

The Semantics and Syntax of Old English *End* Verbs

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This article deals with the syntax and semantics of Old English *End* verbs on the basis of the framework of verb classes and alternations and the theory of Role and Reference Grammar. The analysis focuses on class membership and includes meaning components and argument realisation—linking in simplex and complex constructions and alternations. The inventory of verbs under analysis comprises *āblinnan*, *ætstandan*, *blinnan*, *for(e)sacan*, *geblinnan*, *linnan*, *ofersittan*, *oflinnan*, *oðstillan* and *(ge)trucian*. The main conclusion is that the morphologically related verbs *āblinnan* and *blinnan* are the strongest candidates for *End* verbs, given the syntactic constructions and morphosyntactic alternations in which they are found.

Keywords: verb class; Old English; Role and Reference Grammar; linking; alternations; constructions

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La semántica y sintaxis de los verbos de *Finalizar* en inglés antiguo

Este artículo trata sobre la sintaxis y la semántica de los verbos de *Finalizar* en inglés antiguo tomando como base el marco teórico de las clases verbales y alternancias y la teoría de la Gramática del Papel y la Referencia. El análisis se centra en definir la pertenencia a una clase verbal y tiene en cuenta los componentes de significado y la realización de los argumentos—las uniones con construcciones simples y complejas y las alternancias. El inventario de los verbos bajo análisis incluye *āblinnan*, *ætstandan*, *blinnan*, *for(e)sacan*, *geblinnan*, *linnan*, *ofersittan*, *oflinnan*, *oðstillan* y *(ge)trucian*. La conclusión principal de este trabajo es que, teniendo en cuenta las construcciones sintácticas y las alternancias morfosintácticas en las que aparecen, los verbos *āblinnan* y *blinnan*, que están relacionados morfológicamente, son los candidatos más claros para pertenecer a la clase verbal de *Finalizar*.

Palabras clave: clase verbal; inglés antiguo; Gramática del Papel y la Referencia; asociación; alternancias; construcciones

1. INTRODUCTION

This article deals with the syntax and semantics of Old English verbs; more specifically, it aims to assess the consistency of *End* verbs as a verb class. This study focuses on this class because *End* verbs present features that are typical of aspectual verbs as well as inaction verbs. Syntactically, they entail complex complementation which, moreover, differs significantly in Old English compared to Present-Day English. The analysis includes the meaning components as well as the argument realisation of these verbs.

A verb class is a set of verbs that share meaning components and grammatical behaviour, and thus present the same realisations of arguments and morphosyntactic alternations (Levin 1993, 11). In this article, the realisation of arguments is described in terms of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2005), the typological-functional grammar that, given its concern with the semantic motivation of syntax and its interlinguistic adequacy, constitutes the theoretical basis of this study.

The article proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents the basics of RRG by drawing on two introductory overviews by Robert D. Van Valin, Jr. (n.d. a, n.d. b), as well as the framework of verb classes and alternations. This background section also reviews previous contributions to the study of the verb classes of Old English. Section 3 describes the sources and data for the analysis. The semantics-syntax linking of Old English *End* verbs is discussed in section 4, while section 5 focuses on the alternations in which *End* verbs are found. Section 6 summarises the results and draws the main conclusions.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In RRG, the starting point of the semantic representation of the sentence is the *Aktionsart* (internal aspect) class of the verb. Logical structures, which link clausal semantics to clausal syntax, are the main descriptive device of the semantics-syntax linking. The different *Aktionsart* types with their corresponding logical structures are shown in table 1. The main distinctions are between the stative (predicate') and nonstative (do') segment, on the one hand, and the noncausative and causative versions of each *Aktionsart* type on the other. The variables x, y and z represent verbal arguments. The labels INGR(essive), SEM(e)L(factive), BECOME and CAUSE stand for, respectively, ingressives, semelfactives, accomplishments and causatives.

TABLE 1. *Aktionsart* types and logical structures in RRG

<i>Aktionsart</i> type	Logical Structure
STATE	predicate' (x) or (x, y)
ACTIVITY	do' (x, [predicate' (x) or (x, y)])
ACHIEVEMENT	INGR predicate' (x) or (x, y), or INGR do' (x, [predicate' (x) or (x, y)])
SEMELFACTIVE	SEML predicate' (x) or (x, y), or SEML do' (x, [predicate' (x) or (x, y)])
ACCOMPLISHMENT	BECOME predicate' (x) or (x, y), or BECOME do' (x, [predicate' (x) or (x, y)])
ACTIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT	do' (x, [predicate1' (x, (y))]) & BECOME predicate2' (z, x) or (y)
CAUSATIVE	α CAUSE β , where α, β are logical structures of any type

RRG is best known for its theory of macroroles. These are generalised semantic roles, referred to as *Actor* and *Undergoer*, on which the semantic interpretation of verbal arguments is based. Macroroles make grammatical generalisations across the structures of verbs and their arguments. In a transitive predication, the first argument of the verb is the Actor and the second argument is borne by the Undergoer. In an intransitive predication, the semantic properties of the verb determine whether the one single argument is an Actor or an Undergoer. The maximal number of macroroles that a verb can take is two.

As regards syntactic functions, subject and object are not considered universal in RRG. For this reason, this theory has defined the concept of *Privileged Syntactic Argument* (PSA). PSA is a construction-specific function that results from the neutralisation of thematic roles and pragmatic functions for syntactic purposes. Any other argument in the sentence is either a direct core argument or an oblique core argument.

Linking is the correspondence between syntax and semantics, both from semantics to syntax (production) and from syntax to semantics (comprehension). The building blocks of linking are verb agreement, case assignment and prepositional government. The treatment of constructions follows from these aspects. In languages like Present-Day English, the controller of finite verb agreement is the highest-ranking core macrorole argument, in terms of PSA selection. Case assignment rules for direct core arguments in accusative languages such as Old English—different from when case is governed by adposition—stipulate that the highest-ranking core macrorole in the PSA selection hierarchy is inflected for the nominative case, while the other core macrorole takes the accusative case. Nonmacrorole direct core arguments take the dative case.

