Chapter Three Modern Irish VSO

3.0 Introduction

This is the second chapter in my discussion of verb-movement and VSO order. In this chapter, I will focus solely on Irish Gaelic and will remain strictly within the class of analyses where the verb raises around the subject to an inflectional head. Of issue here is the exact location of the verb and the positions of the subject and object.

Before delving into the issue at hand, let us quickly review the conclusions of chapter 2 that are relevant here:

i) Flat structure is inadequate for Irish because of subject/object asymmetries

ii) There is evidence from progressive constructions for a verb/object constituent in Irish

iii) Evidence from clefting and adverbial placement, along with theory internal problem, argue against a subject lowering account of Irish.

iv) Evidence from ellipsis phenomena (following McCloskey 1991) argues for a verb raising analysis of Irish. However, following McCloskey (1992b), there is strong evidence from adverbial placement that this is not raising to C° (in contrast to the situation in Old Irish where raising to C° does seem to be the correct mechanism for deriving VSO).

With these conclusions in mind we now turn to the option of deriving VSO by raising the verb around the subject to an inflectional head.

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1The description of the Bobaljik and Carnie system for VSO found in this chapter is a revised version of Bobaljik and Carnie (1992, forthcoming).
This chapter will be organized as follows. In section 3.1, I examine previous analyses proposed in the literature for deriving Irish VSO. In section 3.1.1, I look at proposals suggesting that the subjects of Irish clauses are VP internal. I will show, however, that these all suffer from serious inadequacies with respect to Case theory, the placement of adverbials, and alternate word orders. I then turn, in section 3.1.2, to the issue of word order in Irish infinitivals which bears on the issue of the placement of nominals in Irish syntax. Finally, in section 3.2, I propose a theory of Irish VSO order that attempts to reconcile the various problems found in previous analyses.

The theory which I propose in section 3.2 of this chapter, based upon the set of assumptions laid out in chapter one and the conclusions of chapter 2, derives Irish VSO order from an underlying SVO order by raising the verb to the highest inflectional category under C°. Based on evidence from infinitives and auxiliary constructions, as well as evidence from adverbial placement, I argue that both subjects and objects raise in the overt syntax to the specifiers of case positions, which are located lower than the verb. Following McCloskey (forthcoming), I will assume that the specifier of the highest inflectional position (the specifier occupied by subjects in SVO languages like English) is unavailable for subjects in Irish due to the weakness of its features. Finally, due to theory internal problems of minimality in deriving infinitival word order and an apparent violation of the HMC, I adopt a version of the split VP theory suggested in Travis (1991), Guilfoyle (1993), Koizumi (1994, 1995), and Kratzer (1994), among many others. These mechanisms will be seen to provide the most adequate account of Irish word order consistent with the theory and assumptions laid out in chapter 1.
3.1 Verb Raising Analyses II: Raising to INFL/AGR/T

An alternative approach to VSO order to the ones presented in chapter 2 is that the verb does not appear in C°, but rather appears at the left edge of the inflectional complex, as suggested by McCloskey (1992b). In this kind of approach the verb need not raise to C° to be initial in its clause; instead it can raise to the highest inflectional category with its arguments in the specifiers of lower inflectional phrases, or in VP. We will call this class of analyses the “left edge of inflection” approach:

1) **The Left Edge of Inflection approach.**
   VSO order is derived via head-movement of the verb to the highest inflectional head (AgrS). Arguments appear in surface positions lower than this head. There is no (overt) raising to C°.

In this section we will review the various approaches to VSO order that have been proposed along these lines.

3.1.1 VP Internal Subjects

Sproat (1983, 1985) argues, using evidence from Welsh, that VSO languages differ from SVO languages in terms of the direction of their subject case assignment. VSO languages have strictly rightward case assignment. For him, the verb must raise around an IP-based generated subject to adjoin to the S node in order to assign case rightwardly to the subject.

2)
This kind of story, given the VP internal subject hypothesis of Fukui and Speas (1986), Kitagawa (1986), Kuroda (1986), Koopman and Sportiche (1991), translates nicely into an account of VSO order. Under such an account, the subject remains VP internal\(^2\), and the verb raises to INFL where it assigns case rightwardly under government (3) to the subject:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{IP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{I'} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{INFL} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{VP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Subj} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{V} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Obj}
\end{array}
\]


If we are to assume the kind of theory outlined in the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1992, 1993), discussed above in chapter 1, however, there is a strong conceptual argument against this approach. In the minimalist framework, only Agreement categories (with adjoined verbal heads) assign case, and they only do so in the minimal spec-head relation\(^4\). Case under government is not an available option. Chomsky’s system,

\(^2\)A variation on this approach is found in Shlonsky (1987) who argues that the subject in VSO languages lowers from a base generated spec,IP position to adjoin to VP. This appears to be a notational variation of the VP internal approach.

\(^3\)Actually Kaplan locates subjects in the specifier of PrP, a verbal projection proposed by Bowers (1994). This projection in many ways resembles the light VPs shells of Larson (1988) and Hale and Keyser (1991).

\(^4\)See also Aoun, Benmamoun, and Sportiche (1994) who make a similar claim about case (referring to Arabic VSO order) using a pre-minimalist assumptions.
however, does allow subjects to surface VP internally, as discussed in the MPLT. Recall that movement for case checking may apply covertly at LF, due to the principle of Procrastinate. Chomsky (1993) claims that in VSO languages, the verb moves overtly before Spell Out and the arguments remain *in situ* until LF:

4) 

At Logical Form, the arguments raise for case/feature checking:

5)
There are two serious empirical problems with such an approach for Irish, both showing that subject NPs are VP external in the overt syntax in Irish. McCloskey (forthcoming) notes that certain temporal adverbs, presumably VP adjoined, appear between the subject and the object in Irish:

6) a) Níor shaothraigh Eoghan ariamh pingin

\[ \begin{array}{lcl}
V & S & adv \\
\text{neg} & \text{earned} & \text{O} \\
\text{Owen} & \text{ever} & \text{penny} \\
\text{“Eogan never earned a penny”}
\end{array} \]

If we assume that adverbs cannot be adjoined to a single bar level category—a not unreasonable assumption—such an adverb position should not be available if both subject and object are VP internal. The second piece of evidence, as discussed by Bobaljik and Carnie (1992, forthcoming), is that there is evidence from infinitives for overt object shift in Irish (this will be discussed in more detail in section 3.1.2 below). Given that nominative subjects always appear to the left of objects in Irish, and that Irish has overt movement of objects, it follows that if the object has shifted to the outside of the VP, the subject must also be outside VP, a conclusion drawn independently by McCloskey (forthcoming) for Irish, and by Fassi Fehri (1993), Aoun, Benmamoun and Sportiche (1994), Rouveret (1991) for other languages. We can therefore assume a surface VP internal subject approach to VSO is not tenable for Irish. Given this, we can now ask, where is the subject? We must determine what specifiers the subject and the object are in, and what functional head the verb occupies. In order to do this, we turn to one of the most hotly debated issues in Irish syntax: the analysis of infinitives across Irish dialects. Readers

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5Although it may be well motivated for Breton: see Schafer (1994) for discussion.

6Rouveret (1991) based on evidence presented in Awberry (1990) shows a similar fact using negation in the Pembrokeshire Welsh dialect. When the subject is a full definite NP, negation can follow the subject NP:

\[ \begin{array}{lcl}
i) \text{Redodd Siôn ddim i ffwrdd} \\
\text{ran} & \text{John not away} \\
\text{“John didn’t run away”}
\end{array} \]

Under the assumption that negation marks the left edge of VP, subjects in Pembrokeshire Welsh are higher than Negation, thus are higher than the specifier of VP.

7It should be noted, however, that the class of constructions like this is very limited. In general, as noted by Ernst (1991) and Ó Siadhail (1989), adverbs appear at the end of their clause after the object and oblique arguments if there are any.

8It should be noted at this point, that the claim that Irish has overt object shift is incompatible with McCloskey’s claim that temporal adverbs adjoin to VP, since these adverbs appear before the object. We will consider this question in more detail below in section 3.2.
not wanting the trials of reading a historical survey may wish to skip directly to section 3.2, where a brief summary is laid out and my analysis is presented.

