

Old English genitive deverbal nominalisations with verbs of inaction. An RRG-based study

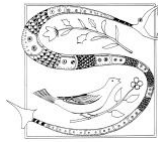
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This paper deals with Old English derived nouns that entail a verbal predication. More specifically, it aims at analysing the role of deverbal nominalisations in the genitive on a semantic and syntactic basis. Deverbal nominalisations can be defined as verb-derived noun phrases with a syntactic structure parallel to a verbal predication, as in *The enemy destroyed the city* vs. *The destruction of the city by the enemy*. Thus, this study considers the morphological relations holding between derived nouns and their verbal bases of derivation on the one hand, and the derived constructions that revolve around deverbal nominals, on the other. The verbs in focus are those belonging to the classes of inaction, namely, *Fail* verbs, *End* verbs, *Try* verbs, *Hinder* verbs, *Refrain* verbs, *Prevent* verbs and *Forbid* verbs. The theoretical basis is provided by Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2005). The data have been retrieved from the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* and the York corpora of Old English, including the prose and the poetry segments. Lexical information on the bases of derivation and derivational paradigms of the items under analysis has been retrieved from NerthusV3 (Martín Arista *et al.* 2016). The results show that, with few exceptions, these sets of verbs take part in nominalisations implying nouns inflected for the genitive. Up to 37 nominalisations of this kind have been found with these verbs, which can be classified into four types on semantic and syntactic grounds. The main conclusion is that deverbal nominalisations give rise to constructions parallel to verbal predications, thus contributing to the acquisition of verbal features by noun phrases (Fischer 1992: 252), which anticipates the subsequent development of syntactic verbal properties that takes place during the Middle English period.

References

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