Prepositions in Early Modern English Argument Structure

Marianne Hundt & Eva Zehentner

Prepositions and PPs

- integral part of PDE language

- important role in system of verbal complementation

- diachronic development in history of English

- most striking changes: OE → ME (synthetic → analytic)

- increase of PP-patterns (token frequency, functions)

(e.g. *Mustanoja* 1960: 348; *Strang* 1970: 274-275; *Traugott* 1972: 127; *De la Cruz* 1973: 173; *Denison* 1981: 209, 1985: 193, 2014: Ch.7; *Fischer* 1992: 233-234; *Lundskær-Nielsen* 1993: 113-115; *Claridge* 2000: 89-93; *Baugh & Cable* 2002: 154-155; *Fischer & van der Wurff* 2006: 166; *Iglesias-Rábade* 2011; *Szmrecsanyi* 2012; inter alia)

Previous research

- (changes in) the semantics and syntax of individual prepositions (typically in adverbial function)

  (e.g. Lundskaer-Nielsen 1993; Molencki 2005, 2007, 2008, 2011a, 2011b; Sato 2009; Iglesias-Rábade 2011; Czisek-Kiliszewska 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2015; De Cuypere 2013)

- 'prepositional verbs' (and related issues, e.g. preposition stranding)

  (*History of English*: e.g. Denison 1981, 1985, 2014; Claridge 2000; Brinton & Traugott 2005; Nykiel 2014, 2015, etc.; Yañez-Bouza 2015)

  (*World Englishes*: Mukherjee & Hoffmann 2006; Mukherjee 2009; Nesselhauf 2009; Schneider & Zipp 2013; Siew Imm 2016)

- syntactic alternations (dative alternation, genitive alternation)

  (*dative alternation*: e.g. Colleman & De Clerck 2009, 2011; Wolk et al. 2013; Gerwin 2014; De Cuypere 2015a, 2015b; Yañez-Bouza & Denison 2015; Zehentner 2018)

  (*genitive alternation*: Thomas 1931; Rosenbach 2002; Allen 2005, 2009)

PEAS-project
(*Prepositions in English argument structure*, SNF)

o address lack of a **systematic, comprehensive, unified, longitudinal** account of the diachrony of prepositional complementation patterns in English

- insufficient empirical evidence (very small databases; restricted scope)

- focus on selected aspects (instead of PP-system as a whole)

- no conclusive answer to question of correlation (causal relationship) between rise of prepositional patterns and other (system-wide) changes

- no connection between history of Standard English and more recent developments (in new varieties of English)

Today: Pilot study on Early Modern English

Data/methodology

Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English (PPCEME)

- 1500-1720
- 1.7 million words

o *CorpusSearch*: V + PP, V + NP + PP

o random sample of 200 tokens per period (E1-E3)

Today: Pilot study on Early Modern English

Data/methodology

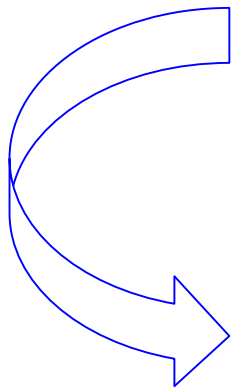Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English (PPCEME)

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- 1.7 million words

- o supplemented by selected data from the International Corpus of English (ICE)
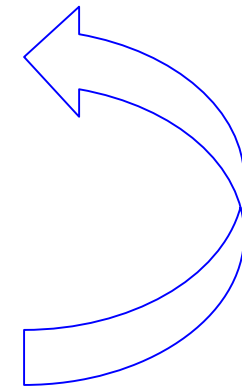
Today: Pilot study on Early Modern English

Aims

o   first glimpse into diachrony of PP-patterns and connection to WE

bottom-up approach: What's out there?

top-down: test specific hypotheses derived
from initial data analysis

Today: Pilot study on Early Modern English

Aims

o   first glimpse into diachrony of PP-patterns and connection to WE

o   English as an increasingly PP-friendly language (synthetic → analytic)

