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THE DE-INDO-EUROPEANISING OF ENGLISH (II)

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As was the case with PIE (see Part I) we can, using the evidence of the early records, infer a good deal about the prehistoric state of the language of the Germanic tribes inhabiting northwest Europe (including southern Scandinavia) in the last two or three centuries BC. The resulting supradialectal language, which we refer to as Proto-Germanic (PGmc[1]), shows very significant differences from the Graeco-Aryan model of PIE presented in Part I. A certain amount of inflectional syncretism evidently occurred between PIE and PGmc, and when in PGmc the movable accent inherited from PIE became fixed as an expiratory accent on root-initial syllables, the weakened articulation of inflectional syllables led to further phonological reductions, reflected in the separate dialects. In nominal inflections, for example, PGmc shows six cases, against the maximum of eight assumed to have existed in PIE. By the time we reach Old English and the other dialects we find in universal use only four, which in Old English are never fully distinguished formally in the declension of nouns and only in the masculine in that of adjectives and demonstratives. Of the PIE categories of case, number, and gender dealt with in Part I, the Germanic and post-Germanic developments tended to preserve best that of number.

We shall give for illustration the full declension of just one noun, a PIE *o*-stem, known as an *a*-stem in Germanic because of a change of PIE *o* to *a* (other phonological developments we shall ignore).

a-stem (masc): PGmc daγaz (PIE root dhogh-) 'day':

		PGmc	Goth	ON	OE	OHG
Sg	Nom	daγ-az	dags	dagr	dæġ	tag
	Acc	-am	dag	dag	dæġ	tag
	Gen	-as	dagis	dags	dæġes	tages
	Dat	-ai	daga	degi	dæġe	tage
	Ins	-ō				tagu
Pl	Nom	-ōs	dagōs	dagar	dagas	taga
	Acc	-anz/-ōs	dagans	daga	dagas	taga
	Gen	-ōm	dagē	daga	daga	tago
	Dat	-umiz	dagam	dǫgum	dagum	tagum

[1] Abbreviations: Dan(ish, Dut(ch, Eng(lish, Gmn=German, Goth(ic, Icl=Icelandic, ME=Middle English (c. 1050–c. 1450), OE=Old English, OHG=High German (–c. 1100), ON=Old Norse (–c. 1350); other abbreviations as in Part I. Some graphs and diacritics: PGmc *γ*=a voiced velar fricative; Goth *ái* [ai], *ei* [i:], *þ* [θ]; OE *æ* [æ], *y* [y], *ċ* [tʃ], *cg* [dʒ], *ġ* [j], *sċ* [ʃ], *þ* [θ], [ð] (intervocalic); ME ȝ [j]; ON ǫ [ɔ], *ú* [u:], *þ* [θ], [ð]; Icl *é* [je], *ó* [ou], *ö* [ø], *þ* [θ], *ð* [ð]; Dan *æ* [a], *å* [ɔ]; macrons indicate long vowels.

The sixth case assumed for PGmc is the vocative, on the basis of some evidence in Gothic. In the dialects in general, the dative fulfils the functions of the PIE dative, ablative, instrumental, and locative, usually with the aid of prepositions, and the nominative that of the vocative.

In PGmc as in PIE the largest classes of nouns were the *a*-(PIE *o*-) and *ō*-(PIE *ā*-) stems, and while the other PIE classes mentioned in Part I are well represented in Germanic there was a marked tendency for nouns to be attracted into the most common classes. An exception of great importance is the enormous growth of one of the consonant-stems to become one of those commonest classes: we refer to the *n*-nouns, known traditionally, and rather meaninglessly, as 'weak' nouns, in contrast to those with PIE vocalic stems, which are known as 'strong' nouns. Because of phonological reductions that took place after the fixing of the accent the forms show little inflectional variety in the separate dialects, thus OE *nama* 'name' has accusative, genitive, and dative singular identical as *naman*, while the plural is nominative and accusative *naman*, genitive *namena*, and dative *namum*.

As we illustrated in Part I, even the rather well-differentiated nominal declensions of the Classical languages contained significant amounts of polysemy among category feature realisations and frequent patches of homonymy among functionally different sets of features. Old English before the end of the tenth century had less than ten endings with which to encode the two dozen sets of category features required by its three genders, two numbers, and four cases: zero inflection, *-as*, *-es*, *-e*, *-a*, *-u*, *-um*, *-an*, and *-ena*. By the end of the tenth century, and probably owing to the inadequacies of the system as a means of encoding grammatical relations and categories, to the continuing effects of root-initial accent, and perhaps also to an increasingly rigid word order (but see below), these endings were reduced to a mere handful through the falling together of *-e*, *-a*, and *-u* in [ə] and of *-an* and *-um* in [ən] (evidenced by the graphic interchange of such endings in the literary standard from the early eleventh century); this event had an opacifying effect on the categories of case and number, and also on that of gender which, although an essentially covert category, had in fact been fairly well signalled in the nominative plural by vocalic endings.[2] By the twelfth century (in what we call the Early Middle English period) endings were usually spelt only with *-e-*: OE nominative plural *dagas* 'days,' Early ME *daies*; OE dative plural *dagum*, Early ME *daie(n)* (final *-n* was soon lost in the dative plural and in weak nouns outside southern dialects); OE nominative singular *talu* 'number,' plural *tala*, Early ME *tāle;* OE nominative plural *sċipu* 'ships,' Early ME *sċipe*. Within another two hundred years or so, and earlier in the north than in the south of the country, the nominative plural (and genitive singular) *-es* from the old *a*-stems, to which about thirty-five percent of Old English nouns had belonged and which now contained the only distinctive plural-marker, *s*, had been extended to the vast majority of nouns, and the dative singular in *-e* (which had func-