The linking algorithm operates clause by clause in such a way that the layered structure of the clause is hierarchical, comprising several semantic layers defined by the scope of operators such as tense, aspect and modality. The layers of the logical structure of the clause are the core—the verbal nucleus, its arguments and its argument-adjuncts, as in *eat beans* and *go to the station*, respectively—the clause itself—which consists of the core and the periphery, as in *play tennis in the park*—and the sentence—which can be broken down into one or more clauses, as in *I always have a shower before going to bed*.

With the clausal layers just described, the RRG theory of complex sentences is based on the type of unit (juncture) and the type of relation (nexus). These two aspects of complex sentences are considered independently. On the basis of the degree of complexity of the units that are combined, nuclear juncture, core juncture, clausal juncture and sentential juncture are distinguished. Nuclear junctures, for instance, are complex constructions that contain several nuclei. To illustrate this, in *John forced the door open*, two nuclei, *force* and *open*, belong to a single core. Core junctures are made up of two or more cores, as in *I ordered Fred to force the door open*. In this type of juncture, a core argument—in this case the participant *Fred*—is shared by two cores. In Present-Day English, intransitive verbs can appear in the linked predication of a nuclear juncture (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997, 445). A clause juncture is the relevant type in more complex structures like *John phoned Mary yesterday and Jim phoned her too*. Further differences between the levels of juncture are related to complementisers such as *to*, *from* and so on. For example, nuclear junctures do not include complementisers, whereas core junctures may make use of them. As such, the two nuclei can be adjacent in a nuclear juncture, but this cannot happen in a core juncture. The syntactic and semantic relations between the units in a juncture—that is, the nexus—include coordination and subordination. It is a requirement of subordination that clefting and passivisation are possible. For instance, *Mary regretted Jim's losing his job* is a case of subordination because *It was Jim's losing his job that Mary regretted* (cleft) and *That Jim lost his job was regretted by Mary* (passive) are possible (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997, 445). RRG distinguishes a third nexus type, called cosubordination or dependent coordination. In cosubordination, the dependence is related to the scope of the operators. This is because the units must share at least one operator at the relevant level of juncture. For example, in *Jack sat playing the piano* the operator of the imperfect aspect has scope over both nuclei, given that a paraphrase like *Jack sat and played the piano* is possible.

As regards the second component of the theoretical basis of this article, the framework of verb classes and alternations, for Beth Levin these descriptive concepts are explanatory with

respect to each other (1993, 11). On the one hand, the semantics of a given verb determines the range of expressions within which it is found. On the other, the syntactic configurations shared by a set of verbs are criterial for class membership. Therefore, from the point of view of argument realisation, the number and form of verbal arguments are restricted by the meaning components of the verb in question; from the perspective of class membership, verbs belonging to the same class according to grammatical behaviour are also expected to share meaning components (5). The properties that determine the grammatical behaviour of verbs include argument-taking properties, participation in diathesis alternations and morphological properties. For instance, the class of *Grow* verbs includes *develop*, *evolve*, *grow*, *hatch* and *mature*. The properties of this class include the alternations exemplified by Levin as follows:

Material/Product Alternation (intransitive):

- a. That acorn will grow into an oak tree.
- b. An oak tree will grow from that acorn.

Causative/Inchoative Alternation:

- a. The gardener grew that acorn into an oak tree.
That acorn will grow into an oak tree.
- b. The gardener grew an oak tree from that acorn.
An oak tree will grow from that acorn. (174)

Diathesis alternations, as defined in this theoretical framework, are “alternations in the expressions of arguments, sometimes accompanied by changes of meaning” (2). Alternations constitute a defining property of verb classes and allow us to make generalisations across classes. Differences in verbal behaviour can be explained, as has been pointed out above, if alternations make reference to the meaning components of verbs. For instance, the meaning components of motion, contact, change of state and causation explain why verbs participate in diathesis alternations. The meaning component of contact is relevant for the body-part possessor alternation, whereas contact and motion have a bearing on the conative alternation. Put briefly, meaning components can be defined for each alternation, such that the verbs that participate in the alternation can be assigned to a certain verb class.

With respect to previous research on the verb classes of Old English, the lexematic-functional approach, which integrates functional grammar and structural semantics, applies both to the verbal syntax and semantics of Old English. This approach distinguishes between constructions—recurrent associations of form and meaning—and alternations—recurrent

contrasts of form and meaning. Constructions and alternations incorporate the semantics of verbs by identifying the *Aktionsart* classes of RRG, and also make reference to the syntax of verbs. Both in the lexematic-functional approach and in this study, class membership calls for shared meaning components and grammatical behaviour. However, the lexematic-functional approach gives priority to constructions, which constitute the main aim of linguistic description. In this study, syntactic constructions are nexus-juncture types, which allows us to explain structural changes to the verbs in question throughout diachronic evolution.

Several verb classes of Old English have been studied, together with their logical structures, constructions and alternations, within the lexematic-functional approach: verbs of warning (González Orta 2002), verbs of running (Cortés Rodríguez and Torres Medina 2003), verbs of writing (Cortés Rodríguez and Martín Díaz 2003), verbs of smell perception and emission (González Orta 2003), verbs of speech (González Orta 2004), verbs of remembering (González Orta 2005), verbs of sound (Cortés Rodríguez and González Orta 2006), verbs of feeling (C. D. García Pacheco 2013) and verbs of existence (L. M. García Pacheco 2013). Against this background, the analysis that follows is based on *Aktionsart* types—including the logical structures that make reference to them as well as the principles and hierarchies that guarantee the linking between semantics and syntax—together with the concepts of construction and alternation.

3. SOURCES AND DATA

The point of departure for the selection of verbs discussed in this article is the set of lexical domains proposed for English by Pamela Faber and Ricardo Mairal (1999). The domain Action comprises a subset that may be called *verbs of inaction*, including “To not do something,” “To cause somebody not to do something,” “To stop doing something” and “To make an effort in order to be able to do something.” Of these, this work concentrates on “To stop doing something” for the reasons given in section 1.

According to two authoritative dictionaries, *Lexico's Dictionary* and *Cambridge Dictionary Online*, verbs of inaction convey the common meaning component of the nonhappening of an event, either because the action referred to by the verb was never completely accomplished, as in *They tried to get a ticket*; or because, as is the case with *End* verbs, it ceased in the past, as in *We stopped lending her money*. From the point of view of syntactic complementation, *End* verbs take a noun phrase that entails a verbal predication, as in *The government stopped the*

approval of the new act, or a nonfinite dependent clause, as in *The customers stopped lodging complaints*.

