Prose Psalter* almost never uses SO(pro)V (5 out of 309 clauses (1.6%)), the other two heavily favour this order. In the *Ayenbite*, the frequency of SO(pro)V is 89.3% (268 out of 300 clauses), and in the *Kentish Sermons* 67.2% (15 out of 21). What is interesting now is that both the *Ayenbite* and the *Kentish Sermons* are, just like the *Brut*, close translations of French texts.

Table 2 provides revised figures for SO(pro)V order, excluding the three translations from French mentioned above for the periods m2 and m3.¹¹

¹¹ Period m2 is now represented by a single text from the very end of this period. In this version of the table, m2 therefore represents a text around 1350 rather than an entire period from 1250 to 1350.

As for the French translations from this period, the frequencies of OV order differ in a statistically significant way (*Ayenbite* 89.3% (268/300), *Kentish Sermons* 71.4% (6/21)). Due to the different sizes of the samples contained in the PPCME, the figure given in Table 2 mainly reflects the data from the *Ayenbite*. It remains nevertheless the case that OV is the clear majority option even in the *Kentish Sermons*.

TABLE 2 *The distribution of object pronouns and finite main verbs in Middle English – translations from French for m2/m3 distinguished*

Periods	SO(pro)V	SVO(pro)	Total
m1 1150-1250	467 (43.2%)	615 (56.8%)	1082
m2 (1250-)1350	5 (1.6%)	304 (98.4%)	184
<i>m2 Ayenbite, Kent. Sermons</i>	283 (88.2%)	38 (11.8%)	321
m3 1350-1420	24 (1.9%)	1242 (98.1%)	1266
<i>m3 Brut</i>	87 (32.8%)	178 (67.2%)	265
m4 1420-1500	41 (2.9%)	1385 (97.1%)	1426

The general picture emerging from Table 2 is that SO(pro)V is common until the middle of the 13th century, but it is then lost to a large extent. From 1350 onwards, there are no statistically significant developments any more. It is only in translations of French texts that SO(pro)V remains a regularly used word order option. The general decline of SO(pro)V therefore seems to occur considerably earlier than suggested by the data in Table 1 that do not isolate the French-based texts.

As the examples from the ME and the AN *Brut* in (5) show, French influence is a likely source of the distinctive quantitative behaviour of the ME text with respect to SO(pro)V. Just as in present-day French, object pronouns precede the finite verb in early French (object pronouns in italics, finite main verbs in bold print).

- (5) a. When Vortiger *hit* **wiste**, ... (CMBRUT3,49.1482)
 Quant Vortiger *le* **savoit** ... (ANPB 1466)
 When Vortiger it knew
 ‘When Vortiger knew it ...’
 b. and Arthure *ham* **pursuede** (CMBRUT3,70.2118)
 et Arthur *lez* **chasa** (ANPB 2138)
 and Arthur them pursued
 ‘and Arthur pursued them’
 c. but my ij doughtres *me* **glosede** þo, (CMBRUT3,19.555)
 Mez deux filles *moi* **blandesoint** (ANPB 473)
 My two daughters me flattered (then)
 ‘My two daughters flattered me (then)’

However, it is not the case that the author of the ME *Brut* slavishly follows the AN text when it comes to SO(pro)V order. The ME text may have this order even if there is no corresponding order in the AN source. And even if AN does have a preverbal object pronoun, the pronoun may occur in postverbal position in ME. The first scenario is illustrated in (6). In these examples, the ME translations (6a/b/c) are relatively free, and they introduce an object pronoun where there is none in the AN text (6a’/b’/c’).

- (6) a. When þe kynges men *it* **wyste**, þat here lord was so ded... (CMBRUT3,47.1424)
 When the king’s men it knew that their lord was so dead.
 ‘When the king’s men knew that their lord was dead...’
 a’. Qaunt lez hommes le roy **savoient** *la mort lour seignour* (ANPB 1387)
 When the men of-the king knew the death of-their lord
 ‘When the king’s men heard about their lord’s death...’

- b. ...grete ziftes paat pai *ham* **zaf** (CMBRUT3,67.2028)
 ...great gifts that they them gave
 ‘... great gifts that they gave them’
- b’. grauntz douns q’ ils **resceurent** de eux (ANPB 2050/1)
 great gifts that they received from them
 ‘great gifts that they received from them’
- c. Hit bifelle þus, as almizty God *hit* **wolde**, ... (CMBRUT3,111.3358)
 It happened thus, as almighty God it wanted, ...
 ‘So it happened, as God-almighty wanted, ...’
- c’. Avint issint, come Dieux **voleit**, ... (ANPB 3286)
 Happened thus, as God wanted, ...
 ‘So it happened, as God wanted, ...’

