

**Morphosyntactic variation in Northern English:
The Northern Subject Rule, its origins and early
history**

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Morphosyntactic variation in Northern English: The Northern Subject Rule, its origins and early history

Een wetenschappelijke proeve op het gebied van de Letteren

Proefschrift

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 The Northern Subject Rule

This thesis investigates the nature and origin of the Northern Subject Rule (NSR)¹, a pattern of conditioned variation in verbal inflection which is found in the dialects of Northern England and some other varieties. This investigation will offer the first formal analysis of the NSR which takes into account recent insights into the syntax of Old and Middle English, as well as new evidence on variation of the pattern in early Middle English. It will also combine this new evidence with what is known about the historical varieties in which the NSR occurred and theories of language change and language contact, in order to provide the best possible account for the origin of the NSR that can be formulated on the basis of all available evidence. This study will also offer new insights into the nature of subject-verb agreement, as well as the nature of language and dialect contact in historical Northern English.

The Northern Subject Rule (NSR) is a pattern of variation in verbal morphology which is unique in that verb endings are conditioned by both the type of the subject and its position relative to the verb. Modern dialects with this pattern (cf. Pietsch 2005a,b) have two options for present-tense indicative verbal morphology: a zero ending (-∅) and verbal -s. The morphology for the second person singular *thou* and the third singular is invariably -s, more or less as in the Standard English third person singular, but variation between the two endings occurs in the first person singular and in the plural. In these forms, the zero ending which is familiar from Standard English occurs only when the verb is immediately adjacent to a personal pronoun subject (Spro) *I*, *we*, *you*, or *they*, as in (1a). Elsewhere – when the pronoun subject and the finite verb (V) are not adjacent, or when the subject is a noun phrase (SNP) – the verb ends in -s (1b,c).

¹This term was used by Ihalainen (1994). The NSR is also known as ‘northern present-tense rule’ (cf. Montgomery 1994; King 1997) and ‘personal pronoun rule’ (McIntosh 1983), among other terms; cf. McCafferty (2004).

- (1) a. *they sing* [Spro - V-∅]
 b. *birds sings* [SNP - V-s]
 c. they sing and **dances** [Spro - ... - V-s]
 d. they always **sings** [Spro - ... - V-s]

This pattern has been analyzed as a combination of two constraints on verbal agreement: the type-of-subject condition or subject condition, according to which \emptyset endings only occur with pronoun subjects, and the adjacency condition, according to which these endings only occur when the pronoun subject is immediately adjacent to the verb.

This pattern has been found in Northern varieties of British English (including Scots and Northern Midlands dialects) since the Middle English (ME) period, although in ME, the ending corresponding to the \emptyset ending was often -e (cf. Mustanoja 1960:481-482, LALME I:554). The NSR also occurs in some Hiberno-English dialects which were brought to Ireland by Northern English and Scots settlers. It persists in some dialects to the present day (cf. Pietsch 2005).

1.2 What we need to know about the early NSR

This thesis aims to give a fuller account of the early NSR and its origins than has hitherto been provided. A full account of the NSR, including aspects of its nature and historical development, is especially interesting because it is a crosslinguistically rare pattern that may throw new light on the scope of variation in subject-verb agreement as well as on issues related to language contact. On the one hand, it may yield a better understanding of the contact situation between Brythonic Celtic and Old English (OE) just after the Anglo-Saxon invasion. On the other hand, it gives a unique insight into the linguistic effects of (a succession of) more complex contact situations (between Northern

English and Brythonic and/or Scandinavian as well as various other English dialects).

Subject-verb agreement is a basic phenomenon in language that is often taken for granted. From the perspective of formal analyses, subject agreement is just one of the functional layers in syntactic structure available for verbal inflection, like tense, mood and aspect (cf. Cinque 1999). However, a thorough analysis of the NSR reveals interesting problems for this type of analysis. There may be conditions on the expression of subject-verb agreement which do not rely on the person and number features usually expressed by verbal agreement in Germanic languages, but rather on the syntactic type of the subject (under the subject condition), and even on its position (under the adjacency condition). The nature of these conditions is therefore a primary target for investigation.

The possibility of influence from Brythonic Celtic is also especially interesting from a theoretical point of view. Based on the virtual lack of early Brythonic loanwords in English, Brythonic has often been dismissed as being of little influence on Old English. In recent years, however, the literature on language contact (cf. Thomason 2001) has shown that loanwords are not the type of influence that is expected to appear most prominently in this type of contact situation. Wherever two linguistic communities are in contact and one (the superstrate) is more powerful than the other (the substrate), so that the latter population (in this case, Brythonic Celts) will try to acquire the former's language (in this case, Old English), the substrate language can be expected to contribute structural features to the superstrate language. For instance, the West-Frisian variety of Dutch differs from other Dutch dialects with respect to its verbal morphosyntax, with different conditions on the use of infinitives and inflectional morphology. Intriguingly, these conditions closely parallel those found in the Frisian language, which is known to have been spoken in the area before Dutch (Hoekstra 1993). This shows that patterns of morphosyntax may be carried over from a substrate into a superstrate language; this may have been a factor in the rise of the NSR as well.

Brythonic Celtic is not the only possible origin of contact influences on the NSR; the Scandinavian language spoken by Viking immigrants in Northern England may have been a factor too. In addition, the distribution of the NSR and related patterns across dialects shows how linguistic phenomena may be affected by dialect contact.

A number of questions demand special attention when investigating the early NSR. Although there is a substantial body of work on the Northern Subject Rule, its early history has remained largely unclear, and there is no analysis of the pattern's morphosyntax that fully takes into account what is known about the syntax of early English. Various authors have contributed variationist analyses of the NSR and related patterns in (early) Modern English varieties (cf. Bailey, Maynor and Cukor-Avila 1989; Cole 2009; Corrigan 1997; Hickey 2004:603; McCafferty 2003, 2004; Pietsch 2005a,b; Wright 2002), and some descriptive and historical work also exists for the earlier periods (Mustanoja 1960:481-482, *LALME* I:554, McIntosh 1989, Montgomery 1994). Until now, however, no detailed quantitative study of the NSR in early Middle English has been made. With the availability of a new, exhaustive early ME LAEME corpus (Laing and Lass 2008-), this can now be remedied.

Another gap in our knowledge of the NSR concerns its syntactic analysis. Although some detailed analyses have been offered for related patterns in Present-Day English varieties which take into account the syntax of subjects (e.g. Henry 1995, Tortora and den Dikken 2010), the only analysis offered for the NSR and its historical variant by Pietsch (2005b), in syntactic terms relies only on the idea that pronoun subjects are clitics on the verb, an idea which does not fit the OE and ME evidence for differential placement of pronoun and NP subjects (cf. Fischer et al. 2000 and see below). I will present an analysis which unifies the evidence for differential subject positions in early English with an account along the lines of Henry (1995), who distinguishes between subject agreement and default inflection, and incorporating the ideas on adjacency conditions on morphology put forward in Bobaljik (2002).

The final aspect of the early NSR which demands attention is its ultimate origin. This is perhaps the most hotly debated aspect of the phenomenon, with two clearly opposed sides of the argument: those in favour of language contact with the Northern variety of Brythonic Celtic as a point of origin (Hamp 1975-76; Klemola 2000), and those opposed to it (Isaac 2003; Pietsch 2005b). This debate merits closer discussion.

Language-internal hypotheses for the rise of the NSR, as proposed by Murray (1873) and elaborated on by Rodeffer (1903) and Pietsch (2005b), take the pattern to have arisen simply by generalization of *-e/∅* endings, most probably from inversion contexts with plural pronoun subjects, where Old English (OE) already had *-e* in the indicative (*singe we, singe ge* etc.), which was ultimately combined with the generalized plural *-s*. Pietsch assumes that the old system of agreement was unstable after levelling of *-e/∅* and *-s* and the variation between endings would have given way to a new system of conditions, related to subject type and adjacency rather than person and number (Pietsch 2005b). Although this type of hypothesis does not assume contact with Celtic as an important factor, it should be noted that contact with Celtic and/or Old Norse may still have played a role in generalizing the relevant verb endings to their eventual range of use. For this reason, both contact situations will be investigated.

The Celtic hypothesis, on the other hand, views the NSR as a result of language contact between OE and Cumbric. Klemola (2000:338-342) argues that the NSR may be a substrate effect from Brythonic Celtic, originating in a period of Cumbric/Anglo-Saxon bilingualism in Northumbria. This theory is based on an observed parallel between the NSR and the Welsh agreement system: Welsh has agreement with pronominal subjects, but not with nominal ones, which trigger an invariant (third singular) verb form. Klemola finds some evidence that contact with Brythonic lasted longer in the North than in other parts of England, and there is therefore a distinct possibility that the NSR had its origin in Celtic substrate influence (Klemola 2000:337-346). This hypothesis is interesting, but it is supported only by circumstantial evidence based on a

morphosyntactic parallel in Welsh and the present-day geographical distribution of the NSR in varieties of English. To gauge the potential of the hypothesis, we will require a detailed scenario for the rise of the NSR, based on all available historical evidence for the contact situation, as well as for the distribution and nature of the early NSR, and informed by current morphosyntactic and contact-linguistic theories. This is one of the contributions I hope to make in this thesis.

There are a number of counter-arguments to the Celtic hypothesis. Proponents of the language-internal hypothesis hold that language contact is unnecessary for explaining the NSR and in fact unlikely as an origin for a number of reasons. Contact between Cumbrian and English could only have taken place during the early Old English (OE) period, but the NSR is unattested in OE texts (cf. Pietsch 2005b). Pietsch (2005b) and Isaac (2003) assume that the NSR would have arisen only when both *-e/∅* and *-s* endings had been generalized throughout the plural persons in the present indicative paradigm, which happened only after the early OE period. Both authors deem it unlikely that contact between English and Cumbrian would have lasted that long. Pietsch thinks the parallel between the NSR and Welsh anti-agreement may not have been sufficiently strong to have led to substrate interference, since unlike the default ending in Welsh, ME *-s* is not simply a third person singular ending. Pietsch's final counterargument is based on his analysis of *-s* as an agreement ending, which as such would not have been suitable as a default non-agreement form to be used by Cumbrian speakers transferring their agreement pattern to English.

This study will demonstrate that these counterarguments to the Celtic hypothesis do not, in fact, clearly hold. I will show that there is reason to believe that the NSR did exist in some form during the OE period, and it is not dependent on the morphological opposition between *-e/∅* and *-s*; other variant endings (such as the older plural ending *-th*) would suffice as well. In addition, I will show that substrate influence from Cumbrian could well have resulted in the NSR, given the available evidence and keeping in mind that the Celtic

hypothesis does not hinge on the idea that *-s* is a third person singular ending but rather on the distinction between (plural) person/number agreement (*-e/∅*) and a default inflection (*-s*).

The Celtic hypothesis has the added benefit that it explains why this parallel to the Brythonic system of anti-agreement exists in English dialects but not in any other branch of Germanic. Combined with what we know about the syntax of older English, which had different positions for pronoun subjects than for nominal ones, it also explains why *-e/∅* endings remained restricted to pronominal contexts, instead of being generalized further to all of the plural present indicative, as in other English varieties (including Standard English). I will argue that this makes language contact with Cumbrian at least as likely an origin of the NSR as language-internal generalization.

1.3 Method

This thesis attempts to supply a full account of the NSR and its origins, informed by all the available early evidence for the pattern and the historical situation in which it arose as well as current theory, both from contact linguistics and from formal (morpho)syntax. Reviewing the evidence for the early NSR and its background is a classic case of making “the best use of bad data”, as Labov (1994:11) calls it. Little is known about the exact social circumstances under which contact between Cumbrian and Old Norse and Northumbrian OE occurred. The exact dates of the contact periods, as well as the exact region and period during which the NSR arose, are unknown. This is due to the fact that little historical evidence from the early OE period in the North remains, and there are only a few short Northumbrian texts which predate the 10th century. Only one of them shows some evidence for plural indicative present forms of regular verbs, but since this evidence is a non-adjacent form with a conservative *-th* ending, it is not very informative on the NSR.

This sparsity of direct evidence for the circumstances under which the NSR arose means we will have to look elsewhere for indications of what happened. Our main source of information on the nature and distribution of the early NSR will be a corpus of early ME texts, which for the most part have not been brought to bear on the case of the NSR until now. The corpus consists of 36 texts from the LAEME corpus (*Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English*, Laing and Lass 2008-) – all available early ME texts from the Northern dialect area, as well as the Northern and Eastern parts of the Midlands – and two more texts which are slightly later but thought to be rather conservative: the *Northern Prose Rule of Saint Benet* from the PPCME2 corpus (*Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English 2*, Kroch and Taylor 2000) and the *Anturs of Arther at the Tarnewathelan*, digitized for the occasion of this study. This corpus represents all the available evidence for the NSR in early ME, and its analysis brings us closer to the origin of the pattern in two ways. First, these texts date further back than most of the evidence for the ME NSR found in the literature. Second, the analysis undertaken in this study is the first comprehensive quantitative and statistic analysis of the NSR in Middle English, and thus fills the gap previously left by studies which impressionistically stated that the NSR was general in Northern ME (cf. Mustanoja 1960:481-482, LALME I:554). A further source of data is the work of Cole (to appear), whose quantitative analysis of present indicative endings in the *Lindisfarne Gospels* indicates that a variant form of the NSR already existed in the 10th century.

These data will be interpreted in the light of what is known about the Northern dialect, both in the OE and in the early ME period (the early ME corpus will also be used as a direct source of evidence for early ME syntax), and in the light of what we know about the historical facts surrounding it. Some of the early history of the contact situation can be gleaned from historical texts, place-name evidence, archaeology, and population genetics. These sources will be related to work on historical linguistics to derive an overview of the developments in the Northern dialects during the early Middle Ages, focusing not only on the arrival of Anglo-Saxons in Northern England, but also on the

circumstances and effects of contact with both Cumbrian Celtic and Old Norse later on.

Insights from contact linguistics (especially on substrate influences) and variationist literature (with a special focus on the distinction between transmission and diffusion as proposed by Labov, 2007) will be used to account for the origin of the NSR in OE and for its variability and spatial distribution in early ME. This account would be impossible without a detailed analysis of the morphosyntax of the NSR pattern. The analysis proposed in this thesis is informed by the large body of work done on OE and ME syntax (cf. Fischer et al. 2000; Haeberli 1999, 2000; Haeberli & Ingham 2007; van Kemenade 1997, 2000, 2002, 2009, 2011; Warner 2007), as well as theories of morphology and morphosyntax in a broader sense (cf. Bobaljik 2002; Chomsky 1995, 2000, 2001a,b; Cinque 1999; Henry 1995).

1.4 Results

The outcomes of the multi-faceted approach outlined above are as follows. The analysis I propose for the morphosyntax of the NSR (in Chapter 4) follows the existing literature on OE and ME syntax in its claim that pronoun subjects appear in a higher structural position than nominal subjects. In addition, it must be assumed that there are conditions on subject-verb agreement in NSR dialects that are not found in other English varieties. Only *-e/∅* endings truly represent plural agreement with the subject, whereas the *-s* ending represents default inflection for the present indicative. This means that subject-verb agreement is only available for pronoun subjects in NSR dialects, and in the core cases, it is also subject to an adjacency condition.

The quantitative analysis of the present-tense indicative verb endings and their syntactic contexts in the early ME corpus shows that the pattern was variable in this early period. The pattern is strongest, with a strong adjacency condition as well as a near-categorical subject condition, in some of the Northern texts, with a focal point in Yorkshire. South of this area, the pattern

fans out and becomes less categorical. Most of the variation is found in the strength of the adjacency condition, which seems entirely absent even in some Northern texts with a strong subject effect (so all verbs with pronoun subjects will take an *-e/∅* ending, and only those with nominal subjects will take *-s*), but further south, the subject effect dissipates as well. In addition, the pattern occurs with different endings in the Midlands dialects (*-en* next to *-e/∅*, and later *-th* next to *-s* in the East Midlands).

This evidence supports the conclusion that the NSR originated in the North, in or near Yorkshire. The pattern of variation also shows that the core property of the NSR consists of the different syntactic conditions imposed on pronoun subjects relative to nominal ones; the adjacency condition seems to be most properly analyzed as an extra, variable outcome of the distinct syntactic status of pronoun subjects, and the exact endings chosen as agreement or default inflection are similarly arbitrary from the perspective of the syntactic conditions on their use, although perhaps not from the perspective of the original rise of the pattern.

The early ME corpus evidence can be fruitfully combined with the formal analysis of the NSR, the historical background and theories on contact linguistics to derive a scenario in which the subject condition of the NSR arose as a combined effect of variation in Northumbrian OE which was accelerated by contact with Cumbric and, later, Old Norse and a substrate effect in Cumbric learners of Northumbrian OE, who imposed their native condition on verb agreement (namely, plural agreement only with pronoun subjects) on verbs in the OE syntactic configuration, where pronoun subjects occurred in a higher position than nominal subjects. It also shows how the syntax of Northern dialects diverged from that of other English dialects, which retained categorical agreement and had some different word order patterns.

1.5 Overview

The structure of this thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 explores the historical, cultural and linguistic background of the Northern dialect. Chapter 3 puts the NSR in a diachronic and dialectological perspective, detailing the distribution of various verb endings in Old, Middle and Modern English dialects, but ultimately focusing on a detailed quantitative analysis of the variation present in the early ME corpus. Chapter 4 presents the early ME data on subject positions as well as the syntactic analysis of the NSR. Chapter 5 ties all the previous points together and explores the origins of the Northern Subject Rule. Chapter 6, finally, summarizes the conclusions drawn in earlier chapters and the outlook that can be derived from them.

Chapter 2 – Historical and dialectological background

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the external circumstances of the Northern English dialect in the Old English period (known as Northumbrian) and in the (early) Middle English period. The aim is to provide a background for the discussion of verb endings in Northern English and adjacent dialects in Chapter 3, as well as for the discussion of the NSR as a possible outcome of language contact in Chapter 5. To this end, I will first focus on the early history of English as a group of dialects in Section 2.2, discussing the origin of the Anglo-Saxons and the relations between Old English and other Germanic varieties in Section 2.2.1, the Old English dialects in Section 2.2.2, and Middle English dialects in Section 2.2.3. Next, Section 2.3 explores two instances of contact between Northern English and other languages: the Cumbrian variety of Brythonic Celtic, which may have been crucial in the development of the NSR, and Old Norse, which had a tremendous impact on the Northern dialect due to the Viking invasion in the Danelaw area. Section 2.3.1 discusses the evidence for relative population sizes in the contact situations between Anglo-Saxons and other peoples in England. More detailed evidence for the history and social circumstances is presented in the rest of Section 2.3, focusing on Brythonic Celtic in Section 2.3.2 and on Old Norse in Section 2.3.3.

2.2 Early Northern English: origins and contact with other dialects

2.2.1 The origins of the Anglo-Saxons and (Northern) Old English

It is a well-known fact that the English language came to the British Isles with Anglo-Saxon invaders from the continent in the fifth century, but there has been some discussion about the exact relations between English and other

Germanic languages. English is a West-Germanic language, and as such related to Frisian, Dutch and German, and (less closely) also to the North-Germanic (Scandinavian) languages. In order to establish the relative distance between the various West- and North-Germanic languages, Nielsen (1985, further discussed in Nielsen 1986, 1998) provides an inventory of the morphological and phonological characteristics that Old English (OE) shared with different Germanic languages, based on data from neogrammarian handbooks (Nielsen 1986:96). Nielsen took care to distinguish old (inherited) from more recent (contact) parallels based on grouping, dating of sound changes, and likelihood of independently developed parallels, and lists only those shared features as meaningful parallels that he considers derived from contact before speakers of pre-OE varieties left the continent (Nielsen 1985).

Nielsen's conclusion is that Old English, taken as a group of varieties, had most in common with Old Frisian. The two languages share 40 features that are found in none of the other Germanic languages, and 26 that are also shared by Old Saxon (OS) (Nielsen 1986:172-3). In addition, there were six features that only Old Norse (ON) shares with Old English before the Viking invasion. Of these, three were "common selections of the same [Indo-European] variants" (1985:215). The first is the ablaut grade *-or* in acc. sg. *r*-stem nouns: ON *fǫþor*, *móþor*, OE *brōðor*, *mōdor*, with the vowel *-o-* as opposed to the *-er-* variant found in the other Germanic languages (1985:191). Secondly, in the same noun class, we find gen. sg. ON *fǫþor*, with *-or* from the zero grade (Indo-European **pátř-s*), whereas all other Germanic languages have forms from the full grade (Indo-European **pátr-és, -ós*), including (West Saxon) OE: *fæder*. The Mercian and Northumbrian (known together as Anglian, cf. Section 2.2.2) dialects are exceptions in that they also have zero-grade forms: *feadur* in the *Vespasian Psalter*, *fædor* in the Royal Gloss, *fador* in the Lindisfarne Gospel, *fadur* in *Cædmon's Hymn* (Nielsen 1985:191). Finally, only Old Norse and OE have forms from the **er/*or*-root in the present indicative of 'to be': East Norse 3SG *ar*, 3PL *aru* and OE *eart*, Anglian (*e*)*arð*, *earun/earon* (Nielsen 1985:205). In OE, the

root occurs in all dialects, but “its use is more widespread in Angl[ian] than anywhere else” (Nielsen 1985:231).

Nielsen also discusses three innovations that are shared only between OE and Old Norse (1985:215). OE and Old Norse (specifically, East Norse and Old Norwegian) are the only Germanic languages that have not only retained Indo-European **duō* for ‘two’, but have also transferred it from the masculine to the neuter gender: OE *tū*, East Norse *tū*, Old Norwegian *tú* (Nielsen 1985:193). Furthermore, Old Norse and OE are alone in the consistency with which they lower *i* to *e* and *u* to *o* before (Proto-Germanic) *-z* (Runic *ʀ*): cf. Old Norse *mér*, *þér*, *vér*, Old Danish *orwitæ* and OE *me*, *þe*, *we*, *oreald* with Old Frisian *mi*, *thi*, *wi*, *urdēl/ordēl*. This lowering must have taken place before *-z* was lost in West-Germanic, since *-z* conditioned it, and it was also attested in early Scandinavian runes (Nielsen 1985:206-207). A final development in Old Norse which may be shared with OE is the loss of medial *þ* before *l*, accompanied by compensatory lengthening of the short vowel preceding it: compare Old Norse *mál*, *mála*, *stál* with Gothic *maþl*, Old Frisian. *stathul*. A similar development took place in OE (OE *mǣl*, *mǣlan*, *stǣl*), although OE also had three other variants of this sequence: compare OE *mæþ(e)l*, *staðol* (Nielsen 1985:212).

Two of these six parallels are found only or predominantly in Anglian dialects (i.e., in Mercian and Northumbrian), and this might be taken to imply that Anglian was closer to Old Norse than other English dialects even before the Viking invasion. This was probably not the case, however. Nielsen notes that the Anglian dialects exhibit nearly all of the correspondences between OE and continental Germanic languages that he attributes to the period before the Anglo-Saxon invasion. There was no especially close link between Anglian dialects and Old Norse before the Viking invasion: as we have seen, there were a few links with Old Norse that Northumbrian and Mercian showed more than the other OE dialects, but the same goes for a number of parallels with different Germanic languages (Nielsen 1985:251-252).

The fact that there are many parallels between OE and various other Germanic languages is partly due to the fact that in many instances, there are

competing variants of morphological and phonological features present in OE. According to Nielsen, there are “many competing forms in OE, [...] which suggest an intermediate dialectal position of pre-OE on the continent, or perhaps, that the Germanic invaders of Britain were of dialectally mixed origin” (1985:223). The same conclusion can be drawn from the various constellations in which OE is linked with other Germanic languages. Parallels that date back to the period before the Anglo-Saxon invasion of England point to a period in the development of the languages involved when they were spoken in shared or bordering regions. Consequently, we can assume that there was a dialect continuum with pre-Old English and pre-Old Saxon on either side of pre-Old Frisian (Nielsen 1985:223,255; 1986:174). Nielsen has not investigated the correspondences between Old Norse and other Germanic languages independently of OE, but it is clear that in terms of phonology and morphology, OE occupies an intermediary position between other West-Germanic languages and Old Norse. This implies either that pre-OE occupied a geographical position between North Germanic and more southerly West-Germanic varieties, or that the (pre-)Anglo-Saxons spoke different varieties, from various regions, when they arrived in England (Nielsen 1985:257-258).

This linguistic evidence gives us a very general indication of the origins of the early Anglo-Saxon settlers, which can be made more precise by taking into account historical and archaeological evidence. Early sources from the sixth to eighth centuries mention different tribes as the Germanic invaders of Britain, the most important of which are the Saxons, the Angles, the Frisians and the Jutes (Nielsen 1998:62-64). Archaeological evidence confirms this. It shows that many 5th-century immigrants came from the region of the Elbe and Weser rivers in Northern Germany, and from Schleswig-Holstein, probably with some small groups from Frisia, the region of the Salian Franks (between the Rhine and the Somme rivers), and Southern Norway (Nielsen 1998:66); cf. the map in Figure 2.1.

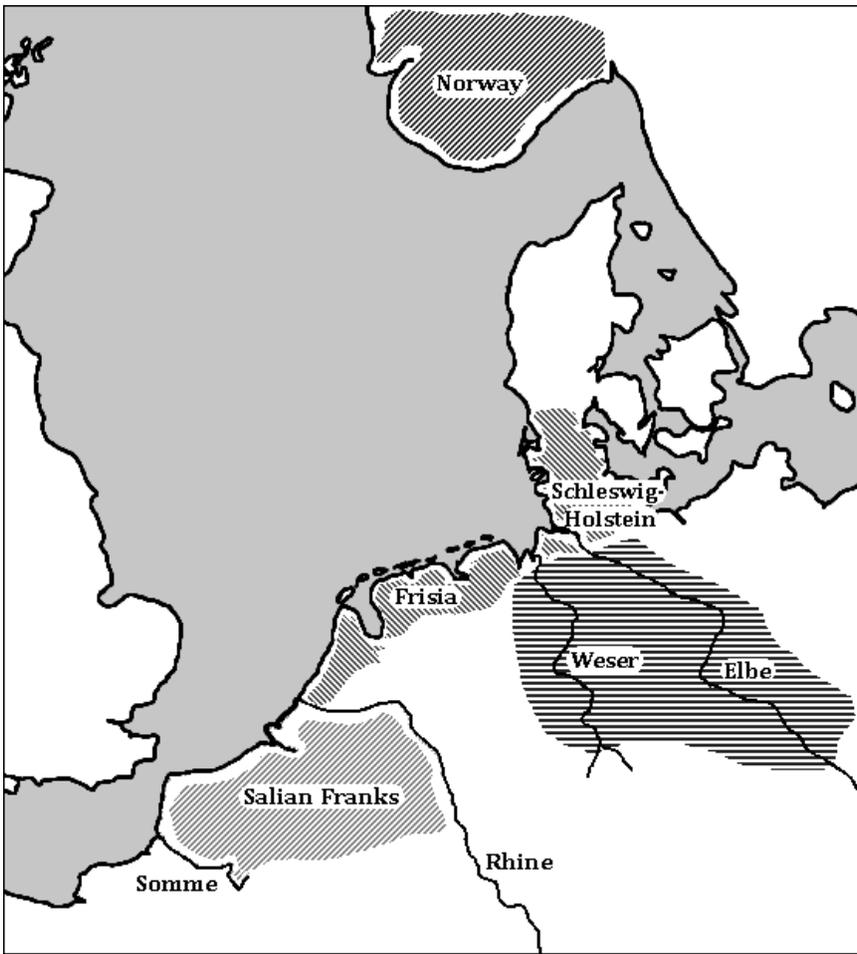


Figure 2.1. The origins of the Anglo-Saxons. Based on Nielsen (1998:66). The shaded areas represent the approximate regions from which ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons settled England.

Essentially, most of the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons came from a core area in what is now Northern Germany, but this area was in all likelihood linguistically diverse. It may have included dialects spoken in Schleswig-Holstein near present-day Denmark that would later develop into Norse, but it must also have included West-Germanic dialects. Nielsen (1998:78) concludes that “there may well have been dialectal diversity among the early Anglo-Saxon settlers in Britain”. This means that many morphosyntactic variants in the (Northern) English dialects were probably present when the dialects were first

brought to England, and we should be careful to distinguish them from later (contact) influences.

2.2.2 Northumbrian and other Old English dialects

The population of Anglo-Saxon England consisted of several tribes that had organized themselves into kingdoms. The two kingdoms that are most relevant to us are the northern kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia (cf. Figure 2.2), which together were known as Northumbria. The various English kingdoms and regions also had their own dialects, which may have differed in various respects, but have been distinguished mainly on the grounds of phonology (cf.

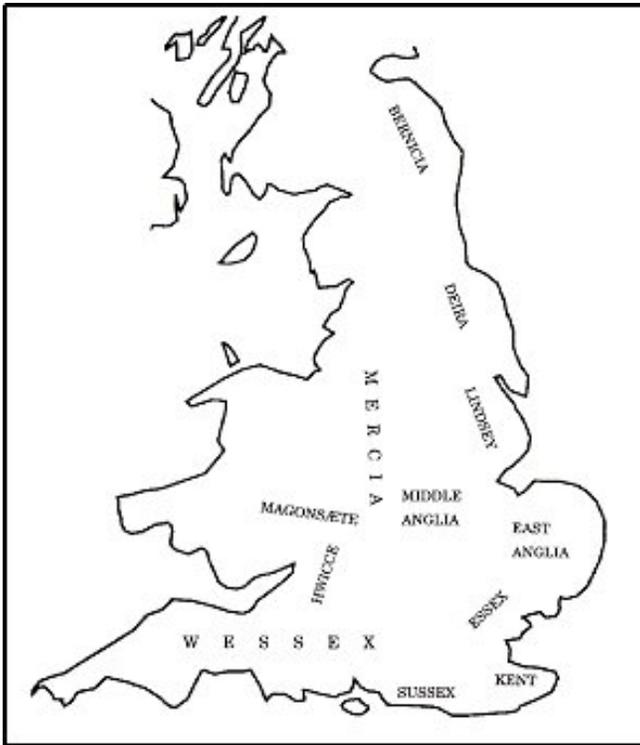


Figure 2.2. Old English Kingdoms around the year 600, from Nielsen (1998: 90)

Toon 1992, Brook 1978) and morphology (cf. Nielsen 1998). The most important of these dialects were West Saxon, Kentish, Mercian and Northumbrian (cf. Nielsen 1998:92 and see the map in Figure 2.3). These last two dialects had much in common and, as we have seen in Section 2.2.1, they can also be grouped under the name ‘Anglian’ (Nielsen 1998:99). There may also have been some other distinct dialects, for instance in East Anglia and Sussex, but these are not attested in any extant texts.



Figure 2.3. OE dialects, from Baugh and Cable (1993: 52)

The Old English period lasted from the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in England until shortly after the Norman Conquest, so roughly from 425 until 1125 (Hogg

1992:1). This period can be divided into three subperiods. The first is prehistoric or proto-OE, pre-700, from which no significant textual records remain. Next, early OE lasted from c. 700-900, and the evidence from this period stands out especially because there was no standard spelling. Finally, late OE (which brought forth many texts in the West-Saxon written standard and later texts from when these traditions were beginning to break down) lasted from c. 900-1125 (Hogg 1992:2-3).

Texts in the Anglian dialects date from as early as the eighth century and are sparse, whereas the earliest texts in the two southern dialects are from the ninth century (Nielsen 1998:92-93). The southern textual record is quite extensive, especially in the West-Saxon dialect, but northern texts are quite rare. The early Northumbrian texts which predate the Viking invasion are no more than a few (fragments of) poems and runic inscriptions, and the only Northumbrian and Mercian texts that postdate contact with Old Norse are interlinear glosses in Latin texts, such as the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels and the Vespasian Psalter (cf. Chapter 3 and de Haas 2004).

According to Bede, the kingdoms associated with the three main OE dialect areas corresponded closely to the different tribes that came from the continent: the Angles in Anglia, the Jutes in Kent, and the Saxons in Wessex (*Historia Ecclesiastica* i.15, quoted in translation in Stenton 1971:9, and cf. Nielsen 1998:77). In reality, however, things cannot have been that simple. The differences between the OE dialects do not correspond to clear-cut parallels with different groups of other Germanic languages, as we have seen in the preceding section (and cf. Nielsen 1998:77). There is no evidence that the dialect differences in OE correspond one-to-one to original regional differences on the continent, even though much of the variation was probably imported by various mainland West-Germanic varieties that contributed to Old English. Nielsen in fact assumes that the mixed dialects from the continent underwent some form of convergence in the first few generations after the Anglo-Saxons came to England, as they came to be perceived as one language (Nielsen 1998:78). This would be consistent with accounts of early American English, in

which the different dialects spoken by various settlers converged to more focused American varieties (Kretzschmar 2002).

2.2.3 Northern Middle English and other ME dialects

The Middle English period is generally defined as running from 1100 or 1125 to 1450 or 1500. This study will focus predominantly on the early Middle English (eME) period, defined in line with LAEME, the main source of our data corpus, as the period before 1350 (Laing and Lass 2008-, cf. Chapter 3).

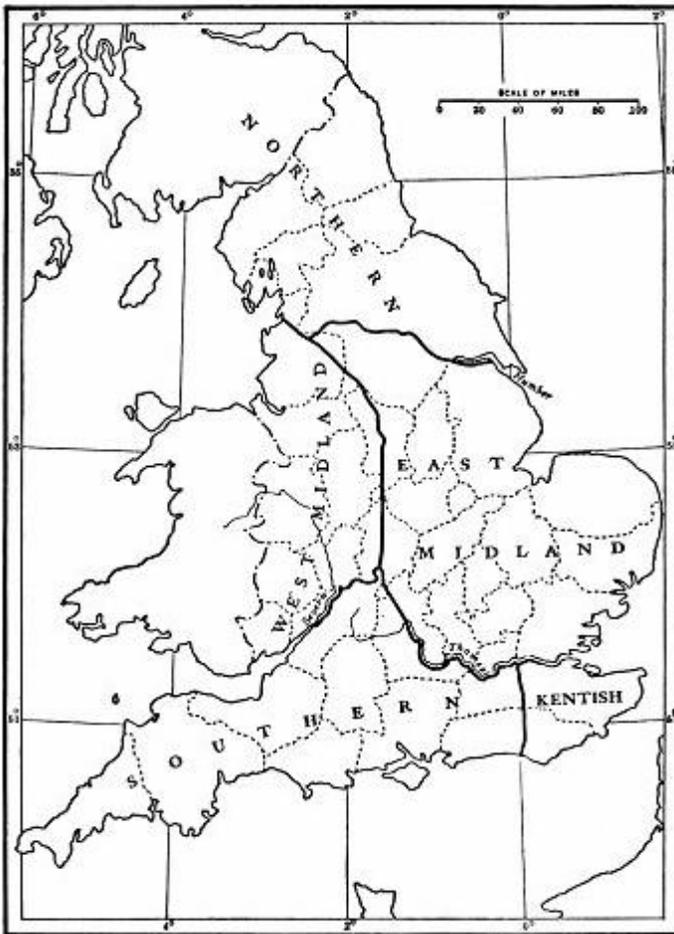


Figure 2.4. ME dialects, from Baugh and Cable (1993: 186)

The Middle English dialects developed from Old English dialects, but there are some interesting differences between the dialect classifications of the two periods, as can be seen when we compare the ME dialect map in Figure 2.4 with the OE one in Figure 2.3. We can distinguish five main ME dialect areas, which developed out of the four OE dialects. Kentish OE was continued as Kentish ME, West Saxon became Southern ME, Northumbrian became the Northern dialect, and Mercian split up into East Midland and West Midland ME (Baugh and Cable 1993:186). This split seems mostly due to (contact-induced) changes that took place in the Danelaw (cf. Section 2.4 and the map in Figure 2.8), but not, or to a much lesser extent, in the West Midlands. The Northern and East Midland areas had largely been part of the Danelaw, as had a (less densely settled) part of the West Midlands. This Scandinavian settlement led to relatively extensive and early influence from Old Norse (cf. Trips 2002:15). Apart from the split between the Midlands dialects, the boundaries of the dialect areas shifted only a little; for instance, the southern border of the Northern dialect in ME is somewhat further north than the boundary of Northumbrian OE.

2.3 Contact with Brythonic and Old Norse

Having established the background of the Northern dialect and other OE and ME dialects with which it was in contact, we can now turn to contact with other languages. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the NSR may have been formed under the influence of contact with Brythonic. Contact with Old Norse also deserves our attention, since it had a pervasive influence on the Northern dialect which should also be taken into consideration when discussing the history of the NSR. I will discuss both contact situations in chronological order, focusing on contact between OE and Cumbrian in Section 2.3.2 and on contact with Old Norse in Section 2.3.3. We will start, however, by establishing the probable relative sizes of the populations involved in Section 2.3.1.

2.3.1 Population size and genetic evidence

An important factor in any contact situation is the relative size of the groups involved; generally speaking, a larger (immigrant) population will have a larger effect on the other population's language (cf. Chapter 5). As we will see in Section 2.3.3, historical, archaeological and linguistic evidence clearly indicate that the influx of Scandinavians was relatively large. Much less is known about the relative number of Brythonic Celts relative to Anglo-Saxons, and for this reason, it may be worthwhile to investigate a source of evidence which has only begun to yield detailed results in the past few years: the genetic make-up of the population.

Traditional methods of investigation have produced widely varying estimates for the numbers of Celts who inhabited England before the Anglo-Saxons arrived and for the number of Anglo-Saxons taking part in the invasion (Filppula, Klemola and Paulasto 2008:15). The former is estimated at 1 to 2 million (Härke 2002:150, quoted in Oppenheimer 2006:379), and the latter at between 10,000 (Higham 1992:225, cited in Filppula et al. 2008:15) and 200,000 (Härke 2003:21, cited in Filppula et al. 2008:15). The ratio of natives to invaders is estimated between 5:1 and 20:1 or even 50:1 (Filppula et al. 2008:15, citing various sources). There is some evidence for regional differentiation: "archaeological and skeletal data suggest an immigrant-native proportion of 1:3 to 1:5 in the Anglo-Saxon heartlands of southern and eastern England ... but a much smaller proportion of Anglo-Saxons (1:10 or less) [in] south-west, northern and north-west England" (Härke 2002:150, quoted in Oppenheimer 2006:379).

Evidence gathered through new methods of enquiry based on genetics may complement this picture. Let us first discuss the general methodology employed in this type of genetic research, known as phylogeography (Oppenheimer 2006:428). It employs DNA samples from thousands of volunteers, aiming for an even distribution over the different regions of the British Isles (Sykes 2006). These samples are analysed focusing on the non-

recombining DNA, since this does not change with every new generation but is relatively stable. There are two types of non-recombining DNA: mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA, following Oppenheimer 2006), which is passed on from mother to child, and the non-recombining part of Y chromosome DNA (which Oppenheimer 2006 calls NRY), passed on only from father to son.

Non-recombining DNA is relatively stable, but it is subject to change through random mutations, of which we know that they occur on average every 20,000 years in mtDNA and every 1500 years in NRY (Sykes 2006:162-163). By analyzing the mutations in the non-recombining DNA of volunteers from different parts of Britain and comparing them to DNA samples from other parts of Britain and the world, both the geographical distribution of the mutations and their relative recency can be determined, in order to reconstruct ancient migration patterns.

This reconstruction takes place by using mtDNA and NRY to trace the maternal lineages of men and women and the paternal lineages of men, respectively, and then assigning groups of people with shared mutations to various haplogroups ('clans' in Sykes 2006; 'gene groups' in Oppenheimer 2006), each with one hypothetical ancestor in whose genes the distinguishing mutation first occurred. These haplogroups can then be organized into very large-scale family trees.

The frequency of haplogroups varies in different parts of the world, and each haplogroup will have accumulated more additional mutations in some regions than in others. It is assumed that there will be more variation within haplogroups in the regions where they have existed longest, with smaller and therefore less variant parts of the group branching off, moving into a different region and isolating themselves at later points in time. This means that genetic evidence can be used to deduct the provenance of people's ancestors (at least in the maternal and the paternal line, giving us a small sample of their ancestors) and to date approximately when these ancestors came to the area their families now live in (Sykes 2006, Oppenheimer 2006). Y-chromosome data will yield a higher geographical resolution than mtDNA data, both because NRY changes

faster than mtDNA and (probably) because men have historically been more mobile than women in Europe (Oppenheimer 2006:427).

We will now review the evidence as presented by Sykes (2006), based on his study of mtDNA as well as NRY from about 3000 individuals from across the British Isles, and by Oppenheimer (2006), who made an extensive review of NRY data.

The results of these studies show that there is some evidence for immigration into Britain from continental Europe during the past 2000 years, but not as much as might have been expected based on the linguistic evidence and folklore. This discrepancy is especially clear in regard to the Celtic element in the population. According to both Sykes (2006) and Oppenheimer (2006), there is no clear genetic evidence that the Celts migrated to Britain anywhere in the past 3000 years; in fact, most of the population traces back to Neolithic farmers who reached Britain after a trek up the Atlantic seaboard from Iberia, at least 6000 years ago (Sykes 2006). More specifically, no specific genetic link was found between the Celtic regions of present-day western Britain and the historical middle-European Celts, who first inhabited regions north of the Alps (forming the La Tène and Hallstadt cultures) and then migrated south of the Alps as well as to the east during the first millennium BC (Sykes 2006:281-284).

The evidence for Neolithic settlement from Iberia represents the greater part of the mitochondrial as well as Y-chromosome DNA data; it is even more pronounced in mtDNA than in NRY, indicating that most of the later waves of immigration were made up of men (Sykes 2006). The proportion of mitochondrial DNA that has been passed on within Britain since the Neolithic era is estimated by Sykes (2006:279-283) to approximate 100% in most regions, with the exception of the Orkneys and Shetland (where it is only 60%-70%) and North-Eastern England (90%-95%).

The numbers are lower for Y-chromosome DNA. Sykes notes that there is one NRY haplogroup (which he calls Oisín) which is most common all over Britain. The one subgroup within Oisín which is predominant everywhere, the 'Atlantis chromosome' or Atlantic Modal Haplotype, probably entered the

British Isles at a very early date from Iberia: it is also found in Northern Spain (Sykes 2006:162, 283). The frequency of this haplogroup in the male population varies per region. It is lowest (51.2%) in East Anglia and rises towards the North and West: 68.3% in Northumbria, 62.8% in the North of England, 72.9% in Scotland and 83.2% in Wales (Sykes 2006:275, 290).

Oppenheimer (2006) uses a slightly different methodology but arrives at similar results. He makes a detailed analysis of haplogroup R1b, which overlaps to a high degree with Sykes's Oisín clan, as well as a number of other NRY haplogroups (Campbell 2007). Oppenheimer (2006:375) finds the same pattern of regional variation, with the lowest percentage of Iberian-origin genes in East-Anglia (59% in Fakenham, Norfolk) and the highest in Wales (96% in Llangefni, north Wales) and Ireland (93% Castlerea). On the whole, according to Oppenheimer, 75% to 95% of NRY gene types in Britain and Ireland match most closely with types from Iberia (2006:378). Oppenheimer also finds the same type of east-west variation as Sykes, saying that Ireland, Scotland and Wales (especially the western parts) are "almost entirely made up from Iberian founders", and only England really has a heterogeneous pattern (Oppenheimer 2006:378).

The evidence thus suggests that the ancestors of the Celts who inhabited Britain when the Anglo-Saxons arrived had acquired their languages from Celtic immigrants who did not leave clear traces in the gene pool, possibly because the numbers of invading original speakers of Celtic were vanishingly small. However, all interpretations of this type must remain tentative. On the basis of the same data, Oppenheimer (2006) goes so far as to suggest that Celtic languages may have been spoken in the British Isles since Neolithic times – a view which most linguists would be reluctant to share, given the rather different view of Indo-Europeans and their languages entering Western Europe much later, based on linguistic reconstruction. It can be concluded, however, that it is feasible for a population to shift to the language of a very small group of conquerors; if this happened in prehistoric times when Celtic speakers came to Britain, it may well have happened again when the Anglo-Saxons did so. For

evidence for a similar process with Romance speakers in the Balkans, see Comas et al. (2004); Bosch et al. (2006).

The mitochondrial and Y-chromosome haplogroups which cannot be linked to ancient immigration from Iberia are largely traceable to north-western mainland Europe, and thus provide evidence for Anglo-Saxon and/or Viking immigration. Unfortunately, however, it is not possible to clearly distinguish between Vikings and Anglo-Saxons on the basis of genetic evidence, since they are too closely related.

As we have seen above, the proportion of mitochondrial DNA from Neolithic immigrants is extremely high in England. This means that the proportion of genes imported by maternal ancestors from North-Western Europe is very low. In most regions of Britain, there seems to be no substantial later addition to the basic mitochondrial gene pool. One notable exception² is north-eastern England: in the Danelaw area, about 5% (in the North) to 10% (in the East) of the population has typically North-West Germanic mtDNA. This might be due to Anglo-Saxon or Viking immigration. Sykes attributes it to the latter, in view of its distribution in the Danelaw (Sykes 2006:279-283).

The evidence for late north-western-European immigration is much more prominent in Y-chromosome DNA. According to Sykes, there are about twice as many “Saxon/Danish Y-chromosomes compared to their maternal counterparts”, which implies settlements partly driven by men who eliminated some of the indigenous male population. The evidence is therefore consistent with some form of military invasion by Anglo-Saxons and/or Vikings, although the numbers of invaders do not appear to have been high in comparison to the native population (Sykes 2006:286).

As we saw above, there is east-to-west variation in the frequency of Neolithic Iberian genes; the Germanic genes are to some extent in

²Orkney and Shetland are the other exception: 30% to 40% of today’s population there has a Viking maternal ancestor, lining up with the substantial Viking settlements for which there is historical evidence, and the same number found for paternal ancestors in this region (Sykes 2006:192-197;282).

complementary distribution with this. Sykes arrives at the conclusion that “approximately 10 per cent of men now living in the south of England are the patrilineal descendants of Saxons or Danes, while above the Danelaw line the proportion increases to 15 per cent overall, reaching 20 per cent in East Anglia” (Sykes 2006:286).