The online version of the *Thesaurus of Old English* (Roberts and Kay 2000) was used to find instances of *End* verbs with the meaning of inaction. The following verbs were obtained: *āblinnan*, *ætstandan*, *anforlǣtan*, *ānforlǣtan*, *belūcan*, *forlǣtan*, *framdōn*, *(ge)blinnan*, *(ge)lǣtan*, *(ge)lettan*, *(ge)trucian*, *gerestan*, *linnan*, *oðstillan*, *ofergān*, *ofersittan*, *oflinnan* and *restan*. In order to select fragments with the relevant meanings only, these verbs were looked up in the available dictionaries of Old English, including *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Bosworth and Toller 1973), *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Clark Hall 1996), *The Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* (Sweet 1976) and *The Dictionary of Old English in Electronic Form A-H (DOE)* (Healey 2016). On the basis of the meaning definitions offered by these dictionaries as well as the lexical database of Old English *Nerthus* (Martín Arista et al. 2016), the scope of this research was reduced to the verbs *āblinnan*, *ætstandan*, *blinnan*, *for(e)sacan*, *geblinnan*, *linnan*, *ofersittan*, *oflinnan*, *oðstillan* and *(ge)trucian*.¹ This selection, motivated by the meanings displayed by these verbs, allows for the identification of the most likely candidates for the *End* verb class.

For verbs beginning with the letters A-H, the citations selected by the *DOE* were analysed. For verbs in the second half of the alphabet, searches were launched in *The Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (Healey et al. 2004). A total of sixty-six fragments were, the occurrence of the verbs being as follows: *āblinnan* (17), *ætstandan* (16), *blinnan* (13), *foresacan* (5), *geblinnan* (3), *linnan* (2), *ofersittan* (2), *oflinnan* (3), *oðstillan* (1) and *(ge)trucian* (4). In this final selection, the verb *(ge)trucian* was only found with the meaning “to fail,”² while *for(e)sacan* was only identified with the meaning “to prevent,”³ and in consequence these two verbs were discarded as *End* verbs and left out of the discussion. Furthermore, neither *ofersittan*

¹ On the prefix *ge-* and the morphological alternations of Old English verbs, see Javier Martín Arista's work (2012, 2017, 2019).

² [ÆCHom II, 3 007000 (23.128)]
*Ne **trucað** heora nan ana ðurh unmihte. ac ðurh gecynde anre godcundnysse. hi wyrcað ealle æfre an weorc.*

“Not one of them fails alone through weakness, but through the nature of one Godhead they all work ever one work.”

³ [MtGl (Li) 006300 (3.13)]
Ða cuom haelend from in to þæt he were gefulwad from him. soðlice foresoc l forbead hine cueð ic from ðe rehtra is gefulwia & ðu cuom l cymes to me.

“Then the Saviour came to be baptised by him. Indeed, John prevented and prohibited him and said: it is more suitable that I am baptised by you and you come to me.”

nor *linnan* were found in prose texts with the meaning under analysis, so poetry works were consulted for examples.

The syntax of the fragments was checked with the parsing provided by *The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose* (Taylor et al. 2003), when available. Fragments are presented with their text code in *The Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (Healey et al. 2004). The following translations from Old English texts were followed: Benjamin Thorpe (1844, 1846), Thomas Oswald Cockayne (1864), Albert Cook and Chauncey Brewster Tinker (1908), Edmund G. Gardner (1911), Henry Sweet (1958), M. C. Seymour (1965), G. N. Garmonsway (1975), Michael James Swanton (1975), Brigitte Langefeld (1985), Lewis E. Nicholson (1991), G. I. Needham (1996), Thomas Miller (1999) and Carmen Acevedo Butcher (2006).

4. THE SIMPLEX AND COMPLEX LINKING OF *END* VERBS

End verbs have been analysed from the point of view of simplex linking—thematic role, macrorole, argument versus argument-adjunct, direct versus oblique argument, prepositional government, PSA assignment—and complex linking—nucleus, core and clause juncture, cosubordination, subordination and coordination nexus, omission, anaphora, nominalisation, participial uses.

That said, the *Aktionsart* class of *End* verbs is Achievement, which corresponds to an ingressive and telic event of the type INGR predicate' (x) or (x, y). The lexical representation of *End* verbs shows that the ongoing activity has a punctual endpoint. This can be seen in (1):

(1)

End verbs

ACHIEVEMENT

INGR do' (x, [stop' (x, y)])

The x argument in the logical structure in (1) is assigned the macrorole Actor. The y argument is a linked predication. In an expression such as *She stopped working*, the juncture takes place at the nuclear level because there is no complementiser between the two nuclei and the second verb is intransitive (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997, 460). The nexus type is cosubordination, given that the single argument that receives the macrorole Actor is shared by the matrix predication and the linked predication. The complex sentence, therefore, is an instance of

nuclear cosubordination. The interclausal semantic relation between the matrix and the linked predication is Phase—*End* verbs, like *Begin* verbs, are aspectual.

End verbs are macrorole intransitive, which means that they take one semantic macrorole only. In an Old English expression like *He ne ablinð to asendenne bydelas* “He does not cease to send messengers” in (2), the x argument plays the thematic role of Effector and receives the macrorole Actor. The linked predication *to asendenne bydelas* “to send messengers” is a nonmacrorole core:

(2)

[ÆCHom II, 5 43.53]

He fram frymðe middaneardes oð his geendunge. He ne ablinð to asendenne bydelas and lareowas to lærenne his folc.

“Because from the beginning of the world till its ending, he ceases not to send messengers and teachers to teach his people.”

4.1. *Āblinnan*

The verb *āblinnan* is found in simplex and complex linking and is unattested in the passive voice. In simplex linking, it appears in intransitive clauses with an adjunct in the periphery, as is the case with *for ðæs weges earfoðnysse* “for the roughness of the way” in (3), or with an oblique argument inflected for the genitive and no preposition, such as *his æhtan* “his pursuit” in (4) and *þæs rynes* “the run” in (5):

(3)

[LS 8 (Eust) 35]

*Ne hors ne he sylf gewergod wæs, ne he for ðæs weges earfoðnysse **ablan**, ac he lange æfter ferde, and feor fram his geferum gewat.*

“Neither his horse nor himself was wearied, nor did he **stop** for the roughness of the way, but he went long after (it), find departed far from his companions.”

