TOWARDS A MORE ANALYTIC EXPRESSION OF GRAMMATICAL RELATIONSHIPS: THE USE OF PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS IN EARLY ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE

HANNA RUTKOWSKA

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

ABSTRACT

The focus of my paper is syntactic. It analyses different functions and positions of uninflected words, more precisely prepositions and adverbs, in fifteenth-century English correspondence. By Late Middle English grammatical relationships and meanings previously expressed by means of affixation (inflectional endings and prefixes) had been largely taken over by prepositions and adverbial particles which had become necessary elements in most noun and verb phrases.

Due to their analytic character, constructions containing prepositional and phrasal verbs have been considered of particular interest and are analysed in considerable detail in the paper. Moreover, the use of adverbs in negations, and prepositions and adverbs in relative structures is examined. In order to make the discussion complete, compound prepositions and adverbs are discussed as counterexamples to the general tendency towards a more analytic expression of grammatical relationships.

Medieval constructions containing prepositions and adverbs are often highly idiomatic and differ from Present-day English ones not only in terms of word order but also with regard to meaning. Therefore, some attention is paid throughout the paper to the semantic development of the discussed words.

The *Cely letters* (1472-88) constitute the basis for the analysis, but some examples are also drawn from the Paston and Plumpton letters.

The present article is hoped to contribute to a better understanding of the language of fifteenth-century written unofficial documents.

0. Introduction

The focus of this paper is syntactic. It analyses different functions and positions of prepositions and adverbs in fifteenth-century English correspondence. The *Cely letters* (henceforth *CL*), a collection of the earliest extant commercial letters in English (1472-88), constitute the basis for the analysis (the size of the

corpus is almost 85,000 words),[1] but some examples are also drawn from the Paston and Plumpton letters.[2]

By Late Middle English grammatical relationships and meanings previously expressed by means of affixation (inflectional and derivational affixes) had been largely taken over by prepositions and adverbs which had become necessary elements in most noun and verb phrases. Interestingly, the occurrences of the most frequent prepositions, **OF**[3] (*of(f)*, *ov*[4]), **TO** (*to*), **AT** (*at(t)*) and **IN** (*in, yn, i, y*), amount to over 8,000 words, i.e., nearly ten per cent of all the words in the whole collection of the *CL*.

My paper is divided into three parts: It will first discuss the functions and distribution of prepositions, then the structure, functions, comparison and distribution of adverbs. Later on, the focus will shift to periphrastic structures involving prepositions or/and adverbs. Particular attention will be paid to expressions and constructions that have either been changed or altogether lost from the language.

1. Prepositions

1.1. Functions and distribution

In the material analysed, prepositions, in most cases, retain their full prepositional force (marking the grammatical and semantic relation between two notional words, the latter of which is a substantive or pronoun). In *CL* prepositions take noun phrases as their complements. Prepositional phrases formed in this way act as complements or adjuncts to verbs and modifiers to nouns and pronouns. As can be seen in the following example, such uses of prepositions closely resemble those found in PDE.

1)   Ryght worchepffull syr, I recomend **to** your goode masterschep, etc., laytyng your masterschep wett the caus **of** my comyng **to** Callys was to

---

[1] The numeration of letters from the Cely collection follows Hanham's (1975) edition of the letters. Additional numbers given in examples correspond to the lines in the electronic version of the *CL* in the form of a Microsoft Access databasis that compiled by the present author and used for the purposes of linguistic analysis. All the abbreviations and symbols used in this paper are listed in the Appendix.

[2] All the examples from the Plumpton letters come from Kirby (ed.) (1996) (over 38,000 words), and those from the Paston letters (only John Paston III's and William Paston III's letters have been analysed) from the Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse available at: http://www.hti.umich.edu/cgi/c/cme/cme-idx?type=header&idno=Paston (nearly 50,000 words).

[3] Capital letters refer to all the orthographic variants of a given word or phrase.