- increase in type and token frequency of PP-patterns

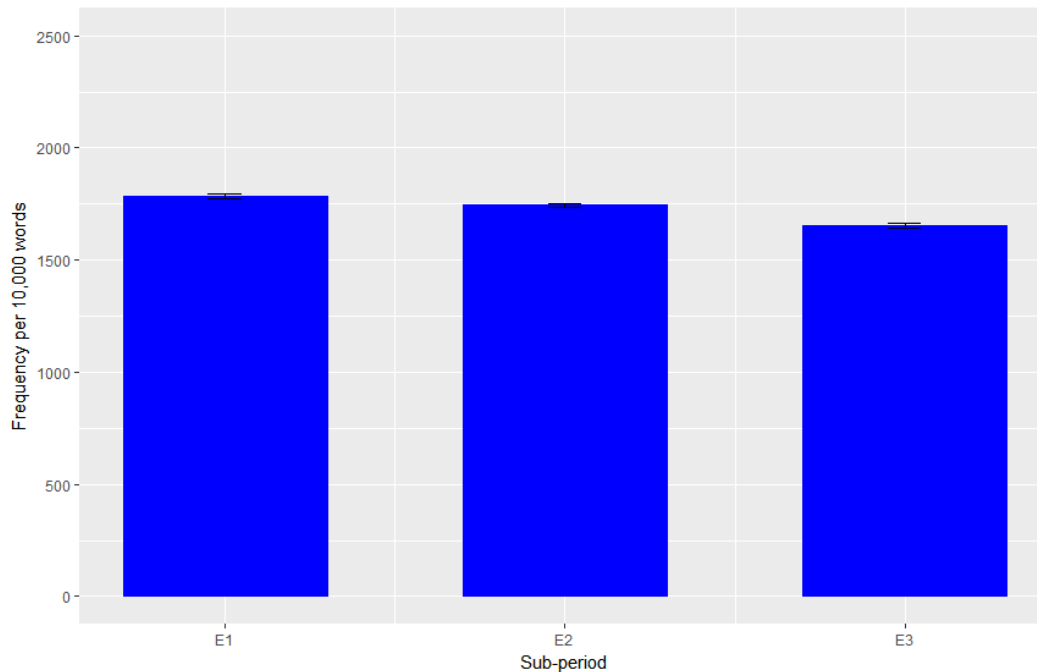- increase in range of prepositional patterns (new functions)

Today: Pilot study on Early Modern English

Aims

o first glimpse into diachrony of PP-patterns and connection to WE

o English as an increasingly PP-friendly language (synthetic → analytic)

- taxonomy and distribution
- collocations
- NP vs. PP

Taxonomy and distribution of PP-patterns in EModE

N=309,998

Overall (normalised) token frequency of PP-patterns:

- decrease instead of increase?
  (cf. Szmrecsanyi 2012)

- coding issues (definition of prep.)

Taxonomy and distribution of PP-patterns in EModE

PDE: complements ~ adjuncts

"In practice it is hard to make an absolute distinction between free combinations and fixed multi-verb verbs"

(Biber et al. 1999: 403; cf. also Quirk et al. 1985: 501-511, 1162-1167)

Hoffmann (2005, 2007):

network of PP-patterns, ranging from optional sentence adjuncts to obligatory complements subcategorising for specific preposition (*rely on, consist of, give to*)

Taxonomy and distribution of PP-patterns in EModE

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Hypothesis:

PP-types in PDE represent different stages of constructionalisation (grammaticalisation/ lexicalisation)

- increasingly close relationship between verb and preposition/ PP moves into VP
- semantic extension

<u>Diachronic development (cxgz/gramm./lex.)</u>

*John died **in Rome (on Monday)***

*John cooked dinner **with his dad***

*John killed the cat **with a knife***

*John slept **in a bed***

*John ran **to the church***

*John was **in Rome***

*John lives **on the moon***

*John worked **at the job***

*John talked **to Mary***

*John gave the book **to Mary***
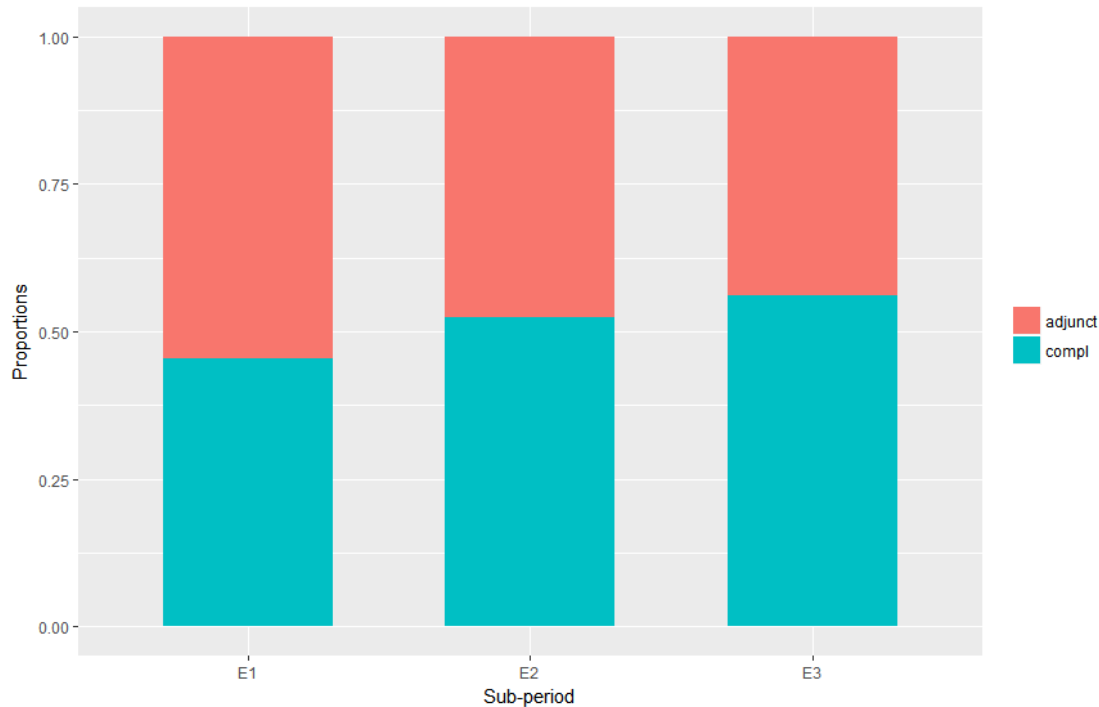
*John kept the book **in the drawer***

