

Prosody, Topicalization and V2 in the History of English and French

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The history of topicalization in English (Speyer 2008)

- Why does topicalization decline in Middle English but not disappear? If the change is a parametric one, it should go to completion. Otherwise, topicalization, a clear case of stylistic variation might be expected to be stable in frequency over time.
- This question has an answer in the specific interaction between parametric settings and stylistic variation in the history of English.

The decline of topicalization in English and its prosodic motivation

English Data Sources

- Anthony Kroch and Ann Taylor. *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English, second edition*. University of Pennsylvania, CD-ROM, second edition, 2000.
- Ann Taylor, Anthony Warner, Susan Pintzuk, and Frank Beths. *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose*. Oxford Text Archive, first edition, 2003.
- Anthony Kroch, Beatrice Santorini, and Lauren Delfs. *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English*. University of Pennsylvania, CD-ROM, first edition, 2004.
- Ann Taylor, Arja Nurmi, Anthony Warner, Susan Pintzuk, and Terttu Nevalainen. *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence*. Oxford Text Archive, first edition, 2006.

An illustrative case in the New Testament Matthew 13.28

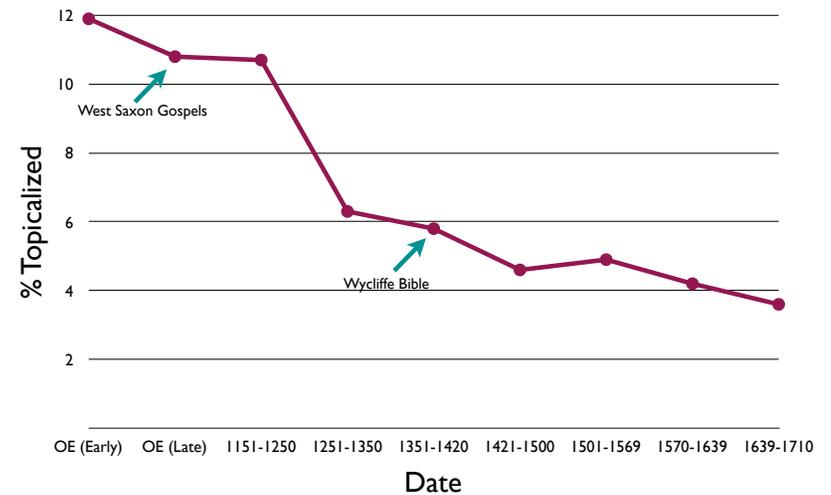
- (1) Pā cwæp hē, Pæt dyde unhold mann.
West Saxon Gospels ca. 1000
- (2) And he seide to hem, An enemy hath do~ this thing.
Wycliffe Bible ca. 1380

Frequency of direct object topicalization in modern spoken Dutch (Bouma 2008)

Table 4.2: Summary of Vorfeld occupation of arguments.

Argument	Vorfeld		Prop est (%)
	yes	no	pt
subject	43 523	18 597	70.1
direct object	3 418	20 432	14.3
indirect object	38	815	4.5

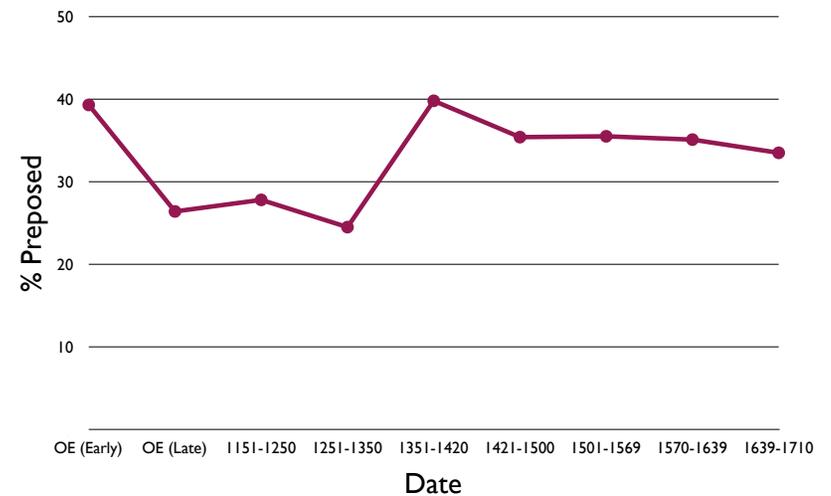
Decline of direct object topicalization in English