The second type of evidence showing that the ME author does not strictly imitate the AN syntax is presented in (7). Here, the AN source has an object pronoun in preverbal position, but the ME text replaces this word order by postverbal object placement.

- (7) a. ... how miche she **louede** *him* (CMBRUT3,16.493)
 ... combien ele *lui* **amast** (ANPB 406)
 ... how much she (him) loved (him)
 ‘... how much she loved him’
- b. and pai **helde** *it* xij zere (CMBRUT3,21.603)
 et *la* **tindrent** .xii. aunz (ANPB 530/1)
 and (they) (it) held (it) 12 years
 ‘and they held it for 12 years’
- c. and he **put** *ham* into prisoun. (CMBRUT3,25.733)
 et il *lez* **mist** en prisoun (ANPB 657)
 and he (them) put (them) into prison
 ‘and he put them into prison’

The variation shown in (5) to (7) raises the question as to whether there are any factors that may have an influence on the use or non-use of SO(pro)V orders in the ME *Brut*. At present, I am not in a position to provide any conclusive answers to this question.¹² Instead, I will conclude this section by showing that an answer cannot simply be related to properties of the AN text. The two examples in (8) below form a near-minimal pair.¹³ In the AN examples (8a’) and (8b’), the word order is identical. In ME, however, the object is once in postverbal position (8a) and once in preverbal position (8b) despite the identical source construction.

¹² Two plausible factors would be the following. First, in cases like (6), where there is no corresponding object pronoun in AN, the use of a preverbal object could be due to a kind of priming, whereby the use of SO(pro)V in an earlier sentence favours the use of the same word order in a subsequent sentence (cf. also Taylor 2008). Secondly, the placement of an object pronoun may be influenced by the presence of a second non-subject argument in the same clause. Thus, when the verb selects an object pronoun and an additional DP or CP argument, and the latter occurs in a postverbal position, the object pronoun is generally also in a postverbal position. This is true in 49 out of 54 cases, and the 49 VO examples account for over a fourth of all VO orders. This observation suggests that the author avoids separating the objects. Further research will have to show whether other factors of this type can shed some light on what determines the choice of OV order as opposed to VO order with pronouns in the *Brut*.

¹³ The examples in (8a/a’) only differ from those in (8b/b’) in two respects apart from object placement. The ME subject is pronominal in (8a) and nominal in (8b), whereas the forms of the AN object pronoun are not identical in (8a’) and (8b’). However, there are no reasons to believe that these two differences are in any way related to the choice in the placement of the object pronoun in the ME translation.

- (8) a. and þere he **toke** *him*. (CMBRUT3,35.1067)
 and there he took him
 ‘and there he took him’
 a’. et la *le* **prist** il (ANPB 963)
 and there him took he
 ‘and there he took him’
 b. and þere Armoger *him* **toke**. (CMBRUT3,35.1073)
 and there Armoger him took
 ‘and there Armoger took him’
 b’. et la *lui* **prist** il (ANPB 963)
 and there him took he
 ‘and there he took him’

Note also that the examples in (8) show once again that the translator of the *Brut* does not blindly follow the AN syntax. This is not only shown with the placement of the object pronoun in (8a/a’), but also by the fact that the fronted locative adverb gives rise to subject-verb inversion in AN (V2) whereas the subject remains preverbal in ME although V2 orders are still found with a certain frequency in the *Brut* even with transitive verbs (cf. Haeberli 2010:147).

In summary, the author of the ME version of the *Brut* does not copy the AN syntactic structure fully in ME. Nevertheless, it seems to be plausible to relate the hugely increased use of SO(pro)V in the *Brut* as compared to other texts from the same period to contact with a source language in which the pronominal object systematically precedes the finite main verb. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that two other French-based ME texts, the *Kentish Sermons* and the *Ayenbite of Inwyrt*, show the same kind of quantitative pattern. In order to shed further light on the nature of the interaction between French and English, I will now consider the placement of object pronouns in clauses containing a finite auxiliary and a non-finite main verb.