Oppenheimer (2006) reaches even smaller estimates for the incursion of Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. He investigates genetic matches in different regions of mainland Europe in more detail and finds gene type matches in Schleswig-Holstein and North-West Germany, where the Anglo-Saxons are thought to have originated, for “an average of 3.8% British male gene types”, most in England (5.5%) and with the highest concentrations in parts of Norfolk (part of East Anglia): between 9% and 15%. The population of the area in between England and north-west Germany, Frisia, actually matches to a lesser degree, showing that this matching is not background noise but evidence of an actual migration or ‘gene flow’, which “was real, but very modest” (2006:376). Meanwhile, Oppenheimer finds slightly higher numbers for the Danish and Norwegian Viking intrusion into the British Isles: about 5.5%. Oppenheimer notes that this number is “slightly higher than figures of 2-4% estimated by archaeologists” like Härke (2002), whose estimate for the 9th-century Anglo-Saxon population was rather high at 1-2 million (Oppenheimer 2006:400 and n. 32).

The phylogeographical evidence we have reviewed here necessarily only represents a small sample of the population’s ancestors and individual researchers will disagree over some of the particulars of interpretation. However, the evidence is based on a large number of individuals, raising the level of confidence that patterns found represent actual patterns in settlement. Moreover, both Sykes (2006) and Oppenheimer (2006) clearly agree that the genetic record shows relative stability, with most ancestors of the present-day population having entered England in the late Stone Age. Unfortunately, the genetic input of Anglo-Saxons and Vikings can only be distinguished to a limited degree, but the overall ratio of Germanic settlers is small compared to the

original population. There may have been more Viking settlers, proportionally, than there were Anglo-Saxon invaders; at any rate, the proportion of Germanic genes is considerably higher in North-Eastern England, the Danelaw area. This is generally in line with the expectations based on historical evidence.

What this tells us is that the linguistic dominance of the Anglo-Saxons over Cumbrians and other varieties of Brythonic spoken in the area that became England was probably not based on any numeric dominance of the Anglo-Saxons. Somehow, they must have exerted considerable cultural pressure to make the Brythonic population shift to using Old English. The hypothesis that the Anglo-Saxons wiped out the original population, which was widely held in the 19th century, was clearly mistaken; instead, the genetic evidence leaves ample room for the interpretation that there was a large Celtic substrate in Britain, with most ancestors of the modern population being second-language learners of (Old) English.

2.3.2 Contact with Brythonic Celtic

2.3.2.1 The contact situation

Establishing the nature of the contact situation between Anglo-Saxon English and Brythonic Celtic in Northern England is vital for judging the likelihood of a contact origin for the Northern Subject Rule. Unfortunately, the lack of contemporary sources allowing insight into contact situations makes this singularly difficult. We have seen in Section 2.3.1 that the Anglo-Saxons came in relatively small numbers, compared to the Celts, but they somehow managed to dominate the latter linguistically. This section aims to fill in the details of the contact situation as much as possible, based on the other available evidence, making use of medieval historical texts, archaeology and place-name evidence to yield a general picture of contact between Anglo-Saxons and Brythonic Celts with some regional detail.

We will focus on the Northern area, where Old English came into contact with the Brythonic variety known as Cumbrian. Contact with the other

branch of Celtic, Gaelic, lies outside our scope of investigation, since this was mainly relevant to Scots varieties of English and became relevant later; Gaelic-speaking Scots moved from Ireland to the Northwest of Scotland around the start of the sixth century, and expanded their territory toward South-East and South-West Scotland until about 1200, after which the Scottish Gaelic language itself was gradually pushed back into the Highlands and islands by the Scots English dialect (Gillies 1993:145).

It has long been noted by linguists that there are hardly any traces left in the English language from the contact that the Anglo-Saxons must have had with the Celts. There are place-names (river names are especially found in areas where the Brits were only driven out later), and fewer than twenty loanwords from Brythonic (Nielsen 1998:70, 60-61; cf. Filppula, Klemola and Paulasto 2008:123-131). The traditional explanation for this is that the Anglo-Saxons probably behaved purely as conquerors and did not mix with the original population on equal footing; in fact, some have assumed that the Celtic population was all but decimated during the colonization of England. According to Baugh and Cable (1993:73-74), Anglo-Saxons and Celts probably were in constant contact for generations in some places, but the Celts were a “submerged people”, with many Celts enslaved by the conquerors; the Celts had to adopt Germanic culture, not the other way around. More recent scholarship, however, supports the evidence for continuity in the genetic record. The Celtic population appears to have remained in England, although they were of course affected by the social pressures of contact with the Anglo-Saxons. We will see that this may be true more of the Northern region than of southern England, because the North was less intensively settled by Anglo-Saxons (cf. Tristram 2002:116). All of this fits with the genetic evidence presented above.

2.3.2.2 Reconstructed history of contact

The general pattern of Anglo-Saxon settlement was reconstructed by Jackson (1953), who made an inventory of river names in Britain and related the extent to which they were Brythonic in origin to other historical evidence, producing a

chronology of Anglo-Saxon settlement (Jackson 1953:220-223). The results are shown in the map in Figure 2.5, taken from Jackson (1953:220).

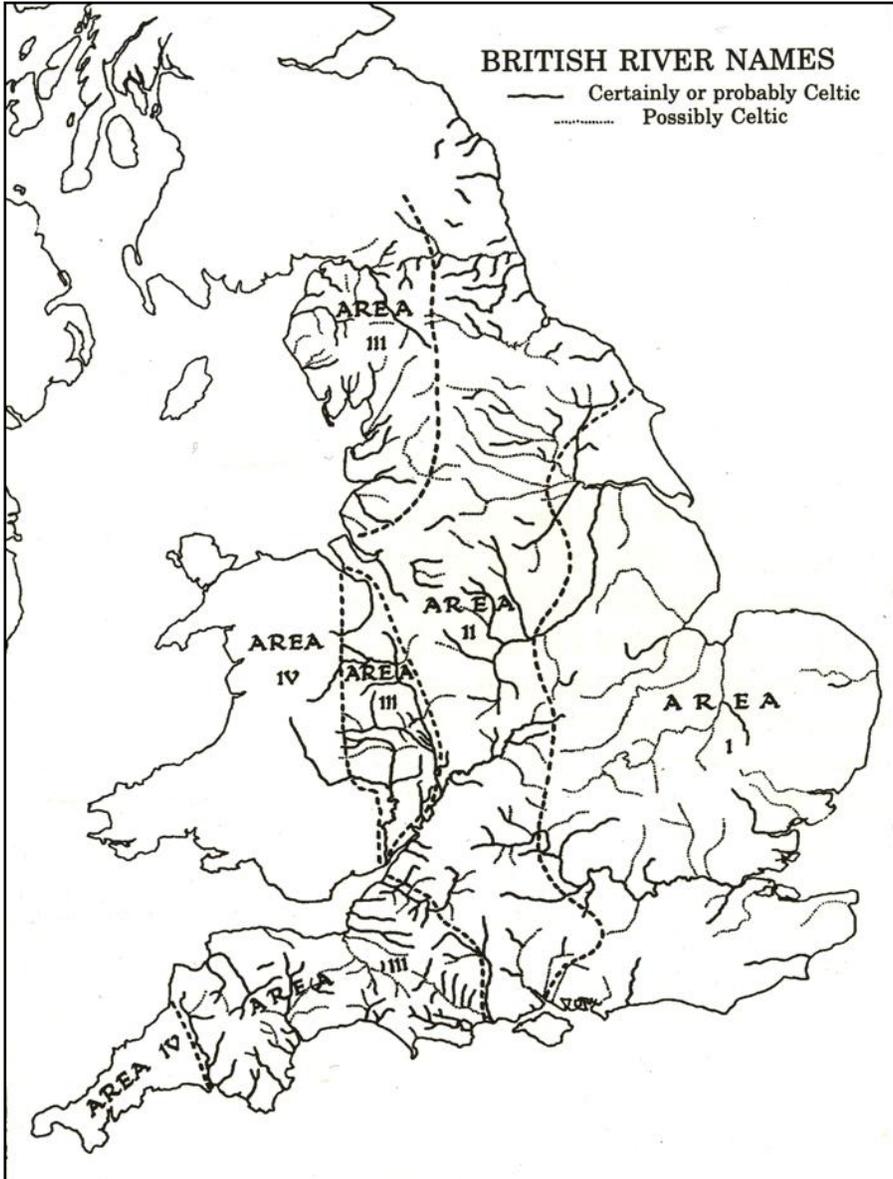


Figure 2.5. British River names in relation to the continued survival of Brythonic Celtic; Area I was settled and anglicized first, Area IV only after the OE period. Taken from Jackson (1953:220).

Area I on the map, in which Brythonic river names are limited to the larger rivers, represents the extent of Anglo-Saxon settlement until c. 550 (Jackson 1953:221-222). In Area II, many more Brythonic river names were preserved, and Jackson matches this to the westward progress of Anglo-Saxon settlement “by the second half of the sixth century in the south and the first half of the seventh in the north” (Jackson 1953:222, paraphrased in Filppula, Klemola and Paulasto 2008:12). In Area III, the last one to be settled during the Old English period, the proportion of Brythonic river names is largest, and even minor rivers have Brythonic names. In the North, this area includes parts of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire, which Jackson takes to have been settled by “the middle and third quarter of the seventh century” (Jackson 1953:222-223, paraphrased in Filppula, Klemola and Paulasto 2008:12). We can conclude that most of the North was settled relatively late, and contact between Anglo-Saxons and Cumbrians was extensive enough for communication about and adoption of the original river names.

Some other information on the early settlements is provided by several early mediaeval texts which discuss the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in England, all dated at least a century after the first period of migration. A Celtic perspective is represented by the British monk Gildas in his 6th-century *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*, which relates how the native Celts, after the Romans had left Britain, called in the help of Saxons to defend them against the barbarians (probably Picts from the North and Scots from Ireland, in Nielsen’s (1998:63) estimation) and gave them lands in Eastern England in return. Some time later, the Saxons fell out with the Britons and settled in England without allegiance to the Celts (Nielsen 1998:62-63). Historical sources with an Anglo-Saxon perspective are Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, from the early 8th century, and the late 9th-century Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which mentions 449 AD as the year in which the first Germanic chieftains, Hengest and Horsa, entered Britain in order to help the British chieftain Vortigern (Nielsen 1998:63). Subsequently, the Anglo-Saxons appropriated ever more

The Brythonic Celts of southern Scotland and Northern England, with whom the Anglo-Saxons competed for territory, spoke a language called Cumbric or Cumbrian, and were organized into three kingdoms (Russell 1995:8), as can be seen in Figure 2.7. Bernicia bordered directly on the Cumbrian kingdom of Gododdin, which originally covered the eastern area between the Forth and the Tyne. Further to the west and north was the kingdom of Strathclyde, and south of Strathclyde was Rheged, covering the Solway basin and the Eden valley (Russell 1995:8; Price 1984:146-154; Jackson 1963:67-68).

The Anglo-Saxons entered Northern England from the east, colonising the area from the Humber estuary (Jackson 1953:207). They navigated up the Humber's tributaries to move further inland, turning south up the river Trent to form Lindsey and Mercia and north to form Deira; further North, they entered Bernicia from the coast. The fact that much of the Northern Midlands was densely forested made settlement there relatively difficult and led to weak



Figure 2.7. The Cumbrian and Northumbrian kingdoms. Based on Jackson (1953:67-68) and Nielsen (1998:90).

and relatively small-scale settlement in Lindsey and Mercia early on, before Mercia gained power in the second quarter of the 7th century (Jackson 1953:207).

The historical evidence for the early history is very sparse, but the earliest archaeological evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement in Deira is from the open areas of the Yorkshire Wolds and the city of York itself (with a very early Anglo-Saxon cemetery), which were settled by Anglo-Saxons as early as the second half of the 5th century, but had been inhabited before that and were never abandoned in the mean time (Jackson 1953:211-212). If the earlier inhabitants were in fact Britons and not former Roman mercenaries of Saxon origin as suggested by Hunter Blair (1947), but without clear archaeological evidence (cf. Jackson 1953:212), this implies that the Angles either fought Britons for their homesteads or settled among them more peaceably, perhaps on unused land after having won a number of battles that showed they were not to be trifled with and not easily expelled from the region. Jackson does not discuss this matter further.

Settlement of Deira continued further north along the Roman road to Aldborough, Catterick and Darlington, until it halted for a while at the less hospitable hills beyond the river Tees. The Angles fought Britons in this region, as witnessed by the Welsh heroic poem *Gododdin* which details a battle between Anglo-Saxons and Britons from the kingdom of Gododdin that was probably fought near Catterick around the year 600, and lost by the Cumbrians. There were also regions in Yorkshire that the Angles did not attack or settle in this phase: the Yorkshire Moors, which probably housed a British enclave for some time, and the British kingdom of Elmet in the Pennines to the west (Jackson 1953:212; 1963:66-69).

Further North, the Anglian settlement that would result in the founding of Bernicia in the coastal region around Bamburgh and Alnwick began later, about halfway through the 6th century, and it did not spread much further inland until after the *Gododdin* battle at Catterick (Jackson 1953:212-213; 1963:69-70). After winning this battle, having fought it together with the

Deirans, king Æthelfrith of Bernicia succeeded in uniting both Anglian kingdoms into the kingdom of Northumbria. This period is also when the Angles began to settle areas further inland, to the west in the Pennine hills and to the north into Lothian (Jackson 1963:70). It probably was not until the late 7th century that the Northumbrians had occupied the western regions around Cumberland as well.

Under the rule of king Ecgfrith, roughly between 671 and 685 AD, Northumbria reached the peak of its power and even controlled Strathclyde (Jackson 1953:217-218; 1963:71). Jackson estimates that during this period, English would have become the regular language, especially in the eastern and southern parts of the region (1963:71), at least until the Strathclyde Cumbrians conquered the western areas early in the tenth century, when Northumbrian power dwindled due to the Danish Viking invasions in the east and Norse-Gaelic settlers in the west. The latter were Vikings who had settled in Gaelic territory before moving on to England. They came in from the Hebrides around the year 900. In the first thirty years of the tenth century, more Vikings came to the western regions of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire from Ireland. Strathclyde then took over a large part of former Rheged from the Anglo-Saxons, so this area may have been “re-cumbricized” up to a point. In the early eleventh century, Strathclyde was absorbed into greater Scotland, which existed independently until the Norman invasion of Scotland in 1092 (Jackson 1953:217-219; 1963:72). This means that Cumbrian may have been spoken in parts of the Northern area until the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century (Jackson 1963:72).

The historical, onomastic and archaeological evidence as reviewed by Jackson (1953, 1963) yields a fairly detailed picture of the course of Anglo-Saxon settlement and the history of conflicts with Cumbrians. It shows there is reason to believe that contact between speakers of OE and Cumbrian occurred during several centuries, from the 5th century until possibly as late as the 11th century. In line with the evidence from phylogeography, it is likely that Cumbrian speakers were numerically superior in the early centuries, especially

since early Anglian settlements were not very dense; in the later centuries, the only Cumbrian speakers may have been members of the circles of Strathclyde nobility who had recovered the western part of Northumbria. This means that the contact situation during these centuries was far from stable.

2.3.2.3 Sociolinguistic situation

We have seen where and when contact between Anglo-Saxons started and for how long it may have continued, but we must also ask ourselves what the social circumstances would have been like. While Cumbrians were probably the numerically dominant group, the only possible conclusion from the ultimate survival of English, but not Cumbrian (or any of the other Brythonic varieties in England) is that the Anglo-Saxons must have gained cultural dominance over Cumbrians. This is borne out by the Anglo-Saxons' political dominance, and also by the fact that Anglo-Saxon culture (their social order, law, and organization) appears to have been typically Germanic, showing no signs of adopting Brythonic customs, although there were laws recognizing Celts as a group within Anglo-Saxon society (Stenton 1971:314-315).

Anglo-Saxon dominance probably played out even at a micro-level, within households. It has been assumed that many Britons ended up in subservient positions in Anglo-Saxon households, especially women: as slaves, servants, concubines or wives. It is unlikely that many adult males would have become slaves in the aftermath of conquest, but female prisoners of war would probably have been pressed into slavery (cf. Thompson 1984:95-96, discussed in Benskin 2011). Benskin (2011) points out that many of these women would be involved in child-care, and as second-language speakers of English, might well have influenced the first-language input of Anglo-Saxon children with substrate effects in their speech.

In addition, Cumbrian-speaking families and communities probably survived for a while as well, since the Anglo-Saxon settlement was not very dense. This may have been true for Northern England more than for the East,

since parts of the North were settled very late, and fully and finally brought under Anglo-Saxon rule only after several hundred years (in the case of Strathclyde). According to Loyn, when Norwegians colonized the North-West of England in the early tenth century (cf. Section 2.3.3), they encountered Anglo-Saxons only in the lower parts of the country, whereas Cumbrians inhabited the higher valleys in Cumberland, Westmorland, Northern Lancashire and West Yorkshire (Loyn 1994:47-50). This would be in line with the phylogenetic evidence discussed above, which suggested that Anglo-Saxon settlement could not have been very dense compared to the original population, especially in the West.

We cannot be certain of the extent and duration of contact between Northumbrian and Cumbrian, so any conclusions must remain somewhat tentative. Still, we may conclude that conditions in the North were more favourable for bringing about changes induced by contact with Brythonic Celtic than elsewhere, and this may well have played a role in the rise of the NSR.

2.3.3 Contact with Old Norse

2.3.3.1 History of Danelaw and settlement: who, where and when?

The contact situation between English and Old Norse is much better documented than the one between English and Cumbrian, although detailed evidence is still rare. It is known that the English came into contact with Scandinavians in the Viking Age. During this period, which lasted roughly from 800 to 1100, the Vikings raided coasts and towns on rivers all over Europe (Loyn 1994:1), but unlike in many other areas, they went beyond raiding in England and settled large areas of land. An overview of Viking settlements in England can be found in Figure 2.8.

From 850, the Vikings came to England in armies rather than small raiding parties (Baugh and Cable 1993:91). In the autumn of 865, a large Danish army undertook a number of expeditions in the North and East of

England, and by 869, they had control over East Anglia and Northumbria, and to some extent over Mercia (Loyn 1994:41).

Wessex was now the only English kingdom that remained independent. Because of this unique status and because the Viking raids had all but destroyed the tradition of learning in the North and East of England, the West Saxon dialect could develop into the 'standard' (written) dialect of Old English. This was true especially when Wessex gained control over Mercia and Northumbria as well, under the rule of king Ecgbryht in the early years of the ninth century (Nielsen 1998:91-95).

From the year 870, the Danish army tried to conquer Wessex, which was ruled from 871 by King Alfred. The attacks reached their peak around 878, when King Alfred of Wessex was pushed into a defensive position in the marshes of Athelney and subsequently countered the attacks with a victory at Edington (Loyn 1994:43). From then on, Alfred could consolidate his strength as a king, and he signed the treaty of Wedmore, in which the Danelaw was established, with the Danish leader Guthrum. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, this happened in 878 (cf. Killings 1996 and Baugh and Cable 1993:91), but "the situation was probably not completely clarified until 885-6" (Loyn 1994:43). The border of the Danelaw ran from London along the Thames and Lea rivers via Bedford and the Ouse river to Watling Street and following that road to Chester in the North-West (Nielsen 1998:167; cf. Figure 2.8). The area in Northumbria north of the river Tees, in the old Kingdom of Bernicia, remained English and was ruled by ealdormen in Bamburgh and the religious community of St Cuthbert (Pons-Sanz 2004:180).

The first Danes started settling North-East England around this time. In 876, Healfden "shared out the land of Northumbria to the soldiers in his part of the Viking army"; these soldiers from then on continued as farmers (Nielsen 1998:167). Part of Mercia was shared out to warriors from another Viking army in 877, and in 880 the same happened in East Anglia (Nielsen 1998:167). Even though the colonists started farming, they retained their military organization; the settlements were led by armies from fortified headquarters such as York

and the Five Boroughs (Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Stamford, and Leicester) in the North-East Midlands (Loyn 1994:44). Nonetheless, the settlers did adapt to the English culture and many of them quickly converted to Christianity (Loyn 1994:48).

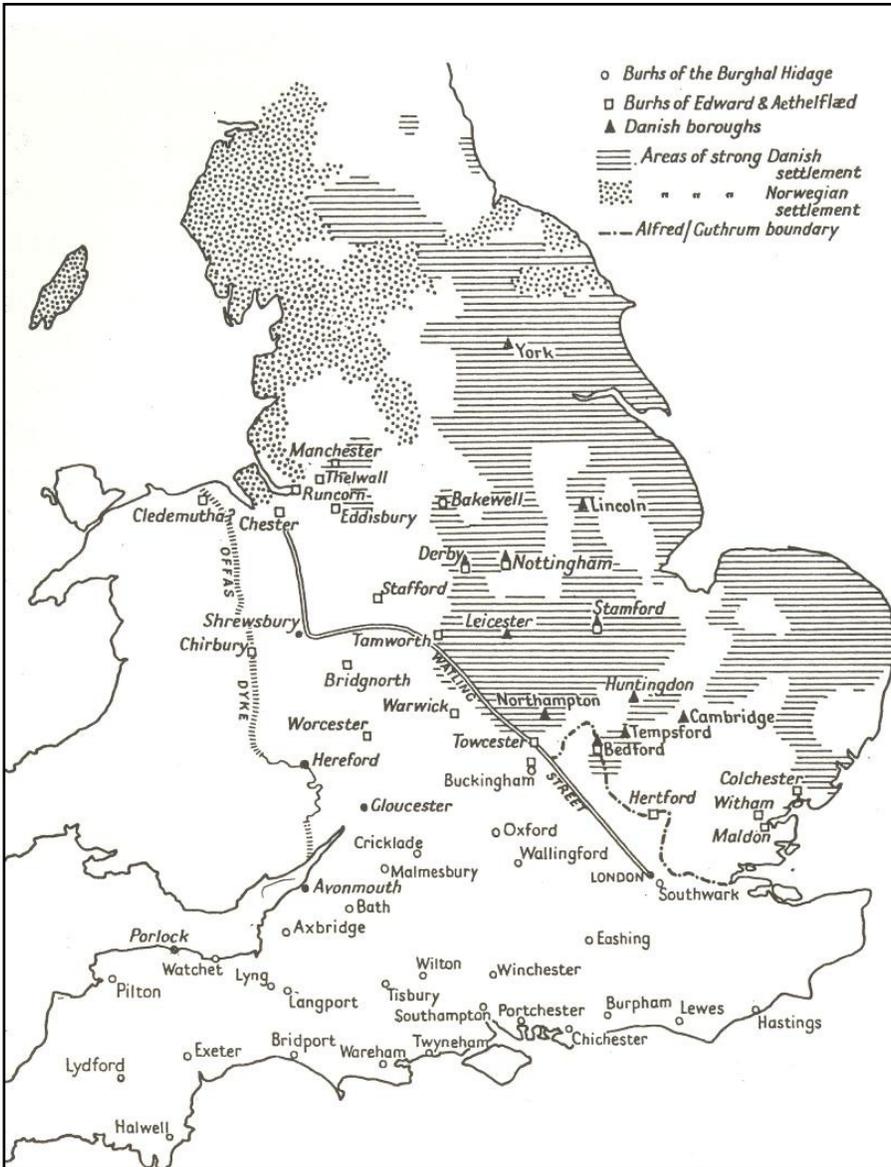


Figure 2.8. ON settlement areas from Nielsen (1998:168), originally from Loyn (1962:53).

After the death of King Alfred in 899 (Loyn 1994:42) came a succession of strong West Saxon kings, who succeeded in winning back all of the Danelaw from the Scandinavians (Loyn 1994:38). This involved only the overlordship; the settlers generally stayed where they were. They also retained their own legal system. The reabsorption of the Danelaw culminated in the reign of king Edgar (959-975), who was the first king of all of England (Loyn 1994:47-48).

In addition to the Danish settlements which concentrated in the East, there were also Norwegian settlers coming in from the Irish sea in the North-West. These Norwegians had been raiding Ireland, Man and the Scottish Isles from the year 795 and started settling there around 830 (Loyn 1994:34). The Norwegians in Dublin were expelled by the Irish in 902, and they then started colonizing the North-West of England (Pons-Sanz 2001:3). The exact dates of settlement are unknown because the developments were not chronicled as they were in the East, but most of the colonization must have taken place in the early decades of the tenth century (Loyn 1994:47).

The new settlers formed a significant addition to the population in the regions of Cumberland, Westmorland, North Lancashire and West Yorkshire (Loyn 1994:49-50). In the higher valleys, the Scandinavians met mainly British people; Anglo-Saxons only lived in the lower parts of the country. The Scandinavians received shares of conquered land here, but this did not happen as intensively as in the East (Loyn 1994:50). The Scandinavian Irish gained control over York and established a trade route between this city and Ireland (Loyn 1994:48), which helped make York an important city (Loyn 1994:44-45). Between 927 and 954, York and the whole of the Danelaw changed hands a few times, alternately being controlled by Norwegian and English kings. The Norwegians finally lost York in 954 (Loyn 1994:50-51).

After 954, there were no more invasions focused on settlement, but, instead, large armies attacked England for the sake of loot and political power, particularly after 980. There were Scandinavian initiatives for conquest that culminated in their ultimate domination under king Cnut in 1016 (Loyn

1994:64). The Scandinavian rule of these years did not change the fabric of English society much; it was mainly political in nature (Nielsen 1998:91).

2.3.3.2 Sociolinguistic situation and duration of contact

In order to analyse the way in which the linguistic influence of Old Norse on English came about, it is necessary to describe the sociolinguistic situations in which Scandinavians interacted with Englishmen. We know that the most important form of contact was between Scandinavian settlers in England and Anglo-Saxons who lived in the same regions. Describing the exact sociolinguistic situations in which contact took place is difficult, however, since contemporary written sources from the relevant regions are not available for the first 300 years of contact and the situation was in constant flux (Burnley 1992:419-420, Barnes 2000:175). What we do know is based on the traces that the Scandinavians left: names of places and people, loanwords and other linguistic influences they had on the English language, and English historical texts. These may be valuable even though they were often biased against the Vikings whom they saw as invaders.

Although the Danes, as conquerors, probably seized some land by force (Burnley 1992:17), they seem to mainly have settled on unoccupied land. As we have seen above, the Danes held on to their organization when they ceased to be a conquering army. According to Baugh and Cable (1993:93), the Danes would group themselves in concentrated centres such as the Five Boroughs and then divide "large tracts of land from which the owners had fled" between themselves.

The Vikings may have come to England first as soldiers and raiders, but those who stayed usually settled down as farmers, on equal footing with the surrounding English farmers and townsmen. The settlers mixed and intermarried with their English neighbours, they adopted many of the local customs and took part in the English communities, thus creating conditions

that were “favourable for an extensive Scandinavian influence on the English language”(Baugh and Cable 1993:93).

All of this means that settlers and native Englishmen would mostly communicate with each other as equals. As neighbours, they would have to talk to each other on a regular basis. This would happen in informal, everyday settings, without pressure to learn the other language perfectly. There was no spoken standard language, so understanding and being understood was the only goal (Burnley 1992:420). In these situations, it is probable that Vikings



Figure 2.9. The Scandinavian Belt and the Five Boroughs (based on Samuels 1989).

and Englishmen would try to make do with whatever they knew about and understood from the other language when communicating with each other.

Aside from some different word-order patterns, Old English and Old Norse were very similar to each other in structure, and many words would be the same or at least recognisable to speakers of the other language once they learnt to recognize the regular phonological correspondences between the two languages. In order to make themselves understood, Norse speakers would substitute English phonemes for their own, and English speakers would do the same with Norse phonemes (Burnley 1992:420). Townend calls this use and recognition of correspondences a 'switching-code' (2002:44). Although this view on cross-cultural communication may be somewhat simplistic, it does not seem at all improbable that this was at least one of the processes at work.

Scandinavian settlers could integrate into English society and shift to the English language relatively easily, since most of them were farmers and therefore of the same social class as most Anglo-Saxons. This process was probably aided by the fact that although they held on to their own laws and organization for a long time, they did come under English rule at some point (Price 1984:196). There are various hypotheses about when Old Norse ceased to be spoken in England; the language probably died out at different times in different regions, with the Scandinavian Belt being one of the last.

The language shift to English (albeit a variety bearing the traces of contact with Old Norse) is generally thought to have taken place in the tenth or eleventh century (cf. Ekwall 1930, Loyn 1994, Townend 2002). Isolated parts with close-knit Scandinavian-speaking communities would have retained their language the longest (Barnes 2000:177). The region par excellence where this seems to have held is the so-called Scandinavian Belt (cf. Figure 2.9). The dialects of this region show a stronger lexical influence from Old Norse than the rest of the Danelaw. As the map in Figure 2.9 shows, the Scandinavian Belt stretches from Cumberland and Westmorland in the west to the East Coast of Yorkshire, and includes the northern half of Lincolnshire. It does not include the area of the Five Boroughs, even though there was heavy settlement there as

well (Samuels 1989:106-108). The northern border of the Belt corresponds with the edge of the most important Scandinavian areas of settlement in England (cf. Figure 2.8 above). The old kingdom of Bernicia was less densely settled, and Scotland was colonized by settlers from England only later on in the Middle Ages (Samuels 1989:113; cf. Smith 1996:177-180).

The area that grew into the Scandinavian Belt probably combined two factors that were conducive to language survival: it was a core area of settlement and Scandinavian communities may have been close-knit. There is medieval evidence of stronger Scandinavian linguistic influence in this focal area than in the surrounding regions, which means that it must have been, "from the period of the actual settlements onwards, an area of deeper Scandinavian linguistic penetration than the rest of the Danelaw" (Samuels 1989:109-111). That is to say, the Scandinavian Belt is an area that was not necessarily more densely populated by Scandinavians than the land of the Five Boroughs, but where apparently Old Norse was spoken more for a longer period of time. From place-name evidence suggesting that the population was still taking part in general Old Norse phonological changes in the twelfth century, Samuels concludes that the language died out in the focal area only after that period. He hypothesizes that Scandinavian continued to be spoken in closed communities in this area until the twelfth century, and the younger generations started speaking English instead when the communities were opened up, for instance because of the civil war of the mid-twelfth century (Samuels 1989:112-113).

It should be noted here that the contrast with the dialects of the Southern Danelaw was probably more striking in the Middle Ages than it is now, because these dialects have been under strong influence from high-prestige Southern dialects since the fifteenth century, and the Old Norse linguistic influence on local dialects was reduced in the process (Kolb 1965, quoted in Nielsen 1998:185).

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that the Northumbrian or Northern dialect may well have harboured some morphosyntactic variation from the outset, deriving from a mixture of North-West Germanic dialects spoken on the continent (Section 2.2). We have also seen that it bordered on other dialects in the south: Mercian during the OE period, East and West Midlands English during the ME period. We will see in Chapter 3 that the different dialects had somewhat different patterns of verbal morphology, and they affected each other through dialect contact.

It has also been established that the Northumbrian dialect was probably in relatively close contact with the Cumbrian variety of Brythonic, and certainly in close contact with Old Norse in the Danelaw area. There is genetic evidence that most of the English population is not originally Anglo-Saxon, but rather Celtic (or, at least, their ancestors must have been Celtic-speaking before the advent of the Anglo-Saxons). The only region in England where Germanic settlers (Anglo-Saxon and Viking) made much of a genetic contribution is in the east. This leaves ample room for the hypothesis that many speakers of Cumbrian must have learned Old English as a second language, and this may have influenced the language in subtle ways. Meanwhile, in the North-East, Scandinavians may well have formed a relatively large minority compared to Anglo-Saxons and (anglicized) Cumbrians, leading, among other things, to the many Old Norse loanwords that became a part of Northern Middle English.

These circumstances set the dialect apart from other English dialects, since it probably underwent more contact-induced changes than others, due to contact with two very distinct other languages. We will return to this matter briefly in Chapter 3, when discussing the developments in the verbal paradigm which provided the input for the NSR. A fuller discussion of changes in English which were possibly brought about by contact with Brythonic and Old Norse will follow in Chapter 5, which reviews the evidence that the Northern Subject Rule may have been formed under the influence of language contact.

Chapter 3 – The NSR in a diachronic and dialectological perspective

3.1 Introduction

The discussion in Chapter 2 showed that English in Northern England was in a unique contact situation in the early Middle Ages: not only was there (possibly prolonged) contact with Cumbrian, the regional variety of Brythonic Celtic, after the Anglo-Saxons had settled the area, but also relatively intense contact with Old Norse, brought about by the settlement of Vikings in the Danelaw area. We saw that there may have been some morphosyntactic variation present in Northumbrian OE that was inherited from the Germanic varieties brought to Britain by the Anglo-Saxon settlers. It is possible that this variation was affected in some way by contact with Cumbrian, as it was by contact with Old Norse. This combination of contact factors may therefore have helped to set apart Northern English from other English dialects. We also saw that the Northern English dialect area bordered on the area of Mercian OE and later West and East Midlands ME (of which East Midlands ME was also heavily influenced by Old Norse), so these dialects may have influenced each other.

Since the Northern Subject Rule has been described as a typically Northern phenomenon in Middle English, it is interesting to investigate how it evolved against the backdrop of these contact situations. To this end, this chapter will discuss verbal morphology in the history of Northern English and some other varieties known to have patterns related to the NSR, focusing on contexts relevant to the NSR and especially on early ME corpus data, since these offer the best evidence for the early stages in the development of the NSR and were unavailable until now.

The relevant contexts for our purposes are (plural) present indicative forms of strong and weak verbs. Recall that the NSR involves variation in verbal endings in the present indicative, affecting the plural and, in some varieties, the first person singular. There are two conditions relevant for inflection in the NSR: the subject condition (pronoun or NP subject) and the adjacency condition

(whether a subject pronoun is adjacent to the verb or not). Pronoun subjects (*we, you, they*, and in some varieties, *I*) trigger zero endings (-∅) or earlier -*e* on adjacent finite verbs, but when the verb is not adjacent or the subject is not a personal pronoun (I refer to these as NP subjects), the finite verb has an -*s* ending. This is illustrated with a Present-Day English example in (1), repeated from Chapter 1 and cf. Pietsch (2005b):

- (1) a. *they sing*
 b. *birds sings*
 c. *they sing and dances*

The discussion of variation will be limited in several ways. First, it will focus mainly on variation in plural forms, since these are the only ones regularly following the NSR in early Middle English. Second, only regular (strong and weak) verbs will be considered, since preterite-present verbs like *can* and *may* have always had a divergent paradigm (with general plural -*en* in early English) and as far as we know never followed the NSR. The verb *be* will also be left out of the discussion, at least for Middle English, since it also has its own paradigm and it is unclear whether it participated in the ME NSR in the same way as regular verbs.

The comprehensive survey of the available evidence for the NSR and related phenomena as presented in this chapter will reveal a number of variation patterns which may prove useful in exploring the morphosyntactic nature as well as the possible origins of the NSR. The discussion of new early ME data will show that the pattern already occurred most categorically in the North, from which we may want to conclude that that was also its approximate region of origin. The fact that the subject condition usually has a stronger effect than the adjacency condition can be taken as evidence that the syntax of subjects is at the core of the pattern. The NSR also occurred with other endings than -∅ and -*s*, even in early English, showing that the exact morphological realization is less important to the pattern, and perhaps to its origin, than the

fact that there were different plural endings available. The variant endings and their geographical distribution are also revealing with respect to the contacts that existed between dialects: in the core northern area, the NSR occurs with \emptyset/e and $-s$, but in areas bordering on the Midlands, where $-n$ was the general plural ending in ME, it occurs with $-n$ as a variant of \emptyset/e . In the East Midlands (and further south after ME), it is also found with the southern plural ending $-th$ instead of $-s$. I will discuss these developments roughly in chronological order, from Old English (Section 3.2), via Middle English (Section 3.3) to Modern and Present-Day English, with a focus also on non-Northern varieties (Section 3.4). The chapter will close with a summary and conclusion (Section 3.5).

3.2 Variation in Old English

The evidence for Northern (Northumbrian) OE is relatively sparse, especially before the 10th century. The only remaining Northumbrian evidence from the earlier period consists of four relatively short poems. The oldest consists of fragments of *The Dream of the Rood* from the Ruthwell cross (late 7th or early 8th century, cf. Sweet 1975: 153-159). Probably slightly younger is *Cædmon's Hymn*, which is found in two manuscripts of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (Sweet 1975: 181). The third poem is *Bede's death song*, a poem in five lines of alliterative verse, which occurs in a letter describing the last hours of Bede, written by one of his pupils. Bede reputedly died in 735 (cf. Browne 1930:10-11), but the oldest manuscript in which this poem is found dates from the ninth century: the St. Gall MS 254 (Sweet 1975: 182). *The Leiden Riddle*, finally, is a Northumbrian translation of Aldhelm's riddle *De Lorica*, found in a 9th-century continental manuscript: MS. Voss. Lat. 4.106 (Sweet 1975: 183).

The early Northumbrian poems have few present tense indicative forms, and even fewer verbs other than non-preterite-present verbs. The third singular and plural forms that we do find all end in $-th$ or $-t$. The relevant examples are 3SG *uuiurthit* 'becomes' from *Bede's Death Song* and 3SG *hlimmith* 'resounds' and *scelfath* 'shakes', which show that the 3PL ending in this dialect

was probably *-th*, as 3SG and 3PL endings usually ended in the same consonant, but are not directly informative on the NSR, and 3PL *biað* ‘are’ (2) and *fraetuath* (3) ‘adorn’, from the *Leiden Riddle* (Sweet 1975:183).

(2) *Uundnae me ni biað ueflæ* (Leiden Riddle 5)

wounds me not are horizontal-threads

‘No horizontal threads pierce me’

(3) *ða ði geolu godueb geatum fraetuath* (Leiden Riddle 10)

when that yellow fine-cloths trappings adorn

‘when yellow fine cloths adorn trappings’

Both of these plural forms have non-adjacent NP subjects and would be compatible with a version of the NSR that has *-th* instead of *-s*, but they would equally easily fit the pattern with general plural *-th* that is attested for other varieties of OE. Since the earliest Northumbrian evidence is equivocal on the presence of syntactic conditions on present indicative endings, then, we have to look elsewhere to reconstruct the history of the full present indicative paradigm in early Northumbrian OE. The more extensive evidence from later Northumbrian OE (mainly consisting of 10th-century glosses) can be investigated in its own right, but can also be used for reconstruction, when compared with the evidence from other older Germanic varieties. The most striking result of this comparison is that the *-s* ending was a specifically Northumbrian OE innovation; plural vowel endings, the probable precursors of the zero ending in the NSR, occurred throughout OE.

	Northumbrian OE	West Saxon OE	Old Frisian	Old Norse	Old Saxon	Old Low Franconian	Old High German	Gothic
1SG	-e/o	-e	-e	-ø/ -a/-i	-u/-o	-on	-u/-ōn/ -on	-a/-o
2SG	-s/-st	-(e)st	-(a/e)st	-r/ -ar/-ir	-is/-os	-is	-is(t)/ -ōs(t)	-is/-os
3SG	-þ/-s	-eþ	-(e)t/ -(e)th	-r/ -ar/-ir	-id/-od/ -it/-ot/ -ið/-oð	-it/-et	-it/ōt	-iþ/-oþ
1PL	-þ/-s	-aþ	-at/-ath/ -et/-eth	-um	-(i)ad/ -od/- (i)at / -ot / -(i)að / -oð	-un	-emēs/ -ēm/-ēn/ -ōmēs/ -ōn	-am/ -om
2PL	-þ/-s	-aþ	-at/-ath/ -et/-eth)	-ið	-(i)ad/ -od/- (i)at / -ot / -(i)að / -oð	-it/-et	-et	-iþ/-oþ
3PL	-þ/-s	-aþ	-at/-ath/ -et/-eth	-a	-(i)ad/ -od/- (i)at / -ot -(i)að / -oð	-unt/- ont/ -int	-ant/ -ent	-and/ -ond

Table 3.1. Indicative present verb endings in Germanic languages. Reduced endings have been excluded. Dental consonants (þ/ð/th) have been spelled in accordance with the source; cf. note 3.

Table 3.1³ summarizes the relevant paradigms of the various older Germanic languages, including West Saxon and Northumbrian OE. This shows that the OE dialects inherited a system of present-tense indicative morphology that had already undergone some syncretism compared to the Common Germanic system. Whereas some of the other Germanic languages had a separate indicative present ending for each person/number combination, all plural persons had the same morphology in OE. Of the two possible variants in Northumbrian, *-th* was found in West-Saxon OE as well as a number of other Germanic varieties, but *-s* was unique in older Germanic. Another striking characteristic of the OE paradigm is that the difference between plural and 3SG morphology was very small. The more detailed overview of OE paradigms in Table 3.2 shows that the consonantal endings are the same in Northumbrian, and the only difference in the other dialects is the vowel: *-eþ* or *-aþ*.

		Northumbrian OE		Non-northern OE
		conservative	innovative	
SG	1	-o, -e	-o, -e	-e
	2	-s(t)	-as	-(e)st/-e(st)
	3	-eþ, -aþ	-es, -as	-eþ
PL		-eþ, -aþ (-e?)	-es, -as (-e)	-aþ (-e)

Table 3.2. Old English indicative present verb endings. Based on Lass (1992:134-136), Brunner (1962 II:179).

Both the variation between *-th* and *-s* forms and the occurrence of vowel endings are interesting for our purposes, since they may have provided the input for the NSR. I will first discuss vowel endings, and turn to variation between *-th* and *-s* below. Table 3.2 shows that in addition to *-th/s*, OE had plural forms ending in a vowel. These are usually represented as *-e*, although *-o* also was a common spelling in Northumbrian. These plural vowel endings were

³Northern OE from Lass (1992:136); WS from Lass (1992:134); Old Frisian from Bremmer (1999:70-71); Old Norse from Barnes (2001:138); Old Saxon from Rauch (1992:xxxii-iii); Old Low Franconian from van Helten (1902:176); Old High German from Ellis (1953:53,61-62); Gothic from Rauch (2003:85).

homophonous with the 1SG ending and appear to have been an innovation occurring in all dialects of OE, especially in the 1PL and 2PL with a pronoun subject in inversion (Hogg 1992:297,305; Brunner 1962 II:185). This is illustrated in (4), from the *Lindisfarne Gospels*:

- (4) *intellextistis* *haec omnia* *dicunt* *ei etiam*
oncneaw gie vel ongete *ge dhas alle* *cwoedon vel saegdon him.*
 know you or understand you those all told or said him
 (Lindis.Mat.Skeat1871 13.51)
 ‘Do you know / do you understand all that? They told him [yes]’

These vowel endings were especially frequent in past and present tense indicative forms in the South (Brunner 1962 II:179). They occurred less often in the Northumbrian glosses than in texts written in other OE dialects, but this may be an effect of the fact that they are word-by-word translations of Latin texts, and the glossators may not have seen vowel endings as sufficiently explicitly indicative plural for their purposes, as opposed to indicative 1SG or past/subjunctive (Benskin 2011). This theory is supported by the fact that West Saxon glosses also avoid plural vowel forms (Cole to appear).

In spite of the low frequency of plural vowel endings in the Northumbrian glosses, there is evidence that these endings actually occurred more widely in Northumbrian than in West Saxon: Cole finds them in the Lindisfarne glosses (gospels of Mark and John), not only in the inverted verb-subject order with 1PL and 2PL, but also in the 3PL and in subject-verb order (Cole to appear). Strikingly, then, vowel endings already seem to be used in the same contexts as in the later NSR, although their frequency of use was very low in the OE evidence (cf. Cole to appear). The specifically Northumbrian uses of vowel endings are illustrated below (cf. de Haas 2008 for (5) and Cole to appear for (6)).

(5) *et a foro nisi baptizentur non comedunt*
 & from *ðingstow sie gefulwuad ne etto hia*
 and from marketplace if-not baptized not eat they

(Lindis.Mark.Skeat1871 7.4)

‘And in the marketplace, if they have not washed, they do not eat’

(6) *domine ad quem ibimus uerba uitae aeternae habes*
drihten to huæm woe ge geonge uordo lifes ece ðu hæfis
 lord to whom we go words of-life eternal you have

(f. 226 ra 10; Lindis.Jn.Skeat1871, 6.68)

‘Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life’

The other innovative ending only affected Northumbrian OE: this is the dialect where final *-s* started competing with *-th* in the PL and 3SG, at least as early as the 10th century. The Northern Midlands do not seem to have been affected by this change during the OE period: the Mercian dialects had only *-th* forms in the 3SG and the PL (Lass 1992:134-136). This is certainly true for the Mercian glosses of the *Vespasian Psalter* (early 9th century) and the *Rushworth¹ Glosses* by Farman (late 10th century): virtually only *-th* endings were found in these texts in the indicative present of regular verbs (de Haas 2004:91-95).

In the 10th-century Northumbrian glosses (as evidenced by the *Lindisfarne Gospel* and the *Rushworth² Glosses* by Owun⁴), *-th* and *-s* endings are in competition; these texts represent an intermediary stage in the replacement of *-th* by *-s* (de Haas 2004:91-95), cf. (7) from Cole (2011):

⁴According to Hogg (2004), both these Northumbrian dialects probably hailed from the region of Durham in the far North-East of England, although they were slightly different.

(7) *cognoscitis eum et uidistis*

gie ongeattas hine & geseað hine (Lindisfarne Jn.14:7)

you know him and see him

“ye know him and have seen him”

Northumbrian								
	Lindisfarne			Rushworth ² (Owun)				
	-th	-s	% -s	Total	-th	-s	% -s	Total
3 SG	738	490	39.9%	1228	649	145	18.3%	794
PL	447	546	55.0%	993	247	289	53.9%	536
Total	1185	1036	46.7%	2221	896	434	32.6%	1330

Mercian								
	Vespasian Psalter			Rushworth ¹ (Farman)				
	-th	-s	% -s	Total	-th	-s	% -s	Total
3 SG	682	0	0.0%	682	341	0	0.0%	341
PL	477	0	0.0%	477	282	1	0.4%	283
Total	1159	0	0.0%	1159	623	1	0.2%	624

Table 3.3. Indicative present *-th* and *-s* endings of regular verbs in the Northumbrian and Mercian glosses, based on de Haas (2004).

Table 3.3 gives a comparison of the numbers of 3SG and PL *-s* and *-th* endings in the Northumbrian *Lindisfarne* and *Rushworth²* glosses with those in the Mercian *Rushworth¹* glosses (10th century, cf. Skeat 1871) and the 9th- or 10th-century *Vespasian Psalter* (cf. Kuhn 1965, Kytö 1996). The percentage of *-s* endings varies between 18% and 55% in the Northumbrian glosses, whereas it is (virtually) absent from the Mercian glosses.

