

## Old English *Refrain* verbs. Syntactic stability and change

This paper deals with the semantics and syntax of Old English *Refrain* verbs. Its aim is to describe and explain the main points of convergence and divergence between Old English and Present-Day English as to the syntactic constructions in which these verbs are found. The theoretical basis of this study is comprised of the concept of *verbal class* (Levin 1993), a set of verbs that share meaning components and grammatical behaviour; and the components and processes of the linking semantics syntax as postulated in Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin 2007, 2021). Three methodological steps are taken: (i) the selection of the relevant verbs and the identification of the meaning components compatible with the verbal class at stake; (ii) the compilation of the corpus of analysis, which has been extracted from the *York Corpus of Old English* (Taylor et al. 2003); and (iii) the analysis of the relation between semantics and syntax, including the description of the lexical representation and the logical structure of *Refrain* verbs, on the one hand; and syntactic aspects such as argument types, the status of the verbal form and the first argument of the linked predication, and the interclausal relation that holds between the matrix predication and the linked predication, on the other hand. The conclusions insist on the relative stability of the syntax of *Refrain* verbs, which have kept the optional reflexive object and the obliqueness of the Theme, as well as on the replacement of the finite form of the verb with a non-finite one in linked predications.

**Keywords:** semantics, syntax, verbal classes, Role and Reference Grammar, Old English

## References

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