

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:
