SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS:

DIACHRONICAL AND TYPOLOGICAL

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Jespersen writes concerning the similarity between the subject and the object: "Both subject and object are primary members, and we may to some extent accept [the] dictum that the object is as it were a hidden subject···or 'ein in den schatten gerückes subjekt' [a subject placed in the shade]." [1] For Jespersen the "primary" in nexus is a "comparatively definite and special" notion compared with the secondary, *i. e.* verb, which is "less substantial. " [2] The ground on which to regard the primary as definite, special or substantial is based on the viewpoint remarkable in considering modern lauguages that in some phenomenon there exists something like a core which actualizes that phenomenon, and this is designated by the primary.

The subject and the object, however, are explained as different in the relation to the verb: "If there are two [nouns], the one that stands in the closest relation to the verb is its subject, the other the object." [3] (The closest relation between them is realized by the agreement in number and person.) Funke writes regarding this, "Niemand···wird bezweifeln können, daB Subjekt und Objekt ihrer Funktion nach grundverschieden sind" (nobody can doubt that the subject and the object are functionally utterly different). [4] His claim of the functional difference between the subject and the object is appropriate with regard to (i) their syntactic levels: the subject is put equal to predicate (*i.e.*, VP in today's term); the object is an element within the predicate, and (ii) their syntactic relation to the verb: one is the agreement in number and person ;

the other the government. Judging from this it seems that Jespersen's idea of the subject and the object being equally treated is beside the point. But when considered diachronically or typologically they show various aspects which cannot simply be judged from a unitary angle. In this paper such aspects will be considered.

Plato is said to be the first to mention the importance of nouns [onomata] and verbs [rhēmata] as the main components of sentences [logos]. [5] The noun here means the subject (or topic), and it plays an important role in a sentence with a verb, functioning together as a core in most of modern European languages. [6] The more important of the two is the verb, "chief life-giving element," [7] because in some languages it indicates person and number of the subject in its conjugation:

(1) a. Canto. (I sing)

b. Viene. (he/she comes)

Moreover, the sentence structure is determined by the "valency" of the verb: "go" presupposes one term; "give" three terms, a giver, a receiver, and something given, and the like. From the historical point of view the importance of the verb is obvious as shown in the following analysis of Proto-Indo-European language:

(2) $\Sigma \rightarrow Q$ Prop

Q→ [+ Dec] [+ Int] [+ Mid], etc.

Prop→V (K categories)

K cat.→ (Target) (Receptor) (Agent) (Means), etc.[8]

As understood from this, some sentence consists only of a verb (remarkable in the expressions of natural phenomena):

(3) a. Pluit. (Latin)

b. Vārsati. (Sanskrit) } ; (it rains)

c. Rigneiþ. (Gothic)

   d. vāti. (Sansk.) (the wind is blowing) [9]

The most basic clause type in Proto-Germanic is as follows:

   (4) ♯ Particles - Pronouns - Pronominal Adverbs - Subject Nominal -

$$\begin{cases} \text{Indirect Object Nominal} \\ \text{Nominal Complement} \end{cases}$$ - Direct Object Nominal - Heavy

   Adverbs - Verbal Complex ♯ (Verbal Complex: Reflexive - Pre-

   Verb - Non-Finite Verb - Negation - Finite) [10]

The usual word order in Latin is:

   (5) Subject - Adjective [of the subject] - Indirect Object -

        Direct Object - Adverb - Predicate Verb [11]

It is commonly understood that the dominant word order in ancient languages is S-O-V. Because of the subject being partly expressed by the verb as mentioned above and being put afar from the verb, the core in S-O-V sentence is different from that of modern languages (S-V-O); that is, in S-O-V the core consists of the object and the verb. Lehmann writes of nominals appearing in a sentence that "if there is a nominal, it is in the first instance an object rather than a subject. ⋯ the subject is far less central in the sentence than is the object." [12]