3.1.2 The Great Irish Infinitive Dialect Debate

Perhaps the one aspect of Irish syntax which has received more attention than any other is the issue of word order in non-finite clauses across Irish dialects. Let us first consider the facts. Under the hypothesis that non-finite verbs differ from finite ones only in their lack of strong tense features, and thus fail to undergo verb movement, we predict that given an underlying SVOX order, infinitive clauses should show overt SVOX order in Irish. This prediction is false. As discussed in Stenson (1981) and Ó Siadhail (1989) in standard Irish, we find (S)OVX order:

7) Ba mhaith liom [ an teach a thógáil ]
   C good with.1s the house.ACC TRANS build
   ‘I would like to build the house.’

One obvious analysis of these facts is to claim that Irish is underlyingly SOV (as suggested in Collberg (1990)). There are several problems with such an approach, however. First, it has been noted (Duffield 1991) that Irish is generally a head initial language. It has prepositions, determiners precede their nouns, complementizers precede their clauses, nouns precede all their modifiers\(^\text{10}\). This is seen in (8)

8) a) in Derry b) an bhean c) bean mhór
   “in Derry” “the woman” “woman big”

d) Ceapaim [go bhfuil sé ansin]
   Think.1.s that be.pres he there
   “I think that he is there”

If we were to pursue an underlying SOV analysis of Irish, we would have to abandon the assumption that a given language is internally consistent with its headedness. We would

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\(^9\) Two significant papers on infinitival clauses have appeared since this work was prepared. These are Adger (1995) and McCloskey (1995). I will not discuss these here but will refer briefly to them in section 3.2.

\(^{10}\) The exception to this are numeral modifiers which precede their nouns; see Ernst (1992) for more discussion.
have to claim that all phrases in Irish, except the VP, were head initial, but that the VP was head-final. This is clearly an undesirable result. Similarly, it’s a fact of true head-final languages (such as Japanese) that oblique arguments and adjuncts precede the head. In Irish, however, obliques, quasi-arguments like measure phrases (Duffield 1991), and adjuncts follow the verb giving (S) O V X order (9)

9)  

Ba mhaith liom Seán an teach a thógáil le casúr
   S  O       V  oblique
     C           good with.1.s John the house Tran build with hammer
  “I want Sean to build the house with a hammer”

Finally, given an SOV analysis of Irish we never expect to find post-verbal objects. This too is an incorrect prediction. In progressives, a post-verbal object is the only acceptable form. In colloquial registers this NP is marked with accusative case. In more formal registers, in the speech of older speakers, and in prescriptive writing, this NP is marked with genitive case:

10) a) Tá mé ag scríobh an abairt anois   (colloquial)
    Be.pres I prog write the sentence.acc now
    “I am writing the sentence now”

   b) Tá mé ag scríobh na habairte anois   (formal)
    Be.pres I prog write the sentence.gen now
    “I am writing the sentence now”

Similarly, in the Munster dialect, as will be discussed below, if an overt subject is present in an infinitive clause, then objects appear post-verbally, again, marked with genitive case marking:

11)  

Ba mhaith liom [CP Seán aL scríobh na habairte] na habairte
    C   good with.1.s John.ACC TRAN write the sentence.GEN
  ‘I want John to write the sentence’

Note that although both genitive and accusative cases are allowed postverbally (depending upon the register) in both progressives across dialects and in Munster infinitives, only accusative is allowed in preverbal position:

12)  

* Ba mhaith liom [CP Seán na habairte aL scríobh ] na habairte
    C   good with.1.s John.ACC the sentence.GEN TRAN write
  ‘I want John to write the sentence’
This suggests that the preverbal position is the position of structural case assignment, and that the post-verbal position is the base position of the object, where it can either be assigned inherent genitive case or take accusative case and raise. The fact that we find an inherent case marking in one position but never in the other is suggestive that the place of inherent case marking is the base-generated position of objects. With all this evidence, it seems difficult to espouse an underlying SOV analysis of Irish.

3.1.2.1 The facts of Irish infinitival dialect syntax

If we assume an underlying SVO order for Irish, it becomes necessary to explain the SOV order. This topic has received considerable coverage in the literature, which I will survey below. However, let us first consider the facts of word order in infinitives in the various Irish dialects\(^1\). These facts were first laid out in McCloskey (1980), and discussed in more detail in McCloskey and Sells (1988). In all dialects of Irish non-finite verbs take a special form (also found with periphrastic tenses) called the verbal noun (VN) (see Guilfoyle (1994) for a discussion of the semi-nominal status of VNs). Northern Irish

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\(^1\)Modern Irish is, unfortunately, an endangered language. Current estimates suggest that only about 30,000 speakers use it as their everyday language, and these estimates may well be overly optimistic (Hindley 1992). Gaeltachtaí, (the official Irish speaking areas) are limited to isolated pockets on the west coast of the island. They are geographically, and to a certain extent culturally, isolated from one another. This means that the dialects of Irish are sometimes quite disparate in their grammars. There are three main dialect areas: the “Munster dialect”, centered now mostly in the Dingle peninsula in Co. Kerry, the “Connacht dialect”, found in Conamara in Co. Galway; and finally the “Ulster dialect” found on the northwest coast centered around the town of Gaith Dobhair. Other Irish speaking areas exist, (including one in Co. Mayo in the east of the island), but they tend to fall dialectically speaking into one of the three categories discussed here. I refer the reader to Ó Siadhail (1989) for a more extensive discussion of the dialect splits in Modern Irish. Historically, Munster Irish was the literary standard of Irish. Much Modern Irish literature is written in this dialect, which is also the most heavily inflected. The official standard (An Caighdeán), used now in schools and in government documents, however, is mostly based on Connacht Irish, with some influences from the other two dialect areas. Ulster Irish, is in many respects the most different from the other two, it shares many inflectional, phonological, and lexical similarities to Scottish Gaelic which is spoken directly to its north. The isoglossic split that we will be discussing here, however, groups Ulster Irish and Connacht Irish against the Munster dialects. I will, following general practice in the syntactic literature on this subject, refer to the Ulster and Connacht dialects as the “Northern dialects” and the Munster dialects as the “Southern” ones. The reader should note, however, that in practice there are three distinct dialect splits for other syntactic and phonological features (e.g. the double subject construction discussed in McCloskey and Sells (1988) and Ó Baoill (1994) is strictly limited to the Ulster dialect and is never found in Connacht or Munster.)
dialecst only allow SOV order (13). Whenever an object is present the “transitive” particle\textsuperscript{12} \textit{aL} intervenes between the object and the VN (14a). When the verb is intransitive this particle does not appear (14b). The licensing of overt subjects does not seem to be linked to traditional ECM verbs; in fact, almost any subordinating verb allows either an overt subject or a PRO (15a&b), with the subject taking accusative case marking\textsuperscript{13} (15c).

13a) \textbf{Ba mhaith liom \[CP Seán an abairt \textit{aL} scriobh \]} \textit{SO\textit{aL}-V(north)}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{C good with.1.S John.ACC the sentence.ACC TRAN write}
  \item \textit{I want John to write the sentence’}
\end{itemize}

b) *\textbf{Ba mhaith liom \[CP Seán \textit{aL} scriobh na habairte\]} \textit{*SVO(north)}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{C good with.1.S John.ACC TRAN write the sentence.GEN}
  \item \textit{I want John to write the sentence’}
\end{itemize}

14a) \textbf{Ba mhaith liom \[CP Seán an abairt \textit{aL} scriobh \]} \textit{SO\textit{aL}-V (north)}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{C good with.1.S John.ACC the sentence.ACC TRAN write}
  \item \textit{I want John to write the sentence’}
\end{itemize}

b) \textbf{Ba mhaith liom \[CP Seán fanacht\]} \textit{SV (north)}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{C good with.1.S John.ACC wait}
  \item \textit{I want John to wait}
\end{itemize}

15) \begin{itemize}
  \item a) \textbf{Ní thaithneann leat\textsubscript{1} \[ PRO\textsubscript{1} dul\]} \textit{PRO V (north)}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item \textit{Neg please with.2 \[ go\]}
      \item \textit{“You are not pleased to go”}
    \end{itemize}

  \item b) \textbf{Ní thaithneann liom \[ mé an abairt \textit{aL} scriobh\]} \textit{ECM V (north)}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item \textit{Neg please with.2 me the sentence tran write}
      \item \textit{“you are not pleased (for) me to write the sentence”}
    \end{itemize}

  \item c)\textbf{Ba mhaith liom \[CP é an abairt \textit{aL} scriobh \]} \textit{ECM(acc) V}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item \textit{C good with.1.S him the sentence.ACC TRAN write}
      \item \textit{‘I want him to write the sentence’}
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

The word order is different in Southern dialects of Irish. In Southern Irish, with the exception of intransitives with a controlled PRO subject (16), all non-finite clauses take the particle \textit{aL}. It appears with intransitives with overt subjects\textsuperscript{14} (17), and with overt objects,

\textsuperscript{12} This particle also surfaces as \textit{do} in some dialects and registers.

