

OLD ENGLISH *TRY* VERBS: GRAMMATICAL BEHAVIOUR AND CLASS MEMBERSHIP

Ana Elvira Ojanguren López
Universidad de La Rioja

1. INTRODUCTION

This article examines Old English *Try* verbs and discusses to what extent they constitute a unified verbal class. Along with the general aim of making progress with a syntactically-based organisation of the Old English lexicon, the relevance of *Try* verbs, which represent a subclass of inaction verbs, lies in their complex complementation.

The assessment of class membership takes both semantic and syntactic aspects into account. On the side of semantics, meaning components are considered. On the syntactic side, the morpho-syntactic realization of verbal arguments is analysed. To carry out this analysis, the theoretical model of this research is based on Levin's (1993) framework of verb classes and alternations, in terms of which the verbs that belong to a certain class share meaning components and grammatical behaviour; and Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2004, 2005, 2007, 2014), which links the semantics of a verb to its syntax by means of semantic macroroles and syntactic functions. Additional insights from the Lexematic-functional approach are taken into account.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical background and reviews the relevant concepts and notions. The method, sources and data follow in Section 3. Then, Section 4 analyses the linking semantics-syntax with *Try* verbs. Section 5 offers some diachronic perspectives and, to close this work, Section 6 draws the main conclusion.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND REVIEW

This work draws on three approaches to the building of verb classes: Levin's framework of verb classes and alternations, Role and Reference Grammar and the Lexematic-Functional approach. These approaches have been selected because they are models of the interaction of semantics and syntax and, furthermore, compatible with one another. Firstly, these theoretical models consider constructions, understood as recurrent associations of meaning and form, compatible with their grammatical analysis. Secondly, these approaches show some similarities that underline their theoretical compatibility: they have scope over the clause, focus on compulsory syntactic arguments and the semantics of verbs and, above all, are mainly concerned with the association between syntax and semantics. Last but not least, this combination of approaches has been successfully applied to other verbal classes of Old English, such as verbs of rejoice (Martín Arista 2020), verbs of prohibition (Ojanguren López 2019), and *End* verbs (Ojanguren López (2020).

Levin's (1993) approach to the building of verb classes crucially relies on syntactic behaviour. Thus, the alternations in which a verb partakes determine its

membership to a particular verb class and, at the same time, the semantics of a verb limits the number of arguments it can take and the syntactic configurations in which it can appear. As Levin (1993: 5) puts it, “various aspects of the syntactic behaviour of verbs are tied to their meaning”. Verbal classes involve verbs that share a semantic components and its syntactic behaviour, including the number of arguments which they take, the alternations they participate of and their morphological features. Alternations, in this framework, are related to the diathesis of verbs (Levin 1993: 22) and are used to define a verbal class as well as to identify contrasts and make generalisations across verb classes.

Levin (1993) does not consider *Try* verbs as an independent verbal class. The verb “try” is listed under Psych-verbs (verbs of psychological state) and, more concretely, within the category of *Amuse* Verbs, together with verbs like “affect”, “horrify”, “please” or “worry”. Levin (1993:188-193) characterises Psych-verbs as taking two semantic arguments: the experiencer and the stimulus. *Amuse* verbs are defined as transitive, with the subject as the experiencer of the action. Concerning syntax, they present systematic contrasts involving syntactic configurations and the number of arguments taken. To illustrate this point, most of these verbs participate in the Middle alternation, as can be seen in *The clown amused the little children* vs. *Little children amuse easily* and the PRO-Obj Alternation, as in *That joke never fails to amuse little children* vs. *That joke never failed to amuse*.

It should be noted, however, that the verb “try” does not comply with the features presented by Levin for *Amuse* verbs. Thus, this article does not consider *Try* verbs as belonging to Psych-verbs, but as a sub-class of Action verbs, following the classification by Faber and Mairal (1999: 279-293). Alternations, on the other hand, are still considered in the analysis presented in this work because they relate morpho-syntactic configurations to meaning variation. For instance, *Try* verbs partake of the nominalization alternation, which involves a contrast between verbal and nominal arguments, as in *They attempted to remove several key clauses from the contract* vs. *They attempted the removal of several key clauses from the contract*. These complex structures call for an overall theoretical framework that can deal with the relationship between syntax and semantics in an exhaustive and explicit way. In this way, even though Levin’s contribution is relevant for the building of verb classes, an overall grammatical theory is necessary for defining and classifying *Try* verbs.

Role and Reference Grammar, hereafter RRG (Foley & Van Valin 1984; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2005), classifies verbs according to semantic properties expressed as semantic roles. In this way, the semantic roles assigned to the different arguments of a verb determine its membership to a verbal class. This correspondence crucially depends on the *Aktionsart* (internal aspect) type and macrorole (generalised semantic role) assignment. *Aktionsart* types include two basic types, States and Activities. Achievements are linked to punctual events and Accomplishments are related to durative events. Van Valin and LaPolla incorporate a fifth type, the Active Accomplishment, for telic uses of Activity verbs, as well as the causative version of all the aforementioned classes. In a further development of the *Aktionsart* typology, Van Valin (2005) adds the Semelfactive type, for punctual events both in their causative and non-causative variants.

