

Trends in Linguistics
Studies and Monographs 23

Editor
Werner Winter

Mouton Publishers
Berlin · New York · Amsterdam

Historical Syntax

edited by

Jacek Fisiak

1984

Mouton Publishers
Berlin · New York · Amsterdam

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Divergent word order developments in Germanic languages: A description and a tentative explanation

0 Introduction

Historical linguists dealing with surface word order at sentence level in the Germanic languages have mostly concerned themselves with reconstruction: establishing the word order of Proto-Germanic was generally attempted on the basis of the syntactic and morphological patterns that were found in the earliest records of the various daughter languages.* Word order reconstruction is no easy matter, though, and this certainly holds for Proto-Germanic, as is clearly shown by the different Proto-Germanic word orders proposed by various scholars.¹ Considering this difficulty, it is remarkable that so few historical linguists have shifted their intention from the reconstruction of Proto-Germanic to a more accessible area of diachronic Germanic syntax: the development of word order from the earliest records to the present.

I am not sure why so many historical linguists have preferred to speculate on the word order in which prehistoric Germans might have communicated. Perhaps the different possibilities for investigating Germanic word order have never even been considered. Whatever the case may be, it is not the purpose of this paper to discuss and speculate on the reasons for this bias towards reconstruction. I will only attempt to show that it might be equally interesting to study Germanic word order change from another point of view: the verb-position changes in surface word order at the sentence level that may be traced from the earliest sources up to the present in each of the Germanic languages.

Such an approach might not only be equally interesting, it might even give us a better insight into the mechanisms of word order change than reconstruction, since it does not only allow us to check word order changes on real data, but also to discover other language phenomena that co-occur with the ones under observation. As a result, this method will provide us with the tools to find possible reasons for the observed changes (cf. Lightfoot 1979:16). In the first part of this paper I will give a description of two typologically important phenomena in the word order development of sentences in the

Germanic languages: embraciation and inversion (1.). I will then try to explain why the Germanic languages developed differently from one another in these two respects (2.). Finally I will discuss briefly what these findings might mean for reconstruction and theories on syntactic change (3.).

1 Embraciation and inversion in the Germanic languages

1.1 The phenomena of embraciation and inversion

When native speakers of English learn Modern German, they will soon discover that there are some striking differences in the position of finite and non-finite verb in English and German.

a. In the surface word order of German declarative main clauses, the verbal elements do not all show up as one constituent: the finite verb occupies the second position, and all other verbal elements the last position. Nominal objects, for example, occur in between the finite and the non-finite verb.

(1) *Ich habe Peter gesehen*

I have Peter seen

'I have seen Peter'

b. In German dependent clauses all verbal elements show up at the end of the clause. Nominal objects, for example, appear obligatorily before the verb or verbal complex.

(2) *dass ich Peter gesehen habe*

that I Peter seen have

'that I have seen Peter'

c. Inversion of subject and finite verb is obligatory in German declarative main clauses beginning with any other constituent than the subject.

(3) *Morgen werde ich Peter sehen*

Tomorrow will I Peter see

'Tomorrow I will see Peter'

The phenomena mentioned under a. and b. are traditionally regarded as one and the same and are both labeled *Embraciation* (Finklammerung or *Ein-Klammerung* in the German literature). Under special conditions, for example in afterthoughts and with long constituents, the brace can be broken up in German by Prepositional Phrases and Adverbials. Those constituents then

1.2 The Standard Modern Germanic languages

The phenomenon under c. is called *Inversion* (or Verb Second rule). Both Embraciation and Inversion play an important role in current theories on word order typology, because their occurrence or non-occurrence is a factor in characterizing a language as SOV (+ embraciation, - inversion), (X)VSO (- embraciation, + inversion) or (X)SVO (- embraciation, - inversion).

My study of embraciation and inversion in the Modern Germanic languages is restricted in two respects. In the first place I have left out of consideration those Germanic languages which have only come into existence relatively recently and which have been strongly influenced by members of other language families: Afrikaans and Yiddish. In my opinion, these two qualities make them less useful for discovering general internal linguistic factors behind word order change in the Germanic languages. The restriction as to recent origin needs no further argumentation in a real-time investigation while, as a result of the strong influence from other Germanic languages, the syntax of Afrikaans and Yiddish could also have been modified by non-linguistic factors, which are even more difficult to determine than linguistic ones.² The second limitation lies in the fact that I have only taken into consideration the Standard Germanic languages. As far as I have been able to determine, the word order phenomena discussed here do not deviate from those in the dialects. Most dialect atlases provide little information on syntax, though, so that I have not been able to investigate this thoroughly.³

According to the standard grammars of the Modern Germanic languages embraciation of nominal objects occurs in German, Frisian and Dutch dependent and declarative main clauses only.⁴ Inversion is obligatory in all the Germanic languages, except in English⁵, in declarative main clauses beginning with *any* other constituent than the subject. In Modern English some constituents may trigger verb second order optionally, to serve some special pragmatic functions (Green 1980), when they occur in front position (Stockwell: this volume). A few other constituents trigger Inversion obligatorily (Stockwell: this volume). Well: this volume).

Although inversion is obligatory in all Germanic languages other than English, this does not mean that fronting of other constituents than subjects is subject to the same syntactic and pragmatic conditions for all the Germanic inversion languages. This is of importance because the fewer conditions on fronting an inversion language has, the more it deviates from a non-inversion language (e.g. English). I have not been able to determine the conditions on fronting for all the languages concerned in detail, but it seems to me that there are not many differences between the various languages. This idea is supported by the fact that counts for spoken Norwegian, German and Dutch show that about 40% of all declarative main clauses have some other constituent than the subject in front position in all three languages (Faarlund 1981, Jansen 1978, 1981), making it plausible that, with respect to inversion, all Germanic languages deviate from English to the same extent.