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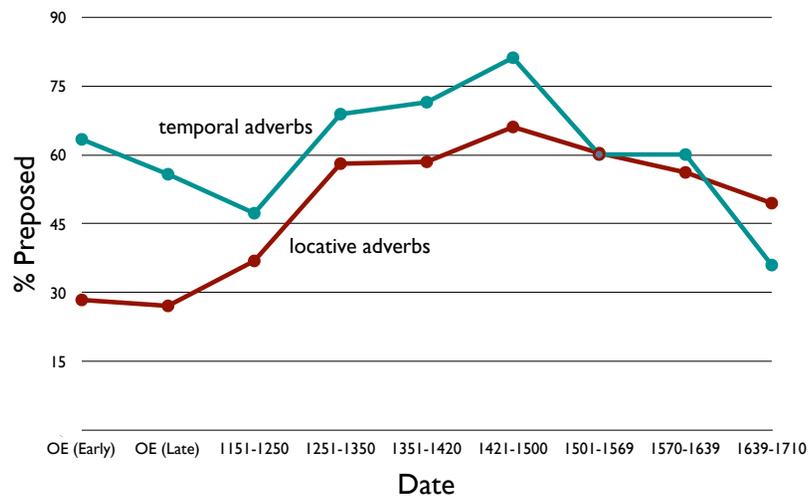
Evolution of PP preposing in English



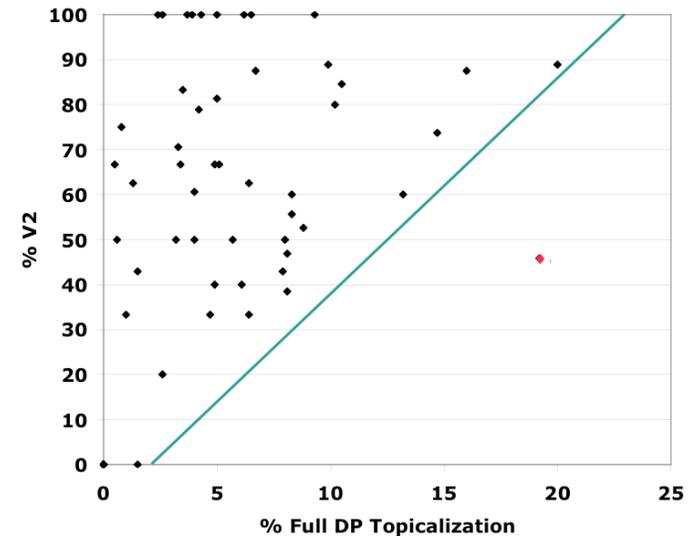
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Evolution of adverb fronting in English



Correlation between frequencies of object topicalization and of V2 in Middle English texts (Wallenberg 2007)



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Clash avoidance

- The type of topicalization that declines:

(1) The **n**ewspaper **J**ohn read; the **n**ovel **M**ary did.
(Compare: The **n**ewspaper read **J**ohn.)

- The type of topicalization that doesn't:

(2) The **n**ewspaper I read; the **n**ovel I didn't.

Distribution of subject types in a corpus of topicalized and non-topicalized sentences in Modern English natural speech (Prince/Ward corpus)

personal pronoun	demonstrative pronoun	full noun phrase
140	20	142
46.4%	6.6%	47%

Subject type in sentences with *in situ* objects

personal pronoun	demonstrative pronoun	full noun phrase
181	2	17
90.5%	1%	8.5%

Subject type in sentences with topicalized objects

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Translating German topicalized arguments into English in three modern German novels [by Böll, Dürrenmatt and Grass]

Topicalized to topicalized:

G: **Mahlkes Haupt** bedeckte dieser Hut **besonders peinlich**.

E: **On Mahlke's head** this hat made a **particularly painful impression**.

Topicalized to non-topicalized:

G: **Zu den sechs** kamen noch **drei weitere**.

E: **Three others** joined **these six** in the afternoon.