English has undergone a great change in vocabulary and structure; as for the latter English is said to have "changed from a synthetic to an analytic language." [13] Although the structure of O (ld) E (nglish) is "in its essentials⋯the structure of today," [14] S-O-V order is still recognized especially in subordinate clauses; Bean says that main clauses "are subject to stylistic influences which do not affect [subordinate clauses], and⋯therefore [subordinate] clause types are more representative of the word order patterns than the main clauses." [15] As stated in Greenberg's universal 41 that S-O-V language "almost always has a case system," [16] OE is inflectional (eleven different forms of definite

articles, for instance). If the case system in such a language does not work well, the problem arises as the following:

(6) Dies ist das Weib das Mädchen liebt. (this is the woman that likes the girl) or (this is the woman that the girl likes)

Such a problem is avoided by the distinct case forms:

(7) a. Dies ist der Mann *der* das Mädchen liebt. (this is the man who likes the girl)

b. Dies ist der Mann *den* das Mädchen liebt. (this is the man whom the girl likes)

If subjects and objects are of oppositional kinds to be distinguished, the case system should function for clear representation of the distinction. This is, however, not the case with the actual situation of cases; nominative and accusative (typical case for objects) are the same in their forms in many Indo-European languages as seen diachronically or typologically. But the fact is that the problem is not so great; for, it can be said, the nouns, subjects and objects, are distinguished predominantly by their relative positions, *i. e.,* S-O; Greenberg's universal 1 is: "the dominant order is almost always one in which the subject precedes the object." [17] On the other hand, in the sentences with pronoun objects, which are "light" elements, (S)-O-V word order is seen even though S-V-(O) is dominant in the language:

(8) a. Je *l*'ai lu. (I've read it)

b. Je *le* ferai lire à Jean. (I'll have John read it)

The same is the case with OE:

(9) a. We hie ondredon. (we feared them)

b. Me longade. (to me longed)

c. Him speow. (to him succeeded)

d. Eow licað. (it pleases you)

The reason for pronouns preceding verbs derives from the tendency for light elements to come early in a sentence.

The important point for English is the structural change from the sentences in (9 b, c, d) to those in (10):

(10) a. I longed. ($<$ 9 b)

b. He succeeded. ($<$ 9 c)

c. You like. ($<$ 9 d)

Also such sentences as (11) changed to (12):

(11) a. Me wæs gegiefan an boc. (to me was given a book)

b. Ðam wife licodon þa word. (the words pleased the wife)

(12) a. I was given a book. ($<$11a)

b. The wife liked the words. ($<$11b)

For these, two main reasons may be thought of: (i) the general tendency mentioned as "universal 1," and (ii) *Tattypus* (action type).[18]

The structual change from O-V-(S) to S-V-(O) shows the alternative possibility between subjects and objects; for although they seem at some level quite different as mentioned earlier, they have many aspects in common.

Sweet calls objects and adverbs "adjunct words" because they are "modifiers" of verbs. [19] Their common characteristic is diachronically witnessed:

(13) a. Ītaliam (acc (usative)) venit. (he came to Italy)

b. He þancode gode (dat (ive)). (he thanked god)

(13 a) is analyzed as "adverb-V"; (13 b) "S-V-adverb." Their present equivalents are (French) "il est venu à Italy" and "he thanked god" respectively : the former has obtained the analytical structure as regards the overt subject "il", the composite of "est" and " venu ", and the prepositional phrase "à Italy" for "Ītaliam"; the latter has struc-

turally changed from "S-V-adv" to "S-V-O." Lehmann writes: "early Proto-Indo-European did not have inherently transitive or intransitive verbs." [20] If so, the difference between "Italiam vēnit" and "Italiam perdit" (he destroyed Italy), or between "he þancode gode" and "he seah god" (he saw god), would not be so great. [21] As seen in the similarity between "þancode gode" and "thanked god, " adverbs and objects function likewise (here adverbs mean adverbials) :

(14) a. He spoke *to me*.

b. He addressed *me*.

c. I wish *for the car*.

d. I desire *the car*. [22]

The fundamental similarity in the relation between verbs and adverbs or objects is consistently recognized in the following sentences:

(15) a. He swims *fast*. -- He hunts *lions*.

b. His swimming is a sort of fast swimming. -- His hunting is a sort of lion hunting.

c. He is a fast swimmer. -- He is a lion hunter.