It appears that, with respect to Embraciation and Inversion, Modern Germanic languages can be divided into three groups:

- a. English (— Embraciation, — obligatory Inversion)
- b. Scandinavian Languages (— Embraciation, + obligatory Inversion)
- c. German, Frisian, and Dutch (+ Embraciation and + obligatory Inversion).

These findings are summarized in Table 1, column a, b, and c. In the next section I will show that this tripartition can only partly be recovered in the earliest records of the languages.

1.3 The findings in the earliest records of the Germanic languages

Before dealing with the results of my survey on embraciation and inversion in the earliest sources of the Germanic languages, I will point out two problematic aspects of this investigation which might complicate the comparison between the various languages: the differences in the character and age of the earliest records. It is frequently pointed out that syntax could have been seriously affected by factors such as genre, style, rhyme, metre etc. (e.g. Werth 1970:28–29, Watkins 1976:314–315). Since the earliest sources of the Germanic languages consist of texts which differ in these respects (see Table 1, column h), this could hamper the comparison. I do agree with this point of view in general, but, for the phenomena under consideration here, I do not consider these problems very serious. I do not believe, for example, that a language that never embraciates will suddenly start doing so in a certain style. The second problem is that the earliest sources do not all date from the same period (see Table 1, column g). This complicates the comparison because the further back in time a comparison between the various Germanic

Table 1. *Embraciation and inversion in the Germanic languages according to the Standard Grammars and the oldest records*

	CURRENT NORMS			OLDEST RECORDS			g	h
	a	b	c	d	e	f		
Germanic languages	Embraciation in declarative main clauses SVfOV	in dependent clauses SOVf	Obligatory Inversion in declarative main clauses XVfS	Embraciation in declarative main clauses SVfOV	in dependent clauses SOVf	Obligatory Inversion in declarative main clauses XVfS	Date of oldest record	Name
English	—	—	±	±	±	±	741	Anglo Saxon Chronicle
Icelandic	—	—	+	—	±	+	± 1000	Edda Saga's Runes
Norwegian	—	—	+	±	±	+	± 1000	
Swedish	—	—	+	±	±	+	± 1200	Laws
Danish	—	—	+			+	± 1300	
Frisian	—	—	+	?	?	?	—	—
German	+	+	+	±	±	±	± 800	Isidor
Frisian	+	+	+	±	±	?	± 1470	Letters
Dutch	+	+	+	±	±	±	± 1275	Limburgse leven van Jezus

— never occurs
+ always occurs
? no data available

± mostly occurs
± seldom occurs

languages is attempted, the less likely is it that records will be available to compare all the Germanic languages of one particular period. This problem can partly be remedied by studying the word order changes for all the languages concerned up to 1475, the date of the earliest source for Frisian. The available Frisian sources happen to be the youngest, compared to those for the other Germanic languages, so we will unfortunately never know anything about Frisian word order at the time of, for example, the first part of the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, simply because no data are available on the Frisian of that particular period.

A summary of the occurrence and non-occurrence of Embraciation and Inversion in the oldest sources of the respective Germanic languages is given in Table 1, column d, e, and f.⁶ This table shows that for all Germanic languages other than English the word orders which are obligatory in the Modern Standard languages are either very frequent or also obligatory in the earliest sources of these languages. The difference between the Modern Scandinavian languages and German, Frisian and Dutch with regard to embraciation are already present in the earliest sources. The way in which the differences appear varies, though: we encounter absolute differences between the standard languages, but gradual differences between the languages in their earliest sources. Inversion, the phenomenon that distinguishes Modern English from the other Modern Germanic languages, also sets apart Old English from the other Old and Middle Germanic languages. The tripartition found in the Modern languages (see 1.2) is apparently also present in the earliest sources, though it is expressed partly in a different manner. Old English and Modern English differ strongly as regards embraciation. In Old English it occurs frequently in dependent clauses and sometimes in declarative main clauses, while Modern English shows no embraciation at all. In this respect Old English in fact resembles Old German, Middle Dutch and Middle Frisian to a certain extent.

The next section discusses the changes in embraciation and inversion that have taken place in each of the Germanic languages from their oldest sources to the present.

1.4 The changes over time

In all Germanic languages, other than English, deviations from the standard word order disappear gradually over time.⁷ Variation is more and more restricted by syntactic and pragmatic factors and, by the time the various Standard languages are established, the few remaining exceptions are overriden by the normalizing influence of the Standard. The disappearance of em-

braciation in English also proceeds gradually. Embraciation, on the other hand, seems to have already been well established before the standard language comes into existence. It appears from the study by Bean (1976:146, 173, 180) that embraciation and true verb final constructions hardly ever occur in the main clauses of the Anglo Saxon Chronicle after 884, while in dependent clauses it disappears after 1122.

For inversion the changes in English are more complex. It might appear from Table 1 that no changes have taken place at all, but this is not the case. In all periods inversion may occur in English under certain conditions, but the conditions change over time. Stockwell (this volume) has made a first attempt to trace the changes in these conditions factors. On the basis of Bean's data (1976:145), summarized in Table 2, he claims that in late Old English inversion was far less constrained than it is in Early Old English and Modern English. Inversion is apparently sufficiently frequent for Stockwell to call it the prose word order norm for late Old English. Table 2 shows that the frequency of inversion increases up to 1001 and then gradually declines. By the end of the 14th century it occurs only rarely. The few constituents that trigger verb second optionally or obligatorily when occurring in front position in Modern English are in part reflexives of the Old English structures and in part innovations of Early Modern English (Stockwell, this volume).

Table 2. The word order of declarative main clauses beginning with another constituent than the subject in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle (based on Bean (1976:145))

	XVS		XSV		T OR M L
	N	%	N	%	
Before 755	38	29%	93	71%	131
755-860	41	52%	38	48%	79
865-884	59	97%	2	3%	61
885-891	22	73%	8	17%	30
892-900	39	93%	3	7%	42
958-1001	21	100%	0	0%	21
1049-1066	64	82%	14	18%	78
1122-1124	37	88%	5	12%	42
1132-1140	29	76%	9	24%	38

The changes in the use of embraciation and inversion in the Germanic languages may be summarized as follows.