Logical structures display the correspondences that hold between semantics and syntax in a clause. Hence, they stand up as the main device of linking as established between semantics and syntax in RRG. In Figure 1, *Aktionsart* types are shown together with their corresponding logical structures. Stative verbs are marked as **predicate'**, while non-stative verbs show **do'** in their logical structures. Verbal arguments are indicated with the variables x, y and z; and the labels INGR(essive), SEM(e)L(factive), BECOME and CAUSE stand for the metalinguistic predicates ingressives, semelfactives, accomplishments and causatives respectively.

[Insert Figure 1. *Aktionsart* types and logical structures in RRG.]

RRG bases its semantic interpretation of verbal arguments on the macroroles *Actor* and *Undergoer*, which stand for the two generalised semantic roles. Macroroles allow for generalisations across different argumental structures. If the predication is transitive, the first argument presents the *Actor* macrorole and the second the *Undergoer*. In the case of intransitive predications, in which there is only one argument, it can be either *Actor* or *Undergoer*, depending on the semantic properties of the predicate. RRG does not consider a third macrorole argument for ditransitives. Instead, the third argument is referred to as a *non-macrorole direct core argument*.

Concerning grammatical relations, the notions of subject and object are not universal for RRG. In its place, RRG puts forward the concept of Privileged Syntactic Argument (PSA). In active constructions, the PSA is the argument holding the macrorole *Actor* if the verb is dynamic, or the argument with the *Undergoer* macrorole in the case of a stative verb. In passive constructions, the PSA is linked to the *Undergoer* argument. The other arguments appearing in a clause are considered core arguments, which can be either direct, if they are not preceded by a preposition, or oblique, if they have preposition or are inflected in genitive or dative case (as is the case in inflectional languages like Old English). However, there are some restrictions to this. In some languages, the PSA status can only be enjoyed by macrorole arguments, while, in others, non-macrorole core arguments can also be PSA (as happens in Old English).

Linking refers to the correspondence between semantics and syntax. It is regulated by the Completeness Constraint, which posits that, for a sentence to be interpreted, there must be a direct correspondence between the expressions realised in the syntax and the arguments appearing in the semantic representation, and the other way around. Linking also takes into account elements such as verb agreement, case assignment and prepositional government.

RRG bases its theory of complex sentences on the concepts of *juncture* and *nexus*. Juncture refers to the type of unit, while nexus has to do with the type of relation that is established between the different units of juncture. Juncture and nexus are independent from one another, which gives rise to the different combinations. The structure of the clause in RRG is based on a hierarchical structure referred to as the *Layered Structure of the Clause*, which is composed of different semantic layers motivated by the scope of operators (grammatical features such as tense, aspect, modality, etc.). The main components of the logical structure of the clause are the Core, the Clause and the

Sentence. The Core comprises the verbal nucleus and its arguments and argument-adjuncts, as in *eat fish* and *go to the hall*. The Clause involves the Core and the Periphery, as in *cook dinner in the kitchen*. Lastly, the Sentence is composed of one or more Clause units, as in *I have breakfast before going to work*.

The types of juncture can be nuclear, core, clausal or sentential juncture depending on the complexity of the combining units. The presence of complementisers is also used as a defining criterion to establish the different types of juncture. For instance, nuclear junctures do not contain complementisers, while core junctures may have them. Consequently, the two nuclei can be adjacent in a nuclear juncture, but not in a core juncture.

The possible relations held between the different units in a juncture (nexus) include coordination, subordination and cosubordination. Subordination can be divided into daughter subordination and peripheral subordination. Whereas in daughter subordination the subordinate clause acts as an argument (as in *That my sister got married surprised everyone*), the subordinate clause is a periphery in peripheral subordination (as in *John had worked for a Chinese company before he retired*). Both subtypes are possible at any level of juncture. Subordination requires clefting and passivisation to be possible. Cosubordination, in turn, refers to dependent coordination. For cosubordination to hold, the units must share at least one operator at the level of juncture, as the mutual dependence between the units is due to the operators they share. In the example *The supporters left singing anthems*, the operator of imperfect aspect has scope over both nuclei, *left* and *singing*.

The juncture-nexus types are ordered on the basis of the degree of the integration of the two units: whether they are integrated into a single unit or remain two separate units. The semantic relations form a continuum expressing the degree of semantic cohesion between the propositional units linked in the complex structure, i.e. the degree to which they express a single event or discrete events. The interaction between syntactic and semantic relations is represented by means of the Interclausal Relations Hierarchy, presented in Figure 2.

[Insert Figure 2. Interclausal Relations Hierarchy.]