3.2. Object pronouns and auxiliaries

In clauses with a finite auxiliary and a non-finite main verb, a pronominal object could occur in three positions: (i) in a position before the finite auxiliary (SO(pro)AuxV); (ii) in a position between the auxiliary and the main verb (SAuxO(pro)V); (iii) in a position following the main verb (SAuxVO(pro)). Early French generally uses option (i), even in contexts with modal auxiliaries where present-day French would now have option (ii) (clitic climbing, cf. example 9a/b below¹⁴). Hence, if French influence played a role in the choice of the placement of object pronouns in ME, we would expect a high frequency of option (i) in French-based texts. As Table 3 shows, this expectation is only partially borne out.

¹⁴ Clitic climbing starts being lost by the end of the 14th century only (cf. Marchello-Nizia 1979: 191ff.), and its decline seems to have been very slow (cf. Martineau 1991:239, who reports frequencies of 2% and 5% for the absence of clitic climbing in two texts from the 15th and early 16th centuries). For the texts considered here, the changes affecting the placement of object pronouns in non-finite constructions are too late to be relevant.

TABLE 3 The distribution of object pronouns, finite auxiliaries and non-finite main verbs in Middle English – translations from French for m2/m3 vs. other texts

Periods	SO(pro)AuxV	SAux O(pro)V	SAuxVO(pro)	Total
m1 1150-1250	146 (36.2%)	77 (19.1%)	180 (44.7%)	403
m2 (1250-)1350	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	195 (100%)	195
<i>m2 Ayenb., Kent. Sermon</i>	79 (60.3%)	47 (35.9%)	5 (3.8%)	131
m3 1350-1420	0 (0%)	23 (3.4%)	649 (96.6%)	672
<i>m3 Brut</i>	5 (3.6%)	71 (50.7%)	64 (45.7%)	140
m4 1420-1500	0 (0%)	15 (1.7%)	857 (98.3%)	872

In the two French-based texts from period m2, the order SO(pro)AuxV is indeed predominant with a frequency of 60.3%.¹⁵ This is in stark contrast to the other text from the same period where only postverbal placement is found. French influence could therefore be put forward as an explanation of this distinctive pattern in the *Ayenbite* and the *Kentish Sermons*.

A slightly different picture emerges for the *Brut*. In this text, the majority pattern is SAuxO(pro)V, which is again highly unusual compared to other texts from the same period (50.7% in the *Brut* vs. 3.4% elsewhere). However, here, it is generally not the case that this predominant order reflects a word order found in the AN source text.¹⁶ Instead, we can distinguish three different contexts in which ME has SAuxO(pro)V order. Each of these options corresponds to about a third of all the cases of SAuxO(pro)V in ME. First, this order may occur when AN has the order SO(pro)AuxV, as is shown in (9).

- (9) a. ... wher þey **myghte** hym **fynde**. (CMBRUT3,13.344)
 ... ou q' ils **le poeient** **trover**. (ANPB 283)
 ... where they (him) might (him) find
 '... where they might find him'
- b. ... men **wolde** ham **destroie** (CMBRUT3,121.3686)
 ... hom **les voleit** **destrure** (ANPB 2783)
 ... one (them) wanted (them) destroy
 '... someone wanted to destroy them'
- c. ... þat þe Danois **hade** him **slayne**. (CMBRUT3,109.3320)
 ... qe lez Daneis **lui eussent** **occis**. (ANPB 3244)
 ... that the Danes (him) had (him) killed
 '...that the Danes had killed him'

Secondly, the ME text sometimes uses SAuxO(pro)V order when, as in (10), the AN text lacks an auxiliary and has SO(pro)V instead.

¹⁵ Once again, due to the differences in sample size, the percentage given for the translations from French in period m2 mainly reflects the situation in the *Ayenbite* (cf. also fn.11). The frequencies of SOAuxV order in the two texts are as follows: *Ayenbite* 89.3% (69/118), *Kentish Sermons* 71.4% (6/21). Thus, the frequency is again slightly lower in the *Kentish Sermons*. In this case, the difference is statistically not significant, however.

¹⁶ There is only one exception to this observation. In the following example, the SAuxO(pro)V order is found both in ME and in AN.