*John relied **on his mother***

adjuncts → compl

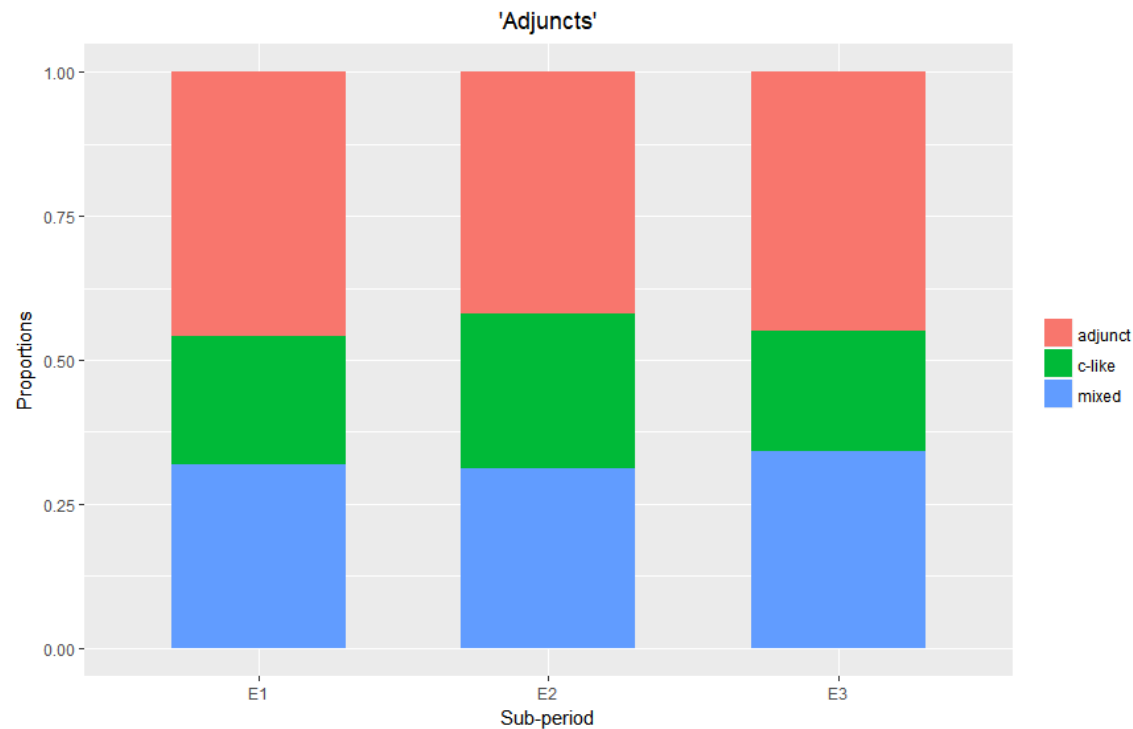# Taxonomy and distribution of PP-patterns in EModE

N=601

- increase in proportional frequency of 'complements' at the expense of 'adjuncts'

since Michalmas there *hath dyed* **in the town** seaven
(PPCEME3, eoxinden)

VS.

when you *trust* **to sb.** you are gone
(PPCEME3, phenry)