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Accent placement and topicalization frequencies in translating German topicalized arguments into English

	2nd accent on the German subject	accent elsewhere
topicalization in the English translation	0	31
no topicalization in the English	25	100

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Experiments on clash avoidance in German and English (Speyer 2008)

Repairing clashes

Selkirk (1984) introduces a silent grid position into sentences with adjacent accents. This option turns out to be freely available in SV(O) sentences like (1) but not in OSV sentences like (2):

(1) $\overset{\prime}{\text{Rick}} \overset{\backslash}{\text{likes}} \text{them} \rightarrow \overset{\prime}{\text{Rick}} \emptyset \overset{\backslash}{\text{likes}} \text{them}$

(2) $\overset{\prime}{\text{Rick}} \overset{\backslash}{\text{they}} \text{like} \rightarrow \overset{\prime}{\text{Rick}} \emptyset \overset{\backslash}{\text{they}} \text{like}$

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Clash and non-clash environments in German

- (1) a. SV: Pitt **bastelt** gerne (aber Bert **brüllt** gerne)
 P tinkers gladly but B shouts gladly
 b. SO/OS: ...dass Pitt **Blau** mag (und Bert **Gelb**)
 that P blue likes and B yellow
- (2) a. SV: Pitt **bastelt** gerne (aber Bert **nicht** gerne)
 P tinkers gladly but B not
 b. SO/OS: Pitt mag **Blau** (und Bert **Gelb**)
 P likes blue and B yellow

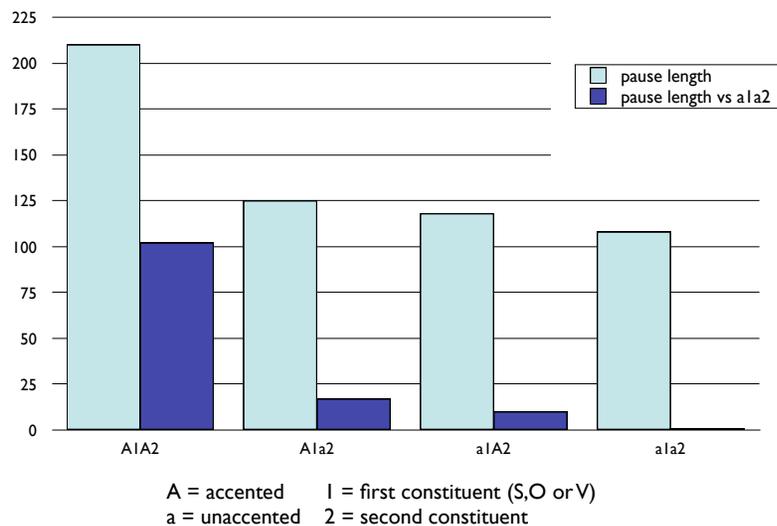
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Clash and non-clash environments in English

- (1) a. SV: Pitt **tinkers** easily (but Bert **shouts** easily)
 b. OS: **Blue** Pitt likes (and **yellow** Bert)
- (2) a. SV: Pitt tinkers **easily** (but Bert **not so** easily)
 b. SO: Pitt likes **blue** (and Bert **yellow**)

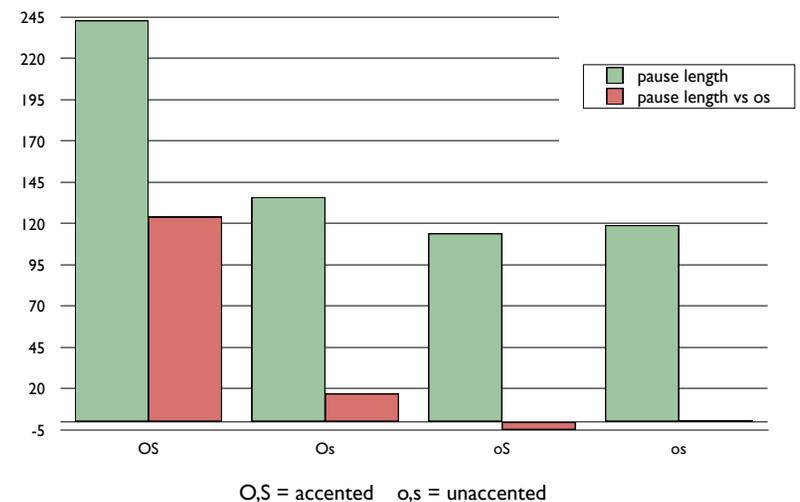
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Effect of clash avoidance on the insertion of pauses into read sentences in German (n=80)