[2] Even before this, natural gender, as opposed to grammatical, not infrequently prevailed in anaphoric reference, as in *hē hæfde ān swīþe ænlīċ wīf, sēo wæs hāten Eurydīċe* 'he had a most excellent wife, who was called Eurydice,' *þā-þā sēo bōc cōm tō ūs, þā āwendon wē hit on Englisċ* [when the book came to us, then translated we it into English] 'when the book reached us, we translated it into English.' In the first example *wīf*, although neuter, is referred to by the feminine demonstrative *sēo* functioning as a relative; in the second, *bōc* is feminine but is referred to by the neuter pronoun *hit*. Non-anaphorically, a demonstrative adjective sometimes agreed with the sex, not the grammatical gender, of a human referent, thus *þēos wīf* 'this woman,' with a feminine demonstrative although *wīf* is neuter.

tioned as a general-purpose prepositional case as well as encoding indirect objects) had been dropped, to give the same two nominal forms as exist in modern English: *day/day(e)s, ship/ship(e)s, nāme/nāmes* (OE weak noun *nama/naman*, above).

Although several of the other Germanic languages, especially the Scandinavian, also came eventually to simplify nominal inflection, as illustrated below, English remains the simplest, and whereas the exceptions to the regular *-s* plural in modern English form no more than a handful, the other languages retain from two (Dutch) to thirteen (Icelandic) types of plural formation in common use.

		Icl	Dan	Eng	Dut	Gmn
Sg	Nom	dagur	dag	day	dag	Tag
	Acc	dag				Tag
	Gen	dags	dags	day's	dags	Tages
	Dat	degi				Tage
Pl	Nom	dagar	dage	days	dagen	Tage
	Acc	daga				Tage
	Gen	daga	dages	days'	dagen(s)	Tage
	Dat	dögum				Tagen

There were two outstanding developments in the adjective between PIE and PGmc. The first was the replacement of many of the inflectional endings proper to the PIE *o-* and *ā*-stem declensions that the vast majority of adjectives followed, by forms derived from the demonstrative pronoun.[3] Beside this pronominal or 'strong' declension, there developed another, traditionally known as 'weak,' in which adjectives were inflected in the same way as the *n*-nouns mentioned above. This double declension for adjectives was used to mark determination, i.e. definite or indefinite meaning, in much the same way that we use the definite or indefinite article in modern English: OE *gōd mann* 'a good man,' *se gōda mann* 'that/the good man.' As in this example, in the recorded dialects the definite use occurred in conjunction with a demonstrative or possessive adjective.

The strong/weak distinction, four or five cases (there was an instrumental in the singular of the strong declension), two numbers, and three genders of the Old English adjective operated with a meagre total of eleven different forms:[4] zero, *-e*, *-a*, *-u*, *-es*, *-ne*, *-re*, *-ra*, *-um*, *-an*, and *-ena*. When final vowels fell together in [ə] in the tenth century gender distinctions in the nominative singular and plural, which used only zero, *-e*, *-a*, or *-u*, were almost obliterated. In Middle English, accompanying the breakdown of inflections in nouns, the strong uninflected nominative singular was extended through the strong singular and the nominative plural in *-e* through the plural, thus abolishing entirely distinctions of case and gender: singular *gōd*, plural *gōde* 'good.' The *-n-* of the weak declension was early lost in most dialects, and the weak form came to end in *-e* in both the singular and the plural. Final *-es* ceased to be pronounced in all words by the end of the fourteenth century, and the distinction between the strong and the weak adjective then quickly disappeared in writing, to give the invariable adjective of modern English.

[3] Thus, for example, the masculine dative singular of the Gothic adjective *blinds* 'blind' is not the expected *blinda* but *blindamma*, to be compared with *þamma*, the corresponding form of the demonstrative pronoun.

[4] We might note that the Gothic adjective had twenty-three different forms, and the Old High German nineteen.

The other modern Germanic languages have retained grammatical gender (Dutch and the mainland Scandinavian languages conflated masculine and feminine into a single gender known as common), and an attributive adjective consequently varies according to this distinction, as well as for number and the strong/weak distinction, though the rules for the use of the latter differ somewhat among the languages and German has actually extended the old system.[5] An illustration from Dutch, the simplest case: *een goede man* (common) 'a good man,' *een goed kind* 'a good child' (neuter), *dit goede kind* 'this good child,' *(deze) goede mannen/kinderen* '(these) good men/children.' Icelandic and German have maintained relatively full case distinctions in the adjective as in the noun, so in both languages there is considerable variety of form.

The retention of gender means that the demonstratives also are more complex in the other modern Germanic languages than in English, where drastic simplifications of the paradigms during Middle English preserved only a number distinction, as in the noun. The definite article, which as we pointed out in Part I is in origin a demonstrative neutralised for the distinction of proximity/remoteness, is unique in English in having become invariable; this is a development which, like the development of the article itself as formally distinct from the demonstrative, also belongs to the Middle English period, accompanying the inflectional breakdown in nouns and adjectives and the attendant loss of case and gender distinctions.[6] The other Germanic languages show from two (Dutch) to twelve (Icelandic) different forms, and the Scandinavian languages anciently developed a double system of prepositive and postpositive articles.[7]

When we recall that relatively well-differentiated morphological encoding of gender, case, and number had continued to exist in nouns, adjectives, and demonstratives for at least several thousand years, we may realise the momentousness of what happened in English in the space of just five hundred years, from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, and much less in some dialects.

The rather amorphous verbal system of PIE was simplified and greatly remodelled in Germanic. Tense-aspect oppositions were reduced to two in a preterite tense and a non-past form which, while it is convenient to call it a present tense, did not necessarily have temporal reference, and when it did, could refer to future as well as to present time. The method of forming the preterite provides the basis for a division of Germanic verbs into two major groups, known traditionally as strong and weak. The strong verbs (the

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[5] By developing two weak paradigms, one used after the definite article and demonstratives and the other after the indefinite article and possessive adjectives.

[6] The development of both the definite and the indefinite article was incipient in Old English. The Old English demonstrative *se/sēo/þæt* (nominative masculine/feminine/neuter) can be seen in not a few instances to lack the proximity/remoteness contrast of the demonstrative, and the distinction between demonstrative and definite article was finally lexicalised in Early Middle English by the emergence of both *that* and *the* out of the paradigm of *se/sēo/þæt*. The antecedent of the indefinite article is the Old English numeral *ān* 'one.' It is found in Old English in contexts where it is clearly not a numeral, but its force in presenting new information is more individualising than that of the modern article, and resembles rather the modern 'a certain, a particular.' In most contexts where the indefinite article would be required in modern English, there is nothing in the Old English, thus *hē wæs eald mann* 'he was an old man.' During the Middle English period *an,* with a short vowel, came to be used regularly with indefinite noun phrases, while the form with a long vowel, now rounded, continued as the numeral, *ōn,* modern *one.* By the fourteenth century the *-n* of *an* had come to be dropped before any consonant except *h.*

[7] Prepositive with an adjective, postpositive without, thus Icl *hinn sterki hestur* 'the strong horse,' *hesturinn* 'the horse.'

kind reflected in modern *drive-drove-driven, bear-bore-borne,* etc.) used mainly the PIE perfect, which was characterised by qualitative gradation (Part I) of the root vowel of the PIE present. The majority of documented strong verbs are seen to have been regularised into two major gradation series, both using PIE *e* (PGmc *e* or *i*) in the present and PIE *o* (PGmc *a*) in the preterite singular, zero-grade quantitative gradation in the past participle, and either zero- or lengthened-grade in the preterite plural. The following is an illustration (the PIE and PGmc forms are of course reconstructions):

PIE	bheidh-	bhoidh-	bhidh-
PGmc	bīdanam 'to wait'	baida 'I waited'	bidumiz 'we waited'
Goth	beidan	báiþ	bidum
OE	bīdan	bād	bidon

Since the accent conditions which gave rise to the gradation variants eventually ceased to exist, the strong verbs could never be a very productive group, and it is the weak verbs, a Germanic innovation, which came to form by far the larger and the only productive type.[8] These mostly denominal or deverbative (e.g. causative) verbs formed the preterite and the past participle by the addition of a dental suffix, as in modern *lay/laid,* which probably had its origin in the PIE suffix *-to-/-te-* reflected in such a Latin past participle as *amātus* 'loved.' The endings of both strong and weak verbs in the present derive from PIE primary endings (Part I), while the strong preterite uses perfect and secondary endings and the weak preterite has some unique forms. In the historical dialects person and number continued to be well encoded in these endings, as illustrated in the following present indicative and preterite indicative forms for the weak verb Goth *lagjan,* ON *leggja,* OE *lecgan,* OHG *leggen* 'to lay' (we illustrate the personal pronouns also, which were now on their way to being obligatory):

	Goth	ON	OE	OHG
Pres Sg 1	ik lagja	ek legg	iċ lecge	ih leggu
2	þu lagjis	þú legr	þū leġst	dū legis
3	is lagjiþ	hann legr	hē leġþ	ër legit
Pl 1	weis lagjam	vér leggjum	wē	wir leggemēs
2	jus lagjiþ	ér legið	ġē } lecgaþ	ir legget
3	eis lagjand	þeir leggja	hīe	sie leggent
Pret Sg 1	lagida	lagþa	leġde	legita
2	lagidēs	lagþir	leġdest	legitōs
3	lagida	lagþi	leġde	legita
Pl 1	lagidēdum	lǫgþum		legitōm
2	lagidēduþ	lǫgþuð	} leġdon	legitōt
3	lagidēdun	lǫgþu		legitōn

[8] Three hundred or so strong verbs appear in the Old English records. In Middle English more than a third of these disappeared, either through transference to the more numerous weak class (for example *help/helped* and *flow/flowed,* which in Old English were strong verbs, *helpan/healp* and *flōwan/flēow*) or through lexical replacement by French and Latin loans (which were inflected on the weak pattern, thus *deceive/deceived* from French and *ascend/ascended* from Latin, replacing the contemporary forms of OE *beswīcan/beswāc* and *stīgan/stāg*). In succeeding centuries the number was reduced still further by the same processes, leaving less than seventy today. Losses have been less heavy in the other Germanic languages, with about one hundred and forty remaining in Icelandic and Norwegian, a little over one hundred in Dutch, German, and Danish, and eighty or ninety in Swedish.