Taxonomy and distribution of PP-patterns in EModE
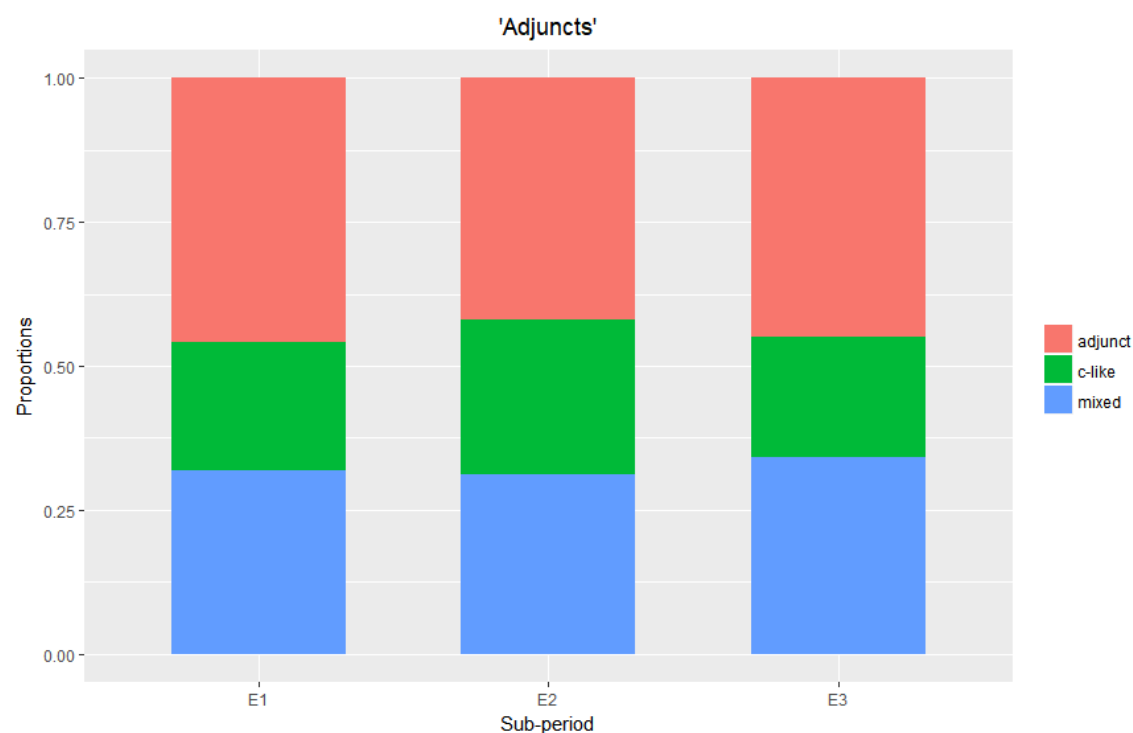
'Adjuncts'

N=292

- prototypical **adjuncts** (adverbials of place/time/..) most frequent, followed by **mixed** and **complement-like** uses

  there *hath dyed* **in the town** seaven (PPCEME3, eoxinden)

  from thence we *went* **to the City of Esmeere** (PPCEME2, coverte)

  gave her may=tie= cause to *looke* **about her** (PPCEME2, rcecil)

Taxonomy and distribution of PP-patterns in EModE

'Adjuncts'

N=292

- prototypical **adjuncts** (adverbials of place/time/..) most frequent, followed by **mixed** and **complement-like** uses

- little change over time, but distribution corresponds to expectations

Taxonomy and distribution of PP-patterns in EModE
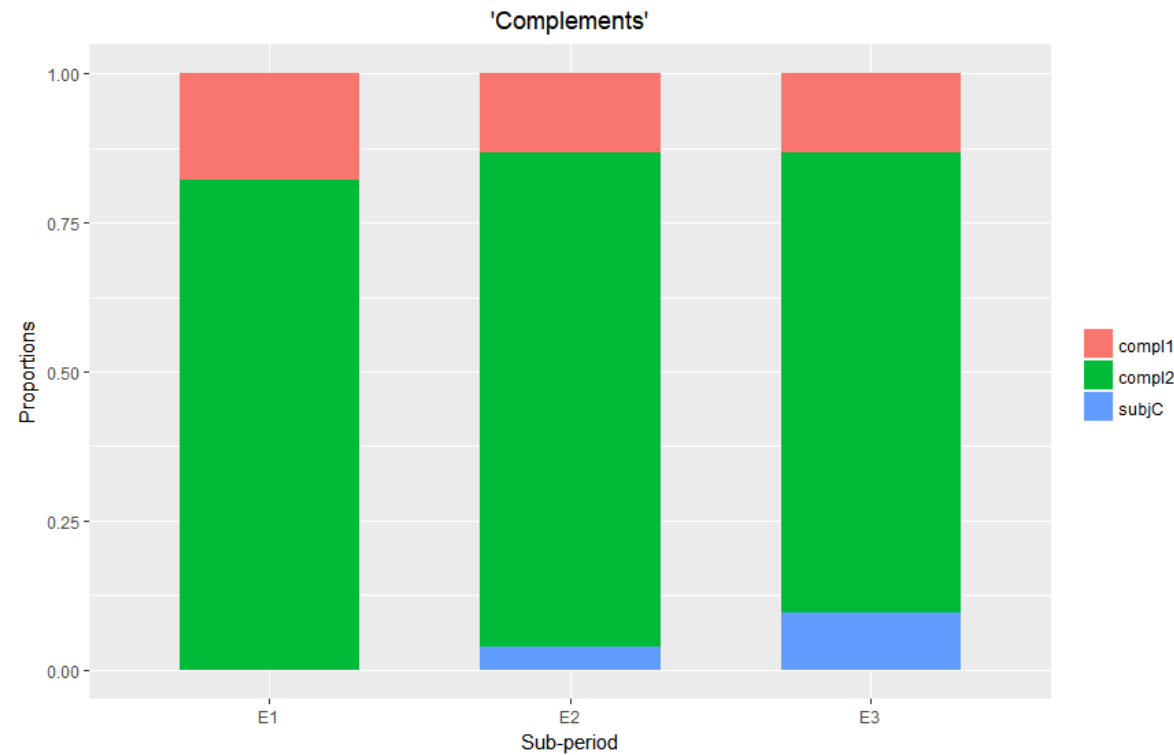
'Complements'