(4)

[LS 8 (Eust) 38]

*Placidas ða lange stod, and beheold þone heort, and wundrode his micelnysse, and **ablan** his æhtan.*

“Then Placidus stood long and beheld the hart, and wondered at its size, and **ceased** his pursuit.”

(5)

[ÆLS (Martin) 1060]

*Da ofhreow þam halgan þæs haran frecednyss, and þam hundum behead þæt hi **ablunnon** þæs rynes, and þone haran forleton mid fleame ætberstan.*

“Then the saint had ruth of the hare’s peril, and commanded the hounds to **desist** from running.”

The verb *āblinnan* can also be found with an argument-adjunct in the dative case governed by a preposition, such as in *fram þam gewinne* “from the task” in (6) and *fram yrre* “from anger” in (7):

(6)

[BedeHead 1.10.1]

*Dæt se halga papa Gregorius Augustinum sende mid munecum Angeðeode to bodiganne Godes word and geleafan and eac swylce mid trymmendlice ærendgewrite hi gestrangode, þæt hi ne **ablunnen** fram þam gewinne.*

“That the holy pope Gregory sent Augustine with monks to preach God’s word and faith to the English and also encouraged them with comforting letters not to **give up** their task.”

(7)

[PsGld (Roeder) 36.8]

***Ablin** fram yrre forlæt hatheortnisse.*

“**Cease** from anger and leave rage; have no emulation to do evil.”

In complex linking, the verb *āblinnan* turns up in core cosubordination. This is illustrated in example (8), where both verbs, *ablynnon* and *to myngyenne*, share the Actor and are nonadjacent due to the presence of the argument shared by the matrix and the linked predication—literally “you do not cease you to take care”—and the complementiser. Figure 1 below represents core cosubordination with *āblinnan*.

(8)

[ChrodR 1 79.39]

*Forþi þonne swa miclan swa ge magon, mid worde and mid bysne, swa we bufan sædon, ne **ablynnon** ge to myngyenne þa eow betæhtan sceap.*

“Therefore, as much as you can, in word as well as through example, as we said before, do not **cease** to take care of the sheep.”

*Ða sona hine eft genam se deofol, þe hine ær forlet, & se ne **ablann** þæt he hine ne swencte, oþ þæt he his feorh aprang of þam lichaman.*

“Whereupon immediately the devil that before had left him entered again, and never **ceased** to torment him, until he had separated his soul from his body.”

(10)

[GD 2 (C) 31.163.14]

*Ða sona swa se Zalla gehyrde þone Godes wer næmnan, he **ablan**, þæt he na ma ne swencte þone ceorl mid þam tintregum.*

“And this he did, to the end that his tormentor, giving credit to his words, might at least for a while **surcease** from his horrible cruelty. Galla hearing this tormented him no longer.”

(11)

[Bede 5 2.390.2]

*& ofer þæt ealle ðy dæge ne **ablan** & þære æfterfylgendan nihte, [...] þæt he a hwæthwugu spræce & oðrum mannum æteaude ða deagolnisse his willan & his geðohta, þæt he næfre ærþon gedon meahte.*

“And besides that, he never **ceased** all that day and the following night [...] ever uttering something and disclosing to others the secrets of his will.”

In example (12), *āblinnan* is complemented by a finite and a nonfinite verb simultaneously: *þæt we Gode cwemon, & deofol tynan* “that we God please and to annoy the devil.” The juncture takes place at core level, in such a way that a clause—*þæt we Gode cwemon*—and a core—*deofol tynan*—are inserted into core positions as compulsory arguments without a macrorole. The nexus relation is cosubordination because the first argument is shared and because operators have scope over the matrix and the linked verb:

(12)

[HomS 14 141]

*Ne **ablinnan** we, manna bearn, þæt we Gode cwemon, & deofol tynan, dæges & nihtes.*

“Let us, the children of men, not **cease** to please God and annoy the devil day and night.”

This dual complementation is of course not possible in Present-Day English and constitutes a reflex of the competition between nonfinite forms of the verb—the inflected versus uninflected infinitive—noted by Morgan Callaway (1913), as well as the competition between finite and

nonfinite clausal complements—infinite versus *þæt* clauses—identified by Bettelou Los (2005) and Don Ringe and Ann Taylor (2014). In (12), the uninflected infinitive gains the upper hand, but the nonfinite forms do not take over completely because the first cosubordinate predication is not a core, like *deofol tynan*, but a finite verb clause introduced by *þæt*. From the perspective of Present-Day English, the level of juncture has changed, given that it is no longer possible to complement *End* verbs with finite clauses, but the nexus relation has remained cosubordination.

Other instances of complex linking with the verb *āblinnan* arise with the omission of constituents, as in (13), which constitutes a juncture-nexus relation of nuclear cosubordination. The constituents between square brackets are missing in the matrix predication:

(13)

[LS 16 (MargaretCot.Tib. A.iii) 19.19]

*We syndon flæsc and blod, æfre [syngiende] and næfre **ablinnende** [syngiende].*

“We are flesh and blood and are always sinning and never **ceasing**.”

Āblinnan also takes part in nominalisations of the verbal predication such as (14), where *weorces* is morphologically related to the weak verb *wyrcean* “to work,” and (15), *tintregena*, morphologically related to the weak verb derivative *tintegrian* “to torment.” In (14), for example, a nominalisation from a verbal predication with *wyrcean* “to work” to a genitive noun phrase—*weorces* “of the work”—takes place, so that the first argument of the matrix verb, *āblinnan*, is shared with the linked predication, *wyrcean*. This is the argument that receives the macrorole Actor. The same analysis holds for (15). The Actor argument of the matrix verb is shared with the linked verb that is nominalised into a genitive, *tintegrian-tintregena*. Figure 2 below represents the nominalisation of a verbal predication into a genitive noun phrase.

(14)

[LS 17.1 (MartinMor) 277]

*Þa wæs he dagas wel manige mid þære feforadle swiþe gestanden, ah he þeah næfre Godes weorces ne **ablon**.*

“He was afflicted by a fever for many days, yet he never **ceased** from God’s work.”