Old English can be seen to have reduced the plural of both tenses to single forms by generalisation. Phonological changes brought about further simplification of forms during the Middle English period:

	Early ME	ME	Late ME
Pres Sg 1	legge	leye	lay
2	leist	leist	layst
3	leiþ	leith	layeth, lays
Pl	leggeþ	leye(n)	lay
Pret Sg 1	leide	leide	layd
2	leidest	leidest	laydst
3	leide	leide	layd
Pl	leiden	leide(n)	layd

When the second person pronoun *thou* was later abandoned in favour of *you* (in itself a unique event in the Germanic languages),[9] the modern situation of one marked form in the present tense (the third person singular) and an invariable preterite was established. The forms of the verb in the other languages except mainland Scandinavian, which shared with English the tendency to abandon distinctions of person, remain much closer to the older ones:

	Icl	Dan	Dut	Gmn
Pres Sg 1	ég legg	jeg lægger	ik leg	ich lege
2	þú leggur	du lægger	jij legt	du legst
3	hann leggur	han lægger	hij legt	er legt
Pl 1	við leggjum	vi lægger	wij leggen	wir legen
2	þið leggið	I lægger	je legt	ihr legt
3	þeir leggja	de lægger	zij leggen	sie legen
Pret Sg 1	lagði	lagde	legde	legte
2	lagðir	lagde	legde	legtest
3	lagði	lagde	legde	legte
Pl 1	lögðum	lagde	legden	legten
2	lögðuð	lagde	legde	legtet
3	lögðu	lagde	legden	legten

The middle voice of PIE was kept in Gothic as a passive, in the present tense only, while Old Norse prehistorically developed a medio-passive in both present and preterite. Most of the other dialects formed a passive by an analytic structure that used the past participle, as in modern English. The optative and subjunctive moods of PIE were conflated into one in Germanic, usually referred to as the subjunctive; as in English this has come to be virtually abandoned by all except Icelandic and German, its function, where it continues,

[9] The distinction between the second person singular *thou* (oblique *thee*) and the plural *ye* (oblique *you*, later generalised) came from the late thirteenth century to be a social one, with *thou* being used towards inferiors and social intimates and *ye* towards superiors and as a polite form of address among social equals. The usage was modelled on the same distinction in French between singular *tu*, plural *vous*. *Thou* disappeared from speech in the standard language of the eighteenth century, except in certain religious contexts, but remained in poetry and religious language into the nineteenth.

having been taken over largely by modal auxiliaries. Although this movement away from synthetic tense, mood, and voice can be observed generally in the modern Germanic family, none of the languages has developed an analytic system of the complexity of that of modern English, in particular of that of the periphrastic tense system, which serves to indicate the aspectual or temporal relations of an action or state with respect to the point of orientation.[10]

As noted above, the extent and effects of the phonological changes which produced the inflectional syncretism that occurred between PGmc and Old English were such that the early Old English inflectional system was rather inadequately (or at best very unevenly) differentiated for the encoding of grammatical relations, and it it understandable that during the Old English period word order should have come to assume a more important grammatical function than before.[11] By the tenth century there were in prose three major clause patterns. In declarative main clauses SVO (or SVC) was the usual pattern, as in

hē lufode forhæfednes
he-NOM loved temperance-ACC
'he loved temperance'
hē sealde ælcum ānne pening
he-NOM gave each-DAT one-ACC penny-ACC
'he gave each a penny.'

When the clause contained an auxiliary, the non-finite form of the verb tended to come in final position:

iċ sċeal þāra maniġra ġewinna ġeswigian
I must those-GEN many-GEN fights-GEN be-silent-INF
'I must be silent about those many fights'

(*ġeswigian* governed the genitive). Main clauses introduced by adverbs or adverb phrases had the order VSO, retaining the verb in second position in the clause, as in

þȳ ilcan ġēare drehton þā herġas Westseaxna
the-INS same-DAT year-DAT harassed the-NOM-PL armies-NOM West-Saxons-GEN
land
land-ACC
'in the same year the armies harassed the West Saxons' land'
on sumere nihte hlosnode sum ōþer munuc his
on a-certain-DAT night-DAT listened a-certain-NOM other-NOM monk-NOM his
færeldes

[10] The functions of the present perfect and past perfect, for instance, tend to be more limited in other Germanic languages than in English (though there are certainly differences among the languages), while progressive tenses as such do not exist outside English. Although most of the periphrastic tenses have their origins in Old English, the full development of the system is post-medieval.