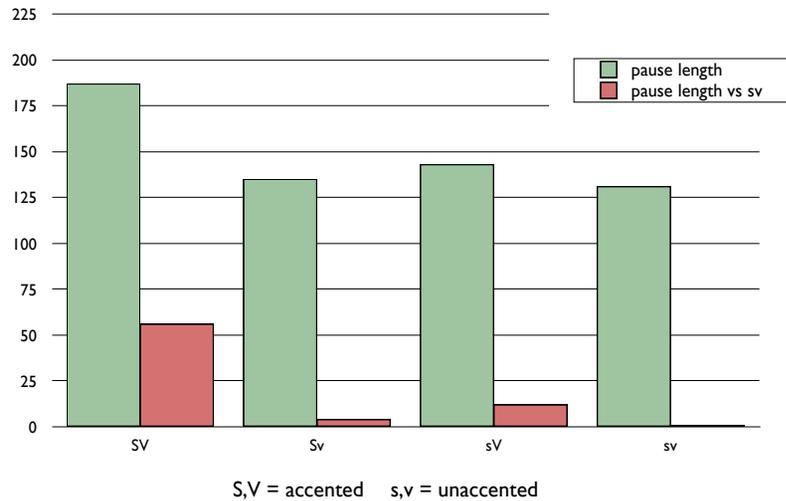
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Effect of clash avoidance on the insertion of pauses into read OSV sentences in English (n=60)



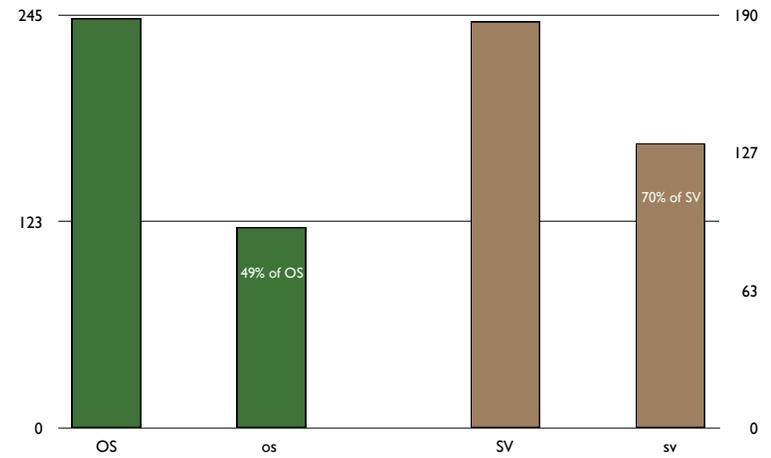
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Effect of clash avoidance on the insertion of pauses into read SVO sentences in English (n=60)



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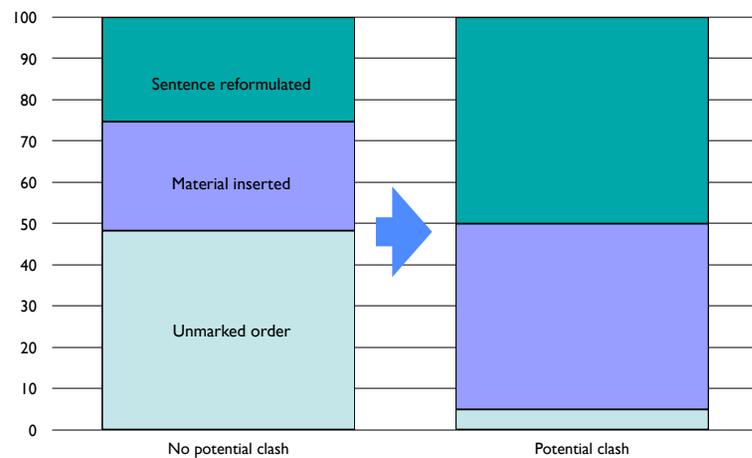
Differential effect of clash on pause length in English OSV and SV sentences



NB: German shows no effect in such cases.