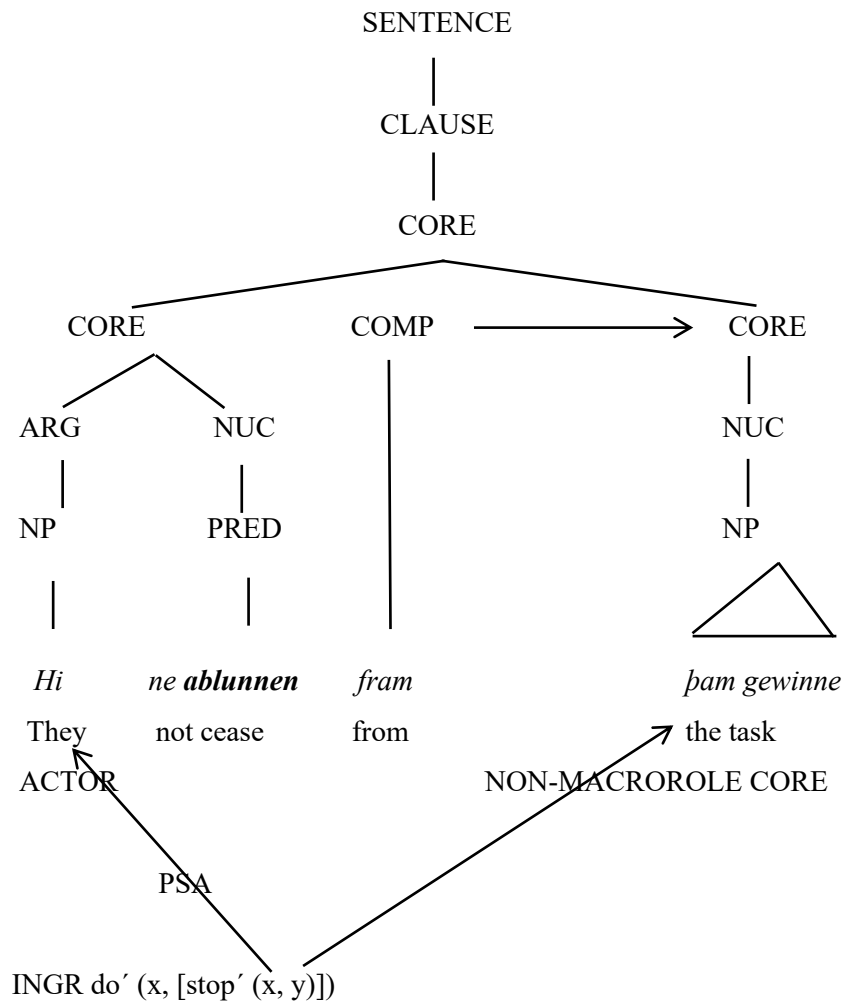
(15)

[ÆCHom I, 29 428.274]

Witodlice Decius egeslice awedde & binnon þrim dagum mid feondlicere stemne singallice hrymde: ic halsie þe Laurentius. Ablin hwæthwega þæra tintregena.

“But Decius became horribly frantic, and for three days, with fiendlike voice, constantly cried ‘I beseech thee, Lawrence, **cease** somewhat of those torments’.”

FIGURE 2. Nominalisation of verbal predication with *āblinnan*



4.2. *Ætstandan*

In the case of the verb *ætstandan*, there are instances of both complex and simplex linking. The latter is found in intransitive clauses, both absolute (16) and with an adjunct in the periphery (17), and in transitive clauses that take a direct core argument in the accusative case, such as *þæt* “which” in (18):

[ÆLS (Ash Wed) 215]

Þa ætstod þæt swurd and þone swuran ne hrepode.

“Then the sword **stood** still and did not touch the neck.”

(17)

[ÆCHom II, 12.2 121.386]

Ða Iordanis seo ea on emtwa toeode. and for ðæs folces fare flowan ne mihte. and ætstod se stream. swa steap swa munt.

“Then the river Jordan separated into two parts, and for the people’s passage might not flow, and the stream **stopped** as steep as a mount.”

(18)

[ÆHom 12 109]

Uppan sae he eode, & þa sælican yða hine abæron; & he þone blawendan wind mid his hæse gestilde, þæt he ætstod sona, & þa scipmenn sædon þæt he soð Godes sunu wære.

“Then Christ got up and rebuked the wind and the sea, commanding them **to be still**. And immediately a great tranquility came to the sea and the oarsmen marveled, saying: ‘What sort of man is this, that both winds and sea obey him?’”

Complex linking with the verb *ætstandan* is found in clauses involving a participle without constituents of its own, functioning as a noun modifier (19). In (20), the verbal predication is nominalised because *ryne* is morphologically related to the strong verb base *yrnan* “to run.” The argument in the genitive, *þæs blodes*, takes the macrorole Actor in the corresponding verbal predication:

(19)

[Lch I (HerbHead) 4.3]

Wið þa þe habbað ætstandene ædran swa þæt þæt blod ne mæg his gecyndlican ryne habban & hyra þygne gehealdan ne magon.

“For those that have **stopped** veins, so that the blood may not have its kindly (natural) run, and are not able to retain their food.”

(20)

[Lk (WSCp) 8.44]

Ða genealæhte heo wiðæftan & æthran hys reafes fnæd, ða ætstod sona þæs blodes ryne.

“She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak and immediately her bleeding **stopped**.”

4.3. *Blinnan*

The verb *blinnan* is found in both simplex and complex linking. In the former, it turns up in intransitive clauses (absolute use) (21), and in intransitive clauses with an adjunct in the periphery (22):

(21)

[CP 45.337.4]

*Se ðe ryhtwis bið, he bið a sellende, & no ne **blind**.*

“He who is righteous is always giving and never **ceases**.”

(22)

[GD 3 (C) 14.202.6]

*Ge wel habbað geworht & gewonnen; **blinnað** nu sume hwile.*

“You have worked and toiled well. **Rest** now for a while.”

Blinnan is not attested in the passive voice, but it appears in other syntactic configurations in simplex clauses, including an argument-adjunct case-marked dative with preposition (23), and with an oblique argument inflected for the genitive without a preposition in core (24):

(23)

[Bede 1 7.40.16]

*Ða wæs se dema æfter ðyssum mid þa neownysse swa monigra heofonlicra wundra swyþe gedrefed and gefyrhted, het þa sona **blinnan** fram ehtnysse cristenra manna.*

“Thereupon the judge, much troubled and affrighted by the strangeness of so many heavenly wonders, at once ordered them to **cease** from the persecution of Christians.”