[11] We lack the space to discuss PGmc word order in any detail. It is probable that SOV was the basic, unmarked order, and that in later stages the verb was moving into the second position in main clauses typically seen in the recorded dialects (thus SVO or AdvVSO) because of an increase in the use of auxiliary verbs which, being light elements, tended to be placed early in the clause. Old English word order as described below is representative of that of the other old Germanic dialects except Old Norse, where verb-final clauses are rare.

departure-GEN

'on a certain night another monk listened for his departure,'

while subordinate clauses introduced by a conjunction had SOV, as seen in

ġif hwā þās lȳtlan bōc āwrītan wile
if anyone-NOM this-ACC little-ACC book-ACC copy-INF wish-3-SG-SUBJ
'if anyone wishes to copy this little book'
oþ-þæt hīe bēġen tō sǣ becōmon
until they-NOM both-NOM to sea-DAT came
'until they both reached the sea.'

VSO was also the order in interrogative sentences, as in

ne sēowe þū gōd sǣd on þīnum æcere?
not sowed you-NOM-SG good-ACC seed-ACC in your-DAT field-DAT
'did you not sow good seed in your field?,'

and served the pragmatic function of marking a whole clause. The less frequent patterns OSV and OVS were used mainly to topicalise the object and to focus the constituent in final position. While, for example, SOV does occur in main clauses (especially when the object is a light element such as a pronoun, as in

þā burgware hīe geflīemdon
the-NOM-PL townsfolk-NOM-PL them-ACC routed
'the townsfolk put them to flight')

and SVO is not rare in a subordinate clause, these five patterns were, in prose, used fairly consistently in accordance with the above principles. VOS, the remaining possible arrangement of the three major sentence constituents, was rare.

Let us, for a moment, imagine that Old English had no inflections and consider what ambiguities might arise in trying to determine which is the subject and which the object in these six patterns (i below indicates the kind of initial element—a conjunction or an adverb—that was regularly accompanied by a change in word order, m a marked clause, ? an interrogative clause, and N a noun or noun phrase):

SVO	appears as	NVN
iSOV		iNNV
iVSO		iVNN
mVSO		VNN
?VSO		VNN
OSV		NNV
OVS		NVN
VOS		VNN

The ambiguities that exist are between iSOV and OSV (both appearing as NNV), i/m/?VSO and VOS (VNN), and SVO and OVS (NVN). iSOV and OSV are disambiguated by the presence of i, as are iVSO and VOS. m/?VSO and VOS are ambiguous, if we ignore intonational differences, but VOS is of such rare occurrence that the problem would not very

often arise. SVO and OVS could be disambiguated only by meaning, which would often be easy; if both orders were possible, such a sentence as (using the caseless forms of modern English) *the boy loves the girl* would indeed be completely ambiguous, but *the ship built Alfred* could hardly be mistaken for an example of SVO. The same disambiguation by meaning would apply both to m/?VSO and VOS (whether we said *built Alfred the ship* or *built the ship Alfred* there could be no doubt about the identity of the subject) and to the occasional SOV in a main clause and OSV.

Consideration of the above brings us to the conclusion that, in later Old English, grammatical relations were generally recoverable from the word order alone without recourse to case inflections. When we consider further that the nominative and accusative cases of nouns were frequently identical, so that both word order and meaning had anyway to be relied upon; that number distinctions in the verb frequently served a disambiguating role; and that prepositions were already quite widely used in Old English, so that in many instances case endings were redundant in the marking of locative, instrumental, directional, or temporal relations and indeed could not alone distinguish all of these, we may realise how well the foundation had been laid for the rapid disuse of most nonverbal inflections that took place in Early Middle English.

The first stage of the disuse is already found in the Old English reduction of unaccented vowels to [ə], whereby many vocalic inflectional distinctions were lost, but it is not certain that this was merely an effect of increasing rigidity of positional rules. As noted above, the event is detectable in the literary standard from the early eleventh century, where there is frequent graphic interchange of originally distinct endings, but it may have happened considerably earlier without being immediately reflected in the orthography, and, given the pre-existing tendency referred to earlier of unaccented vowels to become obscured as a result of the development in PGmc of an expiratory accent fixed on the root-initial syllable of a word, it may have been a causal factor in the development of stricter positional rules.

It is necessary also to consider the influence of Norse. Danish invasions in the ninth century brought to the north and the east of England large numbers of Norse speakers, who eventually settled and mingled with the local inhabitants, and were reinforced by fresh influxes of settlers for the next two hundred years.[12] Norse and Old English were still largely mutually intelligible, and many words in the two languages differed in little more than inflectional realisations; when speakers of the two languages intermingled the differences between them would tend to be levelled down. If the inflectional system began to be reduced still further in these areas, the need to establish stricter positional rules would have been all the more urgent.

