

THE PERIPHRASTIC SUBJUNCTIVE WITH *MAGAN*
IN OLD ENGLISH

JERZY KRZYSZPIEŃ

The Jagellonian University of Cracow

The present paper is an attempt at presenting and analysing the structure *magan* + infinitive as it alternated with the inflectional subjunctive in Old English.

I. In present-day English we encounter the alternation of such structures as the two italicized in the following examples taken from Quirk et al. (1972: 76):

It is necessary that every member *should inform* himself of these rules.
It is necessary that every member *inform* himself of these rules.

There is not much difference between the two structures as far as meaning is concerned. The style of the second sentence is more formal than that of the first and is characteristic of the written language, especially in American English.

The two verb phrase structures indicated above signal modality. The form *should inform* is modally marked by its having the auxiliary verb *should*, whereas *inform* is modally marked in that it has no *-s* suffix.

The extensive use of *to*-infinitive constructions in present-day English, as in the following example, renders the modally marked verbal forms, especially the inflectional subjunctive, marginal.

It is necessary for every member *to inform* himself of these rules.

In earlier periods of English, however, the modally marked verbal forms occupied a more prominent position.

II. I shall use the term *modality* to refer to "the speaker's commitment with respect to the factual status of what he is saying" (Lyons 1968: 307). The term *mood*, on the other hand, will refer to the grammatical devices, or more precisely, to the structures of the verb phrase, that a language uses to signal

modality in sentences. Lyons does not make an overt distinction between these two concepts, and I follow Palmer (1977) in this respect.

In OE sentences, when modality was that of fact, it was the indicative mood that was used. In the case of non-fact modality the verb phrase could assume one of these three forms: 1) the imperative mood was associated with command, prayer, etc., 2) the subjunctive mood (inflectional or periphrastic) was associated with wish, imagination, contingency, doubt, uncertainty, potentiality, etc., and 3) the indicative mood also appeared in some of the contexts in which the subjunctive was rather used, but this indicative did not signal non-fact modality overtly. One of the uses of the indicative in non-fact modal contexts, however, did signal non-fact modality overtly; in such cases it had the preterite form (the so-called modal preterite) and was used without relation to any time sphere; for example:

Gif god wære eowre fæder, witodlice ge *lufedon* me.

(O.E. Gosp., John: 8, 42)¹

McLaughlin (1970:197) observes that it is "difficult to formulate precise rules that will automatically generate the subjunctive under appropriate conditions".²

The subjunctive mood was represented by a verbal inflection (the inflectional subjunctive) or by the use of certain verbs construed with the infinitive (the periphrastic subjunctive). The verbs which appeared in the periphrastic subjunctive were *sculan*, *willan*, *magan*, *motan*, *purfan*, and a few more.³

III. The alternation of the periphrastic subjunctive with the inflectional subjunctive in Old English, as well as in the subsequent periods, can be accounted for from the diachronic point of view. At least since the beginning of recorded English the inflectional subjunctive has been on the decline.⁴ One of the factors causing the deterioration of the inflectional subjunctive in Old English and later was the levelling and gradual loss of inflectional suffixes with evident results in Middle English. Thus, when only inflections are taken into consideration, the process resulted finally in the neutralization of the formal opposition indicative v. subjunctive in the majority of grammatical contexts. However, there were other grammatical devices which continued to signal non-fact modality. Those were, for instance, the typical modal con-

¹ Quoted after Visser (1966:763).

² McLaughlin refers to the inflectional subjunctive at this point.

³ After McLaughlin (1970:263).

⁴ The morphological characteristics of the inflectional subjunctive in Old English can be found, for example, in Kispert (1971:60).

junctions, the introductory formulae *I desire that ...*, *I wish that ...*, and so on, the use of the modal preterite, word order, and the periphrastic subjunctive.⁵ The importance of the periphrastic subjunctive in marking non-fact modality increased as the inflectional subjunctive decayed. Mustanoja (1960) observes that by the fifteenth century the periphrastic subjunctive outnumbered the inflectional subjunctive by nine to one.