\textsuperscript{13} Full NPs, like those in the examples below, do not show a morphological distinction between nominative and accusative cases; however, pronouns do. (See chapter 5 below for more discussion of case marking in Irish.)

\textsuperscript{14} In practice, in the southern dialects, speakers will tend to avoid infinitives in general and prefer to use tensed subordinate clauses. I will abstract away from this pragmatic preference here.
when there is a controlled subject (18 — parallel to 15a). As noticed by Guilfoyle (1994),
this leads to ambiguities like (19).

16) \( \text{Ba mhaith liom } [\text{CP PRO}_i \text{ fanacht}] \text{ PRO V (south)} \)
\( \text{C good with.1.S wait} \) \( \text{I want to wait} \)

17) \( \text{Ba mhaith liom } [\text{CP Seán aL fhanacht}] \text{ SdL-V (south)} \)
\( \text{C good with.1.S John.ACC tran wait} \)
\( \text{I want John to wait} \)

18) \( \text{Ba mhaith liom } [\text{PRO}_i \text{ an abairt aL scríobh}] \text{ PRO OaL-V (south)} \)
\( \text{C good with.1.S the sentence.ACC TRAN write} \)
\( \text{I want to write the sentence} \)

19) \( \text{Ba mhaith liom } [\text{tú aL phósadh}] \text{ ambiguous} \)
\( \text{C good with.1.S you tran marry} \)
\( \text{I want you to marry / I want to marry you} \)

When there is an overt subject, with a transitive verb, a marked order emerges: the subject
precedes the particle, and the object is postverbal, usually with genitive case15 (20). This
option is only available when there is an overt subject, otherwise OV order must be used.

20) \( \text{Ba mhaith liom } [\text{CP Seán aL scríobh na habairte}] \text{ SdL-VO-gen (south)} \)
\( \text{C good with.1.S John.ACC TRAN write the sentence.GEN} \)
\( \text{I want John to write the sentence} \)

As an aside, OV order is also found in all dialects in the recent perfective16 (also called the
“after perfect”).

21) \( \text{Tá mé taréis an teach aL thógáil} \) \( \text{Be.pres I ASP the house trans build} \)
\( \text{I have just built the house} \)

The following chart summarizes the various orders in infinitival clauses in the two dialects.

The differences between the two are indicated in **bold italic**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Southern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intransitives: Control</td>
<td>PRO V</td>
<td>PRO V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intransitives: Overt Subject</td>
<td>Subj V</td>
<td>Subj <strong>aL</strong> V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitives: Control</td>
<td>PRO <strong>Obj</strong> <strong>aL</strong> V</td>
<td>PRO <strong>Obj</strong> <strong>aL</strong> V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitives: Overt Subject</td>
<td>Subj <strong>Obj</strong> <strong>aL</strong> V</td>
<td>Subj <strong>aL</strong> V <strong>Obj-gen</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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15 See Duffield (1991) for more discussion of case marking in this dialect.
16 See Ramchand (1993) and Adger (forthcoming) for discussion of the related construction in Scots Gaelic.
3.1.2.2 Chung and McCloskey (1989)/ McCloskey and Sells (1988)

The first\textsuperscript{17} analysis of these facts in terms of object shift is presented in Chung and McCloskey (1989) and McCloskey and Sells (1988). In both these works, it was proposed that $O_{aL}$ $V$ orders are derived via the adjunction of the object to VP, where it receives case from the verbal element $aL$. This particle is present since the non-finite verbal noun is incapable of assigning structural case by itself.

There are several problems with this approach. First, as noted by Guilfoyle (1994) it involves the addition of a new case assignment mechanism not otherwise attested in the literature: case assignment via adjunction to an A-bar position. There is also an empirical problem with such an approach: it simply cannot account for the patterns found in Southern Irish. This, in and of itself, is not a flaw of Chung and McCloskey (1987) and McCloskey and Sells (1988); since, in both cases, the authors were only dealing with phenomena in the Northern dialects. However, from the larger perspective of the grammar of Irish as a whole this is problematic.

\textsuperscript{17}McCloskey (1980) presents an analysis of these facts in a traditional transformational approach positing a rule of verb postposing from a flat VSO structure:

\begin{align*}
\text{Northern} & \quad \text{X} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{Y} \Rightarrow 02314 \\
\text{Southern} & \quad \text{X} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{Y} \Rightarrow 0213
\end{align*}

I will, for reasons of space, not discuss this further here.
3.1.2.3 Duffield (1990a,b, 1991)

Perhaps the earliest and most comprehensive account of these dialect differences in word order is Duffield (1991, 1990a,b). Two assumptions are critical to Duffield’s account. First, he strictly adopts the split INFL structure of Pollock (1989) with only one agreement node under TP.

\[ TP \]
\[ T' \]
\[ T \]
\[ AgrP \]
\[ AgrP \]
\[ VP \]

He also works under the assumption that if a particular functional feature shows up in an independent morpheme preceding the verb, then the verb cannot have raised through the head that houses that feature. He notes that not only do pre-verbal particles in Irish show negation, tense and complementizerhood (25) but that they are also morphologically decomposable (26). He concludes then that in tensed clauses the verb is no higher than agreement (27).

25) Preverbal particles:
   
   (do)\textsuperscript{L}  Past tense 
   Níor\textsuperscript{L}  Past-negative.
   Ar\textsuperscript{L}  Past question 
   Nár\textsuperscript{L}  Past negative Question 
   gur\textsuperscript{L}  past complementizer 
   nár\textsuperscript{L}  past negative complementizer 
   Ní\textsuperscript{L}  present/future negative 
   An\textsuperscript{N}  present/future question 
   Nach\textsuperscript{N}  present/future negative question 
   go\textsuperscript{N}  present/future complementizer 
   nach\textsuperscript{N}  present/future negative complementizer 

26) N-á-r 
    Neg-question-past
In non-finite ‘O aL V’ clauses, Duffield claims that the object is in the specifier of Agr, headed by the particle aL:

He argues that subjects in infinitives are base generated in the specifier of TP. Accusative case is licensed by non-finite tense. He claims that for reasons of minimality, the subject cannot be base generated in the specifier of VP, since movement to the specifier of TP would violate economy, skipping an available A-position (the specifier of Agr) (29).

He concludes that since we get SOV order, rather than OSV order, as predicted by a VP internal subject without movement, subjects must be base generated in the specifier of TP. This problem will recur in the other analyses of Irish to be discussed below. I call this the **Minimality Problem**. Duffield is forced to claim, however, that subjects in VSO clauses
and Southern infinitives, however, are VP internal (so that the subject can absorb the accusative case of the $d$-morpheme).

This leads us to the problems with a Duffield-style analysis. From a theoretical perspective there are two problems with this kind of approach. Duffield is forced, for theory internal reasons, to claim that subjects are base generated in two distinct positions, one the specifier of a non-theta-marking functional category. From argument structure theoretic perspective this is less than ideal. Similarly, contra the assumptions set out in chapter 1, he is forced to claim that there is more, and different, movement in non-finite than in finite clauses. In particular, he cannot claim that the movement in non-finite clauses is a subset of that found in finite ones, as would be expected given the assumptions given in chapter 1 and by the verb movement/argument movement correlations of Holmberg (1986).