Although the other ancient Germanic dialects also had root-initial accent and developed

[12] It is estimated that in many areas the number of Danes equalled that of the local population. The intimate contact between the two peoples, and thus the two dialects, is revealed by the borrowing into English of considerable numbers of everyday words for which Old English already had equivalents (and it was often the simple cognate that was borrowed), thus, in Middle English forms, *angre* 'anger' (ON *angr;* OE *ierre* or *grama*), *deie* 'die' (ON *deyja;* OE *steorfan*), *egge* 'egg' (ON *egg,* OE cognate *æġ*), *ill* 'bad' (ON *illr,* OE cognate *yfel*), *sister* (ON *systir,* OE cognate *sweostor*), *windoȝe* 'window' (ON *vindauga* [lit. 'wind-eye']; OE *ēaġþyrel* [lit. 'eye-hole']), *weike* 'weak' (ON *veikr,* OE cognate *wāc*); even more significant may be the unusual borrowing of more grammatical items such as the pronouns *they, them, their* (though this was probably prompted by a homonymic clash within the contemporary English pronoun system), the conjunction *though,* the determiner *both,* and the preposition *till.*

restricted syntactic patterns much the same as those of Old English, not all of them later lost their inflections (German, for instance, did no more than reduce inflectional vowels, and Icelandic to this day retains a highly complex and largely redundant inflectional system). This fact alone might be enough to suggest that the influence of Norse was a decisive factor in the subsequent and nationwide destruction of the system. The supposition is in fact strongly supported by the consideration that, as the Early Middle English evidence shows, the inflectional decay began earliest in those parts of England most heavily settled by the Danes and seems to have spread southward and westward from there, and also by comparable events that took place in mainland Scandinavia: when the dialects there began to disuse their inflections between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century the earliest and most rapidly innovating area was Denmark, which from the twelfth century had been heavily influenced by its neighbour to the south, Low German.

In Middle English the pattern SVO became firmly established as the usual order in declarative main clauses (with pronominal objects also coming after the verb and non-finite forms being brought in after the auxiliary, as in modern English), and also was extended to other types of clause; in this the south lagged behind the north, but it is true to say that during the fourteenth century this pattern became normal all over the country in dependent clauses which earlier had the pattern SOV from Old English, and was becoming so in main clauses introduced by adverbs or adverb phrases which earlier had VSO.[13] This quite rapid spread of SVO, and the accompanying decrease of other orders for pragmatic purposes, is to be attributed to the massive inflectional losses, both in the noun phrase and to a lesser extent in the verb, which increasingly made word order the only means available to encode grammatical relations. During the period we see also the development of distinct definite and indefinite articles, which supplied some of the pragmatic functions earlier performed by word order;[14] an increase in the use of prepositions, both in adverbials and with what in Old English were non-accusative objects of a verb;[15] the emergence of the analytic indirect object with *to* (at first with nouns, as pronouns retained oblique case-forms); the beginnings of the use of *do* in question formation (unique to English, as the other Germanic languages continue to use inversion, below), which both preserved the pre-verbal position of subjects and also brought the question pattern in clauses using full verbs into line with

[13] This inversion of subject and verb after clause-initial adverbs and adverb phrases remained not infrequent into the seventeenth century; it was possible because it never created ambiguity in grammatical relations. It still exists, of course, in the structure *Hardly/Scarcely . . . when . . .* , and when *Never* occupies clause-initial position, as well as in the patterns seen in *Here comes the train, There goes John.* English is the only language to have abandoned what is elsewhere a rigid positional rule (page 35).

[14] Particularly, of course, by providing part of the distinction between topic and comment and between given and new information.

[15] As we pointed out in Part I, not a few verbs in most of the Indo-European languages, ancient and modern, govern non-accusative cases. Thus the Old English verb *wundrian* 'to wonder at/about' governed the genitive; in Middle English the object begins to appear first with *of,* influenced by the new possessive-*of* construction that ran parallel with the synthetic possessive using the genitive, and later with *about* or *at.* Some Old English verbs governed more than one case, with a semantic difference, thus *hīeran* with the accusative meant 'to hear' and with the dative 'to obey'; when non-accusative objects disappeared through inflectional loss the difference often came to be expressed lexically, in the present example by using *obey,* borrowed from French, for the latter sense. Adverbial expressions in Old English had already made considerable use of prepositions, of which there were about thirty in common use; in Middle English the semantic range of existing prepositions was widened and not a few new ones were introduced by borrowing from French and Old Norse.

that in the very common clauses containing auxiliaries,[16] which had always occupied clause-initial position in questions; and the beginnings of the reinterpretation of the pre-verbal oblique arguments of subjectless verbs (Part I) as subjects or their movement to post-verbal position as objects with the introduction of the dummy subject *it*. Succeeding centuries saw the full development of cleft sentences as a means of focussing elements while maintaining SVO (or SVC) order, and a great expansion of the semantic roles (Part I) permitted the subject (in both active and passive sentences), which made it possible to vary topic and focus fairly freely within the constraints of an essentially rigid SVO order.[17]

The grammaticalisation of SVO order in all clause types which thus developed in English is unique in the Germanic group, the other languages of which have retained, or even rigidified,[18] alternative patterns much like those described for Old English, some of them with grammatical function, others with pragmatic. We may illustrate this very briefly. SVO in declarative main clauses:

(Dan) jeg så manden i går
I saw man-the yesterday
'I saw the man yesterday'

(Dut) ik gaf de bedelaar wat geld
I gave the beggar some money
'I gave the beggar some money.'