Jespersen (1924) restricts the term *mood* to the form of the verb. He refrains from attaching any specific meaning to the subjunctive mood exclusively. Thus his approach, as to the semantic function of this mood, is in accord with the position assumed in this paper: there is no one to one correspondence between non-fact modality and the subjunctive (inflectional and periphrastic), as has already been mentioned in II. It would not "be possible to find one formula that should cover all the various uses of the subjunctive in any one Aryan language" (Jespersen 1924:317). Jespersen suggests that the disappearance of the inflectional subjunctive was a result of its undecided function in marking non-fact modality.

IV. The OE verb *magan*, when construed with the infinitive, expressed either ability which was not dependent on outward conditions, or objective possibility, or, perhaps, permission. Of these, the use of objective possibility seems to have been the one employed in the periphrastic subjunctive. The meaning of *magan* in this use can be defined as that of nihil obstat. Thus *magan* + infinitive meant that the event expressed by the infinitive was free to take place. Consequently, there was no truth value with respect to the occurrence of the event. In other words, this meaning of *magan* + infinitive expressed one of the aspects of non-fact modality. From now on, I shall use the term *possibility* to refer to the meaning 'nihil obstat' of *magan*.

On the other hand, the inflectional subjunctive expressed general or unqualified non-fact modality. *Magan* itself, as used in the periphrastic subjunctive, also appeared in the subjunctive inflected form, and, as such, it was more noticeable in the present tense, where the inflectional contrast indicative v. subjunctive existed for all the grammatical persons. When *magan* was used in the subjunctive inflectional form, the general non-fact modality was 'superimposed' on the narrower meaning of possibility. When *magan* was used in the preterite form but did not refer to any time sphere, it expressed hypothetical or unlikely possibility.

V. The following two examples are OE renditions of the same text, the first signalling non-fact modality by means of the structure *magan* + infinitive

⁵ After Visser (1966:961)

(the periphrastic subjunctive) and the second signalling non-fact modality by means of the inflectional subjunctive.

Folge me nu þin mildheortnes ... þæt ic *mæge wunian* on þinum huse swiþe lange tid.

(Paris Ps.: 22, 8/9)

... mildheortnes þin æfterfylgeð me ... þæt ic *ineardize* on huse dryhtnes on lengo daga.

(Junius Ps.: 22, 6)⁶

The subsequent paragraphs will deal with the alternation of these two forms of the verb phrase in Old English. Then I shall mention the units in which the inflectional subjunctive did not alternate with *magan* + infinitive. When dealing with the subject I shall follow a simplified version of Visser's (1966: 786-941) classification of the uses of the inflectional subjunctive. He discusses this verbal form in independent and dependent clauses, subdividing the two groups into subtypes. Visser prefers this classification to those which start off with a list of kinds of modality and then show how they are overtly expressed. It is impossible to specify all the different kinds of modality inherent in speech, but it is possible to specify the syntactic units with the verb in the subjunctive mood.

Independent clauses

1. The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* in the preterite indicative form alternated with the inflectional subjunctive in the preterite form of the verb in clauses expressing wishes which were impossible to realize; in other words, they were idle wishes. Examples:

Eala ðæt ure tida nu ne *mihtan weorðan* swilce!

(Alfred, Boeth. (Sedgefield): 34, 6)⁷

Eala, *wære* he auðer, oððe hat, oððe ceal[d].

(Alfred, P. C.: 445, 36)

The periphrastic subjunctive as well as the inflectional subjunctive expressed hypothesis or unlikeliness as to the occurrence of the event wished for. *Magan*, in addition, had a sense of possibility, so the resultant meaning was a hypothetical possibility or an unlikely possibility of the occurrence of the event wished for. The inflectional subjunctive tended to be limited to the form

⁶ The two examples are quoted after Visser (1969:1781).

⁷ Quoted after Visser (1969:1786).

wære, whereas *magan* appeared with various verbs and was, in this way, more productive than the inflectional subjunctive.

Other signals of non-fact modality in expressing an idle wish were interjections such as *eala* and the inversion of subject and object, except when *þæt* preceded.