N=309

- prototypical **complements** (direct/indirect objects, 'compl2') most frequent, followed by 'compl1' (fixed expressions, idiomatic uses) and subject complements

when you *trust* **to sb.** you are gone
(PPCEME3, phenry)

the Amorites *dwell* **in the mountaines**:
(PPCEME2, authold)

Taxonomy and distribution of PP-patterns in EModE
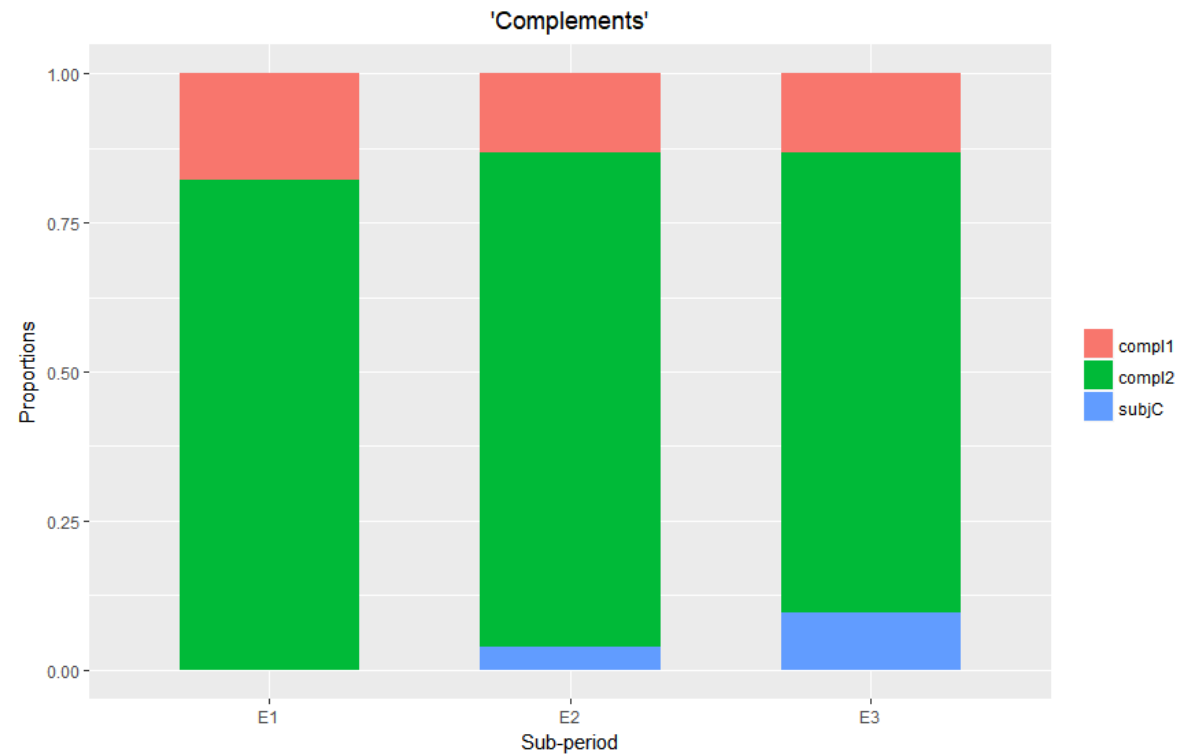
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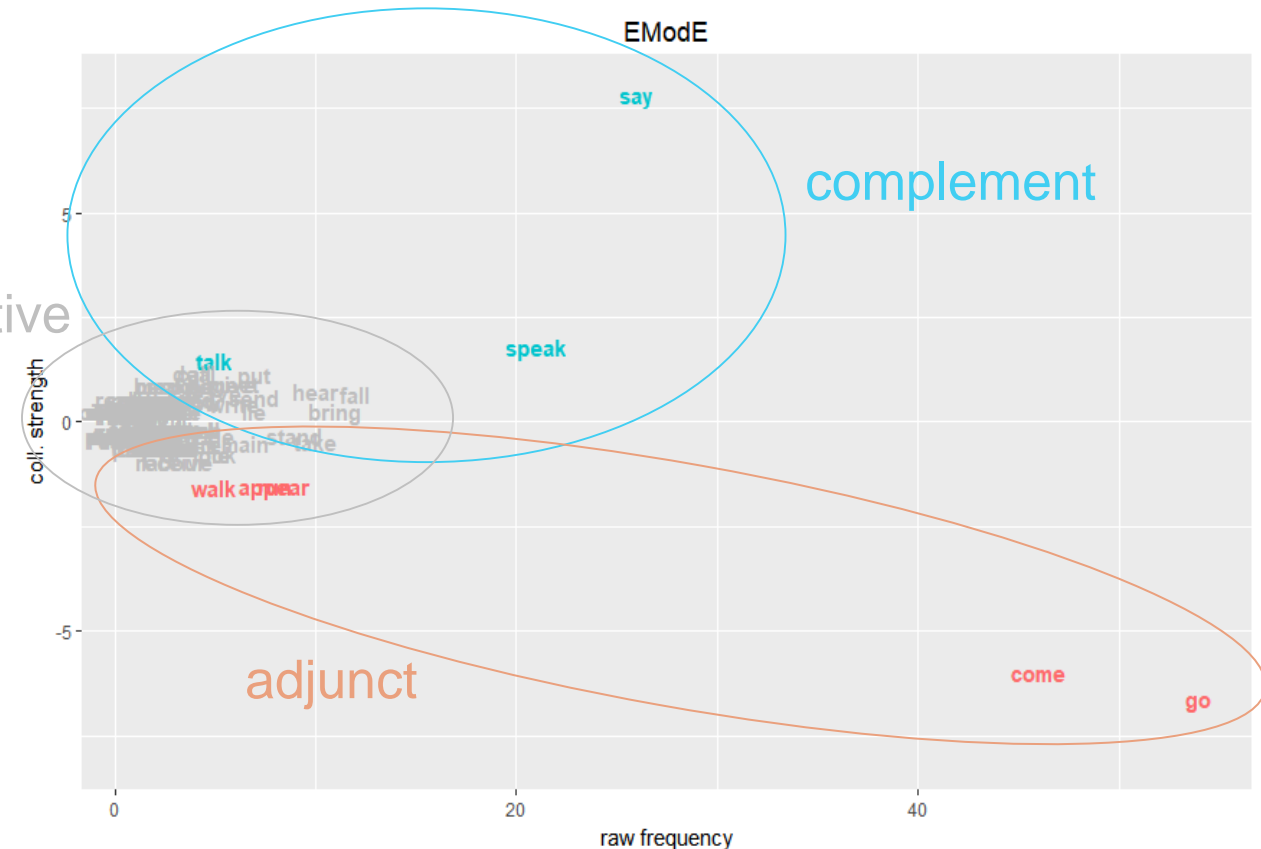
- rise in subject complements