Chronicle has been written. Bean (1976:149) views it as a consequence of the Chronicle's wide style which would lend itself particularly for XVS order. Fourquet (1938:90) accounts for it by referring to Aelfred's efforts to establish a literary tradition during his reign. I believe, though, that we have to look at the problem from a different angle, in view of the developments in the other Germanic languages. Instead of attempting to explain why inversion was so frequent in late Old English we must explain why it did not become obligatory in English, as it did in the other Germanic languages.

I do agree with Givón (1977), Stockwell (1977) and Vennemann (1974b) that a natural word order drift may follow the paradigm $SOV \rightarrow (X)VSO \rightarrow SVO$. From that point of view the English development is quite normal, but the really interesting questions concern the short time-span in which verb third order was stabilized in English. It is a short time-span, at least, in comparison with the long-lasting intermediate stage between XVS and SV in which the other Germanic languages still find themselves after many centuries and which they do not seem to be on the verge of abandoning, as far as I know.

Several internal linguistic factors have been cited to account for the quick regularization of verb third order in English.⁹ For few of these factors it has been determined whether or not they were also present in the other Germanic languages. Givón (1977:175) is an important exception. He argues that the more often languages have subject agreement conjugation, the less likely they will have regularized SV order. In this way he connects inversion with the viable subject agreement paradigm in German and Old English, while he relates the infrequency or complete absence of inversion in Modern English and the Scandinavian languages to the largely eroded subject agreement conjugation in those languages. I find this explanation unconvincing since it relies partly on incorrect data, so that counterexamples are easy to find. In Modern Norwegian and Modern Dutch, for example, 40% of the declarative main clauses have inversion (see 1.2), but both languages have a similar subject agreement paradigm as English does. We apparently need other explanations for the fast development to verb third order in English.

Explanations ascribing this development explicitly to factors present in no other Germanic language than English have in common that they often refer to the changes resulting from the Scandinavian invasions and settlements (\pm 787–1042) and the Norman Conquest (1066–1200). The early Scandinavian invaders in England were motivated largely by the desire to plunder. They did not have much contact with the Anglo Saxons, so they had little influence on their language. The Danes and Norwegians who came in the last quarter of the 9th century and the 10th century settled in England and did have continuous contact with the original population. They were

Inversion showed the following changes:

a. It disappeared in English;
 b. It became obligatory in German and Dutch.

In Embraciation the following changes took place:

a. It disappeared in English and in the Scandinavian languages;
 b. It became obligatory in German, Frisian and Dutch.

A tentative explanation for these changes will be given in the next section.

2 Tentative explanation of the tripartition of the Germanic languages

This is not the first time the observation has been made that the Germanic languages developed from one group of languages with more or less the same word order possibilities to three different language groups. At the end of his outstanding work on word order change from Proto-Germanic to Early Germanic, Fourquet (1938:223) makes the same observation. He does not venture much of an explanation, though, and indicates the complexity of the issue when he writes: "Ce sont des causes infimes qui ont pu faire pencher la balance" ("Infinitely small causes could have tipped the balance") (Fourquet 1938:233). Nearly half a century of continued research later we still find ourselves in the same, or maybe even worse situation, for nowadays it is often questioned whether explanation of linguistic change, and particularly syntactic change (see Harris this volume and 1981), is possible at all. In spite of the problematic aspects of explaining language change, I will try to point out some possible causes for the divergent word order developments in the Germanic languages. I will first deal with the separation related to inversion and then with the divergence connected with embraciation.

2.1 Inversion and the creole character of English⁸

I have shown that inversion has disappeared almost completely in English, has become obligatory in German and Dutch and has already become obligatory in the earliest sources of the other Germanic languages. The disappearance of inversion in English seems to be the exception and demands explanation.

Some linguists have argued that the frequent occurrence of inversion in late Old English does not constitute evidence for an ongoing word order change, but that it is due to the style in which this part of the Anglo Saxon

this observation: without exception all of them use the XSV-order, even those few creoles based on languages that do not have XSV order at all. Moreover, it appears from other studies that in cases of interference or pidginization of two or more languages of which only one or none has XSV-order, a development of verb third order still takes place (Bickerton and Givón 1976, Clyne 1980:30, Voskuil 1956). These facts support the hypothesis that the fast development of verb third order in English might be due to its creole character. This is all the more plausible, since XSV-order had already been almost completely regularized in Norman French, one of the languages on which this 'creole' English is based.¹²

The question may arise whether the rapid grammaticalization of verb third order in English could be considered a direct influence from French. This has been suggested for example by Fisiak (1977:255-256), who ascribes the influence of French to its prestigious position in Middle English society: speakers of French formed the most influential stratum of society and, during the whole Middle English period, French was the language of written documents and correspondence. This prestigious position of French may have facilitated its influence on English.

Fisiak's article appeared in the same year as the articles by Bailey and Maroldt (1977) and Domingue (1977) and could, therefore, not have been a reaction to their viewing Middle English as a language with creole characteristics. It is implicit in Fisiak's study, though, that he considers the socio-linguistic context of Middle English less appropriate for creolization than the Old English context, and he even doubts whether Old English is actually a creolized language (Fisiak 1977:249). He shows that the French-English communicative community was completely different from the Scandinavian-English one: French and English were mutually unintelligible, no more than 10% of the population used both English and French, throughout the Middle Ages, and a great social distance existed between French and English-speaking populations.