Although the variation in indicative plural endings in Northumbrian is not exactly like the later NSR because the effects are weaker and different endings pattern together, there is evidence that indicative plural endings were already conditioned both by subject type and by adjacency between subject and

verb, as in the NSR. Cole (2011, to appear) shows that this is the case in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. These glosses do not have the opposition between *-e* and *-s/th* that we might expect from an early NSR dialect, since *-e* is very infrequent, a fact which originally led me to conclude that there was no evidence for the NSR in these glosses (de Haas 2008). However, a thorough analysis of various possible context factors conditioning verbal inflection in the *Lindisfarne* glosses by Cole (2011, to appear) has revealed that in this text, it is variation between *-s* and *-th* that is conditioned by subject type⁵ and adjacency: *-s* occurs more frequently with adjacent pronoun subjects, and *-th* elsewhere. The pattern is statistically significant, although it is far from categorical and variable between gospels (not all of them show the same effects to the same degree, Cole 2011), and is obscured further by the presence of other conditioning factors, notably stem endings (verb stems ending in *-d/t/th* favour *-s*; cf. Blakeley 1949, Cole to appear) and priming (an ending is more likely to be used again if it has recently been used in the text; Cole 2011).

We may conclude from the Old English evidence that Northumbrian OE was different from other OE dialects both in the form of its present indicative endings (especially the presence of *-s*) and in the way variation between endings was conditioned. The morphological material which would later be used in the NSR was already there, with variation between *-e*, *-s* and *-th*, and so were the syntactic conditions on the NSR, the type of subject condition and the adjacency condition. However, the Northumbrian dialect from the *Lindisfarne* glosses is different from later Northern English in the sense that not all endings already occur in exactly the same contexts as they do in later NSR dialects. Plural vowel endings do, but *-s* endings favour contexts with adjacent pronoun subjects as well, unlike in later NSR varieties. On the one hand, this indicates that the syntactic conditions on the NSR are not dependent on the exact morphological material that is available in the plural present indicative: the fact

⁵ Unlike in Northern ME NSR dialects, but like in the early Modern English Cely Letters, this effect also plays a role in the third person singular (Cole 2011).

of morphological differentiation seems to be more important. We will see in Section 3.3 that this also follows from the early ME evidence. On the other hand, this distribution represents a puzzle: what happened to the conditions on inflection between the Lindisfarne OE dialect and the rise of the ME NSR varieties? I will revisit this question when discussing the origin of the NSR in Chapter 5.

3.3 Variation in Middle English

3.3.1 Introduction: variants of the NSR and various plural endings

Middle English is a crucial period in the investigation of the NSR and its origins for several reasons. It is the first period in which the pattern is widely attested, and also the period in which it seems to have been most widely found across Northern English dialects, before it receded due to competition with Standard English. This means that we should focus on ME to get an overview of what the NSR was like before it was influenced by Standard English. Since the OE evidence does not show the NSR pattern in its later form, early ME is also the period to look for evidence of its early history. Although the literature describes the NSR as the general pattern in Northern ME (cf. Mustanoja 1960:481-482, LALME 1:554), no detailed quantitative study of the ME NSR has been undertaken until now. It is likely that some variation was present in the pattern, especially in view of the fact that it occurred in a group of dialects which had undergone relatively little standardization and were spread out over a large geographical area. I therefore present a detailed analysis in Section 3.3.2 of all the available early ME evidence, using a new corpus. I will interpret that evidence in the light of what is known from the literature about variation in ME verbal inflection.

If we compare the indicative present paradigms of ME dialects with those of OE, it is clear that there is more variation between dialects in ME. In

OE, only Northumbrian was divergent in that it had a plural *-s* ending in addition to *-th* and *-ø/e*. In ME, the Northern dialect has lost *-th* altogether and innovated the familiar NSR pattern with variation between *-ø/e* and *-s*, and whereas the Southern paradigm has remained virtually unchanged since OE, the Midlands dialects have a new plural *-en* ending, which co-occurs with *-s* in the northern and north-eastern parts of the Midlands, which also have the NSR (Lass 1992:136-137, Mustanoja 1960:481-482, Brunner 1962 II:185, 188-189). This state of affairs is summarized in Table 3.4.

	North: NSR		West Midlands	East Midlands	South
	Adjacent pronoun Subject	Nonadjacent / NP subject			
SG	1 -e/-ø	-e/-ø (-es)	-e	-e	-e
	2 -es	-es	-es(t)	-est	-est
	3 -es	-es	-eth/-es	-eth/-es	-eth
PL	-e/-ø	-es	-en/-es (-e)	-en/-es (-e)	-eth (-e)

Table 3.4. Middle English indicative present verb endings. Based on Lass (1992:136-137), Mustanoja (1960:481-482), Brunner (1962 II:185, 188-189).

Table 3.4 gives a very general overview of the geographical distribution of plural endings. I will refine this by giving a more exact overview of where the various endings occurred, and of how they combined in areas where they co-occurred. I will first discuss the facts as they appear in the literature, and then explore the exact state of affairs in early ME as it appears from my corpus material. The discussion will focus especially on three issues: first, on variation between *-ø*, *-e* and *-n* endings, which have different geographical distributions but all appear in the same (adjacent pronominal) contexts in NSR dialects; second, on the *-s* ending and NSR patterns with *-s*; and third, on the *-th* ending and NSR patterns with *-th*, which have been attested for some late ME East Midlands dialects.

All ME dialects, except the Southern ones which retained general plural *-th*, appear to have had some form of *-ø/e/n* plural ending, sometimes in variation with *-s* (especially in the North) or *-th* (in southern parts of the Midlands). Zero, *-e* and *-n* endings can be grouped together since they represent

stages in processes of phonological reduction and as a result, functioned as spelling and/or allophonic variants during long periods in OE and ME. Final *-e* and *-en* of various origins were affected by the neutralization and ultimate loss of unstressed vowels and thus were the forerunners of the zero endings in Northern ME and later dialects.

OE had plural *-e* in the present indicative on a limited scale, especially in inversion contexts (cf. Section 3.2), but it also had plural *-en* in a number of other forms: the conservative classical West-Saxon dialect had *-en* in the present and past tense subjunctive plural and *-on* in the past indicative plural (Brunner 1962 II:175). There were reduced vowel variants (*-e*) of these endings which were especially frequent in the subjunctive forms and may have been the origin of the indicative vowel endings in inversion (Sweet 1871:xxxv, Bloomfield 1930:100, and see the discussion in Chapter 5). In addition, preterite-present verbs had general plural *-en* (cf. Bryan 1921). The presence of these plural *-en* and *-e* endings may have helped to reinforce the plural *-e/∅* endings in the present indicative, so they became very frequent with pronoun subjects in NSR dialects, in non-inverted as well as inverted order (cf. Pietsch 2005b, Cole to appear, and the sources discussed in Chapter 5). They probably also represent the input for the generalized *-en* ending of the (non-Northern) Midlands ME dialects (Brunner 1948:74-75; Mossé 1952:76).

Plural *-en* and *-e* endings became confused through a number of erosive phonological processes, which affected the Northumbrian/Northern dialects early on⁶, before spreading south to dialects of the Midlands and the South. The endings were reduced in OE through the loss of final *-n*, and later through neutralization of unstressed vowels to schwa, and consequent ME loss of schwa.

Northumbrian OE lost final *-n* in a number of morphosyntactic contexts (Hogg 1992:305 and cf. Campbell 1959:189, Brunner 1962 I:373). Loss of final -

⁶ These processes of reduction may have been accelerated by contact with (Cumbrian and) Old Norse; I will return to this topic in Chapter 5.

n occurred not only in some verb forms, but also in weak nouns, adverbs and numerals. This loss took place early on in some forms of the verb, namely infinitives (*arisa* 'rise') and plural subjunctives in the present (*geworðe* 'they may become') and past (*onfunde* 'they may have discovered'), but in other verb forms, final *-n* was retained: past participles of strong verbs (*arisen* 'arisen') and, usually, past plural indicative forms (Hogg 1992:305). This change was apparently in progress when the early Northumbrian texts were written in the 8th and 9th centuries (Hogg 1992:5), as they have forms with as well as without *-n* in the contexts mentioned above. The change was more or less unique to the Northumbrian dialect during the OE period⁷.

After the OE period, forms without final *-n* started occurring in Midlands and Southern dialects as well (Moore 1927, cf. Brunner 1962 I:382-383). Moore notes that there are substantial differences between various 13th- and 14th-century texts from the South and the Midlands in the degree to which final *-n* had been lost. In some texts, final *-n* had been virtually completely lost in all contexts, while in others (including verbs) it is only lost in some contexts (Moore 1927:232-233).

Another reductive development in OE was the gradual neutralization of unstressed vowels to schwa during the OE period (Hogg 1992:240-247; Campbell 1959:153-157, 161; Brunner 1962 I:345-347), which was a condition for deletion of the syllable, resulting in a *-∅* ending. OE initially had five distinct unstressed vowels: /i, e, æ, u, a/ (Hogg 1992:240), but OE spellings show that ever more of these vowels became confused, until they all merged into one vowel, probably schwa. This development was probably complete in the late Northumbrian and Mercian dialects of the 10th-century glosses, but in other dialects, full merger became apparent only in the 11th century (Hogg 1992:240-247; cf. Campbell 1959:157, 161).

⁷ The only exception is formed by the Mercian Rushworth¹ gloss which also frequently has forms without *-n*, especially in weak nouns (Hogg 1992:305). However, part of this gloss was based on the Northumbrian Lindisfarne glosses (Skeat 1878:xiv), so it may have been influenced by that exemplar.

These neutral final vowels subsequently underwent deletion. Brunner (1962 I:348) describes how this process started first in words with secondary sentence-stress like *þane* > *þan* 'then', OE *butan* > early ME *bute* > *but* 'but' in the 12th century, and occurred later during the same century, in trisyllabic words with a long initial syllable (e.g. OE *hlæfdige* 'lady' > *laffdiȝ* in the Ormulum). Final *-e* in other contexts was lost later, first in the North, in the 13th century, and then in the South in the 14th century.

The result of this is that *-e* and *-ø* endings were in allophonic variation in early ME: depending on the dialect, they could also be allophones of *-en*. This is one reason to treat *-ø/e/n* as one type of ending. Another is, more specifically when analysing possible evidence for the NSR, that the different spelling variants are often unreliable as evidence for actual pronunciation in early ME. This is shown, for instance, by the practice of the *Havelok* scribe to write *-en* or *-e* where rhymes indicate that it must have been pronounced *-e* or *-ø* (Smithers 1987:203-207). We will see in Section 3.3.2 that treating *-ø/e/n* as one type of ending also fits the patterns of variation in NSR dialects.

The geographical variation between *-n* and *-ø/e* in the plural present indicative was such that *-n* was predominantly a Midland ME feature from the second half of the 13th century onwards (Brunner 1962 II:189). In late ME, *-n* endings were widely found especially in the southern and western parts of the Midlands, as can be seen in the map from LALME (I:467) in Figure 3.1. In spite of the wide distribution of plural *-n* shown here, the reductive processes outlined above did affect the Midlands *-n* ending, too. The loss of *-n* occurred late in the 14th century in the present indicative plural (Brunner 1962 II:190-191). After loss of *-e*, Midlands ME plurals remained endingless (Brunner 1962 II:189).



Figure 3.1. Plural -n-type (including abbreviated -n forms and -yng) in non-Southern late Middle English, map 652 from LALME I:467. Large dots indicate dialects with -n-type endings, small dots indicate sample locations without them.

The early ME corpus study presented in Section 3.3.2 will show to what extent the geographical distribution of plural *-n* changed between early and late ME. It will also show the distribution of *-ø/e* endings which is not readily available for late ME, since LALME does not separately present data on the occurrence of *-ø/e/n* in NSR dialects (LALME I:554) and only a few isolated texts in the North and East Midlands have *-ø/e* alone in the plural present indicative (LALME I:467, map 651). One interesting point that this may help clarify is how variation between *-ø/e*, *-n* and *-s* patterned in border areas between Northern and Midlands dialects.

The Northern Subject Rule as it has traditionally been described in ME involves variation (in the plural forms and sometimes in the first person singular⁸ of the indicative present) between *-e/-∅* when the verb is adjacent to a personal pronoun subject, and *-s* elsewhere, i.e. when subject and verb are not adjacent or when the subject is an NP. The pattern is illustrated with Northern ME examples in (8):

(8) a. *bai caste þair mantil and rennis a-mise.*

(CMBenrul 13.457-460, North, 1400-1425)

‘they throw away their mantle and run amiss’

b. *And hali storis tels and sais þat helias, in ald dais, Was taken up als vnto heuen*

(CMCursor 17.545, North, 1325-1350)⁹

‘and holy stories tell and say that Elias, in the old days, was taken up as if to heaven’

Example (8a) illustrates the adjacency condition: in a clause with a pronoun subject (*þai* ‘they’), only the verb that is adjacent to the subject has an *-e* ending (*caste* ‘cast’). The non-adjacent verb has an *-s* ending (*rennis* ‘run’). The subject condition is visible in the difference between (8a) and (8b): verbs in a clause with an NP subject (*hali storis* ‘holy stories’) have an *-s* ending even when they are adjacent to the subject (*tels* ‘tell’).

Pietsch (2005a) presents the approximate geographical distribution of the NSR in late ME, shown in Figure 3.2 (Pietsch 2005a:164, map 8). The region

⁸ Mustanoja (1960: 481-482) lists the NSR as a feature of the first person singular in ME, although it only started to become frequent in this context in early Modern English, according to Fernández Cuesta (2010). The data from early ME show that the 1sg did not follow the NSR (cf. Section 3.3.2). For this reason, the discussion of indicative forms here will focus on the plural.

⁹ This example was taken from the PPCME2 corpus; *CMCursor* refers to the text of the *Cursor Mundi* in MS. *Cotton Vespasian A.iii*. This is the same text included in the LAEME corpus as *Cotvespcma* (cf. Section 3.3).

covers the Northern dialect area as well as parts of the Northwest and Northeast Midlands, reaching far southwards especially in the East; it includes all of Lincolnshire and some of Leicestershire, Rutland, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

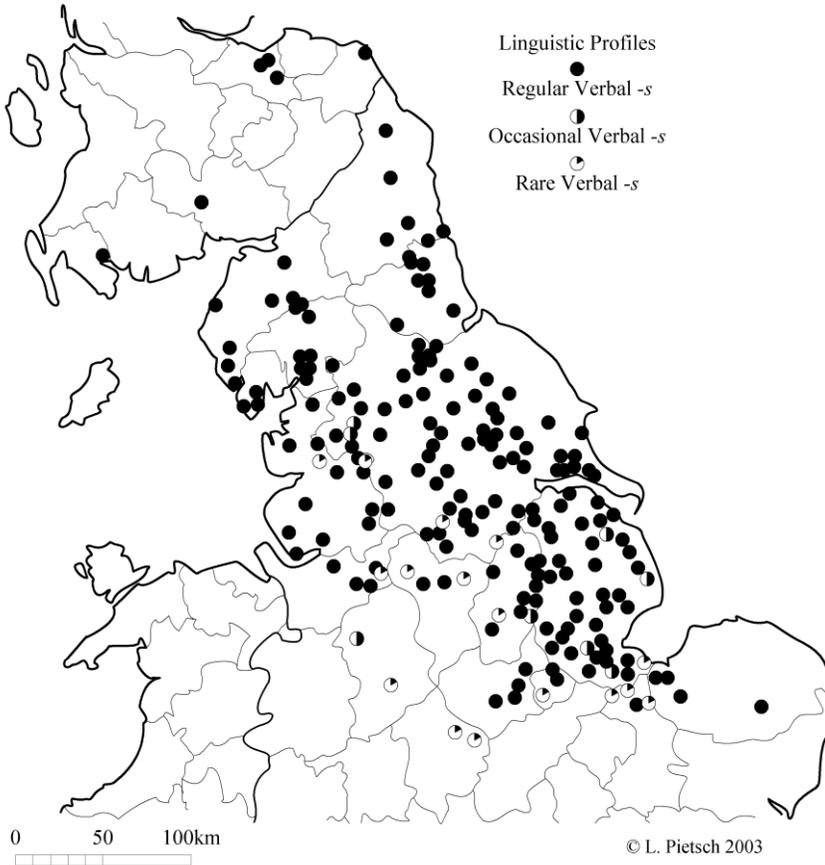


Figure 3.2. The NSR in Late Middle English, from Pietsch 2005a:164 (based on data in LALME I:467, IV:110-111). 'Regular verbal -s' represents dialects with fairly categorical NSR.

This map is only a rough approximation of the variation in the NSR, since no detailed analysis of the variation present in the ME NSR has been published until now. It has been assumed that the NSR (with -s) was the general pattern of plural inflection in Northern ME, without much variation. Mustanoja

(1960: 481-482) concludes from his corpus that “the exceptions to this rule are mostly due to the requirements of the metre or to southern influence”, although he does not give any examples of these exceptions. The Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English (LALME), surveying the state of affairs in late ME, between 1350 and 1450, describes the NSR simply as the pattern found in Northern ME plural verbs, without actually having recorded the zero endings in these dialects (LALME I:554). LALME accordingly only offers a map of present indicative plural *-s* in the North, not of the NSR as such (LALME I:467). Pietsch’s map in Figure 3.2 is based on the LALME data on *-s* and also integrates the LALME data on various other plural endings (Pietsch 2005a:164). Since LALME was not designed to give a very fine-grained overview of variation in the NSR, this map does not show much detail.

The corpus study of early ME material presented in Section 3.3.2 is designed to show the details of variation that are lacking on the map of the NSR in late ME. We already discussed variation between *-∅*, *-e* and *-n*. With regard to variation in the use of the *-s* ending, an interesting factor to pay attention to is the spread of *-s* towards the south during ME. Plural *-s* forms were found in the indicative in the North from the 10th century onwards. The *-s* ending competed with *-th* until by the time of the first Northern Middle English texts, *-s* endings had virtually completely supplanted *-th* endings in the North (cf. Table 3.4 and Lass 1992:136-137, Mustanoja 1960:481-482). At the same time, the *-s* ending was also spreading Southward into the East Midlands during ME (cf. Brunner 1962 II:188-189). If the *-s* ending shows that the *-s* ending was spreading, it is not unlikely that the NSR pattern may have increased its geographical area at the same time.

The third point of variation that my corpus study will focus on is the occurrence of the NSR pattern with *-th* endings instead of *-s*. Plural *-th* endings were mainly a Southern pattern in ME, but they did occasionally occur in Midlands dialects as well, especially in the border areas with the Southern dialect, as shown in Figure 3.3 (map 654 from LALME I:467). Brunner notes

that *-th* plurals were found in low numbers in the early ME dialect before the original OE-*th* ending was replaced by *-n* or *-s* (Brunner 1962 II:185).



Figure 3.3. Plural *-th* in non-Southern late Middle English, map 654 from LALME I:467. Large dots indicate dialects with *-th*, small dots indicate sample locations without *-th*.

In spite of the fact that plural *-th* seems to have been receding, a new inflection pattern employing *-th* apparently developed in some East Midlands dialects in late ME: a variant NSR pattern which employs *-þ* instead of *-s* with non-adjacent and nominal subjects (McIntosh 1983). An example of the pattern from the *Rosarium Theologie* (Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 354/581), a text dating from the first half of the 15th century (von Nolcken 1979:51), is given in (9) from McIntosh (1983).

- (9) *bey pretende þam or feyneþ* (Rosarium Theologie 59/20, EMidl, 1400-145)
 ‘They pretend (them) or feign’

During late ME, this pattern can be found in a few areas in the (East) Midlands, which, according to McIntosh, border on the regular NSR area to the north. McIntosh calls the NSR pattern with *-th* ‘paradigm P’ and states that the areas where it is found include “NE Leicestershire, Rutland, N. Northamptonshire, the extreme north of Huntingdonshire, and parts of N. Ely and NW Norfolk” (1983: 236). His map of the area in question, as well as the Northern ‘N’ area (classical NSR), the Midlands ‘M’ area (3SG *-eth*, PL *-en/-e/-∅*), and the Southern ‘S’ area (3SG, PL *-eth*) is reproduced in Figure 3.4.

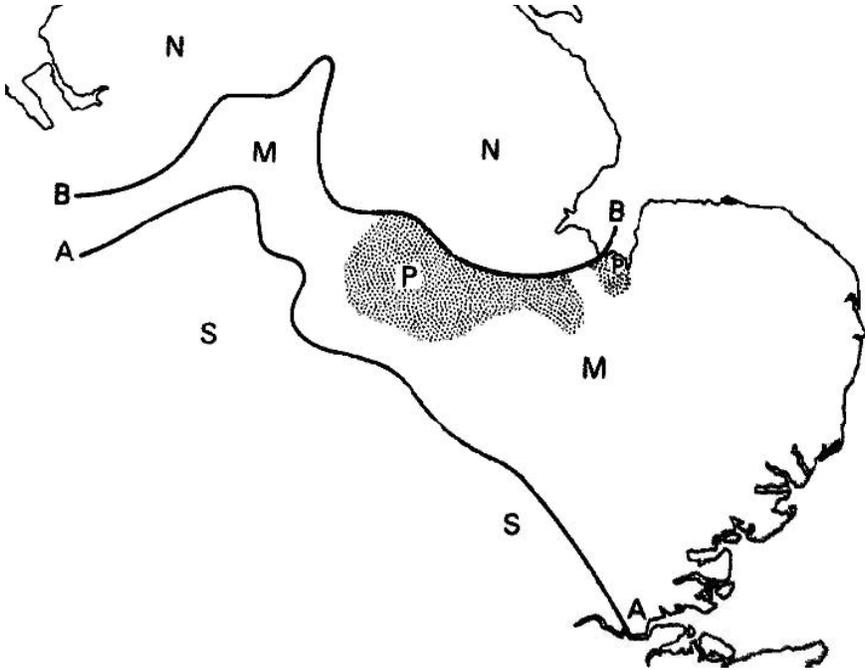


Figure 3.4. Distribution of the NSR with *-th* (labeled ‘P’ on the map) and other plural present indicative patterns in late Middle English, from McIntosh 1983:243. ‘N’: Northern pattern (NSR with *-s*); ‘M’: Midlands pattern (*-n/e/∅*); ‘S’: Southern pattern (*-th*).

McIntosh claims that this ‘paradigm P’ or NSR with *-th*, as we might call it, is an innovation. The area with paradigm P is isolated from the area with general 3SG and plural *-th* endings in the South and the West Midlands (‘paradigm S’ south of isogloss A in Figure 3.4) by dialects with 3SG *-th* and general plural *-en* (‘paradigm M’). To the north, it borders on the NSR area, with 3SG *-s* and variation between *-s* and $-\emptyset/e/n$ in the plural (‘paradigm N’ above isogloss B in Figure 3.4). This distribution leads McIntosh to argue that paradigm P is an innovation, with these dialects adopting the pattern of the NSR, but with their own 3SG ending instead of the Northern one: *-þ* (1983:238-239):

“The ending *-en* (together with its later derivatives *-e* and $-\emptyset$) was simply the plural form already used in all syntactic conditions in the M area; the restriction of its use in paradigm P to syntactic condition (ii) [McIntosh: “personal pronoun subject in contact with the verb”, i.e. adjacency, NdH] was natural, because it was the very form required by this condition in the adjacent N areas. The type (i) [subject not a personal pronoun in contact with the verb] plural ending *-eth* is, functionally speaking, a new creation which reflects the pattern of the northern paradigm N, where the plural has, in condition (i), the same form as the third singular (*-es:-es*). It reflects it, however, not by introducing the alien verb-morpheme *-es*, but simply by employing (in condition (i)) the morpheme *-eth*, familiar already as a third singular form, for use in the plural as well.” (McIntosh 1983:239)

In short, McIntosh assumes that speakers of a dialect with 3SG *-th* and general plural $-\emptyset/e/n$ adopted the NSR-type variation in the plural by substituting the familiar 3SG *-th* ending for Northern *-s* which was also used in the 3SG. The corpus study of early ME material may help to shed light on the question whether this pattern was in fact an innovation in later ME and how it may have come about. I will return to the question of the origin of the NSR with *-th* in Chapter 5.

3.3.2 Early Middle English Corpus Study

3.3.2.1 Corpus and method

I have conducted a corpus study of variation in present indicative endings in early ME, focusing on variation between $-\emptyset/e/n$, $-s$ and $-th$ in the Northern dialect area, the Northern Midlands and parts of the East Midlands, in order to investigate the evidence for the NSR, both with $-s$ and with $-th$, and for variation within the NSR and between the NSR and other patterns. The results will help us to draw conclusions on the nature of the NSR and, hopefully, on its origins.

The corpus used for this study consists of 38 texts, 36 texts from the LAEME corpus (*Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English*, Laing and Lass 2008-) and two others: the *Prose Rule of Saint Benet* (from the PPCME2 corpus: (*Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English 2*, Kroch and Taylor 2000) and *Anturs of Arther at the Tarnewathelan*¹⁰. The texts in the LAEME corpus have been localized and dated using all available linguistic as well as scribal and historical clues. The corpus comprises texts from the period between 1150 and 1350, and for this study, I have selected all available texts from the Northern dialect area, the bordering areas of the Northwest Midlands and Northeast Midlands, and the area in the East Midlands where McIntosh (1983) localized the version of the NSR in late ME that employed $-th$ endings instead of $-s$. The LAEME texts are of varying length; some (5 texts, to be exact) simply do not offer any evidence on plural verb endings of lexical verbs in the indicative present, others very little, while still others are so long that they provide dozens or even hundreds of relevant forms. This means that the evidence will have to be examined for each text separately, as some texts will offer stronger evidence on linguistic patterns than others.

¹⁰ When included in tables or examples, the texts will be referred to by their abbreviated names, as listed in the LAEME or PPCME2; for detailed bibliographical and information and provenance of each text, I refer to the Appendix. The *Peterborough Chronicles, Second or Final Continuation* is included in the PPCME2 corpus (part of *CMPeterb*) as well as LAEME (*Petchron*). Both versions of the text were consulted for this study.

The early ME textual material from the North is supplemented by a text sample from the early 14th-century *Prose Rule of Saint Benet* (*Benedictine Rule*, from the PPCME2 corpus; cf. Appendix), a text which has been localized to central West Yorkshire and which was written in a rather conservative dialect (Kroch and Taylor 1997:313), warranting its comparison to other, slightly earlier Northern texts. Another addition to the corpus is *Anturs of Arther at the Tarnewathelan*, a 5763-word romance in verse that was digitized for the occasion of this study and that hails from Lancashire; the manuscript dates from the 15th century and the language possibly from the 13th (Robson 1842).

All texts in the corpus were searched for indicative present forms of strong and weak verbs¹¹ in the first person singular and the first, second and third person plural, using morphological tags where available (this was the case for the LAEME texts). The clauses in which these forms appeared were then analyzed syntactically, with a view to establishing the type of subject (personal pronoun or other, i.e. NP subject) and its position relative to the verb. I distinguished between inverted (verb - subject) and non-inverted (subject - verb) and adjacent and non-adjacent (subject - ... - verb) contexts; inverted non-adjacent contexts (verb - ... - subject) did not occur in the corpus. Null subject clauses were not included in the analysis.

3.3.2.2 *Singular forms: 1sg*

Although recent findings show that NSR conditioning of first person singular endings only started to increase significantly during early Modern English

¹¹ Preterite-present verbs and the verb 'to be' have been excluded from analysis. These verbs have always had anomalous paradigms and their endings therefore cannot easily be compared to those of strong and weak verbs. It is unlikely that preterite-present verbs have ever followed the NSR, since they had general plural *-ø/e/n* endings (in ME, but no more variation is known from other stages of the language). The copula *be* in ME had variation between *be(n)*, *are(n)* and *is*. It follows the NSR in Present-Day English NSR dialects (cf. Pietsch 2005a,b), but need not already have participated in the NSR to the same extent as regular verbs during the ME period. I leave this matter to further research.

(Fernández Cuesta 2010), the first person singular was included in the classic description of the NSR in ME (Mustanoja 1960:481), giving the appearance that it already occurred, possibly frequently, at that time. In order to settle this matter for the early ME period, I have included a search of 1SG forms of strong and weak verbs. The results show that variation in 1SG endings is minimal in early ME, and this form will therefore not be included in the main part of this investigation. I will briefly review the results here; they are illustrated by the Northern early ME examples in (10)-(12).

(10) *Pan dar I sai & leies noht / A sorful tim þan war we wroht /*

(Edincma f9va, North, 1300-1350)

‘then I dare say and [I] lie not: [at] a sorrowful time were we made’

(11) *I prai þe leuedi þu wald þe sem / to tak þis litil werk to cwem /*

(Edincma f10ra, North, 1300-1350)

‘I pray you, lady, that you would befit yourself to take this little work as gratification’

(12) *Wi qui þen mak we vs so ken / Of þis es al þat I me men /*

(Edincma f9vb, North, 1300-1350)

‘Oh, why do we make ourselves so fearless about this then, is all that I mean’

My data show that in Northern early ME, 1SG verb forms generally inflect in *-e/-∅*, even when the pronoun subject *I* and the verb are not adjacent. Of all 34 texts in the sample with 1SG forms, only one has a single verb form (10) with *-s*: the *Edinburgh Cursor Mundi A* (Edincma), the MS Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians, MS of *Cursor Mundi*, entry 1 (hand A). This form follows the NSR, occurring as it does in a non-adjacent context, but it contrasts with 4 *-e* forms in adjacent contexts, 44 *-∅* forms in similar contexts, and 12 *-∅* forms in nonadjacent contexts in the same text, as illustrated in (11)-(12). Since the verb form in question, *leies* in (9), is the only example in the entire corpus, it would seem that the NSR in 1SG is only a small minority pattern in early ME, and

perhaps a later development based on analogy with the plural persons. This is in line with Fernández Cuesta's (2010) findings.

3.3.2.3 Plural endings in early ME

Before we move on to the analysis of variation between different plural endings in the early ME corpus, I will review the geographical distribution of the individual endings in the corpus, starting with $-\emptyset/e$ and $-n$. Final $-n$ was distinguished from the other two variants here because it has been described as a typical Midlands ME feature, as we saw above, and because it may be more clearly distinguished from the other variants than $-\emptyset$ and $-e$ are distinguishable from each other in terms of phonological content.

Source text	Period	Dialect	$\emptyset e$	n	Total
Culhh	13ab	EMidl; Hunts Ramsey	0	2	2
Petchron	12b1	EMidl; NNorthants Peterborough	0	2	2
TrincleoD	13b2	EMidl; Norf	1	17	18
Trin43B	13b2	EMidl; NWNorf / S Lincs ??	0	5	5
Candet3	13b	EMidl; SELincs ?	0	1	1
Orm	12b2	EMidl; SLincs Bourne	0	49	49
Genexod	14a1	EMidl; WNorf	2	51	53
Arundel292vv	13b2-14a1	EMidl; WNorf ?	0	1	1
Bestiary	13b2-14a1	EMidl; WNorf ?	4	72	76
Royal12e1b	13b2-14a1	EMidl; WNorf King's Lynn	0	4	4
Tanner169	13b1	NWMidl; Ches Chester	1	0	1
Lam499	13b2	NWMidl; WChes Stanlaw Abbey	2	35	37
Gospatric	13ab	North; Cumberland Carlisle	0	1	1
Bodley26	13b2	North; ELancs	1	0	1
CotcleoBvi	13a2-13b1	North; WYorks	2	3	5
Cotfausta	14a	North; WYorks Fountains	0	1	1
Total			13	244	257

Table 3.5. Plural $-\emptyset/-e/n$ endings in the early ME Corpus: texts with no other plural endings.

In our sample of 32 texts that offer some evidence on indicative present-tense plural verb endings, all but one have one or more $-\emptyset/e/n$ endings. Figure 3.5 shows the distribution of $-n$ endings and $-\emptyset/e$ endings, and marks texts in which these are the only plural endings found. The texts where this is the case are listed in Table 3.5¹². The other texts, which combine $-\emptyset/e/n$ endings with $-s$ and/or $-th$ endings, are included in Table 3.6 below.

Figure 3.5 shows that $-\emptyset/e/n$ endings occur in most texts in the corpus, and especially in the East Midlands area, they are often the only type of plural ending (represented by green rings on the map). The same goes for two Northwest Midlands texts and four Northern texts. Since the Northern texts in question only offer between one and five plural verbs each, it the possibility remains that other endings were present in their dialects, but they have simply not been recorded. The same holds for a number of the Midlands texts.

The map also shows that $-n$ endings (the blue circles on the map) occur most dominantly in the south of our area; cf. the East Midlands example in (13).

(13) *þe landes þe lien to þe circewican ...* (Petchron f90r, EMidl, 1150-1175)
 ‘the lands that lie near the church-dwelling’

This geographical distribution is expected, as $-n$ is a typical Midlands ending. It is interesting to note that some $-en$ spellings occur in Northern texts, even though final $-n$ is assumed to have been lost in these dialects before 1300. It may be that these spellings are not indicative of actual pronunciation of $-n$, however (cf. Section 3.3.1). A northern example which combines n and $-e$ is given in (14):

¹² Table 3.5 and others follow the LAEME conventions for text dating, so that in the ‘Period’ column, ‘13’ refers to the 13th century, ‘a’ to the first and ‘b’ to the second half of a century, ‘1’ to the first and ‘2’ to the second quarter in that half. In the ‘Dialect’ column, ‘Midl’ represents ‘Midlands’, ‘E’ = East, ‘W’=West, ‘N’=North, ‘S’=South. ‘Hunts’=Huntingdonshire, ‘Northants’=Northamptonshire, ‘Norf’=Norfolk etc.

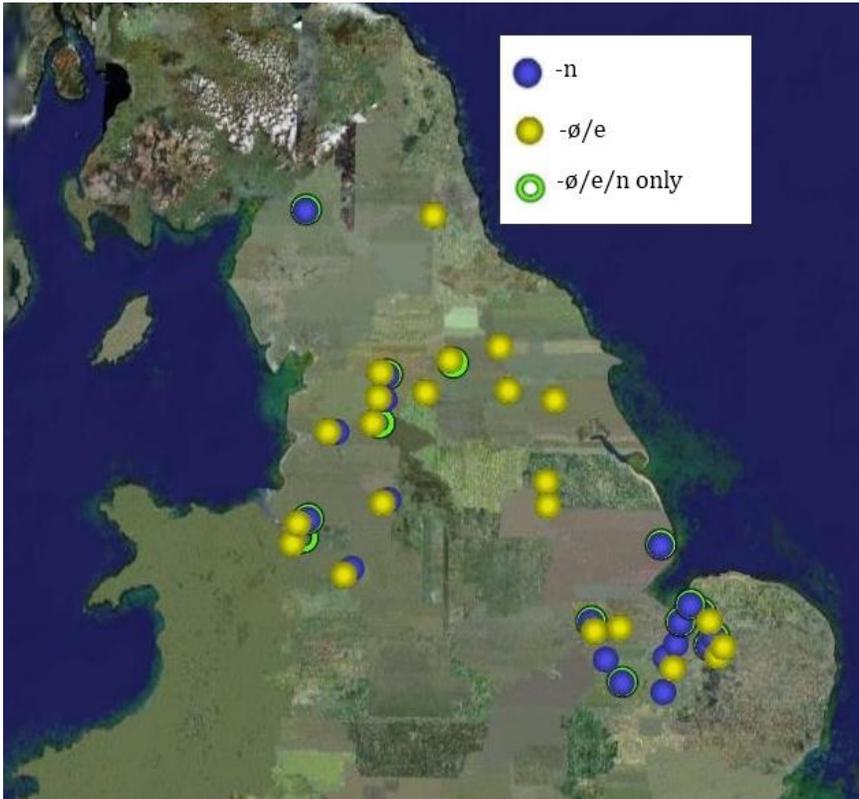


Figure 3.5. Geographical distribution of texts with plural $-\emptyset/e/n$ endings in regular verbs in the eME corpus. Texts with only $-\emptyset/e/n$ endings have the according marker layered behind the main marker.

(14) and for **alle** þat on herþe vs **fedin** and **fostre** / saie we nu alle þe hali pater noster (CotcleoBvi f204v, North, c. 1250)

'and for all that on earth us feed and foster say we now all the holy pater noster'

Zero and *-e* endings (yellow circles on the map) occur throughout the area, but are more dominant, compared to *-n*, in the far north and northeast. They do occur in texts that only have $-\emptyset/e/n$ plural endings, but are found more often

than *-n* in texts that also have *-s* or *-th* endings (these are yellow circles without green rings); cf. the example from an NSR dialect in (15).

(15) *For in hali bok find we / Of cristes tocuminges þre /*

(Edincmb f17rb-f17va, North, 1300-1350)

‘for in the holy book we find three of Christ’s adverts’

The predominance of the *-n*-type endings in southern reaches of our area tallies well with what we know about the general use of *-en* as PL ending in ME dialects of the Midlands, but it is clear that we need to review the other endings as well, especially in the North, before we can draw any conclusions about the entire paradigm.

All texts in which *-s* endings occur are listed in Table 3.6. In all relevant texts, *-s* co-occurs with *-ø/e/n*, as in (16), and twice, it co-occurs with *-th*.

Source text	Period	Dialect	ø e	n	th	s	Total
Dulwich	13b2-14a1	EMidl; SLincs	6	0	0	2	8
Havelok	14a1	EMidl; WNorf	20	20	3	1	44
Clerico	13b2-14a1	NEMidl; NWLincs	1	0	0	2	3
Merton248	14a2	NEMidl; NWLincs?	5	0	0	8	13
Tituswoh	13a2	NWMidl; NEChes	2	24	0	2	28
Titusar	13a2	NWMidl; SChes	3	120	1	2	126
Anturs of Arther	15ab; dialect 13ab?	North; Lancs	10	13	0	10	33
Benrul	15a1	North; CWYorks	52	0	0	63	115
Edincma	14a	North; EYorks	80	0	0	36	116
Edincmb	14a	North; NYorks	128	0	0	74	202
Cotvespcma	14a2	North; WYorks	8	0	0	26	34
Edincmc	14a	North; York	52	1	0	17	70
Scotwar	14a	North; Durham	6	0	0	3	9
Total			373	178	4	246	801

Table 3.6. Plural *-s* endings in the eME Corpus and other variant endings in texts with *-s*.

(16) A nu **raise þai** up þe rode **Setis** up þe warhtreo

(Tituswoh f131vb, NWMidl, 1225-1250)

‘Ah, now they raise up the cross, set up the criminal-tree’

In a number of Midlands texts, -s seems to be a minor variant, dwarfed by high numbers of - \emptyset /e/n endings, but we can also see a number of Northern texts where -s is quite frequent, and co-occurs with - \emptyset /-e endings. In the next section, we will see that these endings often pattern according to the NSR.

Final -s was typical as a plural ending for Northumbrian OE. By late ME, it had spread further south into the Northwest, Northeast and East Midlands (cf. Figure 3.2). A survey of our corpus shows that this spread had already



Figure 3.6. Geographical distribution of texts with plural -s endings in regular verbs in the early ME corpus.

occurred to some extent in early ME (Figure 3.6).

The last remaining plural ending is *-th*. Based on the literature, we expect to find *-th* mainly in the southern parts of our corpus, and especially in some East Midland pockets bordering on the NSR area, if there were any precursors to McIntosh's (1983) NSR with *-th*. Indeed, *-th* is found mainly in the East Midlands (28 tokens in 5 texts), and once in the Northwest Midlands. This is shown in Figure 3.7.

Source text	Period	Dialect	ø	e	n	th	s	Total
Gandccreed	13ab	EMidl; possibly Ely /Norfolk	0	0	1	0	1	
BuryfF	13b2-14a1	EMidl; Ely/WNorf/NESuff	0	4	1	0	5	
Laud108b	13b2	EMidl; WNorf	0	16	21	0	37	
Havelok	14a1	EMidl; WNorf	20	20	3	1	44	
Titusar	13a2	NWMidl; SChes	3	120	1	2	126	
Total			23	160	27	3	213	

Table 3.7 Plural *-th* endings in the eME Corpus.

The findings are summarized in Table 3.7 and Figure 3.7. There is some spelling variation in this ending, as illustrated in (17)-(19). Only one text in the corpus, the *Creed, Pater Noster, Ave Maria, In Manus Tuas* from Ms. Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 52/29 (*Gandccreed*) from the East Midlands (the most south-easterly text in Figure 3.7), has *-th* as the only plural ending for strong and weak verbs (17); but since there is only one relevant plural ending in this text, we cannot reliably draw conclusions about this dialect.

(17) *also we forgivet ovre gultares* (Gandccreed f43r, EMidl, 1200-1300)

'as we forgive those who have wronged us.'

(18) *Hellehoundes cometh nou sone / forby*

(Laud108b f202v, EMidl, 1275-1300)

'hell-hounds will now soon pass by'



Figure 3.7. Geographical distribution of texts with plural *-th* endings in regular verbs in the early ME corpus.

(19) *for nawt ho arn lokene inwið wah oðer wal þ[at] þes 3ates **opneð** bute a3ain
Godes sonde and liueneð of sawle* (Titusar f29vb, NWMidl, 1225-1250)
‘for they are not locked within pledge or wall that open these gates but
against God’s ordinance and food of the soul’

In the other texts, *-th* is in competition with *-ø/e/n*, and in two of them, also with *-s*. In most texts, *-th* seems to be only a minor variant, and *-ø/e/n* may be the dominant plural ending; but numbers are often low. I will return to these texts in the next section.

3.3.2.4 *Patterns in early ME plural forms: evidence for the NSR?*

3.3.2.4.1 *Methodology: the corpus sample and statistical methods*

In the previous sections, we have seen how the various plural endings are distributed throughout the (Northern and Midlands) dialects of early ME. In this section, we will explore how these endings combine into patterns, and where they co-occur in texts. Based on the literature on verb endings in ME, we are primarily looking for variation in and between three patterns: the NSR with *-s* in the North and northern parts of the Midlands, the NSR variant with *-th* in parts of the East Midlands (if it already exists in this period) and the Midlands pattern of generalized plural *-n* in the more southern and south-western parts of our area. Since we cannot expect to find only clear-cut, categorical evidence for these patterns (because some texts have both *-s* and *-th*, if for no other reason), I will quantify and evaluate the amount of variation found, using statistical methods. This will allow us to tell how strong the evidence for each pattern actually is in each text.

The early ME corpus sample contains 15 texts where different endings (*-∅/e/n* and *-th* and/or *-s*) co-occur. The total of 843 endings in these texts is listed in Table 3.8. This number includes some verb endings in unanalyzable syntactic contexts¹³; these are included here to show the full extent of variation, but will be excluded from the following statistical analysis (yielding a total of 824 analyzable verb endings). These 15 texts can be divided into distinct groups based purely on which endings occur in them: Table 3.8 shows that many texts, especially Northern ones, vary between *-∅/e* and *-s* (as expected for NSR dialects). Some of these also have a number or even a majority of *-n*

¹³ Unanalyzable are those syntactic contexts in which the subject is absent or its position relative to the verb is otherwise difficult to determine, for instance because the clause is semantically opaque. NP subjects with embedded relative clauses have been analyzed as adjacent in the order NP head - relative clause - verb, if no other element intervened between any of these three. Verb forms in subject-relative clauses were initially analyzed separately, but turned out to behave like non-adjacent contexts in NSR dialects. The numbers were subsequently collapsed with those for non-adjacent contexts; see below.

endings; two Midlands texts have all four variants, *-n*, *-ø/e*, *-s* and *-th*; and two East Midlands texts vary between *-n* and *-th* only.

How do we interpret these variations in the texts? In order to evaluate the possible evidence for NSR-like paradigms, I will count the various verb endings, both adjacent and non-adjacent to the subject, with pronoun subjects (Spro) and NP subjects (SNP). In many texts, the number of plural present-tense indicatives is fairly low, or the numbers for certain endings are low. Does this imply that the findings are unreliable and may be due to chance, instead of representing general patterns and tendencies in the dialects of the authors or scribes involved? In order to answer this question, I will subject the numbers to statistical analysis.

Source text	Period	Dialect	ø	e	n	th	s	Total
Edincmb	14a	North; NYorks	128	0	0	74	202	
Benrul	15a1	North; C W Yorks	52	0	0	63	115	
Edincma	14a	North; EYorks	80	0	0	36	116	
Cotvespcma	14a2	North; WYorks	8	0	0	26	34	
Edincmc	14a	North; York	52	1	0	17	70	
Anturs of Arther	15ab; dialect fr C13?	North; Lancs	10	13	0	10	33	
Merton248	14a2	NEMidl; NWLincs?	5	0	0	8	13	
Scotwar	14a	North; Durham Lanchester	5	1	0	3	9	
Clerico	13b2-14a1	NEMidl; NWLincs	1	0	0	2	3	
Tituswoh	13a2	NWMidl; NEChes	2	24	0	2	28	
Dulwich	13b2-14a1	EMidl; SLincs	6	0	0	2	8	
Titusar	13a2	NWMidl; SChes	3	120	1	2	126	
Havelok	14a1	EMidl; WNorf	20	20	3	1	44	
Laud108b	13b2-14a1	EMidl; Ely/WNorf/ NESuff	0	4	1	0	5	
BuryfF	13b2	EMidl; WNorf	0	16	21	0	37	
Total			372	199	26	246	843	

Table 3.8. Plural verb endings in early ME texts with variation between -ø/e/n and -th and/or -s.

In NSR dialects, two factors are relevant to the selection of verb endings: subject type and adjacency. For statistical analysis, this implies that subject type and adjacency are coded as independent variables, and verb ending as the dependent variable. Each of the three variables will be encoded in such a way that it only has two distinct values. This facilitates our analysis as well as being consistent with the structure of the data from texts where the NSR is found.

The values for the variable adjacency are *adjacent* and *non-adjacent*. Adjacent cases include directly adjacent Spro/SNP and finite verb pairs, both inverted (verb - subject) and non-inverted (subject - verb)¹⁴. This includes NP

¹⁴ The difference between inverted and non-inverted contexts was not statistically analyzed, as inversion is not described as a conditioning factor in literature on the ME NSR and verb forms in the early ME texts under consideration did not show divergent

subjects with a relative clause directly following the head noun: [_{SNP}NP RC] - verb = SNP - verb. It also includes cases where the negator *ne* is affixed to the verb and directly preceded by the subject, since an initial analysis revealed that these verbs generally behaved like adjacent verbs in NSR dialects in the corpus. Non-adjacent are all cases where the NP subject or the pronoun subject is not adjacent to the verb or where the verb is in a subject-relative clause, where the relativizer might be analyzed as the grammatical, but not the referential subject. For these cases, it does not matter whether the relativizer (e.g., *that*) is adjacent to the verb or not. This decision was also informed by an initial analysis of the corpus which revealed that verbs in subject-relative clauses generally behaved like non-adjacent verbs in NSR dialects.

