

# The Periphrastic Dative and the Wycliffite Bible

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## 1. Introduction

There is a unique ditransitive construction in modern British English. It is the type of *give it me* that shows ‘direct object (DO) + indirect object (IO)’ word order. Some linguists consider the possibility that this exceptional word order *give it me* is the result of a development from *give it to me*. Kirk (1985: 133), whose opinion depends on a dialectological study, states as follows:

In interpreting LAE<sup>1)</sup> maps we should never forget Orton and Dieth’s interest in the historical evolution of the language. The responses on Map 8.1 *give it to me*, *give it me* and *give me it* represent a historical pattern of syntactic evolution.

In the next page, Kirk (1985: 134) cites the common passages from four different English versions of the Bible in order of publication.

- a. 1000 fæther syle me (DATIVE) minne dæl minre æhta
- b. 1400 fadir ʒyue to me the porcioun of substaunce
- c. 1611 father giue me the portion of goods
- d. 1961 father give me my share of the property

Kirk does not specify the names of the four versions of the English Bible, but it is obvious that they are historically important English versions. The

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1) *The Linguistic Atlas of England*, edited by H. Orton, S. Sanderson, and J. Widdowson (Croom Helm, London, 1978).

first citation is probably from the West Saxon Gospels I, which is usually dated from circa 990. The second citation should be from the Wycliffite Bible, the third one is from the Authorized Version, and the latest one is from *The New English Bible* jointly published by Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press. At first glance, they seem to show the “historical pattern of syntactic evolution”, but the matter is more complicated than his inference. The one translated in circa 1400, which is probably the version made by Wycliffe, has two versions. In the first place, the New Testament was translated by Wycliffe himself in some part<sup>2)</sup> and most of the Old Testament by Nycholay de Hereford (Nicholas de Hereford) (1330?–1417). The late version is the one revised by John Purvey (1353?–1428?) in 1388-1395, after Wycliffe’s death.<sup>3)</sup> It is well known that the earlier version is not very idiomatic but is translated verbatim, keeping the original Latin influence.<sup>4)</sup> Kirk’s citation in 1400 corresponds to the earlier one. According to the editions of two Wycliffite versions edited by Forshall and Madden,<sup>5)</sup> the passage (Luke 15: 12) appears as shown below (underline added). The corresponding passage in the Vulgate is also added for comparison.

(1) Early Version:

- a. and the ʒongere seide to the fadir, Fadir, ʒyue to me the porcioun of substaunce, ethir catel, that byfallith to me.

Late Version:

- b. and the ʒonger of hem seide to the fadir, Fadir, ʒyue me the

- 2) The date of translation and how much Wycliffe has taken part in the translation has not been made clear yet — see Yonekura (1979), Partridge (1973: 23, 24), and Terasawa et al. (1969: 11).  
3) See Terasawa et al. (1969: 11–14).  
4) See Terasawa (1990: 286).  
5) First published, 1850, reprinted, 1982.

porcioun of catel, that fallith to me.

Vulgate:

c. et dixit adulescentior ex illis patri pater da mihi portionem  
substantiae quae me contingit et divisit illis substantiam

(Luke 15: 12)

The preposition marking dative case *to* is added in the literally translated earlier version, but it is omitted in the more ‘naturalized’ later version.<sup>6)</sup>

Kirk (1985: 132, 135) adopts two maps to illustrate the dialectal distribution of *give it me* in England from *The Linguistic Atlas of England* edited by Orton, Sanderson and Widdowson (1978) and the *Survey of English Dialects (B) Basic Materials* edited by Orton et al. (1962–71). According to those maps, the word order treated in this paper *give it me* ranges mainly in the West Midlands, some in Kent and a little in the South West; the *give me it* type is Northern and East Midlands, and the *give it to me* type is south-western. The distribution would be related to the historical development of this kind of ditransitive construction if it can be proved that there is linear development, as shown in the above four citations from the English versions of the Bible. This study discusses whether the premise, the historical development from *give it to me* to *give it me*, and to *give me it* can be verified.