Collocations/ verb preferences:

(multiple) distinctive collexeme analysis
(*Gries* 2007)

- verb-construction collocation (attraction) in entire period

- verbs of movement (*go, come, walk, appear, run*): adjunct uses

- verbs of communication (*say, speak, talk*): complement uses

Collocations/ verb distribution:

<u>(multiple) distinctive collexeme analysis</u>
(*Gries* 2007)

- verb-preposition collocation (attraction/ repulsion)

- **verbs of movement** vs. **verbs of communication**: complementary, distinct preferences

Verb	before	in	of	onto	unto	with
repeat	1.88	-0.07	-0.03	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03
speak	-0.12	-1.43	2.56	-0.15	1.72	1.14
talk	-0.03	-0.34	1.36	1.1	-0.11	1.3
show	-0.02	-0.27	-0.13	2.81	0.73	-0.14
say	-0.18	-1.31	-0.21	5.02	10.11	-1.08
recommend	-0.01	-0.14	-0.06	-0.01	2.6	-0.07
converse	-0.01	-0.14	-0.06	-0.01	-0.04	2.23

Verb	about	down	in	into	of	through	to	towards
walk	-0.02	0	2.71	-0.07	-0.16	-0.02	-0.49	1.83
enter	-0.01	0	-0.2	4.46	-0.1	-0.01	-0.3	0
run	-0.03	1.93	-0.54	0.63	-0.26	2.83	-0.3	-0.01
go	2.1	-0.04	-2.73	0.98	-1.76	0.47	8.36	-0.07
come	-0.15	-0.03	-1.59	0.34	-0.47	-0.15	6.9	-0.06

Collocations/ verb distribution:

<u>(multiple) distinctive collexeme analysis</u>
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- verb-preposition collocation (attraction/ repulsion)

- phase of 'experimentation'/ great variation → clearer and stronger association between specific verbs and prepositions?

(e.g. *Abbott* 1870; *Franz* 1892; *Traugott* 1972)

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NPs vs. PPs

loss of one variant   vs.   co-existence

NP ousts PP:

- prepositional verbs (*congratulate *with*)

PP ousts NP:

- adverbials (time, place, manner, also accompaniment, instrument)
- prepositional verbs (*rely on, consist of*)

transitives:

NP: *think/ believe sth.*

PP: *think about/of sth., believe in sth.*

ditransitives:

NP: *give so. sth.*
PP: *give sth. to so.*

NPs vs. PPs

loss of one variant   vs.   co-existence

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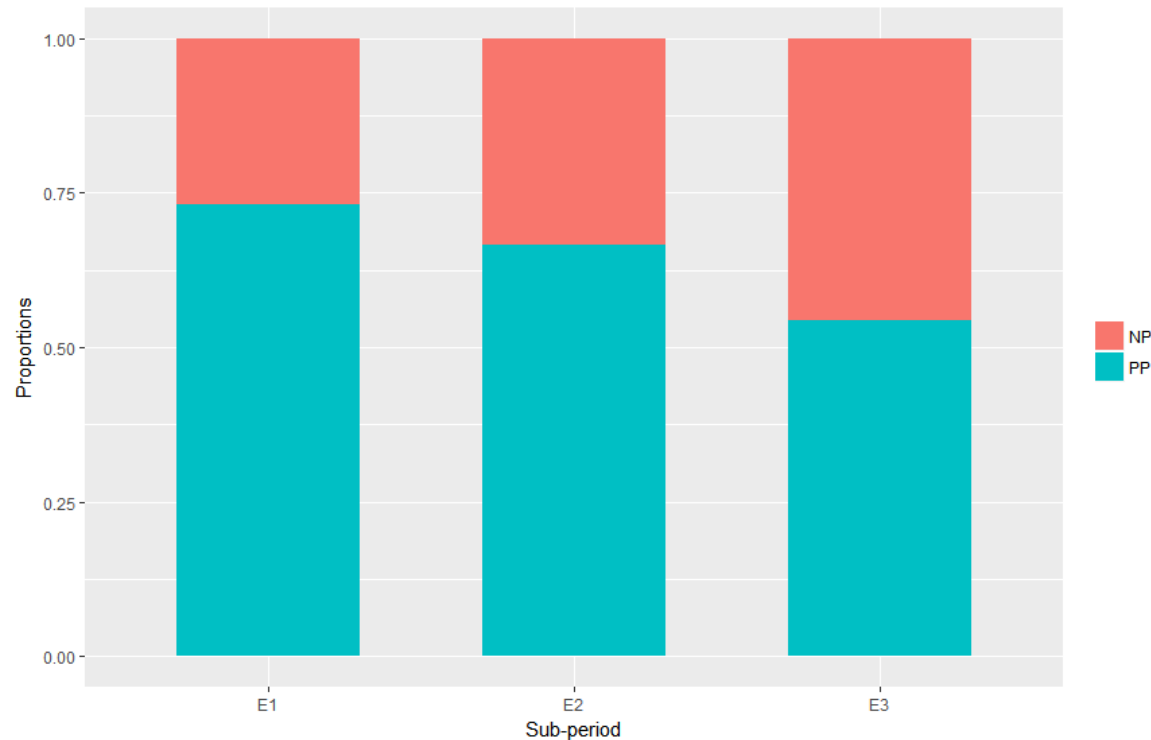
PP: *think about/of sth., believe in sth.*

intransitives:

NP: *give so. sth.*

PP: *give sth. to so.*
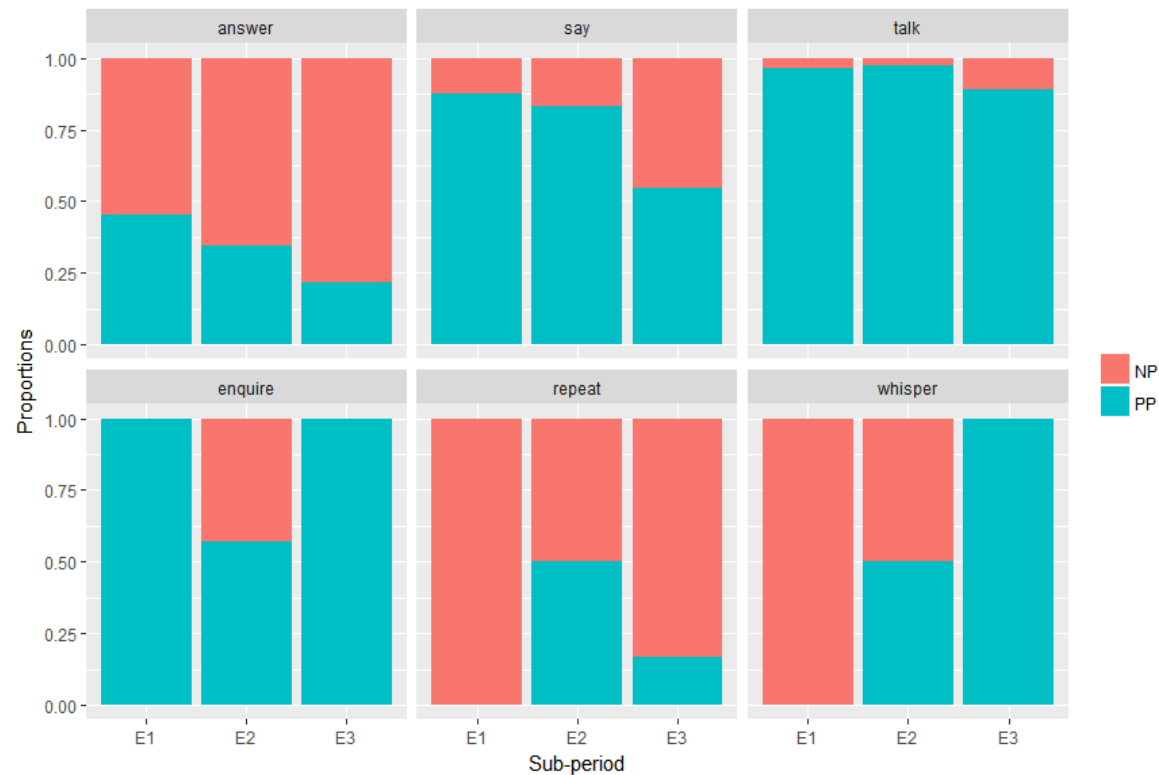
OVERALL: increase in PP?