2. The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* in the preterite indicative form and the inflectional subjunctive in the preterite form of the verb were used to express the speaker's uncertainty or hesitation as to the statement he was making. Examples:

Manega þing we *mihton* of peodwitena gesetnyse herto *geicean*; ac ... nu wille we ure spræce awendan to þam iungum munecum ...

(Byrhtferth's manual: 132, 4)

... him soelest *wære* þæt hie fripes to Romanum wilnaden.

(Alfred, Orosius: 202, 18)

The use of the preterite in both cases signalled hypothesis, which made the uncertainty or hesitation of the speaker apparent. In the case of the inflectional subjunctive it was the occurrence of the event that was hypothetical, and in the case of the periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* it was the possibility of the occurrence of the event that was hypothetical.

The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* and the inflectional subjunctive were not wholly interchangeable because the inflectional subjunctive was practically limited to the form *wære*. Thus the periphrastic subjunctive had a more diverse use than the inflectional subjunctive.

The use of the indicative in comparable clauses indicated an obvious change in modality; in such instances the speaker expressed bare facts, that is, fact modality. So here there was a one to one correspondence between fact modality and the indicative (with the exception of the preterite indicative used as the modal preterite).

3. The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* in the preterite indicative form or the inflectional subjunctive in the preterite form of the verb appeared in the apodosis of a hypothetical condition; the event in the condition was looked upon as unrealizable or unreal. Examples:

... hie wel *meahton libban* on þam lande, gif hie wolden lare godes forweard fremman.

(Genesis: 786)⁸

⁸ Quoted after Visser (1969:1778).

Gif ðam gifran ungemetlicu spræc ne eglde, ðonne ne *burne* se weliga ...
(Alfred, P. C.: 309, 3)

The preterite forms of the inflectional subjunctive and *magan* expressed hypothesis. In this way the apodosis of the hypothetical condition was also rendered hypothetical. *Magan* in the periphrastic subjunctive expressed hypothetical possibility as to the occurrence of the event expressed by the infinitive in the apodosis, and the inflectional subjunctive expressed hypothetical occurrence of the event.

There were no comparable clauses with the verb in the indicative.

Dependent clauses

A. Object clauses

1. The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* alternated with the inflectional subjunctive in object clauses which depended on expressions of volition, that is on verbs such as *wilnian*, *willan*, and *biddan*. Examples:

Nis nan gesceaft ðara ðe ne wilnige ðæt hit pider *cuman mæge*.
(Alfred, Boeth. (Fox): 88, 30)⁹

... uton biddan þæs æðelan Dauides sunu þæt he *geopenige* ure gesyhðe ...
(Byrhtferth's manual: 50, 27)

Magan in the periphrastic subjunctive appeared in the subjunctive form. The verb in the inflectional subjunctive and *magan* in the periphrastic subjunctive were either in the present or in the preterite tense form, according to the rules of the sequence of tenses.¹⁰

The meaning of the inflectional subjunctive was that of general non-fact modality with respect to the occurrence of the event which was desired, and the meaning of *magan* in the periphrastic subjunctive was that of non-factual possibility as to the occurrence of the event expressed by the infinitive. Thus in the periphrastic subjunctive, it was the possibility of the occurrence of the event that was desired rather than the event itself.

There were also numerous instances of the indicative in clauses depending on expressions of volition, for example:

... [he] behead Tituse his suna þæt he *towearp* þæt templ on Hierusalem ...
(Alfred, Orosius: 262, 20)

⁹ Quoted after Visser (1969:1784).

¹⁰ As a rule, a present tense form in the clause corresponded to a present tense form in the introductory expression, and a preterite tense form in the clause corresponded to a preterite tense form in the introductory expression.