- (i) as he **hade** him ferste **desceyuede**. (CMBRUT3,115.3503)
 sicome il **avoit** luy primes **engynné** (ANPB 3423/4)
 as he had him first deceived
 'as he had deceived him before'

- (10) a. and God **shal** vs **helpe**, (CMBRUT3,86.2606)
 and God will us help
 ‘and God will help us’
 a’. et Dieux *nous* **aidera** (ANPB 2506)
 and God us help-FUT
 ‘and God will help us’
 b. and þo ... now **haue me desceyuede!** (CMBRUT3,19.564)
 and those ... now have me deceived
 ‘and those ... have now deceived me!’
 b’. Celes ... *moy* **deciverent** (ANPB 484)
 those me deceived
 ‘Those ... deceived me.’

Finally, SAuxO(pro)V can also be found when there is no exactly matching passage in the AN text, either because the ME text contains elements that are entirely absent in the AN text or because the translation is not literal. Illustrations of the latter type are given in (11).

- (11) a. but þai **myzt** nouzt *hem fynde*, (CMBRUT3,63.1887)
 but they could not him find
 ‘but they could not find him’
 a’. meas il ne **fust** pas **treové** (ANPB 1910)
 but he NEG was not found
 ‘but he was not found’
 b. but she **myzt** *hit* nouzt **soffren**, (CMBRUT3,85.2562)
 but she could it not bear
 ‘but she could not bear it’
 b’. meas ele ne **peot** **suffrir** (ANPB 2460)
 but she NEG could bear
 ‘but she could not bear it’

Although there is no exact match in word order in the sentences shown above, French influence cannot be entirely excluded at least for cases like (9) and (10). What may have been the salient feature for the translator in these examples is simply the fact the object pronoun occurs to the left of the main verb in AN. This distributional property is then reproduced in the ME version. As for the question why the AN placement with respect to the auxiliary in (9) is not mirrored in ME, we will address this issue in section 3.3 below.

To conclude this subsection, let us briefly consider the status of the word order SAuxVO(pro) in the ME *Brut*.¹⁷ A comparison with the AN source leads to very similar results as for the order SAuxO(pro)V. SAuxVO(pro) can occur when AN has SO(pro)V with a finite main verb, when it has SO(pro)AuxV, or when no corresponding object pronoun can be found for AN. Once again, the ME SAuxVO(pro) examples are spread almost evenly across the three scenarios. An illustration of each option is given in (12).

¹⁷ As for the five cases of SO(pro)AuxV in Table 3, I have only been able to link two of them to the AN source. In one case, the word orders match, in the second one AN has a slightly unusual V2 order with the object pronoun following rather than preceding the auxiliary in second position. Given this limited amount of evidence, it is difficult to come up with any hypotheses as to why the author may have used this word order a few times despite his general reluctance to do so.

- (12) a. but for-soþe y **shal** **tel** ȝow treuþ (CMBRUT3,17.501)
 but of-course I shall tell you truth
 ‘But I shall of course tell you the truth’
- a’. et jeo vous **dirrai** veritablement (ANPB 412)
 and I you tell-FUT truthfully
 ‘and I will tell you the truth’
- b. but he **hade put** *him* in soche a castel þat was stronge (CMBRUT3,66.1984)
 ‘but he had put himself in such a castle that was strong’
- b’. Meas il *se* **avoit mis** en une fort chastiel (ANPB 2008)
 But he himself had put in a strong castle
 ‘But he had put himself in a strong castle’
- c. but þe Erle of London ... **wolde** nouȝt **suffren** *hit* (CMBRUT3,32.999)
 but the Earl of London wanted not accept it
 ‘but the Earl of London did not want to accept it’
- c’. Meas le counte de Loundrez ... ne voleit seoffrir (ANPB 886)
 But the Earle of London ... NEG **wanted accept**
 ‘But the Earl of London did not want to accept’

The examples in (12a/a’) and (12b/b’) confirm the observation made in section 3.1 already that the author of the ME *Brut* does not mechanically transfer the AN syntax into ME. Once again, I will have to leave the question open here what factors may lead the author to maintain the AN word order or to modify it.¹⁸

3.3. The placement of object pronouns in ME translations from French

The discussion in the previous subsections has shown that three ME texts translated from French have very distinctive properties with respect to the distribution of object pronouns. Compared to texts that do not have a French source, the three texts show a much higher frequency of preverbal placement of object pronouns. Given that pronominal objects in French systematically occur in a preverbal position, influence from French is a very likely cause of the unusual patterns found. However, the three translations from French do not have exactly the same properties. In clauses with a finite main verb, the two texts from the period 1250-1350 (*Ayenbite*, *Kentish Sermons*) have a considerably higher frequency of SO(pro)V than the text from 1400 (*Brut*). Furthermore, while the order SO(pro)AuxV is the most frequent word order in clauses with a finite auxiliary in the earlier texts, the *Brut* has a preference for SAuxO(pro)V orders. In this subsection I will briefly examine how these contrasts could be accounted for.