I cannot decide here whether the fast stabilization of verb third order in Middle English is due to a creolization process involving Scandinavian and French or to direct influence from French. In order to make such a decision, we first of all need more complete knowledge of the socio-linguistic context of French and English in the Middle English society, because the descriptions in the articles mentioned here contradict each other in some important respects. For example, the authors hold different views about the degree of social distance between the English and French speaking populations. In my opinion, only a scholar with a thorough knowledge of the history of Medieval England, as well as of socio-linguistic issues, is qualified to judge whether the socio-linguistic context in Medieval England supports a creole hypothesis or a

socially not very different from the Anglo Saxons and willing to assimilate and consequently they felt a need for communication. Fisiak (1977:249) describes the development of a kind of interlanguage as a result of this contact. Since Anglo Saxon and Old Norse were cognate languages, they already resembled each other to a great extent and were probably even mutually intelligible, but in both languages additional changes were introduced that made them converge still more. This process may have resembled pidginization, but since the use of the interlanguage seems to have been restricted to special domains, it is doubtful whether it ever reached creolization. It is beyond dispute, though, that the alternate use of the interlanguage and English can be considered one of the factors which have caused a development in English that differed from developments in the other Germanic languages. The alternation between languages brought about both special changes and accelerated the normal processes of change.

The quick disappearance of inversion is apparently not a direct result of the Scandinavian invasions and settlements, because it only declined after the year 1001 (cf. Table 2). Various scholars have suggested that the Scandinavian invasion might have caused this word order change indirectly. The loss of inflexions that came about as a result of the Scandinavian invasions is thought by some linguists to have affected the fixing of English word order in the 12th, 13th and 14th century. This causal relationship is open to question (cf. Fisiak 1977:254, Steele 1978:609), but other reasons can be given to view the fast development of verb third order in English as an indirect result of Scandinavian interference. According to Bailey and Maroldt (1977:26) it caused a linguistic instability that paved the way for substantial changes during and after the Norman Conquest. Bailey and Maroldt as well as Domingue (1977) maintain that although the number of French-speaking Anglo-Norman immigrants in England was probably rather small and only the influential part of the population used French, the Norman Conquest contributed to possible creolization of Old English. The authors of both articles describe an enormous quantity of innovations in English on a lexical, morphological and phonological level, which all came about during and after the Conquest and which may be considered characteristic of creoles. However, neither of these articles mention word order. This is not surprising since the general syntactic characteristics of creoles have not yet been formulated thoroughly.¹¹ Still, I believe that the stabilization of verb third order in Middle English should also be considered a direct result of its creole character, if it is indeed plausible that Middle English is to some extent a creole. According to Voorhoeve (personal communication) verb third order is a hard and fast rule in creoles for sentences beginning with a constituent other than the subject. My own survey of about twenty creole languages confirms

According to this sequence of changes, embraciation in English disappeared after inversion, but in I.4 we have seen that in the other Germanic languages the disappearance seems to occur in the reversed order, stage (c) after (d) and (e). The Scandinavian languages pass through all changes except (c). The output of stage (b) reflects the word order of Modern German, Dutch and Frisian. In the remaining part of this paper I will only deal with the phenomenon under (d) and (e): exbraciation.

Stockwell suggests that embraciation in English disappeared because a number of phenomena in Old English, the so-called 'motivations for exbraciation', destroyed the verb-final appearance of the language and led to a reintegration, destroyed the verb-final appearance of the language and led to a reintegration of English as a non-embraciating language (Stockwell 1977:310). He presents the following 'motivations for exbraciation'

- a) Simple verbs occur far more frequently than complex ones in Old English and consequently all objects and adverbial material appear in those sentences after the main verb.
- b) Extraposition of relative clauses, conjuncts and appositives.
- c) Postdeposition of adverbs and afterthoughts.
- d) Rightward movement of sentential objects and subjects.

I believe that the first 'motivation for exbraciation' is more important in the change from embraciation to exbraciation than the others, first of all, for the simple reason that every sentence has a verb and therefore verbs occur far more frequently than the parts of speech mentioned in Stockwell's other motivations. Secondly, because the occurrence to the right of the non-finite verb or verbal complex of afterthoughts, relative clauses, sentential subjects and objects is also found in accepted verb final languages and does not seem to have resulted in reinterpretation as a non verb final language in these cases.

If we assume that the frequent occurrence of simple verbs in Old English is indeed the principal cause for the appearance of exbraciation, it may also be assumed that the divergent development in the Germanic languages is due to the fact that this motivation for exbraciation has not been sufficiently present in German, Frisian and Dutch to lead to reinterpretation at the time when these languages were in the exbraciating stage of their development (cf. Gerritsen 1980:133). In other words, the divergence might be explained by the fact that the English and Scandinavian verb systems were more synthetic when those languages entered the exbraciation stage than the verb systems of German, Frisian and Dutch when they began to exbraciate. Since we do not know when each of the respective languages reached the exbraciation stage or to what extent their verb systems were analytic at the time they

hypothesis positing influence from French. To decide on the most plausible hypothesis, we especially need answers to two important questions: what is the position of word order among the linguistic changes under influence of creolization and what are the constraints on borrowing of word order at the sentence level. Borrowing is generally regarded as a weak tool for explanation. This certainly holds for borrowing at the sentence level, since, to my knowledge, no convincing example has ever been presented (cf. Moravcsik 1978:102). This would seem to lead us to prefer the creole hypothesis, but in the case of Middle English there has been such ample opportunity for borrowing that its influence can hardly be refuted. Be this as it may, it does seem plausible that the rapid disappearance of Inversion in Middle English – at least in comparison with the other Germanic languages – is a direct consequence of the fact that William the Conqueror decided to cast covetous eyes on England rather than on one of the other Germanic countries.