These theory-internal problems aside, there are several empirical problems with his account. Several of these problems are based on data that was not available at the time Duffield was writing his work. First, we have the problem of the adverbs discussed in McCloskey (forthcoming). These adverbs, appear between the subject and object. Example (6) from above is an example of this, repeated here:

6) a) Níor shaithraigh Eoghan **ariamh** pingin
   V          S          adv     O
   neg    earned      Owen     ever   penny
   “Eogan never earned a penny”

Under the assumption that adverbs cannot adjoin to a single bar level category, such data is problematic for any approach that posits a surface VP internal subject. Recall that

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18I have glossed over Duffield’s account of Southern infinitives here, because of the problems to be discussed below. Roughly speaking, he claims that in southern dialects the specifier of TP is not a case position; the specifier of the lower (VP internal) subject position blocks overt object raising to the specifier of AgrP for minimality reasons, thus resulting in the $S d$-V Obj-gen order.

19Duffield does not have VP internal subjects; instead, he has subjects base generated in the specifier of ZP: a position higher than VP, but lower than Agr. For our purposes this is equivalent to a VP internal subject.
Duffield's analysis of tensed VSO clauses has both the subject and the object as VP internal constituents. The appearance of an adverb between two such constituents is for obvious reasons problematic. The exact location of this adverb will be a recurring problem for many of the analyses sketched below. I will refer to this problem as the **Temporal Adverb Problem**.

A different problem lies in Duffield's analysis of tense morphology. Recall that Duffield's analysis of Irish head-movement has tense and negation heads incorporating into the complementizer, and the verb raising into the Agr head (27, repeated here):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{[ Neg+T+C [ t [ t [ V+agr [ t ] ]]]]}
\end{array}
\]

I believe there are some strong problems with this. Duffield's claim is based upon the fact that complementizers show historical vestiges of the Old Irish perfective morpheme *ro*-. The morphology of the preverbal complementizers is shown below in (30)\(^{20}\):

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Declerative} & \text{Embedded} & \text{Past} & \text{Present} & \text{Root} & \text{Past} & \text{Root} & \text{Present} \\
\hline
\text{Declarative} & \text{gur}^L & \text{go}^N & \text{(do)}^L & \emptyset & \text{Nach}^N & \text{Ní}^N & \text{An}^N \\
\text{Negative} & \text{nár}^L & \text{Níor}^L & \text{Ní}^N & \text{Nach}^N & \text{Ní}^N & \text{An}^N & \text{Nach}^N \\
\text{Question} & \text{—} & \text{—} & \text{—} & \text{—} & \text{—} & \text{—} & \text{—} \\
\text{Neg. Question} & \text{nár}^L & \text{Níor}^L & \text{Ní}^N & \text{Nach}^N & \text{Ní}^N & \text{An}^N & \text{Nach}^N \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

The vestiges of the *ro*- morpheme are seen in the /r/ of many of the past tense forms. On the basis of this, and the simple fact that there are "past tense" forms of all these complementizers, he claims that Irish has the tense incorporating into the complementizer. The problem with this is that Irish verbs, which are not supposed to incorporate to T in Duffield's system, show a full range of tense (past, future, present, habitual). However, the complementizers — which only show a past/non-past distinction — are supposed to be

---

\(^{20}\)There are also a complete set of wh-complementizers which I haven't listed here, see Christian Brothers (1960) for more details.
incorporated with the tense node. This seems like a strange situation to me; the element which is incorporated with the tense node doesn't show a full range of tense morphology, but the element which is not linked to the tense morpheme does show a full range of tense morphology. This apparent contradiction aside, Duffield's original question of why complementizers show an apparent past/non-past split remains open. I suggest, that the solution lies in the work of Ó Sé (1990). He claims that there is no tense distinction in complementizer particles. Rather, he claims that they show a realis/irrealis modality distinction. He bases this on the semantics of the interpretation of these particles. A related analysis is found in Fassi Fehri (1993) of Arabic tense morphology, he argues there that tense morphology higher than the verb in VS structures is clearly modality rather than tense. I will adopt this approach here. Given this analysis of the particle alternations seen in (30), we have an explanation of why verbs show a full range of tense distinctions, but complementizer particles only show a binary distinction (that of realis modality): The verb raises at least as high as tense, and the modal morphology is independent of the T node.

We thus have extensive evidence that Duffield's account of the Irish dialect facts is both theoretically and empirically inadequate. It was, however, the first work to deal extensively with some interesting evidence about Irish word order and laid the groundwork for much debate.

3.1.2.4 Noonan (1992)

Noonan (1992) presents a related analysis which more closely holds to the kinds of assumptions set out in chapter 1. She assumes a two Agr system like that in Chomsky

---

In fact, Ó Sé (1990) argues that the copula morphemes don't show tense morphology, but this modality distinction, but in other work Ó Sé (1987) claims, in the spirit of the analyses in Ahlqvist (1972), Doherty (1992, forthcoming) and this thesis (see chapter 4), that the copula and preverbal particles are all complementizer particles of a like type.
Andrew Carnie

(1989). For Noonan, like Chomsky (1992), tensed VSO clauses have the verb in the highest functional head and the subject and object in situ within the VP:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{AgrSP} & \rightarrow \\
\text{AgrS'} & \rightarrow \\
\text{AgrS} & \rightarrow \\
\text{TP} & \rightarrow \\
\text{V} & \rightarrow \\
\text{T'} & \rightarrow \\
\text{T} & \rightarrow \\
\text{AgrOP} & \rightarrow \\
\text{AgrO'} & \rightarrow \\
\text{AgrO} & \rightarrow \\
\text{VP} & \rightarrow \\
\text{Subj} & \rightarrow \\
\text{V'} & \rightarrow \\
\text{t_v} & \rightarrow \\
\text{Obj} & \rightarrow 
\end{align*}
\]

This, of course, suffers from the empirical problem of the positioning of adverbials mentioned above and in McCloskey (forthcoming). For northern non-finite clauses, she proposes that objects raise to the specifier of AgrO, licensed by verb movement. Like Duffield, she claims AgrO is headed by the particle *a*. Subjects raise to the specifier of TP where they take an exceptional accusative case marking. For Noonan, this accusative case marking is licensed by non-finite T. Non-finite T allows a subject in its specifier, since the verb does not raise to it. She proposes a principle whereby both the specifier and the head of clause cannot be filled simultaneously. A principle of *Earliness* (Pesetsky 1989) requires NPs to move as early as possible, so that in VSO clauses where the verb has previously occupied the head of TP, subjects are not allowed in the specifier of TP. In non-finite clauses, the verb has not raised, so the specifier is allowed to be occupied. This is, of course, the opposite intuition to that of Holmberg (1986) who suggests that argument movement only happens when verb movement does. Her structure for northern non-finite clauses is seen in (32).
For Southern dialects, she claims no TP is projected, and both subjects and objects compete for the single Agr position, thus accounting for why an overt subject always triggers the appearance of the $d^L$ morpheme, and why postverbal objects appear only with overt subjects:

134)

Again, as with Duffield’s approach, there are some strong theoretical problems with Noonan’s account. In particular, Noonan simultaneously requires both verb movement to AgrO (to license object shift) and the lack of verb movement to T (to motivate movement to the subject position). The assumptions underlying the two kinds of movement are not only incompatible, they are exactly opposite. We cannot have it both ways. Second, Noonan’s account again suffers from the problem that movement in non-finite clauses is a superset of
the movement found in finite clauses. Again, an account where less verb movement means less nominal movement is more in spirit with the assumptions set out in chapter 1. Finally, Noonan is forced to claim that dialects of a given language (or for that matter between languages) vary in what functional projections are present in a particular clause — an unattractive revision to the theory.

3.1.2.5 Bobaljik and Carnie (1992, forthcoming)22

Bobaljik and Carnie (1992) (henceforth B&C), in a paper originally presented in the same year as Noonan’s work and later revised in (forthcoming), independently come to many of the same conclusions as Noonan. They agree with both Noonan (1992) and Duffield (1991) that the specifier of AgrOP is the locus of the object in OV orders and that subjects in Northern dialects are in the specifier of TP23. They also agree with Noonan in that they assume that in southern dialects, subjects and objects compete for accusative case in AgrOP. They differ from her in terms of their accounts of finite VSO order, and in terms of the mechanisms of movement and case assignment in non-finite clauses.

Let us first consider the case of non-finite clauses in the different dialects. First, B&C claim that the reason that all nonfinite clauses in northern dialects allow overt subjects is due to ECM by a null complementizer (similar to “for” in English). They claim that southern dialects simply lack this null complementizer. If subjects are to be realized overtly in the southern dialect they simply must appear in the specifier of AgrOP, beating out the object, which is forced to take an inherent genitive. This accounts for why subjects can trigger the presence of the AgrO $a^L$ morpheme in this dialect.