## 2. Preliminary Survey Regarding Major Grammar Books

Many grammarians comment on the *give it me* type word order. It is mentioned as a kind of exceptional word order by Hornby in the *Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* (1975: 50) as follows:

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6) According to a footnote in Forshall and Madden (1850; vol. 4, 199), the preposition *to* is also omitted in one of the manuscripts of the earlier version, which is in Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.

The IO normally precedes the DO, but there are occasional exceptions (colloquial style) when the IO is a personal pronoun and the DO is *it* or *them*.

His word ‘colloquial style’ raises our interest in the relationship between the *give it me* word order and the register. Visser (1962, Vol. I, p. 624, § 686), on the other hand, cites examples in the V + IO + DO word order, which also sound colloquial (underline added).

- (2) DAPPERWIT What, you take it ill I refuse your money? Rather than that should be, give us it. But take notice I will borrow it — now I think on’t, Lucy wants a gown, and some knacks.  
(Wycherley, 1672, *Love in a Wood (Mermaid)*, III, ii)
- (3) LORD BRUMPTON Why didst thou ever tell me it!  
(Steele, 1768, *The Funeral*, I, i)

Lines in the script of William Wycherley’s drama follow conversational style. The actor playing the role of Mr. Dapperwit would communicate the information content of these lines not only in word order written in the script but also with the help of intonation or added accent. The other example is also from a drama (a comedy) called *The Funeral*.

Using *Project Gutenberg* (1997), we can find six more examples of ‘give + personal pronoun as the dative object + *it* as the accusative object’ (underline added). These are all conversational as well.

- (4) but give him it out of hand:  
(*Deuterocanonical Books of the Bible / Apocrypha*)
- (5) better give me it.” (Frank Norris, 1899, *McTeague*)
- (6) “You won’t, huh? You won’t give me it? For the last time.”  
(Frank Norris, 1899, *McTeague*)
- (7) ‘I can give you it at once. it was sixty-four feet.’  
(Arthur Conan Doyle, 1894, *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*)

- (8) My father bought it and gave me it,  
(Amelia E. Barr, 1906, *The Man Between*)
- (9) Give me it: I will give it her. (Alfred Tennyson, 1847, *The Princess*)

These examples give us the impression that the source of the ‘colloquial style’ may not be the DO + IO word order but the involvement of the first person dative pronoun *me*. The examination of the relationship between these expressions and their register is compulsory in the course of thinking of the *give it me* type word order, but here we are concentrating on examples found in the Wycliffite Bible and just paying attention to them only as examples of the *give me it* pattern word order.

It is notable that the last example from *Project Gutenberg* shows both word order patterns and that the first person singular pronouns are emphasized in both clauses. The referent of the accusative object in the second clause is the same as in the first clause. The accusative object *it* at the end of the first sentence, functioning as the focus, carries less information in the next sentence. This example is in complete agreement with the norm of Information Flow. Taking the above example into consideration, we can conclude that, in Modern British English, the ‘IO + *it*’ word order is grammatical and that the restriction on the use of *it* is just a matter of contextual situation, which is closely related to the information structure.

Zandvoort (1975: 240, § 695) comments on the relationship between the two objects and the information structure:

When a sentence contains two objects, the indirect object precedes the direct object, if, as is usually the case, the latter is the weightier of the two. This principle also accounts for the opposite order in the cases where a phonetically light direct object pronoun is put before an indirect ditto.

Not only Zandvoort, but also Erteschik Shir (1979: 451, 452), show that it is preferred in Modern English that highly referential elements immediately follow the verb in ditransitive constructions.

Quirk et al. (1985: 1396, Note) show all three word order patterns with the verb *give* and add accent marks on them:

Where both  $O_d$  and  $O_i$  are pronouns, it would be usual to replace the latter by a *to*-phrase:

She GÁVE it to him.

She gave it to HÍM.

Alternatively, we could have:

She GÀVE him it.

She GÁVE it him. } <only BrE>  
She gave it HÍM. }

But not:

\*She gave HÍM it.

\*She gave ÌT him.

These illustrate that the sentence stress is never put on *it* regardless of the arrangement of the two objects, which means that the pronoun *it* bears very little information content.

Even in the early twentieth century, Kruisinga (1925: vol. 3, 335) explained this type of word order as follows:

When both objects are personal pronouns the indirect object *usually* stands first, but the reverse order also occurs, especially when the direct object is the enclitic *it*.

It is notable that Kruisinga uses the word ‘enclitic’, which means that the pronoun *it* is phonetically light and connected to the preceding verb *give*.

His contemporary Jespersen (1927) treats *give it me* in more detail in the *Modern English Grammar*:

*it* may phonetically represent an earlier *it to*, which became first [ittə, itə] and then with the usual loss of weak [ə]: [it], just as, for instance *at the (atte) laste* became *at last* (I 6.36). *Give it me* therefore represents an earlier *give it to me* as well as an original *give it me*; cf Ch[aucer] G[roup] 1118 [“]and shewed it the preest[”], where the Ellesm. MS alone has *it to the p[reest]*.

(Jespersen, 1927, Part III, Syntax, Second Volume, p. 289, § 14.7<sub>4</sub>)

Jespersen suggests the possibility of the contraction of *it to*. We shall come back to this later. He also refers to the contextual situation where *give it me* is used.

In such combinations the context (situation, sometimes assisted by gesture) only can show which is direct and which indirect object; careful speakers and writers would generally prefer the unambiguous construction with *to*, ... (Jespersen, 1927, Part III, p. 290, § 14.7<sub>6</sub>)

Jespersen finds that the context assists the use of nonstandard word order (V + DO + IO). In the same section, Jespersen gives six citations from major literary works, which are examples with feminine or masculine personal pronouns as the proposed accusative object (underline added):

(10) ich chulle senden hine ou

(*The Ancrene Riwe*, edited by Morton, 1853)

(11) we deliuer him you

(Christopher Marlowe, *Edward the Second*,  
edited by Tucker Brooke, 1910)

(12) Ile yeeld him thee asleepe

(William Shakespeare, *Tempest* III. 2. 68,  
edited by Warnke and Proescholdt, 1886)

(13) will you ... giue me this maid? as freely, sonne, as God did giue her me

(William Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing* IV.  
1. 27, edited by Warnke and Proescholdt, 1886)

(14) thou gauest them [men] me

(*The Authorized Version of the Bible*, 1611, John 17: 6)

(15) Give him us! We have not seen blood for many a day.

(Charles Kingsley, *Hypatia*, 1853, London, p. 39)

As shown above, Jespersen carefully considers the possibility that adjacent [t] sounds made the preposition *to* merge with the preceding *it*, but this explanation cannot apply to his examples with two feminine or masculine personal pronouns. Moreover, there remains some doubt why the case marker *to* is omitted in this case while the lightly informative pronoun *it* is contracted in many other cases. The pronoun *it* after verbs or prepositions is often abbreviated. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter cited as *OED*), states that from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth century, *it* was sometimes contracted with the preceding prepositions or verbs in the form of affixes such as -et, -'t, -t and -d. The following are some citations in the *OED*:

c1470 Henry Wallace iv. 482 To tak him in thai maid thaim redy ford  
[=for it]

1535 Lyndesay Satyre 2095 Gude, halie peopill, I stand for'd

1560 Rolland Cr. Venus<sup>7)</sup> I, i. 122 Of biggest bind as he thocht best  
to haid [=hae it].

1610 Shakes[peare] *Temp[est]* i. ii 304 Goe take this shape And  
hither come in't.

Examples of a similar kind are to be found in the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (hereafter abbreviated as the *Helsinki Corpus*). The following is an example (underline added):

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7) *Ane Treatise Callit the Court of Venus* c1550 (1575; S.T.S. 1884)

(16) **T.I.**<sup>8)</sup> Yes sure I thinke I haue her measure about me, good faith 'tis  
downe, I cannot show't you.