2.2 Embraciation and the development of an analytical verb system

It has been pointed out in I.4 that we must try to account for the disappearance of embraciation in English and the Scandinavian languages and for its grammaticalization in German, Frisian and Dutch. Finding explanations for the divergence in the Germanic languages with respect to embraciation is even more difficult, though, than explaining the differences concerning inversion, since for all Germanic languages except the English, the absolute differences between the Modern Standard languages reflect the gradual ones that were found between the languages of the earliest sources. Therefore, it seems likely that for all the Germanic languages, except English, the motivations for the divergence were already present before the period from which we have data. It is evident that this lack of access to factors determining the divergence complicates its explanation. Fortunately, the disappearance of Embraciation in English has taken place in a period for which data are available, so that it is possible to trace the process. Stockwell (1977:296) has suggested the following sequence of word order changes from Germanic to Modern English:

- (4) (a) SO(V)_v → VSO(V) by Comment Focusing
- (b) VSO(V) → xVSO(V) by Linkage or Topicalization
- (c) TVX(V) → SVX(V) by Subject = Topic
- (d) SVX(V) → SvVX by Exbraciation
- (e) Subordinate Order → Main Order by Generalization (or, at least, elimination of whatever

difference existed.)

entered it, this hypothesis is difficult to prove. Despite these inevitable missing links in the argumentation, I will try and trace whether the history of the periphrastic verb system in the Germanic languages supports the hypothesis, assuming that all the languages entered the extraction stage at the same time.

2.2.1 The development of a periphrastic tense system in the Germanic languages

It is generally accepted that the Germanic tense system developed from synthetic to analytic. For Proto-Germanic only two tenses have been reconstructed, which were both inflected: present and preterit. Gothic, the earliest of the derivate languages, also works with only these two tenses, but in the earliest sources of the Nordic and Westgermanic languages, analytic tenses for the past (perfect and pluperfect) do already occur. These periphrastic constructions are formed with the verbs 'to have' or 'to be', the original situation being that in the active transitive verbs normally selected the former and intransitives the latter.¹³ Since the periphrastic formations with 'to be' occur even in the earliest sources, they are considered an indigenous development. It has been suggested, though, that the existence of similar constructions in Romance could have stimulated their use (Lockwood 1969:115). The constructions with 'to have' originated from reinterpretation of the verb *have* as an auxiliary in constructions such as Old German (5) in which the participle was constructed as an adjective modifying the accusative object of the main verb *have*.

(5) *ir den christianum nannun infangan eigt*
 PRO ACC m sg ACC m sg ACC m sg PA-PRT PRES 2pl
 you the Christian name accepted have/own
 (Exhortatio)

Since the reflexes of this change are still found in the oldest sources of the Germanic languages, it is thought to be relatively recent: it probably did not arise until just before the documented period. A similar development has taken place in the evolution from Latin to Romance (cf. Benveniste 1968:86, Bynon 1979³:61) and the genesis of a periphrastic tense with 'to have' in Germanic is assumed to be the result of imitation from the Romance languages. The evolution of an analytic future tense mainly took place during the documented period. Previous to that development the present tense was sufficient to express futurity. Again, the development of future tense is thought to

have been encouraged by its existence in Latin and French (Lockwood 1968:113). The development of an analytic present and preterit in English is only found in the do-periphrasis used to construct the present and preterit of negative, emphatic and interrogative sentences in the active voice. Since such periphrastic constructions do not appear until the thirteenth century and since even in the fifteenth century they were only a peripheral category (Samuels 1972:173), they are not important for the argumentation here, because embranchation in English had already disappeared before that time (cf. 1.4).

It is clear from the above that Romance is believed to have played a prominent part in the development of the periphrastic tenses in the Germanic languages: Romance is thought to have stimulated the use of the periphrastic perfect with 'to be' and the periphrastic future, and to have been a model for the periphrastic perfect with 'to have'. Although several eminent linguists have advanced and adhered to this theory (Brinkmann 1931:25, Lockwood 1969:75, Meillet 1917:129), others have their doubts about it. Especially the hypothesis that the development of the periphrastic tenses with 'to have' is due to borrowing from Romance has been criticized. Ebert (1978:59) argues that Old Icelandic, which certainly cannot have been influenced by Romance, does have a periphrastic perfect with 'to have', albeit rarely (Husler 1913:144). To me, this only seems an apparent counterargument, because the development of a novel complex tense system in Icelandic is said to be due to Irish influence (Haugen 1976:307). Other opponents of the Romance influence theory are Kern (1912:8) and Zieglschmid (1929:57), who both consider the development of the periphrastic perfect with 'to have' an indigenous Germanic development. They argue that somewhat parallel developments are found in certain modern Indo-European languages outside the area in question and they do not believe that borrowing of Romance lexical elements in Germanic has occurred. Their argumentation is all the more convincing, since it is in line with Moravcsik's (1978:110) first constraint on borrowing: "No non-lexical language property can be borrowed unless the borrowing language already includes borrowed lexical items from the same source language". It appears from the study of Frings (1966, maps), though, that borrowing of lexical items from Romance did in fact take place and that weakens the argument against borrowing of the periphrastic perfect. Zieglschmid (1929:59) does not completely reject possible influence from Romance, maintaining that the occurrence of the periphrastic tense with 'to have' in Romance could have favored its development in Germanic. This is exactly Bynon's (1979³:250) line of reasoning: the inbuilt tendency towards analytic structures in Germanic does not exclude the possibility of such innovations having developed in a contact situation.