The Interclausal Relations Hierarchy is organised on the basis of strength of the syntactic bond between the units giving rise to the complex structure. The Interclausal Relations Hierarchy states that the closer the semantic relation between two propositions is, the stronger the syntactic link between them must be. Thus, the semantic relations at the top of the hierarchy should be expressed by the syntactic relations at the top, and, conversely, the semantic relations at the bottom of the hierarchy should be expressed by the syntactic relations at the bottom.

The two frameworks described so far focus on PDE. In contrast, the Lexematic-Functional approach has also been applied to Old English. Several Old English verb classes have been studied, along with their logical structures (formal representation of *Aktionsart* types), constructions and alternations: verbs of warning (González Orta 2002), verbs of running (Cortés Rodríguez & Torres Medina 2003), verbs of writing (Cortés

Rodríguez & Martín Díaz 2003), verbs of smell perception and emission (González Orta 2003), verbs of speech (González Orta 2004), *remember* verbs (González Orta 2005), verbs of sound (Cortés Rodríguez & González Orta 2006), verbs of feeling (C. García Pacheco 2013), and verbs of existence (L. García Pacheco 2013); as well as some individual constructions, like the resultative (González Orta 2006).

On the association between semantics and syntax, the Lexematic-Functional approach draws on RRG, with one important difference: it gives constructions pride of place. The lexical templates of the Lexematic-Functional approach are lexical representations that include syntactic and semantic information within the same format, which corresponds to the logical structures of RRG and enriched semantic decomposition. Lexical templates, therefore, describe a construction with its various instantiations and subconstructions.

To recapitulate, the theoretical basis of this study can be described as follows. For a certain verbal class to be distinguished, as in the framework of verb classes and alternations (Levin 1993), not only the expression of a common meaning but also a certain degree of similar grammatical behaviour are compulsory. A distinction is made between constructions (recurrent associations of form and meaning) and alternations (recurrent contrasts of form and meaning). In this respect, this study also draws on the Lexematic-Functional approach. Both constructions and alternations make reference to the semantics of the verbs in question by identifying the *Aktionsart* (internal aspect) realisations and also refer to the syntax of verbs (including argument realisation, case marking and prepositional government and clausal relations within the complex sentence).

3. METHOD, SOURCES AND DATA

The analysis that follows is based on RRG (*Aktionsart* types, logical structures and the principles and hierarchies that guarantee the linking between semantics and syntax), as well as on the following concepts of *alternation* and *construction*.

An alternation is a recurrent contrast of form and meaning in the realization of verbal arguments. For example, the contrast between the presence and the absence of the reflexive pronoun with some Old English verbs, such as *faran* ‘to go’ is an alternation.

A construction is an association of nexus (relation) and juncture (unit) in complex sentences, as, for instance, when referring to the cosubordination in coordinate subject constructions. In the analysis of simplex clauses, the focus is on the logical structure corresponding to the *Aktionsart* type, as holding, for example, in the contrast between an activity (*to write books*) and an active accomplishment (*to write this book*).

Verbal classes are motivated by alternations as well as by the constructions in which these alternations can be found. For example, verbs of writing are motivated, at least, by an alternation involving an intransitive (instrumental) construction and an Activity variant related to an Active Accomplishment variant (*to write books* vs. *to write this book*).

The explanation of argument realisation with RRG involves the following aspects: *Aktionsart* type and logical structure (these are constant within the whole verbal class);

macrorole assignment (Actor, Undergoer, non-macrorole); nucleus vs. argument; morphological case assignment (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative); PSA assignment (Privileged Syntactic Argument vs. other arguments) and voice; macrorole argument, non-macrorole argument and argument-adjunct; level of nexus (coordination, subordination, cosubordination); level of juncture (nucleus, core, clause, sentence; including finite vs non-finite form and complementiser). After this syntactic explanation has been given, it is possible to determine the alternations and constructions found with each verb and, ultimately, its class membership.

Rather than distinguishing simplex clauses from complex sentences, two types of linking are considered. Simplex linking takes place when there is one verb only. When there are two or more verbs, complex linking occurs. There are some instances that, in spite of containing just one verb, belong to complex linking because a verb is implicit. This happens, for instance, when anaphora, cataphora or the omission of arguments are involved.

The tree diagrams presented in the following section are based on the system of representation and the syntactic templates for the different juncture-nexus types proposed by Van Valin and LaPolla (1997). The projection of constituents is represented only, while the projection of operators, much less relevant for this work, is put aside. The assignment of juncture level has been treated differently, though. For example, *That Peter won surprised everybody* is a core juncture for Van Valin and LaPolla (1997) because a clausal element is inserted into an argumental position of a core; whereas in this work *That Peter won surprised everybody* is a clausal subordination at core level because a unit of the clausal type is inserted into a unit of the core type, in such a way that the clause occupies an argumental position of the core and may get a macrorole and the PSA of the construction. This decision allows us to describe Old English syntax more accurately and results in a neat system of representation: nuclear junctures do not take complementiser and comprise two adjacent nuclei; core junctures may take a complementiser and a non-finite form of the verb, so that the two nuclei are not always adjacent; and clausal junctures take complementiser and a finite form of the verb.