(24)

[Bede 5 18.466.25]

*& he wæs in reogolum cyrclicre gesetnesse se behydegæsta þa to healdenne, & he þæs ne **blon**.*

“And he was most careful in observing the rules of ecclesiastical law. And in this he never **slackened**.”

In complex linking, *blinnan* appears in nuclear cosubordination (25), where both verbs are adjacent (no complementiser) and share the first argument, as well as in core cosubordination (26), with a transitive dependent verb, shared first argument and no complementiser—nonadjacency due to the object of the dependent verb “*þa burg*”. Figure 3 below shows linking with the juncture-nexus relation of nuclear cosubordination.

(25)

[Bede 1 9.44.2]

*Of þære tide Romane **blunnun** ricsian on Breotene.*

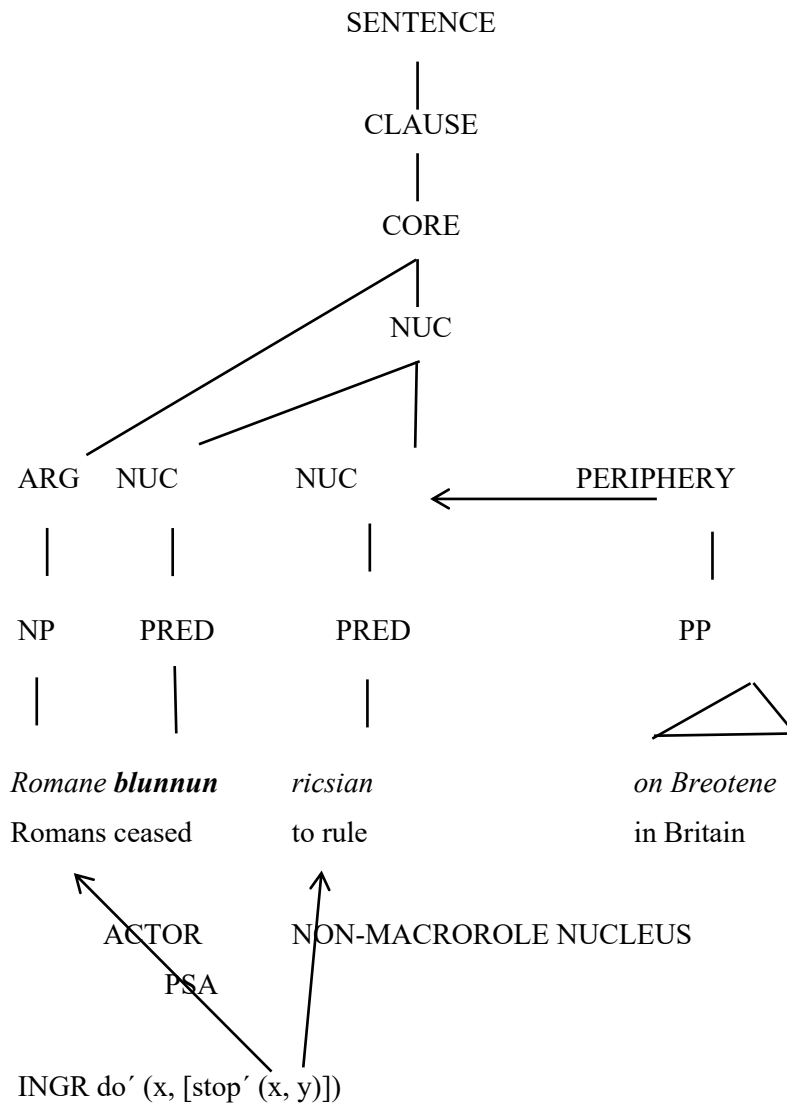
“From that time the Romans **ceased** to have dominion in Britain.”

(26) [Bede 3 14.202.20]

*& heo ealle afyrhte onweg flugon & **blunnon** þa burg afeohton.*

“and all fled away in alarm and **ceased** to attack the city.”

FIGURE 3. Nuclear cosubordination with *blinnan*



In clausal cosubordination, *blinnan* belongs in clauses that are inserted into the argumental position of core, (27) and (28). In these examples, the clause does not receive a macrorole and the complementiser is *þæt*:

(27)

[GD 1 (C) 4.27.4]

Ne blan he hwæðre, þæt he his geongran ne manode, þæt hi næfre gelyfdon heom sylfum to swiðe in þissere wisan.

“He never **ceased** to admonish his scholars not to trust themselves to such a point in this belief.”

(28)

[GD 4 (C) 46.335.4]

*Hi wilniað, þæt hi lifigan aa in þære synne butan ænde, þa þe ne **blinnað** næfre, þæt hi syngian þa hwile þe hi lifgiað.*

“They wish to live always in this sin without end, so that they never **cease** to sin while they live.”

Other instances of complex linking with *blinnan* arise in anaphoric relations and in sentences with omitted constituents. (29) and (30) involve clausal cosubordination. The elements between double round brackets are coreferential, while those that are omitted in the fragment appear inside square brackets. For instance, in (29) the demonstrative *þæs* “that” makes anaphoric reference to the clause *we lifigende leofne dryhten balde bletsigað* “we that live bless the Lord openly.” In (30), the clause *he bið a sellende* “he is always giving” is the omitted complement of *blind* “ceases.” It is worth pointing out with respect to (30) that the first argument is not realised in the matrix clause because it is shared with the linked clause and is realised in the latter (*he* “he”). Figure 4 below represents linking in core cosubordination with anaphora.

(29)

[PPs 113.25]

*Ac ((we lifigende leofne dryhten balde bletsigað)), ne ((þæs))_i **blinnað** nu.*

“And we that live bless the Lord openly; this time now and forever (lit. and we do not **cease** of that now).”