In examples like this one, however, the object clauses can be treated as clauses of result, i.e. expressing the result of a wish. In this case the modality would be that of fact. Consequently, the periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* can be considered as an additional and more prominent signal of non-fact modality than the inflectional subjunctive.¹¹

2. The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* alternated with the inflectional subjunctive in indirect questions used as object clauses. The reporting verbs were *secan*, *ascian*, *þencan*, and the like. Examples:

Ac Isaias, ða Dryhten ascode hwone he *sendan meahle*, ða cwæð Isaias ...
(Alfred, P. C.: 48, 9)

Gif hwam gelustfullað to witanne hwæt *sy* quadrans, ...
(Byrhtferth's manual: 4, 18)

The verb in the inflectional subjunctive and *magan* in the periphrastic subjunctive were either in the present or preterite tense form, as the rules of the sequence of tenses determined. Since *magan* quite often appeared in the third person singular preterite form, its inflectional form with respect to the formal opposition indicative v. subjunctive was often unmarked.

The meaning of the inflectional subjunctive was general non-fact modality, and the meaning of *magan* in the periphrastic subjunctive was possibility. The preterite form of *magan* could, besides being a result of the sequence of tense rules, express hypothesis; thus *magan* in the preterite form could express a hypothetical possibility with respect to the occurrence of the event in the indirect question. These various forms of the subjunctive mood expressed the speaker's reserve or uncertainty as to the reported question.

The indicative form of the verb was also used in indirect questions. For example:

Men ne cunnon secgan to soðe ... hwa þæm hlæste *onfeng*.
(Beowulf: 50)

The indicative mood in indirect questions was an expression of fact modality; in other words, the speaker did not express any uncertainty as to the reported question. *Magan* + infinitive, on the other hand, was used to emphasize the speaker's uncertainty and served as a more prominent means than the inflectional subjunctive in signalling non-fact modality.

B. Attributive clauses

The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* in the subjunctive or indicative inflectional form and the inflectional subjunctive alternated in attributive

clauses. The subjunctive mood expressed the speaker's reserve as to the occurrence of the event in the attributive clause. Examples:

... ic geomor sceal secan operne ellenleasran under cumbol-hagan ceman
sænran þe ic *onbryrdan mæge* beorman mine agælan set gupe ...
(Juliana : 393)

... þæt wæs þara pinga þe her þeoda cynn *gefrugnen* ...
(Christ : 224)

The inflectional subjunctive expressed general non-fact modality. *Magan* in the periphrastic subjunctive expressed possibility. The preterite form of *magan* expressed a hypothetical possibility if used in a present tense context. In a preterite tense context, the preterite form of *magan* meant either possibility in the past or a hypothetical possibility. The speaker's reserve could be coloured by these meanings of non-fact modality.

The indicative mood of the verb phrase in attributive clauses expressed fact modality; the speaker's reserve was no longer present. For example:

... þu fordydest ælcne men se þe *hæmþ fram þe* ...
(Lamb. Ps.: 72, 27)¹¹

As the inflectional subjunctive morphologically merged with the indicative, *magan* + infinitive served as an additional means of indicating non-fact modality.

C. Adverbial clauses

1. The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* in the indicative or subjunctive inflectional form and the inflectional subjunctive alternated in clauses of purpose or contemplated result. These clauses were used to indicate the purpose or contemplated result of an activity expressed in the main clause. Examples:

Ealle þas ping we wyllað her amearkian, þæt so iunga preost *mæge beon*
þe wisra, þe he þas ping gesihð.
(Byrhtferth's manual : 86, 16)

... læf us ecne gefean wuldres þines þæt þec *weorðien* ... þa þu geworhtes ...
(Christ : 159)

The inflectional subjunctive expressed general non-fact modality, and

¹¹ Quoted after Visser (1966:858).

magan in the periphrastic subjunctive expressed possibility. *Magan* in the preterite form could denote a hypothetical possibility unless it was used to indicate the past.

When the result in the subordinate clause was not intended but automatic, the indicative mood was used, and it signalled fact modality. For example:

... ic þæt gefremme þær se freond wunað ... þæt ge min onsynn oft *sceawiað*.
(Guthlac : 715)

In sentences like this one, *þæt* should be interpreted as "with the consequence that".