The set of verbs discussed in this article is based on the lexical domains proposed for English by Faber and Mairal (1999). Within the domain Action, a group can be distinguished that may be called *verbs of inaction* and includes the subdomains ‘To not to 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 the lexical subdomain ‘To make an effort in order to be able to do something’.

According to the online dictionaries *Lexico’s Dictionary* and *Cambridge Dictionary Online* (2019), verbs of inaction convey the meaning component of the non-happening of an event. This is so either because the action referred to by the verb ceased in the past, as in *We stopped reading romantic novels years ago*, or because, as happens to *Try* verbs, the action was never fully accomplished, as in *They tried to reach the summit*. As far as syntactic complementation is concerned, *Try* verbs take a noun phrase that entails a verbal predication, as in *The government tried the nationalisation of the*

company, or a non-finite dependent clause, as in *The government tried to nationalise the company*.

Try verbs have been looked up in the *Thesaurus of Old English* (Roberts & Kay 2000), which lists thirteen verbs with this meaning: *fundian*, *(ge)cneordlācan*, *(ge)cunnian*, *(ge)ðennan*, *(ge)earnian*, *(ge)fandian*, *(ge)tilian*, *hīgian*, *ōnettan*, *onginnan*, *onsacan*, *winnan*, *ȳðan*. In order to select the verbs that are most likely to express the relevant meanings, the dictionaries of Old English have been consulted (*An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, *The student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon*, and *The Dictionary of Old English in Electronic Form A-G*, hereafter DOE). Considering 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 is limited to the verbs *(ge)cneordlācan*, *fandian*, *fundian*, *hīgian*, *onginnan*, and *(ge)tilian*. This semantically motivated selection allows us to restrict the scope of analysis to the most likely candidates for the verbal class of *Try* verbs.

Various textual and lexicographical sources have been consulted in order to select the fragments in which the verbs under analysis express the meanings in focus. For verbs beginning with the letters A-H, the citations provided by the DOE have been analysed. Given that the DOE has published up to the letter I only, for verbs beginning with the letters I-Y, searches have been launched in *The Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, which has also provided the text codes. A total of eighty-three fragments have been analysed with the theoretical framework presented in Section 2. They include the following verbs: *(ge)cneordlācan* (3), *fandian* (2), *fundian* (14), *hīgian* (21), *onginnan* (26), and *(ge)tilian* (17). This selection allows to come up with a range of fragments from different Old English works in which only the relevant meanings of the verbs are included. Additionally, the syntax of these fragments has been checked with *The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose*, if they are included in this corpus. The fragments not included in this corpus have been analysed manually. Unless indicated otherwise, the translations of the following editions of Old English texts have been followed: Thorpe (1844, 1846); Cockayne (1864); Cook & Tinker (1908); Gardner (1911); Sweet (1958); Seymour (1965); Garmonsway (1975); Swanton (1975); Langefeld (1985); Nicholson (1991); Needham (1996); Miller (1999); Acevedo Butcher (2006); and Irvine & Godden (2012).

4. THE LINKING SEMANTICS-SYNTAX WITH *TRY* VERBS

Try verbs can be represented by means of an Accomplishment logical structure which indicates that the first participant is not successful in doing something. The x argument plays the thematic role Experiencer and gets the macrorole Undergoer, whereas the y argument is often realized by a linked predication. The logical structure of *Try* verbs is shown in Figure 3.

[Insert Figure 3. The logical structure of *Try* verbs].

This logical structure represents expressions like *The visitors tried to take pictures*

of the hall. In such expressions, the juncture takes place at core level because the two nuclei are not adjacent but separated by the complementiser *to*. The nexus relation is cosubordination because the first argument is shared and deontic modals have scope over the two cores (as, for instance, in *The visitors should not try to take pictures of the hall*). The complex sentence, therefore, is an instance of core cosubordination.

In Old English, this can be illustrated with expressions like *tiligen we us to gescildenne and us to gewarnigenne* ‘we should try to shield and to protect ourselves’ in (1). The juncture takes place at core level because the two nuclei are not adjacent but separated by the complementiser *to*. At the same time, the two predications share the argument that bears the macrorole Undergoer (*we*). As there is a complementiser, the complex sentence is an instance of core cosubordination.

The semantic relation between matrix predications containing *Try* verbs and the corresponding linked predications is Phase. Therefore, the prediction of the Interclausal Relation Hierarchy is that *Try* verbs should take part in nuclear junctures.

(1)

[HomS 44 (Baz-Cr) 005900 (121)]

*Of þysum tintregum, men ða leofestan, **tiligen** we us to gescildenne and us to gewarnigenne þa hwile þe we lifes leoht habban.*

‘From these torments, dearest men, we should try to shield and to protect ourselves, while we have the light of life.’

Figure 4 illustrates linking in core cosubordination.

[Insert Figure 4. Core cosubordination with *Try* verbs.]