The subject type variable can have the values *pronoun subject (Spro)* and *NP subject (SNP)*. Only instances of the personal pronouns *we*, *you*, and *they/hi* were counted as *Spro*, as these are the only subjects to take *-ø/e/n* endings in the NSR, according to the literature (cf. Section 3.3.1). Subjects of which the exact status was unclear, such as personal pronouns with a dependent relative clause ('we that ...') were not included in the analysis. All other subjects, including independently used adjectives and pronouns like *alle*, were counted as *SNP*.

behaviour in inversion contexts. Non-adjacent inversion cases were not attested. There were 92 inverted cases with pronoun subjects; all had *-ø/e/n*. Out of 12 inversion cases with NP subjects, only 2 had *-ø/e/n* (*Bury Documents*); the other cases had *-s* (9 cases) and *-th* (1 case).

Source text	Adjacent				Total adjacent plural	Total plural
	Spro		SNP			
	ø e n	s th	ø e n	s th		
Edincmb	110 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	32 (100.0%)	142	202
Benrul	48 (98.0%)	1 (2.0%)	2 (22.2%)	7 (77.8%)	58	115
Edincma	63 (98.4%)	1 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (100.0%)	75	116
Cotvespcma	6 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (100.0%)	21	33
Edincmc	44 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (100.0%)	51	70
Anturs of Arther	18 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	20	33
Merton248	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)	7 (87.5%)	10	13
Scotwar	4 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	6	9
Clerico	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0	0	1	3
Tituswoh	6 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	12	28
Dulwich	4 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0	0	4	8
Titusar	29 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	21 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	50	109
Havelok	26 (96.3%)	1 (3.7%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	30	43
Laud108b	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	3	5
BuryfF	4 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (44.4%)	5 (55.6%)	13	37
Total	367 (99.2%)	3 (0.8%)	38 (30.2%)	88 (69.8%)	496	824

Table 3.9. Plural verb endings in early ME texts with variation: subject type and adjacency. Adjacent cases; percentages given per subject type. Exceptions to the NSR are in boldface.

Source text	Nonadjacent				Total nonadjacent plural	Total plural
	Spro		SNP			
	ø e n	s th	ø e n	s th		
Edincmb	16 (61.5%)	10 (38.5%)	2 (5.9%)	32 (94.1%)	60	202
Benrul	0 (0.0%)	12 (100.0%)	2 (4.4%)	43 (95.6%)	57	115
Edincma	11 (52.4%)	10 (47.6%)	5 (25.0%)	15 (75.0%)	41	116
Cotvespcma	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	2 (20.0%)	8 (80.0%)	12	33
Edincmc	9 (90.0%)	1 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (100.0%)	19	70
Anturs of Arther	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	1 (16.7%)	5 (83.3%)	13	33
Merton248	0	0	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	3	13
Scotwar	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	3	9
Clerico	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	2	3
Tituswoh	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.7%)	9 (90.0%)	1 (10.0%)	16	28
Dulwich	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (100.0%)	4	8
Titusar	16 (94.1%)	1 (5.9%)	40 (95.2%)	2 (4.8%)	59	109
Havelok	9 (90.0%)	1 (10.0%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	13	43
Laud108b	0	0	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2	5
BuryfF	6 (60.0%)	4 (40.0%)	1 (7.1%)	13 (92.9%)	24	37
Total	79 (62.7%)	47 (37.3%)	68 (33.7%)	134 (66.3%)	328	824

Table 3.10. Plural verb endings in early ME texts with variation: subject type and adjacency. Nonadjacent cases; percentages given per subject type. Exceptions to the NSR are in boldface.

Finally, the dependent variable, verb ending, can either have the value $-\emptyset/e/n$ or the value $-s/-th$. We have seen in preceding sections that the $-\emptyset/e/n$ group operates as one type of ending, and so do $-s$ and $-th$, according to McIntosh (1983), albeit in different versions of the NSR.

The data that will serve as input to our statistical analysis are presented in Tables 3.9 and 3.10. A quick exploration of these raw numbers shows that on the face of it, some of these texts present clear evidence for the NSR, in particular a set of long Northern texts where $-\emptyset/e/n$ endings in adjacent pronominal context are generally quite neatly opposed to $-s$ endings in nominal and non-adjacent pronominal contexts. There are usually some counterexamples, however, and we need to know how significant these are for the pattern.

There are also some texts with low numbers of relevant verb forms, where there is some variation but the evidence is less clear, and then there are texts where $-\emptyset/e/n$ endings alternate with $-th$ endings, or with both $-th$ and $-s$ endings. Especially in the light of McIntosh's (1983) evidence for an NSR-like rule with $-th$ in late ME in the Midlands, we would like to know whether the variation in these earlier texts follows the same pattern as the NSR.

For a pure NSR system, we expect $-\emptyset/e/n$ endings for adjacent Spro cases, and $-s/th$ endings in other contexts. The difference between the two contexts can be measured in terms of two effects: 1) a subject effect in adjacency (verb ending is $-\emptyset/e/n$ with adjacent Spro vs. $-s/th$ with adjacent SNP); 2) an adjacency effect for pronominal subjects (verbs adjacent to Spro end in $-\emptyset/e/n$, non-adjacent verbs have $-s/th$). No other effects are expected to be significant in a "model" NSR dialect, unless as a side-effect: a subject or adjacency effect may be measurable over all cases as a result of the two basic effects. On the other hand, we do not necessarily expect any significant subject or adjacency effects in dialects with general $-\emptyset/e/n$, where $-s$ and/or $-th$ only occur as minor variants.

The main statistical method I employ to estimate which effects are present is the chi-square (χ^2) test. This test measures the statistical significance of a cross tabulation. Given a cross tabulation such as Table 3.11 with two variables, e.g. subject type (independent variable) and verb ending (dependent variable), the χ^2 procedure can test whether the difference between the cell numbers (i.e., the frequencies of the various verb endings for the each subject type) and the expected cell numbers is statistically significant. If there is no effect of the subject type on the verb endings, then we expect the same ratio of endings (A:B, e.g. - \emptyset :-s) for both subject types (Spro and SNP), as in Table 3.11. χ^2 measures how far the actual numbers lie from the expected numbers, and whether this difference is statistically significant. The measure is significant when the probability of these numbers occurring by chance falls below 5%, i.e. probability $p < .05$. This means that the χ^2 value needs to be higher than 3.84 at 1 degree of freedom, i.e. in a 2x2 table like our example (cf. Moore and McCabe 1997:473). I will still take the effect to be almost significant if probability levels fall between .05 and .10.

	- \emptyset	-s
Spro	30	60
SNP	10	20

Table 3.11. Sample cross tabulation.

Since the χ^2 test cannot reliably be used when cell counts below 5 are expected, I will use a different measure in these cases: Fisher's exact test. This test directly measures the probability of cell counts appearing as they do in 2x2 tables (Siegel and Castellan 1988). Again, I will take effects to be significant when the probability is lower than or equal to $p = .05$, and if p ranges between 0.05 and 0.10, I will assume that an effect is probable. Texts with token number below 5 were not included in the analysis, since these never yield statistically significant results.

3.3.2.4.2 Results

Using the method outline above, I have analyzed the 15 texts with variant plural endings for subject and adjacency effects. The results are summarized in Table 3.12, which does not list *Interludium de Clerico et Puella (Clerico)*, since this text had only 3 tokens. In a pure NSR dialect, we expect only a subject effect in adjacent cases and an adjacency effect with pronoun subjects. However, due to the predominance of adjacent and pronoun subject cases in the data, the presence of either of these effects may lead to a significant all-over (subject or adjacency) effect as well. The tests for basic NSR and all-over effects have been complemented by tests for subject effects in non-adjacent cases and for adjacency effects with NP subjects.

The 14 texts in Table 3.12 have been grouped according to effects and endings. The geographical distribution of all 15 texts with variation in endings and the distribution of invariant $-\emptyset/e/n$ and $-th$ texts is given in Figure 3.8. What stands out is that NSR-like patterns with $-s$ are most strongly represented in the North, with a central area in Yorkshire and variant patterns fanning out to the south and north, although there are very few extant texts from the far North. Competing patterns are generalized $-n$, found mostly in the East and Northwest Midlands, and variation with $-th$ instead of $-s$, which is found mostly in the East Midlands. We will discuss these groups in turn.

Text	Dialect	Endings	Pattern	Subject effect			Adjacency effect		
				Adjacent	Non-adjacent	All	Spro	SNP	All
Benrnl	North	ø/e vs. s	NSR	p < .001	-	p < .001	p < .001	-	p < .001
Anturs of Arther	North	ø/e/n vs. s	NSR	p = .100	-	p < .005	p < .005	-	p < .001
Edincmb	North	ø/e vs. s	NSR+	p < .001	p < .001	p < .001	p < .001	-	p < .001
Edincma	North	ø/e vs. s	NSR+	p < .001	p < .100	p < .001	p < .001	-	p < .001
Edincmc	North	ø/e/n vs. s	NSR+/-	p < .001	p < .001	p < .001	-	-	p < .005
Cotvespcma	North	ø/e vs. s	NSR +/- S-effect	p < .001	-	p < .001	-	-	-
Merton248	NEMidl	ø/e vs. s	NSR? S-effect?	p < .100	-	-	-	-	-
Dulwich	EMidl	ø/e vs. s	NSR? S-effect?	-	-	p < .05	-	-	-
Buryff	EMidl	n vs. th	atypical S- & Adj-effects	-	p < .01	p < .005	-	p < .100	p < .100
Havelok	EMidl	ø/e/n vs. s/th	S-effect? / - ø/e/n w. variation	-	-	p < .10	-	-	-
Scotwar	North	ø/e/n vs. s	NSR?	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tituswoh	NWMidl	ø/e/n vs. s	-n w. variation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Titusar	NWMidl	ø/e/n vs. s	-n w. variation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Laud108b	EMidl	n vs. th	-n w. variation	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3.12. Endings and effects in early Middle English texts with variation in plural verb endings. Effects are significant if $p < .05$; almost significant if $.05 \leq p \leq .10$; not significant ('-') if $p > .10$. In Pattern fields, 'S-effect' refers to a subject effect and 'Adj-effect' to an adjacency effect.

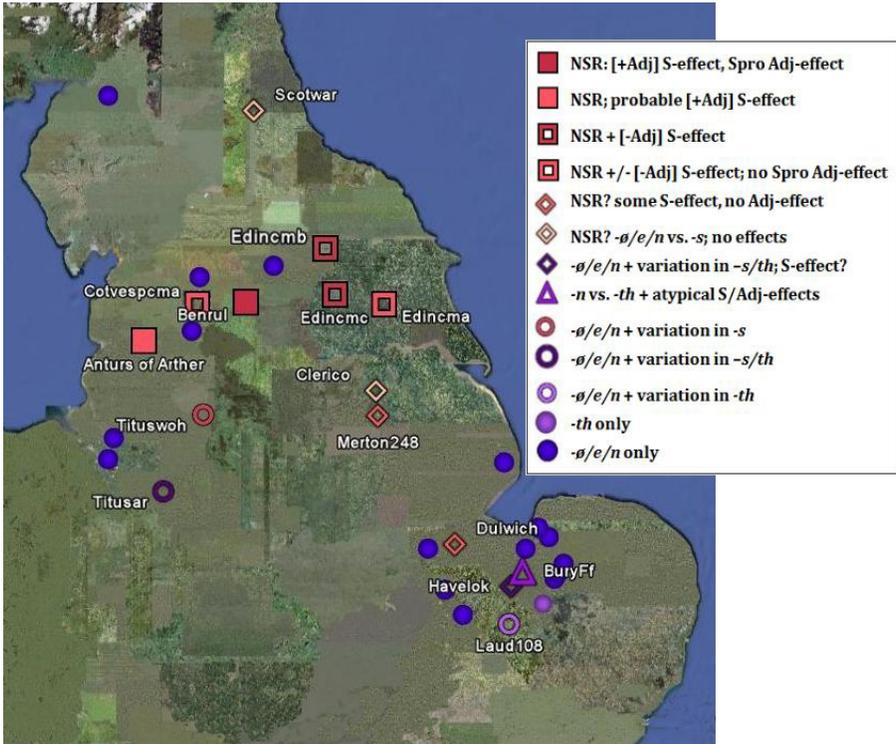


Figure 3.8. Plural agreement patterns in the early Middle English corpus sample. *S-effect* refers to a subject effect; *Adj-effect* to an adjacency effect. [+Adj] is adjacent, [-Adj] is non-adjacent.

The first two texts in Table 3.12 (*The Benedictine Rule* or *Benrul* and *The Anturs of Arther*) hail from Western Yorkshire and Lancashire, and exhibit the most consistent NSR pattern: they only show the expected effects (for the *Benedictine Rule*, cf. example (8a) in Section 3.3.1 above). Verb forms in inverted orders do not seem to behave differently from non-inverted forms, as illustrated by (20).

(20) *Or sai we þus þat he bigan* (Cotvespcma f3vb, North, 1325-1350)

‘Or we say thus that he began’

Note that *The Anturs of Arther* combines a relatively strong NSR pattern with variation between *-s* and *-n* as well as *-ø/e*, as illustrated in (21):

(21) a. *The dere in the dellun, **Thay droupun and daren.***

(Anturs IV, North, ms. 1400-1500 / text 1300-1400)

‘The animals in the dells, they droop and tremble’

b. *Thenne **byernes bannes** the tyme*

(Anturs IV, North, ms. 1400-1500 / text 1300-1400)

‘Then men curse the time’

A caveat for classifying this as an NSR text is the fact that it only has a probable subject effect in adjacency ($p=.100$), although it has a clearly significant adjacency effect with pronoun subjects, and also significant over-all subject and adjacency effects. This may simply be due to the relatively low numbers of forms with adjacent NP subjects in this text; there are two, and only one of them has an -s ending.

East from the core group and next in Table 3.12 are the dialects of the *Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians*, MS of the *Cursor Mundi*, hands A, B and C (*Edincma, Edincmb, Edincmc*). These texts display the pattern somewhat less clearly than the core group. Hands A and B have the expected effects, but also a significant or probably significant subject effect in non-adjacency: they favour - \emptyset /*e* endings with pronominal subjects even when they are not adjacent to the verb. In hand C, the same non-adjacent subject effect is not only highly significant, it is virtually categorical. An example is given in (22).

(22) *Quen **þai** fulfild **haue** þair seruisse* (Edincmc f50va, North, 1300-1350)

‘When they have fulfilled their service’

The *Edinburgh Cursor Mundi* texts show that the subject effect is more robust in early Middle English NSR dialects than the adjacency effect; we will see in Section 3.4 that this is in line with data from Modern English varieties. It suggests that the subject effect is in some way more essential to the NSR pattern than the adjacency effect. This tendency is shared by the *Cotton*

Vespasian A.iii manuscript of the *Cursor Mundi* (*Cotvespcma*), which is from the same region and exhibits a highly significant subject effect (cf. example (8b) in Section 3.3.1 above) but no discernible adjacency effect. This may be due in part to the fact that the text sample has only 2 adjacent pronominal forms.

Other NSR-like dialects which are further removed from the core area show the same tendency, although in some cases the results are tentative due to low numbers of forms in certain contexts. Probable or significant subject effects without an adjacency effect are found in three East Midland texts: *Oxford, Merton College MS 248* (*Merton248*), *London, Dulwich College MS XXII* (*Dulwich*), and *Havelok*. *Merton248* has a significant subject effect in adjacency, but no non-adjacent Spro cases to test the adjacency effect. There is variation with NP subjects, but no adjacency effect there. *Dulwich* has a significant subject effect for adjacent and nonadjacent cases taken together; *Havelok* appears to have the same effect, but it is only significant with a probability level below $p=0.10$. Neither text has any other effects, possibly due to low numbers. *Dulwich* has only 8 relevant forms. Its 2 adjacent Spro forms are compatible with the NSR; there are no adjacent forms with NP subjects, and its non-adjacent forms seem to follow a subject effect, but this is not statistically significant. *Havelok* has 43 relevant endings, mostly $-\emptyset/e/n$, but also some $-s/th$ in all contexts (cf. Tables 3.9 and 3.10). Numbers are low especially for NP subject contexts, and it may be that the behaviour of $-s/th$ in this dialect was not conditioned according to the NSR.

Two more texts which may be representative of NSR dialects but do not offer enough evidence for statistical analysis are *A Ballad on the Scottish Wars* (*Scotwar*) and *Interludium de Clerico et Puella* (*Clerico*), originating to the North and South of the core NSR area, respectively. The Northern *Scottish Wars* MS has only 9 plural forms. It may represent a weak form of the NSR since it has $-\emptyset/e$ in adjacency with pronoun subjects and variation or $-s$ everywhere else; cf. (23).

(23) *your sped **ye spille** / And **lates** ye lion haue his raike /*

(Scotwar f180v, North, 1300-1350)

‘you waste your speed and let the lion have his way’

The *Interludium de Clerico et Puella*, a North-East Midlands text, has the lowest numbers of all our texts: 3 plural endings, too few for statistical analysis, but they are compatible with the NSR (cf. Tables 3.9 and 3.10).

One more text, the *Bury documents (BuryFf)*, shows subject and adjacency effects, but not quite in the manner expected for the NSR. This text is found in the East Midlands and geographically far removed from the core early Middle English NSR area, but located in the area where McIntosh found the NSR with *-th* in late Middle English. Variation occurs between *-n* and *-th* endings, and inconsistently follows the NSR pattern, as in (24) vs. (25).

(24) a. *so longe so **he pen** to **pen hode** (BuryfF f49v, East Midlands, 1275-1300)*

‘so long as they grow up to take holy orders’

b. *per euere vn-don wrthe þat vre fordgengles vthen and þat **we vnnen habbeth** into þat holi minster (BuryfF f22r, East Midlands, 1275-1300)*

‘wherever is undone what our predecessors left and what we have granted to the holy minster’

c. *& so fele sithe so **men gildith** here-geld*

(BuryfF f20v, East Midlands, 1275-1300)

‘and so many times as men¹⁵ pay Danegeld’

(25) *& ic an hem alle here tune-socne of alle here lond þe **he nu habben** & get bigeten schulen on godes este (BuryfF f20v, East Midlands, 1275-1300)*

‘and I owe them all their town jurisdiction of all the lands that they now have and will receive later, with God’s grace’

¹⁵ *Men* is tagged as nominative plural by the compliers of LAEME, in accordance with all the evidence for the spelling and dialect of this text. I have followed this practice and therefore assume *men* is not a variant of the singular impersonal pronoun *man*.

The *Bury Documents* are atypical in that they only show (nearly) significant effects outside contexts with adjacent pronominal subjects. There is a significant subject effect in non-adjacency and when adjacent and non-adjacent cases are counted together. Similarly, there are probable adjacency effects in SNP and for Spro and SNP cases taken together, but not in the context where we would most expect it: with Spro alone. The absence of significant effects with Spro and adjacency contexts may be attributable to the relatively low frequency of adjacent pronoun subjects in these legal, formulaic documents: 4 out of 37 forms (cf. Table 3.9). Adjacent Spro cases fully follow the NSR pattern with 100% *-n* endings, but in their low numbers, they do not carry enough weight to add up to significant effects. This text may still represent an NSR dialect with *-th*, but this conclusion cannot be drawn on the basis of these data.

This leaves us with several texts which have general *-n* or *-ø/e/n* endings with some variation in *-s*, *-th* or both. This pattern seems most closely related to the general *-en* ending reported widely for Midlands dialects in Middle English. Aside from its probable subject effect, the above-mentioned *Havelok* may be of this type, and it is joined in this respect by two North-West Midlands texts: *Pe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd (Tituswoh)* and the *Ancrene Riwle* section from MS Cotton Titus D xviii, entry 1 (*Titusar*). *Pe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* has mostly *-e/n* (26 forms), but it has some slight variation in the form of 2 *-s* forms in non-adjacency (one of each subject type). These are found where *-s* would be found in an NSR dialect, but the numbers are simply too small to tell whether they are random variation or part of a larger pattern. The Cotton Titus D xviii *Ancrene Riwle* has a large number of plural forms, but no statistically significant variation. Its 123 regular *-ø/e/n* endings contrast with only 2 *-s* endings, and 1 *-th* ending, found in non-adjacency (Spro, SNP). It may or may not be coincidental that this minor variation occurs in NSR-appropriate contexts. The last text in Table 3.12, the *Debate between the Body and the Soul* (MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc 108, entry 2) from the East Midlands (*Laud108b*) has a total of only 5 relevant plural forms (cf. Tables 3.9 and 3.10).

The majority of these have *-n*; the single *-th* form occurs with an adjacent NP subject. With numbers this low, it must remain a guess, but this may be a case of regular *-n*, with variant *-th* that is once again compatible with the NSR.

3.3.2.4.3 Discussion

Three patterns emerge from the results of the early ME corpus study. I will discuss each pattern and the conclusions that can be drawn from it in turn, focusing especially on the nature of the NSR and competing patterns, and on consequences for a theory of the origin of the NSR.

The first clear pattern in the corpus is the fact that the subject and adjacency effects associated with the NSR are represented most strongly in the heart of the Northern dialect area, centring on Yorkshire; in the Midlands, at the southern end of the area, they seem to compete with a general *-ø/e/n* pattern, and there is no hard evidence for an NSR pattern with *-th* here.

The Yorkshire NSR dialects may be overrepresented in the corpus, since four out of the five texts with the highest numbers of variant plural forms are from this area, and three of these (*Edinburgh Cursor Mundi A, B, C*) are part of the same *Cursor Mundi* text and related to one somewhat smaller source of data from the same region (*Cotton Vespasian A.iii Cursor Mundi*). Another caveat is the fact that there is very little material for the far north and the middle of the Northern Midlands. Still, it is clear that texts from the southern part of our area do not yield strong evidence for the presence of NSR patterns at this stage of the language. This supports the hypothesis that the NSR probably originated in the Northern dialect area.

The main competitor of the NSR in the Midlands area seems to be a regular *-n* pattern, with some *-e* and *-ø*, and some *-th* or, in the Northern border zone mainly, *-s*. These endings often crop up in NSR-appropriate situations, but this is not a statistically significant effect.

Comparing the East Midland texts in the early ME sample to McIntosh's (1983) late ME NSR area with *-th*, we find that few of the texts which originated

in or very near the relevant area (i.e., the *Peterborough continuation*; *Ormulum*; *Bury document*; *MS London, British Library, Royal 12 E i, entry 2 (Royal12e1b)*, and to a lesser extent, the other East Midlands texts) exhibit variation which resembles the NSR with *-th*. Only the late 13th-century *Bury documents* come close to it, but even here the conditions are not the same as in the classic NSR pattern. The evidence from the *Bury documents*, together with the other East Midland texts that show seemingly random variation between $-\emptyset/e/n$ and *-th*, leaves room for the interpretation that the NSR with *-th* either did not exist or had not established itself as a stable pattern at this point in time. Compared with the strong evidence for the NSR in the Northern area centring in Yorkshire, this may be interpreted as a clue that the NSR developed in the North (possibly with variation between $-\emptyset/e/n$ and *-s*), rather than in the East Midlands, where it is found with *-th* in late Middle English. McIntosh's (1983) analysis of the NSR with *-th* as a later innovation finds some support in this evidence.

The second clear pattern is the fact that the subject effect seems both more stable and stronger than the adjacency effect: the subject effect is present in more texts than the adjacency effect (especially where the NSR pattern dissipates to the south of its core area), and even in the core NSR area, a subject effect often occurs where it was not expected, in nonadjacent contexts. This seems to imply that the distinction between subject types is more essential to the NSR than the distinction between adjacency and non-adjacency. We will see in Chapter 4 that this can fruitfully be analyzed as an effect of the underlying syntax, in which Spro and SNP occupy different positions, a fact which is not always visible as a difference between adjacency and non-adjacency. This may also prove important if we want to devise a plausible hypothesis for the origin of the NSR.

Another conclusion to be drawn from the relative strength of the subject effect is that the variant patterns which only exhibit this effect and not the adjacency effect may be the result of diffusion in the sense of Labov (2007): when grammatical patterns spread to new dialects and lose some of their

conditioning in the process, this is usually the result of contact between adult speakers of different dialects. We will revisit this issue in Chapter 5.

The third clear pattern is the occurrence of the NSR (and variant patterns with, in part, the same conditions on verbal inflection) with other endings besides $-\emptyset/e$ and $-s$. While the evidence for $-th$ as an alternative to $-s$ is stronger after the early ME period, witness the late ME NSR with $-th$ (and cf. Section 3.4 for some early Modern English variant patterns), there is clear evidence, particularly in the *Anturs of Arther*, that $-n$ can function as an alternative to $-\emptyset/e$ in NSR dialects. This suggests that the presence of a morphological opposition between $-\emptyset/e$ and $-s$ is not essential to the NSR; only the morphosyntactic conditions, and the presence of several morphological options for the same indicative present forms, are. Together with the evidence for an OE version of the NSR with an opposition between $-s/e$ and $-th$ (Cole to appear), this argues for the hypothesis that the NSR did not necessarily come into being only after the generalization of both $-s$ and $-e$ across the indicative present paradigm.

3.4 The NSR in Modern English and other varieties

The three patterns that were discussed above continued after ME, but variation was affected by two important factors: the increase in the geographical area with NSR variants, and increased competition with the Standard English general $-\emptyset$ ending, which derived from the Midlands ME $-\emptyset/e/n$ paradigm.

We have seen that the NSR and related patterns were found in the Northern dialect area and parts of the Midlands during Middle English. What should be noted is that the NSR was not restricted to these areas at that time: it also occurred generally in Scots, which formed a dialect continuum with Northern English (Meurman-Solin 1992, King 1997). Scots seems to have had the classic Northern version of the NSR, with variation between $-\emptyset/e$ and $-s$ and both the subject condition and the adjacency condition, from the earliest attestations of Old Scots in the late 14th century (Montgomery 1994). This fact

implies that even though the early ME evidence from the far north of England was very scant, this region may well have had the same categorical NSR pattern, since it was surrounded by such varieties both to the north (Scots) and to the south (cf. especially the Yorkshire texts from the early ME corpus). It also means that when the NSR extended its area after the Middle English period, it may have done so from Scots as well as from Northern English.

There are many attestations of NSR-like patterns outside the Northern/Scots area after ME¹⁶. In early Modern English, such patterns were attested in London and south-western England, but also in Ireland. In Present-day English, NSR variants are still found in the same regions (except London), in East-Anglia and in North-America (cf. Godfrey and Tagliamonte 1999).

In early Modern English, the NSR occurred as a minority pattern with *-th* and *-s* against \emptyset in late 15th century (Bailey, Maynor and Cukor-Avila 1989) and late 16th-early 17th century London English (Wright 2002). Similar patterns were found in 17th- and 18th-century ships logs written by sailors from south-western England (Bailey and Ross 1988:195, cf. Godfrey and Tagliamonte 1999:93). A present-day south-western English dialect where an NSR variant is still found is Devon English. Godfrey and Tagliamonte (1999) show that a version of the NSR with both the type-of-subject effect and the adjacency effect occurs variably in present-day Devon English, but unlike in Northern NSR dialects, the adjacency effect occurs with NP subjects rather than with pronoun subjects.

Another present-day southern English dialect with an NSR variant is found in East Anglia, where an NSR-like pattern seems to have developed recently (Britain and Rupp 2005). Some East Anglian English dialects have the same distinction between pronoun subjects and NP subjects, but with opposite morphological reflexes. Forms ending in *-s* are more common with adjacent pronoun subjects than with adjacent NP subjects. This goes for 3SG as well as

¹⁶ Many varieties (only) have variation in the paradigm of *be* (present tense *is/are* and/or past tense *was/were*); we will not focus on these patterns separately here.

plural forms (Britain and Rupp 2005; Rupp 2006:298), unlike in the NSR. It is an interesting question how this pattern arose. What its reversed use of morphology, compared with the classic NSR, shows, is that the exact form of the morphology is not very important to the pattern; the underlying subject condition can function with different morphological realizations, as was already shown by the presence of NSR variants with different endings in OE and ME.

Outside England, the region where the NSR and related patterns are most robustly attested is in Hiberno-English (Pietsch 2005b:126; McCafferty 2003, 2004; cf. Hickey 2004, Corrigan 1997). Not only the subject constraint, but also the adjacency constraint is still found in the dialect of some late-20th-century Ulster speakers from the NITCS (Kirk 1991) corpus (Pietsch 2005b:144-145, cf. (26) from 2005b:165):

(26) *And **they season** and **gets** lighter there then* (NITCS L22.2)

Like in Northern ME, however, the adjacency constraint seems to apply variably. According to McCafferty (2004), the subject condition has been attested in all Irish English varieties studied so far, at least to some degree, whereas the adjacency constraint “does not seem to apply widely in modern dialects in which the [Subject Type Condition] survives” (McCafferty 2004:53). According to Filppula (2004), however, Northern Irish dialects generally follow both conditions of the NSR (Filppula 2004:88, citing Milroy 1981:12-13), whereas Southern Irish English dialects vary between general plural *-s*, the NSR, and Standard English plural *-∅* (Filppula 2004:89-90). Since there is clear evidence that the Ulster dialect of Belfast only has the subject condition (Henry 1995), we can assume there is stronger evidence for the adjacency condition in Northern Ireland than in southern Ireland, but it is not actually general. In addition, even for verbs in NP subject contexts, plural *-s* is only an option next to standard-like *-∅* (Henry 1995).

Outside the British Isles, NSR-like varieties with the subject condition are found in North-America. The adjacency constraint is less well-documented

than the type-of-subject constraint, but there is clear evidence for the latter in a wide variety of especially African-American varieties of English (Godfrey and Tagliamonte 1999, Bailey et al. 1989, cf. McCafferty 2003), and in some white American varieties as well, Ocracoke English (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1997, cf. Tortora and den Dikken 2010:1090) and Appalachian English (Tortora and den Dikken 2010:1090, Montgomery 1994:94), for instance.

A striking pattern that emerges from the evidence for NSR variants outside the Northern dialect area is that most of them do not display the adjacency condition. We saw that this condition was already variable in early ME, to some extent even in the core NSR area in the North, but that it was often absent in varieties that were further removed from that core area. The same pattern seems to have been perpetuated in non-Northern Modern English NSR varieties. It may be that these varieties acquired their version of the pattern from Northern or Midlands varieties in which the adjacency constraint was already absent, but it may also be that this constraint is more easily lost in dialect contact somehow. I will revisit this question in the discussion of present-day northern varieties below.

There appear to have been several ways in which non-northern NSR varieties acquired their versions of the rule. It has been assumed that the NSR appeared in early Modern London English due to the presence of Northern dialect speakers in the city (cf. Bailey, Maynor and Cukor-Avila 1989, Wright 2002). By extension, south-western English may have acquired its pattern from contact either with Londoners or with Northern (or Midlands) speakers of an NSR dialect¹⁷. Transatlantic varieties of English are thought to derive in part from southern NSR varieties like Devon English and London English, as spoken in the 16th to 18th centuries, so these may have contributed to NSR-like patterns

¹⁷ Although this south-western distribution might also been advanced as evidence for the Celtic hypothesis, this is unlikely in view of the absence of ME evidence for the pattern in this region. A pilot study of the Devon material from LAEME (carried out by Marieke van der Leest in preparation for her bachelor thesis at Radboud University Nijmegen) did not show any variation of the NSR type.

in North America (cf. Godfrey and Tagliamonte 1999). The same is true of Northern and Irish varieties of English. In all these cases, the rather indirect ways in which the varieties in question seem to have acquired their NSR-like patterns make it unsurprising that the NSR pattern did not survive exactly as it most generally appeared in the North.

One variety where the NSR seems to have been imported in a more direct way is Irish English: Ulster was settled by communities of Northern dialect speakers, who brought their NSR patterns with them (cf. Pietsch 2005b:126; McCafferty 2003, 2004). Unsurprisingly, this is also the only non-Northern variety where the adjacency condition with pronoun subjects has survived in much its original form.

Within the Northern dialect area itself, the NSR extended its reach by including the first person singular in the pattern in early Modern English (Fernández Cuesta 2010), but otherwise, the pattern became weaker rather than stronger: the pattern started to become more variable, competing with general $-\emptyset$ in all contexts, probably due to influence from southern (Standard) English.

Southern English influence becomes clearly visible in the early Modern English period. For instance, the Plumpton letter collection from 15th-century and 16th-century Yorkshire has rather high proportions of plural $-\emptyset$ with NP subjects and nonadjacent subjects (43%). This dialect also had variation between $-s$ and $-th$; the use of $-th$ was likely also a southern influence. Both functioned like $-s$ in the classic Northern NSR, with 34% $-s$ and 23% $-th$ in non-adjacent/NP subject contexts on average; there was a lot of inter-speaker variation (Moore 2002).

In Scots, change seems to have set in later: the near-categorical NSR pattern with $-\emptyset$ vs. $-s$ only started eroding in the mid-17th century (Montgomery 1994 and cf. Meurman-Solin 1992, Bugaj 2002). In Montgomery's sample of texts, rates of $-s$ with plural NP subjects are between 90% and 100% before the mid-17th century, and then drop to 71%; $-s$ with non-adjacent *I*, *we*, *ye*, *they* occurs between 92% and 100% in the earlier texts and drops to 82% in the

mid-17th century text. There is only one instance of *-s* with an adjacent pronoun subject in the whole corpus, dating to the early 17th century (Montgomery 1994:87-88).

Present-day Northern dialects seem to have been more heavily affected than earlier varieties by contact with Standard English and its general plural *-ø* form. The NSR is often described as an optional pattern in variation with general plural *-ø*, the adjacency condition is absent in many varieties, and even the subject condition is all but lost in some present-Day Northern varieties.

The full NSR pattern was still described for Scots in the 19th and early 20th century, at least as a variant pattern in competition with Standard English general plural *-ø* (Wilson 1926:87-88); and cf. Ramisch's (2008) study of exceptions to the rule in Wright's dialect dictionary (Wright 1898-1905). The Shetland dialect, according to unpublished *Linguistic Survey of Scotland* material, follows the NSR closely (Melchers 2004:38). However, recent corpus research shows that present-day Northern and Scots varieties have the NSR less regularly. Pietsch (2005a,b) gives a detailed survey of the NSR in 20th-century varieties of Northern English, Scots and related varieties of Ulster English, based on the FRED corpus (Kortmann et al. 2005) and the SED basic material and field work notes (Orton, Halliday, and Barry 1962-1971). Pietsch finds that the NSR occurs variably in these dialects; the adjacency effect in particular tends to be absent. This constraint "appears with some regularity" in data from the Survey of English Dialects (SED), dating back to the 1950s, cf. the examples in (27) from Pietsch (2005b:74-90):

(27) a. ***They rope 'em and then pulls 'em in*** (SED Y29)

b. ***Some uses a jug and gets it broke*** (SED R)

However, the adjacency constraint is not observed at all in Pietsch's sample of the late-20th-century Northern and Scots FRED corpus. It is also reported to be absent from various other Northern English and Scots varieties. This is true for a range of dialects across North-Eastern England and Hawick Scots

(Buchstaller, Corrigan and Holmberg 2010), as well as the Scottish variety of Buckie (Adger and Smith 2010). It may be significant that some studies specifically note that non-adjacent contexts with pronoun subjects are especially rare in their material. For instance, Cole (2009) reports that these contexts are rare in the NECTE corpus of spoken data from the north-eastern English dialect of Tyneside. However, where they do occur, the verb usually takes a $-\emptyset$ ending, contrary to the NSR. There is only one *-s* with nonadjacent *they* in the NECTE corpus, indicating that the adjacency condition has been (all but) lost in this dialect (Cole 2009). Non-adjacent contexts are very infrequent in the FRED corpus as well (cf. Pietsch 2005b).

The absence of the adjacency condition in recent northern corpora may seem surprising in view of the distribution of the adjacency condition in the SED material which is only a few decades older. However, the loss of this constraint may not be quite as sharp and recent as this opposition appears to suggest, because the nature of the data is not exactly comparable. Whereas the FRED and NECTE corpora consist of extensive but relatively informal naturalistic conversation data, the SED material consists of elicitation data and fieldworker notes, which tended to focus only on non-standard utterances. The SED data therefore do record that the adjacency condition could be active in 1950s Northern dialects, but they say little about how frequently it was actually used.

The fact that the more recent corpora show that non-adjacent contexts are vanishingly rare in spontaneous speech may also help to explain why the adjacency condition was lost in these varieties. It may be that non-adjacent contexts are so infrequent in the input of many language learners that they lack the evidence to acquire the adjacency condition. It is interesting to note that at least in early Middle English texts, non-adjacent contexts do not seem to have been especially rare. It is an open question whether the same was true for spoken language in the same period. Apparently, many learners did have enough evidence to acquire the adjacency condition, although its variability in

early ME may imply that the context was already rare in many varieties during ME.

The adjacency constraint is not the only condition which is subject to variation and loss in present-day Northern varieties. Even the subject constraint is often obscured by competing patterns: general plural $-\emptyset$, probably under the influence of Standard English, and generalized $-s$, used for the historic present (*'I says, I goes'*; Pietsch 2005b:82, Beal and Corrigan 2000:17, Wilson 1926:87-88) and habitual semantics in some dialects (Pietsch 2005b:82). In the north-eastern English Tyneside dialect recorded in the NECTE corpus (Corrigan, Beal and Moisl 2001-2005), the original NSR type-of-subject condition no longer holds: whereas some NP types do promote $-s$ (existential *there*, conjoined singular subjects, relative and indefinite pronouns, demonstratives, *them*), the NSR seems to have become fossilized to these environments, and other NP subjects actually inhibit $-s$ (Cole 2009). Although the original conditions of the NSR have been lost in this dialect, it seems that the pattern has not only given way to Standard English plural $-\emptyset$, but also to specific dialect uses of $-s$.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has offered a review of the variation in and surrounding the NSR, from OE to the present day and in Northern English and other varieties, focusing on a detailed case study of early Middle English. There are a number of patterns which emerge from the variation and which offer insights into the nature of the pattern, as well as possible hypotheses for its origin.

We have seen that the NSR pattern occurs with different morphological realizations: verbs can end in $-\emptyset$, $-e$ or $-n$ with subject pronouns, and in $-s$ or $-th$ with NP subjects or in non-adjacency. In the OE *Lindisfarne Gospels* and in modern East Anglian dialects, the morphological material even occurs in more or less the opposite contexts: *Lindisfarne* has $-\emptyset/e/s$ with (adjacent) pronoun

subjects and *-th* elsewhere; the East Anglian Subject Rule has *-s* with pronoun subjects and \emptyset with NP subjects.

Throughout the history of the NSR in Middle English and Modern English, the subject condition has proved to be more stable than the adjacency condition: in many varieties, pronoun subjects promote $\emptyset/e/n$ endings instead of *-s*, even when the subject and the verb are not immediately adjacent. This seems to argue for the idea that the nature of the subject is somehow more essential to the pattern than its position. In Chapter 4, I will link this insight to evidence from OE and ME that pronoun subjects were syntactically different from NP subjects. Another factor may be that non-adjacent contexts are not always sufficiently frequent to provide the evidence language learners need to acquire the adjacency condition. I will return to this issue in the discussion of the origin of the pattern in Chapter 5.

Another pattern which becomes apparent from the data is that the oldest and most categorical evidence for the NSR is found in the Northern dialect area; this is where both the subject condition and the adjacency condition are most widely attested. This argues for the hypothesis that the NSR is indeed an originally Northern English pattern. The evidence indicates that the NSR may have come into being as early as the 10th century or before, taking into account that the core NSR conditions are already visible in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. However, they are not as categorical as in the later NSR pattern and have different morphology. It may be the case that the NSR was still developing at this stage of the language. Alternatively, it may be that NSR patterns of the same type as attested in early ME from the early 14th century already existed in Northumbrian outside the dialects of the few glosses that are left. We will see how these points tie into a theory of the rise of the NSR in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 - A syntactic analysis of the Northern Subject Rule

4.1 Introduction

The basic facts of the early Middle English Northern Subject Rule, as discussed in Chapter 3, can be summarized as follows: there are patterns of variation between $-\emptyset/e/n$ and $-s$ present in plural present-tense endings in early ME, and they are conditioned mainly by the presence or absence of pronoun subjects (which favour $-\emptyset/e/n$) and in addition by adjacency or nonadjacency to the subject (where nonadjacency variably promotes the use of $-s$). This is illustrated in (1), a Middle English version of example (1) from Chapter 1:

(1) a. *they sing(-e/-en)*

b. *birds sings*

c. *they sing(-e/-en) and daunces / daunce(-n)*

In order to fully understand how and why these patterns arose, we need an account of the syntax and morphology involved that explains the difference between pronoun subjects (Spro) and NP subjects (SNP), including the ways in which they can trigger different inflections, and that also explains why adjacency/nonadjacency would have a variable effect on the inflection, conditioned by subject type. In short, the theory developed here (see also de Haas and van Kemenade, forthcoming) is as follows: early English had differential subject positions, with Spro appearing in SpecFP (the precursor to Present-Day English SpecAgrSP) and SNP generally appearing lower, in SpecTP. In the NSR, only subjects in SpecFP trigger plural subject-verb agreement (appearing as $-\emptyset/e/n$ morphemes on the verb), and there is a variable adjacency condition on this type of agreement. Wherever subject-verb agreement does not take place, the verb takes a default ending ($-s$) which marks Tense.

Section 4.2 discusses the syntax of subjects in OE and early ME, with special focus on the evidence from main clauses in the Northern/North-East-

Midlands corpus. Section 4.3 discusses subject-verb agreement and default inflection. Section 4.4 then applies these notions to the NSR, detailing a theory for its syntactic analysis in Section 4.4.1. Section 4.4.2 discusses some recent literature on the NSR and related patterns of agreement in other varieties and shows that these do not fit the data as well as my own analysis. Section 4.5, finally, summarizes the most important points of the analysis and sets the scene for a discussion of the origins of the NSR in Chapter 5.

4.2 The syntax of subjects in OE and early ME: differential positions

We have seen that the variation in verb endings in the NSR is keyed not only to subject type, but also to subject position. There is ample evidence that pronominal and nominal subjects occupied different positions in OE and ME. Pronoun subjects occurred in SpecFP, preceding discourse adverbs such as *þa*, *þonne* ‘then’ and *na*, *noht* ‘not’, whereas nominal subjects occurred in SpecTP, following these adverbs.

Section 4.2.1 presents the general syntactic background I assume. Section 4.2.2 surveys the research done on differential subject positions in OE and ME and defines the clause types which can be investigated to gather evidence for differential subject positions. I will compare the evidence in the early ME corpus (cf. Chapter 3) in section 4.2.3. We will see that early Northern ME did in fact have differential subject positions, although its syntax is in some ways different from that of other early ME dialects.

4.2.1 Background: clause structure in OE and ME

I will analyse the syntax of subject positions in OE and ME clauses using a formal model of syntax that includes an articulated phrase structure which allows for fine-grained analyses and which has yielded many useful insights

over the past decades. The basic clause structure I employ is illustrated with the early ME examples in (2) and the tree structure in (3) below.

(2) a. *til yat worm **yan drightin** spak...*

(Cotvespcma f6vb, North, 1325-1350)

to that serpent then Lord spoke

'to the serpent, the Lord then spoke...'

b. *ne stireð **he nout** of slepe...* (Bestiary f4r, EMidl, c. 1300)

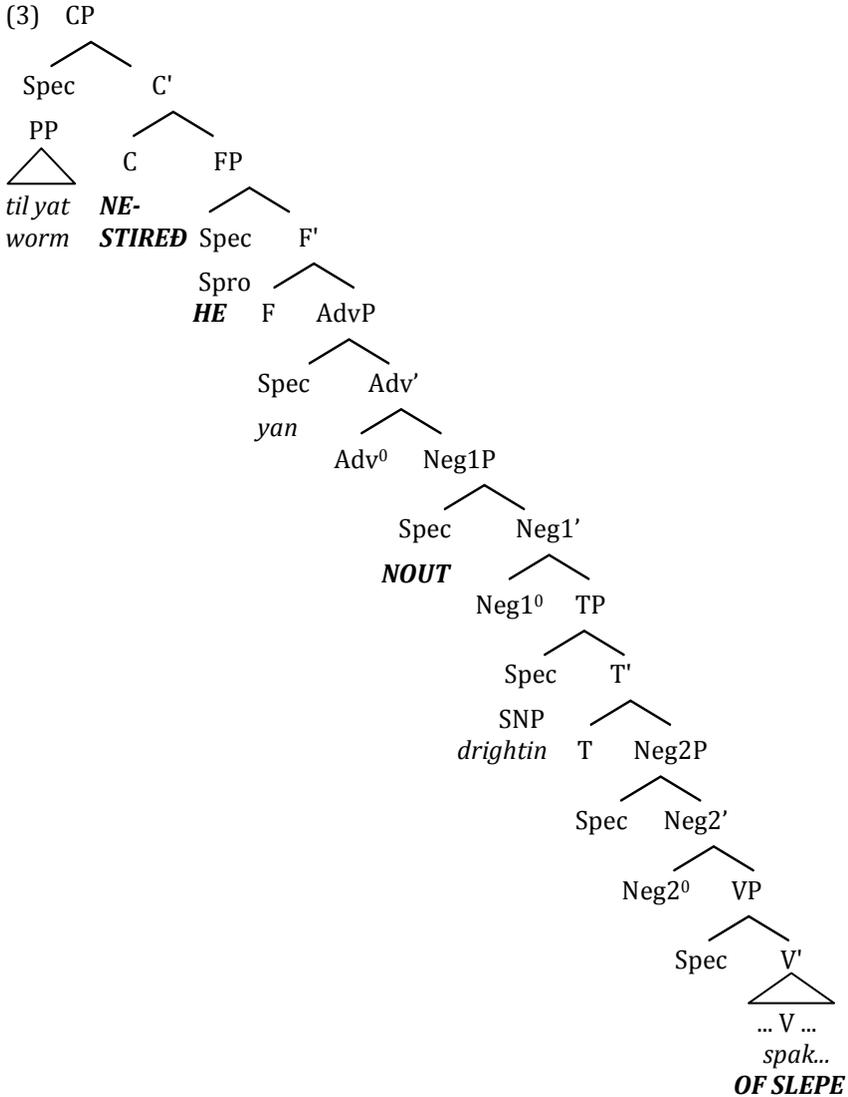
neg stirs he not from sleep

'he does not stir from his sleep...'

I will first explain the rationale behind the structure in (3), and then briefly discuss its individual building blocks, illustrated by elements from (2). The clause structure in (3) has been developed within the Minimalist Programme (cf. Chomsky 1995, 2000), and for the sake of clarity employs the X-bar structure from Chomsky's earlier Government and Binding approach. In this kind of structure, every constituent XP has a specifier position to the left of its head X or X⁰, a complement position to its right, and possibly modifying adjuncts above the X-bar or X' node.