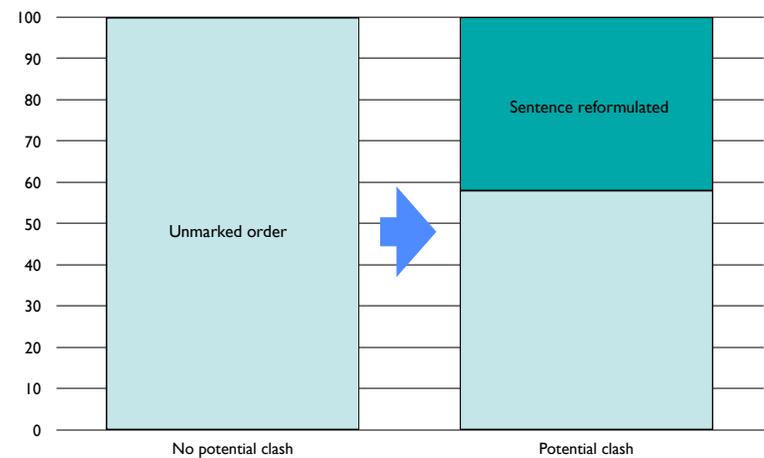
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Effect of clash avoidance on sentence formulation in German (n=180)



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Effect of clash avoidance on sentence formulation in English (n=96)



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Distribution of contrastive topicalization by focus (second accent) placement in Middle English

focus position distribution of cases	focus on subject	focus on tensed verb	focus elsewhere
N (total= 207)	113	29	65
% inversion	89	14	71
% of cases	55	14	31

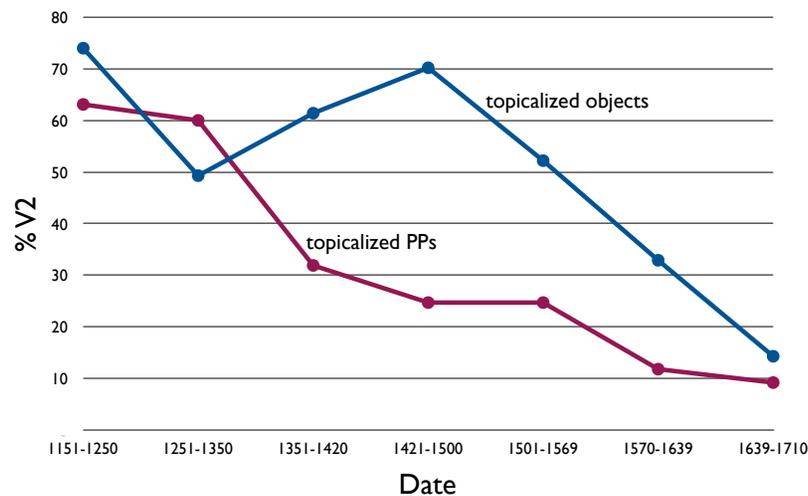
Frequency of matrix clause topicalization and V2 in sentences with full DP subjects in Middle and Early Modern English

time period sentence type	me1	me2	me3	me4	eme1	eme2	eme3
# sent. with DO	2855	1300	4615	2271	3229	3584	2544
# topicalized	219	69	145	66	67	82	28
% topicalized	7.7	5.3	3.1	2.9	2.1	2.3	1.1
#V2	162	34	89	46	35	27	4
%V2	74	49.3	61.4	70.2	52.2	32.9	14.3

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Rate of V2 loss in English with topicalized objects and PPs



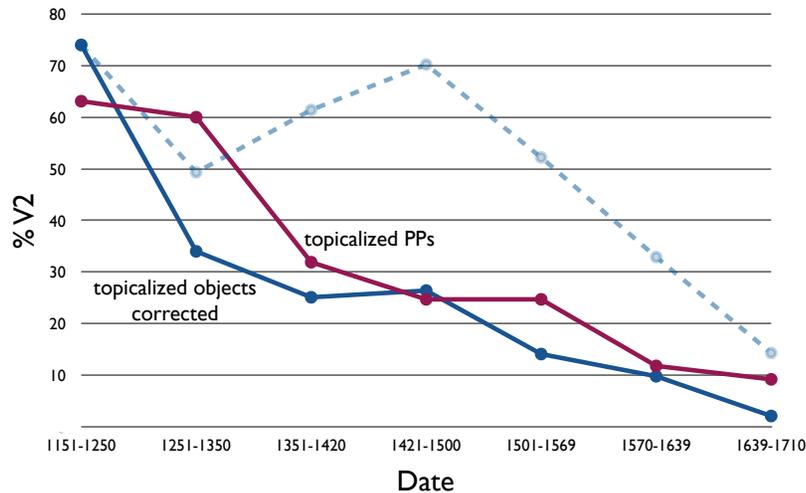
Corrected frequency of matrix clause topicalization and V2 in Middle and Early Modern English