[4] The variant *ov* has been recorded only once: *Ryght wyrschypfull cossyn, I commaunde me to yow, praying yow to send me halfe a doson quysschyns and viij yerdys ov bankerys acordyng þareto, of Ynglyssche yerdys, verdure þe colowr* (RCD 60: 149).

com **vnto** you **for** a goshauke, as you promysyd me **at** my laste beyng **wyth** ^you^ **in** London. (61: 85)

Prepositions often occur in collocations with particular verbs referred to as prepositional verbs. However, these are not as strictly fixed as in today's English. Many of these collocations allow for some variation of the preposition, e.g.,

2)   Daultons mother comendys hyr to you and **thankys** yow **for** the knyuys that ʒe sente to hyr. (RCII 117: 512)

3)   Syr, my Loord comendys hym harttely wnto yow, and **thankys** yow **of** your letter, and syche tydyngys as he knowys a wryttys yow parte. (RCII 121: 564)

Prepositions may also be necessary elements in idiomatic prepositional phrases, e.g.,

4)   Firthermore sir, as for the byllis of John Eton tat Fedyan axith, **in gudd fayth** we cannott yett fynde them; Y trowe nor neuer shall. (JC 100: 22)

5)   Also syr, he leyde arndys on me **by mothe** to sey to you... (JR 57: 75)[5]

6)   For sothe, I can haue of Rychard Tywne, mecer, at London ix s. viij d. (RCI 50: 271)

Not infrequently, prepositions, which are part of a collocation with a verb, occur at the end of a clause, e.g.,

7)   Item, syr, I vnderstonde that yowre masterschypp wold [th]at John Dalton schuld bye the horsse that he wrote to yow **off**. (WLC 163: 216)

8)   ʒe schall onderstond mor at your comyng – yt ys of meyrth the cavsse I woold haue you **for**. (JD 44: 26)

9)   I woll speke wyth John Vandyrhay and soche merchantys as I am acostom to delle **wyth**. (GC 22: 35)

At times the same preposition occurs twice in the same construction, e.g.,

10) and they hawe graunttyd and gewen a saffcondutt generall duryng the space of x monthys to all maner merchauntys, **of** what nacyon or contrey they be **off**, bryngyng vetell ynto Flaunders, or ellys nott (WLC 238: 1537)

11)

---

[5] *Arndys* means 'message, errand' (Hanham 1975: 315).

Furthermor ˋsyr, at they makyng heroff all that nov bene **in** Leyceter **in** recomaunde them vnto yow and desyred me so to wreet, and that we wold ffayne haue yow heere agayne, etc. (JD 180: 134)

No specific reason for such doubling of prepositions can be inferred from the examples, apart from, perhaps, emphasis. It can also be indeliberate.

Conversely, in certain constructions where prepositions would be considered necessary according to the grammatical rules in modern English, no preposition is employed, e.g.,

12)   and I hawe delyuerd Joysse v s. x d. Fl. *ffor al maner costys* here, as hallff passage and brege money, etc., and ffor hys costys yn Ynglond, xx s. ster. acordyng to yowre wrytyng, etc. (WLC 181: 367)

13)   Syr, ther ys in the same chambyr iijᶜ xlix Cotys of my fadyrs in the sayd chambyr, *praysyd xiiij noblis*, howlde ffellys allso. (GC 92: 114)

In example 12 one could expect the preposition **OF** following *maner*, but apparently the writers did not judge the preposition to be necessary. In (13) **AT** has been omitted.

However, the omission of a preposition in the discussed constructions seems optional and there are clauses where it is retained in the same environment, e.g.,

14)   Syr, he hath bowght won as on Synt Telen Day, besyde Odenborow at a ffaȝer, and he standys yn yowre stabull. Hys color ys *maner off a gray coler.* (WLC 163: 217)

15)   Forst syr, and ȝe con, sell iiijᶜlvj wynter London of my ffadyrs Rychard Cely hys: they be *praysyd at xij noblis*, xx d., and they be howlde ffelys. (GC 92: 112)

Prepositions are an uninflected part of speech and cannot take any inflectional suffixes. They do not show any derivational affixation either. However, there are examples of compound prepositions in, e.g.,

16)   The messenger that brought them I herde hym sey he departede from the Kynge at þe Tower of London **vpon** Frydey last past. (WD 171: 50)

17)   Owr father rydys **into** Cotsold **vythin** viij dayes, and I go to my Loorde. (RCII 47: 146)

Such complex forms (written jointly or separately in the originals of the letters) can obviously be found in PDE.