---

22 My thanks to Jonathan Bobaljik for his help in preparing this section. He is also responsible for drawing some of the trees which appear in this subsection.

23 Rouveret (1991) presages Bobaljik and Carnie in this regard by proposing the specifier of TP as the locus of subjects in Welsh. See also Pyatt (1992) and Fassi Fehri (1993) for speculations in this regard.
B&C also claim that, given Holmberg’s (1986) generalization that movement of arguments is tightly linked to the movement of verbs, the movement found in non-finite clauses, where there is less verb movement, will be a subset of movement in finite clauses. In particular, they claim that, since there is object shift in non-finite clauses, the null (and minimal) assumption is that there is also object shift in finite clauses. Since subjects always precede objects in Irish, it follows that subjects must overtly shift in Irish in finite clauses. Since objects are in AgrO, and verbs must be in the highest functional head (i.e. AgrS), it follows that the subject must be in the specifier of an intermediate position: TP. This is consistent with the claim made in B&C and in Bobaljik and Jonas (forthcoming) that, for reasons of economy of derivation, a language which has overt object shift will consistently license the specifier of TP as a subject position. To summarize, B&C argue that the subject, object and verb all raise out of the VP (34).

Let us explore in more detail how this works, then turn to problems with the system. The first step in the derivation is head-movement of the verb to AgrO, creating the complex head \( [\text{AgrS} \ V + \text{AgrO}] \). The chain created by this step allows the object to raise over the subject to the specifier of AgrO, the next highest specifier position.
Informally, in order for the object to raise over the specifier of the VP which contains the subject, the verb must raise and adjoin to AgrO. This follows from the minimality effects of Equidistance, which ultimately can be derived from considerations of Economy (Chomsky 1991, 1993). In particular, this is related to Holmberg’s (1986) generalization that verb-raising is required for overt object-raising.

Next, the (complex) head AgrO (containing the verb) raises to tense (T), creating the complex head \[ T \text{ AgrO } , T \], and the subject raises to the specifier of the Tense Phrase:
Again, considerations of economy require the head-movement in order to permit raising of the subject to ‘skip’ the intervening specifier of AgrO containing the object.

The last overt step is raising of the head T (Tense, containing Tense, AgrO and the verb) to adjoin to AgrS, creating $[_{AGRS} T + AgrS]$.  

37) 

```
AGrSP
   /      /
  /       /
AgrS'    TP
     |     |
   subj  T'
     |     |
t_1   AgrOP
       /   |
      /     |
  Ob_jn  AgrO'
        /   |
       /     |
  t_1   VP
       /   |
      /     |
  t_k   V'
     |   |
  t_i  t_m
```

“Spell Out” occurs at this stage, resulting in “surface” VSO order.

Finally, covert movement occurs at Logical Form to check agreement features and check the nominative features of the subject. The subject raises from the specifier of the Tense Phrase to the specifier of the AgrSP. Note that this movement only occurs in the covert syntax (at LF) and is never realized in the phonological output:
While this analysis derives the correct word order, it appears somewhat *ad hoc*. Now let us consider how such a derivation might be motivated, using the theory of syntactic features.

In B&C’s analysis, Irish has strong V-features of AGR (requiring the verb to raise overtly), and strong N-features of T (requiring that the subject check its Case features in the specifier/head configuration with T), but its remaining features, including the V-feature of Tense are weak\(^{24}\). This last is the key. In French, we saw (in Chapter 1) that strong V-features for Tense entailed overt raising of Tense to AgrS, rendering the specifier of TP unavailable, and requiring that the strong N-features of Tense be checked in the specifier of the complex head [T+AgrS]. By hypothesis, Irish has T weak V-features and thus need not (and so cannot) raise independently to AgrS. As the N-features of Tense are strong, the NP-argument which will check these features, the subject, need only raise as far as the specifier of TP in the overt syntax. The crucial difference between French, which displays

\[\text{Covert Movement (i.e. at LF)}\]

\[\text{AgrSP} \quad \text{AgrS} \quad \text{TP} \quad \text{T} \quad \text{AgrOP} \quad \text{AgrO'} \quad \text{Ob}_{hn} \]

\[^{24}\text{Note that B&C are using "weak V-features" somewhat loosely here. If only features of targets can vary in strength as proposed in Chomsky (1993), and not features of the heads which undergo movement (as in the text here), then "strong V-features of Tense" should be taken to mean that whatever set of features conspire to force T to raise to Agr in English "independently", their makeup is different in Irish. For more on the difference between independent raising of T to AgrS, and such raising as a part of the head chain raising, and in particular an explanation of how such raising renders the Specifier of TP unavailable, see Jonas and Bobaljik (1992).}\]
SVO order, and Irish, which displays VSO, is a difference in the valence of the V-features of Tense, which correlates with whether or not Tense must raise overtly to AgrS (i.e. independently of the raising of V→AgrO→TENSE→AgrS). Note that in Irish Tense does, in effect, raise overtly to AgrS, but only as a step in the sequence of Head-movements V→AgrO→T→AgrS. This difference correlates with the possibility of checking the N-features of Tense in the specifier of TP (Irish) as opposed to in the specifier of AgrSP (with the complex head [T + AgrS]) (French). The features of English, French and Irish are thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>weak</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>weak</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarize then, the weakness of the V-feature on the Tense node indirectly licenses the specifier of TP as a possible subject position, unlike the specifier of TP in English and French. VSO order, therefore, results from the interaction of two facts. First, AgrS’s N-features are weak\(^{25}\) and Tense’s N-features are strong, thus allowing NPs to raise only as far as the specifier of TP overtly. Second, and more interestingly, the specifier of TP is made available by the Tense node’s weak V-features.

Let us now turn to B&C’s discussion of non-finite clauses. They claim that Southern SVO non-finite clauses have their object in its base position. They claim, in contrast, like Duffield and Noonan, that in SOV infinitives, accusative objects are in the specifier of AgrOP and involve object shift. Overt raising of the object to the specifier of AgrOP is only possible if the verb has raised overtly to AgrO. Thus they are forced to claim that the verb is at least as high as AgrO in this construction. In southern dialects, subjects are also allowed to check their case features in this position.

\(^{25}\)This might correlate with the observation of Fassi Fehri (1993) that postverbal subjects are cross-linguistically linked to weak morphological agreement
The next question we must consider is how the subject is allowed to raise past the object in specifier of AgrOP if the verb has raised no higher than AgrO in the Northern dialects? That is, if the verb has not raised past the shifted object, then the specifiers of TP and AgrO should not be equidistant from the base position of the subject, thus the latter should not be able to raise overtly. This is the minimality problem of both Duffield (1991) and Noonan (1992). Bobaljik and Carnie do not try to resolve this problem, and it constitutes the greatest argument against them. Any attempt at an account of Irish word order will have to account for this fact.

Another problem lies in the specification of the N-features of Agr. B&C claimed that the N features of Agr are weak. They did this so that there is no requirement that the subject raise overtly to the specifier of AgrSP in finite clauses. In doing this, they have eliminated the trigger for object shift, which clearly appears in non-finite clauses. This is a problem they also do not attempt to resolve. This problem will arise again with respect to other analyses, I will refer to it as the Featural Problem. Rather than abandon the assumption that both agreement nodes have identical valency for their features, I will attempt to reconcile this view with the object shift data discussed above.

Finally, the argument of McCloskey (forthcoming) regarding adverbial position discussed above is a problem for the idea that both objects and subjects shift in VSO clauses. Recall that temporal adverbs may appear after a subject but before an object:

40) a) Níor shaothraigh Eoghan **ariamh** píngin
    V   S   adv   O
    neg earned Owen ever penny
    “Eogan never earned a penny”

26Recall from above that in the Southern dialects one only gets overt subjects in transitives when the object is post-verbal and genitive (i.e. one either gets OV, or SVO, but never SOV).
27Watanabe (1993) offers one solution to this problem: that AgrO excorporates and raises overtly to non-finite T, stranding the main verb in AgrO. This will not be the tack taken below, since it fails to account for the adverbial and featural problems of B&C. However, it does offer an interesting solution to the minimality problem.
If these truly are VP adjoined adverbs then the object cannot have shifted to the specifier of AgrOP, as B&C claim. Of course, the assumption that these are VP adjoined adverbs can equally be called into question, as will be seen below.