This said, the *Try* verbs (*ge*)*cneordlācan*, *fandian*, *fundian*, *hīgian*, *onginnan*, and (*ge*)*tilian* are discussed below.

Beginning with (*ge*)*cneordlācan*, this verb has been found in complex linking involving clausal cosubordination. This is illustrated in example (2), in which the clause is inserted into the argumental position of the core and does not get macrorole. The complementiser is *hu* and the first argument of the matrix predication (*we* ‘we’) is shared with the linked predication.

(2)

[ÆCHom II, 4 38.273]

*Untwylice on ðisum andgite us bið awend þæt fifte wæterfæt to wynsumum wine. gif we **gecnýrdlæcað** hu we þa deofellican Babilonian forfleon magon. and becuman to ðære heofenlican Hierusalem.*

‘Undoubtedly in this sense the fifth water-vessel will be turned for us to pleasant wine, if we endeavour how we may flee from the devilish Babylon, and come to the heavenly Jerusalem’.

Examples like (2) evidence that *Try* verbs are cosubordinate in Old English, as in Present-day English, although the juncture can take place at the level of the clause, which is not possible in the contemporary language. This question is addressed in Section 5.

Figure 5 illustrates linking in clausal cosubordination.

[Insert Figure 5. Clausal cosubordination with *Try* verbs.]

Turning to *fandian*, it can appear in complex linking, as in example (3), in which some constituents, rendered between brackets, are stranded from the verb. The resulting fragment, omitting the non-obligatory elements, would be *we sculon [...] fandian [...] þæt mon scolde ælc þing ongitan be his andgites mæpe*. In this case, clausal cosubordination holds, given that, even though two different subjects are involved from a formal point of view, the personal pronoun *we* ‘we’, in the matrix predication, and the underspecified personal pronoun *mon* ‘man’, in the clause, are co-referential.

(3)

a. [Bo 42.147.13]

*Ðeah hit ure mæð ne sie þæt we witen hwylc he [God] sie, we sculon þeah be þæs andgites mæðe þe he us gifð **fandian**; swa swa we ær cwædon ((þæt mon scolde ælc þing ongitan be his andgites mæpe)), forðæm we ne magon ælc þing ongitan swylc swylce hit bið.*

‘Though it may not be our lot that we should know what he is, we ought nevertheless, according to the measure of understanding which he gives us, to strive after it: for, as we have already mentioned, man must know everything according to the measure of his understanding, since we are not able to know everything such as it is.’

As far as *fundian* is concerned, it can be found in simplex clauses that contain an argument-adjunct governed by preposition and inflected for the dative, such as *to ðæm weorðscipe ðæs folgoðes* ‘to the honour of rule’ in (4a); or inflected for the genitive, as is the case with *wið þæs* ‘of that’ in (4b).

(4)

a. [CP 8.55.4]

*Onð ðonne he **fundað** to ðæm weorðscipe ðæs folgoðes, his mod bið afedd mid ðære smeauga ðære wilnunga oðerra monna hiernesse & his selfes upahæfenesse.*

‘And when he aspires to the honour of rule, his heart is nourished with the contemplation of the desire of having other men subject to him, and his own exaltation [...].’

b. [Solil 2 63.33]

*Þonne wene ic þæt hyt wille þe andweardan, gif hyt gesceadwis is, and cwæðan þæt hit forði wilnige þæt to witanne þæt ær us wæs, forði hit <simle> wære syððan god þone forman man gesceape <hafde>; and hyt forði **fundige** wið þæs þe hyt ær were, þæt to witanne þæt hyt ær wiste, þeah hyt nu myd þære byrðene þæs lichaman gehefegod sio, þæt hyt þæt witan ne mage þæt hyt ær wiste.*

‘Then I suppose it will answer thee, if it is discreet, and say that it desireth to know what was before us for the reason that it always existed since the time that God treated the first man; and therefore aspireth to what it formerly was, to know what it formerly knew, although it is now so heavily weighted with the burden of the body that it cannot know what it formerly knew.’

Complex syntactic constructions of core cosubordination arise when the matrix predication and the linked predication share the first argument. In (5a), the verb *fundian* ‘to try’ and the transitive dependent verb *underfon* ‘undertake’ are non-adjacent despite the lack of complementiser, as there are several elements between them, including the Undergoer of the predication and the additional verb *teolan*. On the contrary, in (5b), it is the complementiser *to* that separates the two verbs. In example (5c), both a complementiser and another element cause non-adjacency. In (5c), the second argument of the linked verb precedes it, thus *þas eorþan to forswylgenne* ‘to devour the earth’.

(5)

a. [CP (CCCC 12) 7.51.22]

& nu **fundiað** swelce wreccan & teoð to, woldon underfon ðone weorðscipe & eac ða byrðenne.

‘And yet such wretches try for, and aspire to undertake the dignity and burden.’

b. [Bo 35.98.2]

Forðæmþe ealla <gesceafta> gecyndelice hiora agnum willum **fundiað** to cumanne to gode, swa swa we oft ær sædon on ðisse ilcan bec.