Like objects and adverbs, subjects also modify verbs:

(16) a. Fish run up the river.

b. Morning glories ran up the side of the wall.

c. Her stockings ran.

d. The pot ran over.

e. Time runs.

f. The picture ran in the newspaper.

g. Creative thought runs in his family.

Although there arises the difference of "partitive" and " holistic," nouns as objects and in prepositional phrases are exchangeable:

(17) a. Tom hung pictures on the wall.

    b.   Tom hung the wall with pictures.

    c.   John loaded hay on the truck.

    d.   John loaded the truck with hay.

The same is seen with subjects:

  (18) a.   Bees swarm in the garden.

         b.   The garden swarms with bees.

         c.   Stars are glowing in the sky.

         d.   The sky is glowing with stars.

Morphologically subjects and objects are frequently the same as touched upon before. Such is also the case with the genitive representations of their notions:

  (19) a.   (subject) : his suggestion; the talking of man; the arrival of the group.

         b.   (object) : his education; the washing of the dress; the destruction of the city.

The so-called activo-passive sentences are unique in that grammatical subjects indicate logical objects:

  (20) a.   Tomatoes are cooking.

         b.   The dress washes very easily.

         c.   This book reads fast.

In OE, morpho-syntactically subjects and objects resemble regarding the agreement with verbs:

  (21) a.   Ð a Deniscan *comon.* (the Danes came) (agreement in number)[23]

         b.   Hi hæfdon þa heora stemn *gesetenne* and hiora mete *genotudne.* (they had their term of service finished and their food used up) (agreement in gender, number and case)[24]

With the agreement between them, objects and verbs construct "nex-

us" like between subjects and verbs.

In many present languages the subject (in the nom (inative)) and the verb function as a core in a sentence as mentioned so far, but this is not always the case typologically and diachronically.

In the following there is no nominative:

(22) a. Ihr (dat) bangte vor den Folgen. (she was fearful of the outcome)

b. Mihi (dat) proditori (dat) credendum non est. (I (the traitor) should not believe the traitor (me))

c. Him (dat) sceamode þæs mannes (gen). (he was ashamed for the man)

In the following, Hindi (a), Modern Icelandic (b), Malayalam (a Dravidian language) (c):

(23) a. Maryam (dat) ɵpna bhai (nom) milā .

(her own) (brother)　(met)

(Maryam met her own brother)

b. þā (acc) vantar peninga (acc).

(them)　(lacks)

(they lack money)

c. Raajaawinɵ (dat) swamtam bharraye (acc) istam-aanɵ.

(king)　　　　　(self's) (wife)　　　　　(likes)

(the king likes his wife) [25]

what corresponds to the subject or the object in English is not expressed by a specific case. This means that the case system is not the same cross-linguistically but language-specific; so it is improper to say some system is better than another. Even within a language its case system is not consistent as Jespersen says: "case distinctions are⋯exclusively grammatical categories. No purely logical analysis can lead to a distinc-

tion between nominative, accusative, dative, etc." [26] In Hindi, for ex-
ample, the case of the subject varies according to the difference in
tense:

    (24) a. *Jamil* (nom) larki ko (dat) jagāegā.

                      (girl)   (will wake up)

         (Jamil will wake up the girl)

      b. *Jamil ne* (instr (umental)) larki ko jagāyā.

                                      (woke up)

         (Jamil woke up the girl) [27]

In Russian, on the other hand, the object takes different cases accord-
ing to with or without a negative:

                          v   v

    (25) a. Masa kupila *sapku* (acc) .

         (bought) (a cap)

         (Masha bought a cap)

                 v   v

      b. Masa ne kupila *sapki* (gen).