In any event, whether the origin of periphrastic tenses is ascribed to direct influence from Romance or — as for the other periphrastic active tense formations — to an inbuilt tendency accelerated by Romance influence, both hypotheses support the theory that a relationship exists between the grammaticalization of embraciation and the speed with which the periphrastic tense system spread across the Germanic language area. Lockwood (1969:75) maintains that most likely the periphrastic tenses established themselves first in West Germanic, in the area where the Romance influence was the greatest, gradually spreading subsequently to Scandinavia, the area where Romance had little or no influence. Unfortunately, he does not give evidence for this hypothesis and I have not been able to trace when the periphrastic tenses were grammaticalized in each of the languages concerned. If this hypothesis is indeed correct, it might explain the disappearance of embraciation in the Scandinavian languages as opposed to its grammaticalization in German, Frisian and Dutch, since the Scandinavian languages used periphrastic tenses to a lesser extent than the other three languages when they entered the embraciation phase. This does not explain the disappearance of embraciation in English, but there are reasons to believe that the English tense system developed from synthetic to analytic at a later stage than the tense system of the other West Germanic languages. First of all, this is plausible from a historical point of view: during the period in which the periphrastic tenses developed in the Romance languages — between the third and the seventh century AD (Benveniste 1968:88) — there was less of a relationship between England and the area where the Romance languages were spoken than between the German, Frisian and Dutch area and the Romance area. Secondly, there also is linguistic evidence that the tense system of English developed from synthetic to analytic at a later date than that of German and Dutch. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find data about the development of periphrastic tenses in Frisian, so, the English development of periphrastic tenses could only be compared with developments in German and Dutch.

With respect to the future tense, no great differences can be traced between the languages in question, since the idea of futurity is most commonly expressed by the present tense and periphrastic forms developed relatively late in the course of the Middle Ages.¹⁴ The future-like periphrasis, especially with 'shall' and sometimes with 'will', seems to have occurred more frequently in Old German than in Old English: Mustanoja (1960:483) discusses its rare occurrence in Old English, while Paul (1920:147) states that it is found 'öfters' (rather often) in Old German translations from Latin.

With respect to the development of the periphrastic past tenses remarkable differences may be noticed between English, on the one hand, and German and Dutch on the other. In Old English, perfect or pluperfect was expressed

very often by means of the preterit. According to Mustanoja (1960:499), many linguists believe that it is not until the early middle English period that participial constructions with 'to be' and 'to have' can be regarded as true perfects and pluperfects. Before that time, the past participles are considered to be predicate adjectives. Both Mustanoja and Jespersen (1938:193) locate the gradual development of the periphrastic past tense system in English in the latter part of the Middle Ages. Visser (1966:751) places it even later, stating that it took place in the Early Modern English period. The earliest sources of Dutch show an abundant use of perfects and pluperfects, according to Weijnen (1971:88). He even points out that there is a perfect periphrase with 'to have' in the only Old Dutch sentence that has been handed down to us:

(6) *Hebban olla vogalas nestas bigunnan hinase hi(c) enda thu*
Have all birds nests begun except I and you

The German periphrastic past tense does not yet occur in the earliest sources of Old German, but it does appear in the beginning of the 9th century and in Notker (922–1022) it is already grammaticalized to a certain extent, according to Ebert (1978:58), Koch (1974:78) and Lockwood (1968:115). In subsequent periods periphrastic past tenses became more and more common usage and by the 12th century the perfect must have almost taken over from the preterit (Lockwood 1969:121). It seems, therefore, that English did not only develop periphrastic tenses more slowly than German and Dutch did, there is also a difference in the number of functions of the perfect, at least between English and German. The perfect in English has retained the one function it originally had in all the Germanic languages: completion of an action. In German, on the other hand, it has become the general tense to express past, and it has taken over the functions of both perfect and preterit (Mustanoja 1960:505).

In short, the different developments of the periphrastic tense system in English, on the one hand, and German and Dutch, on the other, corroborate the hypotheses that embraciation might be grammaticalized in English and not in German and Dutch because there was less of a change in the English tense system from synthetic to analytic.

There is also other evidence for a relationship between the development of periphrastic tenses and the grammaticalization of embraciation. Lockwood (1968:121) describes the competition between German preterit and perfect. During the 12th century the perfect tense largely took over from the preterit and the use of the perfect for preterit spread from the South of Germany to the North. If the occurrence of periphrastic tenses has indeed contributed to the grammaticalization of embraciation, we would expect it to have appeared first in the parts of Germany where the use of perfect for preterit was first

regularized, namely first in Southern Germany and later in the other parts. These are precisely the findings of Maurer (1926). According to him, the grammaticalization of embraciation did in fact gradually spread from the Southern part of Germany to the North.

It is clear from the above that the different developments of the periphrastic tenses in the Germanic languages, which other historical linguists have assumed and which I have only partly been able to trace, lend support to the hypothesis that the slower development of the tense system from synthetic to analytic in English and the Scandinavian languages in comparison with German, Frisian and Dutch, contributed to the disappearance of embraciation in English and the Scandinavian languages and, on the other hand, to its grammaticalization in German, Frisian and Dutch.

2.2.2 The development of a periphrastic and a synthetic passive in the Germanic languages

Although remnants of the Indo-European inflected passive have been preserved in the present tense of Gothic only, it is generally assumed that the periphrastic Germanic passive developed from a synthetic one. The genesis of the periphrastic passive probably took place in the period of Common Germanic and it is considered to be an indigenous Germanic development (Ebert 1978:61; Kossuth 1981:2; Lockwood 1968:142; Zieglschmid 1929:29). Since periphrastic passives occur in all the Germanic languages, even in the earliest sources, we cannot trace the change from synthetic to analytic to determine whether it occurred at an earlier date in the 'embraciating' languages than in the others.

Still, a difference did arise in the way passivity was expressed in the Nordic and Western Germanic languages: a novel synthetic medio-passive originated between 600 and 1000 in the Scandinavian languages. This development caused the verb system of Scandinavian to become less analytic than that of the other Germanic languages. The mark of the synthetic medio-passive was an enclitic derived from the reflexive pronoun. As a suffix (*s/st*) added to the active forms it could have reflexive, reciprocal, medial, active or passive meaning, competing in most of these meanings with other devices. Thus, for expressing the passive, the Old Swedish form (7) could also be expressed by (8) and after 1400 also by (9).