time period sentence type	me1	me2	me3	me4	eme1	eme2	eme3
# sent. with DO	2855	1300	4615	2271	3229	3584	2544
# topicalized	219	69	145	66	67	82	28
topicalization rate	7.7	5.3	3.1	2.9	2.1	2.3	1.1
would have been topicalized	219	100	354	174	248	275	195
actual rate of V2	74	49.3	61.4	70.2	52.2	32.9	14.3
corrected rate V2	74.0	34.0	25.1	26.4	14.1	9.8	2.1

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Rate of V2 loss in English corrected for clash avoidance



The loss of topicalization and of V2 in the history of French

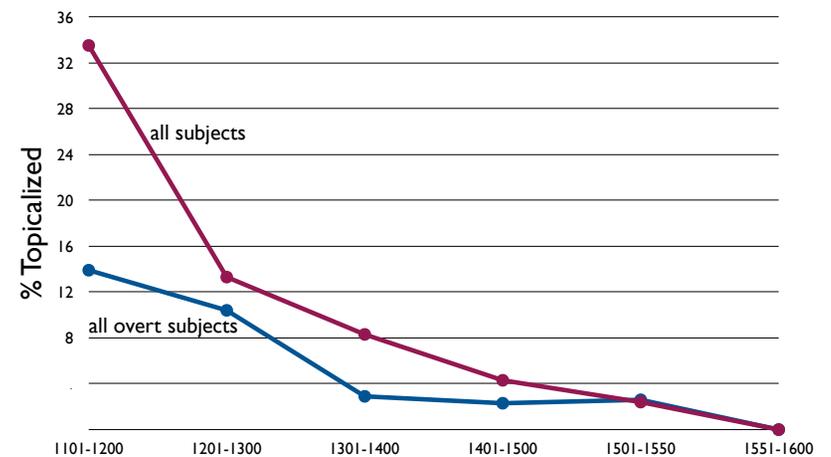
French Data Sources

- France Martineau, et. al. *Corpus MCVF, (Projet Modéliser le changement: les voies du français.)* University of Ottawa, CD-ROM, 2009.
- Anthony Kroch and Beatrice Santorini. *Penn Supplement to the Corpus MCVF.* University of Pennsylvania, CD-ROM, 2010.

Total Corpus consists of:

1. Twelve Old French texts (1000 - 1300).
2. Six Middle French texts (1301 - 1500).
3. Three Early Modern French texts from (1501 - 1600).

Decline of direct object topicalization in French, excluding early Old French



Object topicalization with V2 in Old and Middle French

- (1) **l'estreu** **li** tint **sun uncle** **Guinemer**
the stirrup him held his uncle Guinemer
Roland 27.329
- (2) **messe e matines** ad **li** **reis** escultet
mass and matins has the king heard
Roland 11.139
- (3) **si grand paour** avoit que a pou qu'il ne mouroit
so great fear he-had that at little that he ne died
CNNA 51.488

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Object topicalization with V3 and pronoun subjects in Middle French

- (1) **aultre remyde** **je** n'y voy
other remedy I not there see
XV Joies, 111v.1209
- (2) **deux chose** **je** diray de luy
two things I will-say of him
Commynes, 38.478
- (3) **nul enfant** **il** n'ot onques eu de sa fenme
no child he not-had ever had of his wife
Froissart, 462.6477

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Object topicalization with V2 and pronoun subjects in Old and Middle French

- (1) **Espaigne** **vus** durat **il** en fiet
Spain you will-give he in fief
Roland, 36.446
- (2) **chars** avoient **ils** assés
meat had they enough
Froissart, 135.569
- (3) **une chose** ont-**ilz** assez honneste
one thing have-they enough honest
Commynes, 120.1634

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Adverb preposing with V2 in Old and Middle French

- (1) **Er** **matin** sedeit **li** **emperere** suz l'umbre
yesterday morning sat the emperor under the shade
Roland 29.363
- (2) **or** est **ele** bien venue
now is she welcome
Yvain 43.1440
- (3) **ben** l'entendit **il** **arcevesques** **Turpin**
well it understands the archbishop Turpin
Roland 96.1237