It is assumed that there are two types of constituents: lexical projections and functional projections. Words conveying basic propositional information, such as verbs and their complements, are first merged into the structure as heads of lexical projections, such as VP (Verb Phrase, with the unmoved verb in V, like *spak* in (2a)) and, in its argument positions, NPs (Noun Phrases). The example in (2b) also has a Prepositional Phrase (PP) *of slepe* adjoined to VP. Beyond these basic XPs, above VP, there is room to encode grammatical information in functional projections. The highest projection, the Complementizer Phrase (CP), hosts complementizers in its head C where present, but may also host the finite verb (Vf) in clause types with categorical subject-verb inversion, like questions and negative initials (illustrated in (2b);

stireð occupies C, together with the negative clitic *ne*). The specifier of CP is the location of the first element in Verb-Second clauses, like the Prepositional Phrase *til yat worm* in (2a) (cf. van Kemenade 1997).



There is evidence in older English (OE and ME) for various functional projections above VP and below CP, in the middle field referred to in earlier years as IP (Inflection Phrase). This articulated IP domain hosts both

differentiated subject positions (in SpecFP and SpecTP) and the elements that allow us to distinguish between them (in AdvP and Neg1P). These projections are consequently our main focus. As we will see below, there has been some debate about the nature of the projections I analyze here as FP and AdvP, as well as about the position of negation.

Following e.g. Fischer et al (2000:125-126) and van Kemenade (2000), I assume that pronoun subjects (such as *he* in (2b)) occur in SpecFP. FP (Functional Projection) is a neutral term with which to refer to the XP which hosts not only subjects, but also pronoun objects in OE (and, as we will see, in early ME)¹⁸. Because of its versatility, calling FP AgrSP (Subject Agreement Phrase), as Haerberli (1999, 2000) does, would be a misnomer in OE and early ME, in spite of the fact that FP shares its position and a close association with pronoun subjects with Present-Day English AgrSP (cf. Henry 1995).

Below FP and above SpecTP (Tense Phrase), which hosts NP subjects (cf. Fischer et al. 2000, among others) such as *drihtin* in (2a), we find a position which for a number of discourse adverbs (in which case I label it AdvP) but which may also host the secondary negator *not*. In line with current theory, I assume a Negation Phrase (Neg1P) to host the negative adverb in its specifier, and by analogy (and cf. Cinque 1999), I also assume an Adverb Phrase (AdvP) for the diagnostic adverb (*van* 'then' in (2a)). The structure in (3) shows AdvP preceding Neg1P, but in actual fact, the relative position of AdvP and Neg1P is unclear from the corpus, since they do not co-occur there. The order represented in (3) is an assumption only, and no further claims made here ride on this choice. *Not* (*nout* in (2b)) appears in SpecNeg1P in OE and ME when the finite verb moves to C; in all other cases, it appears in a lower position, preceding VP (van Kemenade 2011). I will refer to the lower Negation Phrase as Neg2P (for more discussion of this matter, see Section 4.2.2.3).

¹⁸ Compare van Kemenade and Milicev (2011) for a different approach for OE.

The main goal of this section is to show what evidence there is in early ME for a different distribution of pronoun subjects (in SpecFP) versus nominal subjects (in SpecTP) in OE and ME. The discussion will continue with the various syntactic configurations used to this effect in Section 4.2.2. The syntactic projections introduced here will be dealt with in more detail in what follows.

4.2.2 Clausal contexts demonstrating differential subject positions

Only a limited subset of OE and ME clauses yield evidence for differential subject positions. These are clauses which contain a subject which is unequivocally below CP and above VP, as well as a lexical element marking a position between SpecFP and SpecTP: an adverb in SpecAdvP/Neg1P, or a finite verb in F.

There are other subject positions besides SpecFP and SpecTP which are not the focus of this discussion. As in PDE, many OE and ME main clauses may be subject-initial. Wherever the subject precedes AdvP/Neg1P in these clauses, it is unclear whether it is situated in SpecCP (a topic position which may also host subjects, cf. Fischer et al 2000:111), SpecFP or indeed SpecTP. These clauses are evidently not suitable as evidence for the purpose of distinguishing between subject positions.

I will not include in the discussion the analysis of clause-final subjects. These occur almost exclusively with unaccusative verbs. Since these verbs do not assign a thematic role to an external argument, they often have an internal argument as their syntactic subject. Such subjects often follow VP material, such as verb particles or non-finite verbs. Included in this group of verbs are impersonal verbs, impersonal passives, modals, and verbs like *wesan* 'be',

weorþan ‘become’, *cuman* ‘come’, and *standan* ‘stand’ (Van Kemenade 1997:334-337). An early Northern ME example is given in (4)¹⁹.

(4) *But Igain god þat es sa wise / Mai noht awail mannes quaintise*

(Edincmb f26vb, North, 1300-1325)

but against god that is so wise can not help man’s cunning
 ‘But against God, who is so wise, man’s cunning is of no use’

4.2.2.1 V-to-C contexts

Clause types that provide unequivocal evidence for differentiated subject positions contain an initial element which is not the subject in SpecCP or in C. In addition to subclauses (with a complementizer in C), these clause types include topicalizations, which I will discuss in some more detail in Section 4.2.2.2, and questions and negative-initial clauses.

WH-questions (illustrated in (5)), yes/no-questions (6), and negative-initial clauses (7) are V-to-C contexts: the finite verb moves to the head of CP, presumably triggered by an interrogative or negative operator (cf. van Kemenade 2000). In WH-questions, the WH-word or WH-phrase also moves to SpecCP (cf. Fischer et al. 2000). In negative-initial clauses of 9th-century OE and later, the negative head *ne* is proclitic on the finite verb and therefore moves along with it to C (van Kemenade 2000).

(5) *A hwat schal i nu don* (Tituswoh f131va, NW Midlands, 1225-1250)

Ah what shall I now do
 ‘Ah, what should I do now?’

¹⁹ All Northern and Midlands early ME examples are from the LAEME corpus unless otherwise stated.

(6) **Was** tu þan at ierusalem Quen-þat þi son was laht /Bundin & sua
 were you then at Jerusalem when your son was arrested bound and so
labeli lede (Edincma f10va, North, 1300-1350)

loathly led

'Were you in Jerusalem then, when your son was arrested, bound and led
 with so much indignity?'

(7) **nulich** ow nawt iheren Ah i wile turne me awej hwen ge heuen toward me
 not-will-I you not hear but I will turn me away when you have toward me
hehe owre honde (Titusar f22ra, NW Midlands, 1225-1250)

high your hands

'I will not hear you, but I will turn away when you have your hands up
 towards me'

V-to-C movement also takes place in declarative verb-initial clauses (8) and many clauses headed by *þa/þonne* (Pintzuk 1991, 1993; Kroch and Taylor 1997). *þa/þonne*-initial clauses as in (9) will not serve as evidence for differential subject positions unless they contain another diagnostic adverb. Since such clauses do not occur in the early ME corpus, I will not revisit this clause type.

(8) **Hauide** þei þanne non opir won (Dulwich f83ra, EMidlands, 1275-1325)

had they then no other custom

'they did not have another custom then'

(9) **þenne schule** ze seon hu al þe world nis nawt wurð

(Titusar f26va, NW Midlands, 1225-1250)

then shall you see how all the world neg-is nothing worth

'Then you shall see how the whole world is worth nothing'.

V-to-C clauses only yield evidence for differential subject positions when a diagnostic adverb such as *then*, *now* or *not* is present in AdvP/Neg1P. Thus,

examples (5)-(8), but not (9), provide evidence for a pronominal subject position in SpecFP, left of AdvP. I will discuss diagnostic adverbs and the evidence gathered with their help in more detail below.

4.2.2.2 Topicalization

Based on the literature on early English syntax, we might expect topicalizations to be a fruitful source of evidence on subject positions even without diagnostic adverbs, given the position of the finite verb in F in this clause type. However, there are some complications in (especially later) ME. I will briefly discuss the syntax of topicalizations in OE and ME and show some evidence that the early ME texts in the corpus do not reliably pattern with OE as to verb placement, so that I will only use topicalizations as evidence if they contain a diagnostic adverb.

OE had variable Verb Second in topicalizations: the finite verb generally followed the topic immediately with NP subjects, but pronoun subjects intervened. This is illustrated in (10) and (11) (from Fischer et al 2000:114 and 2000:118, respectively):

(10) *On twam þingum hæfde God þæs mannes sawle gegodod*

in two things had God the man's soul endowed

'With two things had God endowed man's soul'

(Ælfric, Catholic Homilies I, 1.20.1)

(11) *Forþon we sceolan mid ealle mod & mægene to Gode gecyrran*

therefore we must with all mind and power to God turn

'Therefore we must turn to God with all our mind and power'

(Blickling Homilies 8:26)

This pattern is analyzed as movement of the finite verb to F, in combination with differential placement of subjects (cf. Fischer et al. 2000). According to Koopman (1998), as cited in Fischer et al. (2000:128-129), this pattern was

nearly categorical for subject pronouns in OE, but less so for NP subjects, for which inverted (finite verb - subject) orders were 91%-94% of the total in the works of Ælfric but around 50% in other OE texts.

This pattern of variable Verb Second was lost during ME, and it has been argued that Northern ME did not share this pattern of verb movement (Kroch and Taylor 1997), and even that Northern ME did not share the differential subject positions we are interested in (Fuß and Trips 2010, 2011). The main evidence for the claim that northern ME did not have V-to-F movement came from one text which is also included in the corpus: the *Northern Prose Rule of Saint Benet, Benedictine Rule* in short. This text shows categorical inversion with all subject types, indicating general V-to-C movement (Kroch and Taylor 1997). This is illustrated in (12) and (13) , from Trips (2002: 257, (105)-(106)):

(12) *In þis sentence mustirs sain benet us hu we sal lede ure lif.*

in this sentence musters Saint Benet us how we shall lead our life

'In this sentence, Saint Benet shows us how to lead our life'

(CMBenrul,2.37, North, 1400-1425)

(13) *In oþir stede sais he: 'In god sal man be glad and loue him in dede.'*

in other position says he in God shall man be glad and love him in deed

'in another place, he says: 'One shall be happy with God and love him in deed''

(CMBenrul,3.61, North, 1400-1425)

Based on this evidence, it has been argued that Northern ME, unlike OE and Southern ME, did not have differential subject positions (Fuß and Trips 2010, 2011, building in part on Kroch and Taylor 1997 and Trips 2002; cf. also Haeberli 2000). Since there is no evidence that the finite verb moves to AgrS (our F) in the *Benedictine Rule*, and arguing that agreement morphology is relatively weak in this dialect and so does not offer independent evidence for a subject agreement projection, Haeberli (2000) claims that there is no AgrSP

(our FP) in this dialect; it has been lost in conjunction with the loss of morphology (cf. Bobaljik and Thráinsson 1998 for the argument that inflectional morphology expressing both tense and agreement can be seen as a prerequisite for movement of the verb to AgrS, and the presence of a separate AgrSP above TP).

The changes to Verb Second (V2) in ME topicalizations have recently been analyzed in detail by van Kemenade and Westergaard (in press), based on a survey of the evidence from the PPCME2 corpus. They find that several developments preceded the loss of V2 that occurred at the end of the ME and in the early modern English period. The positional difference between discourse-old subjects in SpecFP and discourse-new subjects in SpecTP (cf. Section 4.2.2.3 below) was lost by more and more speakers from the end of early ME (c. 1250-1350), giving way to a uniform placement of subjects in SpecFP. During this process, the input became too varied for children to clearly distinguish the discourse factors behind the old inversion/non-inversion pattern, and this variation gave way to a reanalysed pattern of inversion: younger generations assumed a syntactic reason for inversion and started moving the finite verb to C in certain verb types, irrespective of the type of subject. This led to a rise in V2, since Topic - Verb - Subject orders were now common with NP subjects as well as with pronoun and other discourse-old subjects. The simultaneous presence of this pattern together with other patterns still present with other verb types presumably led to relatively confusing language input for learners, and would have contributed to the subsequent loss of the V2 pattern in English with V-to-C as well as V-to-F orders (van Kemenade and Westergaard, in press).

The Northern dialect had been characterized as a uniform CP-V2 dialect, as we saw, but van Kemenade and Westergaard's work, although it has no dialectological approach, implies that the variation between V-to-F and V-to-C movement was not strictly a matter of dialect differences: there was much intra-dialect variation as well (van Kemenade and Westergaard, in press). There does seem to be a tendency for V-to-C movement to occur more in Northern texts in the PPCME corpus, however (Ans van Kemenade, p.c., and cf.

Kroch, Taylor and Ringe 2000). So how do the Northern and Midlands early ME texts from LAEME (cf. Chapter 3), most of which are not included in the PPCME corpus, compare?

A study of the material from the LAEME corpus that will be used here to adduce evidence for subject positions (cf. Section 4.2.3) reveals that in topicalizations, V-to-C movement was frequent, but not categorical (Table 4.1). This sample of the material only includes main-clause topicalizations with a diagnostic adverb for subject position (*then/now/not*) in which the finite verb, the diagnostic adverb and the subject all occupied a position between the topic (in SpecCP) and VP material (ranging from adjuncts, left or right of the rest of VP, to objects in the complement of V). Finite verbs that could only occupy a low position in V were thus left out of consideration. For the sake of clarity, it was assumed that pronoun and NP subjects preceding the diagnostic verbs occupy SpecFP (see Section 4.2.3 for evidence that this assumption is usually warranted), and post-adverbial NP subjects occupy a position in SpecTP or lower. Post-adverbial pronoun subjects posed somewhat of a complication, since this order is otherwise unattested in ME (cf. van Kemenade and Westergaard, in press), so I assumed an extra AdvP, Adv1P between CP and FP, relabeling the diagnostic AdvP Adv2P and still taking pronoun subjects to usually appear in SpecFP (cf. Table 4.1 and Section 4.2.3).

Source text	Period	Dialect	C	C/F	C/F/T	Adv1	F	F/T	F/T/lower	Neg1-Adv2	Neg1-Adv2/lower	T/lower	Total
Laud108b	13b2-14a1	EMidl; Ely/WN/norf	50% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	50% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	2
Dulwich	13b2-14a1	EMidl; Slincs	50% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	50% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	2
Genexod	14a1	EMidl; WNorf	63% 5	25% 2	0% 0	0% 0	13% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	8
Havelok	14a1	EMidl; WNorf	67% 2	33% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	3
Tituswoh	13a2	NW/Midl; NEChes	100% 2	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	2
Titusar	13a2	NW/Midl; Sches	75% 3	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	25% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	4
Scotwar	14a	North; Durham Lanchester	73% 8	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	27% 3	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	11
Edincma	14a	North; EYorks	40% 12	3% 1	3% 1	33% 10	0% 0	0% 0	7% 2	3% 1	3% 1	7% 2	30
Edincmb	14a	North; NYorks	70% 7	0% 0	0% 0	20% 2	0% 0	10% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	10
Cotvespcma	14a2	North; WYorks	30% 7	0% 0	0% 0	57% 13	4% 1	0% 0	4% 1	0% 0	0% 0	4% 1	23
Edincmc	14a	North; York	29% 5	6% 1	0% 0	59% 10	0% 0	0% 0	6% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	17
East Midlands total			60% 9	20% 3	0% 0	0% 0	7% 1	0% 0	7% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	15
North Midlands total			83% 5	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	17% 1	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	6
North total			43% 39	2% 2	1% 1	38% 35	1% 1	4% 4	4% 4	1% 1	1% 1	3% 3	91
Total			47% 53	4% 5	1% 1	31% 35	2% 2	4% 5	4% 5	2% 2	1% 1	3% 3	112

Table 4.1. Positions of the finite verb in topicalizations with then/now/not in the Northern/Midlands LAEME corpus. Only topicalizations with finite verb, diagnostic adverb and subject between the topic and VP material were considered. Positions of the finite verb are based on the assumptions that Spro and pre-adverbial SNP are in SpecFP and post-adverbial SNP is in SpecTP.

It is not always possible to pinpoint the exact location of the finite verb in these clauses, but the finite verb is attested in every position in between the other elements in the clause. Assuming that the finite verb only moves from head to head, we can say that C, F and T are all possible landing sites for the finite verb in topicalizations here, and probably the heads of the AdvPs/NegP are as well. The C position immediately following the topic is the most frequent position for the finite verb in all regions in the corpus; this is the position found in clauses like example (13) above, where both the Topic and the finite verb precede a pronoun subject. Examples like (14) were also included in the sample:

- (14) *Min soru I ne can noht sai* (Edincma f11ra, North, 1300-1350)
 my sorrow I neg can not say
 ‘My sorrow, I cannot utter’

In this clause, the finite verb is clearly not in C, so *noht* can be taken to appear in SpecNeg2P, below TP. This clause can still yield evidence for the position of the finite verb. Assuming the pronoun subject *I* appears in SpecFP, the auxiliary *can* appears either in T or in F, together with clitic *ne*.

There are two clauses in the sample where the finite verb appears to occur in the head of the diagnostic adverb phrase Adv2P, both with *then* immediately preceding the verb and an NP subject immediately following it, as in (15):

- (15) *To þat angel þan spek’ helsie / Sai me signe ...*
 to that angel then spoke Elias say me sign
 (Edincma f15rb, North, 1300-1350)
 ‘To that angel, Elias then spoke: “tell me the sign” ...’

The variable distribution of the finite verb in topicalizations thus precludes the use of finite verbs as diagnostic device for subject positions.

4.2.2.3 *Diagnostic adverbs: discourse particles and secondary negation*

Instead, evidence for differential subject positions can be obtained from a number of short adverbs which can be used diagnostically. In both OE and ME, these adverbs are often used in a non-clause-initial position and then follow Spro and precede SNP in the same way the finite verb did in OE topicalizations. The adverbs involved are varied, but have in common that they are “often used as rhetorical devices, and thus serve an important discourse function” (Van Kemenade and Los 2006:224). For OE, they include normally temporal adverbs *þa* ‘then’, *þonne* ‘then’, *nu* ‘now’, the interjection *la* ‘lo’, *eac* ‘also’ and reinforcing negative adverbs (Van Kemenade and Los 2006:224). The last category includes OE *na* ‘no’, functionally equivalent with later *not*, which I will discuss in more detail below. The most frequent and consistent of these adverbs are *þa* and *þonne* (Van Kemenade and Los 2006:225), and they have consequently been used most to serve as evidence. I follow this practice, using *then* (in various forms, including variants of *þa* and *þonne*) as well as *now* and *not* as diagnostic adverbs in this study. I will discuss the background of these adverbs as diagnostic devices in earlier studies on OE and ME before showing the results of the study in Section 4.2.3.

The positional difference between Spro and SNP in clauses with *þa/þonne* is nearly categorical in some OE texts, such as the *Cura Pastoralis*, illustrated in example (16) below (cf. Van Kemenade 2009); in other texts, it is not categorical in the sense that many nominal subjects precede rather than follow the discourse adverb, but the tendency is still very clear (Fischer et al. 2000).

(16) a. *Hu mæg he ðonne ðæt lof & ðone gilp fleon*

how may he then the praise and the vainglory avoid

(Cocura, 9.57.18.364)

‘How can he then avoid praise and vainglory...?’

b. *Hu gerades mæg ðonne se biscep brucan ðære hirdelican are*
 how properly may then the bishop enjoy the pastoral dignity
 (Cocura, 18.133.3.898)
 ‘How, then, can the bishop properly enjoy the pastoral dignity?’

Research by van Kemenade and Los (2006); van Kemenade, Milicev and Baayen (2008); van Kemenade (2009); and van Kemenade and Milicev (2011) shows that the position of subjects in OE is determined not specifically by the syntactic (pronoun / NP) category of subjects, but more precisely by their discourse characteristics. By their nature, personal pronouns refer back to entities already mentioned in the discourse, whereas discourse-new entities are usually introduced in a full NP. Other discourse-old elements may occur in pre-adverbial position in OE, besides pronoun subjects: personal pronoun objects (variably), independently used demonstrative pronoun subjects (near-categorically) and objects (variably), and definite subject NPs (variably).

Studies of word order in the ME PPCME2 corpus (Van Kemenade and Los 2006, Van Kemenade and Milicev 2011) have shown that this system was lost and replaced by a simpler one in early ME subclauses: instead of an organisation based on discourse properties, a system emerges in which the pre-adverbial position is simply a subject position. NP subjects precede *þa/þonne* in 23 out of 28 subclauses in the earliest part of the PPCME2 corpus, dating from 1150 to 1250 (Van Kemenade and Milicev 2011). Van Kemenade and Milicev do note that the system continues to be more complex in main clauses during ME, suggesting that in a more limited way, discourse conditioning for subject positions continued to be relevant in main clauses. We will see below to what extent this is true for the early Northern ME corpus.

The negative adverb *not* (or, in OE, *na/no*) can be used as a discourse adverb with a syntax similar to that of the adverbs discussed above. However, as we saw in Section 4.2.1, *not* also often appears in a lower position and the two need to be clearly distinguished if we are to use *not* as a diagnostic adverb.

The syntax of negation in OE can be summarized as follows. *Ne* is a negative head that is procliticized to the finite verb as it moves through NegP. This is why *ne* appears immediately to the left of the finite verb (*ne will* etc.), or even as a part of the verb form (*nule* etc.) in OE and ME. In ME, and less frequently also in OE, *ne* is reinforced by a secondary negator of the *not* type (henceforth *not*; OE *na*, *no*, *naht*, *noht*, ME *noht*, *nought*, *nawt* etc.; cf. Van Kemenade 2000).

There has been some debate about the suitability of the secondary negator as a diagnostic device for subject positions. While some studies showed evidence for NegP occurring between FP and TP (cf. Van Kemenade 2000, Fischer et al. 2000), others found that NegP occurred in a position below Spro as well as SNP (Haeberli and Ingham 2007). Van Kemenade's (2011) recent study of negation in OE and ME provides a resolution of the issue and shows that there are in fact two positions for NegP. Consequently, the secondary negator *not* may occupy a high position in the same part of the clause as particles like *þa* and *þonne*, or a low position in between TP and VP. Van Kemenade shows that NegP occurs in the high position (our Neg1P, cf. discussion in Section 4.2.1 and the syntactic structure in (2)) whenever the finite verb moves to C, and in the low position elsewhere (our Neg2P). The low position is illustrated in (17) for OE. The examples in (18) from Van Kemenade (2011) show OE clauses with NegP in the higher position; (19) does the same for ME clauses (cf. Van Kemenade 2000:69).

- (17) *Nis eac nan wundor þeah us mislympe, forðam we witan ful georne*
 Not-is also no wonder though us went-badly, because we know full well
þæt nu fela geara men na ne rohton foroft hwæt hi worhton
 that now many years men not-not-cared very-often what they wrought
wordes oððe dæde. (Cowulf, WHom_20.2:127.1724)
 of-words or of-deeds
 'It is no wonder that things went bad for us, since we know full well that
 for many years, people often haven't cared what they say or do.'

- (18) a. *Ne het he us na leornian heofonas to wyrcente*
 neg ordered he us not learn heavens to make
 (Coelive, [Memory_of_Saints], 127.3394)
 'He did not bid us learn to make the heavens'
- b. *Ne sæde na ure Drihten þæt he mid cynehelme oððe mid purpuran*
 neg said not our L ord that he with diadem or with purple
gescryd, cuman wolde to us (Coelive, [Exalt_of_Cross], 90.5620)
 clothed, come wanted to us
 'Our Lord did not say that He would come to us with a diadem or
 clothed with purple'
- (19) a. *þet ne seide he noht* (CMKentse, 215.24)
 that neg said he not
 'That he did not say'
- b. *nule nawt þi leofmon þoli na leas þing ta lihe þe longe*
 neg-will not your beloved tolerate no false thing to deceive you long
 (CMJulia, 108.208)
 'your beloved will not allow any false thing to deceive you for long'

In this structure, an example like (19a) is derived as follows: the preposed object *þet* is in SpecCP; *ne*+finite verb *ne seide* is in C; the pronominal subject *he* is in SpecFP, while the secondary negator *noht* is in SpecNeg1P. Example (16b) is derived in a similar way: *ne*+finite verb *nule* is in C; the secondary negator *nawt* is in SpecNeg1P, while the nominal subject *þi leofmon* is in a lower subject position.

I will analyze discourse adverbs like *þa* and *þonne* as elements in an adverb phrase AdvP. Analogous to the negative adverb which occupies the specifier position in NegP, I have shown discourse adverbs in SpecAdvP in the

tree structure in (2) (cf. Section 4.2.1)²⁰. By assuming a dedicated functional projection for these adverbs, I follow the framework set up by Cinque (1999), who assumes that adverbs with a fixed position in the clause, like these adverbs in their use as focus particles, are expressions of dedicated functional projections with an XP structure. Haerberli (1999, 2000) has assumed such an analysis for the ‘adjunct’ position between AgrSP (our FP) and TP in West-Germanic languages.

Haerberli (1999:8-9) assumes that this independent functional projection (his “FP”) is inserted into the derivation because adjunction to TP is impossible for independent reasons²¹. I rather assume that independent status of this XP is related to the nature of its head, following Cinque (1999). The exact nature of this functional head is not the focus of this investigation, although we can assume it is related to the discourse properties discussed above. I will remain agnostic about this issue and henceforth use the label ‘AdvP’ to distinguish this XP from other functional projections.

It was noted above that the distribution of NP subjects relative to AdvP/Neg1P underwent some change after the OE period: they started to appear predominantly in pre-adverbial rather than post-adverbial position, at least in ME subclauses. At the same time, object pronouns, which frequently occurred pre-adverbially in OE, found a new canonical low position instead

²⁰ There is some evidence, however, that similar discourse adverbs in German may have head status, even though they are immaterial to the Head Movement Constraint (Bayer and Obenauer, to appear). Nothing in the present argument hinges on the distinction.

²¹ Haerberli’s (1999) argument strives to account for the contrast between V2 languages like German, which allow XP adjuncts preceding definite subjects, and V2 languages like West Flemish, which do not (cf. i. and ii., Haerberli’s (2)).

(i) *Wahrscheinlich wird später der Hans dieselbe Uhr kaufen* (German)

(ii) **Misschien goa loater Valère tselfste orloge kuopen* (West Flemish)

Probably will later (the) John/Valère the-same watch buy

Haerberli concludes that the ungrammaticality of adjunction to the XP hosting the highest subject position (AgrSP or TP depending on the language) means that adjunction to AgrSP and TP is restricted, and therefore favours an analysis which relies on an extra functional projection rather than AgrSP or TP, to which XPs can be adjoined (1999:8-9).

(Van Kemenade and Los 2006, Van Kemenade and Milicev 2011). The upshot of this is that the nature of the projection I have labelled FP seems to have changed. It started out as a position for discourse-old NPs (NPs in a general sense, including both DPs and pronouns), but evolved into a position which was specifically used for subjects, be they discourse-old or discourse -new, and no longer for object pronouns.

We will see in Section 4.2.3 that the evidence from main clauses in the Northern/Eastern early ME corpus does not reflect this advanced state of development, as discourse conditioning is still apparent there. However, for the analysis of FP and the NSR, it should be taken into account that pronoun subjects were the only group of NPs that categorically occurred in SpecFP rather than SpecTP throughout both OE and ME, a state of affairs that can be assumed to have marked subject pronouns as the prototypical element of SpecFP, and which may have provided the opportunity to inflect finite verbs in subject-pronoun contexts with special forms of agreement, as we will see in Section 4.3.

4.2.3 Evidence for SpecFP and SpecTP in the early ME corpus

Let us now consider the evidence for multiple subject positions in SpecFP and SpecTP in the early Middle English corpus, consisting of all texts from the NSR area in LAEME (Northern, Northwest Midlands and part of the East Midlands) and some early texts from PPCME2 from the same area (the *Peterborough continuations*, *Ormulum* and the *Benedictine Rule*, cf. Appendix). I will first narrow down the contexts from which the evidence will be drawn and make a short excursus in the form of a discussion of the evidence for object pronouns. Since these often occupy SpecFP, as in OE, focusing only on the evidence for subjects in this position would not do justice to the facts.

As we have seen in the preceding discussion, evidence can be gathered from clauses which contain a subject which is neither in initial position nor inside VP, as well as a diagnostic adverb (i.e., one of the set of discourse adverbs

discussed above, used in a clause-medial position). For this study, I have chosen to search the corpus for such clauses with forms of the most frequent discourse particles. These are *then* (including all forms of *þa* and *þonne*) and *now* (usually spelled in ME as *nu* or *nou*) when used in clause-medial position, and the secondary negator *not* (often spelled *noht*, *no3te*, *nawt* or *nowth*) when used in V-to-C contexts. Texts from the LAEME corpus were searched by lemma, whereas texts from PPCME were searched for syntactic tags (in this case, for temporal adverbs and negation). The numbers of relevant clauses are listed in Table 4.2.

An initial search showed that in the LAEME texts, only 29 subclauses had the relevant diagnostic value, compared to 201 main clauses. I will not analyse the results for subclauses here for a number of reasons. First, results from only 29 clauses are unlikely to be very reliable, especially if they have to be split up into different subject types and dialect areas. Second, subclause and main clause numbers cannot easily be conflated, since developments in subject syntax are different for main clauses and subclauses in ME (cf. Van Kemenade 2011, and the discussion in Section 4.2.2.3).

	LAEME		PPCME	
	Subclause	Main clause	Main clause	Main clause total
<i>not</i>	0	98	42	140
<i>then</i>	11	66	11	77
<i>now</i>	18	37	4	41
Total	29	201	57	258

Table 4.2. Numbers of clauses yielding evidence for differential subject positions in the Northern / Midlands early ME corpus. The PPCME texts include only the Peterborough continuations, *Ormulum*, *Benedictine Rule*.

The early Northern ME syntax of subjects is particularly interesting, mainly because Northern ME has been argued not to have differential subject positions at all. We will see below that the dialect actually does have differential subject positions, and in addition to the patterns familiar from other dialects, it

displays some interesting patterns in the left periphery of main clauses that are not otherwise attested.

4.2.3.1 Object pronouns

Before I proceed to the main part of the analysis, a word on the position of object pronouns is in order. It has been argued that the structure of FP in subclauses was simplified in the transition to ME, so that SpecFP became restricted to subjects instead of the range of discourse-old elements it

Source text	Period	Dialect	Pre-adverbial object pronouns	
Laud108bt	13b2-14a1	EMidl; Ely/WNorf/NESuff	100,00%	(1/1)
Genexodt	14a1	EMidl; WNorf	0,00%	(0/1)
Havelokt	14a1	EMidl; WNorf	100,00%	(3/3)
Bestiaryt	13b2-14a1	EMidl; WNorf?	100,00%	(1/1)
Tituswoht	13a2	NWMidl; NEChes	100,00%	(1/1)
Titusart	13a2	NWMidl; SChes	100,00%	(2/2)
Edincmat	14a	North; EYorks	100,00%	(2/2)
Edincmbt	14a	North; NYorks	0,00%	(0/1)
Edincmct	14a	North; York	0,00%	(0/1)
East Midlands total			83,33%	(5/6)
North Midlands total			100,00%	(3/3)
North total			50,00%	(2/4)
			76,92%	(10/13)

Table 4.3. Position of object pronouns in main clauses with evidence on differential subject position in North-Eastern LAEME texts.

previously hosted (Van Kemenade and Milicev 2011). If this also took place in main clauses and had run its course in Northern dialects before the earliest extant ME texts were produced, we should find no examples of pronoun objects preceding discourse adverbs in the relevant part of the LAEME corpus, but in fact we do. Pre-adverbial object pronouns in fact outnumber their post-adverbial counterparts in the subsection of main clauses that yield evidence for differential subject positions (Table 4.3). In the 201 main clauses that yield

evidence on subject positions, object pronouns precede the diagnostic adverb 10 times, as illustrated in (20)-(21). They follow it only 3 times, as seen in (22).

(20) *Forþi wil he **it noht** fulfille* (Edincmb f32va, North, 1300-1350)

for-that will he it not fulfil

'Because of that, he will not fulfil it'

(21) *Par þu **him nu** hauis al in blis* (Edincma f13vb, North, 1300-1350)

there thou now have him all in bliss

'there you now have him, all blissful'

(22) *wolde he **nogt him** his swinc forgeten* (Genexod f18r, EMidl, 1300-1325)

wanted he not him his labour forget

'he did not want to forget his labour'

These numbers are evidently very low and include only a subset of all relevant object pronouns in the corpus. To reach a definitive conclusion, all object pronouns in clauses with medial *then*, *now* and *not* would have to be investigated. I will leave this for further research. However, the occurrence of 'high' object pronouns in itself is in line with some early evidence from the PPCME2 corpus. Van Kemenade and Milicev (2011) found some similar (subclause) examples, but only in the Ormulum, an early East Midland text. It would seem that (North-Eastern) early ME dialects had not completely lost the OE structure of FP (at least in subclauses). In this respect, they were more conservative than other ME dialects, as discussed in van Kemenade and Los (2006) and van Kemenade (2009). I will investigate below whether this is also true for the discourse factors involved in positioning Spro and SNP.

4.2.3.2 Positions of subjects relative to *then*, *now*, *not*

We now turn to the evidence for subject positions. The numbers of main-clause subjects preceding and following the (clause-internal) adverbs *then* and *now* and *not* in relevant contexts as discussed above are shown in Table 4.4. As

expected, pronoun subjects and NP subjects show very different tendencies. Spro almost categorically precedes the adverb in the Midlands dialects, indicative of a position in SpecFP; this is illustrated in (23). Although the Northern facts are different, Spro precedes the adverb in a clear majority of cases (62%) there, as well; compare (24), repeated from (1b) in Section 4.2.1. I

Source text	Period	Dialect	Text type	Spro > Adv/Neg1	SNP > Adv/Neg1
Peterborough	12b1	E Midl; N Northants Peterborough	Prose	100% (2/2)	100% (1/1)
Ormulum	12b2	E Midl; S Lincs Bourne	Verse	97% (32/33)	13% (1/8)
Laud108b	13b2-14a1	EMidl; Ely/WNorf/ NESuff	Verse	50% (1/2)	0% (0/1)
TrincleoD	13b2	EMidl; Norf	Verse	100% (2/2)	(0/0)
Dulwich	13b2-14a1	EMidl; SLincs	Verse	100% (2/2)	0% (0/3)
Genexod	14a1	EMidl; WNorf	Verse	100% (10/10)	33% (1/3)
Havelok	14a1	EMidl; WNorf	Verse	100% (21/21)	20% (1/5)
Bestiary	13b2-14a1	EMidl; WNorf?	Verse	100% (6/6)	(0/0)
Tituswoh	13a2	NWMidl;	Prose	100% (4/4)	(0/0)
Titusar	13a2	NWMidl; SChes	Prose	100% (19/19)	0% (0/4)
Benrul	15a1	North; C W	Prose	100% (14/14)	(0/0)
Scotwar	14a	North; Durham Lanchester	Verse	100% (4/4)	(0/0)
Edincma	14a	North; EYorks	Verse	50% (18/36)	0% (0/7)
Edincmb	14a	North; NYorks	Verse	90% (19/21)	100% (2/2)
CotcleoBvi	13a2-13b1	North; WYorks	Verse	100% (1/1)	(0/0)
Cotvespcma	14a2	North; WYorks	Verse	42% (11/26)	0% (0/3)
Edincmc	14a	North; York	Verse	43% (10/23)	0% (0/2)
East Midlands total				97% (76/78)	19% (4/21)
North Midlands total				100% (23/23)	0% (0/4)
North total				62% (77/125)	20% (2/14)
Total				78% (176/226)	15% (6/39)

Table 4.4. *Spro*, *SNP* preceding now, then or high not (in Neg1P) as a proportion of all main clauses with *Spro* or *SNP* and these adverbs in the early ME corpus. Clauses with clause-initial or clause-final subjects/adverbs were not included; complement of all proportions consists of clauses with Subject following Adv. All texts from LAEME except Peterborough, Ormulum, Benedictine Rule from PPCME2.

will come back to the reasons why the Northern dialect might show an unexpectedly high number of seemingly lower Spro cases below.

(23) & *þurh riht dom þu best ta demmd /*

and through right judgement you are then judged

To drezhenn helle pine (CMOrm,II,262.2600, EMidl, 1125-1150)

to suffer of-hell pain

'And it is by just judgement, then, that you are sentenced to suffering the pain of hell'

(24) *ne stireð he nout of slepe . Til ðe sunne haueð sinen .*

neg stirs he not from sleep till the sun has shone

ðries him abuten (Bestiary f4r, EMidl, c. 1300)

thrice him about

'He does not stir from his sleep until the sun has shone [and run its course] three times around him'

By comparison, the frequency of NP subjects preceding the adverb is much lower, with categorical post-adverbial SNP (in SpecTP) in the few Northwest Midlands cases (25) and around 80% post-adverbial SNP in the other two dialect groups. East Midlands dialects are illustrated in (26) and Northern dialects in (cf. (27); (27b) is repeated from (1a) in Section 4.2.1).

(25) *Haue þenne euch feble mon & wummon muche dread when heo...*

have then each feeble man and woman much dread when she

(Titusar f16va, NMidl, 1225-1250)

'Every weak man and woman, then, is very afraid when she...'

(26) a. & *þar iss þa þatt illke mann / Unnsezhennlike wharrfedd /*

and there is then that same man invisibly changed

Fra flæsh till gast (CMOrm,II,246.2512, EMidl, 1125-1150)

from flesh to spirit

'and there is that same man then turned from flesh into spirit'

- b. & *himm* was ***þa þe kinedom*** / *Forr hise gilltess ræfedd*
 and him was then the kingdom for his guilts taken-away
 (CMOrm,I,286.2365, EMidl, 1125-1150)
 ‘and the kingdom was then taken away from him because of his crimes’
- (27) a. *þis croice* was ***tanne man*** *wont to se*
 this cross was then man wont to see
 (Edincmc f46ra, North, 1300-1350)
 ‘This cross, one was wont to see then’
- b. *til yat worm* ***yan drightin*** *spak / wordes bath*
 to that serpent then Lord spoke words both
o wrath and wrak (Cotvespcma f6vb, North, 1325-1350)
 of wrath and punishment
 ‘To the serpent, the Lord then spoke words of wrath as well as
 punishment’

Any subject following the adverb or high *not* is assumed to be in SpecTP or in a lower subject position²². While we are primarily interested in subjects that have been raised out of VP and occupy SpecTP, most clauses where the subject follows *not/then/nor* are ambiguous as to its exact position. Only clauses with manner adverbs appearing to the left of VP material provide unequivocal evidence for the subject position in SpecTP, since these manner adverbs are generally assumed to mark the VP-edge (cf. Cinque 1999). These cases, of which (26a) is an example, are infrequent in the corpus. An objection could be that (27b) may be an instance where both *then* and the NP subject appear in CP, as they precede the finite verb. However, this is unlikely in view of the fact that pronoun subjects (and objects) may precede a diagnostic adverb in the same position, as in (21) above.

²² Lower subject positions are particularly characteristic in unaccusative environments, and may presumably include the outer Spec vP, SpecVP or an internal argument position, cf. van Kemenade (1997); Warner (2007).

All in all, the evidence is clear: Spro and SNP have a differential distribution relative to diagnostic adverbs. Pronoun subjects generally occupy a higher position than NP subjects. The difference in placement between the two subject types is highly significant in all three dialect groups, as witnessed by a two-sided Fisher's exact test for the East and Northwest Midlands text group (both $p=.000$), and a chi square test for the Northern text group ($\chi^2=11.488$, 1 df, $p=.001$)²³. Exceptions to this rule come in two shapes: pre-adverbial SNP and post-adverbial Spro. I will discuss these in turn.

A minority of nominal subjects precedes diagnostic adverbs. Table 4.5 shows the distribution and form of these cases, and two examples are given in (28).

Text	Period	Dialect	Subject	Diagnostic adverb	Total
Ormulum	12b2	E Midl; S Lincs Bourne	<i>Drihhtin</i> 'the Lord'	<i>þa</i>	1
Genexod	14a1	EMidl; W Norf	<i>Ruben</i> (name)	<i>not</i>	1
Havelok	14a1	EMidl; W Norf	<i>the bondes</i> 'the bonds'	<i>not</i>	1
Edincmb	14a	North; N Yorks	<i>Crist</i> 'Christ', <i>þair praier</i> 'their prayer'	<i>þan, not</i>	3
East Midlands				3 not, 1 then	3
North				1 not, 1 then	3
Total				5 not, 2 then	7

Table 4.5. SNP preceding the diagnostic adverb in the early ME corpus. All tokens are discourse-old NPs.

- (28) a. *Bot god men sal crist þan lede / Til hefenes blis to tak*
 but good men shall Christ then lead to heaven's bliss to take
þar mede (Edincmb f34vb, North, 1300-1325)
 their reward

²³ The difference in pre-Adv vs. post-Adverbial numbers for Spro vs. SNP was measured, using the Pearson chi-square test and wherever chi-square would yield incorrect results due to expected cell counts below 5, using Fisher's exact test.

‘But *good men*, those will Christ then lead to the bliss of heaven to take their reward’

- b. *We will **þai** said apon us take / al þi sin and al þi wrak /*
 we will they said upon us take all your sin and all your punishment
For-þi fader we prayed þe / þou turne igain and bischop be /
 because father we prayed you you turn back and bishop be
*Bot moht **þair praier noht** a-vail / For wald he noht trow þair consail*
 but might their prayer not avail for would he not trust their counsel
 (Edincmb f26ra, North, 1300-1325)

“‘We will”, they said, “take all your sin and all your punishment upon us. Because, father, we entreated you, that you return and be a bishop” – but their entreaty could not help, for he did not want to trust their counsel’

All pre-adverbial NP subjects in the corpus are discourse-old. This includes words like *Crist* ‘Christ’ (28) and *Dryhten* ‘Lord’, which have a special status in that they are always presuppositionally present in religious texts and therefore discourse-old and eligible for placement in SpecFP. In this respect, these dialects appear to follow the OE discourse-conditioned system of subject placement. Since numbers of NP subjects in relevant contexts are low, however, this conclusion must remain somewhat tentative.

The other category of exceptions, pronoun subjects following discourse adverbs, is more unexpected. As Table 4.4 illustrates, this order occurs only very rarely in the Midlands dialects (both cases are illustrated in (29)), but at a much higher rate of 38% (or 48 cases) in the Northern part of the corpus (30-33).

- (29) a. & *affterr þatt **ta** wass **he** dæd / Inn all hiss miccle sinne.*
 and after that then was he dead in all his large sin
 (CMOrm,I,283.2338, EMidl, 1125-1150)
 ‘and after that, then he was dead, the sinner’

- b. *her and þer þan he was hent* (Laud108b f203r, EMidl, c.1300)
 here and there then he was taken
 ‘here and there, then, is where he was taken’
- (30) a. *Fra alle þan saltu titest falle* (Edincmc f48ra, North, 1300-1325)
 of all then shalt-thou quickliest fall
 ‘of all people, then, you will fall quickliest’
- b. *Vnneþe nu mai I þarof min* (Edincma f13ra, North, 1300-1325)
 hardly now may I thereof think
 ‘I can hardly bear to think of it now’
- (31) *An vncouþe dai þan it es kid / Pat þe mon þat es sa schen / ...*
 an unknown day then it is foretold that the moon that is so bright
Sal bicom red as ani blod (Edincma f1rb, North, 1300-1325)
 shall become red as any blood
 ‘One unknown day then it is foretold that the moon, which is so bright, will
 become as red as any blood’
- (32) *þir III mai þan we wel fordrife* (Edincma f9ra, North, 1300-1325)
 these three may then we well drive-away
 ‘these three, then, may we well drive away’
- (33) a. *Wi qui þan mak we vs so ken / of þis ...*
 Oh why then make we us so keen of this
 (Edincma f9vb, North, 1300-1325)
 ‘Oh, why, then, do we worry so much about this’
- b. *Hougat her nou mai we bend* (Edincma f2va, North, 1300-1325)
 how-way here now may we bend
 ‘In what way, here, now, can we bend?’

At first sight, we might assume that this post-adverbial placement of Spro should be analysed as Spro occurring in a lower position than normal, i.e. in SpecTP. However, this is unlikely for several reasons. First, this type of positional variation is virtually absent from all other dialects of OE and early ME – one other example with the same pattern as in (32) is found in the work of

Richard Rolle, which is also Northern (Ans van Kemenade, p.c.) – and post-adverbial *Spro* is only frequent in a very specific type of text: four different manuscripts of the *Cursor Mundi*, a narrative verse text in the Northern dialect. It may be that the high frequency of this order is (partly) due to its usefulness as a metrical device, and this is unlikely to be tied to specific properties of the subject.

Second, the syntax and interpretation of this order seem to point in the direction of an analysis in which the discourse adverb occupies a special position. All 48 cases involve topicalizations (46 cases; cf. (30-32)) or WH-questions (2 cases; cf. (33)). WH-questions involve V-to-C movement, and in both cases in (33), the discourse adverb precedes the finite verb, showing that the adverb occupies a position in the CP domain. It is likely that the adverb occupies the same position in the topicalization contexts in (30-32); as we have seen, the position of the finite verb in early Northern ME topicalizations is variable. Most Northern topicalizations with post-adverbial *Spro*, 39 in all, show subject-verb inversion as in (30). I assume that these exhibit V-to-C movement, unlike the 8 cases with non-inversion as in (31). In one case, illustrated in (32), the auxiliary seems to have topicalized along with an object, to form a unit with the adverb.

The extra adverbial position in the CP domain may amount to an additional AdvP with a fixed position, which would be in line with Rizzi's (1997) work on an articulated CP structure; I will refer to it here as Adv1P. If the discourse adverb is a head, its position relative to the finite verb in C indicates that there is at least one XP that follows Adv1P in the CP domain. If, on the other hand, the adverb is in SpecAdv1P, the finite verb may occupy the head of Adv1P.

Alternatively, analyzing these adverbs as part of the WH or Top (Topic in the sense of topicalization) constituent may be an attractive option. Such an analysis is argued for by Bayer and Obenauer (to appear). They argue that German discourse particles such as *denn*, *nur*, and *schon* usually occupy a fixed position in the left edge of VP/vP (as in (34), Bayer and Obenauer's (2)), not

incomparable with the intermediary position between FP and TP occupied by AdvP.

- (34) *Wo hast du denn meine Schlüssel hingelegt?*
 where have you DENN my keys put-down
 “Where did you put my keys? (I’m wondering)”

Their fixed position implies that these particles are heads (labelled Prt); they have the special status of Minor Functional Heads (cf. Rothstein 1991), which do not count for the head movement constraint because as purely semantic heads, they do not project their own categorial features.