(Thomas Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. I. 1, 1630)

As the examples show, the pronoun *it* was enclitically added in weak form to the preceding verbs or prepositions, and sometimes, as 'tis in Example (16), to the following verbs proclitically. The contracted forms of *it* can sometimes be seen in play scripts, whose words rather follow conversational style. In the examples, we notice the relationship between form and phonetic economy. Since such auditory elements were of great importance to meter in medieval literature, metrical reason may have had priority over grammatical economy. However, such contracted forms are usually demonstrations of the direct grammatical connection of these two entities as well as phonological economy. Direct objects are internal arguments of the verbs controlling them and directly connected to the verbs.<sup>9)</sup> Prepositional objects are directly connected to the prepositions preceding them. Therefore, these two entities can be expressed by one contracted form. If we think of such iconicity between the close grammatical relationship and the close phonological relationship, it is difficult to find the reason why *it* as a direct object is connected with *to*, which is the preposition of the indirect object. Grammatically, the direct object *it* is rather related to the verb and the preposition *to* is closely related to its own object.

V + DO + IO word order is often used with *it* as the direct object, but the plural pronoun *them* is also seen as the direct object in this type of word order, as Hornby (1975: 50) states. The following are examples of the

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8) T.I. is abbreviated from Touchwood Junior.

9) Also remember that Krusinga (1925: vol. 3, 335) connects the pronoun *it* to the preceding verb as an enclitic.

corresponding plural type (*give + them + IO*) collected using *Project Gutenberg* (underline added).

(17) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all

(*The Bible*, King James Version, John 10: 28)

(18) “What made her give them you?” she asked.

(D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*)

(19) WAGNER. Bear witness I gave them him.

(Christopher Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus*)

(20) HORSE-COURSER. I have none about me: come to my ostry, and I'll give them you.

(Christopher Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus*)

The direct object *them* is plural and, from the viewpoint of information structure, conveys more information than *it*, but the information content of *them* is still small compared with full noun phrases. The word order with the plural dative pronoun *them* is also seen over quite a long span from the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, though *Project Gutenberg* is not a diachronic corpus.

Citations in these grammatical books and examples found in *Project Gutenberg* give us an impression that both types of word order ‘give + IO + DO’ and ‘give + DO + IO’ range over several centuries. Has one of these patterns historically developed from the other? If it is likely to have happened, the number of ‘give + *it* + IO’ word order pattern might have fluctuated in the course of the history of English. Table 1 below shows the number of ‘V + *it* + IO’ word order sentences with dative verbs *give* and *show* in each sub-period of Late Middle English and of Early Modern English in the *Helsinki Corpus*.

Table 1: “Give/Show + It + IO” in the *Helsinki Corpus*

hcm3 1350–1420	hcm4 1420–1500	hce1 1500–1570	hce2 1570–1640	hce3 1640–1710
5	2	5	5	3

Most of the examples consist of ‘V + *it* + dative personal pronoun’ and we can easily recognize the cases of the two pronouns as ‘the accusative + the dative’. One of the examples consists of different constituents (underline added).

(21) Now in this Discontentment you gave him the Book, and he gave it his Brother.

(*The Trial of Sir Walter Raleigh*, Vol. I, p. 213, C2, ll. 62–63 in hce2.<sup>10</sup>)

In Example (21), the referent of the accusative object *it* is the focused element of the previous clause, *the Book*. The dative object is not a personal pronoun, but it is easily recognized as dative because it is a noun phrase that mentions a person, *his brother*.

There are not many examples of the ‘*give/show* + *it* + IO’ sentences in the *Helsinki Corpus*. Probably the size of the corpus is not large enough to see the fluctuations of the use, but, at least, the ‘*give/show* + *it* + IO’ sentences have never completely disappeared after the Late Middle English period. Thus this type of word order cannot be regarded as a revival but as having survived. From the fact that, in the V + DO + IO word order, the two objects are usually ‘*it* + personal object’, the reasons for the continued existence can be presumed to be: (1) that the word order is suitable for the Information Flow, and (2) that the two noun phrases can communicate their cases unmistakably, even though the word order is the reverse of the standard word order of ditransitive constructions.