        (not)

        (Masha didn't buy a cap) [28]

Although some sentences do not have nouns in the nominative as seen
so far, it can be said as a general trend that a lot of Indo-European lan-
guages take the nominative as subjects and the accusative as objects.
Such languages are called "nominative-accusative" type, in which sub-
jects of transitive and intransitive verbs are unmarked, while objects
are marked (oblique cases). The general reason for this type is that sub-
jects of both verbs are actors or topics of some actions or situations,
while objects are goals, undergoers or, broadly speaking, "everything
that is linguistically grasped in the pattern of 'undergoer." [29] There is
another type (ergative-absolutive) whose main pattern is that sub-
jects (Si) of intransitive verbs and objects take the same case (abs (olu-

tive)) which is unmarked, whereas subjects (St) of transitive verbs take erg (ative), marked. Avar (one of East Caucasian languages) is such a language:

(26) a. Jas (abs) j- ekerula.

          (girl) (fem, sing, abs) (run)

          (the girl runs)

    b. Vas-as jas j-ec:ula.

        (boy) (praise)

        (the boy praises the girl) [30]

What is remarkable here is that "jas" (abs) is used both for the subject in (a) and the object in (b), and in (b) "jas" (as the object) agrees with the verb "j-ec:ula" in gender, number and case.

In general, in such a language are seen: (i) the characteristic common between the absolutive (Si) of the intransitive verb and that (O) of transitive, (ii) the close relation between the transitive verb and the absolutive noun (O), and (iii) ergative as something like adverbial or "adjunct." As for (i), the common characteristic is recognized by asking "what happened to the boys (or the odd thing) ? " to the following:

(27) a. He marched the boys.

    b. The boys marched.

    c. She flew the odd thing.

    d. The odd thing flew.

Concerning (ii) and (iii), ergative languages are said not to have a regular passive. [31] That is, in (26b) "jas" (girl) and "j-ec:ula" (praise) are so closely connected by the agreement in gender, number and case that they might be understood like "the girl-praising" or "the girl being praised," and ergative "vas-as" (boy) may be taken as an adver-

bial indicating agentivity (like "by the boy"). [32]

Apparently the so-called "accusative" and "ergative" languages are quite different, but in the former there are seen several points common to the latter: the agreement of a verb with an object (e.g., "tengo abiertas las ventanas" [I have the windows opened]); the same form for nominative and accusative (in Latin, OE, German, Russian, etc.). Therefore the following can be said that "it is rather misleading to speak of ergative languages, as opposed to nominative-accusative languages." [33] In Georgian (one of South Caucasian languages) both types appear with the different tenses:

(28) a. Studenti (nom) cerils (acc) cers.

(writes)

(the student writes the letter)

b. Studentma (erg) cerili (abs) dacera.

(wrote)

(the student wrote the letter) [34]

In English the following might be regarded as ergative:

(29) a. John stopped the car.

b. The car stopped.

c. The boy ignited the hut.

d. The hut ignited.

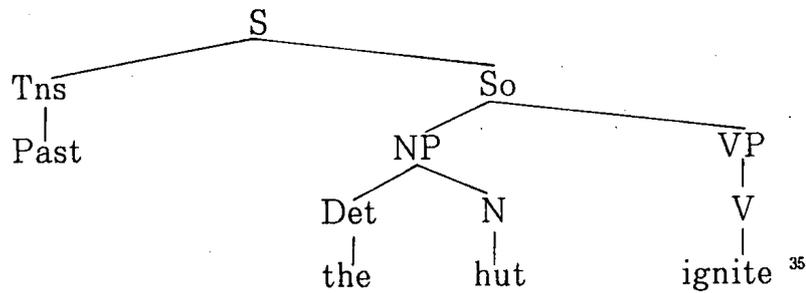So might be the activo-passive:

(30) a. The dress washes easily.

b. The apple is cooking.