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Adverb preposing with V3 in Old and Middle French

- (1) **unkes nuls hom** ne vit tel ajustee.
 never no man not saw such joust
 Roland 238.3299
- (2) **premierement il** devient taverniers
 first he becomes innkeeper
 Somme 47.306
- (3) **doucement li oisel** chantoient
 sweetly the birds sang
 Yvain 15.451

Frequency of V2 in main clauses with topicalized XPs in Old French (no *Somme*)

	pronoun subject	full DP subject
XVS	40 [.98]	146 [.97]
XSV	1	4

Topicalized objects

	pronoun subject	full DP subject
XVS	40 [.67]	286 [.78]
XSV	20	81

Topicalized PPs

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Frequency of V2 in main clauses with topicalized XPs in Middle French

	pronoun subject	full DP subject
XVS	21	64 [.93]
XSV	26	5

Topicalized Objects

	pronoun subject	full DP subject
XVS	58	422 [.61]
XSV	438	274

Topicalized PPs

Frequency of V2 in main clauses with topicalized XPs in Middle French

	pronoun subject	full DP subject
XVS	21 [.45]	64 [.93]
XSV	26	5

Topicalized Objects

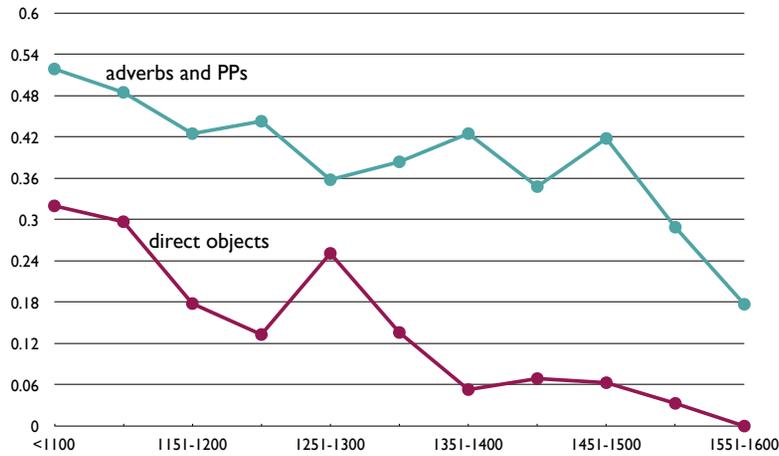
	pronoun subject	full DP subject
XVS	58 [.12]	422 [.61]
XSV	438	274

Topicalized PPs

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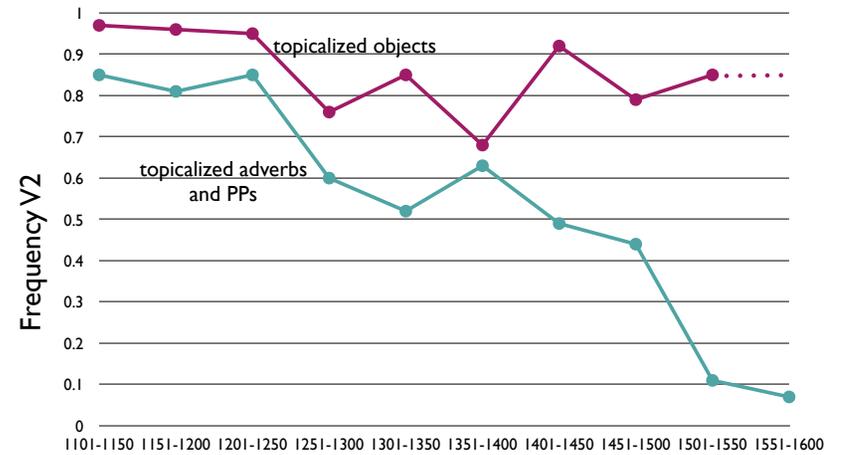
Decline of XP fronting in French