NPs vs. PPs

N=434

Verbs of communication (*answer*, *say*, *talk*, *enquire*, *repeat*, *whisper*): ?

- **decrease** in proportional frequency of PPs in favour of NP uses

- other competitors: intransitive uses, clausal objects

Verbs of movement:

- PPs predominant throughout period, little change

NPs vs. PPs

Verbs of communication (*answer*, *say*, *talk*, *enquire*, *repeat*, *whisper*): ?

- same trend with individual verbs (higher frequency)
- low frequency verbs: less clear

(*answer*: N=151, *say*: N= 166, *talk*= 79, *enquire*=20, *repeat*=13, *whisper*=5)

NPs vs. PPs: Language history and World Englishes

enter (into)

mentioned as one example of novel verb-preposition collocations in WE (e.g. SingE, IndE, KenE, FijE) and learner Englishes

(Nesselhauf 2009: 18; Zipp 2014: 128)

o When one **enters** these tribal territorial boundaries one is said to **enter into** the sacred house of Ngapuhi-nui-tonu … (ICE-NZ, W2a-004)

o These plants contain … psoralens (furocoumarins) in the sap which can **enter into** the skin especially when it is moist. (ICE-SIN, W2B-021)

o Whenever I **enter into** the class they laugh at me (ICE-IND, S1a-001)

o and suddenly the Lord that you seek will **enter into** His temple (ICE-GB, S2a-036)

NPs vs. PPs: Language history and World Englishes

enter (into)

OED:

const. *into*, †*in* (= 'into'), rarely †*unto*. Now largely superseded by the trans. use 10, but retained where the notion of penetration into the interior of a place is sought to be emphasized

o   He most **entre** the See, at Gene. *(c*1400 Mandeville xiii (1839) 144)

o   I **entred in** þat erber grene. (c1400 (c1380) Pearl 1. 38)

o   That ilke nyght That we ben **entred in to** shippes bord (c1405 (c1390) Chaucer Miller's Tale l. 399)

o   Syr for Gods sake **enter** againe **into** your Ship (1569   R. Grafton Chron. II. 263)

NPs vs. PPs: Language history and World Englishes

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o the Lorde Marques hadd **entered into** the Tower of London (PPCEME1, moreric)
o we muste **enter ynto** the kyngdome of God (PPCEME1, mowntayne)
o hee shall not **enter into** the land (PPCEME2, authold)
o no man might presume to **enter into** his House (PPCEME3, milton)

NPs vs. PPs: Language history and World Englishes

enter (into)

OED:

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o And **entering into** the house, they found the Child with Mary (COHA, NF, 1939)

o The pilot **entered into** a restricted airspace. (COHA, NEWS, 1987)

o The drop of grape-juice which **enters into** the flask by this suction ordinarily remains in the curved part of the tube (COHA, NF, 1904)

NPs vs. PPs: Language history and World Englishes

- **decrease** in proportional frequency of PPs in favour of NP uses, **high frequency** of NP in WE

- other competitors: intransitive uses, clausal objects

N=602

Conclusions

- first glimpse into history of PPs in English from a bottom-up, data-driven, encompassing perspective

- certain common claims about PP-development may not find straight-forward support, at least not from EModE data (English as an increasingly PP-friendly language, synthetic → analytic), benefits in re-visiting issues

- historical depth adds significantly to the interpretation of data from WEs

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Thank you!

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Collocations/ verb distribution:

(multiple) distinctive collexeme analysis
(*Gries* 2007)

- verb-preposition collocation (attraction/ repulsion)

- phase of 'experimentation'/ great variation → clearer and stronger association between specific verbs and prepositions?

  (e.g. *Abbott* 1870; *Franz* 1892; *Traugott* 1972)

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walk	-0.02	0	2.71	-0.07	-0.16	-0.02	-0.49	1.83
enter	-0.01	0	-0.2	4.46	-0.1	-0.01	-0.3	0
run	-0.03	1.93	-0.54	0.63	-0.26	2.83	-0.3	-0.01
go	2.1	-0.04	-2.73	0.98	-1.76	0.47	8.36	-0.07
come	-0.15	-0.03	-1.59	0.34	-0.47	-0.15	6.9	-0.06

NPs vs. PPs: Language history and World Englishes

enter (into)

OED:

const. *into*, †*in* (= 'into'), rarely †*unto*. Now largely superseded by the trans. use 10, but retained where the notion of penetration into the interior of a place is sought to be emphasized

o   Whiche shortly therevppon folowed to **enter into** talke with Sir Thomas Moore (PPCEME1, roper)

o   now I am **entered into** a discourse of this baue abiect or subiect (PPCEME2, jotaylor)