3.1.2.6 Guilfoyle (1994)

Guilfoyle (1994), building on some observations of Ramchand (1993), offers what is perhaps the clearest challenge to the B&C type approach to non-finite clauses, accounting for all the problems discussed above (minimality, adverbs, and features). She does not take a stand on the derivation of finite VSO order. With respect to non-finite clauses, Guilfoyle follows Travis (1991) in assuming that there exists an Aspect phrase internal to the VP. VPs are split into a light verb, which licenses the external theta role (see also Kratzer(1993), Koizumi (1994), and Collins and Thráinsson (1994) for similar proposals), an Aspect phrase and a main VP which licenses objects:

41)

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{VP} \\
&\quad \text{subj} \quad V' \\
&\quad \quad V \quad \text{AspP} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \text{Asp'} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \quad \text{Asp} \quad \text{VP} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{obj} \quad \text{V'} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{V} \quad \text{XP}
\end{align*}
\]

She claims that it is the specifier of this Aspect Phrase that is the locus of shifted objects, and that the particle \(a\) is an aspectual particle:
Notice that this account of Irish SOV non-finite clauses escapes the minimality problem\(^{28}\) of B&C, Duffield, and Noonan. It also avoids the featural problem, since Agr and Asp are not necessarily predicted to be identical in terms of feature valency. Similarly, it avoids the problem of adverbial position, since adverbs can be adjoined to either the higher VP or AspP and still be both below the subject (provided the subject has raised) and above the object in finite clauses.

Turning now to the southern dialects, Guilfoyle claims [-finite] T does not select the light verb, but rather directly selects AspP. Subjects and objects are both generated in the lower VP. Either can raise to the specifier of AspP, where it triggers the appearance of the \(\alpha\)-morpheme:

\(^{28}\)Similar escape hatches from the minimality problem using split VPs are suggested in Koizumi (1994) and Noonan (1992, 1994)
Guilfoyle’s account, while it solves many of the problems found in Bobaljik and Carnie, Noonan, and Duffield, is prone to other criticism. For example, like Duffield’s account, Guilfoyle is forced to claim that subjects are generated in different positions in Northern and Southern dialects.

There are also empirical reasons to believe that the $a^L$ morpheme is not an aspectual particle, but an agreement morpheme. First, as shown in work by Adger (forthcoming), this particle behaves like an agreement morpheme. As discussed in McCloskey and Hale (1984), agreement and overt nominal arguments in Irish and Scots Gaelic are in complementary distribution. Except under very specific circumstances, the presence of an overt nominal argument precludes the appearance of agreement. Interestingly, in the speech of older speakers, the “transitive” particle behaves in exactly the same way as overt subject agreement. When an overt object NP is present, it takes the form of the default third person possessive pronoun $a^L$ (147a). When no overt object NP is present it is inflected for person and number$^{29}$ (147b). When agreement is present no overt NP may surface (147c). (These data are the Irish equivalents to Adger’s Scots Gaelic examples.)

---

$^{29}$Duffield (1991) claims that this option is not available for Irish. To my knowledge, he is incorrect in this regard. According to Ó Siadhail (1989) use of agreement is available in the speech of older speakers, especially in the Ulster dialect. Younger speakers tend to prefer using an overt pronominal and the default $a^L$, but both forms are found. In prescriptive grammars and formal registers, the form with no overt nominal and an agreement particle is preferred.
These facts strongly suggest that $a^L$ is an agreement morpheme rather than an aspectual particle (see Roberts and Shlonsky (forthcoming) and Borsley (1980) for discussion of a similar phenomenon in Welsh).

The second argument against analyzing $a^L$ as an aspectual particle comes from the fact that it can co-occur with other aspectual particles. In particular it occurs in conjunction with the proximate perfective particle $tar\ éís$:

45) Tá mé taréis an teach a$^L$ thógáil
Be.pres I ASP the house trans build
‘I have just built the house’

Assuming that these constructions are mono-clausal, the requirement that two particles be present to indicate a proximate perfective would be quite surprising (see Adger forthcoming, for more discussion). For these reasons, then, I believe that the landing site of object shift is not the specifier of AspP, but the specifier of AgrOP.

Another paper about the positioning of objects in non-finite clauses is current in the literature: Noonan (1994). Since this paper captures many of the insights of the analysis that will be sketched below, it will be discussed with it in the next section.
3.1.2.7 Summary

The analyses and discussion in this subsection have been complex and intricate comparing theories of Irish clause types that each differ minutely from each other but are based on different assumptions and make different empirical predictions. Perhaps, then, this is a good moment to regroup the soldiers of our discussion and count our casualties in the form of a summary. We have seen that there are as many different theories of VSO as there are authors. First consider the points of agreement:

a) OV orders involve object shift to a functional head headed by $a^L$.

b) In the southern dialect subjects and objects compete for the single accusative case.

c) Northern Subjects are licensed by some default case mechanism.

What is of dispute are the following points:

a) VSO, SOV, SVO of related origin, in a subset relation
   Duffield, Noonan VSO: subject and object in situ.
   SOV/SVO: involve argument movement
   Guilfoyle, Chung and McCloskey: no opinion
   Bobaljik and Carnie: SOV/SVO are a subset of VSO.

b) The nature of head occupied by $a^L$
   Chung and McCloskey: Verbal head
   Duffield, Noonan, Bobaljik and Carnie: AgrO
   Guilfoyle: Asp

c) The solution to the minimality problem,
   Chung and McCloskey, Bobaljik and Carnie: no discussion
   Duffield: base generation in the specifier of TP,
   Noonan: no discussion of minimality, (see Noonan 1994, however)
   Guilfoyle: Split VPs

d) Exact mechanism of subject case assignment.
   Chung and McCloskey, Guilfoyle: no discussion
   Duffield: assigned by [-fin]T
   Noonan: Earliness licensing the specifier of TP
   Bobaljik and Carnie: case via complementizer ECM

In the next section, I will propose a new account of Irish VSO and infinitives that hopefully resolves some of these items of disagreement in a coherent way, but maintains the good insights of this previous work. I will assume the AgrO landing site of Noonan, Duffield and Bobaljik and Carnie, maintain as much of the minimalism of Bobaljik and Carnie as possible while avoiding the problems of features and adverbs, and will adopt a part of Guilfoyle’s account of the minimality problem.
3.2. A theory of Irish VSO Order

3.2.1 The issues

Before considering my analysis, let us quickly review the issues brought up thus far in this chapter which I have to account for.

i) First, and most obviously, we must account for basic word VSO word order. This order is repeated in (46) below.

46) Leanann an t-ainmní an briathar i nGaeilge

follow.PRES the subject the verb in Irish

"The subject follows the verb in Irish"

As discussed above, I will assume that this is a derived order and that the underlying order of Irish is SVO. In particular we must account for why the subject surfaces in position lower than verb and we must determine the principles that determine the surface position of the verb. I will assume, following the discussion in chapter 2 and McCloskey (1992), that the raising of the verb is to the highest inflectional head, and no higher (i.e. not to C°).

ii) Second, we must account for the position of temporal adverbials, in both finite clauses and in infinitivals. Recall that certain adverbs can appear between the subject and the object as repeated in (47).

47) Níor shaothraigh Eoghan ariamh pingin

neg V earned S adv O

Owen ever penny

"Eogan never earned a penny"

iii) Next, we have the dialect differences in infinitives discussed above in section 3.1.2.

These differences are summarized for the reader's reference in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intransitives: Control</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Southern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intransitives: Overt Subject</td>
<td>PRO Subj V</td>
<td>PRO Subj aL V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitives: Control</td>
<td>PRO Obj aL V</td>
<td>PRO Obj aL V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitives: Overt Subject</td>
<td>Subj Obj aL V</td>
<td>Subj aL V Obj-gen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30For discussion related to this analysis see Barbosa (1995).
Of particular interest is the fact that subjects and objects seem to compete for accusative case in the Southern dialect, but not in the Northern dialect. This seems to correlate to the appearance of the $\alpha^L$ morpheme. This requires some discussion. Further we have the fact that in the Northern Dialects all infinitival subjects seem to be licensed via some kind of ECM, no matter what the matrix predicate is. The exact nature of this case assignment must be determined.

iv) Related to the dialect distinctions in (iii) we have the problem of where the subject is in northern SOV orders. As discussed above in section 3.1.2, moving a subject around the object will result in a violation of Equidistance or Minimality. In section 3.1.2 we called this the Minimality Problem. This apparent violation of minimality must be given some account.

v) Finally, we must determine the order and nature of functional heads that derive all these orders. Of particular interest is the issue we called the Featural problem, above in section 3.1.2. That is, how we can derive the correct word orders while maintaining Chomsky's assumption that Agreement Phrases are non-distinct?