‘For all creatures naturally of their own will endeavour to come to good, as we have often before said in this same book.’

c. [HomS 26 174]

Blodig regn & fyren **fundiaþ** þas eorþan to forswylgenne & to forbærnenne.

‘A bloody and fiery rain will strive to devour and burn up this earth.’

As can be seen in examples (5a–c), the level of juncture of these constructions with *fundian* is the core, either because the two nuclei are not adjacent, as in (5b) or because the verb of the linked predication is transitive, as in (5a) and (5c). At the level of the clause, *fundian* appears in clausal cosubordination juncture-nexus constructions in which the clause is inserted into the argumental position of the core and does not get macrorole. This is the case with example (6), in which the complementiser is *þæt*. In example (6), the first argument of the linked predication *þæt hie willon genimon mycclē herehyþ manna saula* ‘that they seize a great loot of men’s souls’ is shared with the relative clause *þa fundiaþ* ‘who try’.

(6)

[HomS 26 206]

Þy syxtan dæge ær underne þonne biþ from feower endum þære eorþan eall middangeard mid awergdum gastum gefylled, þa **fundiaþ** þæt hie willon genimon mycclē herehyþ manna saula swa Antecrist ær beforan dyde.

‘Before the third hour on the sixth day, the entire world will be filled with evil spirits from the four ends of the earth who will strive to seize a great pillage of men’s souls just as the Antichrist previously did.’

As regards *hīgian*, in simplex linking, this verb appears in intransitive clauses with an adjunct in the periphery, as in (7a); and with an argument-adjunct case-marked dative and governed by a preposition, including *æfter* in (7b), and *to* in (7c).

(7)

a. [Bo 11.25.16]

*Ac ic eow mæg mid feawum wordum gereccan hwæt se hrof is ealra gesælða; wið þas ic wat þu wilt **higian** þon ær þe ðu hine ongitest; þæt is þonne Good.*

‘But I can, with few words, show you what is the roof of all happiness: for which I know thou wilt strive until thou obtainest it: this, then, is good.’

b. [Bo 37.112.30]

*Forðæm is ælcum ðearf þæt he **higie** ealle mægene æfter ðære mede; ðære mede ne wyrð næfre nan good man bedæled.*

‘Therefore, it is needful to everyone that he strive with all his power after the reward. Of the reward no good man is ever deprived.’

c. [CP 14.83.13]

*Forðæm ðonne he **higað** to ðæm godcundum ðingum anum, ðæt he ne ðyrfe an nane healfe anbugan to nanum fullicum & synlicum luste.*

‘That when he aspires to divine things alone, he may not deviate on either side after any foul and sinful lusts.’

In complex linking, *hīgian* has been identified in core cosubordination with shared first argument, as illustrated in examples (8a) and (8b). In (8a), the complementiser *to* causes non-adjacency, whereas in (8b) both the complementiser and another element separate both verbs.

(8)

a. [CP 16.105.14]

*Ðætte sua hwelc sua inweard **higige** to gangenne on ða duru ðæs ecean lifes, he ðonne ondette ælce costunge ðe him on becume ðam mode his scriftes beforan ðæm temple.*

‘[...] so that whoever inwardly desires to enter the gates of eternal life must confess every temptation which has assailed him to the mind of his confessor before the temple.’

b. [GD 2 (C) 38.178.1]

*Gregorius him andswarode: us is nu hwæthugu to blinnenne & to gerestenne fram þissere spræce, to þon gif we **higiað** to oþra æþelra wera wundrum þa to gereccanne & to aseccanne, we þonne nu sume hwile þurh swigunge geedniwian ure mægn eft to sprecanne.*

Gregorius answered him: Let us now cease and rest a little from our discourse, so as we strive after the miracles of other eminent men by explaining and announcing, now, we

may change our virtuous action to silence for a while before speaking again. (My translation).

At the level of the clause, *hīgian* arises in clausal cosubordination with the clause inserted into the argumental position of a core. The clause does not get macrorole and the complementiser is *þæt*. In (9), the first argument of the matrix predication (*he sceal simle hīgian* ‘he must ever strive’) is shared with the linked predication, which is a finite clause: *ðæt he weorðe onbryrd & geedniwad to ðæm hefonlican eðle* ‘that he is inspired and regenerated for the heavenly regions’.

(9)

[CP 22.169.8]

Forðæm se eorðlica geferscipe hine tiehð on ða lufe his ealdan ungewunan, he sceal simle hīgian ðæt he weorðe onbryrd & geedniwad to ðæm hefonlican eðle.

‘Since earthly companionship draws him to the love of his former bad habits, he must ever strive to be inspired and regenerated for the heavenly regions.’

Other instances of complex linking with *hīgian* involve the nominalisation of the verbal predication, as in (10), in which *gestruðe* derives from the weak verb base *gestreonan* ‘to gain, get’. In this example, the constituent inflected for the genitive (*manna æhta* ‘the possessions of men’) gets the macrorole Undergoer.