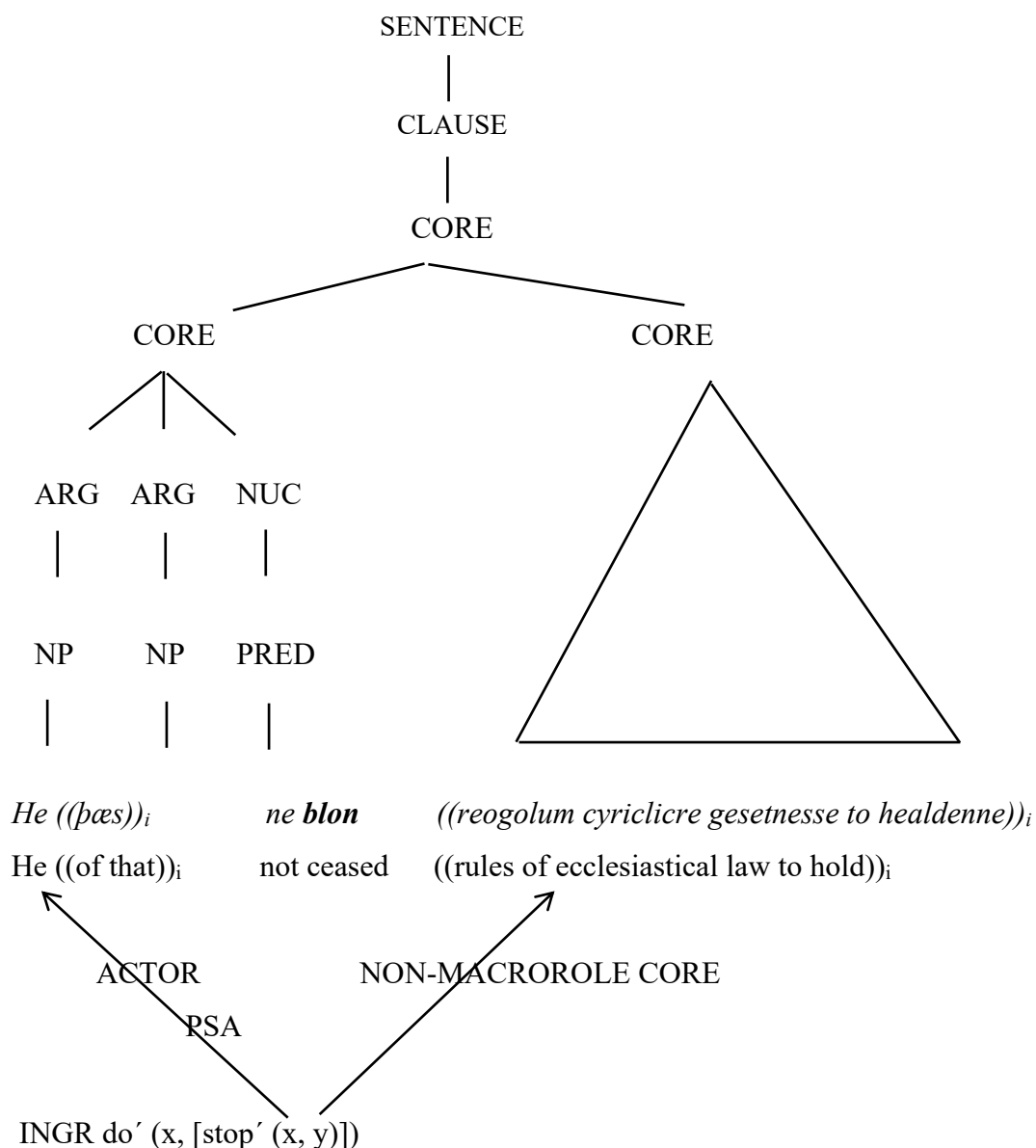
(30)

[CP 45.337.4]

*Se ðe ryhtwis bið, [he bið a sellende], & no ne **blind**.*

“He who is righteous is always giving, and never **ceases**.”

FIGURE 4. Core cosubordination with *blinnan* (anaphora)



Examples of nominalisations of the verbal predication are also found with *blinnan*, as happens in (31), where *cossetunges* is a derivative of the weak verb *cyssan* “to kiss” and the element in the genitive case, *foeta* “feet,” takes the macrorole Undergoer of the corresponding verbal predication:

(31)

[LkG1 (Li) 7.45]

Haec [...] ex quo intraui, non cessauit osculari pedes meos d̄ios [...] of ðon l̄ siðða in ic foerde, ne blann cossetunges l̄ foeta mine.

“You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not **stopped** kissing my feet.”

4.4. *Geblinnan*

The verb *geblinnan* is found in simplex linking in intransitive clauses with absolute meaning and in clauses with omitted constituents in complex linking (32), an instance of constituent omission, in such a way that the full expression involves clausal subordination, comprising the verb *geblinnan* in the matrix predication and the clause *bideþ þæs ecan leohtes* “prays for the eternal life.” Notice that the first argument is shared in the two cosubordinate clauses in the coordinate subject construction *se leofað & gelyfeþ & no ne geblinneþ* “he lives and believes and does not cease” and in the linked predication with the verb *biddan* “to pray”:

(32)

[HomS 8 65]

*& se leofað & gelyfeþ se þe siteþ be þæm wege wædliende, & þonne [bideþ þæs ecan leohtes], & no ne **geblinneþ**.*

“He lives and believes, he that sits by the way begging and praying continually for the eternal light to come [*and never ceases to do so*].”

4.5. *Linnan*

Only simplex linking is found with the verb *linnan*. *Linnan* is not attested in prose texts with the meaning under consideration. Thus, (33) is from poetry. In this example, *linnan* is complemented by an oblique argument in the genitive case and without preposition in the core, *þinre aldre* “of this life”:

(33)

[Beo 042000 (1473)]

*Gif ic æt þearfe þinre scolde aldre **linnan**, þæt ðu me a wære forðgewitenum on fæder stæle.*

“If I, for your need, was going to **give up** this life you would always be to me like a father.”

4.6. *Ofersittan*

Ofersittan appears in simplex clauses only. This verb does not occur in prose texts with the meaning under discussion. Hence, an instance from poetry follows in (34):

(34)

[Beo 069400 (2527)]

Ic eom on mode from þæt ic wið þone guðflogan gylp ofersitte.

“My mood is bold but **forbears** to boast over this battling flyer.”