VSO in questions:

(Gmn) hörst du nicht die Lieder der Kinder?
hear-2-SG you-SG not the-NOM-PL songs-NOM the-GEN-PL children-GEN
'do you not hear the children's songs?';

in a main clause when the latter is preceded by a subordinate clause:

(Gmn) als er nach Hause kam, sah er seinen Onkel
when he to house-DAT came saw he his-ACC uncle-ACC
'when he came home he saw his uncle';

and when an adverb or adverb phrase has initial position:

(Dan) ofte har jeg set hende
often have I seen her
'I have often seen her.'

XVS, i.e. the verb obligatorily in second position after a fronted non-subject constituent, for topicalisation or marking (Dutch and German only):

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[16] And note that exactly the same thing happened in negative sentences, where the use of *do*-support began at much the same time.

[17] In describing the word order of modern English as rigid SVO we ignore some marginal patterns such as those in note 13 or the occasional fronting of objects in patterns like *Fish I hate(, but meat I love)*. A variety of grammatical operations on sentences containing embedded clauses, known as raising rules, which it would require too much space to detail here, also function to maintain SVO order, and create a degree of divergence between grammatical and semantic structure that exists nowhere else in the Germanic languages.

[18] For instance the verb-final rule in subordinate clauses in Dutch and German (below), where a non-final verb remained possible into the sixteenth century.

(Dut) boter verkopen wij hier niet
butter sell-1-PL we here not
'we do not sell butter here'

(Gmn) dem Mann habe ich das Buch gegeben
the-DAT man-DAT have I the-ACC book-ACC given
'I have given the book to the man.'

SOV in a subordinate clause (Dutch and German only):

(Dut) als ik hem zie, zal ik het hem zeggen
if I him see shall I it him say-INF
'if I see him I shall tell it to him.'

(Gmn) der Junge ging ins Bett, weil er krank war
the boy went in-the bed as he ill was
'the boy went to bed because he was ill'

In the modern Indo-European family in general, the virtual absence of synthetic-inflecting morphology and rigid SVO structure of English stand out sharply: the typical Indo-European language of today has still a richer synthetic morphology, and tends to allow greater freedom of word order than English for pragmatic purposes, particularly when a fairly full case-system has been retained; among the major members perhaps only Persian could be said to be comparable to English in the degree to which it has abandoned inherited structure. It is now necessary to illustrate the present state of these languages, but to do so in any detail for all the major members of the family would take us far beyond the limits of available space; the accompanying table and the illustrative sentences below, from a

SYNTHETIC-INFLECTING CATEGORY-ENCODING IN SOME MODERN NON-GERMANIC INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Category		French	Greek	Irish	Russian	Hindi
Number	articles	+	+	−		
	demonstratives	+	+	−	+	+
	adjectives	+	+	+	+	+
	nouns	+	+	+	+	+
	verbs	+	+	+	+	+
Case (in non-pronominals)			Nom, Acc, Gen	Nom-Acc, Voc, Gen, Dat	Nom, Acc, Gen, Dat, Ins, Loc	Direct, Oblique (prepositional)
Gender		Masc, Fem	Masc, Fem, Neut	Masc, Fem	Masc, Fem, Neut	Masc, Fem
Person in the verb		Sg 1, 2, 3 Pl 1, 2, 3	Sg 1, 2, 3 Pl 1, 2, 3	Sg 1, 2, 3 Pl 1, 2, 3	Sg 1, 2, 3 Pl 1, 2, 3	Sg 1, 2–3 Pl 1–3, 2
Tense		Present Imperfect Past Historic Future Conditional	Present Imperfect Past	Present Imperfect Past Future Conditional	Present Past	Perfect Future
Mood		Indicative Subjunctive	Indicative Subjunctive	Indicative Subjunctive		Indicative Subjunctive
Voice			Active Passive	Active Passive		

few representative major non-Germanic languages, will therefore have to suffice. The table is overly simple in that it fails, for example, to indicate that the person markings shown are the maximum differentiations and that some tenses may be less heavily encoded (the past system of the Russian verb, for instance, is not encoded for person at all, though it is encoded for the gender of the subject, which also is not indicated in the table), or that the passive voice of the Irish verb does not contain all the tenses shown. Nevertheless, the impression that will be gained from the table is basically correct: that while considerable reduction in the synthetic encoding of grammatical categories is to be found in comparison with the situation described in Part I, none of the languages shown has advanced as far as English.

In the following examples of the most basic ordering of major sentence constituents in the languages of the table, it will be seen that SVO predominates; pronominal, especially first and second person, subjects may be omitted in Greek and Russian, which also permit great variation of word order for pragmatic purposes.[19]

(French:SVO) nous donnerons l'argent au garçon
we we-give-FUT the-money to-the boy
'we shall give the money to the boy'

(Greek:SVO) ésteila[20] héna pakéto stḗ mētéra mou
I-sent a-ACC packet-ACC to-the-ACC mother-ACC my
'I sent a packet to my mother'

(Irish:VSO) d'ól an garsún an bainne
drank the boy the milk
'the boy drank the milk'

(Russian:SVO) Víktor kupíl mašínu
Viktor-MASC-NOM bought-MASC car-FEM-ACC
'Viktor bought the car'

(Hindi:SOV) maiṁ āpko apnā patā dūṁgā
I you-to (my-)own address I-give-FUT
'I shall give you my address'