(10)

[GD 2 (C) 31.162.30]

Þa sume dæge wæs he onbærned mid þære hæte his gitsunge & hīgiende to gestruðe manna æhta.

‘Then on a certain day he was inflamed with the heat of his avarice and plotting to prey on the possessions of men.’

The verb *onginnan* has been found in instances of simplex and complex linking as well. In simplex linking, it appears with a direct core argument inflected for the accusative. Some examples of this are (11a–c).

(11)

a. [CP 237500 (58.445.4)]

Ongean ðæt sint to manienne ða ðe næbre nyllað fulfremman ðæt god ðæt hi onginnað, ðæt hi ongieten mid wærlice ymbeðonce ðætte, ðonne ðonne hi forlætað hiora willes & hiora gewaldes ða god ðe hi getiohchod æfdon to ðonne, ðæt hi ðonne mid ðy dilgiað ða ðe hi ær ongunnon.

‘Those, on the other hand, who will never accomplish the good that they begin, are to be admonished to understand with careful consideration that when they relinquish of their own will and accord the good they had determined to do, they thereby cancel that which they formerly began [...].’

b. [Or 6 005400 (4.136.26)]

*Ac wurdon him selfum wiðerwearde þæt hie hit æfre **ongunnon**, & Scribanianus ofslogon.*

‘But were angry with themselves that they had ever undertaken it, and slew Scribonianus.’
c. [CP 246900 (61.455.17)]

*Swa eac ða swiðe unrotan bioð oft gedrefde mid ungemetlice ege, & ðeah hwilum bioð genedde mid sumre fortruwodnesse ðæt hi **onginnað** ðæt ðæt hi willað.*

‘So also, the very sad are often dispirited with immoderate fear, and yet sometimes are impelled by rashness to attempt what they desire.’

Onginnan appears in complex linking in nuclear cosubordination relations with shared first argument, as in (12a), in which both verbs are adjacent and lack a complementiser. Core cosubordination arises in instances with a transitive dependent verb in which *onginnan* and the dependent verb share the first argument. In examples (12b) and (12c) no complementiser is used, but the two verbs are non-adjacent due to the presence of another constituent between them. Example (12d) illustrates clausal cosubordination with the verb *onginnan*. In this case, the clause is inserted into the argumental position of core and does not get macrorole. The complementiser is *þæt*. This verb is unattested in the passive voice.

(12)

a. [CP 238600 (58.445.26)]

*Eac hi sint to manienne ðæt hi geornlice geðencen ðætte hit bið wyrse ðæt mon a **onginne** faran on soðfæstnesse weg, gif mon eft wile ongeancierran, & ðæt ilce on faran.*

‘They are also to be admonished to consider carefully that it is worse than ever to begin to travel on the road of truth, if one intends afterwards to turn back and traverse the same ground.’

b. [CP 001800 (1.25.19)]

*& ðeah ða woroldlecan læcas scomað ðæt hi **onginnen** ða wunda lacnian ðe hi gesion ne magon, & huru gif hi nouðer gecnawan ne cunnan ne ða medtrymnesse ne eac ða wyrta ðe ðærwið sculon.*

‘And yet worldly physicians are ashamed of undertaking to cure wounds which they cannot see, especially if they neither understand the disease nor the herbs which are to be employed.’

b. [Bo 130200 (35.102.9)]

*Ða ðæm hearpere ða ðuhte ðæt hine <þa> nanes ðinges ne lyste on ðisse worulde, ða ðohte he ðæt he wolde gesecan hellegodu, & **onginnan** him oleccan mid his hearpan, & biddan þæt hi him ageafan eft his wif.*

‘Then it seemed to the harper that nothing in this world pleased him. Then thought he that he would seek the gods of hell, and endeavour to allure them with his harp, and pray that they would give him back his wife.’

d. [CP 110000 (34.229.22)]

*Suiðe suiðe we gesyngiað, gif we oðerra monna welgedona dæda ne lufigað & ne herigað, ac we nabbað ðeah nane mede ðære heringe, gif we be sumum dæle nellað **onginnan** ðæt we onhyrigen ðæm ðeawum ðe us on oðrum monnum liciað be dæle ðe we mægen.*

‘We sin greatly if we do not love and praise the good deeds of others, but we shall get no reward for our praise if we will not to some extent begin to imitate the virtues which please us in others, as far as lies in our power.’

Figure 6 represents linking in nuclear cosubordination.

[Insert Figure 6. Nuclear cosubordination with *Try* verbs.]

The verb *(ge)tilian* has been found in both simplex and complex linking in the corpus. In simplex linking, it turns up in intransitive clauses with an adjunct in the periphery. This can be seen in example (13).