Old French Middle French Modern French

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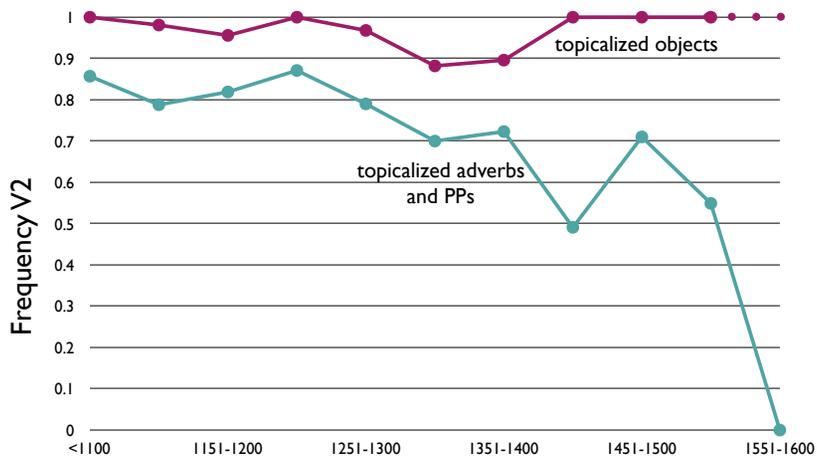
Evolution of V2 word order in French



Old French Middle French Modern French

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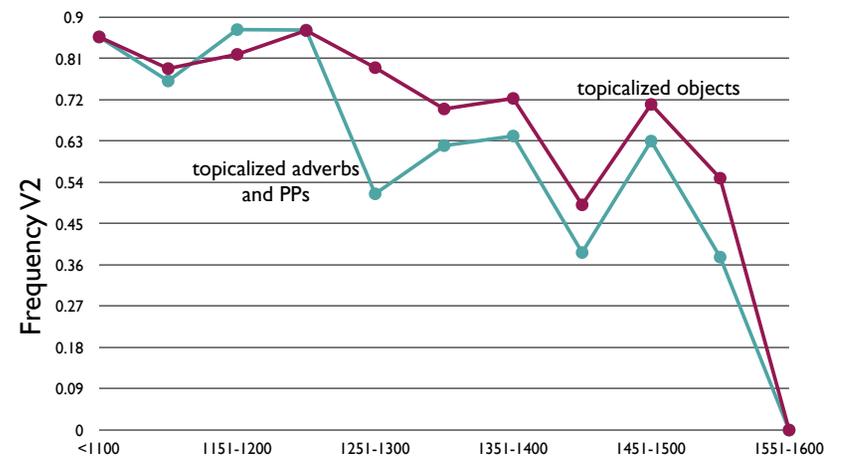
Evolution of V2 word order in French in sentences with full DP subjects



Old French Middle French Modern French

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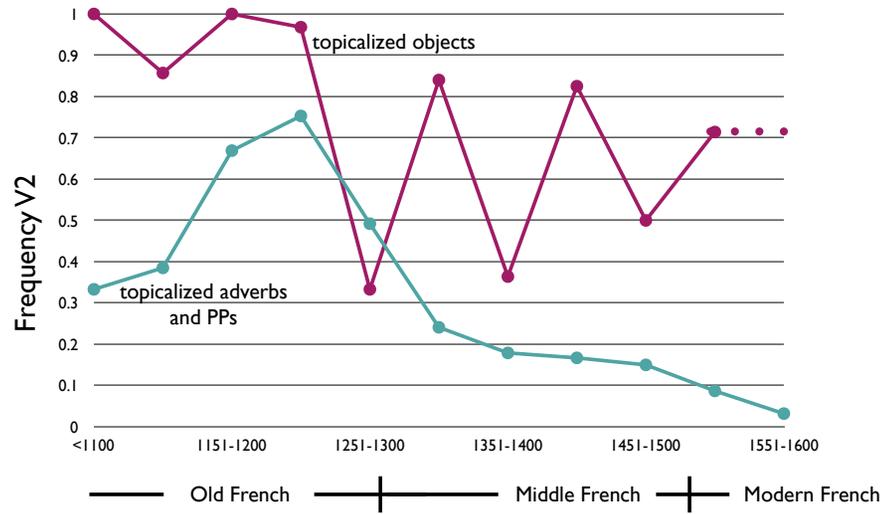
Corrected evolution of V2 word order in French in sentences with full DP subjects



Old French Middle French Modern French

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Evolution of V2 word order in French in sentences with overt pronominal subjects



Finis