Let us start by considering object placement in the *Brut*. The main question here is why the most frequent word order in the *Brut* is one that is generally not found in the French source text (i.e. SAuxO(pro)V) and why the French word order is virtually absent in the *Brut*. A plausible explanation of this state of affairs is that by 1400, when the *Brut* is written, the order SO(pro)AuxV must be an ungrammatical option in English. According to Table 3, the last example of SO(pro)AuxV in a non-French-based text indeed goes back to the period 1150-1250, i.e. to a text written at least 150 years before the *Brut*. The very low frequency of SO(pro)AuxV order in the *Brut* (3.6%) may therefore be related to the reluctance of the translator to use an entirely ungrammatical option. Instead, he prefers the order

¹⁸ The points made in fn. 12 can be extended to clauses with auxiliaries. In particular, ditransitive verbs selecting one non-pronominal argument seem to favour the postverbal occurrence of an object pronoun. One third of the SAuxVO(pro) cases involve a ditransitive verb, which suggests that the author avoids placing two objects on opposite sides of the main verb.

SAuxO(pro)V, which, as Table 3 shows, can still be found in some other texts from the same period albeit at a very low rate (3.4%). Furthermore, the position between a finite auxiliary and the main verb can also be occupied by quantified and negative objects in late ME. Pintzuk & Taylor (2006:259) show that, in the 15th century, around 6% of all quantified objects and around 20% of all negative objects occur preverbally. Thus, the position between the auxiliary and the main verb is a position that is still available, at least marginally, for arguments in late ME. This word order option then reflects the French one at least with respect to the placement before the main verb, and its use can be argued to be increased due to this contact.

The frequent use of SO(pro)V in the *Brut* is compatible with the scenario sketched above. As shown in Table 2, this word order has a very marginal status in the 15th century, but it is not entirely absent from other texts. Thus, as with SAuxO(pro)V the translation effect would again be a quantitative reinforcement of a word order option that is nearly extinct but not fully ruled out by other authors.

The two translations from period m2 differ from the *Brut* in two main respects: SO(pro)V order is much more frequent (88.2% vs. 32.8%), and SO(pro)AuxV is commonly used as well (60.3%). Although I have not been able to compare these ME texts with any French source texts so far, it is possible to identify two properties of the *Kentish Sermons* and the *Ayenbite* that may explain the contrasts with the *Brut*. First, the two texts are older and therefore closer to the period when the orders SO(pro)V and SO(pro)AuxV still regularly occur across texts (43.2% and 36.2% respectively for period m1). It may therefore be somewhat more common still to use these word orders, even independently of the presence of a source text that favours preverbal occurrences of object pronouns.

Second, dialectal properties can also be argued to play a role. Both the *Ayenbite* and the *Kentish Sermons* are Kentish texts. Kentish is an isolated dialect that eventually died out, and Kroch & Taylor (1997:313) show that, at least with respect to the development of the syntax of V2, it is more conservative than other varieties of ME. The high frequency of preverbal object placement could therefore also be due to a more conservative status of Kentish in this area of the syntax. However, this is unlikely to be the only cause of the patterns found in the *Ayenbite* and the *Kentish Sermons*. With respect to V2, the Kentish texts behave to a large extent like ME texts from the earliest ME period (m1). As for the frequencies of SO(pro)V and SO(pro)AuxV, however, they are twice as high in the two Kentish texts compared to the texts from period m1. Furthermore, when it comes to preverbal placement of other elements such as adverbs (cf. section 2 above), the *Ayenbite* and the *Kentish Sermons* do not show any unexpected properties. I therefore conclude that the high frequency of preverbal pronominal objects in the *Ayenbite* and the *Kentish Sermons* is due to a combination of both dialectal properties and the influence of the word order in the French source text.¹⁹

To conclude this section, it should be pointed out that translation effects on the syntax cannot be detected in all ME translations from French sources. An interesting text in this

¹⁹ A certain dialectal component can also not be entirely excluded for the *Brut*. The *Brut* is a West Midlands text. The text with the third highest rates of SO(pro)V and SAuxO(pro)V in period m3 is also from this dialect area (*Mirror of St. Edmund* (Vernon ms.)). Furthermore, a West Midlands text (the *Siege of Jerusalem*) makes the most important contribution to the number of cases of SO(pro)V and SAuxO(pro)V in period m4.