(13)

[Æ LS (Maurice) 003800 (165)]

*Efne nu þæs middaneard is for micclum geswenct, and mid manegum earfoðnyssum yfele gepreatod; and þeahhwæpere we lufiað his earfoðnysse git, and to þisum swicolum life we swincað and **tiliaþ**, and to þam towerdan life we tiliað hwonlice, on þan þe we æfre habbað swa hwæt swa we her geearniað.*

‘Behold now, this earth is too much harassed, and with many distresses evilly oppressed; and nevertheless we love its distresses still; and for this deceitful life we labour and toil, and for the future life we toil little, wherein we shall ever have whatsoever we earn here.’

In complex linking, *(ge)tilian* turns up in core cosubordination with shared first argument, as examples (14a–b) illustrate. In (14a), the presence of the complementiser is the cause of non-adjacency, while in (14b) both a complementiser and another constituent are placed between the two verbs. A relation of clausal subordination holds in (14c) and (14d), in which the clause is inserted into the argumental position of the core and does not get macrorole. The complementiser is *þæt* in the two fragments. The verb *(ge)tilian* is unattested in the passive voice in this type of linking.

(14)

a. [CP 252500 (65.463.3)]

*Ðæt he hine selfne ne forlæte, ðær he oðerra freonda tilige, & him self ne afealle, ðær ðær he oðre **tiolað** to ræranne.*

‘Lest he forsake himself while he attends to his friends, and himself fall, while he strives to raise others.’

b. [Bo 173400 (39.135.4)]

*Swincð þonne ymb þæt swa he swiðost mæg þæt he **tiolað** ungelic to bionne þæm oðrum forðæm hit is þæs godcundan anwealdes gewuna þæt he wircð of yfle good.*

‘Then he works as hard as he can to strive to be unlike the other one, since it is the custom of the divine power to make good out of evil.’

c. [CP 113000 (35.237.7)]

*Ða bilewitan sint to herigenne, forðæmðe hie simle suincað on ðæm ðæt hi **tieligeað** ðæt hie ne sculen leasunga secgan.*

‘The simple are to be praised, because they always laboriously endeavour not to tell falsehoods.’

d. [Bo 043800 (16.38.16)]

*Nu þonne nu ælc <gesceaft> onscunað ðæt ðæt hire wiðerweard bið, & swiðe georne **tiolað** þæt hit him þæt from ascufe, hwylce twa sint þonne wiðerweardran betwuh him þonne god & yfel?*

‘Now then, now that each creature shuns that which is opposed to it and eagerly strives to push it away from itself, what two things are more mutually opposed than good and evil?’

Table 1 summarises the different syntactic constructions discussed in this section. Constructions are presented by verb. In complex linking, cosubordination takes place in nuclear, core and clause junctures. Regarding simplex linking, intransitive uses of these verbs arise, as well as instances with direct argument or argument adjunct. An example of nominalization has also been discussed with the verb *hīgian*.

[Insert Table 1. Complex and simplex linking with *Try* verbs.]

As can be seen in Table 1, most of the verbs that have been analysed take part in intransitive constructions and license dative arguments. They consistently opt for cosubordination constructions, both at the nucleus, core and clause levels of juncture. The only instance of coordination with the verb (*ge*)*fandian* has been explained above in terms of the co-reference of an impersonal pronoun with an omitted first argument.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This article has assessed the class membership of the Old English *Try* verbs (*ge*)*cneordlācan*, (*ge*)*fandian*, *fundian*, *hīgian*, *onginnan* and (*ge*)*tilian*. Conclusions are reached at both the synchronic and the diachronic level.

Synchronically, these Old English verbs are characterised by establishing syntactic relations at the nuclear, core and clausal levels of juncture. The nexus of complex sentences with *Try* verbs is cosubordination. The semantic relation with the predication linked to *Try* verbs is Phase. *Try* verbs are found in intransitive clauses or with an argument-adjunct in the dative governed by preposition. For this reason, the class of Old English *Try* verbs is syntactically and semantically consistent, even though evidence for the nominalisation alternation has been found for *hīgian* only.

However, while the nexus type is in accordance with the prediction of the Interclausal Relations Hierarchy, the level of juncture is not. From a diachronic point of view, *Try* verbs appear in clausal junctures in Old English, whereas their counterparts in PDE cannot appear in clausal junctures. This evolution, which has been noted by previous research (Denison 1996; Los 2005; Ringe & Taylor 2014) has not been explained on a semantic basis before. The Interclausal Relations Hierarchy can explain the evolution on the diachronic axis.

Considering the historical evolution of the complementation with nominal clauses in English, it turns out that the loss of finite clause complementation and the presence of infinitival complementation in Present-Day English *Try* verbs are fully predicted by the Interclausal Relations Hierarchy in two ways. Firstly, semantics motivates the syntactic change, or, at least, is much more stable than syntax on the diachronic axis. Throughout the change, semantic relations and nexus types remain stable whereas juncture levels

change. Secondly, the juncture-nexus types of *Try* verbs go up the Interclausal Relations Hierarchy to become syntactically stronger and express more tightly close semantic relations like Phase.

Author's address

Departamento de Filologías Modernas, Universidad de La Rioja.
26004 Logroño, Spain.

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