(7) *Klaedhas* 'be dressed', 'clothe oneself', 'get dressed'

(8) *Varda klaedd* 'be dressed'

(9) *Bliva klaedd* 'be dressed'

In the oldest sources of Swedish the use of the synthetic passive is frequent, though. The different meanings of forms like (7) disappeared in the course of time and their meaning became limited to the expression of passivity. In modern times periphrastic passives became increasingly productive (Haugen 1976:309, 378; Wessén 1970:198). The occurrence of synthetic and periphrastic passives side by side, even in the oldest sources of Scandinavian, is more evidence that the verb system of Scandinavian was more synthetic than that of the other Germanic languages, and this evidence supports the hypothesis that exbraciation continued to exist in those languages because their verb systems were more synthetic than in the 'embraciating languages'.

2.2.3 The development of periphrastic durative aspect in the Germanic languages

It is generally assumed that in Proto and Early Germanic aspect oppositions were more elaborate than they are nowadays and that they used to be expressed synthetically, by means of prefixes. In the course of time the aspect distinctions either disappeared or were expressed by other means. One of the most important developments was the genesis of the periphrasis with a present participle to express the durative aspect. According to Mossé (1938:1, 37), the development of these periphrastic forms was infinitely richer in the West Germanic languages than in the others. He shows that the constructions with a present participle were especially frequent in the language of scholars and this leads him to ascribe their origin to borrowing from Latin, which might explain, at the same time, why this construction hardly occurs in the Scandinavian languages. Other linguists have proposed that this development must be indigenous, though perhaps favored by Latin influence, since the construction also occurs in other Indo-European languages (cf. Visser 1973:1988).

In any event, the geographic distribution of this construction in the oldest sources of the Germanic languages corroborates the hypothesis that the grammaticalization of exbraciation in the Scandinavian languages, as opposed to German, Frisian and Dutch, might be related to the more synthetic character of the verb system in the Nordic Germanic languages. The fact that embraciation disappeared in English and not in the other West Germanic languages does not seem to be related to divergent developments in the periphrasis with a present participle. In all the languages concerned, it occurred with more or less the same frequency in the oldest sources, but in the latter part of the

Middle Ages it disappeared in all languages, except German and English. The periphrases with 'werden' evolved into the future tense in German in the course of the Middle Ages. In English, the periphrastic constructions with the present participle developed into the expanded form (*He was/is going*), but it was not until 1500 that it became frequent. Visser (1973:1997) quotes Leah Dennis (1940:860) and agrees when she states that at present, English uses five to ten times as many progressive forms as it did in 1600 and ten to twenty times as many as in 1500. In other words, the full development of this construction, which made the English verb system more analytic in this respect than that of the other West Germanic languages, took place after the period when embraciation had disappeared in English and therefore it cannot be viewed as a counterexample to my hypothesis.

2.2.4 The development of periphrastic mood in the Germanic languages

In all the Germanic languages the morphological mood distinctions on the verbs were either replaced by a periphrasis with modals or the mood disappeared completely. This change seems to be far more complex than the ones I have described above. So far I have not been able to trace its development in all the Germanic languages. I do have the impression, though, that in the whole Germanic language area the change from a synthetic to an analytic mood-system took place relatively late.

Maybe this change came about even later than the stabilization of the standard word order patterns and, consequently, it might not have had any influence at all. This should obviously be investigated more thoroughly.

2.2.5 Concluding remarks on the connection between the grammaticalization of embraciation and the genesis of a periphrastic verb-system

The data presented in this section support my hypothesis that the divergent development of the Germanic languages with respect to Embraciation are related to differences in the analytic character of the verb-system at the time these languages entered the Exbraciation stage. The differences between English and the Scandinavian languages on the one hand and German, Frisian and Dutch on the other, may be due to differences in the development of periphrastic tenses. Besides, the development of a synthetic passive next to a periphrastic passive in the Scandinavian languages and the divergent developments regarding to the periphrasis with a present participle could be attributed to the differences between the Nordic languages and German,

Frisian and Dutch. However, the relationship between the grammaticalization of embraciation and the rise of an analytic verb-system definitely needs to be investigated more thoroughly. It is evident that the divergent developments with regard to Embraciation are not necessarily caused by the difference in analyticity of the verb systems in the languages concerned. Other factors may also have contributed to this change (cf. Vennemann, this volume). The disappearance of embraciation in English, for example, may also be due partly to its creole character or to influences from French (cf. 2.1), since the brace is one of the first syntactic phenomena that disappear under influence of language contact (cf. Clyne 1980:30).

3 Concluding remarks

Assuming that my description of the divergent word order developments in the various Germanic languages and my tentative explanations are correct — at least to some extent — they seem to inspire some notes of caution for historical syntacticians.

In the first place, it should not be presumed without question that the syntactic development of one particular language is representative for that of all members of a language family. Curiously enough, the word order development of English has, nonetheless, been taken to be representative for that of the other Germanic languages (e.g. Vennemann, 1974, a, b), although English word order development is in fact the most deviant.

In the second place, it is not possible to reconstruct or predict which word order change would have taken place in the past or will take place in the future when we have data for one stage of a language only. This is clearly illustrated by my observation that the word order in all the Germanic languages was more or less the same initially, while three distinctly different types developed in later stages.

In the third place, the social, cultural, and historical setting of a language is of major importance in questions of language change. In this paper I have suggested that word order developments in the Germanic languages are closely connected with such non-linguistic factors and I believe that they should not be taken lightly, since they may play an important role in syntactic change.