Such a phenomenon is described in transformational grammar as follows:

(31) a. The boy ignited the hut.

```
                        S
        Tns                           So
         |                    NP              VP
        Past             Det     N       V        NP
                         the    boy    ignite   Det    N
                                                 the   hut
```

b. The hut ignited.

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                    S
        Tns                       So
         |               NP                 VP
        Past         Det     N               V
                     the    hut            ignite ³⁵
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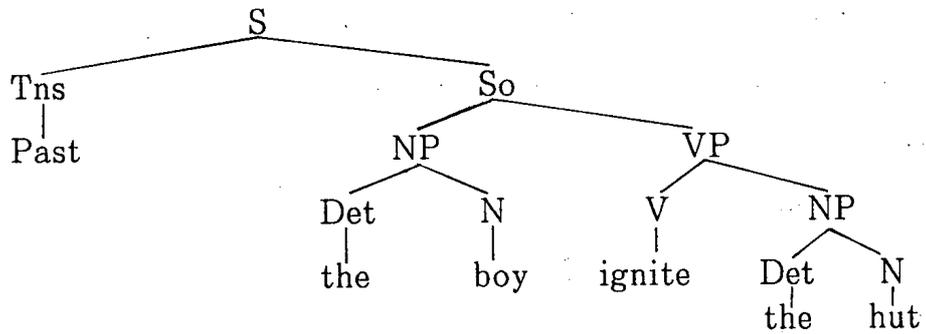
With this description some relation between "the hut" and "ignite" cannot properly be shown in spite of our instinct for that relation. In this respect case grammar is much more appropriate for the description, where a sentence is analyzed as follows:

(32) a. S→M+P

P→V+C$_1$+···Cn

C→K+NP

(S (entence), M (odality), P (roposition), C (ase),

K (asus)) ³⁶

b. (=31a)

```
                        S
        M                           P
        |              V        A            O
       Past            |       /\           /\
                     ignite  the boy      the hut
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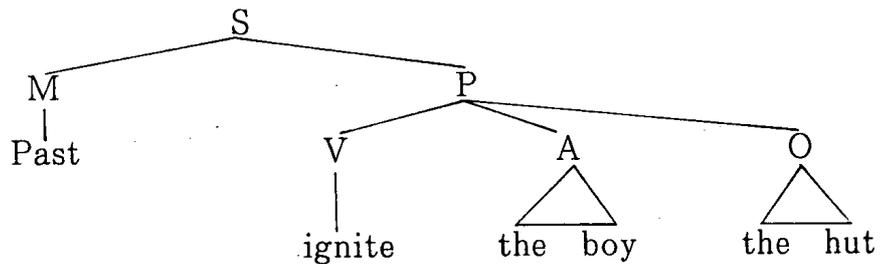
(A (gentive), O (bjective))

C. (=31b)

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                          S
        M _____|_____
        |                                      P
      Past                              _____|_____
                                       V                 O
                                       |                /\
                                    ignite           the  hut
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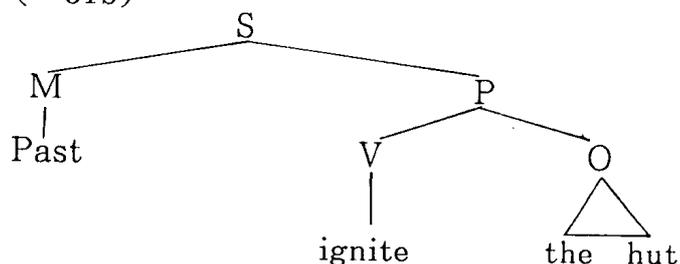
The important thing is that in case grammar the subject "the boy" and the object "the hut" in (32b) (the surface structure) are equally put under P (the deep structure). This is different from the description of (31) where their levels are different: the NP "the boy" is dominated by So: "the hut" by VP. In short, in case grammar the concepts of the subject and the object are those appearing in the surface structure transformed from the deep structure where "all elements (NPs and PPs) except a predicating word (verb, adjective) are all equal." [37]

Looking at English diachronically now, convincing is Sapir's "drift" toward: leveling the distinction between the subjective (nominative) and the objective (accusative) ; fixed positions; and invariable words. [38] In other words, "drift" designates the orientation toward "analytic." The result of it is easy formation of sentences because of (i) the loss of the morphological relation between nouns and verbs, and (ii) the vastness of the "subject territory." [39] As for (i), (33a, c) are possible, while (b) and (d) are not:

(33) a. I hope to like this picture.

　　 b. *Ich hoffe, dieses Gemälde zu gefallen. (cf. Mir gefällt das Gemälde [I like the picture])

　　 c. She came and was helped.

　　 d. *Sie kam und wurde geholfen. (cf. Ihr wurde geholfen [she was helped])

As for (ii), it can be said that with the result of the fixed word order

(S-V-O), the syntactic value of territories of subjects and objects have become so strong that nouns of a variety of semantic cases (in Fillmore's term) can be subjects and objects. Subjects of various semantic cases, for instance, are in the following:

(34) a. (agent) :Tom opened the door.

b. (experiencer) :Tom feels warm.

c. (instrument) :The key opened the door.

d. (object) :The door opened with the key.

e. (source) :Tom presented the book to Mary.

f. (goal) :Mary obtained the book from Tom.

g. (location) :This house sleeps thirty people.

h. (time) :Sunday is when we meet.

As these show, English can be said to have obtained "a comparatively much simpler and handier way" of expression, [40] but instead, it also can be said, for the hearer or the reader much more contextual or pragmatical clues may have become necessary for the understanding of the deep meaning of a sentence.

The principal aim of this paper has been to show the various aspects of the subject and the object in relation to the verb. Indeed they seem different as they are put preverbally or postverbally like English, but as understood from what has been considered, they share not a few characteristics. Case grammar may be one of the theories that can offer adequate explanation of the ground for their shared characteristics. Now the following Jespersen's words can be understood as said from deep and wide-ranging consideration of language: "The relation between subject and object cannot be determined once and for all by pure logic or by definition." [41]

NOTES

1 Otto Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar* (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1924), p.160.

2 O. Jespersen, *Analytic Syntax* (1927; rpt. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1969), p.124.

3 O. Jespersen, *The System of Grammar* (1933) in *Selected Writings of Otto Jespersen* (Tokyo: Senjo Publishing, 1962), p. 502.

4 Otto Funke, "Jespersens Lehre von den 'Three Ranks,' " *Englische Studien* 60 (1925), p. 152.

5 Francis P. Dinneen, *An Introduction to General Linguistics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 78.

6 James Harris, who gave a great influence to the 18th century prescriptive grammarian Robert Lowth, regarded the nominative noun [*i. e.* subject] and a verb as necessary conditions for a sentence, saying, "the Nominative *is that Case, without which there can be no regular and perfect Sentence* "and" every Verb …has …a necessary Reference to some *Noun* for its Nominative Case." (James Harris, *Hermes* [1751; rpt. Menston: The Scolar Press, 1968], pp. 281-2.

7 O. Jespersen, *Analytic Syntax*, p. 121.