10) The hce2 file in the *Helsinki Corpus* contains texts between 1570 and 1640.

### 3. Ditransitive Constructions with *Give/Show* in the Wycliffite Bible

If Kirk (1985: 133) is correct that “*give it to me*, *give it me* and *give me it* represent a historical pattern of syntactic evolution”, the *give it to me* type must have been prominent once and then have been supplanted by the *give it me* type. The same passages from four English versions of the Bible, which is from Luke 15: 12, are Kirk’s (1985) supposed line of development. This would mean that the *give it to me* type was prominent around 1400 in the Late Middle English period.

As stated in the first section, there are two versions in the Wycliffite Bible and the translation of the late version is said to have been naturalized by John Purvey in *c.* 1395. All sentences with *give* or *show* were collected in the four Gospels in the Wycliffite Bible and their two versions were compared.<sup>11)</sup> The result shows that, in the twenty-six parts, only the early version involves the periphrastic dative *to* and the late version does not. One of the twenty-six is the passage from Luke 15: 12, which Kirk (1985: 134) discusses. Some other examples are shown below with the corresponding passages in the Vulgate (underline added).

(22) Early:

a. In what power dost thou these thingis? and who 3af to thee this power?

Late:

b. In what power doist thou these thingis? and who 3af thee this power?

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11) This collection was made at Prof. Hideki Watanabe’s Graduate Seminar at Osaka University using *The Bible in English* (1996) ©Chadwyck-Healey.

Vulgate:

- c. in qua potestate haec facis et quis tibi dedit hanc potestatem  
(Matt. 21: 23)

(23) Early:

- a. Who gessist thou is a trew seruaunt and prudent, or war, whom his lord ordeynede on his meynee, that he ʒeue to hem mete in tyme?

Late:

- b. Who gessist thou is a trewe seruaunt and prudent, whom his lord ordeyned on his meynee, to ʒyue hem mete in tyme?

Vulgate:

- c. Quis putas est fidelis servus et prudens quem constituit dominus suus supra familiam suam ut det illis cibum in tempore  
(Matt. 24: 45)

(24) Early:

- a. And Pharisees and Saduceis temptynge him camen niʒ to hym, and preiden hym for to shewe to hem a tokene fro heuene.

Late:

- b. And the Farisees and the Saducees camen to hym temptynge, and preieden hym to schewe hem a tokene fro heuene.

Vulgate:

- c. Et accesserunt ad eum Pharisaei et Sadducaei temptantes et rogaverunt eum ut signum de caelo ostenderet eis  
(Matt. 16: 1)

(25) Early:

- a. And Jhesus, gon out of the temple, wente; and his disciplis camen niʒ to hym, that thei shulden shewe to hym the bildyngis of the temple.

Late:

- b. And Jhesus wente out of the temple; and his disciplis camen to hym, to schewe hym the bildyngis of the temple.

Vulgate:

- c. Et egressus Iesus de templo ibat et accesserunt discipuli eius ut ostenderent ei aedificationes templi  
(Matt. 24: 1)

On the other hand, there are only two parts where the periphrastic *to* is added to the Late Version. Both are in Mark (underline added).

(26) Early:

- a. And thei **ʒ**auen him for to drynke wyn meddelid with myrre, and he took not.

Late:

- b. And thei **ʒ**auen to hym to drynke wyn meddlid with mirre, and he took not.

Vulgate:

- c. Et dabant ei bibere murratum vinum et non accepit

(Mark 15: 23)

(27) Early:

- a. Sothli oon rennyng, and fillinge a sponge with vynegre, and puttinge aboute to a reede, **ʒ**aue him drynke, seyng, Suffre **ʒ**e, se we, if Hely come for to do hym down.

Late:

- b. And oon ranne, and fillide a spounge with vynegre, and puttide aboute to a reede, and **ʒ**af to hym drynke, and seide, Suffre **ʒ**e, se we, if Helie come to do hym down.

