

Abstract

This diploma thesis aims to classify the uses of *as* in the text of the Middle English romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* from a formal and functional perspective. *As* has acquired a great number of functions through the process of grammaticalization. The theoretical part of the thesis firstly deals with the historical development of *as* from the Old English *swā* and *ealswā*. It then describes the uses of *as* in Middle English. In this period, *as* was found to function as an adverb, conjunction, preposition and a relative pronoun. Each of these uses can be further divided into a number of subtypes. The thesis subsequently summarizes the functions *as* can have in Present-Day English. The final sections of the theoretical overview briefly present the processes of grammaticalization and constructionalization, as these two processes have been instrumental in the development of *as*.

The practical section is concerned with the analysis of all the instances of *as* in the chosen text. It classifies them and defines each type of use in more detail. The analysis also considers competing means of expressing the same function and comments on possible ambiguities. Furthermore, this section deals with the uses of *as* in the text from the perspective of their grammaticalization and also points out uses which are only employed marginally in the text. Finally, it compares the found uses with uses from Early Middle English and evaluates the text in terms of linguistic innovation.

Key words:

as, grammaticalization, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Middle English