We have seen in brief in Part II how English came to abandon the greater part of the synthetic-inflecting structure that it inherited from PGmc and ultimately from PIE, with the result that the congruence category of grammatical gender was discarded, number and person came to be encoded in severely attenuated forms, and the morphological category of case was reduced to a state where it is hardly meaningful to speak of its existence in modern English; mood and voice have come to be marked lexically and analytically, and while the category of tense may be said to have expanded, the techniques used are analytic and have produced a system many of whose members are primarily devices for the expression of a

[19] In the Russian sentence below, for instance, the SVO order is unmarked; SOV would focus the verb, VSO the object, VOS the subject; OSV would topicalise the object and focus the verb, OVS the subject. This freedom is possible because the grammatical relations are fully encoded in the morphology: *Víktor* is masculine and nominative, the case of the subject, *kupíl* is the past tense form used with masculine subjects, and *mašínu* is the singular of a feminine noun in the accusative case, the principal case of the object, the nominative being *mašína*.

[20] In Greek and Russian the acute accent indicates an expiratory accent, and in Irish a long vowel; in Russian *š*=[ʃ], and in Hindi *ṁ* indicates nasalisation of the preceding vowel.

category of aspect.

When phonological developments produced reductions in the morphological encoding of grammatical relations, word order and function words such as prepositions came to play more important roles. This rendered inflections increasingly redundant, which facilitated their disuse; at the same time, the more they were disused the more the new methods became the only ones available. The outcome was a largely grammatically determined word order that permits a profound divergence between semantic and grammatical structure.

The balance that was eventually struck, mostly by the end of the Middle English period, between synthetic and analytic encoding of grammatical categories, between preservation and disuse of the categories themselves, and between morphological and syntactic encoding of grammatical relations, was largely determined by the drastic inflectional losses that took place during the period, and we have suggested that this process was greatly accelerated, if not actually triggered, by the encounter of English with Norse in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries.[21]

We have seen also that, although the other Germanic languages have moved in basically the same direction, English has grown unlike its Germanic relatives morphologically, in the overall extent of its disuse of nominal and verbal inflection, particularly in its disuse of gender and concord and of all inflection in adjectives and the definite (and indefinite[22]) article; and syntactically, in its abandonment of word order patterns both obligatory and optional that are still of fundamental importance in most or all of the other Germanic languages.

When we consider that the majority of languages have preferred patterns and that meaning is a powerful disambiguating factor, it is not difficult to understand why languages which had become as highly information-redundant as Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin in terms of their morphological encoding of grammatical relations and repetitive marking of congruence-category features[23] should, especially when that information was far from optimally

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[21] While this idea may be open to argument, it is very important to emphasise that, if any external influence was in fact at work here, it most certainly was not French. One still encounters the myth that the Norman occupation of England, from 1066 on, was responsible for the transformation of Old English into the modern language. Although the vocabulary of English did eventually undergo great change under the influence of the Conquest, by the filtering down of words first introduced by the tiny upper and literate classes, the breakdown of the inflectional system was already under way in a northern dialect of the mid-tenth century, and in the twelfth it had advanced to varying degrees in the Midlands, especially in the north and the east of this district, far removed from the cultural and linguistic influences of French. The general direction of spread of the inflectional breakdown is thus from north to south, which is the opposite of what we should expect of French influence. It should also be realised that French speakers never exceeded two percent of the population and in the earlier stages mostly remained removed from the English majority, that English and French were not mutually intelligible (both situations very different from those in the areas occupied by the Danes), and that, although the vocabulary of a language is usually the level most susceptible to foreign influence, the Early Middle English texts that show the most extensive morphological reduction display negligible lexical influence from French, whereas texts from more southerly areas in the fourteenth century showing significant lexical influence are usually much more conservative grammatically. It is hard even to concede the common notion that, since English ceased under French influence to be an official langugae and to have a standard form, it changed more rapidly than it might otherwise have done: the existence of a standard among the tiny minority that was literate could have had no significant influence on the language of the vast majority of the population in this period.

[22] Though this is paralleled in Dutch.

[23] E.g. gender, case, and number on every member of a noun phrase, with the latter repeated on the verb. Gender, the congruence category *par excellence*, has nowhere been abandoned among the more important languages except by English and Bengali (Persian maintains a congruence distinction between human and non-human).

distributed, eventually discard much of their inflectional paraphernalia. In the present state, however, of the descendants of PIE, very few of the languages have been as thoroughgoing as English in discarding unnecessary information from their system and in switching to non-inflecting means to convey essential information. The transformation of English from a synthetic-inflecting typology took place intensely over quite a short space of time, the four or five centuries of the Middle English period, and the language since then has been in a relative state of equilibrium, with the fairly small number of subsequent grammatical developments tending only to increase the degree of analytic structure. Between its Old and Middle periods Persian too underwent drastic change of the same kind as English, and this language has been in a similar state of equilibrium for about a thousand years. It remains to be seen whether other major members of the Indo-European family, most of which retain a great deal of grammatical redundancy and yet have been changing only slowly over the past several centuries, will ever, by degrees or in short periods of rapid evolution, give up characteristic Indo-European structure to a comparable extent.

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