

Rögvaldsson (1987) observes that in modern Icelandic, quantified and negated objects may appear preverbally, despite uniform VO base order. This construction, Q(uantifier) M(ovement), is clearly a case of DP movement from an underlying VO position and shows A' properties (Svenonius 2000). Van der Wurff (1999) noticed a striking parallel between the QM of Icelandic and a pattern in Late Middle English (LME), which shows quantified/negated objects in a surface OV position 11% of the time, again despite the general lack of OV. Van der Wurff shows that LME allowed the same QM as modern Icelandic, which Kroch & Taylor (2000) further support with quantitative data from early Middle English and diagnostics for underlying VO structure. Kroch & Taylor also implicitly identify a paradox in the syntax of QPs in English: if the Icelandic and English constructions are the same, then the ability to front QPs is independent of the underlying structure of VP. This is supported by Pintzuk & Taylor (2004a,b) and Pintzuk (2005), in which QM is shown to exist through Old and Middle English, and to decline at a rate of change significantly different from the larger loss of OV order. However, QM still appears to decline during the history of English at roughly the same time as the loss of OV (Figure 1). This study further confirms that Icelandic QM and preverbal (non-OV) QPs in early English are the same construction, and supports the argument that the loss of QM in English is an independent change that overlaps with, but is distinct from, the OV-to-VO change. In fact, the loss of QM in English is a slower change, with a significant frequency of preverbal QPs surviving even into Early Modern English (EME).

Elaborating on the work originally presented in Kroch & Taylor (2000), we identify further unambiguous examples of QPs that have been moved from an underlying VO position using diagnostics for underlying VO VPs. When pronouns (which resist extraposition) follow the nonfinite verb, we find seven preverbal objects. Six are quantified (the seventh is discussed in Kroch & Taylor 2000). We similarly use postverbal particles and stranded prepositions, which together provide four examples of preverbal objects, all quantified (Example 1). We also identify clauses with two auxiliaries (both to the left of the main verb) in which the object occurs between them. Two relevant objects, both quantified, were found. This order shows that preverbal QPs are not in OV position, but rather are in a higher position than VP, which we argue to be Spec(MoodP) in a TMA split-Infl structure. We further show that the adjunction-to-VP analysis in Rögvaldsson (1987) and Svenonius (2000) overgenerates.

In addition, in work which follows that of Pintzuk & Taylor (2004a), we considered all ambiguous examples of preverbal objects to provide statistical evidence that quantified/negated objects behave differently. Figure 1 shows that the difference remains statistically significant into the EME period (Example 2), despite a serious lack of preverbal objects at all in this period. However, although the overall pattern is clear, the rates of preverbal quantified and non-quantified objects vary drastically across a sample of texts. The significance of this is that quantified and non-quantified objects are not patterning together in individual texts. The two processes are thus demonstrated to be independently motivated, and do not share a cause.

The current study confirms the difference between QPs and other objects in historical English with further examples of unambiguous QM and evidence that quantified and negated objects behave differently from non-quantified objects into the Early Modern English period, providing fresh evidence that despite the apparent parallels, the loss of preverbal QPs in English follows a different trajectory from the loss of other preverbal objects. Thus the insight gained from modern Icelandic does not create a paradox but in fact a correct prediction: just as fronted QPs are syntactically distinct from other objects in Icelandic, the loss of QM and the loss OV are independent changes in the history of English.

(1) & hise twe33enn dohtress uss Tacnedenn twe33enn lifess, Ða lifess þatt icc habbe 3uw
Summ del nu spelledd offe, Affterr þatt little witt tatt me Min Drihhtin hafeþþ lenedd.
(The Ormulum, date 1225, CMORM,I,221.1820)

‘& his two daughters showed us two lives, the two lives that I have now told you something
 about, according to the little wit that my God has given me.’

(2) I think M. Wyat would **no Englishman** hurt. *(Trial of Throck Morton, date 1554,
 THROCKM-E1-H,I,66.C1.149)*

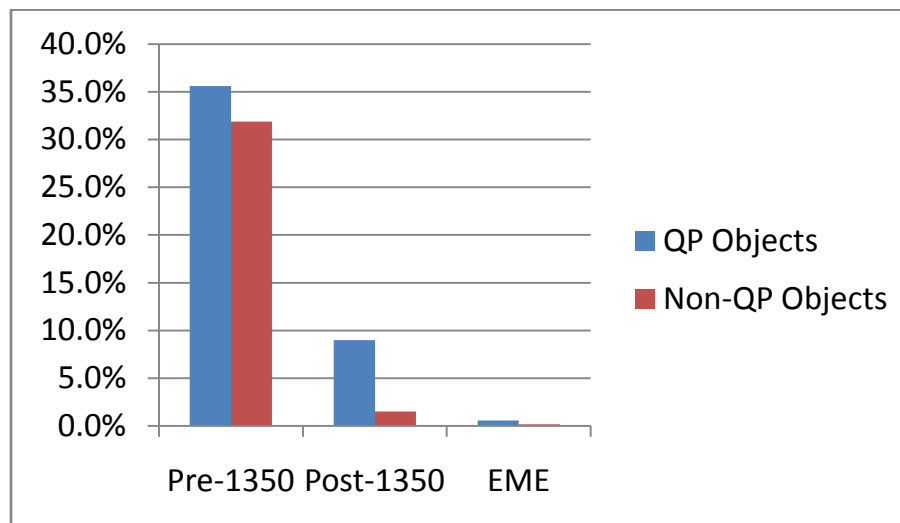


Figure 1. Disappearance of Preverbal Objects in Historical English.

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