However, it is not entirely clear how important the dialectal factor for the situation in the *Brut* is. First, the frequencies found in the *Mirror of St. Edmund* for example are well below those in the *Brut* (9.2% for SO(pro)V (vs. 32.8% in the *Brut*) and 17.1% for SAuxO(pro)V (vs. 50.7%)). Second, another West Midlands text from period m4 (*Malory's Morte Dartur*) has no SAuxO(pro)V orders at all and a very low frequency of SO(pro)V orders. Finally, the two West Midlands texts mentioned above (*St. Edmund*, *Siege*) also both have the property of being translations from Latin. So the question arises as to whether Latin may also have an effect on object placement. Given these observations, I will have to leave it open for the moment whether dialect origin may be a factor contributing to the high frequency of preverbal object placement in the *Brut*.

connection is *Mandeville's Travels*, a translation from around the same time as the *Brut* (a1425). With respect to the phenomena considered in this section, *Mandeville's Travels* does not show any signs of French influence at all. Among the 313 clauses containing an object pronoun, there is not a single example with SO(pro)V, SO(pro)AuxV or SAuxO(pro)V order. Object pronouns are consistently placed in a postverbal position. As for the reason why the translator of *Mandeville's Travels* is not equally likely to use French-style word orders in the target language as the translator of the *Brut*, the philological information for the PPCME provides an interesting hint. It is pointed out that "[t]he translator writes very good English, but often misunderstands the French text".²⁰ This suggests that the translator's level of proficiency in French cannot have been very high. A possible hypothesis emerging from this would be that the degree of influence of a source language on the syntax of the target language depends on the degree of bilingual proficiency of the translator. The less proficient a writer is in the source language, the less likely it is for features to be transferred to the target language.

4. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have explored the role that a French source may have on the syntax of an ME text. My main focus has been on the ME prose *Brut*, a text from around 1400 that is a close translation of an Anglo-Norman text. More specifically, I have examined two syntactic properties of this text that distinguish it from other texts from the same historical period. For one property (the relatively high frequency of preverbal adverbs at a time when this word order was nearly absent from other texts), no connection to the French source can be established. However, for the second property (frequent preverbal placement of object pronouns), the only plausible hypothesis is that it is the result of French influence. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the only other texts from after 1250 that show similar properties are translations from French as well. Although French influence on the placement of object pronouns in the ME *Brut* seems to be undeniable, a close comparative analysis with the AN version has shown that the ME author does not slavishly follow the AN source. An important finding is that the author, with some very rare exceptions, stops short of using an AN word order that must have been entirely ungrammatical in ME at the time. The word order SO(pro)AuxV, which cannot be found in non-French-based texts after 1250 at all, is generally avoided by the author of the *Brut* even though it frequently occurs in the French source. Other orders with preverbal object pronouns are sporadically found in ME texts up to 1500, and it is with these that French influence can be detected most clearly since the frequency of their use is hugely increased in the *Brut* as compared to other texts from the same period. However, even with these word orders, we can see that the ME author is far from slavishly following the AN syntax. Instead, he regularly alternates between following the AN word order and not following it. Furthermore, he also uses the French-style word orders in contexts where no matching construction can be found in the AN version.

From a methodological point of view, these findings suggest that the use of translations in diachronic syntactic analyses may not necessarily be very problematic with respect to determining what we can consider as grammatical or ungrammatical at a given moment in time. At least the translator of the ME *Brut* is clearly reluctant to use a word order that reflects the syntax of the source language but seems to be ungrammatical in the target language. Where the translation context seems to be of great importance, however, is in the quantitative domain. In the ME *Brut*, we have seen word orders occur at very high frequencies, which, in other texts from the same period, are very marginal and presumably

²⁰ <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/hist-corpora/PPCME2-RELEASE-3/info/cmmandev.m3.html>

close to being eliminated entirely from the grammar. Translation as a potential source of interference must therefore be seriously considered in any analysis of a quantitative nature. As the comparison of Tables 1 and 2 above shows, when the diachronic trajectory of a given syntactic phenomenon is examined, the inclusion of one or several translated texts can substantially alter the picture and lead to potentially important differences with respect to the dating of a change.

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