It is evident from these remarks that the prospects for word order reconstruction are not encouraging, given our present state of knowledge. So many factors involved in syntactic change are difficult to trace, that an attempt to reconstruct word order changes that may have taken place in the past seems to be a precarious undertaking.

clauses in English and the Scandinavian languages. Different sentential adverbials in the various languages follow this rule. A Swedish example might clarify the matter here:

- (a) *Han har tyvärr varit sjuk*
 He has unfortunately been ill
 (b) *Hon säger, att han tyvärr har varit sjuk*
 She says that he unfortunately has been ill

Some sentential adverbials may occur in English main clauses in between subject and finite verb:

- (c) He often goes there
 (d) They still want to go

This 'OV' order is - as far as I know - unacceptable in the Scandinavian languages. Gerritsen (forthcoming) deals with the differences and similarities of the conditions on the occurrence of sentential adverbials before finite or non-finite verb in the various exbracting Germanic languages.

5. There are some exceptions of minor importance. In Frisian inversion is not obligatory when the main clause is preceded by a dependent clause. In the Scandinavian languages it is not obligatory for sentences beginning with *kanska/ille* 'perhaps'.

6. Data for Old English are based on Bean (1976:149), Canale (1976), and Fourquet (1938:90-93, 120); for Old Icelandic on Fourquet (1938), Heusler (1913), Kossuth (1978a and b), and Ureland (1978); for Old Norse on Christoffersen (1980); for Old Swedish on Ureland (1970); for Old Danish on Ureland (1978); for Old Faroese I have not been able to find data; for Old German the data are based on Ebert (1978:39-43), Fourquet (1938), and Lockwood (1968); for Middle Frisian on Bor (1982); and for Middle Dutch on Gerritsen (1980 and forthcoming).

7. See for the Scandinavian languages Haugen (1976), Kossuth (1978a and b), Ureland (1978), and Wessen (1970); for German Ebert (1978), Lehmann (1974), and Lockwood (1968); for Frisian Bor (1982); for Dutch Gerritsen (1980), and Gerritsen (forthcoming).

8. In this section I worked out ideas that Frank Jansen and I developed while working on a paper about the differences and similarities in syntactic development between English and Dutch, presented at the department of Modern Languages of the University of Salford in March 1980.

9. See, for example, the summary in Koch (1974:67).

10. See, for example, Baugh and Cable (1978³), Bailey and Maroldt (1977), Domingue (1977) and Fisiak (1977) for the historical aspects and their linguistic consequences and Jespersen (1938), Kellner (1905), Koch (1974), Strang (1970) for the linguistic aspects.

11. See, for example, Mühlhäusler (1974:92) and Valdman (1977).

12. Dees (1980:300) has shown that in the 13th Century French of Normandy inversion occurred in only 3% of the declarative main clauses that have a pronominal subject and begin with any constituent other than the subject.

13. Perfect and pluperfect formations in the passive voice are left out of consideration here, since passives are periphrastic anyway in all the Germanic languages, except Scandinavian (cf. 2.2.2), so that they are not important for the argumentation.

14. See Fisiak (1977:75), Mustanoja (1960:480, 483), Visser (1966:669) for English; Ebert (1978:60), Koch (1974:78) and Lockwood (1968:107) for German and Weijnen (1971:88) for Dutch.

As far as the formulation of theories of word order change are concerned, I am somewhat more optimistic than, for example, Lass (1980), who believes that word order change is as unpredictable as clothing fashions. As I have been at least partially successful in explaining why the Germanic languages underwent divergent word order changes, I believe that it will eventually be possible to develop a theory of word order change. I do agree with Harris (1981), though, that many more problems need to be solved, before such a theory of word order change can be fully formulated.

Notes

* This paper reports on research in progress on syntactic change in the Germanic languages. The Dutch version of this paper was presented at the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of the Netherlands. I am grateful to the participants in the meeting, particularly to Simon Dik, Frank Jansen and Jan Koopij, and to the participants of the Historical Syntax Conference, especially Jacek Fisiak, Xavier Dickeyser, Karen Kossuth and Theo Vennemann, for fruitful discussion concerning the matters dealt with in this paper. I also thank Henriëtte Schatz for polishing style and content of this paper.

1. For example, Lehmann (1972) and Ries (1908) SOV; Schneider (1938) VSO; Wakernagel (1920) Verb-second; Delbrück (1911), Koch (1974), Hopper (1975) SOV under way to SVO; Braune (1894), Fourquet (1938), Hirt (1929), Meillet (1917) free word order.

2. Obviously, Afrikaans and Yiddish are interesting objects of study, particularly with respect to the question whether such 'mixed languages' show similar word order development as their 'pure' Germanic counterparts. With regard to embranchation and inversion this seems to be the case for Afrikaans, which has the same order as Modern Dutch (+ embranchation, + inversion), but not for Yiddish which has inversion as German has, but not the German embranchation (Ponelis 1979:495, Weinreich 1980:32, 532).

3. Questions on Inversion and Embranchation have been inserted in the second questionnaire for the survey of the Atlas Linguarum Europae (Weijnen, 1979:27-34), which will take place in the eighties all over Europe. I hope that the results of this survey will provide more insight in the phenomena of Inversion and Embranchation as they occur in the dialects of the Germanic standard languages.

4. See for English Quirk (1972), and Hornby (1976²); for Icelandic Kossuth (1978), and Thráinsson (1979); for Norwegian Haugen (1976:311-312), and Faarlund (1981); for Faroese Krenn (1941), and Lockwood (1955:156); for Danish Maling (1979); for Swedish Wessén (1970:223-238), and Ten Cate (1973:96); for Frisian Anglade (1966), Fokkema (1948:85-89), and Sipma (1949); for German Duden (1973:623-630); and for Dutch Jansen (1978), Gerritsen (1980), and the references cited there.

Regarding embranchation of other constituents than nominal objects the comments in 1.1 on German are also valid for Frisian and Dutch (Fokkema 1948:85 86 and Jansen 1979). In the language in which embranchation of nominal objects is unacceptable, this also holds for prepositional phrases. Some sentential adverbials occur obligatorily before the non-finite verb in declarative main clauses and before the finite verb in dependent

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