2. The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan*, as well as the inflectional subjunctive, appeared in clauses of condition. Such clauses were introduced by *gif*, *on þæt gered*, *swa*, and *þær*, or by no conjunction at all. *Magan* in the periphrastic subjunctive was in the preterite form and, therefore, in a number of grammatical contexts the inflectional opposition indicative v. subjunctive was neutralized. Examples:

Gif ænig mæden *mihte beon* afunden, ...
(Ags. Hom. (ed. Assmann) : 94, 72)¹²

Gif þær *beon* ma þonne seofon, do aweg þa þær ofer beoð, ...
(Byrhtferth's manual: 54, 18)

Magan in the periphrastic subjunctive expressed hypothetical possibility, and the inflectional subjunctive expressed general non-fact modality.

The indicative form of the verb also occurred frequently in clauses of condition. For example:

... gif hine god *scildeþ* ...
(Christ : 781)

Attempts have been made to correlate the formal distinction between the inflectional subjunctive and the indicative with the semantic distinction between non-fact modality and fact modality. Thus it has been stated that the indicative implies actuality of the state, etc. expressed in the clause.¹³ On the other hand, the subjunctive form of the verb, from this point of view, is considered as expressing uncertainty as to the actualization of the event. The same writers admit, however, that there are exceptions to this rule. There-

¹² Quoted after Visser (1969:1777).

¹³ For instance, Bosworth and Toller in *An Anglo-Saxon dictionary. Supplement*, s.v. *gif*.

fore it is more correct to say that in many OE writings, when the verb phrase is concerned, non-fact modality was expressed by the subjunctive mood (inflectional or periphrastic) or was left unexpressed when the indicative mood was used. There were always other grammatical devices which signalled non-fact modality, e.g. *gif*. In some instances, when *gif* meant "granting that", the indicative mood expressed fact modality, as the case may be in:

...gif þu gewitest swa wilde deor ana from epele nis þæt onginn wiht.
(Guthlac: 276)

In such a situation the role of the periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* may have been that of signalling non-fact modality more prominently, since the inflectional subjunctive and indicative alternated in non-fact modality contexts.

VI. In this section I shall briefly mention those types of clause in which the inflectional subjunctive did not alternate with the periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* in the OE period.

Independent clauses

1. Clauses expressing a wish whose realization depended on conditions beyond the control of the speaker

...sie þe in heannessum ece hælo...
(Christ: 410)

2. Clauses expressing an exhortation, command, regulation, request, advice, encouragement, etc.¹⁴

...Gebide ge on beorge...
(Beowulf: 2529)

3. Explanatory clauses preceded by *ðæt is* (*donne*) *ðæt*, 'that is (then) to say' in King Alfred's *Pastoral care*.

Ðæt is ðonne swelce mon mid forewearde orde stinge, ðæt mon openlice & unforwandodlice on oðerne ræse mid tælinge & mid ðrafunga.
(Alfred, P. C.: 269, 11)

4. Independent questions introduced by *hwæðer*, *hwæt*, *hwi*, and *forhwi*

...Hwæper Rómane hit witen nu ænegum men to secganne, hwæt hiera folces on Ispanium on feawum gearum forwurde?
(Alfred, Orosius: 220, 8)

The indicative could also appear in such clauses.

¹⁴ Command was also expressed in the imperative mood.

Dependent clauses

Object clauses

1. Clauses after expressions of emotion (fear, grief, shame, joy, etc.) and other mental activities (doubt, hope, marvelling, etc.)

He ondrædan sceal ðæt he unmedome sie.
(Alfred, P. C.: 73, 21)

The indicative was also used in this type of clause.

2. Clauses after verbs of believing, trusting, and understanding.

...no ðær gelyfdon in hira liffruman, ... þæt he God wære...
(Andreas: 562)

The use of the indicative in these clauses expressed fact modality.

3. Clauses after verbs of saying, declaring, lying and denying.

...cristes þegnas cwepað and singað þæt þu sie hlæfdige...
(Christ: 283)

The use of the indicative in such clauses meant that the speaker had no reserve as to the truth of what he was saying.

Adverbial clauses

1. *Temporal clauses* introduced by *ær* and the like

Leornien hiene þa manðwæran & lufien, oððæt hie hiene hæbben.
(Alfred, P. C.: 290, 1)

The indicative also occurred in clauses of this type.