In this section of the chapter then, I will show how each of these interrelated issues can be accounted for with a minimally non-stipulative analysis of functional heads and their feature valencies.

3.2.2 A revised system of functional categories:

Consider the problem of feature matching left unresolved by B&C. In order to account for why the subject NP does not raise fully to the specifier of AgrS in VSO sentences, they were forced to claim that the N-features of AgrS were weak. By contrast, since objects shift in Irish they must claim that AgrO has strong N-features. They were forced to claim that the valencies for the two Agreement heads were not identical, contra Chomsky (1992). One solution to this dilemma is to claim that Chomsky (1992) is wrong and that agreement heads are distinct in their featural makeup. This solution is not terribly
satisfying. There are also some empirical grounds for rejecting this solution. Recall that evidence from adverbs shows that subjects in Irish have raised overtly in the syntax. Similarly, evidence from the so-called ‘perfective passives’ (McCloskey 1994), which have a passive syntax (but perfective meaning) show that nominals raise to subject position for case reasons:

49) Beidh an trachtas críochnaithe agam amárach.
   “I’ll have the thesis finished tomorrow
   (lit The thesis will be finished by me tomorrow)

In this sentence, the derived subject an trachtas “the thesis” takes nominative case in subject position. Subjects therefore can be shown to raise overtly for case reasons. As discussed above, evidence from OV non-finite clauses show that objects also shift overtly for case reasons. Since both subjects and objects raise overtly in the language, it would make sense that the features that trigger these movements are identical.

Building upon work done by Ouhalla (1994), Carnie (1991), Harley (1994), and Branigan (1992), among many others, we can assume that the case position of subject nominals, for Irish at least, is lower than the highest functional projection. For reasons of case assignment in Icelandic, Harley (1994) proposes, after Branigan (1992), that there is an extra functional projection corresponding to “extended projection principle” features. In earlier work she calls this an EPPP. In later work (forthcoming), following research conducted jointly with me, she labels this an extra TP, resulting in the following structure:
Licensing of NPs for “EPP” features happens in the TPs\textsuperscript{31}; licensing for Case happens in Agr phrases. With this extra projection, our featural problem is now solved. Both nominal arguments can shift for case reasons, to the specifiers of the AgrPs and still be below the verb in the highest functional head (T1):

\textsuperscript{31}See Bobaljik and Jonas (forthcoming) for a discussion of how the specifier of TP2 could be used as an EPP licensing position.
On this account, then, the Agr features triggering argument movement can be identical. We posit a strong N-feature for both the Agrs, accounting for why both objects and subjects shift overtly in the syntax.

The obvious question to ask, then, is why Irish does not require further movement of the subject NP to the specifier of TP1, like that found in languages like French. The solution lies in the status of TPs as nominal licensors. Harley (1994) proposes the features associated with this head are “EPP” features. Interestingly, McCloskey (forthcoming) has observed that for a class of quirkily case marked unaccusative predicates in Irish, like that in (52), there appears to be no subject argument, expletive or otherwise.

52) Thosaigh idir na fir
rose between the men
“The men quarreled”

In sentences like (52) the single argument behaves like a complement rather than a subject (according to tests like clefting and the highest subject restriction (HSR)). McCloskey concludes that Irish “lacks the EPP”, but has movement for case. He notes that, in general, Irish lacks expletives. He claims that this follows from weak N-features in the highest functional projection (which he even suggests might be TP). This correlates nicely with Harley’s TP qua EPP head. We can thus posit the following feature valencies for Irish:

53) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N-features</th>
<th>Agr</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strong</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32These may well be some kind of nominal inflectional features. See Pyatt (1992), Rouveret (1991), Kaplan (1991), Fassi Fehri (1993), Ouhalla (1994), for more discussion. These authors try to explain the strong/weak agreement correlations to VSO/SVO alternations found in languages like Arabic. See also Ritter (1995) and Rice and Saxon (1994) for discussion of agreement, number and correlations to multiple subject positions. I will not attempt a discussion of this here.

33Irish does have expletives with “weather” verbs such as “rain”, and with clausal arguments. He claims that these are either truly theta marked elements (in the case of weather expletives, see also Napoli (1987) for similar arguments) or traces of CP movement (in the case of clausal arguments) so they are not true reflexes of the EPP.

34The question of why we don’t get expletives in the specifier of AgrP in the unaccusative sentences like (52) is a problem with this account. McCloskey (forthcoming) argues that the reasons for this follow from the strong pro-drop properties of agreement in Irish. See McCloskey for more details on this.
This revised system of functional projections also allows for an account of the fact that temporal adverbs appear between subjects and objects, but that objects shift overtly in the syntax. If we assume that these temporal adverbs adjoin to the lower TP rather than to VP, a not unreasonable assumption given their temporal character, we have an explanation of why they appear lower than both the subject and verb, but higher than the object:

54) 

There is some empirical support for this from the positioning of such adverbs with respect to aspect particles. An example of such a sentence is seen in (55):

55) Bhí na sealgairí **tamall fada** _ag_ amharc orthu

   *“The hunters were watching them for a long time.”* (McCloskey forthcoming)

In this sentence, the temporal adverb **tamall fada** ‘for a long time’ immediately precedes the progressive aspect particle _ag_. This is entirely predicted if we simply locate T2 as the aspectual head, here re-labeled as Asp\(^35\):

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\(^35\)This head might also correspond to Duffield (1994)’s ZeitsP.
The revised system of functional projection thus allows an elegant account of adverbial placement and the lack of expletives in Irish, and allows us to posit identical N-features for the Agr heads, thus avoiding a major problem with the B&C approach.

3.2.3 Recent perfectives, Infinitives, and Progressives

We have not yet resolved one of the major problems of B&C (the same problem that plagued Duffield and Noonan): the problem of minimality and preverbal subjects in Northern Irish. You will recall that object shift is licensed by the raising of the non-finite verb to AgrO and no higher. The positioning of the subject before this object is an apparent violation of Shortest Move. I propose, following a suggestion by Koizumi (1994), Bobaljik (1995), Collins and Thráinsson (1994), and extensive work by Noonan (1992, 1994) and Guilfoyle (1994), that subjects are generated in a VP, headed by a null light verb, higher than AspP and AgrO. This mirrors work by Kratzer (1993) and Marantz (1984) which separates external arguments from the theta-role assignments of lexical verbs.\footnote{In work presented after this chapter was prepared, McCloskey (1995) argues that the split VP analysis...}
In non-finite clauses, the lexical non-finite verb raises to AgrO, licensing object shift
to the specifier of AgrOP. The null light verb raises to AgrS, licensing the appearance of
the subject in the specifier of AgrS. In the Northern dialect this is always allowed.

This approach is given some empirical support by the facts of the Skye dialect of
Scots Gaelic as discussed in Adger (1995). He notes that overt subjects in Scots Gaelic
infinival clauses are *only* licensed by the presence of the light verb bith "be". Omitting this
verb results in ungrammaticality:

58) a) Bu thoigh leam sibh/Màiri a bhith a'coiseachd don sgoil
   C want with.1s you/Mary prt be prt walk to school
   "I want you/Mary to walk to school"

   b) *Bu thoigh leam sibh/Màiri a'coiseachd don sgoil
      C want with.1s you/Mary prt walk to school
      "I want you/Mary to walk to school"

Scots Gaelic, then, provides us with morphological evidence that external arguments are
introduced by light verbs.
This approach also solves a problem that has not been noted before in the literature on Irish aspectual clauses. This is an apparent violation of the head-movement constraint in the recent perfective. In later chapters of this thesis, I will show that the auxiliary \( \text{bí}^{37} \) is a true light verb, not merely a realization of tense\(^{38}\). In traditional stacked VP systems for auxiliary constructions (see, for example, Guilfoyle (1990), Hoekstra and Mulder (1990) and Dubinsky (1994) for discussion) where all the functional projections dominate all the verbal heads, the verbal auxiliary must skip two heads on its way to initial position. In sentence (58), the auxiliary \( \text{bí} \) must skip both the AgrO \( a \) head, and the aspectual head \( \text{tar éis} \):

59)  

a) \( \text{Tá mé tar éis an teach a thógáil} \)  
\( \text{be I after the house agro build} \)  
\( \text{“I have just built the house”} \) 

b)  

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\end{array}
\]

This is an obvious violation of the Head-movement Constraint (HMC). The split VP hypothesis provides a nice account of these effects, avoiding the HMC violation. The auxiliary verb\(^{39}\) is generated above both the Asp head and the AgrO head, thus it does not skip either head:

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\(^{37}\)This verb surfaces in many suppletive forms, the most common being: \( \text{tá, nil, bhfuil, beidh, beith, and raibh} \). See the appendix at the end of this thesis for complete paradigms.