4.7. *Oflinnan*

Simplex linking is also found with the verb *oflinnan*. Example (35) involves an intransitive clause with absolute meaning, while in (36) and (37) *oflinnan* can be seen with an oblique argument inflected for the genitive and no preposition: *þara unarimedra metta & þara gescyndendra gestreona & þara oftrædra symla & þara unrihthæmeda* “those innumerable feasts and those hurrying acquisitions and those frequent banquets and those fornications” in (37), and *þara tælnessa* “those slanders” in (38):

(35)

[HomU 7 (ScraggVerc 22) 006600 (108)]

Oflinnað la, ær eow se deað ofercume.

“**Cease**, lo, before death overcomes you.”

(36)

[HomU 7 (ScraggVerc 22) 012200 (201)]

& for ðan uton oflinnan þara unarimedra metta & þara gescyndendra gestreona & þara oftrædra symla & þara unrihthæmeda.

“And, therefore, let us **desist** from those innumerable feasts and those hurrying acquisitions and those frequent banquets and those fornications.”

(37)

[HomU 7 (ScraggVerc 22) 012300 (203)]

Utan eac oflinnan þara tælnessa, & uton us on gebedu gelomlæcan, & uton ure lif on rihtre gewendan, ær ðan us deað gegripe.

“Let us also **desist** from those slanders and let us be frequent in prayers and let us turn our life to truth, before death snatches us.”

4.8. *Oðstillan*

Finally, the verb *oðstillan* has been found in simplex linking, as in the passive in (38):

(38)

[Lch I (Herb) 007400 (2.5)]

Þonne bið hit sona oðstilled.

“Then it (the hemorrhage) will soon **be stilled.**”

5. THE ALTERNATIONS OF *END* VERBS

Only the verbs *āblinnan* and *blinnan* are found in alternations, more specifically, in the nominalisation and genitive alternations. The former opposes a complex sentence with a finite verbal form and a simplex clause with a noun phrase that entails a verbal predication and is inflected for the genitive case. The noun in the genitive is morphologically related to a verb. In (39), the morphological relation holds between the genitive noun *weorces* “work” and the verb *wyrcean* “to work.” The verbal predication and the nominalisation share the Actor. For the sake of comparison, (40) is a clausal cosubordination with a verbal matrix and linked predication:

(39)

[LS 17.1 (MartinMor) 277]

*Ða wæs he dagas wel manige mid þære feforadle swiþe gestanden, ah he þeah næfre Godes weorces ne **ablon.***

“He was afflicted by a fever for many days, yet he never **ceased** from God’s work.”

(40)

[GD 2 (C) 1.99.10]

*& þonne hwæþre ne **ablan** Romanus na forþon þæt he him ne þegnode mid gerisenlicum gemetum.*

“Yet, for all that, Romanus did not **cease** to serve Benedict by all the possible means he could.”

The genitive alternation comprises morphological case and prepositional government. It opposes the genitive and the dative, on the one hand, and the lack of preposition and prepositional government, on the other. (41) and (42) correspond to the verb *āblinnan*. (41) presents the verb with the first argument in the nominative, *hi* “they,” and the second argument

in the genitive case without preposition, *þæs rynes* “their running.” (42) has a first argument in the nominative, *hi* “they,” and a second argument that is inflected for the dative, *fram þam gewinne* “from their task.” In both (41) and (42), the second argument is Theme:

(41)

[ÆLS (Martin) 1060]

*Ða ofhreow þam halgan þæs haran frecednyss, and þam hundum behead þæt hi **ablunnon** þæs rynes, and þone haran forleton mid fleame ætberstan.*

“Then the saint had ruth of the hare’s peril, and commanded the hounds to **desist** from running.”

(42)

[BedeHead 1.10.1]

*Ðæt se halga papa Gregorius Augustinum sende mid munecum Angeðeode to bodiganne Godes word and geleafan and eac swylce mid trymmendlice ærendgewrite hi gestrangode, þæt hi ne **ablunnen** fram þam gewinne.*

“That the holy pope Gregory sent Augustine with monks to preach God’s word and faith to the English and also encouraged them with comforting letters not to **give up** their task.”

The genitive alternation is also shown with the verb *blinnan* in (43) and (44), with the former taking a genitive Theme, *þæs* “that,” and the latter opting for the prepositional dative Theme *from unhalum styrenessum* “from aching movement”:

(43)

[Bede 5 18.466.25]

*& he wæs in reogolum cyrclicre gesetnesse se behydegæsta þa to healdenne, & he þæs ne **blon**.*

“And he was most careful in observing the rules of ecclesiastical law. And in this he never **slackened**.”

(45)

[Bede 3 7.178.26]

*Ne wæs þa elden, þætte þæt saar gestilled wæs; & hit **blonn** from unhalum styrenessum þara leoma.*

“Without delay, the pain was relieved; and it **ceased** to move its limbs in suffering.”

6. CONCLUSION

The morphologically related verbs *āblinnan*, *blinnan*, *geblinnan* and *oflinnan* convey similar meaning components and show convergent argument realisations. They do not take a macrorole argument in the accusative case and usually appear in complex linking, in constructions of nuclear, core and clausal juncture and nexus of cosubordination. Some of them take an oblique argument in the genitive or an argument-adjunct with a preposition that governs the dative. Moreover, *āblinnan* and *blinnan* are found in the nominalisation alternation as well as in the genitive alternation. These verbs are the strongest candidates for *End* verbs. On the other hand, *ætstandan* is restricted to simplex clauses and conveys a meaning that reflects position rather than inaction. The only evidence for class membership with *End* verbs was found in nominalisations. The verb *oðstillan* is similar in meaning and grammatical behaviour, but was not found in the type of complex linking involved in nominalisations. This is the weakest candidate as an *End* verb. Finally, *linnan* and *ofersittan*, which only appear in simplex clauses in transitive configurations, cannot be said to belong to the class of *End* verbs.

Apart from class membership, this article has highlighted two aspects where Old English and Present-Day English diverge. In the first place, it has been shown that the syntactic constructions with *End* verbs in Old English differ as regards the level of juncture—clausal juncture is no longer possible in Present-day English—although the nexus relation (cosubordination) remains constant. It has also been shown that dual complementation with a finite and nonfinite verb that are simultaneously linked occurs in Old English, specifically with *End* verbs. However, this question requires more research as, from the theoretical point of view, this syntactic configuration poses a problem of representation in RRG. Indeed, cosubordination is rendered in RRG by means of a tree diagram where two core nodes are directly dominated by another core role, while dual complementation calls for a node core directly dominating both a core and a clause node.

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