

Rodrigo Pérez Lorigo. *Coordinación y elipsis en inglés antiguo*. Ediciones de la Universidad de Oviedo, 2019. Pp. 212. €16. ISBN: 9788416343812.



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Coordinación y elipsis en inglés antiguo is a recent monograph by the Oviedo-based specialist in Old English linguistics, Dr. Rodrigo Pérez Lorigo. In this publication, Pérez Lorigo tackles one of the most controversial aspects of Old English grammar, namely, underlying word-order, using ellipsis in coordination structures as an analytic tool and diagnostic method for teasing out the different hypotheses accounting for it. The study of ellipsis in earlier English has so far eluded systematic investigation; in van Kemenade’s words, “the state of our knowledge of ellipsis in the history of English is as yet limited” (96). In this context, the book by Pérez Lorigo is a welcome addition to the bibliography on ellipsis from a diachronic point of view with a special focus on a particular language period, Old English, and on two specific constructions, namely gapping and split coordination, which are illustrated in (1a-b) and (2a-b) respectively for both Present-day and Old English:¹

(1)

a. Tom eats apples and Bill Ø oranges.

b. Gefeoht belimpð to feondum and sacu Ø to ceastergewarum (*ÆCHom* II 311.29) (‘the battle concerns the enemies and the affliction the citizens’)

(2)

a. John came, and Bill (too).

b. . . . & ferde se cyng him ham & þa ealdormen & þa heahwitan. (*ChronE* 1009.139) (‘. . . and the king, the ealdormen, and the chief councillors went home’)

As can be seen in examples (1a-b), gapping entails the ellipsis of the verb and sometimes the complements in the second of the coordinate clauses featuring the same verb. Split coordination, in turn, is a structure in which the first and second conjunct in a coordination structure are separated or split by intervening material. These two constructions are interesting *per se* from a

¹ Examples and translations are taken from the monograph under review.

theoretical point of view, while at the same time they can be used to explore the nature of Old English grammar.

The monograph is divided into six different chapters. Chapter one includes the introduction; chapter two deals with the theoretical framework and clarifies the methodology used in the empirical part of the study. Chapters three and four are devoted to the study of gapping in Old English: the first one is concerned with the syntactic and pragmatic aspects of gapping, while the second one focuses on the insights gapping provides in relation to Ross's Directionality Constraint, and the relevance this has for the determination of the underlying word-order of Old English. Chapter five tackles the study of split coordination and the evaluation of the different hypotheses provided in the literature in the light of the corpus study offered in the book. Chapter six presents the major findings of the study. The volume closes with a list of first and secondary sources and two appendices, Appendix 1 providing information on the texts under analysis (date of composition; dialect; genre; relationship with Latin; edition used and manuscript on which the edition is based), and Appendix 2 containing nominal paradigms in Old English.

The book can be broadly inscribed in the generative approach to the study of syntax, in particular, the Extended Standard Theory (Sag). This same approach is followed in chapters three and four, which are devoted to gapping. In this framework, gapping is taken to emerge from two complete coordinated structures in the deep structure after the operation of a deletion transformation. In Present-day English, gapping is subject to a number of constraints: the coordinated structures must show the same lineal order in both coordinated clauses and must be identical.

For chapter five, the author adopts a more eclectic standpoint, in which Split Coordination is not seen as a unitary phenomenon, but rather as a process which combines the rules of deletion and movement.

Even though there is an important theoretical component in the book (especially in chapters two and three), Pérez Lorido claims that his study is "fundamentalmente descriptivo," even though "también aspira a ser explicativo" (52), combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis with theoretical explanations. In fact, Pérez Lorido's monograph goes far beyond the mere description: he establishes hypotheses that are then confronted with the corpus analysis and he assesses the adequacy of the theoretical apparatus in view of the data. The corpus under study is not large according to modern standards (half a million words), but is exhaustively studied by Pérez Lorido with a detail and depth heir of the best philological tradition in the lines of Anglo-Saxonists, such as the late Professor Bruce Mitchell. The individual

examples are put under the microscope, and the author does not hesitate to confront different versions of a particular text (e.g., the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*), Old English with the Latin original, and even historical sources, in order to ensure the correct interpretation of the Old English material. This kind of careful philological study is not common these days, where concordancers and search tools are (albeit useful) short-cuts for linguistic exploration. However, much is to be gained from the bottom-up analysis of earlier texts offered here. Pérez Lorido's command of Old English is impressive: this is clearly shown in the profusion of examples, conveniently glossed and translated.