In a variant pattern, Prt may attract an emphatic XP over which it has scope to its left and form a constituent with it, which may subsequently move to SpecCP if it is a WH-phrase (cf. (35), Bayer and Obenauer’s (47)).

- (35) [*Wer denn*] *soll befehlen?*
 who DENN should command
 “Who is then supposed to command?”

Then and *now* in the examples (30-33) may well be structured in the same way. Especially *qui þan* ‘why then’ in (33a) looks like it may be a case of *þan* incorporating with the WH-word; the same may be the case with the verb in *mai þan* ‘may then’ in (32).

Be that as it may, for now, I will assume that Adv1P is in some way part of CP. Regardless of its internal structure, it is important to distinguish Adv1P from the diagnostic AdvP in between FP and TP. I will henceforth refer to that lower projection as Adv2P (and cf. the discussion of verb movement in Section 4.2.2.3 above). This yields the following simplified clause structure:

- (36) [CP Adv1P] - FP - Adv2P/Neg1P - TP - Neg2P - VP

Two more notes are in order. First, Adv1P is probably not available as a position for negation, since *not* is not attested in this context. Most cases (40 topicalizations and 1 WH question) involve *then*, while 6 topicalization cases and 1 question involve *now*. Second, Adv1P probably occurs in a minority of SNP cases as well, as follows from the consideration that the presence of Adv1P is unlikely to be related to subject type. It is, however, impossible to distinguish Adv1 and Adv2 based on their order relative to subjects in SpecTP.

It can be concluded that there is ample evidence in the corpus for the occurrence of pronoun subjects in SpecFP and NP subjects in SpecTP, barring some discourse-conditioned exceptions²⁴. The pattern found in ME subclauses, with all subjects generally raising to SpecFP, is not (yet) in evidence here. Recall from Chapter 3 that this corpus includes the earliest evidence for the NSR; apparently, this system of differential subject positions, which was essentially similar to the OE system, was the syntactic background for the development of the NSR. This runs counter to Fuß and Trips's (2010, 2011) analysis of the ME NSR, which assumes there is no positional difference between subject types in the relevant dialects and relies on phonological factors alone. I will return to this matter after further detailing my own analysis of the NSR, which relies on the differential subject positions as a basis for the difference between subject-verb agreement and default inflection.

²⁴ I have not included the evidence on the NSR in the clauses from the corpus that bear evidence on subject positions in the main discussion, because there is very little such evidence. In main clauses (with present-tense plural indicative lexical verbs and auxiliary *have*, so excluding modals and *be*), it consists of 18 cases of Spro, of which 13 positively appear in SpecFP and 5 follow *then* but probably occupy the same position. All of these cases involve adjacent finite verbs (subject-verb or verb-subject order) which end in *-ø/e/n* and therefore comply with the NSR.

4.3 Agreement, default inflection and adjacency

4.3.1 Agreement and default inflection

We have seen that in the NSR system, plural verbs inflect with different verbal morphology depending on whether their subjects are pronouns or NPs. To some extent, this inflectional morphology is also conditioned by (non-) adjacency between subject and verb; I will turn to that in Section 4.3.2. My analysis for the type-of-subject effect in the NSR is that only the \emptyset /*e/n* endings (with pronoun subjects) represent subject-verb agreement²⁵, whereas the *-s* (or *-th*) endings (found with NP subjects) are not really agreement, but rather default (present-tense) inflection.

The starting point for my account is provided by the work of Henry (1995), who develops an analysis of Singular Concord in Belfast English (cf. Section 3.2.3) which is largely transferrable to the NSR, in spite of some differences between both patterns. In Belfast English, plural present-tense verbs may always take \emptyset endings, but under some conditions, *-s* endings (known as ‘Singular Concord’ because their form is that of the third person singular) are also allowed. Crucially, *-s* endings are disallowed with nominative personal pronoun subjects (*we, you, they*), as in adjacent NSR cases. In Henry’s analysis, nominal pronoun subjects invariantly occur in SpecAgrSP (our SpecFP), which is the only position which forces subject-verb agreement and its concomitant \emptyset plural morphology, as illustrated in (37a,b) from Henry (1995) and (37c,d) from Alison Henry (p.c.). NP subjects variably occur in SpecAgrSP, where they trigger \emptyset endings, or in SpecTP, where subject-verb agreement is not triggered and default *-s* endings occur, signalling a lack of subject-verb agreement. This is illustrated in (38) from Henry (1995):

²⁵ Subject-verb agreement is understood to be agreement of the verb with the person/number features of the subject. In the case of the ME NSR, number is especially relevant, since there were no separate forms for the different persons in the plural.

- (39) a. *There are lots of people in the room.*
 a'. *There's lots of people in the room.*
 b. *There seem to be only two apples left.*
 b'. *There seems to be only two apples left.*

Further evidence that the inflectional differences reflect a positional difference between subjects in AgrSP and TP comes from the distribution of Singular Concord relative to IP adverbs. Singular Concord, i.e. a plural *-s* ending, is disallowed when an adverb intervenes between the subject and an auxiliary in T, as in (40) from Henry (1995:26).

- (40) a. **The eggs really is cracked*
 b. *The eggs really are cracked*
 c. **The girls probably has left*
 d. *The girls probably have left*

According to Henry (1995), the impossibility of adjoining an adverb left of the auxiliary shows that there is no structural space between a Singular Concord auxiliary verb in T²⁶ and its nominal subject, which is in SpecTP (cf. (38) above). Apparently, adjunction to T' is impossible here. Clauses in which the subject occupies SpecAgrSP do have this space available, above TP.

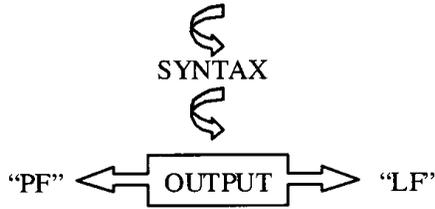
4.3.2 Agreement and adjacency

In line with Henry (1995), I assume that \emptyset plural endings in the NSR system mark subject-verb agreement, whereas *-s* endings are a default option to be used wherever agreement with SpecAgrSP/SpecFP cannot be established. The question remains how agreement can differentiate between contexts where the

²⁶ Henry (1995) assumes finite verbs in Belfast English to either occupy a position in the VP, in the case of lexical verbs, cf. (37b) above, or in T, in the case of auxiliaries.

interpretive system on the one hand, and to morphology and PF on the other. In Bobaljik’s implementation of the model, “the syntax module of the grammar derives a single representation, and it is this representation that is interpreted by both the conceptual-intentional (LF) and articulatory-perceptual (PF) interfaces” (2002:198). This is illustrated in (43) (from Bobaljik 2002:198):

(43)



This implies that morphological processes (determining what inflection should take place as well as which surface forms correspond with that) take place at PF, i.e., after syntax.

One of the processes that take place in syntax is movement. Word order alternations (such as those observable in object shift, as illustrated in (41) and (42)) show that some syntactic elements may appear in several positions. It is assumed that this effect is due to movement of these elements. Chomsky (2001b, quoted in Roberts 2007) models movement as an application of the core structure-building operation, Merge, to an element that had already been merged into the derivation. In line with Kayne (1994), I assume structure building to take place bottom-up, that is, starting at the bottom of the tree and proceeding upwards. This implies that re-Merge or movement will generally involve moving elements from lower to higher positions. Chomsky assumes that movement produces an extra copy of the moved element in its new position, while leaving a copy in the original position (Roberts 2007:43). According to Bobaljik (2002), either the pre-movement or the post-movement

copy of an element may be interpreted by PF and LF. Both systems may, but need not, choose the same copy in a given derivation.

This is relevant for object shift in the sense that Bobaljik assumes a higher and a lower copy of the object to be present in the derivation. However, under some conditions, only the lower copy may be spelled out at PF, giving the appearance that it has not moved. One such condition seems to be when the moved copy of the object would block agreement if spelled out at PF.

Agreement is essentially the establishment of a grammatically relevant relation between syntactic elements, parallel to movement but by morphological means instead of copying within syntax. Both are thought to rely on a syntactic relation, Agree, which matches “formal features in a particular syntactic domain” (Roberts 2007:66-67, based on Chomsky 2000; 2001b). These formal features are properties of syntactic elements which may be words or structural positions, and include categorial features (N, V etc.) as well as morphosyntactic features like Case and φ -features (Person, Gender, Number). Formal features may have semantic content, in which case they are called interpretable, or not, in which case they are uninterpretable. The same features may be interpretable or uninterpretable in different positions: φ -features have semantic content on nouns, but not on verbs. Uninterpretable features need to be deleted before they can be interpreted by the semantic component of grammar, and this is achieved through Agree (Roberts 2007:66). Φ -features such as plural number and third person may be present on a verb purely to signal its relation to a plural subject NP; the verb is not intrinsically plural or third person. When Agree applies and deletes the uninterpretable φ -features on the verb, this renders this part of the derivation interpretable and thus grammatical.

Subject-verb agreement is expressed as inflectional endings on verbs, at PF. Following Bobaljik (2002), I will assume that inflection is a morphological phenomenon; it takes syntactic Agree relations as its input, but its exact shape and how closely it spells out all or some of these relations is determined at PF, not in syntax.

Bobaljik argues that in Mainland Scandinavian, agreement on the verb, which he conceptualizes as a merger of verb and inflectional affix, requires PF adjacency between the verb and the inflectional affix in IP²⁷. Elements intervening between the two therefore block agreement. This is illustrated in (44): in subclauses, the verb does not move. If the lower copy of the object is spelled out ('no object shift'), as in (44a), the finite verb is adjacent to the inflectional affix and PF merger of verb and affix is allowed. If the higher copy of the object is spelled out as in (44b) ('object shift'), the object blocks successful merger of verb and inflectional affix because it disrupts adjacency between them.

- (44) a. Det är troligt [att [IP de -te ~~den~~ [VP läste **den**]]]
 It is probable that they +past ~~it~~ read it
 [Merger successful] O-----O
- b. * Det är troligt [att [IP de -te **den**_i [VP läs ~~den~~_i]]]
 It is probable that they +past it read ~~it~~
 [Adjacency disrupted] O-----*-----O

Even though object shift does not occur in Standard Present-Day English, Bobaljik argues that it does present evidence for a similar adjacency condition on agreement. Standard English has no V-to-I movement, and we find alternation between *do*-support with lexical finite verbs and affix hopping – PF merger of verb and an inflectional affix – with auxiliary verbs. As is well-known, Standard English has regular agreement in the indicative present between the subject and the lexical finite verb under adjacency, best seen in the third person singular, which triggers an -s ending. When adjacency is interrupted by

²⁷ Bobaljik (2002) does not distinguish between different projections within IP. As the details of IP heads are not relevant to the gist of his argument, we will follow his practice here.

verb and inflectional affix at the PF interface. In the Scandinavian languages, this can be achieved by verb movement (i.e. the verb can move and the higher copy can be spelled out); in English, the verb cannot be moved, and dummy *do* is inserted at PF as a default carrier of the inflectional affix. This fits in with the historical loss of V-to-I movement in English and its ‘replacement’ by *do*-support (see e.g. Kroch 1989; Roberts 1993; Warner 2006).

Note that (unlike ME discourse adverbs), Standard English adverbs do not block PF adjacency. Bobaljik’s approach hinges crucially on the assumption that in Standard Present-Day English, adverbs intervening between subject and finite verb do not seem to “count” for adjacency between subject and finite lexical verb, as illustrated in (48):

- (48) a. *Sam never eats spam*
 b. *Sam often eats spam*
 c. *Sam then ate some spam*
 d. *Sam eagerly eats spam*

Bobaljik argues that these adverbs do not factor into PF adjacency because they are adjoined to phrases rather than Specifier elements in functional projections which are in the spine of the derivation, like NegP. I refer to Bobaljik (2002:212-220) for the details of this account, but recall that in Bobaljik’s (2002) conceptualization of PF, it is not equated with the surface form, including surface word order, but rather with the interface between syntax and the articulatory-perceptual component. Morphological processes that take place at this interface need not necessarily make use of all material present in the syntax, nor need they use all material that is spelled out in the surface word order.

violate Holmberg’s generalization and so have orders like the one in (42b). Assuming OV orders are derived by movement from a VO base order, following Kayne (1994), OV languages like Dutch (*Het is waarschijnlijk dat ze het lezen*) and German (*Es ist wahrscheinlich, daß sie es lasen*) appear to be of this type.

There is some consensus for the idea that adjuncts can be invisible for adjacency conditions at PF, cf. Erteschik-Shir (2005), who assumes that adjuncts are merged not on the left edge of a constituent like VP in the basic syntactic derivation, but on a separate plane (Erteschik-Shir 2005:57-58, following not only Bobaljik 2002 but also Åfarli 1997, Chomsky 2001a, and ultimately Lebeaux 1988, 1992), which explains not only why adjuncts are invisible to adjacency requirements like those found in object shift, but also why adjuncts can be ordered relatively freely, attaching to the left or the right of the constituents to which they adjoin, or in between.

In this light, it is probable that adverbs are relevant to the adjacency condition in NSR dialects because they are not adjuncts, but rather occupy a more structurally relevant position in a dedicated XP, as we have seen was the case for diagnostic adverbs like *þa*, *þonne* and *not* in older English (and cf. Cinque 1999 for a similar analysis for rigidly ordered adverbs in a variety of languages). This implies there have been changes since ME not only in the morphosyntax of verb agreement (i.e., the loss of the adjacency condition in most earlier NSR dialects and the loosening of the subject condition in many), but also in the syntax of adverbs, at least in Standard English. This is also apparent in the fact that Standard English no longer has discourse adverbs of the *þa/þonne* type, whereas earlier (mainly Southern) English did.

My proposal is that there is a third strategy, in addition to object shift and *do*-support, to achieve PF adjacency between finite verb and inflectional affix: default inflection, which is manifested in the NSR configuration as *-s* inflection. As a first approximation, let us define default inflection as a PF strategy by which an inflectional affix is added by default, to trivially satisfy the condition of PF adjacency on finite verb and inflectional affix. An additional function of default inflection is to signal finiteness or tense on finite verbs with subjects in SpecTP, which would otherwise not receive any inflection (as in Belfast English).

If default inflection in NSR dialects has the same function as *do*-support in Standard English, we have to account for the fact that modern NSR dialects

also have *do*-support²⁹. It is well-known that when *do*-support first became frequent in late ME and early Modern English, it occurred more freely than it does in PDE; one use which is now obsolete is *do*-support in non-emphatic, non-negative declaratives (Ellegård 1953, cf. Warner 2005), such as in (49) from Warner (2005:258).

(49) *Why you must know, Frank, having a particular esteem for my family, (the nearest relation of which I would go fifty miles to see hanged) I **do think** her a very a[dulteress] – But no more, — mum, dear heart, mum, I say.* (1670s: Thomas Otway, 331–35)

Since the adjacency between finite verb and inflection was never at stake in these cases, it is unlikely that adjacency was the only trigger for *do*-support in its initial stages³⁰. We must assume, therefore, that the conditions on *do*-support have changed during its history, and it would be unsurprising if changes had taken different directions or halted at different stages in different varieties, resulting in distinct conditions on *do*-support. We know that this is the case in a variety of PDE dialects which use auxiliary *do* as a marker of habitual aspect. This occurs in Welsh English, Irish English and South-Western English, illustrated in (50) from Kortmann (2004:1091):

(50) *As I **do say** to my niece, I say, ...*

²⁹ We also need to account for the co-occurrence of Singular Concord and object shift in Belfast English imperatives (cf. Henry 1995:30); this may be done with the same rationale that will be presented for changes on conditioning of *do*-support.

³⁰ One factor may be a local economy constraint involved in not raising the verb or establishing agreement between the inflectional head and an unmoved verb, but rather inserting *do* to carry inflection instead to save a derivation while avoiding a possibly high processing cost involved in either movement or agreement. The particulars are not directly relevant to the present argument, however, and must remain speculative.

As we have seen in the preceding discussion, the evidence from the early Northern ME corpus shows that the NSR developed when verb raising was still general and *do*-support was not yet relevant. *Do*-support is likely to have spread to these Northern varieties through dialect contact at a rather later time than it was introduced in Southern dialects, at some point during Middle English (cf. van der Auwera and Genee 2002).

According to Labov (2007), diffusion of linguistic features via dialect contact usually involves language learning by adults and is conducive to changes in grammatical conditioning (cf. Section 3.5 and Chapter 5); changes in the particulars of *do*-support and verb movement seem likely candidates for this process. While the exact intermediary stages in the development of *do*-support in these dialects remain unknown for the time being, it is clear that in present-day NSR dialects, *do*-support is used in the same contexts as in Standard English, even though there is no need to rely on *do*-support to establish adjacency between the finite verb and F/AgrS or T. It would seem that *do*-support became grammaticalized as a way of signalling negative and interrogatory clause types. In the absence of verb raising, movement of *do* to C may be forced to satisfy a WH feature in C, just like in Standard English; this may be independent of the adjacency requirement on inflection.

Questions and negated clauses without *do* are now highly exceptional in NSR dialects, but some evidence does remain of them. There are three relevant types of evidence from modern NSR dialect: negation with verb raising instead of *do*-support, questions with verb raising instead of *do*-support, and absence of inversion and/or auxiliaries in questions.

The continued presence of verb raising in NSR dialects is perhaps evidence that the loss of verb raising did not proceed at the same pace as in the southern standard, and so the pressure to establish *do*-support with the loss of verb raising was less strong than in Standard English and related dialects as well; at the same time, a loss of verb raising would have had less noticeable effects on word order in an NSR-like system which had default inflection to remedy non-adjacency, since *do*-support would not have been needed and thus

would not have taken over as a dominant pattern. This may have played a part in the conservation of verb raising as a low-frequency alternative.

Negation with verb raising (V-to-T and/or T-to-F/AgrS) still occurred in early-20th-century Lowland Scots; it was recorded as a minority pattern by Wilson (1926) in the early 1920s. Scots has the negative clitic *-nae*, which functions in much the same way as StE *n't*; verbs to which this clitic is attached may be assumed to have risen out of VP. Wilson (1926:92) notes: “The adverb *noa* after an auxiliary verb, and sometimes after other verbs, is slurred into *nay*, much as in [Standard English] the corresponding adverb ‘not’ is slurred into *n't*”. The examples that Wilson (1926:92) gives include the lexical verbs *care* and *know* (51). In addition, Anderwald (2002:54) quotes examples with *keenay* ‘know not’ and *looznay* ‘loves not’.

(51) a. *A cairnay bii*

‘I don’t care a bit’

b. *Hee wistnay hwair hee wiz gawn*

‘He didn’t know where he was going’

Beal (1997:370), quoted in Anderwald (2002:54), supports the thesis that negative clitics with non-auxiliaries “seem to survive longer in Scots than the “main verb+not” construction in English”, even though, as Anderwald (2002:54) notes, these forms have since become obsolete.

The same may be true for the other verb raising pattern illustrated by Wilson: movement of lexical verbs to C in WH-questions and yes/no-questions. As with negation, this is an exception to the rule. Wilson (1926:92) notes that in Lowland Scots “an interrogative sentence, unless when it begins with an interrogative pronoun or adverb, generally begins with one of the auxiliary verbs followed by the subject. [...] If no auxiliary verb is used, the verb begins the sentence”. Wilson’s examples are given in (52):

(52) a. *Think yee say?*

'Do you think so?'

b. *Cam yee bi Athul?*

'Did you come by Atholl?'

With WH-questions, this pattern is only noted for the past tense, where it "sometimes" occurs instead of *did* (Wilson 1926:91):

(53) a. *Hwair hawrd yee dhawt?*

'Where did you hear that?'

b. *Hwair gat yee yur skillin?*

'Where did you get your schooling [go to school]?'

The other relevant pattern, absence of inversion and auxiliaries in questions, forms direct evidence for the absence of verb raising, combined with an absence of *do*-support. The presence of default inflection as an option in these dialects may provide a rationale for this.

A lack of *do*-support with non-raised verbs appears to be a grammatical option in interrogative clauses in Northern dialects, unlike in other British English dialects. Kortmann et al. (2004) have undertaken a survey of the frequency of 76 morphosyntactic features in varieties of English across the world. This inventory was made by asking the participating experts³¹ to what extent these features were attested in their variety (cf. Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi 2004). Within British English varieties, dialect experts only report the occurrence of Kortmann et al.'s features 73 and 74 for the Northern varieties.

³¹ These experts were Lieselotte Anderwald for Southeastern varieties, Joan Beal for Northern English varieties, Markku Filppula for Irish English, Gunnel Melchers for Orkney and Shetland English, Jim Miller for Scottish English, Robert Penhallurick for Welsh English, Peter Trudgill for East Anglian English, and Susanne Wagner for English dialects in the Southwest. Compare their respective chapters in Kortmann et al. (2004) for more information.

Feature 73, “Lack of inversion / lack of auxiliaries in *wh*-questions, (e.g. *What you doing?*)” is reported to be “pervasive” in Northern English and Irish English, and “attested, but not frequently used” in Scots (Kortmann 2004:1099-1101). Feature 74, “Lack of inversion in main clause *yes/no* questions (e.g. *You get the point?*)” has the same distribution, but in addition is also pervasive in Welsh English (Kortmann 2004:1099-1101). Unfortunately, the individual chapters written on these varieties by the same dialect experts do not give any further details on contexts and frequencies of these occurrences and specific examples are lacking. However, it would seem that the distribution of non-verb-movement and non-*do*-support in British English dialects largely overlaps with the NSR area; possibly because these dialects have default *-s* inflection as an alternative to *do*-support.

The evidence from Scots negation and questions in Northern dialects suggests that NSR dialects exhibit (or have exhibited until recently) variation in verb raising and the presence of *do*-support to a greater extent than Southern dialects do; this supports the idea that default inflection may be a parametric option on a par with *do*-support and verb raising, even though it is not strictly mutually exclusive with these options.

If the conditions on *do*-support were the same in NSR dialects as in Standard English, we would expect auxiliary *do* to favour subject-verb agreement and to disfavour default inflection. However, there is no evidence that this is the case. The most comprehensive study of the NSR in modern dialects, by Pietsch (2005b), makes no special mention of *do*-support as a factor that either promotes or inhibits default *-s*. Pietsch does give figures for verb - subject inversion contexts with SNP, however, and this includes *do*-support contexts with *do* in C (in addition to forms of *be*)³². Pietsch (2005b:148-149;110) shows that inversion (verb - subject) contexts with plural NP subjects

³²Pietsch includes forms of *be*, both present and past tense, in his analysis; these outnumber the forms of *do* in this context in the FRED corpus sample (1x *were*, 5x *was*, 2x *'s*; cf. Pietsch 2005b:148-149) and are equal to them in the NITCS corpus (1x *were*, 1x *was*, 1x *is*; cf. Pietsch 2005b:110).

in the Northern Irish English NITCS corpus and the Northern English FRED corpus seem to favour *-s*, although the relevant contexts are very infrequent. Pietsch's data from the NITCS corpus include 3 cases of *does*; his sample from FRED includes 1 case of *do* with a plural NP subject. Default *-s* can also occur with *do*-support in Belfast English, which leads Henry to conclude "that *do* may be inserted in Tense, and is not restricted to insertion in the highest head of IP" (1995:32). We can conclude that *do*-support occurs with default inflection in at least some NSR dialects, and probably more widely.

It should be noted that in contrast with NSR dialects as discussed by Pietsch, Belfast English disallows default inflection on verbs in C, i.e. in inversion; this includes forms of *be* and *have* as well as *do* (Henry 1995:42):

- (54) a. **Is the eggs cracked*
 b. **Has the students arrived*

Henry assumes that verbs would have to move through AgrS on their way from T to C (in keeping with the Head Movement Constraint), and Henry concludes that this movement must only be possible for agreeing verbs (Henry 1995:42-43). From our perspective, in which agreement is a post-syntactic operation, this makes sense: any verb that passes through AgrS will pick up subject agreement features and will be marked for agreement at PF; adjacency will not be at stake. The difference between Belfast English and the NSR dialects described by Pietsch (2005b) may be that in the NSR dialects, AgrSP/FP is simply not available in (many) clauses with NP subjects, so that default inflection is the only option. Since the evidence for the non-availability of agreement in C in present-day NSR dialects is rather slim, and no such condition was apparent in the early ME corpus, I will leave this matter to further research.

4.4 A syntactic analysis for the NSR

4.4.1 Subject positions and (default) agreement in the NSR in ME

Bringing together the insights on the relation between differential subject positions and adjacency on the one hand and subject-verb agreement and default endings on the other, we can analyze the syntax of the core NSR pattern as follows. Recall the pattern in (55), repeated from (1) in Chapter 1 (I will use the PDE form for ease of exposition):

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| (55) a. <i>they sing</i> | [Spro - V-∅] |
| b. <i>they sing and dances</i> | [Spro - ... - V-s] |
| c. <i>birds sings</i> | [SNP - V-s] |

Adapting Henry's (1995) approach, I postulate an analysis in which subject pronouns are in SpecFP and induce subject-verb agreement as long as the subject is PF-adjacent to the finite verb. Nominal subjects are in SpecTP and do not induce agreement, but always receive a default ending. The finite verb is in T or in the VP in both cases. This yields the following derivations for (55a) and (55b)³³:

³³ In clauses where default inflection applies in the second conjunct, we assume there is no second F head in that conjunct. Otherwise, we would expect agreement to occur. Variation between conjunction with and without repetition of FP may account for some of the variability in the application of the adjacency constraint in early ME, cf. cases like *Thay droupun and daren* (*Anturs of Arther*, stanza IV), (19a) in Section 3.3.2.4.2.

- (55') a. [_{FP} they [_F 3PL [_{TP} [_T sing ... [_{VP} ...]]]]
 [Merger successful] O-----O
They sing
- b. [_{FP} they [_F 3PL [_{TP} [_T [_{VP} sing and dance]]]]
 [Merger successful] O-----O
They sing
 [Adjacency disrupted] O-----*-----O
 [Default inflection] -S
... and dances

For nominal subjects, I assume that they are in SpecTP³⁴, as in Belfast English under Henry's analysis. Since FP is not active and so subject-verb agreement does not obtain, default morphology is added to provide the verb with an inflectional affix at PF. This yields the following derivation for (45c):

- (45') c. [_{TP} birds [_T ... [_{VP} ... sing]]
 [no agreement available] -----O
 [Default inflection] -S
Birds sings

This analysis gives substance to a genuine distinction between 'real' subject-verb agreement and 'default agreement' or rather, default inflection. Subject-verb agreement (i.e. $-\emptyset$ agreement) is in this system syntactically induced by activation in F and is, in NSR dialects, sensitive to PF adjacency. Default inflection is a repair strategy that creates a default affix for a finite verb when no agreement is available, and is not subject to adjacency restrictions.

If this analysis is along the right lines, it suggests an interesting commonality which sets apart present-day Belfast English (which descends

³⁴ I do not assume an active FP projection above TP in these clauses, since at least in terms of agreement and subject placement, it has no role to play.

from Northern English) and Northern British NSR dialects on the one hand from present-day standard English: robust evidence for multiple subject positions co-varying with types of agreement. It also suggests an interesting parametric difference between Belfast English on the one hand and Northern British English on the other hand: in Belfast English, agreement is not subject to an adjacency requirement between finite verb and inflectional affix, whereas in NSR dialects it is.

In Middle English, only the plural forms showed variation in inflection between contexts with (adjacent) pronoun subjects and NP subjects. I assume this is an effect simply of the fact that this was the only context where significant variation in forms existed (between *-th/s* and *-e/n* forms) before the NSR arose, and that is why the pattern initially only developed here. I leave open the question whether the condition on agreement that pertains in the plural persons is also relevant in (second and) third person singular forms in the NSR, but the forms happen to be identical (*-s*) in both cases, or whether the condition is simply not present. Apparently, at least, it is possible for different conditions to apply to agreement in different personal forms.

Another interesting point is the occurrence of apparently agreeing *-∅/e/n* forms with NP subjects in NSR dialects. I assume that these are instances where the subject condition on agreement is not applied, in the same way that the adjacency condition is not always applied. In this sense, these clauses appear to be products of a different grammar than clauses with default inflection in this context. This different grammar is of the same type as that of Standard English, which I assume always has subject-verb agreement with *-∅* forms, without subject or adjacency conditions of the NSR type.

4.4.2 Recent work on related agreement patterns

Recent literature within the framework of generative syntax offers a number of other analyses for the NSR and related patterns (Fuß and Trips 2010, 2011; Adger and Smith 2010; Tortora and Den Dikken 2010). I will briefly discuss

how they compare to my own account and show that the analysis presented here fits the facts of the NSR better.

One analysis that aims at an explanation of the same pattern in roughly the same varieties of English that I have focused on, i.e., Northern Middle English, is presented by Fuß and Trips (2010, 2011) and was referred to in passing in Sections 4.2.2.2 and 4.2.3.2 above. Fuß and Trips agree with my own analysis that plural *-s* represents default inflection and *-∅* endings represent agreement (in their terms, positive person/number specifications). However, they have not had the benefit of the extensive evidence for differential subject positions in Northern ME, but rather rely on earlier studies which relied on limited evidence, especially from the *Benedictine Rule*, which found no evidence for a positional difference between pronoun and NP subjects (Kroch and Taylor 1997, Trips 2002, and cf. the discussion in Section 4.2.2.2). They therefore assume that differential subject positions were irrelevant to the NSR and rather rely on other proposed differences between pronoun and NP (phrasal) subjects: “phrasal subjects are mapped onto a separate phonological phrase” (2010:4), following Cinque (1993), and so are invisible to the agreement operation, which is taken to be postsyntactic, parallel to my own approach. Third person singular forms do not agree in this conceptualization of the NSR system, because of a condition on agreement in this variety that it only occur with positive person/number specifications. Although this derivation of the pattern may be internally consistent, it fails to take into account what I view as an essential trait of the syntax of Northern ME varieties, namely differential subject positions. In the face of the evidence, therefore, Fuß and Trips’s account is less than attractive.

Adger and Smith (2010) develop an account for agreement variation in the Scottish English variety of Buckie. In this variety, plural *-s* occurs variably with NP subjects but not pronoun subjects. Because no syntactic effects are found surrounding this variation, and because *was/were* variation in the same variety seems to depend purely on lexical features of the subject, Adger and Smith assume that only lexical features are relevant here, too. It will be clear

that such an analysis is not suited to the ME NSR, which does have syntactic correlates to agreement variation in the form of differential subject positions and the adjacency condition.

The analysis which in many ways comes closest to my own is the one presented by Tortora and Den Dikken (2010). They analyse agreement variation in a variety of English spoken in North America, Appalachian English, which like the NSR and Belfast English, allows verbal *-s* with plural NP subjects, but not with pronoun subjects. Tortora and den Dikken, like us, follow Henry (1995) in assuming that agreement variation depends on the position of the subject. This helps account for the syntactic correlates of agreement variation present in the dialect. Appalachian English allows different types of subjects than Belfast English and combines verbal *-s* with negative inversion, which leads Tortora and den Dikken to the hypothesis that instead of the two subject positions in SpecTP and SpecAgrSP postulated by Henry (1995) for the Belfast variety, Appalachian English has no position available in SpecTP but rather employs SpecAgrSP, which triggers agreement, and a higher position in SpecSubjectP, which does not trigger agreement. This analysis seems very plausible for the variety in question, but since Appalachian English has no adjacency effect, it does not offer an account for adjacency conditions on agreement. In addition, Northern ME does not appear to have any other syntactic effects of the type detailed by Tortora and Den Dikken. As a result, I do not believe a SubjectP above FP need be assumed for the NSR.

4.5 Conclusion

We have seen that there is ample evidence for differential subject placement in early English, including the early ME Northern/Midlands corpus. The evidence presented to this effect in Section 4.2 shows that the same early ME varieties which exhibited the NSR pattern also categorically placed pronoun subjects in a high position, SpecFP, and NP subjects in a lower position, SpecFP, barring a few exceptions. It can be argued that these differential subject positions, in

combination with the presence of variant forms for the plural, probably gave rise to the NSR pattern. Starting with typical OE morphosyntax, only the conditions under which to use the different available plural endings would have to change; the underlying syntax was already in place. Chapter 5 will further explore the factors that may have sparked or aided the development of the variation and conditions present in the NSR, focusing also on the possible role of language contact in the process.

Chapter 5 - The origins of the Northern Subject Rule

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is not only to explore the origin of the Northern Subject Rule and to analyze its grammatical status, but also to explore in as much detail as possible how it may have arisen. This chapter therefore brings together the facts and analyses of the previous chapters and combines them with insights from the literature on the possible origins of the NSR, as well as on contact linguistics and language variation, in order to see what is the most likely origin for the pattern.

The main hypotheses for the origin of the NSR were introduced in Chapter 1. Some authors favour a contact hypothesis for the rise of the NSR (Hamp 1975-76:73, Klemola 2000), while others see language-internal processes as more probable sources (Murray 1873, Rodeffer 1903, Pietsch 2005b). We concluded that more evidence was needed, which was gathered in Chapters 2 through 4.

Chapter 2 reviewed the evidence for the circumstances under which the NSR may have arisen: the historical context and the evidence for contact between speakers of early English, (Cumbrian) Brythonic Celtic and Old Norse in the Northern English dialect area. We saw that there is some evidence for (possibly prolonged) language contact between Northumbrian OE and Cumbrian, as well as the more well-known situation of contact with Old Norse in the Danelaw. Moreover, genetic evidence shows that the Brythonic population was in all likelihood numerically superior to the Anglo-Saxons when the latter arrived in the region, arguing for the hypothesis that Cumbrians may well have influenced Northern English, even if there are no apparent influences on the vocabulary such as there are from Old Norse.

I explored the earliest evidence for the NSR in Chapter 3. While there is some evidence that the NSR already existed in Old English, with variation between *-s/e* and *-th* rather than *-ø/e* and *-s*, we first found the NSR with the morphology characteristic of the present-day NSR (*-ø* and its predecessors *-e/n*

vs. -s) in early Northern ME. The OE evidence is found in the *Lindisfarne Glosses*, a Northumbrian text where the morphosyntactic conditions underlying the NSR already held (Cole to appear). Although inflectional morphology in this text was partly phonologically conditioned, and the verb endings involved are different (-s/e vs. -th), Cole found that adjacent pronoun subjects promoted one set of endings (-s/e) whereas full NP subjects and non-adjacent pronoun subjects preferred -th. This shows that the NSR pattern is not dependent on the variation between - \emptyset /e and -s, but may also occur with other morphological material. This is also apparent in the ME data: versions of the NSR with variation between - \emptyset /e and -th were found in late ME and early Modern English, and even in our early ME corpus, the NSR occurred with -n as a variant of - \emptyset /e.

Two main conclusions can be drawn from the early ME corpus material. The first is that the NSR pattern appears strongest in a core Northern area, centring on Yorkshire (although this should not be taken as too definitive a location of the dialects where the NSR was most categorical, in view of the uneven geographical distribution of available early Northern ME texts, which are represented most robustly in Yorkshire), and it fans out somewhat more erratically towards the south in the Midlands. This distribution implies that the pattern may well have arisen in the Northern dialect area, a hypothesis which is also consistent with the evidence from the *Lindisfarne Glosses* (which were written in a dialect that probably originated around Durham, and therefore is even more northerly than Yorkshire).

The second conclusion is that the nature of the variation present in the NSR, even in the core area, is also significant. Whereas the NSR is usually defined as the combination of two syntactic conditions on agreement, it is clear from the early ME material (and the comparison with modern varieties) that the subject condition applies more categorically and more widely than the adjacency condition. Even in the core area, pronoun subjects promote - \emptyset /e endings to the extent that they also occur in nonadjacent contexts, thus violating the adjacency constraint (according to which verbs with nonadjacent

pronoun subjects should always have *-s* endings). In dialects which are further removed from the core area, the adjacency constraint is the first to be lost.

Chapter 4 discussed the syntactic analysis of the NSR in early ME and in later dialects. I presented a novel analysis which derives the relevant variation in inflection from a distinction between actual subject-verb agreement, which appears as *-ø/e/n* on plural present-tense indicative verbs (weak as well as strong), and default present-tense inflection, which appears as *-s* (or *-th*). What makes the NSR unique as a pattern is the syntactic conditioning of agreement, which occurs only with pronoun subjects and is variably dependent on adjacency as well. We found evidence that pronoun and NP subjects occurred in different positions in our early ME corpus as they did in OE. We consequently analyzed the high position of pronoun subjects as SpecFP, and the lower position of NP subjects (in OE and early Northern ME, especially discourse-new NPs) as SpecTP. SpecFP (or, in later varieties, SpecAgrSP) was apparently the only subject position which gave rise to ‘real’ subject-verb agreement in NSR varieties (at least in the plural). This appears to be the core property of the NSR, and it was hypothesized in Chapter 4 that the NSR originated from a combination of the different subject positions available in older English and the availability of different endings for the plural forms. This reflects the fact that the subject condition is more essential to the NSR than the adjacency condition. The adjacency condition was modelled as a variable PF condition based on the underlying syntax of subjects and verbs; subject-verb agreement can depend on adjacency of the verb and the element it agrees with. This condition occurs in several other Germanic varieties, although the insertion of default inflection when adjacency fails is unique to the NSR. The fact that this default inflection is the same as the third singular ending (*-s/th*) is not surprising, however; this is found widely across languages.

This chapter aims to discuss the question how the NSR arose in as much detail as allowed by the evidence. We will investigate which factors, other than the differential subject positions present in older English, are most likely to have contributed to the rise of the NSR’s conditions on agreement. Some of

these factors require a scenario of how the verbal endings evolved and how this morphology came to vary as it does in the NSR, with *-ø/e/n* endings representing agreement, and *-s/th* representing default inflection.

Such a scenario may depend on language-internal as well as contact-related factors. It can be argued that whenever there is a choice between language-internal developments and contact to explain a pattern, a language-internal explanation will be preferable because language-internal factors must always be taken into account and influence from language contact presupposes extra assumptions, although abundant evidence for language contact will make these extra assumptions more likely to be correct. This means that if a language-internal explanation is possible, it will in principle be more economical (cf. Lass 1997). This is why I will discuss the language-internal hypotheses proposed for the rise of the NSR first and evaluate to what extent these offer a complete and linguistically plausible explanation for the pattern in Section 5.2. I will then explore the possible role of language contact (especially with Brythonic Celtic, but also with Old Norse) in Section 5.3. I will discuss what additional explanatory power a contact hypothesis has in this case, and how it may have interacted with language-internal factors. Section 5.4 will expand the question of origin to non-northern variants of the NSR, and Section 5.5 will provide a short discussion and conclusion.

5.2 Conditions on agreement: analogy and reanalysis without contact influence?

5.2.1 Introduction

The Northern Subject Rule found in early Northern ME involves variation in inflection on plural present indicative verbs. We saw in Chapter 3 that with pronoun subjects (*we, you, they*), especially when they were immediately adjacent, these verbs ended in *-ø/e* (or, especially in the Midlands, in *-n*). With other subjects (referred to here as NP subjects) or when other

material intervened between the verb and *we/you/they*, plural verbs ended in -s (or in some later varieties, *-th*). This pattern is illustrated in (1), repeated from (8) in Chapter 3:

(1) a. *þai caste þair mantil and rennis a-mise.*

(CMBenrul 13.457-460, North, 1400-1425)

‘they throw away their mantle and run amiss’

b. *And hali storis tels and sais þat helias, in ald dais, Was taken up als vnto heuen*

‘and holy stories tell and say that Elias, in the old days, was taken up as if to heaven’

The focus here is to investigate how this pattern came into existence. We saw in Chapter 3 that the Northumbrian dialect of OE, the predecessor of the Northern ME dialect (cf. Chapter 2), already differed from other dialects in that it had -s as a plural ending competing with the inherited *-th* ending that was common in other OE dialects, cf. (2), repeated from (7) in Chapter 3:

(2) *cognoscitis eum et uidistis*

gie ongeattas hine & geseað hine (Lindisfarne Jn.14:7)

you know him and see him

‘ye know him and have seen him’

In addition, there were plural inflections that did not end in a consonant (-s or *-th*), but in a vowel (-e or variants thereof), or later -∅. These are referred to as vowel endings or reduced endings. In the West Saxon dialect of Southwestern England, these endings only occurred when the verb immediately preceded a first-person or second-person pronoun subject (*we* ‘we’, *ge* ‘you’), as in (3), but

we saw that Northumbrian OE (as witnessed by the *Lindisfarne Glosses*, cf. especially Cole, to appear) also had reduced endings with third-person pronoun subjects (*hia* ‘they’) as in (4), and reduced endings also occurred in non-inverted word orders, i.e. when the verb followed the subject, as in (5). All three examples are repeated from (4)-(6) in Chapter 3:

(3) *intellexistis* *haec omnia* *dicunt* *ei etiam*
oncneaw gie vel ongete *ge dhas alle* *cwoedon vel saegdon him.*
(Lindis.Mat.Skeat1871 13.51)

know you or understand you those all told or said him
 ‘Do you know / do you understand all that? They told him [yes]’

(4) *et a foro nisi baptizentur non comedunt*
& from ðingstow sie gefulwud ne etto hia
(Lindis.Mark.Skeat1871 7.4)

and from marketplace if-not baptized not eat they
 ‘And in the marketplace, if they have not washed, they do not eat’

(5) *domine ad quem ibimus uerba uitae aeternae habes*
drihten to huæm woe ge geonge uordo lifes ece ðu hæfis
(f. 226 ra 10; Lindis.Jn.Skeat1871, 6.68)

lord to whom we go words of-life eternal you have
 ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life’

In short, the endings found in the early ME NSR were already present in OE, although the conditions on their occurrence were not exactly the same as in ME (especially since -s was promoted rather than inhibited by the presence of a pronoun subject, as discussed in Chapter 3 and cf. Cole, to appear). In order to explain the origin of the NSR, we need to account for the variation in OE as well as the changes that took place between OE and the earliest attestations of the NSR in early ME.

There are a number of hypotheses in the literature which seek to explain the NSR as the result of language-internal developments rather than

language contact. I will discuss these in Sections 5.2.2 (on the various hypotheses for generalization of the reduced endings) and 5.2.3 (on the generalization of -s), before moving on to Section 5.2.4, which presents a novel hypothesis, incorporating the role played by multiple subject positions, as discussed in Chapter 4.

5.2.2 Levelling of reduced endings and the subject condition

5.2.2.1 Reduced endings: cluster reduction and a pathway of generalization

Reduced plural endings occurred widely in OE, not only as a variant of *-s/th* in the present indicative, but also as a variant of *-on/en* in the present and past subjunctive, the past indicative, and present indicative forms of preterite-present verbs and *be*. These reduced endings usually appeared in subject-verb inversion contexts, when immediately preceding a first or second person plural pronoun (*we, ge*) (cf. Brunner 1962 II:175,179; Bryan 1921) as in examples (3-4) above³⁵.

It has been argued by various authors (Murray 1873, Rodeffer 1903, Pietsch 2005b) that the NSR developed in the indicative present as a result of generalization of reduced endings (initially, *-e*; later, also *-ø*) from the first and second (*ete we/ge* ‘eat we/you’, ‘do we/you eat’) to the third person plural (*ete hia* ‘eat they’, ‘do they eat’) and from inversion to non-inversion (pronoun

³⁵This restriction of reduced endings to the first and second person plural is especially widely attested in the West-Saxon dialect of Old English and less frequent in Northumbrian. For this reason, it has been assumed that reduced endings first arose in the South and only slowly made their way to Northumbria during the OE period (cf. Pietsch 2005b:53-56, Cole to appear). However, as Cole’s evidence discussed in Section 5.2.1 and throughout 5.2.2 shows, reduced endings did appear in all contexts mentioned for the West-Saxon pattern and even in some contexts where they do not in West-Saxon. This, and the likelihood that reduced endings are only infrequent in late Northumbrian textual evidence because such evidence consists of word-by-word glosses of Latin texts and each verb form thus had to be maximally distinctive (cf. Benskin 2011, Cole to appear), makes it unlikely that reduced endings were predominantly a southern phenomenon in OE. I will therefore leave the hypothesis that spread of the pattern from South to North was a factor in the rise of the NSR (cf. Pietsch 2005b) out of the discussion.

subject - verb) contexts (*we/ge/hia ete* 'we/you/they eat'). The *-th/s* endings remained in the other contexts, so with NP subjects (*briddes eteþ/etes* 'birds eat') and when plural pronoun subjects and verbs were not adjacent (*we/ge/hia ete and singeþ/singes* 'we/you/they eat and sing').

A number of different sources have been mentioned as the ultimate origin of *-e* in indicative present inversion contexts, and some of their characteristics may help explain its continued association with pronoun subjects even after generalization from inverted to non-inverted contexts.

A basic process that is widely held to be responsible for the rise of reduced endings in any form is cluster reduction. Vowel endings are thought to have been derived from reduction of a consonant cluster, either in *-en+ge/we* (Hogg 1992:297, 305) or in *-aþ+ ge/we*, or both (Luick 1922, cf. Benskin 2011). If we take the present subjunctive and indicative as examples, the corresponding forms would have been *singen we* 'let us sing', 'that we sing', *singen ge* 'that you sing', *singaþ we* 'sing we', 'do we sing', *singaþ ge* 'sing you', 'do you sing'. In these contexts, the full *-n/th* endings would lead to *-n/th+w/g*-consonant clusters in unstressed syllables, which otherwise never occurred in OE and were therefore liable to be reduced. Phonological reduction would normally have triggered loss of [w] or [j] in these sequences, but [n] and/or [θ] were deleted instead, possibly because these were not as semantically functional as the initial consonants of pronoun subjects: deleting [w] and [j] would have made *we* and *ge* indistinguishable in inverted contexts, which would have inhibited communication (cf. Benskin's 2011:162 discussion of Luick 1922, 1924).

5.2.2.2 Subjunctives as a source

It has been argued, notably by Sweet (1871), that plural vowel endings generalized to the indicative present from the subjunctive (which had general plural *-en*, later reduced to *-e/∅*). The subjunctive is attractive as a source of vowel endings for three reasons: first, it lost final *-n* very early on, not only in

Northumbrian but also in other dialects of OE; second, there is Northumbrian evidence that it was not clearly distinguished in use from the indicative; and third, it was closely associated with pronoun subjects. I will briefly discuss each of these points in turn.

The subjunctive has been seen as the most likely origin for West-Saxon plural indicative forms with vowel endings, which occurred only in subject-verb inversion contexts with first and second person plural pronouns. Sweet argues that the subjunctive was one of the first contexts final *-n* was deleted when followed by a pronoun in early West Saxon, and thus a likely source (Sweet 1871:xxxv).