2. *Clauses of exception* introduced by *buton* and *nymþe*

þises geres ne miht þu gemetan þæs embolismus monðes epactas buton þu nyme þæs oðres geres epactas.
(Byrhtferth's manual: 108, 18)

3. *Clauses of concession* introduced by *þeah* (*þe*) or not introduced by a conjunction and clauses of concession and indefiniteness as to the person, thing, place, time, etc. referred to in those clauses.

Ðonne wene ic to þe wýrsan gepingea, ðeah þu heaðoræsa gehwær dohte...
(Beowulf: 525)

þises circules gewuna ys, oððe ryne, þæt locahwylce concurrentes beon
on þam geara...

(Byrhtferth's manual: 46, 18)

The indicative also occurred in such clauses.

4. Clauses of manner or degree

...doð nu swa ge willen...

(Alfred, Orosius: 290, 13)

The indicative can also be found in this type of clause.

5. Clauses of comparison

Ðas þing we willað openlicor gecyðan þonne þæt Lyden do.

(Byrhtferth's manual: 6, 6)

The indicative was also used in this type of clause.

6. Clauses of hypothetical similarity

...þu þa word spricest swa þu sylfa sie synna gehwylcere firena gefylled...

(Christ: 179)

The indicative also occurred in clauses of hypothetical similarity.

7. Resultative clauses

...ond swa lære ða oðre eaðmetta, swa he ðone ege to swiðe ðæm oðrum
ne geiece...

(Alfred, P. C.: 453, 19)

When the indicative mood was used, the activity expressed in the clause was not looked upon as contingent.

8. Clauses of cause, motive or reason

Ne spræc he hit no forðyðe his mod auht genierwed wære...

(Alfred, P. C.: 304, 16)

Normally those clauses appeared with the indicative form of the verb.

9. Clauses of place

Hafa bletsunge ofer middangeard mine þær ðu fere.

(Andreas: 223)

The subjunctive expressed doubt as to the finding or existence of the place.
The indicative expressed mere facts.

Subject clauses¹⁶

1. Clauses which complement impersonal verbal constructions as *him geriaep*,
þuhte him, etc.

...wel þe gerised þæt þu heafod sie healle mæsse...

(Christ: 3)

When the indicative appeared in such clauses, it denoted fact modality.

2. Clauses which depended on introductory phrases of the type *is alyfed*, *is to
gelyfenne*, and the like with verbs of mental activities and verbs of saying.

...þæt eow æfre ne bið ufan alyfed lehtes lissum þæt ge lof moten dryhtne
secgan...

(Guthlac: 612)

The indicative denoted fact modality when it appeared in these clauses.

3. Clauses introduced by a phrase consisting of *beon*+adjective or noun.

Ðæt is þæs wyrðe þætte wer-peode secgen dryhtne þonc...

(Christ: 600)

The indicative also appeared in these clauses.

VII. The presentation of the periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* shows that this type of subjunctive mood alternated with the inflectional subjunctive only in certain types of clause in Old English: among independent clauses they were those which expressed an idle wish, hesitant statement, and apodosis of hypothetical condition; among dependent clauses they were those which depended on expressions of volition, indirect questions, attributive clauses, clauses of purpose, and clauses of condition. In these units *magan*+infinitive, like the inflectional subjunctive, denoted non-fact modality; however, *magan* also introduced its individual meaning of nihil obstat possibility, whereas the inflectional subjunctive expressed general non-fact modality. When *magan* was in the preterite form and was used without reference to any time sphere, it expressed a hypothetical possibility; when the preterite form of *magan* appeared in a past time context, it was ambiguous as it could express possibility in the past or a hypothetical possibility.

Although *magan*+infinitive and the inflectional subjunctive appeared in identical syntactic units, they were not wholly semantically interchangeable. The use of one or the other form of the subjunctive mood was determined by this difference in meaning.

¹⁶ The classification of subject clauses is based on syntactic criteria.