Vulgate:

- c. Currens autem unus et implens spongiam aceto circumponensque calamo potum dabat ei dicens sinite videamus si veniat Helias ad deponendum eum

(Mark 15: 36)

If it is correct that the translation of the Late Version is naturalized, the omission rate of the periphrastic *to* in the Late Version is alarmingly larger than the addition rate of *to*. Yonekura (1985: 139) is aware of this tendency and shows the numbers of these two constructions with the verb *ʒiuen* in the Four Gospels as follows: three examples of the *ʒiuen him a swerd* type in the Early Version and 13 in the Late Version; 80 examples of the *ʒiuen a swerd to hym* type in the Early Version and 65 in the Late

Version. He mentions that the construction with *to* occurs much more frequently in the Wycliffite Bible and especially in the Early Version, though he does not parallelize the corresponding parts in the two versions.

It is well known that in Old English the periphrastic dative marker *to* was added to emphasize the dative case and the use was enlarged as English had lost the case-endings which show the dative case. Mustanoja (1960: 95) comments that *to* as a dative marker was first recorded at the end of Old English period<sup>12)</sup> and quotes from W. Swane's *Studien zur Casussyntax des Frühmittelenglischen* (1904) that it was occasionally used to mark the indirect object from Early Middle English in prose. Mustanoja (1960: 96) goes on to mention the periphrastic dative:

In late ME prose the periphrastic dative seems to be used approximately in the same measure as in present-day English, and the choice of the dative form also seems to depend on much the same rhythmical principles as today.

Mustanoja (1960) does not find the fluctuation of the use of periphrastic dative *to* after the Late Middle English period and comments that the use of the periphrastic dative almost covers the same size as today. Also, the choice as to whether the periphrastic dative form was used or not is attributed to a rhythmical reason, which means that an iambic meter would be made with the weak pronoun *it* just after the verb and the dative personal pronoun after the accusative object *it*. The dative personal pronoun is also weak but sounds a little bit stronger than the accusative object *it*. This metrical reason is also perfectly adapted to the Information Flow from given information to new information.

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12) See also Quirk and Wrenn (1957) p. 65 and Mitchell (1985) § 1210. Mitchell comments that he has not found any examples of '*giefan + to + person*'.

The comparison of the two versions shows that, in the corresponding parts in the Late Version to ‘*give/show* + prep. O’ clauses in the Early Version, the dative marker *to* sometimes disappears and the V + IO + DO construction is used. However, the constructions collected from the Four Gospels are actually different from the three constructions which Kirk (1985) tries to connect to the syntactic development in the quantities of information the two objects carry. He tries to examine ditransitive constructions with a personal pronoun *it* as the accusative object, which carries extremely light information. The four examples above (22) – (25) which show the omission of *to* in the Late Version have personal pronouns as the dative objects and full noun phrases as the accusative objects, which are clearly weightier. Therefore, we should not conclude the development of the three types of ditransitive constructions only by the examples of the Four Gospels in the Wycliffite Bible. That is, we do not have enough examples to examine these three constructions yet. We get one example of ‘*give it to* + personal pronoun’ in the Early Version, but in the Late Version, the pronoun *it* disappears and the clause does not have two objects:

(28) Early:

- a. And so ‘take **3e** away fro hym the talent, and **3eue 3e** it to hym that hath ten talentis.

Late:

- b. Therfor take awei fro hym the basaunt, and **3yue 3e** to hym that hath ten besauntis.

Vulgate:

- c. tollite itaque ab eo talentum et date ei qui habet decem talenta  
(Matt. 25: 28)

To collect enough examples to examine the distribution of the three constructions in Middle English, it will be necessary to do more extensive

research.