The subjunctive is even more likely as a source for reduced plural endings in Northumbrian and the NSR, because in the North, the subjunctive lost its final *-n* in all contexts before the Northumbrian glosses were written (cf. Hogg 1992:305 and the discussion in Section 3.3.1), thereby providing more vowel endings as a model for generalization to the indicative than the West-Saxon dialect had available³⁶. This did not prevent the continued association of

³⁶ Although vowel endings occasionally occurred in West-Saxon plural subjunctives as well, as shown by Bloomfield (1930), who shows that some of the oldest OE texts have plural *-e* forms in the subjunctive, and based on reported parallels in Old High German, Bloomfield concludes that these forms must have been inherited from earlier Germanic, possibly from old first person dual forms and 3PL preterit forms (Bloomfield 1930:100 and sources cited there; but cf. Benskin 2011 for some caveats on this theory). Interestingly, Bloomfield's examples of reduced plural subjunctive forms from the West Saxon *Cura Pastoralis* include many non-adjacent pronoun subject-...-verb cases and some with NP subjects; as expected for reduced endings derived from regular sound change, they were not limited to a particular syntactic context. This is illustrated by the following example from Bloomfield (1930:103):

(i) ... *ðæt hie eac ðæt soð nyttwyrðlice secgen & geicen ða god hira*
 that they also the truth usefully say and complement the good of-their
anfealdnesse mid wærscipe & sua tilige ðære orsorgnesse mid ðære
 simplicity with prudence and so cultivate the security with the
anfealdnesse ... (Cura Pastoralis 237,13B)
 simplicity...
 '... that they also speak the truth when it is useful and complement the good of their
 simplicity with prudence and so cultivate safety with simplicity'

reduced endings with pronoun subjects, because subjunctives in older English generally favoured pronoun subjects as well.

Before we further explore the association between the subjunctive and pronoun subjects below, it should be noted that the subjunctive is also attractive as a source of indicative vowel endings because it was often confused with the indicative. This was the case in Middle English (cf. Mustanoja 1960:455-469), but there is evidence that it happened already in Northumbrian OE. In the *Lindisfarne Glosses*, Latin subjunctive forms are often glossed using OE indicative forms, sometimes even as an alternative to a subjunctive gloss (Cole to appear). This is illustrated in (6), Cole's example (7):

(6) *gif gie habbas t hæbbe leafo...* (f.69 va 3, Lindis.Mt.Skeat1871, 21.21)

si **habueritis** fidem...

"If ye have faith..."

Cole takes this to imply that reduced endings and "-s (more so than -ð) appear to occur in free variation in this context" (Cole to appear). This confusion, even in the face of such clear evidence for a difference between subjunctive and indicative as the Latin inflections in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, shows the extent of the loss of distinct forms for the two moods in OE. It may have been triggered in part by the fact that the distinction between the moods is not always clear semantically: the indicative does not always express a fact and the subjunctive does not always express uncertainty, even if only distinctly indicative and subjunctive forms are compared (Mitchell 1985:370).

Subjunctives tended to co-occur with pronoun subjects. In the OE *Lindisfarne Glosses*, the subjunctive "occurs almost categorically with pronominal subjects, [...] both ante- and post-pronominally and with all three subject pronouns *we*, *gie* and *hia*" (Cole to appear). In Northern and Northern Midlands early ME texts, the subjunctive also occurs significantly more frequently with pronoun subjects than with NP subjects. This can be concluded from an analysis of the relative frequency of subjunctive forms (as illustrated in

(7)) and indicative forms in relation to the type of subject in the clause (pronoun subject or NP subject) in the early ME corpus introduced in Chapter 3, containing all North-Eastern texts from LAEME as well as the *Ormulum* and the *Benedictine Rule* from the PPCME2 corpus (cf. Appendix).

(7) a. *Quedur **yai be** worthi or bale or bote*

(Cotvespcma f2ra, North, 1325-1350)

whether they be worthy or wicked or both

'Whether they be worthy or wicked or both'

b. *Pat on quat man **mi hend be** laide / **He haue** þe hali-gaste in hii*

(Edincmc f40va, North, 1300-1350)

that on what man my hands be laid he have the holy ghost in haste

'That any man on whom I lay my hands will have the holy spirit immediately'

	Spro		SNP		χ^2	p
	N	%	N	%		
East Midlands	141 / 716	19.69%	275 / 1317	20.88%	0.402	.525
North Midlands	72 / 475	15.16%	102 / 1235	8.26%	17.863	.000
North	95 / 984	9.65%	129 / 2224	5.80%	15.601	.000
All dialects	308 / 2175	14.16%	506 / 4776	10.59%	18.383	.000

Table 5.1. Formal subjunctives as a proportion of all 3rd person present tense forms (singular and plural) with pronominal and nominal subjects in the early Middle English corpus.

Table 5.1 shows that in the third person (singular and plural), present subjunctive forms occur significantly more frequently with pronoun subjects than with NP subjects compared to present indicatives, at least in the Northern and Northern Midlands sections of the corpus³⁷.

³⁷ A statistical analysis was performed using chi-square tests where applicable and Fischer's exact test wherever expected cell counts were too low for chi-square analysis

The association between subjunctive endings and pronoun subjects can be explained by the fact that OE subjunctives often occur in subordinate clauses, especially those expressing a complement of a verb of persuasion or urging, such as *niedan* ‘urge, force’, or a verb expressing a future intention, such as *þencan* ‘intend,’ or *wilnian* ‘desire’. Such complements express ‘dependent desires’ and their subject is usually a pronoun, since it refers to the subject or object of the higher verb (Los 2005:200-201). This is illustrated in example (8) from Los (2005:199):

- (8) *Se þe æt his nextan hwæt to læne abit, gif hit bið gelewed*
 he who from his neighbour something as loan asks if it is injured
oððe dead bæftan þam hlaforde, nyde man hine þæt he hit gylde.
 or dead after the lord force one him that he it repay
 (Exod 22.14)
 ‘He who borrows something from his neighbour, if it is injured or dies in the
 absence of its lord, he should be forced to repay it.’

The high frequency of pronoun subjects with subjunctive forms may have established a connection between subjunctives and pronoun subjects in speakers’ grammatical systems. Frequent confusion of subjunctive and indicative forms may have contributed to the establishment of vowel endings as forms associated with pronoun subjects, whether subjunctive or indicative. This would in turn contribute to generalization of vowel endings to indicative forms with inverted pronoun subjects, but also from (subjunctive) forms with inverted pronoun subjects to non-inverted pronoun subjects. The relation between subjunctives and pronoun subjects would also inhibit generalization of vowel endings to contexts with subjects other than personal pronouns, and thus help establish the distribution of reduced endings in the NSR.

(cf. Section 3.3.2.4.1). Except in the East Midlands texts, the difference between pronoun subjects and NP subjects in frequency of subjunctives was highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

5.2.2.3 Preterite-present verbs as a source

An alternative possible source of indicative plural $-\emptyset/e$ or $-n$ endings is the paradigm of preterite-present verbs, such as *can, may, will*. Bryan (1921) and Cole (to appear) argue that $-e/n$ probably generalized to strong and weak verbs from the indicative present plural of preterite-present verbs and *be*. Bryan (1921) finds these verb types a more probable source for $-en$ than the present subjunctive and the past indicative plural, since the $-en$ ending had already been generalized from preterite-presents to 'be', and these (high-frequency) verbs were already used with this ending in the present indicative.

Another argument is that there is evidence for confusion between the two groups of verbs in OE: there are attestations of preterite-present verbs with plural $-th$ endings in OE (Bryan 1921:126-136). This is corroborated by Cole (to appear), who shows that such confusion occasionally took place in the *Lindisfarne Glosses*, as illustrated in (9) from Cole (to appear:fn. 12).

(9) *ne uuto gie / wutas gie* (f.120 ra 20, Mk.12.24)

not know ye or know ye

'do you not know'

Preterite-present forms, like subjunctives, also occur predominantly with pronoun subjects in the *Lindisfarne Glosses*; Cole notes that 90% of a sample of 50 preterite-present forms in the gospels of Mark and John occur with pronoun subjects (Cole to appear).

The only distributional fact of preterite-present verbs in *Lindisfarne* that militates against an analysis with this context as an origin for reduced endings in the NSR is the fact that loss of $-n$ is not as advanced as in the subjunctive: in contexts with a pronoun subject in non-inverted word order, 100% of preterite-present verbs retained final $-n$, whereas 87% had vowel endings in subject-verb inversion contexts (Cole to appear). This is like the

West-Saxon pattern of vowel endings occurring only with an inverted pronoun subject, and unlike the facts found in the indicative present as well as the subjunctive in the *Lindisfarne Glosses*. Preterite-present verbs are therefore an unlikely source of vowel endings in strong and weak indicative present verbs, but they may still have contributed to the NSR via levelling of *-en* instead of reduced endings, as Cole notes. This is not unlikely, as *-n* functioned as a variant of *-ø/e* in the early ME NSR (cf. Chapter 3) and also in view of the fact that preterite-present plural *-en* probably was the source of general plural *-en* in the ME dialect of the Midlands (Cole to appear; cf. Chapter 3 and Brunner 1948:74-75; Mossé 1952:76).

5.2.2.4 Generalization from inversion to non-inversion: concurrence of several sources?

A final context which had reduced plural endings in OE, including the *Lindisfarne Glosses*, is the preterite indicative. Cole notes that this form may have contributed to the appearance of reduced endings in the present indicative as well, especially since vowel endings occasionally occur with preceding as well as following pronoun subjects, as illustrated in (10)(Cole to appear).

(10) a. *gie dyde ... me gie dydon* (Mt. 25.40)

ye did me ye did

b. *ne dyde gie ... ne me gie dyde* (Mt. 25.45)

not did ye not me ye did

However, like in preterite-present verbs and unlike subjunctives, vowel endings in this context usually do follow the West-Saxon pattern (Cole to appear).

As Cole (to appear) argues, it is most likely that several of these sources (subjunctive, preterite-presents verbs, and/or preterite indicative) provided

the input for reduced endings in the present indicative of strong and weak verbs. In addition, the generalization of these endings to non-inverted word orders in the present indicative may have been reinforced by the presence of vowel endings that already existed in non-inverted word orders as a minority pattern. The examples of reduced endings in non-inverted word orders in *Lindisfarne* may be instances of generalization in progress, or of an existing minority pattern which later became more frequent. One possible origin for vowel endings in the present indicative of strong and weak verbs which does not involve generalization from other paradigms is the older Germanic first person plural ending +[am], which would have developed into +[an] through general morpho-phonological change in OE. Benskin notes that it has not been attested, but this ending may have survived long enough to be affected by the loss of final *-n* (Benskin 2011).

Although the wide attestation of reduced endings in inverted contexts and their obvious partial similarity to the NSR make it likely that generalization from inverted to non-inverted contexts took place and contributed significantly to the rise of the NSR, this generalization is arguably unlikely from the perspective of language use, not only because the direction of levelling would be from an infrequent to a frequent context, but also because inverted orders have a very narrowly defined syntax and very different contexts of use compared to non-inverted, canonical orders: in older English, they involve questions, negative-initial clauses as well as a few other clause types (cf. de Haas 2008 and Chapter 4). If such a generalization took place, we would expect to be able to identify factors that promoted it, overriding issues of frequency and separate contexts of use. I will first explain in more detail why this process of generalization is unexpected, before discussing the various factors which may have played a role.

Pronoun subject-verb was the unmarked order in early English, as it still is today, and the most frequent one. By contrast, inversion patterns were relatively infrequent. This is why we would expect generalization to go the other way, if it occurred at all: theories of language use hold that more

frequently used linguistic items become more entrenched and are less likely to be replaced by others. This is known as the Conserving Effect, which “depends upon the fact that repetition strengthens memory representations for linguistic forms and makes them more accessible [...] The strength of representation of higher frequency forms explains why they resist reformation on the basis of analogy with other forms” (Bybee 2007:10).

Another reason why this type of generalization is unexpected is that inversion contexts occur only as a result of marked and well-defined syntactic operations; as we saw in Chapter 4, with pronoun subjects in older English, this involves clause types such as questions, negative-initial clauses, etc, where the verb moves to C, an initial or nearly initial position. In terms of syntax, then, these orders were not interchangeable, as Benskin (2011) claims, in spite of the relative variability of verb placement³⁸.

Pietsch argues that inverted and non-inverted combinations of verb and pronoun subject could function as one unit, based on an analysis of pronoun subjects as clitics on the verb (Pietsch 2005b:53). As shown in Chapter 4, however, this type of analysis is not the one that best fits the early English data. Since pronoun subjects have a fixed position in the clause, they cannot be analyzed as forming a unit with the verb as clitics, so this type of generalization is not expected in this sense.

A further reason why this kind of generalization is unexpected is that it there are varieties where it does not occur. In related varieties of Germanic, there are stable systems in which inversion triggers special agreement morphology, such as in the Dutch present indicative, where the second person

³⁸ This would have been true for native speakers of older English; it is not impossible that second-language learners (such as Cumbrians or Scandinavians) are more likely to be unable to pick up on all the structural and semantic factors which governed early English word order variation. If the various word orders seemed in free variation to second-language learners, this may provide an argument in favour of language contact as a factor in the rise of the NSR, as we will see in Section 5.3.3.

singular pronoun *jij* ‘you’ triggers a zero ending in inversion (11a), in contrast to the *-t* ending found elsewhere in the second person singular (11b).

(11) a. *doe jij* (Dutch)

‘do you’

b. *jij doet* (Dutch)

‘you do’

On the other hand, there are more examples where a similar generalization does occur, and, as Benskin (2011) notes, apparently without support from language contact. Benskin cites evidence from Brøndum-Nielsen (1973) that reduced plural endings were generalized from verb-pronoun subject to pronoun subject-verb in Old Danish (unfortunately, it is unclear what other supportive factors may have played a role there). According to Brøndum-Nielsen (1973:66), reduced endings in pronoun subject-verb order, as in (12b) actually start to occur after reduced endings in inversion, as in (12a). Both Old Danish examples in (12) are from Brøndum-Nielsen (1973:66).

(12) a. *hafve vi* (Old Danish)

have we

b. *vi hafve* (Old Danish)

we have

There are a number of factors that may have supported generalization from inverted to non-inverted contexts with plural pronoun subjects. One is that, as shown in the preceding sections, the Northumbrian dialect of the *Lindisfarne Gospels* had reduced endings on verb forms following the plural pronoun subject, not just in inversion (unlike West-Saxon). This occurred generally in the subjunctive due to the loss of final *-n*, but also occasionally in the present (and past) indicative tense of strong and weak verbs.

Another possible factor is that a generalization within the plural indicative present paradigm from inverted contexts to non-inverted contexts would involve the removal of an exception to the rule that verbs could have reduced endings when combined with plural pronoun subjects, resulting in a simpler paradigm.

A further possible factor depends on the idea that any association with pronoun subjects in inversion contexts is also, by extension, an association with pronoun subjects in general. If such an association is in place, this will facilitate lifting the restriction of reduced endings to inverted contexts. These factors are especially attractive in an account of the NSR, because a close association with pronoun subjects provides a rationale for the restriction of reduced endings to pronominal contexts alone, after generalization to non-inverted orders.

This is true for all occurrences of reduced endings in inverted pronominal contexts, but other factors may have strengthened the effect. One such factor is the general presence of reduced endings in the subjunctive, which mainly occurs with pronoun subjects, as we saw. Another possible factor is the separate position of pronoun subjects, as discussed in Chapter 4, which set them apart from constructions with other types of subjects. I will discuss the implications of the syntactic theory developed in Chapter 4 for the development of the subject condition in Section 5.2.4, and for the adjacency condition in 5.2.5.

5.2.2.5 Generalization from the first and second person plural to the third?

A final step that has been assumed in the process of generalization of reduced endings is the extension of these endings from the first and second person plural to the third person plural. Pietsch (2005b) assumes that the Northumbrian dialect started out with a pattern of reduced endings that was similar to West-Saxon, where these endings (virtually) only occurred in inversion contexts with first and second person plural pronoun subjects. Given this assumption, generalization from the first and second person plural to the

third person plural must also have taken place, either before or after generalization from inversion contexts to non-inversion contexts (Pietsch 2005b:56).

Pietsch (2005b) and Benskin (2011) argue that this generalization may have taken place in inversion contexts after the third person plural pronoun *hia* had been replaced by *þai* 'they' in late Northumbrian or early Northern Middle English, as a result of the same type of cluster reduction which originally gave rise to plural vowel endings in the first and second person (cf. Section 5.2.2.1). As long as the third person plural pronoun was still *hie* or *hia*, deleting *h-* in *hie*, not *-n*, *-th* or *-s* (*singen hie* > *singen-ie*, *singap hie* > *singap-ie* 'sing they', 'do they sing'), would be expected, since initial [h] was often deleted. As soon as *hia* was replaced by *þai*, it would have resulted in a consonant cluster [nθ] or [sθ], which may have led to cluster reduction by deletion of the *-n/s* ending: *singen þai* > *singe-þai*, *singas þai*. *singe-þai* 'sing they', 'do they sing'. This would help explain why the NSR is only found from early Northern ME onwards, since this is the earliest dialect where *þai* is attested³⁹ (cf. Pietsch 2005b, Benskin 2011).

However, this argument becomes much less persuasive if we bear in mind that reduced endings occasionally did co-occur with *hia* in the present indicative of strong and weak verbs in the *Lindisfarne Glosses*. In the subjunctive, they even occurred generally, in any form including the third person plural, as we have seen. Since these examples apparently predate the advent of *þai*, this was clearly not a necessary condition for the appearance of reduced endings in the third person plural.

Even without the added pressure of cluster reduction, however, generalization from the first and second person plural to the third person plural seems relatively unproblematic from a morphological perspective, since it only involves lifting the restriction that there was an 'odd one out' among

³⁹ This argument shows that it is difficult to keep language contact completely out of the discussion of the NSR's origins, as *þai* is a loanword from Old Norse, adopted in the wake of the Viking invasion of Northern England.

plural forms and thus yields a simpler, more economical system. It can also be argued to follow from the Conserving Effect, on the count that the association between reduced endings and plural pronoun subjects would become more deeply entrenched due to its presence in both the first and the second person plural. The presence of reduced endings in such high-frequency, closely associated contexts may have helped to change the representation of the third person plural as an exception.

As soon as reduced endings had been generalized to non-inverted as well as inverted word orders with plural pronoun subjects in all three persons, they functioned as a type of plural ending that was associated with pronoun subjects. Once this pattern was in place, all that would have been needed to arrive at the NSR pattern would have been the specialization of the other available endings (*-s/th*) to non-pronominal contexts.

5.2.3 The development of -s

The generalization of *-s* at the expense of *-th* in Northern OE has been viewed by various authors (cf. Pietsch 2005b, Isaac 2003) as a prerequisite for the rise of the NSR. In the words of Pietsch (2005:51), the generalization of *-s* to the third person singular and the plural in addition to its existing occurrence in the second person singular meant that the old agreement system was brought to “the verge of breakdown”, so the new zero endings were “apt to be reinterpreted and pressed into service as carriers of a new agreement contrast”. Both Pietsch and Isaac employ this idea as an argument to dismiss the possibility of Cumbrian influence as a factor in the rise of the NSR, since contact between Cumbrian and OE would not have lasted until *-s* had been completely generalized.

However, the logic of this argument is less than clear: as long as there was any form of variation in the endings of plural present indicative verbs, this could give rise to reinterpretation of that variation as keyed to subject type and/or adjacency. Variation between reduced endings and *-th* (which in fact

occurs in some late ME and early Modern English variants of the NSR, as seen in Chapter 3) would function just as well as variation between reduced endings and *-s*. Cole (to appear) shows that even variation between *-s* and *-th* could be, and was, conditioned according to the NSR. This provides support for the idea that the NSR could have arisen during the OE period, whether with the morphological variation between *-ø/e/s* and *-th* as attested in the *Lindisfarne Glosses* or with variation between reduced endings on the one hand and *-th/s* on the other, as the pattern is attested in later periods.

It is hard to gauge exactly how representative the evidence of the *Lindisfarne Glosses* is for the living dialect. On the evidence from Lindisfarne alone, it is also impossible to tell which of these variants developed first, as it is only one text. It may be that the pattern found here was short-lived, as a regional variant of the NSR that existed only until *-s* was generalized further and the pattern crystallized into the NSR as we know it. It is also unclear whether the 'Lindisfarne NSR' may have (temporarily) superseded an earlier system which opposed vowel endings with only *-th* or *-s/th*. What the 'Lindisfarne NSR' pattern does make clear is that there seems to have been some initial confusion about the use of the innovative *-s* ending in Northumbrian OE. As Cole (to appear) notes, it is not impossible that both reduced endings and *-s* may have been present at the root of the NSR, and this makes a theory of origin based on a generalization of certain endings alone less likely and a contact-induced theory, providing more contextual factors, perhaps more likely. I will return to this issue below.

A final note on the development of *-s* and, possibly, *-th*, is that their range of use decreased following the generalization of reduced endings. This is left implicit in accounts of the NSR such as those by Pietsch (2005:56) and others, but specialization of the *-s* endings (or *-th* in other varieties) to environments with NP subjects (and, in the classic Northern ME version, to environments with non-adjacent pronoun subjects) must somehow have occurred to arrive at the NSR pattern. A simple explanation in keeping with arguments based on language use would be that speakers would have felt a

need for a symmetrical system of agreement, and so created a purpose for the new contrast between $-\emptyset/e$ and $-s/th$ endings by using the latter only for those present-tense indicative contexts where $-\emptyset/e$ could not be used (cf. de Haas 2008). In other words, if one type of ending ($-\emptyset/e$) was closely associated with pronoun subjects and the other ($-s/th$) was not, it would follow that there was a clear opportunity for the non-pronominal $-s/th$ endings to become more closely associated with the context where they were most frequently found.

5.2.4 Subject positions and the subject and adjacency constraints

The syntactic analysis of the NSR presented in Chapter 4 yields a number of insights in the way the NSR may have arisen. Pronoun subjects and NP subjects had a different distribution in older English, associated with different syntactic positions. Word-order evidence shows that pronoun subjects occurred in a higher position in the clause than NP subjects. The position for pronoun subjects is referred to as SpecFP, arguably roughly equivalent to SpecAgrSP in Modern English, while NP subjects usually appear in SpecTP.

We have seen in Chapter 4 that agreement morphology expresses syntactic relations, in this case between the subject and the verb. In a non-NSR dialect of older English, with distinct endings for the first, second and third person singular and for the plural, these endings agree with the subject in number and (in the singular) person, expressing subject-verb agreement, generally without distinction as to the type and position of the subject. Agreement can form a relation between the verb, wherever its position in the clause, and the subject, whether in SpecFP or SpecTP.

This situation changes when endings are reduced to $-\emptyset/e$ and these reduced endings become the unmarked way of marking agreement with a plural pronoun subject. At this point, reduced endings do not only become associated with pronoun subjects, but also with the higher position reserved for them (in our terms, SpecFP) and the functional projection hosting them (FP). In

All plural verbs which are not sufficiently closely related to a pronoun subject get the same default ending, which is also the same as the third person singular ending. Third-person singular endings are often used for default inflection, as we saw in Chapter 4. The association of the *-s/th* ending with a number of plural contexts which were not very clearly defined, together with the fact that it was identical to the existing third person singular form (and, in *-s* dialects, also to the second person singular) made this form a very general way of marking the present tense indicative, without very clear reference to specific person or number features of the subject. This may have contributed to the reanalysis of *-s/th* from subject-verb agreement to default present indicative inflection.

As we saw in Chapter 3, the adjacency condition is a variable component of NSR systems which did not always hold even in early ME NSR varieties. The adjacency condition on subject-verb agreement restricts such (\emptyset/e) agreement to adjacent pronoun subject-verb pairs by allowing any intervening lexical element to block agreement (cf. Chapter 4). This is shown in (14), repeated from (55'b) in section 4.4.1:

- (14) [_{FP} they [_F 3PL [_{TP} [_T [_{VP} sing and dance]]]]
 [Merger successful] O-----O
They sing
 [Adjacency disrupted] O-- -----*-----O
 [Default inflection] -s
 ... *and dances*

In many varieties, the subject condition on agreement holds but the adjacency condition does not, or not categorically, resulting in \emptyset/e plural endings on verbs in clauses with a non-adjacent pronoun subject, as illustrated in (15):

(15) [_{FP} they [_F 3PL [_{TP} [_T [_{VP} sing and dance]]]]
 [Merger successful] 0-----0

They sing and dance

In my analysis, the fact that the adjacency constraint is variable follows from the fact that it is an extra PF condition on morphology, which may or may not apply given the same underlying syntax. When reduced endings were reanalyzed as markers of agreement with a pronominal subject-verb, it may be that not all speakers also analyzed adjacency between subject and verb as essential to this agreement process. This may be related to the relative infrequency of non-adjacent contexts, compared to adjacent ones.

If we model language acquisition, and more especially the acquisition of the morphosyntax of a variety, as a process of setting parameters (cf. Lightfoot 1999, Roberts 2007), the option of inferring an adjacency condition on agreement or not can be seen as one such parameter. Parameters are set in accordance with the linguistic input a speaker hears, but whenever there is insufficient evidence for a parameter setting, a speaker may innovate a setting based on the structure of his or her existing grammar. This type of innovation, which does not follow immediately from the evidence, is known as abductive change (cf. Andersen 1973). It amounts to speaker/hearer creativity, triggered by the process of trying to make sense of the data.

If the frequency of non-adjacent pronoun subject-verb pairs was low, this may have led to an abductive change in the form of the innovation of an adjacency condition on agreement, in the absence of such a condition, or, indeed, in the loss of such a condition. This is not improbable for early English: although the adjacency condition is clearly visible in a number of Northern texts in the early ME corpus, forms with adjacent pronoun subjects are overwhelmingly frequent in the corpus, compared to other contexts. As Tables 3.9 and 3.10 in Section 3.3.2.4.1 show, adjacent pronoun contexts occur 370

times in the corpus, and non-adjacent pronoun contexts only 126 times⁴⁰. If the frequency of non-adjacent pronominal context was this low or lower at the time when reduced endings came to be reinterpreted as the only form of plural subject-verb agreement, the subject condition may have been taken to apply only to adjacent contexts, since these were the only ones speakers had sufficient evidence for (resulting in the presence of the adjacency condition). Alternatively, speakers might assume that the subject condition applied to all verbs with plural pronoun subjects, since they had no evidence to the contrary (resulting in the absence of the adjacency condition).

The relatively stable application of the adjacency constraint in the core Northern NSR area in early ME provides a clue that the adjacency condition may have developed at the same time or shortly after the initial innovation of the subject condition, but this is largely conjecture. It is more straightforwardly established that the adjacency condition was apparently easily lost, given the fact that there are many dialects outside the NSR's Northern core area that have the subject condition but lack the adjacency condition (cf. Section 3.3.2), as do many modern NSR dialects (cf. Section 3.4). This may well be due to the low frequency of non-adjacent contexts, which seems to have decreased even further in Modern English: several large Present-day English texts corpora show hardly any attestations of non-adjacent forms (cf. Section 3.4).

5.3 Language contact and the rise of the NSR

5.3.1 Contact between OE, Cumbrian and Old Norse

As we have seen in Chapter 2, the Northern dialect area was distinguished from other OE dialects by a unique mix of contact situations with other languages: first, there was possibly long-lasting contact with the Cumbrian variety of Brythonic Celtic, and then with Old Norse following the Viking invasion. The

⁴⁰ By comparison, non-adjacent NP contexts are much more numerous (202 tokens) than adjacent NP contexts (126 tokens).

discussion in Section 5.2 shows that the NSR may have developed as an effect of processes of erosion and levelling of verb endings, as well as reanalyses of the conditions on the use of these endings, based on their shifted distribution. Since the endings all existed within the English language and the developments towards erosion and levelling may (to some extent) have occurred irrespective of effects of language contact on the syntax, it is possible to sketch a scenario for the NSR without reference to language contact. However, I will argue that it is improbable that OE verb endings were completely unaffected by language contact, given the situation described in Chapter 2. Moreover, the Brythonic pattern of agreement variation offers a clear model for the subject condition in the NSR and may well have helped establish it. Before we turn to a discussion of these possible contact influences, I will summarize the key characteristics of the respective contact situations.

The phylogeographic evidence in Section 2.3.1 showed that when the Anglo-Saxons invaded Britain, they were vastly outnumbered by the original population. Between 90% and 100% of (female) mitochondrial DNA and between 75% and 95% of (male) Y-chromosome DNA is thought to be Celtic in origin; only in Eastern England, especially in the Danelaw in the North-East, the numbers are lower. The high proportion of Celtic mitochondrial DNA shows that more Anglo-Saxon men settled England than women, so contact must often have been close, with Anglo-Saxon men having children with Celtic women. The North, where the Cumbrian population ultimately shifted to Old English, is one of the regions where Celtic women probably learned OE and helped to raise children in OE (cf. Section 2.3.2.3); we will see in Section 5.3.3 how their imperfect acquisition of OE (and that of other Cumbrians) may have contributed to the subject condition of the NSR. Contact between OE and Cumbrian is thought to have lasted for several centuries, between the first Anglo-Saxon settlements in the 5th century and the ultimate decline of Cumbrian political power in the 11th century (although at that point, Cumbrian may not have been used as an everyday language in Northern England since several centuries before). As Anglo-Saxons only represented a reasonably small

group in Northern-English society, it is likely that Cumbrian-speaking communities continued to exist for a long time after the Anglo-Saxon invasion. As the Cumbrians ultimately all shifted to (Old) English, the cultural dominance exerted by Anglo-Saxons must have been considerable, with the Cumbrian language functioning as a substrate, the language of the powerless not normally used by Anglo-Saxons, and OE as a superstrate, the language with the highest social status (cf. Thomason 2001). This is probably also the reason why there are very few clear signs of Cumbrian (or any other Brythonic) influence on the English language (there are fewer than 20 Old Brythonic loanwords in English); speakers of substrate languages are more likely to transfer structural features such as phonology and syntax into the superstrate, via imperfect learning, than they are to contribute loanwords to the superstrate (Thomason 2001:75). Within the context of the imbalance of power, native speakers of the superstrate are unlikely to adopt words from the substrate language which has low social status. In fact, substrate speakers may not even use such words in communication with superstrate speakers. I will discuss below how the subject condition of the NSR can be argued to stem from Cumbrian substrate influence.

The phylogeographic evidence invoked to gauge the relative sizes of the Anglo-Saxon and Cumbrian populations is, unfortunately, less informative about the relation between Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavian settlers, since there is much genetic overlap between the two groups. However, it is clear that while the Scandinavians who settled North-Eastern England from the end of the ninth century were a relatively small group (compared to the Brythonic element in the population) who added to the population especially in the East, they were in close contact with the English population (including Cumbrians as well as Anglo-Saxons) for several hundred years and had a noticeable influence on English vocabulary. Northern and East Midland English borrowed heavily from Old Norse (cf. Serjeantson 1935); so heavily, in fact, that they borrowed the pronouns *they*, *their*, and *them* as well as a number of other grammatical items (Lass 1992:120-121, Mustanoja 1960:134-135 and cf. De Haas 2004). Given that these are function words that are integrated into a paradigm, this is

evidence of very intensive language contact (Thomason 2001:69-71; cf. Thomason and Kaufman 1988). It shows that speakers of older English interacted with speakers of Old Norse very intensively, and that they were willing to adopt elements of their language. This points to a more equal balance of power than was present between Cumbrians and Anglo-Saxons. Like the Cumbrians, the Scandinavians in Northern England eventually also shifted to English and became part of the general population, but before this language shift in the tenth or eleventh century, Northumbrian/Northern English and the variety of Old Norse spoken in England probably mutually influenced each other.

5.3.2 Second-language learning, deflection and loss of structure

5.3.2.1 Second-language learners of Northumbrian

The discussion of the contact situations between Northumbrian, Cumbrian and Old Norse shows that a very high proportion of speakers must have been second-language learners of Northumbrian. There were so many speakers of Cumbrian that many of them probably did not interact with native speakers of OE sufficiently to acquire it perfectly, and probably rarely at a very early age, given the fact that their caregivers must have been Cumbrian women. When they did, the variety of Northumbrian acquired by Cumbrian children was probably coloured by features of imperfect learning in the speech of Cumbrian adults, as we will see in Section 5.3.3. Speakers of Old Norse would also learn Northumbrian as a second language; in their case, they may even have practiced receptive multilingualism, in which each group spoke their own language in communication with the other, for some length of time before shifting, since OE and Old Norse were to some extent mutually intelligible (Townend 2002). The high proportion of non-native speakers of Northumbrian is likely to have influenced the dialect both because many adult learners did not

acquire the language perfectly and because other speakers accommodated to the imperfections in learners' language.

5.3.2.2 Imperfect learning

There is evidence that when adults learn a new language, their morphosyntactic system ceases to change any further after a long period of immersion in the target language. At this point, the learner's second-language grammar has reached a 'steady state'. At this stage, speakers may still produce utterances with a morphosyntax that "diverge[s] considerably from the performance of native speakers" (Hawkins 2009:228). Divergence may occur in word order and morphological marking, as well as in the discourse-pragmatic contexts of their use; this includes verbal morphology (Lardiere 2007, cf. in Hawkins 2009).

It is likely that this also happened when speakers of Cumbrian and Old Norse acquired Northumbrian; such processes may well have affected the shifts in the use of the reduced endings discussed in Section 5.2. Imperfect acquisition by individual learners is known to affect the structure of grammatical patterns when they are adopted by new communities of speakers. Labov (2007) distinguishes processes of contact involving adult learners (diffusion) from those of regular transmission. Linguistic transmission is defined as "an unbroken sequence of native-language acquisition by children" (Labov 2007:346, borrowing a phrase from Ringe, Warnow and Taylor 2002:63). Since children are able to fully acquire a language, including "all of its structural detail", transmission usually preserves the structures of a linguistic variety when it is passed on from one generation to the next, with only minimal changes. This type of change will lead to the gradual changes that occur differently in different communities as they separate from parent varieties; this is how languages separate into different branches and ultimately form 'family trees' even in the absence of language contact (Labov 2007: 344-346).

Changes between related varieties may also come about because of contact: changes spread from variety to variety, in successive waves of innovation, leaving a patchwork of different varieties because the various communities may be affected by different waves. Such variation is better modelled by the Wave Model (cf. Schmidt 1871) than by the Family Tree Model. Labov refines this type of change in his model by adding the concept of diffusion. Linguistic diffusion is the transfer of features from one linguistic variety to another through contact between speech communities (Labov 2007:347). Crucially, adults are the main agents in this type of contact situation (Labov 2007:349). It is well-known that structural elements of language, such as morphology and syntax, are less easily borrowed than others, especially lexical elements (Labov 2007:349 and cf. Thomason 2001). Adults borrow linguistic elements from each other in dialect contact, but these elements lose structural detail because adults cannot acquire language in the same way as children, i.e., because they “do not learn and reproduce linguistic forms, rules, and constraints with the accuracy and speed that children display” (2007:349).

Labov illustrates this with the diffusion of two intricately conditioned phonological patterns in American English dialects, the New York City short-*a* system and the Northern Cities Shift, which both change when they emerge in adapted form in new dialects, in that not all of the conditions present in the original system also appear in the diffused variant. For instance, the original short-*a* system has a number of phonological as well as syntactic and lexical conditions that determine the realization of short *a* as either tense or lax. In dialects that have been in contact with New York City through interaction between relatively large numbers of adults, short-*a* systems have arisen that closely resemble the New York system, but minus a few of the grammatical conditions (2007:353-379).

It is likely that when first Cumbrians and later Scandinavians acquired Northumbrian OE, they likewise did not acquire all conditions of the use of all OE grammatical systems. Specifically, the conditions on use of the various verb

endings may have been affected, and the levelling processes described in Section 5.2 may have been accelerated along the way⁴¹.

Another way in which verb endings may have been affected by imperfect learning, albeit indirectly, is simplification as a strategy to promote communication on the part of native as well as second-language speakers of Northumbrian. We saw in Section 5.3.1 that Northumbrian OE was in contact with both Cumbrian and Old Norse. This implies that before language shift to OE occurred, the Northumbrian dialect area consisted of a number of different speech communities: in addition to native speakers of Cumbrian, native speakers of Old Norse, and native speakers of Northumbrian, there must have been a combined speech community of all three groups, or perhaps first of OE and Cumbrian and then of OE and Old Norse, in which Northumbrian was in all probability used as a lingua franca. This state of affairs and its effects on the language can be modelled by adopting Ross's (2003) distinction between open and closed communities, and within open communities, of close-knit and loose-knit ones. Ross adapts Andersen's (1988) account of open and closed communities, defined respectively as communities that have interactions with other (speech) communities (open), and those that do not (closed). Kusters (2003) shows that open societies promote simplicity in verbal inflection. In situations where second-language learners form a large part of the speech community, their needs in communication will often change verbal inflection by making it simpler, in the sense that morphological oppositions are lost. Kusters attributes this to the fact that in this type of situation, speakers cannot usually assume that their interlocutors share all their knowledge of the variety which is a second language to many or most of them. They will consequently have to be maximally explicit if they want to be understood (Kusters 2003:41). This type

⁴¹ For different theories that attribute the rise of third-person singular and plural *-s* to influence of second-language learning by Scandinavians, see Samuels (1989); Kroch and Taylor (1997) and Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (2000). Since both these theories are rather tentative and the variation between *-s* and *-th* is probably not as essential to the NSR (in at least its ME form), I will leave *-s* out of the main discussion.

of process may have assisted in the erosion of the *-en/ø/e* verb ending, which proceeded particularly fast in the Northern dialect: contact with both Cumbrian (cf. also Tristram 2002) and Old Norse could have played a role here. If deleting an ending was an option in Northumbrian, categorically deleting it would have provided a clearer situation for language learners.

5.3.3 The subject condition as Cumbrian substrate influence

5.3.3.1 Imposition and shift-induced change

Second-language learning may also have played a role in the formation of the NSR through direct influence from Cumbrians' first language. This type of influence is known as imposition. Van Coetsem (1988) defines imposition as transfer of linguistic elements from one language to another with 'source language agentivity'; when a speaker acquires a new language, he or she fails to make a complete transition from the native language to the target language, and transfers elements or structures from the former to the latter. The learner's first language is the source language, and it is this grammatical system which imports new elements into the recipient language, the learner's target language. In this sense, imposition is opposed to borrowing, in which speakers of the recipient language import an item from the source language (van Coetsem 1988:3). I will explain in the next sections how the Cumbrian pattern of agreement may have been transferred into Northumbrian OE. As we will see, the OE opposition between reduced *-ø/e* plural endings in combination with (inverted) pronoun subjects and *-s/th* elsewhere could have been interpreted by speakers of Cumbrian as equivalent to their own distinction between subject-verb agreement with pronoun subjects and default inflection elsewhere.

For an instance of imposition to affect not only the grammar of an individual speaker, but also that of a wider community, some extra steps are necessary. We assume that in a situation like the contact situation between Cumbrian and Northumbrian, an entire community with a shared native

language (the substrate) is trying to acquire a new language, spoken by those in power (the superstrate). Ross uses the structure of communities to clarify this type of situation. Recall that all speech communities which are in contact with one or more other speech communities are open. Ross's (2003) makes a distinction between loose-knit and close-knit open communities which depends on how strong and clustered the relationships between their members are. Close-knit communities will be "bound together by strong bonds of linguistic solidarity" (Ross 2003:179; cf. Andersen 1988, who uses the terms 'endocentric' and 'exocentric' instead of 'close-knit' and 'loose-knit'), expressing their sense of unity and identity by speaking one shared linguistic variety among each other. The use of language in loose-knit open communities, with relatively weak and low-density links between speakers, will be more fluid: they will be open to the use of other linguistic varieties among their own group as well, instead of their own, shared primary variety. Ross notes that this situation is likely to result in the dissolution of the community: such a community will shift to another variety (Ross 2003:191). It should be noted this is probably only true if the community is very loose-knit indeed: a community with many weak links between speakers, like the community formed by speakers of a lingua franca, will not lose its grounds for use easily and its speakers will not shift to another lingua franca without major societal changes.

The insight that communities that shift to another language are not only open but also loose-knit, however, is a useful one. It implies that both the Cumbrian and the Scandinavian communities in Northern England must at some point have ceased to see themselves as a separate group, rather than as part of English society. Before that point, they would already have spoken their own variety of Northumbrian (as individual language learners, but probably also as a group transmitting its version of the language from parent to child, in the case of Cumbrian, since learning the language of power is important as a survival strategy in substrate situations).

Thomason (2001) models shift-induced change as follows. When speakers acquire their second language, the target language (TL), imperfectly, they produce a changed TL variety (TL₂). When a significantly large or influential group of learners shifts to the larger community's language, the wider TL community may take over features from the learners' TL₂, thereby introducing a new TL variety, TL₃ (Thomason 2001: 74-76). Thomason argues that this type of influence occurs most often when large groups of speakers shift during a short period of time, because they will change the linguistic landscape of native speakers so dramatically that there is sufficient pressure for native speakers of the target language to start using non-native features as well.

The rise of a modified target language (TL₃ in Thomason's terms) may be analyzed in terms of the distinction between tight-knit and loose-knit communities as well. Substrate communities like the one formed by Cumbrian speakers are not the only ones who may shift to a different variety. Kusters (2003) notes that the language of an open community is often used as a *lingua franca* between speakers of various first languages. In the Northern English situation, Northumbrian played this role. As we saw in the discussion of simplification above, it is likely that native Northumbrians adapted their language for communication with second-language learners. At first, they may have retained a non-adapted version of OE for use among themselves. However, for substrate influences to have affected the language of the wider Northumbrian community, native speakers probably had to lose their sense of a separate identity, becoming more loose-knit, and shift to the *lingua franca* version of Northumbrian, as Ross (2003) describes for a number of Oceanic languages. Ross points out this is also what koineization amounts to: the adoption of a levelled, shared variant of a language, from which individual characteristics marking the identity of specific subgroups in society have been removed (Ross 2003; cf. Siegel 1985, 1993). It may well be that this development took place among native (ethnic Anglo-Saxon) Northumbrian

speakers after most Cumbrians (and later, Scandinavians) had shifted to OE and had thus declared themselves to be an integral part of the wider community. I will now discuss how these processes may have played out in the case of contact between Cumbrian and Northumbrian OE, if Cumbrian learners transferred their own pattern of agreement into OE.

5.3.3.2 Brythonic anti-agreement: a rare parallel

In this section I hypothesize a case of imposition: the transfer of the Brythonic⁴² pattern of anti-agreement from Cumbrian to Northumbrian, resulting in the subject condition on agreement that is found in the NSR.

The NSR is very similar to a common Brythonic pattern of agreement. All (early) Brythonic languages have unmarked VS word order. In this word order, they share an inflection pattern that distinguishes between (a) default inflection for third person singular forms (with pronoun subjects as well as NP subjects) and for plural forms if the subject is not a personal pronoun and (b) special plural inflection for plural forms with pronoun subject (cf. Benskin 2011 and sources cited there). Pedersen (1913:309) states that this pattern occurred throughout the Brythonic languages, albeit to different degrees in different branches and time periods. According to Evans (1971:43), it is found all through the textual history of Welsh. We may therefore safely assume that Cumbrian had the same pattern of (non-)agreement, also known as anti-agreement. The modern Welsh version of the pattern is illustrated in (16) from Borsley and Roberts (1996:40):

- (16) a. *gwelsan (nhw) ddraig*
 see-3PL (they) dragon
 ‘They see a dragon’

⁴² Gaelic is an *a priori* improbable source for the NSR, as it finds no parallel in the Scottish and Irish Gaelic systems of agreement (cf. Ball 1993:126, 186).

b. *gwelodd y dynion ddraig*
 see-3SG the men dragon
 ‘The men see a dragon’

In Welsh, the verb agrees with the subject if the subject is covert or a pronoun and it gets an invariant ending with NP subjects. Roberts and Shlonsky (1996:182 ff.) argue that this pattern arose historically when pronouns encliticized to the finite verb and were reanalyzed as agreement suffixes. This is why the agreement morphemes do not co-occur with any subjects other than the pronoun, which is referred to as an ‘echo pronoun’ because it echoes the pronoun present in the verb ending. NP subjects get a different, invariant verb form. In this pattern of anti-agreement, we can clearly recognize the similar distinction that the NSR makes between agreement with pronoun subjects and default inflection with NP subjects.

This parallel is all the more relevant, because it is rare crosslinguistically. Siewierska (2011) notes that several languages (Welsh, the Nilotic Luo language) have systems in which person marking on verbs occurs only with free pronouns but not with nouns, but is rather uncommon (Siewierska 2011). Apparently, this feature does not often arise in languages independently. It is also unique within the Germanic branch of Indo-European languages. Although there is a parallel in the use of reduced endings with non-inverted as well as inverted pronoun-verb pairs in old Danish (cf. Section 5.2), dialects with the NSR and related patterns in English are the only Germanic varieties where the ‘full’ (-s/*th*) endings are excluded from these contexts in all word orders. It may be that contact with Cumbrian is what tipped the scales to develop the NSR, which did not happen in any other early variety of Germanic.

5.3.3.3 A scenario for contact as a source for the subject condition

I have shown that the contact situation between Cumbrian and Northumbrian was conducive to substrate effects on Northumbrian. The Brythonic pattern of

agreement, which was in all likelihood shared by Cumbrian, provides a clear parallel between Cumbrian grammar and the subject condition in the NSR, which is unique in the Germanic languages. This means that language contact is an attractive option to help account for the NSR, provided we have a working hypothesis for how processes of language contact in the contact situation between speakers of Cumbrian and OE may have led to this system. Cumbrian speakers would have encountered a pattern of inflection in the OE present indicative which looked familiar to them: plural verbs had a default ending that was identical to the third person singular ending (*-s/th*), except when adjacent to a pronoun subject (cf. de Haas 2008). In OE, this originally usually occurred only in inversion, but this was the unmarked word order in Cumbrian, so it may not have been salient as a marked order in OE to many Cumbrian learners (Benskin 2011). As Benskin (2011) notes, this may have contributed to the levelling of reduced endings from inverted to non-inverted contexts. It would be a case of change through imperfect learning (cf. Thomason 2001; 74-76) which constitutes an abductive change (cf. Andersen 1973): in their process of acquisition, Cumbrians mistakenly assumed that if a pattern occurred in their native unmarked word order, then it must occur in other orders as well.