\(^{38}\)In particular, I will show that realization of tense in Irish in non-verbal predication structures, takes a different form than the verb “to be” (it is on the declarative complementizer \( Is \)), and that the verb “to be” heads a real verbal projection. As a brief example of how \( \text{bí} \) is not simply a realization of tense, it should be noted that this verb has an infinitival form (beith). See also the discussion in Heggie (1988) and Kearns (1989).

\(^{39}\)I am assuming here that the light verb can be realized as either a null light verb, which the main verb raises to (resulting in VSO order), or as an auxiliary as in all aspectual constructions.
This configuration of projections provides us with an elegant placement for each element in the recent perfective clause.

By adopting the split VP story to account for recent perfectives, the minimality problem and the apparent HMC violation, however, we have run ourselves into the problem of accounting for infinitives in Southern Irish. Recall that in southern Irish, subjects and objects compete for accusative case, and both trigger the presence of the $a^L$ morpheme. If the subject is generated in a VP higher than AgrO it is not clear how the subject can compete with the object for a case in a specifier position lower than its site of base generation.

Noonan (1994) proposes a solution whereby there are two AgrO projections, one above the highest VP, the other below. The inner AgrO is linked to aspect, and the outer one is where accusative NPs raise to at LF in Northern dialects. In Southern dialects, either the subject can raise to this AgrOP, or the object can raise to it overtly. When the subject
Andrew Carnie

has raised to the higher AgrO, the object may not, so it must take genitive case to be licensed:

61)

I believe that this approach is on the right track, but that there is no need to add the complication of an extra AgrO. Recall that under Chomsky’s (1993) system Agrs are non-distinct, thus it follows that under certain conditions AgrS (i.e. when it is not joined with a finite T, but rather with a verbal head) could assign accusative case. I propose\(^{40}\) that the difference between Northern and Southern dialects is whether the lower V incorporates into the higher light verb in non-finite clauses. In Northern dialects it never does, in Southern dialects it does so when a V+Agr sequence is needed to license an overt subject. Consider the case of a transitive clause with an overt NP subject. The verb raises to the light verb, in order to license the overt subject; the light verb and the overt non-finite verb then head-move to the AgrS, which is realized as the accusative case assigner \(\alpha^L\). The subject NP can raise to this position where it is assigned accusative case:

\(^{40}\)See Harley (1994) for a different theory of case competition.
The reason the object cannot shift to the lower AgrO is that the verb has only one set of object $\Phi$-features to check, they can be checked only once and the object prefers to check them as close to the verbal head as possible (preferably in an overt spec-head relationship)$^{41}$.

When there is no overt subject to be licensed (in unaccusatives or with a PRO subject), the main verb need not raise to the null light verb, and only raises to the specifier of AgrO. Like in northern dialects, the object shifts to the specifier for case checking.

Before closing our exploration of VSO, there is one more fact that bears discussion here: that being the word order in the progressive aspect in Irish. Consider the sentence in (63):

63) Tá mé ag scuabadh an bád / an bháid
   Be I prog sweep the boat-acc/the boat-gen
   “I am sweeping the boat”

In progressive aspect, unlike the perfective and the infinitive, the object always remains post-verbal, where it can take either accusative or genitive case depending upon register and dialect. The difference between the progressive aspect and other aspect constructions, I believe$^{42}$, lies in the phonological status of the ag aspect particle. This particle is light /ə/ and may very well be a clitic. I claim, then, that the verb raises to it for phonological

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$^{41}$A proposal similar to this one is independently proposed in Adger (1995).
$^{42}$For a different analysis see Duffield (1991).
support. The object could either remain in situ taking genitive case, or take accusative case in the spec of AgrO, which is lower than the adjoined verb supporting aspect. The historical change from genitive to accusative, and dialect differences in these forms, may well follow from the ambiguity between these two post verbal object positions. This approach makes a very clear prediction about agreement. If the verb has raised to Asp in the progressive, object agreement, when overt (i.e. when the object is pronominal and null), should surface as part of the Asp-Verb complex rather than as an independent head. In a direct parallel to subject agreement on tensed verbs in tensed matrix clauses, we find that agreement on progressive participles is part of the AspP-V unit, rather than being an independent head:

\[ 64) \text{Tá mé á\textsuperscript{L}/á\textsuperscript{N} bhualadh} \]
Be I his/her/their hitting
"I am hitting him/her/them"

where \( \text{á}\textsuperscript{L}/\text{á}\textsuperscript{N} \) = \( \text{ag} /\text{á} + \text{a}\textsuperscript{L} /\text{a}\textsuperscript{N} /\text{ag}\textsuperscript{L} \)
\( \text{prog.3masc} = \text{prog} + 3\text{masc} \)
\( \text{á} /\text{a}/ \) = \( \text{ag} /\text{a} + \text{a} /\text{a} /\text{ag} \)
\( \text{prog.3fem} = \text{prog} + 3\text{fem} \)
\( \text{a}\textsuperscript{N} /\text{a}\textsuperscript{N} \) = \( \text{ag} /\text{a} + \text{a}\textsuperscript{N} /\text{ag}\textsuperscript{N} \)
\( \text{prog.3pl} = \text{prog} + 3\text{pl} \)

This is exactly what is predicted when the verb raises to the Asp head.

With this then, we have a straightforward account of Irish intransitive and aspectual clauses which is consistent both with a minimalist approach and the empirical facts and provides us with a nice account of VSO order in Irish.

\[ ^{43}\text{Just to remind the non-Irish speaking reader: superscript} \textsuperscript{L} \text{and} \textsuperscript{N} \text{here bear no phonetic content, but are transcriptional devices (not found in the standard orthography) for indicating what initial consonant mutation is triggered by a given morpheme.} \textsuperscript{L} \text{indicates lenition;} \textsuperscript{N} \text{indicates nasalization/eclipsis.} \]
3.3 Chapter Summary

In this and the preceding chapter, I have attempted to provide an account of word order phenomena of Irish VSO order. I have shown that, although such approaches may be correct for some VSO languages, there are empirical reasons for rejecting approaches using flat structure, subject lowering, raising of the verb to C, and the licensing of subjects in the specifier of VP for Irish. Instead, I have argued, following many other authors, that the verb raises to the head of the highest inflectional projection and both the subject and object raise to specifiers lower than it. I argued on the basis of evidence from infinitivals, and problems with previous approaches to infinitivals for a revised structure for functional projections. TP is the highest functional projection and is the locus of EPP feature checking. The fact that subjects in Irish don’t raise to this highest specifier position in finite clauses corresponds to McCloskey’s (forthcoming) observation that Irish seems to behave like it is not subject to the EPP. Subjects are licensed for case in the specifier of AgrS, dominated by TP. Subjects are base generated in the specifier of a light verb. This light VP dominates AspectP and AgrOP. This split VP accounts for problems with minimality for the locus of subjects in non-finite clauses in Northern Irish, and accounts for two apparent HMC violations in the recent perfective. Temporal adverbs which appear between the subjects and objects are adjoined to AspP. After Duffield (1991), objects are licensed in the specifier of AgrO in both finite and non-finite clauses. In non-finite clauses, where the verb does not raise to TP, AgrO is realized as the $â€$ morpheme and its object agreeing allomorphs. Now that we have finally developed an account of raising of verbal predicates in Irish, in subsequent chapters I will extend the analysis to non-verbal predicates.