When used in the present tense form, *magan* tended to appear in the subjunctive inflectional form; in the preterite, however, the formal distinction indicative v. subjunctive existed only for the second person singular and for the plural, so in many instances the preterite form of *magan* may be said to have been unmarked for mood. When *magan* was in the subjunctive inflectional form, it expressed the meaning of (hypothetical) possibility coloured with general non-fact modality.

In all the clauses in which the two types of subjunctive mood alternated, these shades of non-fact modality were compatible with the rest of the semantic environment. For example, there would have been no such semantic compatibility between *magan* in the periphrastic subjunctive and the illocutionary act occurring in clauses employing the inflectional subjunctive to express exhortation or command: an exhortation or command is concerned with having the addressee perform the event and not with the possibility of performing it.

For the clauses where the alternation discussed took place, except clauses expressing an idle wish and apodosis of hypothetical condition, there existed comparable clauses with the verb in the indicative form. The difference between the indicative and the subjunctive was almost always parallel with the semantic difference between fact modality and non-fact modality;¹⁶ clauses of condition could be an exception. Considering the diminishing formal opposition between the inflectional subjunctive and the indicative, it can be assumed that one of the functions of *magan*+infinitive was to serve as a more distinctive and productive means of signalling non-fact modality than the inflectional subjunctive.

The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* was not connected in any semantically exclusive way with the group of clauses in which it appeared in Old English. This periphrastic subjunctive widened its range of occurrence to other clauses in the subsequent periods. For instance, it appeared later in clauses expressing a wish.

Some of the facts concerning the use of the periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* are summarized in the table.

SOURCES

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¹⁶ With the exception of the preterite indicative when it was used without reference to any time sphere (the so-called modal preterite).

Types of clause	The periphrastic subjunctive with <i>magan</i>	The inflectional subjunctive	The indicative in comparable clauses	The indicative as a signal of fact modality
<i>Independent clauses</i>				
Idle wish	+	+		
Hesitant statement	+	+	+	+
Apodosis of hypothetical condition	+	+		
Wish		+		
Exhortation		+		
Explanatory clause		+		
Questions introduced by <i>hwæþer</i> , <i>hwæt</i> , <i>hwi</i>		+	+	
<i>Dependent clauses</i>				
<i>A. Object clauses</i>				
Expression of volition + clause	+	+	+	+
Verb of asking + clause	+	+	+	+
Expression of emotion + clause		+	+	
Verbs of believing, trusting, etc. + clause		+	+	+
Verbs of saying, declaring, lying + clause		+	+	+
<i>B. Attributive clauses</i>				
	+	+	+	+
<i>C. Adverbial clauses</i>				
Clauses of purpose	+	+	+	+
Clauses of condition	+	+	+	+
Temporal clauses		+	+	
Clauses of exception		+	+	
Clauses of concession and indefiniteness		+	+	
Clauses of manner or degree		+	+	
Clauses of comparison		+	+	
Clauses of hypothetical similarity		+	+	
Clauses of result		+	+	+
Clauses of cause, motive or reason		+	+	+
Clauses of place		+	+	+
<i>D. Subject clauses</i>				
'him geriseþ' + clause		+	+	+
'is alyfed' + clause		+	+	+
'is (was) + adjective' + clause		+	+	

The periphrastic subjunctive with *magan* versus the inflectional subjunctive and the indicative in various types of clause in Old English.

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Abbreviated forms of sources cited:

Andreas	<i>Andreas</i> in Brooks, K. R. (ed.). 1961.
Byrhtferth's manual	in Crawford, S. J. (ed.). 1929.
Christ	<i>Christ</i> in Gollancz, I. (ed.). 1895.
Guthlac	<i>Saint Guthlac</i> in Gollancz, I. (ed.). 1895.
Juliana	<i>Saint Juliana</i> in Gollancz, I. (ed.). 1895.
Beowulf	<i>Beowulf</i> in Klaeber, Fr. (ed.). 1950.
Alfred, P. C.	in Sweet, H. (ed.). 1871.
Alfred, Orosius	in Sweet, H. (ed.). 1883.

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