Following the imposition of the Cumbrian pattern with a special form of agreement for plural verbs with pronoun subjects, the rest of the developments detailed in Section 5.2 still stands. The Cumbrian opposition would have been imported into Northumbrian morphosyntax and would have found a fertile breeding ground in the English syntactic system with its differential subject positions.

5.3.3.4 Weighing scenarios with and without contact influence

The preceding discussion shows that the innovation of the NSR condition that verbs carry special inflection with pronoun subjects, but default inflection with NP subjects would follow naturally from a process of imposition from Cumbrian. It is also clear that such imposition is expected given what we know

about the contact situation between Cumbrian and Northumbrian OE. In addition, the parallel shared by Brythonic and Northern English is relatively rare, which further argues for a contact-based origin of the pattern.

However, even without language contact (as witnessed by the much less contact-influenced West-Saxon variety of OE), Old English had a unique feature in its subject syntax, which served to clearly set pronoun subjects apart and thus may well have promoted reanalysis of reduced endings as related to the status of the subject, rather than just its position relative to the verb. This means that while influence from Cumbrian on the subject condition is a very attractive option, it is not indispensable for an account of the pattern in Northern English. Since there is no direct evidence for the behaviour of Cumbrian speakers in contact with Northumbrian, it is impossible to cast a definitive judgement on the matter.

It should be noted, however, that completely disregarding the role of language contact in the rise of the NSR would be not do justice to the facts. Contact with both Cumbrian and Old Norse was intense, and as shown in Section 5.3.2, contact probably played a significant role in reducing *-n* and *-e* endings to *-e* and *-∅*, and may well have increased the speed of developments of levelling.

5.4 Development of NSR variants in other varieties

After its original rise in Northumbrian OE, the NSR, or related patterns which shared the subject condition, developed in other varieties of English as well, as we saw in Section 3.4. The discussion of various aspects of language change in this chapter may also yield some insight into the question how these patterns arose during and after the ME period. Based on the preceding discussion, I see two ways in which this may have happened.

If Cumbrian language contact was not decisive in bringing about the rise of the original NSR, this development can be seen as an effect of the levelling of verb endings (*-∅/e/n* and *-s*) leading to reinterpretation combined

with the differential syntax of pronoun and NP subjects. Since the syntax of subjects seems to have been relatively stable in older English and into (early) modern English (cf. Chapter 4), this type of innovation would still have been possible when the developments in indicative endings in other dialects progressed to the point that the conditions on variation between endings became unclear and apt to be reanalyzed. This would have happened in many dialects, given the increasing loss of final *-n* and the spread of *-s* at the expense of *-th* in and after ME (cf. Chapter 4).

Dialect contact may also have caused the innovation of NSR-like patterns outside Northern English. I showed in Section 3.4 that South-Western English and London English both had or have had related patterns. London was a rising metropolis in the late ME and early Modern English period, and attracted many speakers from all areas in England, Northern and otherwise (Smith 1996). If northern speakers spread the rule to other varieties, where it was adopted but in modified form (with different endings or with only the subject condition and without the adjacency condition), this would fit perfectly with Labov's (2007) theory of diffusion: the loss of the adjacency condition, but also the occasional spread of the subject condition to the third person singular, is exactly the type of structural loss that is expected in this type of contact. The innovation of a subject condition would have been facilitated by the differential subject syntax that all varieties of English shared.

5.5 Discussion and conclusion

This chapter has presented various hypotheses for the origin of the Northern Subject Rule. We have seen that language-internal as well as contact-dependent hypotheses face some problems because so few data are extant from the earliest Northern OE. Theories dependent on generalization of vowel endings (*-e*) are necessarily tentative because the exact origin and distribution of these endings in earliest Northern English is not known. There is evidence that such a

generalization may have resulted in the NSR pattern, but the early variant pattern found in the *Lindisfarne Glosses* does cast some doubt on this.

On the other hand, the most persuasive scenario deriving the NSR from contact with Cumbrian also depends on the opposition of vowel endings with default *-th/s* endings. It does not, however, derive its essence from this opposition; in principle, a contact origin is also consistent with an opposition between vowel endings and *-s* on the one hand and *-th* on the other, such as found in the *Lindisfarne Glosses*. This gives the Celtic hypothesis something of an advantage.

A drawback of the Celtic hypothesis is the fact that much of our inferences about the contact situation are tentative. Based on what we know, it can be concluded that language contact with Cumbrian is a credible candidate when we are looking for the origin of the NSR, all that can be said with some certainty is that the syntax of subjects in OE seems to be crucial in its development, combined with a cocktail of morphological developments which singled out the Northern dialect in the OE period.

Chapter 6 - Summary and conclusion

6.1 Summary

It was established in Chapter 1 that the early history and the proper syntactic analysis of the Northern Subject Rule were partly uncharted territory. Three main objects for investigation were identified. First, there was no overview of the internal variation and geographical distribution of the NSR in the early Middle English period, the first period where the pattern was attested. Second, a syntactic analysis taking into account such early ME evidence, as well as other evidence for early ME syntax, was therefore also lacking. Third, the origin of the pattern is a matter of debate. While some argue the pattern was a substrate influence from Celtic, others argue that this could not have been the case, in part because such contact would have been too early (in the early OE period) for the required morphological oppositions to have arisen in English. For opponents of the contact hypothesis, these oppositions necessarily include the generalization of *-e/ø* and *-s* endings, although we saw that this is also debatable.

In order to evaluate the relative merit of the various hypotheses for the origin of the NSR, then, it was necessary to gain an overview not only of the internal history of the Northern dialect, in terms of the evidence for variation in present indicative inflection in Northumbrian OE and Northern early ME, but also of its external history, in terms of its relations with other English dialects and with other languages. Cumbrian, the regional variety of Brythonic Celtic, was not the only relevant language in this respect; since Old Norse, the language of the Viking invaders of North-Eastern England in late OE and at the start of ME, is known to have had a strong impact on the Northern dialect, it may also have played a role in the rise of the NSR.

The external history of the dialect was surveyed in Chapter 2. It was established that there may already have been some morphosyntactic variation in the West-Germanic variety brought to Northern England by its first Anglo-Saxon settlers, and contact with Old Norse was intensive, but the possibility of

substrate influence from Cumbrian should not be underestimated. In addition to historical and archaeological evidence which shows that Cumbrian culture and the Cumbrian language probably survived for a few centuries after the Anglo-Saxon settlement, this conclusion is based on phylogeographical evidence, that is, evidence tracing back the geographical origin of the population's ancestors based on their genetic profile. This type of evidence shows that the Germanic element in the population of Northern England was very small, except in the Eastern areas most densely settled by Germanic people (probably Anglo-Saxons as well as Vikings). Anglo-Saxons must have been vastly outnumbered by Cumbrians, making substrate influence a distinct possibility.

Chapter 3 investigated the internal history of the Northern dialect with respect to variation in verbal morphology. In Northumbrian OE, the NSR did not occur in its usual form (with variation between *-e/ø* and *-s*). However, there is some evidence that *-e/ø* endings were already restricted to their NSR environments. More surprisingly, Cole (to appear) established that in the *Lindisfarne Glosses*, variation between *-s* and *-th* was conditioned by subject type and adjacency. In this text, *-s* occurs more frequently in contexts with an adjacent pronoun subject (exactly where it would be disfavoured in the later NSR), and *-th* elsewhere. It may be that this unexpected pattern was part of some initial fluctuation in the morphological alternatives that the subject condition and adjacency condition applied to, when the innovative *-s* ending was in the process of generalizing at the expense of *-th*. Whatever the exact course of events, this evidence shows that the syntactic NSR conditions on verbal inflection were already in place in OE.

The early ME corpus study presented in Chapter 3 forms the main contribution of this study to our knowledge of the geographical distribution of the NSR and variation in the extent to which the syntactic conditions on inflection applied, but the new early ME data were also unified with other material which had not been brought together before. The early ME evidence was combined with the literature on the NSR in late ME and showed that in

both periods, NSR-type variation occurred with various morphological realizations: in addition to *-ø/e*, it also occurred with *-n*, especially in and near the Midlands, and in addition to *-s*, it also appeared with *-th* in some corners of the east Midlands. The NSR with *-th* appears to have been a later development in ME, however, since it has been attested in late ME dialects of the East Midlands, but is not in evidence in early ME, although some variation between *-ø/e/n* and *-s* and *-th* is already present in the relevant dialects.

The corpus study also showed that the NSR pattern was not monolithic, in that there were differences in the extent to which its two conditions on inflection operated. Whereas the subject condition applied (nearly) categorically in a wide range of Northern and Northern Midlands dialects, the adjacency condition was more variable, even in the North, and not in evidence in a number of Midlands texts which did have the subject condition. In Modern English varieties, it was often lost altogether. This pattern was interpreted in two ways: first, it seems to imply that since the pattern was strongest in the Northern texts in the corpus, this was probably also the approximate region where the NSR originated; and second, it implies that the subject condition is a more stable and potentially more essential characteristic of the NSR than the adjacency condition.

The subject condition was therefore also the main focus of the syntactic analysis developed in Chapter 4. The analysis of the subject condition was based on two lines of evidence; first, that the related subject condition in the present-day Belfast English dialect had been fruitfully analyzed in terms of a difference between agreement (with pronoun subjects) and non-agreement (with NP subjects), based on a positional difference between pronoun subjects and NP subjects, and second, that such a positional difference was also widely attested in OE and ME. A further analysis of word order in the early ME corpus showed that there was evidence for differential subject positions in medieval NSR varieties as well: pronoun subjects occurred in SpecFP, a position higher in the clause than SpecTP, whereas NP subjects were often found in SpecTP and usually could not appear in SpecFP.

Following the analysis of the Belfast English pattern, the $-\emptyset/e/n$ endings occurring with pronoun subjects in the NSR were analyzed as (plural) subject-verb agreement, whereas the $-s$ (and $-th$) endings were analyzed as default inflection. This is in line with the fact that these endings occurred not only in the plural but also in the third person singular (and in the case of $-s$, even in the second person singular), and fits with the fact that in NSR varieties with the adjacency condition, these endings generally appeared wherever subject-verb agreement could not obtain, not only with NP subjects but also with non-adjacent pronoun subjects. Subject-verb agreement, then, was found to be restricted to subjects in SpecFP and verbs agreeing with them; in NSR dialects, an element in SpecTP does not trigger subject-verb agreement.

The adjacency condition was analyzed as an extra condition on subject-verb agreement: in some variants of the pattern, agreement can only occur when the pronoun subject and the verb are immediately adjacent, and it is blocked by intervening elements. It was shown that there is evidence for such adjacency conditions in other varieties of English and other Germanic languages (i.e., object shift and *do*-support), although the occurrence of default inflection to rescue the derivation when agreement fails seems to be unique to the NSR and related patterns.

Chapter 5, finally, brought the various lines of evidence together in a discussion of the possible origins of the NSR. In view of the contact situations described in Chapter 2 and the evidence presented in Chapter 3 that some form of the NSR already existed in late OE and, moreover, that variation in accordance with the subject and adjacency conditions was not restricted to varieties with variation only between $-\emptyset/e$ and $-s$, it was established that an origin in language contact with Cumbrian could not be ruled out on the grounds of dating.

The evidence for language-internal as well as language-contact hypothesis was then compared. It was shown that there were various forms in OE which may have provided the basis for generalization of reduced ($-\emptyset/e$) forms to indicative present plural verbs with adjacent pronoun subjects. Many

of them had a preponderance of reduced forms in inverted word orders, i.e. with a following pronoun subject and only in the first and second person plural, but these may still have contributed to the pattern, and there are also forms like the subjunctive, where all forms had become reduced early on, in all word orders and also in the third person plural. In addition, subjunctive forms strongly correlate with pronoun subjects and there was some confusion between indicative and subjunctive forms, rendering this context an especially plausible candidate as the basis of $-\emptyset/e$ endings in the NSR.

It is probable that the generalization of $-\emptyset/e$ was also influenced by language contact, however, and this is even more true for its conditions of use in the NSR. On the one hand, the erosion of endings like $-\emptyset/e/n$ was likely to be accelerated by language contact with speakers of Cumbrian as well as Old Norse, and on the other hand, the subject condition could plausibly be a natural outcome of imperfect acquisition of Northumbrian OE by Cumbrians.

Even if it is the case that Northumbrian only or mainly had reduced plural endings with following pronoun subjects, Cumbrians had a distinction between agreement with pronoun subjects and default inflection (of the same shape as the third person singular) with NP subjects that they would have recognized in the Northumbrian distinction between reduced endings and $-s$ or $-th$. The extension of reduced endings from inverted to non-inverted orders would follow logically from the fact that verb-subject word order was the canonical word order in Cumbrian, and may not have stood out to Cumbrian learners as a special construction in OE.

Whatever the origin of the subject condition, the adjacency condition may well have arisen as a consequence of the fact that non-adjacent contexts were probably very infrequent, leaving learners with little evidence for the presence or absence of agreement with non-adjacent pronoun subjects. This left them to infer that either the subject condition held with all pronoun subjects, whether adjacent or not (resulting in across-the-board $-\emptyset/e/n$ endings with pronoun subjects and $-s/th$ endings with NP subjects), or that subject-verb agreement could only occur in the contexts that they had clear evidence for,

and elsewhere, default inflection must take place. This could have variably resulted in the adjacency condition, and it also shows why it would be so variably present in many varieties.

6.2 Outlook

This investigation of the Northern Subject Rule shows how a formal analysis of a morphosyntactic phenomenon may benefit from, and be of benefit to, a detailed variationist study of the varieties in which the phenomenon occurs: the early ME corpus data and the comparison with modern varieties shows that the two syntactic conditions on the NSR are distinct, and that the status of various types of subject was more essential to its analysis than the adjacency or non-adjacency of subject and verb. Similarly, it was the corpus data that showed the low relative usage frequency of non-adjacent pronominal contexts, showing how the adjacency condition may have arisen as an extra effect in the acquisition of the subject condition.

The formal analysis of the pattern, meanwhile, not only deepens our understanding of what the pattern is and how it works, depending crucially on the presence of differential subject positions in syntax, but also throws new light on the nature of agreement and the relation between syntax and morphology. Subject-verb agreement cannot be assumed to occur categorically even in varieties where it does occur in some contexts, because it may be subject to additional syntactic conditions, like the condition that it only be triggered by an element in the higher subject position, or morphological conditions like the adjacency condition.

Finally, combining a detailed analysis of the external factors which may influence a variety, such as language and dialect contact, with a detailed variationist and formal analysis of the phenomenon is the only way to take into account all possible evidence for the rise of a morphosyntactic phenomenon like the NSR. In this case, this combination of perspectives helped to

demonstrate how the NSR may have arisen as a combined effect of language-internal as well as contact-induced developments.

Although this investigation has yielded a fairly rounded overview of the early history of the NSR, at least as far as the limited data allow, some questions for further research remain. Chapter 4 showed that default inflection (as in the NSR), *do*-support and object shift may be different strategies to repair agreement in the presence of an adjacency condition. Investigating the occurrence of object shift and *do*-support in (historical) varieties of English and relating them to the presence or absence of agreement variation may help to demonstrate whether these phenomena constitute parametrical options or are otherwise related.

The textual evidence from before early Middle English is sparse, but exploring later dialect data from Middle English and early Modern English may help to gain insight in the way the NSR and related patterns diffused, and especially in how variation in the adjacency condition progressed.

Appendix

Old English Texts

Bede's death song. In Sweet (1975). *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon reader in prose and verse.* 15th ed. (1st ed. 1876). Revised by Dorothy Whitelock. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 182-183.

Cædmon's Hymn. In Sweet (1975). 181-182.

The dream of the rood. In Sweet (1975). 153-159.

The Leiden riddle. In Sweet (1975). 183.

From The Dictionary of Old English Corpus (diPaolo Healey, Antonette, Joan Holland, Ian McDougall and Peter Mielke. (2000). The Dictionary of Old English Corpus in Electronic Form):

Exod. Exodus. London, British Library, MS. Cotton Claudius B.IV. In S.J. Crawford. (1922). *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, EETS 160 (London); reprinted with additions by N.R. Ker 1969. 212-85.

Lindisfarne and Rushworth glosses. In:

Skeat, Walter W. (ed.). (1871), *The Gospel according to Saint Mark.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Reprinted in *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew and according to Saint Mark.* (1970). Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

----- (1874). *The Gospel according to Saint Luke.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Reprinted in *The Gospel according to Saint Luke and according to Saint John.* (1970). Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

----- (1878). *The Gospel according to Saint John.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Reprinted in *The Gospel according to Saint Luke and according to Saint John.* (1970). Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

----- (1887). *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Reprinted in *The Gospel according to Saint*

Matthew and according to Saint Mark. (1970). Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

The Vespasian Psalter. Sherman M. Kuhn (ed.). (1965). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

From YCOE (Taylor, Ann, Anthony Warner, Susan Pintzuk and Frank Beths. (2003). *The York-Toronto-Helsinki parsed corpus of Old English.*):

Ælfric's Catholic Homilies I. Clemons, P. 1997. *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series.* EETS s.s. 17. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Blickling Homilies. Morris, Richard. 1967 (1874-1880). *The Blickling Homilies.* EETS 58, 63, 73. London: Trübner.

Coaelive. Ælfric's Lives of Saints. Skeat, Walter William. 1966 (1881-1900). *Ælfric's Lives of Saints.* EETS 76, 82, 94, 114. London: Oxford University Press.

Cocura. Cura Pastoralis. Sweet, Henry. 1958 (1871). *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care.* EETS 45, 50. London: Oxford University Press.

Cowulf. The Homilies of Wulfstan. Bethurum, Dorothy. (1957). *The Homilies of Wulfstan.* Oxford: Clarendon.

Middle English Texts

The Anturs of Arther at the Tarnewathelan. In Robson, John (ed.) (1842). *Three early English metrical romances.* London : Nichols. 1-26.

From LAEME (Laing, Margaret, and Roger Lass (2008-). *A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English 1150–1325.*)⁴³:

⁴³ This bibliographical information was taken from the LAEME 'Index of Sources'. The authors explain the dating system used as follows: "Date: the approximate date of the

- Arundel292vv*. Manuscript: London, British Library, Arundel 292, entry 1. Text(s): (1) fol. 3r Creed in eleven couplets beg. *I leue in godd almicten fader*. (2) fol. 3r-v Pater Noster in twelve lines beg. *Fader ure ðatt art in heuene blisse*. (3) fol. 3v Ave Maria beg. *Marie ful off grace weel de be*. (4) fol. 3v In manus tuas beg. *Louerd godd in hondes tine*. (5) fol. 3v six lines on Three Sorrowful Things beg. *wanne i ðenke ðinges ðre*. (6) fol. 3v five couplets on mortality beg. *If man him biðocte*. Date: C13b2-C14a1. Localisation: W Norfolk.
- Ashmole360*. Manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 360, part VII. Text(s): Hand B: fol. 145vb. 3 stanzas on the theme *My Leman on the Rood* beg. *Qvanne I zenke onne þe rode*. Date: C13b2. NW Norfolk.
- Bardney*. Manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C 510. (ca 1270). Text(s): theological collection in Latin containing on fol. 3r: a fragment (last two lines) of the lyric *Stella Maris: so hend and so god he is / he aues broct us into blis; /superni. / and i dit þe fule pit inferni*. Date: C13b1. Localisation: Bardney, Central Lincs.
- Bestiary*. Manuscript: London, British Library, Arundel 292, entry 2. b. Text(s): (7) fols. 4r-10v: *The Bestiary*. Date: C13b2-C14a1. Localisation: W Norfolk.
- Bodley26*. Manuscript: Oxford Bodleian Library, Bodley 26. Text(s): a compilation of sermons, mainly in Latin, in 18 different hands (according to Fletcher 1994: 219) from the end of the thirteenth to the beginning of the fourteenth century. English in Hand D viz: (1) fols. 107r-108r containing a macaronic sermon for Advent in Latin and English. Date: C13b2. Localisation: E Lancs.
- BuryFf*. Manuscript: Cambridge University Library Ff.II.33. Text(s): documents in English. Date: C13b2 (ca 1300). Localisation: W Norfolk.

relevant tagged text in the format C = century; number e.g. 13; a = first half, a1 = first quarter, a2 = second quarter, b = second half, b1 = third quarter, b2 = last quarter". Abbreviations for localization are 'E' = East, 'W' = West, 'N' = North, 'S' = South. 'Hunts' = Huntingdonshire, 'Northants' = Northamptonshire etc.

- Candet*³. Manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 55. Text(s): Fol. 49r: (1) *Candet Nudatum Pectus* in English begins *Wyt is yi nachede brest*. (2) 5 couplets paraphrasing *Vox Christi in cruce*, *Responsio peccatoris* beg. *Suete leman y deye for yi loue; Wen ihc aue al don mine folie*. Date: C13b. Localisation: SE Lincs.
- Clerico*. Manuscript: London, British Library, Additional 23986 (roll). Text(s): on the verso of the roll, *Interludium de Clerico et Puella*, an interlocutory poem in 84 lines, imperfect at the end. Date: ca 1300 (ca 1275–1300, *OBMEV*; ca 1300, D&W). Localisation: NW Lincs.
- Cotcleo*^{Bvi}. Manuscript: London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra B vi. Text(s): rhetorical and grammatical treatises in Latin except: fol. 204v (*olim* 201v) four short poems in English, written as prose and the *Creed* in prose. (1) Twelve lines beg. *[B]Idde huue with milde steuene*. (2) *Pater Noster* beg. *[V]Re fadir þat hart in heuene*. (3) *Ave Maria* beg. *[H]eil marie. ful of grace*. (4) Prayer to the BV and Jesus beg. *[M]aidin and moder þat bar þe heuene kinge*. (5) *Creed* in prose beg. *[H]I true in god fader hal-michttende*. Date: C13a2–b1 (1250, *OBMEV*). Localisation: Yorkshire, West Riding.
- Cotfausta*. Manuscript: London, British Library, Cotton Faustina A.v, entry 1. Text(s): in a Latin manuscript of C12 containing *Historia Dunelmensis*, later portions (C13 and C14) contain Latin sermons with some English snatches. This entry refers to the work of Hand A. Most of the English in this hand appears on fol. 10r–v (*olim* 9r–v) in a sermon on the text “Eamus hinc” John chapter 14. The fragments include a quatrain beg. *wake wel annot* and rhyming lines beg. *yar Thome Stouue es at ham*. Date: C14a. Localisation: Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire, West Riding.
- Cotfaustb*. Manuscript: London, British Library, Cotton Faustina A.v, entry 2. Text(s): in a Latin manuscript of C12 containing *Historia Dunelmensis*, later portions (C13 and C14) contain Latin sermons with some English snatches. This entry refers to the work of Hand B, (early to mid C14) viz: fols. 105v–106r in which appear nine couplets in English on the

raising of Lazarus beg: *you lazer yat is gasli detd.* Date: C14a.
Localisation: Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire, West Riding.

Cotvespcma. Manuscript: London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian A.iii. Date: C14? Text(s): (1) Fols. 2r–139v line 36 *Cursor Mundi*. (2) Fols. 139va line 37–140rb line 26 *The Creed* and its exposition beg. *I tru in godd fader almighti*. (3) Fols. 140rb line 27–141vb line 18 *The Lord's Prayer* and its exposition beg. *Fader vrs þat es in heuen*. (4) Fols. 141vb line 19–142va line 11 *A Prayer for the Hours of the Passion* beg. *Jesus þat wald efter mid-night*. (5) Fols. 142va–143ra line 3 *A Prayer to the Trinity* beg. *Fader and sun and haligast*. (6) Fols. 143ra–163ra line 20 *The Boke of Penance* beg. *[D]rightin dere wit blisful beildes*. This entry refers to the work of Hand A: fols. 2r–91v; 93va line 9–95vb line 19; 99ra–112vb; 119rb–139va line 36 *Cursor Mundi* and fols. 139va line 37–163ra: *Exposition of the Creed, Lord's Prayer* and Exposition, Prayer for the Hours of the Passion, Prayer to the Trinity, *The Book of Penance*.
Localisation: Yorkshire, West Riding.

Culhh. MS Cambridge University Library Hh.6.11. Text(s): Hand B: fol. 70v *Pater Noster; Ave Maria*. Date: C13. Localisation: Ramsey, Hunts.

Dulwich. Manuscript: London, Dulwich College MS XXII. Text(s): fols. 81v–85v: 519 lines of *La Estorie del Euangelie* in quatrains. Date: ca1300 (c1300, *MED Plan & Bibl*, p. 40; 1250–1300, Wells). Localisation: S Lincs.

Edincma. Manuscript: Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians, MS of *Cursor Mundi*, entry 1. Text(s): the work of Hand A viz: (1) Fols. 1r–15v *Cursor Mundi*. Date: C14a (Ker *Med MSS* 2, p. 40). Localisation: Yorkshire, East Riding.

Edincmb. Manuscript: Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians, MS of *Cursor Mundi*, entry 2. Text(s): the work of Hand B viz: (2) Fols. 16r–36v Prologue and first thirteen items of *The Northern Homily Collection*. Date: C14a (Ker *Med MSS* 2, p. 40). Localisation: Yorkshire, North Riding.

- Edincmc.* Manuscript: Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians, MS of *Cursor Mundi*, entry 3. Text(s): the work of Hand C viz: (1) Fols. 37r–50r *Cursor Mundi*. Date: C14a (Ker *Med MSS* 2, p. 40). Localisation: York.
- Gandccreed.* Manuscript: Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 52/29. fol. 43r, *Creed, Pater Noster, Ave Maria, In Manus Tuas*. Date: C13. Language is perhaps of Ely or Norfolk.
- Genexod.* Manuscript: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 444. Text(s): *Genesis and Exodus* fols. 1r–41r line 2. Date: C14a1 (a1325, *MED Plan & Bibl*, p. 42; “cent. XIV (near 1300)”, James (1912: 2, 357). Localisation: W Norfolk.
- Gospatric.* Manuscript: Carlisle, Cumbria RO, D/Lons/L Medieval Deeds C1. Text(s): copy of the Writ of Gospatric concerning lands in Allerdale, Cardew and Cumdivock, Cumbria. The original writ (not extant), of which this is a thirteenth century copy or version in a single hand, would have been issued in mid C11 probably between 1041 and 1055. Date: *C13. Localisation: Carlisle, Cumberland.
- Hale135.* Manuscript: London, Lincoln’s Inn Hale 135. Text(s): manuscript of Bracton’s *Summa de Legibus*. English only on flyleaf (badly faded), fol. 137v: a song in three stanzas beg. *No[u] spr[unke]s þe sprai*. Date: C13b2–C14a1 (ca1300). Localisation: N Lincs.
- Havelok.* Manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc 108, entry 3. Text(s): Hand C, viz: (7) Fols. 204r–219v *Havelok*. Date: C14a1 (Smithers 1987: xii). Localisation: W Norfolk.
- Lam499.* Manuscript: London, Lambeth Palace Library 499. Text(s): Latin manuscript containing English in one hand as follows: (1) on the lower margins of fols. 64v–68v a group of eight heavily alliterated secular English lyrics. (2) fol. 69r four lines of unrhymed English verse, beg. *Her lis arfaxat*. (3) fol. 124r several macaronic phrases (English, French and Latin) including two lines of English: (a) a version of the *Abuses of the Age*, *Child Ayghe-les hold man layghe-les*; (b) *Chaster schire theues liyghe Ant stele hom los Is*. (4) fol. 125v the verse *Three Sorrowful*

Things beg. Wenne I thenke on thingres [sic] thre. Date: C13b2 (written 'almost certainly in the 1270s' Pickering (1992: 157)). Localisation: Stanlaw Abbey, W Cheshire.

Laud108b. Manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc 108, entry 2. Text(s): Hand B, viz: (6) Fol. 200v–203v *Debate between the Body and the Soul.* Date: C13b2–C14a1 (ca1300, *MED Plan & Bibl*, pp. 73–74). Localisation: Isle of Ely, Cambs.

Merton248. Manuscript: Oxford, Merton College 248. Text(s): Fols. 1r–193v: Sermons acquired by Bishop John Sheppey during his time at Oxford University (master in 1332). This entry refers to the tagged text of the work of Hand C only, who provides the material on fols. 166r–167r (items (36)–(54)), q.v. (36) Fol. 166ra top margin (partly cut away) a four-line tag which now begins *wan we wor vnmyti*. Almost certainly, however, an original first line has been cut away. (37) Fol. 166ra bottom margin three lines beg. *and toke me wan ye fro deuel poer delyuer me*. This may be a continuation or addition to item (38) which ends *he sent fro a-boue and toche me*. (38) Fol. 166ra four lines beg. *he sent fro aboue a ouercummyer mythyeste*. This is labelled by Coxe (1852:1, no. 12) *Carmen de Christo*. (39) Fol. 166ra Satan's reply to Adam and Eve beg. *In ys thre es alle hys myth*. (40) Fol. 166ra In sermone Ewangelizo, three lines beg. *hit was glad and ioyful*. (41) Fol. 166ra–166vb *De agno* sermon on the number seven beg. *sent Ion goddis owne derlinge*. (42) Fol. 166vb two quatrains on falsity beg. *Falsenese and couetys er feris*. (43) Fol. 166vb two couplets on falsity beg. *falsenes I vnderstande*. (44) Fol. 166vb four monorhyming lines on cupidity beg. *I yinge al day*. (45) Fol. 166vb macaronic lines on the evils of the times beg. *lex lysis done ofuer al*. (46) Fol. 166vb two couplets on the degeneracy of the times beg. *hallas men planys of litel trwthe*. (47) Fol. 166vb eight lines on the pains of hell beg. *fyre colde and tezeghatyng*. (48) Fol. 167ra one quatrain on three sorrowful things beg. *3re woys mosthe wyt thowth*. (49) Fol. 167ra one quatrain

- translating two Latin hexameters and beg. *If yow wise worze wille.* (50) Fol. 167ra seven lines on sins and virtues beg. *hy for-sake ye werld and wende to ye fadir.* (51) Fol. 167ra thirteen lines on sins beg. *yat yt was hewy.* (52) Fol. 167ra three three-line stanzas introduced by *My flesse esse sowfast mete &c* and beg. *My flesse yat wrothe was in mari blode.* (53) Fol. 167rb six-line stanza paraphrasing 'Crux fidelis' and beg. *stetdefaste crosse inmong alle oyer.* (54) Fol. 167rb *Ave Maris Stella* beg. *Ayl be yow ster of se.* Date: C14a2 (1330–40). Localisation: NW Lincs
- Petchron.* Manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc 636. Text(s): The Peterborough Chronicle, MS E of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the work of the scribe of fols. 88v–91v: the Second or Final Continuation, 1132–1154. Date: C12b1 (ca 1154). Localisation: Peterborough, N Northants (Soke of Peterborough).
- Royal12e1a.* Manuscript: London, British Library, Royal 12 E i, entry 1. Text(s): English lyrics on the Passion. Hand A: Fols. 193r–194v *Stabat iuxta Christi crucem* beg. *Stonde wel moder vnder rode.* Date: C13b2–C14a1 (ca1300, *OBMEV*). Localisation: Kings Lynn, NW Norfolk.
- Royal12e1b.* Manuscript: London, British Library, Royal 12 E i, entry 2. Text(s): English lyrics on the. Hand B, viz: Fol. 194v a version of the lyric *My Leman on the Rood* beg. *Quanne hic se on rode Iesu mi leman;* Fol. 194v *þenc man of min harde stundes.* Date: C13b2–C14a1 (ca1300, *OBMEV*). Localisation: Kings Lynn, NW Norfolk.
- Scotwar.* Manuscript: London, British Library, Cotton Julius A v. Text(s): on fols. 180r–181v (*olim* 175r–176v) is *A Ballad on the Scottish Wars*, an early analogue of Thomas Erceidoune's Prophecy, in 252 lines (written as 126 long lines) in a single hand. Date: C14a. Localisation: Lanchester, co. Durham.
- Tanner169.* Manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Tanner 169. Text(s): Psalterium, etc. On p. 175 is a version (with music) in a single hand of *Stabat iuxta Christi crucem* beg. imperfectly *stod ho þere neh / þat leueli leor wid spald ischent.* Date: C13b1. Localisation: Chester, Cheshire.

- TencmFf*. Manuscript: Cambridge University Library Ff.VI.15. Text(s): Latin manuscript with material dating from C12 to C15a and containing on fol. 21r, in English in a hand of ca 1300, a ten-line verse on *The Ten Commandments* beg. *þu salt hauen na god buten An*. Date: C14a1. Localisation: Louth Park, E Lincs.
- Titusar*. Manuscript: London, British Library, Cotton Titus D xviii, entry 1. Text(s): (1) fols. 14r-105r: *Ancrene Riwe* language T1 only — the subject of this entry, viz the whole of *Ancrene Riwe* except: fols. 40ra line 1 word 7-40vb line 6; 44vb line 22-46rb line 26; 52va line 17-54ra line 25; 56va line 7-61rb line 22; 67rb line 17-68ra line 2; 69ra line 2 -70ra line 1, which are in language T2 (London, British Library, Cotton Titus D xviii, entry 2). Date: C13a2 (1240-50). Localisation: S Cheshire.
- Tituswoh*. Manuscript: London, British Library, Cotton Titus D xviii, entry 5. Text(s): (4) fols. 127r-133r *þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* — the subject of this entry. Date: C13a2 (1240-50). Localisation: NE Cheshire.
- Trin43B*. Manuscript: Cambridge, Trinity College 43 (B.1.45), entry 2. Text(s): Hand B: Fol. 73v, beg. *Wanne mine eyhnen misten*. Date: C13b2 (probably 1284-1289, Dobson (1972: cxlvii and clx)). The text language is almost certainly of NW Norfolk (like that of Scribe D — see Cambridge, Trinity College 43 (B.1.45), entry 1) or possibly of S Lincs.
- TrinleoD*. Manuscript: Cambridge, Trinity College 43 (B.1.45), entry 1. Text(s): the work of Scribe D, a somewhat later corrector than Scribe B. Scribe D also contributes to Cambridge, Trinity College 43 (B.1.45), entry 1, fols. 24r-v, 41v-42r: verses and sermon, q.v. These are included in the combined tagged text (#152). Scribe D is referred to as C3 in Millett (2005: xiii-xiv). In this manuscript Scribe D writes continuous texts (#153) as follows: (1) Fol. 22v (*olim* 21v) jingle beg. *Liyer lok and tuinkling*. (2) Fol. 23r (*olim* 22r) verses on the *Abuses of the Age* beg. *King conseilles / Bissop lore les*. (3) Fol. 23r (*olim* 22r) verses beg. *Ne be þi winpil neuere so Ielu*. (4) Fol. 57v (*olim* 56v) sermon beg. *Bernardus*.

Quamdiu fuero. (5) Fol. 199r (*olim* 198r) the continuation of Part VII where Hand A's text is lacking. Date: C13b1. Localisation: W Norfolk.

From PPCME2 (Kroch, Anthony and Ann Taylor (2000). *The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English 2*):

CMBenrul. *The Northern prose version of the rule of St. Benet.* In Ernst A. Kock (ed.). (1902). Three Middle-English versions of the rule of St. Benet and two contemporary rituals for the ordination of nuns. London: EETS OS 120, 1-47.

CMJulia. *St. Juliana.* In S.R.T.O. D'Ardenne (ed.). (1977). *The Katherine Group edited from ms. Bodley 34.* Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège fasc. 215. Paris: Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres.

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Figure 3.4 *Paradigms in the (East) Midlands*, from McIntosh (1983:243).
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Figure 3.5-3.8 *Various verb endings in the early ME corpus*. These maps were
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Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)

Dit proefschrift behandelt de aard, de vroege geschiedenis en de vermoedelijke oorsprong van de *Northern Subject Rule*, de ‘noordelijke onderwerpsregel’ oftewel NSR. De NSR is een verschijnsel dat voorkomt in noordelijke dialecten van Brits Engels. Het houdt in dat werkwoordsuitgangen niet puur geconditioneerd worden door congruentie (*agreement*) met het onderwerp in persoon en getal, maar ook door de aard van het onderwerp en de relatieve positie ervan ten opzichte van het werkwoord. In de klassieke versie van de NSR geldt deze conditionering alleen voor meervoudsvormen van de onvoltooid tegenwoordige tijd, en dan nog alleen bij regelmatige werkwoorden; preterito-presentia zoals *can* ‘kunnen’ en *may* ‘mogen’ nemen er niet aan deel, en ook *be* ‘zijn’ doet dat niet altijd. Dit onderzoek behandelt daarom alleen meervoudsvormen van regelmatige werkwoorden.

Het voorbeeld in (1) illustreert hoe de conditionering van werkwoordsuitgangen in de NSR in zijn werk gaat.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) a. <i>they sing</i> | [Spro - V-∅] |
| ‘zij zingen’ | |
| b. <i>birds sings</i> | [SNP - V-s] |
| ‘vogels zingen’ | |
| c. <i>they sing and dances</i> | [Spro - ... - V-s] |
| ‘zij zingen en dansen’ | |
| d. <i>they always sings</i> | [Spro - ... - V-s] |
| ‘zij zingen altijd’ | |

Er wordt een onderscheid gemaakt tussen twee types onderwerpen en twee types positionele contexten. In de NSR vinden we de nuluitgang (-∅) die we kennen van het Standaardengels alleen bij pronominale subjecten (Spro), oftewel onderwerpen die uit een persoonlijk voornaamwoord bestaan, dus *we* ‘wij’, *you* ‘jullie’, en *they* ‘zij’. Dit is geïllustreerd in (1a). Bij andere

onderwerpen, waarnaar ik voor het gemak verwijs als ‘NP-subjecten’ (SNP; dus onderwerpen die uit een zelfstandig-naamwoordgroep bestaan, een zogeheten *Noun Phrase* of NP), treffen we een *s*-uitgang aan (1b). Dit onderscheid staat bekend als de *type-of-subject condition* of *subject condition*: de subjectconditie.

Dit patroon wordt verder gecompliceerd door de adjacentieconditie (*adjacency condition*): werkwoorden eindigen alleen in een nuluitgang als het pronominale subject adjacent is aan het werkwoord, zoals in (1a). Wanneer er een ander element tussen onderwerp en werkwoord in staat, krijgt het werkwoord alsnog een *s*-uitgang, zoals *dances* ‘dansen’ in (1c) en *sings* ‘zingen’ in (1d).

In hoofdstuk 1 werd vastgesteld dat de NSR om meerdere redenen een interessant onderzoeksobject is. Ten eerste is er tot op heden geen morfosyntactische analyse van die rekening houdt met alle feiten: niet alleen met het patroon zelf en de variatie die erin voorkomt, maar ook met de syntaxis van het vroege Engels waarin het patroon ontstond. Ten tweede is er over de vroege geschiedenis van het patroon relatief weinig bekend en bestaan er verschillende elkaar tegensprekende theorieën over het ontstaan ervan. Sommige stellen dat de NSR ontstaan is als bij-effect van de generalisatie van de verschillende beschikbare meervoudsuitgangen (namelijk *-en* en *-e*, de voorlopers van de nuluitgang, en *-s*), en ontkennen hierbij het belang van taalcontact. Andere wijzen op de parallellen tussen de NSR en werkwoordscongruentie in het Welsh en andere Brits-Keltische (Brythonische) talen, die ook verschillende uitgangen hebben voor contexten met pronominale dan wel NP-subjecten, en stellen dat contact met Cumbrisch, de uitgestorven noordelijke variant van Brits Keltisch, waarschijnlijk aan de wieg van de NSR stond. Het doel van dit proefschrift is om op basis van alle beschikbare data en taalkundige theorieën de lacunes in onze kennis op te vullen en te bepalen wat de meest waarschijnlijke oorsprong van de NSR is.

In hoofdstuk 2 werd de achtergrond van de noordelijke dialecten van het Engels verkend. Het bleek dat er waarschijnlijk al sinds het begin (dus sinds de Angelsaksische kolonisatie van Engeland) variatie in deze dialecten aanwezig was, maar deze werd waarschijnlijk nog versterkt door de contacten met

andere talen: niet alleen met het Oudnoords, de taal van de Vikingen die in groten getale naar Noord-Oost-Engeland kwamen, maar ook met het Cumbrisch. Gezien het (met name genetische) bewijs dat de Kelten niet gedecimeerd werden bij de Angelsaksische kolonisatie van Engeland, zoals men vroeger vaak geloofde, maar veruit de grootste groep in de (Noord-)Engelse populatie vormden, is het aannemelijk dat ze het noordelijke dialect beïnvloedden door middel van substraatinvloed toen ze de taal leerden. Het feit dat Cumbrisch uitgestorven is maar Engels nog gesproken wordt duidt erop dat er ooit een dergelijke ontwikkeling heeft plaatsgevonden.

In hoofdstuk 3 werd een overzicht gepresenteerd van al het beschikbare bewijs voor de NSR. In het Oudengels was er geen bewijs voor de NSR zoals we die kennen uit latere fases van de taal, maar wel al voor vergelijkbare variatie met andere uitgangen (-e/∅ en -s bij adjacente pronominale subjecten en -th elders). Het vroeg Middelenengels werd besproken aan de hand van nieuwe corpusdata, die aantoonde dat de NSR in die periode al vooral in het noorden van Engeland voorkwam, vooral in Yorkshire en omstreken, en dat de subjectconditie over het algemeen sterker was dan de adjacenticonditie. De adjacenticonditie kwam eigenlijk alleen in het kerngebied van de NSR voor. In latere tijden was de subjectconditie ook sterker, en in geëxporteerde taalvariëteiten als Iers Engels en verscheidene Noord-Amerikaanse dialecten is vaak ook alleen die conditie te herkennen.

De discussie in hoofdstuk 4 gebruikte deze inzichten om te pleiten voor een analyse waarin het onderscheid tussen pronominale en nominale subjecten centraal staat. Gegevens uit hetzelfde vroeg-Middelenengelse corpus toonden aan dat de noordelijke dialecten, net als andere Oudengelse en Middelenengelse variëteiten, verschillende subjectposities hadden. Over het algemeen kwamen pronominale subjecten eerder in de zin dan nominale. De hogere positie van pronominale subjecten werd SpecFP genoemd, en de lagere, waar NP-subjecten vaak stonden, SpecTP.

In navolging van een eerdere analyse van vergelijkbare variatie in het Engelse dialect van Belfast werd de nuluitgang bij (adjacente) pronominale subjecten

geanalyseerd als normale congruentie met het onderwerp, maar de *s*-uitgang die in alle andere contexten voorkomt als *default*-inflectie: als niet aan de condities voor congruentie voldaan wordt, wordt de standaard tegenwoordige-tijds-uitgang ingevoegd. In NSR-dialecten lokt blijkbaar alleen de actieve functionele projectie FP, met een subject in zijn *specifier* SpecFP, congruentie uit: dit is de achtergrond van de subjectconditie. In de klassieke variant van de NSR geldt daarnaast ook nog de adjacentieconditie, die te analyseren valt als een fonologische conditie op de (congruentie-)morfologie: soms kan een dergelijke morfologische relatie alleen gelegd worden als er geen tussenkomenende woorden in de weg staan. Dergelijke condities zijn bekend uit analyses van *object shift* in Scandinavische talen en van *do-support* in modern Engels.

Hoofdstuk 5 bracht de lijnen die waren uitgezet in de eerste vier hoofdstukken samen in een discussie van de oorsprong van de NSR. Het werd duidelijk dat het verschijnsel zonder specifieke contactinvloed kan zijn ontstaan in het Oudengels of vroeg Middelenengels, uit een combinatie van de verschillende subjectposities en de variatie in meervoudsuitgangen die het Oudengels al had, vooral ook omdat de directe voorloper van de nuluitgang, *-e*, waarschijnlijk al vooral met pronominale subjecten werd gebruikt. Hierbij moet echter aangetekend worden dat de veranderingen in het werkwoordspaaradigma (het afslijten van de uitgangen *-en* en *-e*, en de verspreiding van de nieuwe meervoudsuitgang *-s*) waarschijnlijk sowieso versneld werden door taalcontact, zowel met Cumbrisch als met Oudnoords.

Daarnaast bleek dat de subjectconditie van de NSR goed kan zijn ontstaan door substraatinvloed van het Cumbrisch. Gegeven het feit dat er in vroeg Engels, net als in het Cumbrisch, twee verschillende types uitgangen waren (*-en/e/∅* en *-th* of later *-s*) en de gereduceerde uitgangen (*-en/e/∅*) vooral met pronominale subjecten voorkwamen lag het voor Cumbrische moedertaalsprekers die Engels leerden voor de hand om aan te nemen dat er in het Engels een subjectconditie op congruentie rustte, net als in hun eigen taal. Dat de gereduceerde uitgangen in het Engels met *name* in inversie (subject-werkwoord-volgordes)

voorkwamen, viel hen waarschijnlijk minder op doordat inversie in het Cumbrisch de ongemarkeerde volgorde was; dit zou ook de generalisatie van deze uitgangen naar niet-geïnverteerde volgordes vergemakkelijkt hebben.

Tenslotte is het waarschijnlijk dat de adjacentieconditie ontstaan is als een bij-effect van de subjectconditie; niet-adjacente volgordes waren relatief zeldzaam, zodat de taalleerder bij gebrek aan bewijs voor de mogelijkheid van congruentie in deze gevallen zelf een hypothese moest formuleren, en soms de ene en soms de andere parametrische optie werd gekozen: wel of geen adjacentieconditie op congruentie.

Door dit alles levert dit proefschrift niet alleen een bijdrage aan de discussie over de aard en oorsprong van de *Northern Subject Rule*, maar toont het ook aan hoe gedetailleerde variationistische analyse van historische corpusdata hiervoor direct relevant kan zijn. Daarnaast geeft dit onderzoek nieuwe inzichten in de aard van congruentie en de relatie tussen syntaxis en morfologie.

Curriculum Vitae

Nynke K. de Haas was born in Leiden on 4 October 1979 and grew up in the north of Groningen. After graduating from secondary school (Gymnasium) in 1997, she attended the Sint-Lucas School of Architecture in Ghent, Belgium, for one year before realizing the study of languages would suit her much better.

She subsequently studied English Language and Culture and General Linguistics at the University of Groningen, electing courses in language change and variation at various other Dutch universities. In 2003, she did a research internship at the (then) Catholic University of Nijmegen with Ans van Kemenade, who later functioned as the main supervisor of Nynke's master's thesis entitled *Dialect variation and language contact: the influence of Old Norse on Medieval English*. These various enterprises resulted in two cum laude master's degrees from the University of Groningen at the end of 2004.

Nynke started as a PhD candidate at the Radboud University Nijmegen in 2005, and has taught at various universities in the Netherlands since 2008. She currently works as a temporary lecturer at the Radboud University Nijmegen, at the University of Amsterdam and at INHolland University of Applied Sciences.