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Subordinating uses of *and* in Old English: a corpus-based analysis

Abstract

The earlier stages of the English language reveal a wide variety of functions of the conjunction *and*, the borderline between coordination and subordination being often blurred. As Traugott states (1992: 220), “hypotaxis translates fairly readily into subordination” in Old English, a fact which is further corroborated by the element order of the ensuing sentence as the sequence subject + (object) + verb is characteristically subordinate (Mitchell 1980: 694). Therefore, in the present paper the coordinating vs. subordinating uses of the conjunction *and* will be analysed and, in the case of the latter, a taxonomy will be presented with the specific types of adverbial subordination favoured by this conjunction. The data obtained from this survey will be compared with those from a Middle English corpus so as to obtain diachronic information about the level of grammaticalization. From a methodological perspective, an annotated corpus containing the Old English *Holy Gospels* was analysed and, by using the *Old English Concordancer*, all the instances were automatically retrieved and arranged in terms of the order of elements of the following clause.

References:

- Mitchell, Bruce. 1985. *Old English Syntax*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 1992. “Old English Syntax”. In Richard M. Hogg (ed.) *The Cambridge History of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.