The two examples to which the periphrastic dative *to* is added in the Late Version demonstrate an identical construction ‘*give + a person + (to) drink/eat*’. Mustanoja (1960: 531) refers to these constructions of ‘*give + infinitive*’ and says that this construction already exists in Old English with zero infinitive and that Callaway (1913: 271) ascribed it to Latin influence. There seems to be no easy way to explain the addition of the periphrastic dative *to* in the Late Version with examples (26) and (27) because in another part, *to* is conversely omitted in the Late Version with the same ‘*give + a person + (to) drink/eat*’ construction (underline added).

(29) Early:

- a. Forsothe I was hungry, and 3e 3auen to me for to ete; I thristide,  
and 3ee 3euen to me for to drynke;

Late:

- b. For Y hungride, and 3e 3auen me to ete; Y thristide, and 3e 3auen  
me to drynke;

Vulgate:

- c. esurivi enim et dedistis mihī manducare sitivi et dedistis mihī bibere  
(Matt. 25: 35)

The *OED* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) also refers to this construction as “with ellipsis of obj. before an *inf.*” There is an example in Matthew where an accusative object *sumwhat* is added in the Late Version:

(30) Early:

- a. Forsothe Jhesus seide to hem, Thei han nat neede to go; 3eue 3e to hem for to ete.

Late:

- b. Jhesus seide to hem, Thei han not nede to go; 3yue 3e hem sumwhat to ete.

Vulgate:

c. Iesus autem dixit eis non habent necesse ire date illis vos manducare  
(Matt. 14: 16)

As stated above, the addition of the periphrastic dative *to* in the Late Version happens only in Mark and, as we have already shown, *to* is frequently omitted in Matthew. The reason might be attributed to the differences of who actually took charge of brushing up the translation of the Gospel, though John Purvey may have directed it in all the Four Gospels.

#### 4. Conclusion

The rate of using the prepositional dative object is high even in the Later version, as Yonekura (1985: 139) states, but we could ascertain that not all dative objects in ditransitive constructions had the preposition *to* around 1400 if we compare the two versions of the Wycliffite Bible. The time gap between the two versions is some ten years, which is too short to cause a noticeable syntactic change. Thus we can say with fair certainty that the more frequent use of *to* for the dative object in the Early Version is due to literal translation of the Vulgate Version. For this reason, the parallel passages from the earlier versions shown by Kirk (1985: 134) do not prove that the prepositional dative case marker *to* is always accompanied by the dative pronoun. Unless the *give it to me* type is assured as the major use in Late Middle English, there has to be doubt as to whether there is dialectal distribution connected to “a historical pattern of syntactic evolution”.

We also find another reason the passage from Luke 15: 12 cannot be directly connected to the distribution of *give it to me*, *give it me* and *give me it*. Though Kirk’s dialectological research concerns the distribution of these three constructions, the accusative object in the passage he cites

(1985: 134) is a full noun phrase. The pronoun *it* is very different from full noun phrases in its high referentiality.<sup>13)</sup> It carries little information. As Zandvoort (1975: 240) points out, the word order is likely to be determined according to which object is lighter than the other. In Luke 15: 12, the full noun phrase accusative object is much weightier than the dative object *me*, while in the three types of word order of which Kirk (1985) shows the dialectal distribution, the accusative object *it* is lighter than the first person dative pronoun *me*. That is, the contextual situations with the two objects in his citations from historical English versions of the Bible, and in the three constructions he compares dialectologically, are completely different. However, we also notice that we require tremendously extensive research to collect enough examples to make clear the circumstances in which the three constructions are used.

Finally, taking into account that the search result in the *Helsinki Corpus*, which showed that at least the *give it me* type word order had never disappeared through the Late Middle English period and the Early Modern English period, we can reasonably claim that the *give it me* word order is not a form developed from *give it to me* but a surviving form from the period when case endings were still fully functioning. The twenty-six examples found in the Four Gospels in the Wycliffite Bible in which the translator of the Late Version probably naturalized them by dropping *to*, support the idea that the *give it me* type word order had never disappeared in the Late Middle English period.

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13) See Givón (1984: 40) on the little referentiality of pronouns:

Degree of referentiality/topicality:

pronoun > definite-NP > indefinite-NP

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