8 Winfred P. Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1974), p. 216.

9 "In PIE [a sentence] did not require a separate subject. When a 'subject' was included, it is to be regarded as appositional to the subjective element of the verb form." (W. P. Lehmann, *PIE Syntax*, p. 113) .

10 Paul J. Hopper, *The Syntax of the Simple Sentence in Proto-Germanic* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), pp. 82-3.

11 Hidenaka Tanaka, *Shin Raten Bunpo* (The New Latin Grammar) (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1929), p. 63.

12 W. P. Lehmann, *PIE Syntax*, pp. 39-40.

13 L. M. Myers and Richard L. Hoffmann, *The Roots of Modern English*, ed. with Notes by Haruo Iwasaki (Tokyo: Kinseido, 1980), p. 43.

14 Ian A. Gordon, *The Movement of English Prose* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1966), p. 27.

15　Marian C. Bean, *The Development of Word Order Patterns in Old English* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 130.

16　Joseph H. Greenberg, *Universals of Language* (Cambridge, Mass: M. I. T. Press, 1963), p. 96.

17　*Ibid.*,p.77. Of six types (SOV, SVO, VSO, VOS, OVS, OSV) the percentage of the languages where S precedes O is over 95%. (Masayoshi Shibatani ed., *Gengo no kôzô* [The Structure of Language] [Tokyo: Kuroshioshuppan, 1982], p. 214.) The Russian "Mat' ljubit doc'" can mean both "the mother loves the daughter" and "the daughter loves the mother," but the preference is the former, SVO. (Bernard Comrie, *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981],pp 77-8.)

18　Aronstein classifies ways of representation into two types: (1) *Tattypus* (action type), (2) *Empfindungstypus* (feeling type)--the former represents some phenomenon as an action caused by men; the latter as a feeling given from outside:

(1) I like the meat.; J'aime le viande.

(2) Das Fleisch schmeckt mir. (Philipp Aronstein, *Englische Stilistik* [1924],trans. Kenzo Kihara and Junko Tsuchiya, *Eigo Buntairon* [English Stylistics] [Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1974], p. 89. Jespersen says of the tendency to "place the name of person first" "the native speech-instinct." (O. Jespersen, *The Philosophy*, p. 163.)

19　Henry Sweet, *A New English Grammar: Logical and Historical* I (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1892), p. 64.

20　W. P. Lehmann, *PIE Syntax*, p. 181.

21　The relations between nouns in the oblique and verbs, prepositions or nouns are all called "constructiō transitīva" in Modistae (13-4th century). (Robert H. Robins, *A Short History of Linguistics* [London: Longman Group, 1967], p. 84.)

22　Poutsma calls such prepositional phrases in (a) and (c) "prepositional objects." (Hendrik Poutsma, *A Grammar of Late Modern English* I [2nd ed.; Groningen: P. Noordhoff, 1928], p. 176.)

23　Randolph Quirk and Charles L. Wrenn, *An Old English Grammar*

(London: Methuen & Co, 1955), p. 74.

24 Bruce Mitchell, *A Guide to Old English* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p. 109. The same is seen in French:

   a. Vous avez acheté cette maison ? --Oui, je l'ai achetée.

   b. Voilà *les aisons* que j'ai achetées.

25 Avery Andrews, "The Major Functions of the Noun Phrase" in Timothy Shopen (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description* I (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), p. 101, 102, 118.

26 O. Jespersen, *The System of Grammar*, p. 507.

27 A. Andrews, "The Major Functions," p. 100.

28 Bernard Comrie, *Language Universals*, p. 65.

29 Chares C. Fries, *The Structure of English* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co, 1952), p. 184.

30 B. Comrie. "Ergativity,"in *Syntactic Typology* ed. W. P. Lehmann (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1978), p. 338.

31 Simon C. Dik, *Functional Grammar* (Dordrecht: Foris Publication, 1981), p. 163.

32 In French and Spanish, agentive nouns are expressed with prepositional phrases:

   a. Jean fait manger les pommes *à Paul*. (John gets Paul to eat the apples)

   b. Oyócantar la cancion *a Juan*. (he heard John sing the song)

33 B. Comrie, "Ergativity," p. 350.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 357.

35 The structure rule adopted here is from: Fumio Nakajima, *Eigo no Kozo* (The Structure of English) (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1980), p. 179.

36 Kazuo Araki et al., *Bunporon* (Grammatical Theories) (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1982), p. 407.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 405. The ergative structure has such a case frame as 〔＿＿(A) (I) O〕.

38 Edward Sapir, *Language* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1921), ch. vii.

39 C. C. Fries, *American English Grammar* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940), p. 90.

40 O. Jespersen, *Efficiency in Linguistic Change* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1941), p. 87.

41 O. Jespersen, *The Philosophy*, p. 160.