

Meaning at Clause Level: Old High German *ibu*-Clauses in the Complement-Adverbial Divide

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Constructional models have proven to have a great explanatory potential for linguistic patterns considered to be problematic in other frameworks. Curiously, at utterance level there is a wide range of constructions that receive less attention than in other frameworks, such as the finite, semi- and non-specified patterns constituting main and minor clauses, like the German in subordinate clause (1) and subordinate clause (2), both introduced with *ob* 'if'. Such clauses can be considered constructions and are thus seen as units combining different types of discourse and textual function with obligatory and optional language-specific formal features, like lexical items, particles, as well as morphological, syntactic, and prosodic characteristics (cf. Altmann 1987, 1993). For example (1) functions as a repeated, insisting question and (2) as a complement clause within the valency of the verb *fragte* 'asked', and each show obligatory presence of *ob*, a fixed verb-final syntax, different compatibility with modal particles like *nun mal*, and differences in verbal inflection and intonation patterns.

- (1) Ob du nun mal deine Zähne geputzt hast!?
'[I asked] if you've brushed your teeth yet!?'
- (2) Ich fragte sie, ob sie ihre Zähne schon geputzt hat, aber sie hat nicht geantwortet.
'I asked her if she has brushed her teeth, but she didn't answer.'

As with other types of constructions, the question arises as to what type of formal and functional information really belongs to such a construction. Such problems naturally pose difficulties in constructions which may appear to lack explicit, lexical, formal marking and which have particularly grammatical and/or procedural semantics on propositional, textual and discourse levels. Recent work has, however, aimed to uncover what constitutes constructions of this type and what is mere variation in their usage. For example, there have been a number of studies investigating the role of modal particles and intonation in the constitution of individual types (cf. eg. Alm et al. 2018; Fried/Machač 2022; Gras/Elvira García 2021).

This study addresses this topic as it aims to dissect the relationship between different clause types in Old High German (OHG) introduced by the subjunction *ibu* 'if', predecessor to Present Day German *ob*. Similar to English *if*, *ibu* introduces both conditional (3) and complement (4) clauses in OHG (cf. Axel-Tober 2013; Dal 2014; Schrodtt 2004) and thus functions as a subjunction for clauses occupying two semantically and syntactically distinct roles.

- (3) Oba ir furlazet mannan iro sunta, thanne furlazit íu íuuar fater thie himilisco íuudara sunta.
[T34,7]
'If you forgive people's sins, then your heavenly Father will forgive your sins.'
- (4) Tho quad her: oba her suntig ist ni ueeiz: ein ueeiz ih: mit diu ih blint uuas, nu gisihu.
[T132,15]
'Then he said, "I don't know if he is sinful: I know one thing: Although I was blind, now I see."'

Based on the Otfrid, Tatian, and Notker subcorpora in the Referenzkorpus Althochdeutsch 1.1 (Donhauser/Gippert/Lühr 2018; Krause/Zeldes 2016), representing approximately 50% of the corpus,

the investigation of the characteristics of *ob*-clauses and their respective matrices gives insight into possible contextual factors forming ambiguities, in which a diachronic relationship between complement and adverbial clauses may be inferred (cf. Diewald/Smirnova 2012).

In consideration of this relationship, this study addresses the question above as to what information is part of a construction and what information is construed through collocations in context. This is achieved by investigating the types of information common to both clause types, permitting such a relationship between them. The research presented here thus takes on topics such as contexts in constructionalisation, the relationship between minor- and matrix clauses, relations of opposition and similarity between distinct constructions, and essentially the danger of stuffing as much formal and functional information as possible into a single node in the network.

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