The corpus selected for analysis contains both early and late Old English prose works (the cutting point is set in year 1000) and both vernacular and Latin-based texts comprising different genres. It is a well-constructed corpus that allows the author to draw interesting conclusions that challenge the unitary view of the Old English period, both from the diachronic and the textual point of view. Pérez Lorido provides valuable information about each text (also in Appendix 1), but it is not clarified in the book whether he has used complete texts or text samples.

Gapping is the focus of chapters three and four. In chapter three we find a very clear account of the rules governing gapping in Present-day English, with the constraints on the identity of the coordinated elements and the restriction of its application to immediately adjacent coordinate clauses. After confronting theory with the Old English linguistic data, the author clearly shows that the operation of gapping is far less constrained in Old English than it is in the present day. For instance, asymmetric coordination, which is ruled out in contemporary English, is perfectly possible in Old English, as can be seen in (3) below:

- (3) Ða gaderode Eadric ealdorman fyrde & se æðeling Eadmund be norðan.
(ChronE 146.12 (1015)) ('Then aldorman Eadric gathered levies, and prince Edmund in the north')

The same holds for adjacency in gapped structures, which is not mandatory in Old English, as can be seen in (4):

- (4) Æfter þæm þe Romeburg getimbred wæs feng Archadius to anwalde to þæm eastdæle, & hine hæfde xii gear, & Onorius to þæm wæstdæle (Or 155.13)
(‘After the city of Rome had been built Archadius succeeded to the rule of the

eastern part, and regained it for twelve years, and Onorius to (that of) the western part')

Pérez Lorigo concludes that gapping in Old English is sensitive not as much to syntactic factors (as is the case of Present-day English), but rather to pragmatic and communicative factors related to information structure. This, in his view, may be indicative that Old English has not yet been fully syntacticized.

Chapter four hinges around the so-called Directionality Constraint (Ross), according to which gapping may operate forwards or backwards depending on the configuration of the language at issue. Present-day West Germanic languages like German and Dutch, with underlying SOV order, favour backwards gapping in accordance to the Directionality Constraint, while sometimes allowing forward gapping as a consequence of processability constraints. The data analysis shows that, contrary to expectations, forwards gapping is the rule in Old English, while remnants of backwards gapping are attested in some texts. This would support the view that Old English still has underlying SOV word-order, but is clearly in transition. The prevalence of forwards gapping is put down to psycholinguistic factors related, again, to processing (the tendency to establish closure as soon as possible).

Split Coordination is the focus of chapter five. In this chapter the author presents the three different hypotheses proposed in the literature to account for this Old English construction: (i) the traditional account, which relies on structural heaviness (Principle of End Weight); (ii) the hypothesis that split elements are focal, and that moving them to the end of the clause contributed to their prominence; and (iii) the view that splitting responds to an afterthought, that is, split phrases were not in the initial plan of the speaker when s/he started producing the sequence. Pérez Lorigo's analysis shows that heaviness (both understood in terms of weight and of syntactic complexity) is not responsible for the splitting of heavy groups under coordination in Old English. Moreover, focus should also be discounted, as the data suggest that the second element in a coordination is usually less salient. This is manifested by examples such as (5) in which the two conjuncts of a coordinated NP subject show differences in social status: those higher up in the hierarchy (here the king) are typically placed early in the clause; those of lower status (aldormen and chief councillors in the example) are usually split from the coordinated sequence and relegated to the end of the clause:

(5) & ferde se cyng him ham & þa ealdormen & þa heahwitan (ChronE 1009.139) ('and the king, the aldormen, and the chief councillors went home')

The interpretation of the split conjunct as an afterthought adequately reflects, according to the author, the nature of Split Coordination in Old English. Moreover, he contends that splitting, by detracting attention from the split element, can be used as an indirect way to focalize the conjunct that appears early in the clause.

Pérez Lorigo's study, stemming from a generative approach, ends up, however, by emphasizing the importance of semantico-pragmatic issues, and perceptual and processing factors in the account of a particular syntactic structure.

All in all, this is a very valuable study on coordination and elision, which certainly sheds light on many intriguing factors of Old English grammar. For this reviewer there are very few hiccups in the book. One of them is the fact that the book is written in Spanish rather than in English, which certainly limits its potential readership. Secondly, that the author does not deal in more detail with Taylor and Pintzuk's studies on Split Coordination, even though they came out in the final stages of the production of the manuscript. We are told (57n21) that their approach is in line with the author's analysis and account, but the reader is certainly willing to know more. And finally, in my opinion the author enters into too much detail in aspects which are tangential to his work (for example, when he justifies not using standard computerized corpora for his study) and profusely uses footnotes, some of which are irrelevant. But these are trivial aspects which do not diminish the great value of this excellent study, which confirms Dr. Rodrigo Pérez Lorigo as one of the leading specialists in Old English in Spain.

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