1.2. Prepositions used as infinitive markers

In some constructions prepositions have lost their prepositional force. This applies to those marking the infinitive form of the verb. The infinitive indicators found in the *CL* include *to, f(f)or to, for,* and zero.[6] Figure 1 shows the distribution of the variants *to* and *for to* in the authors using more than one indicator of the infinitive. The remaining writers use only the marker *to.*

Figure 1. Distribution of infinitive indicators *to, f(f)or to,* and *for*[7]

	to (%)	for to (%)	for (%)
WLC	315 (92)	29[8] (8)	–
RCII	196 (98)	4 (2)	–
RCI	29 (32.3)	57 (63.3)	4 (4.4)
WM	15 (33)	30 (67)	–
JD	19 (90)	1 (5)	1 (5)
JR	19 (95)	1 (5)	–
EB	6 (86)	1 (14)	–
JPS	10 (91)	1 (9)	–
RL	4 (80)	1 (20)	–
RT	1 (50)	1 (50)	–
TC	2 (67)	1 (13)	–
WMD	3 (75)	1 (25)	–

The table above shows that *to* is much more common than *for to* as the infinitive marker in all authors but two. Only RCI and WM show preference for the variant *for to.* The percentages of particular forms in their letters are strikingly similar. The fact that both writers belong to the older generation supports the assumption that *for to* is a receding variant. Several younger writers use it as well but merely occasionally.[9] Below, functional features of all the variants and the differences between them are discussed.

---

[6] Other infinitive indicators, *till* and *at,* quoted by Mustanoja (1960: 515), have not been recorded either in *CL* or in the analysed Paston and Plumpton letters.

[7] Zero has not been taken into consideration, because of a large number of doubtful cases, where the definite distinction between the infinitive and the subjunctive seems impossible, which renders counts of these forms unreliable.

[8] Including 19 occurrences of *ffor to.*

[9] The percentages given for the minor writers (EB, JPS, RL, RT, TC, and WMD) are probably of little statistical value, given the sizes of their outputs.

The infinitive form is usually introduced by *to*, which, in this position, does not exhibit its original prepositional functions, but serves merely as an indicator of the infinitive form. The infinitive, preceded by the simple *to*, can also express finality, e.g., *to fet* in example (18) and *to se* in (19).

18)   he hathe mayd promyse **to be** her wythin xiiij days after Candylmesse **to fet** tayme away, and he hathe promysid **to helpe** yow of 1 li. of Caruluss grottys for xvj d. (JPM 142: 117-118)

19)   iij dayes afor the wrytyng of thys I departyd from my Loord, and come **to se** my father and my mother, and the morow after ^thys^ I pwrpos be grasse of God **to goo** ageyn. (RCII 55: 169)

The complex prepositional indicator *for to* was originally used to express purpose ['in order to', 'for the purpose of'] (Mustanoja 1960: 514; Mossé 1952: 100), and it still occurs in that function in most of the instances found in the *CL*,[10] e.g.,

20)   The cavse I wryt to the ys **for to** beware ^of^ resayuyvng of syche goldys as gryte lose ys in at Caleys. (RCI 20: 90)

21)   Syr, my master yowre fadere and my maysterys yowre moder would awyes yow that ye wovld com howre vnto them into Hessex, and nat **for to** com at London, and **for to** be mery ther wyt them thys hervest, and so **for to** do youre pylgrymage. (WM 58: 90-91)

This function of *for to* can also be found in other contemporary letters, e.g.,

22)   they schalbe redy in ther defensable aray ... in the West parte on Gateley More the same day, vpon peyne of losyng of ther goodys and bodyes, **for to** geynsstonde suche persons as is abowtward **for to** dystroy owre suffereyn lorde the Kynge and the Comowns of Engelond. (William Paston III 1489: 5)[11]

23)   att which time ye may nott faile to send hider all your bookes and some readie man **for to** answer unto him (Brian Rocliffe 1461: 11)

However, *for to* does not always indicate finality (though this function can be determined in the majority of occurrences). In several cases it introduces a neutral infinitive (especially in RCI), e.g.,

24)   the warled ys not good, werefor it ys as good **for to** lese in the begeyn(yn)g as in the ende (RCI 31: 182)

25)   The man of Lyne ys good payment, and that ys mery **for to** dele wyt syche men. (RCI 31: 187)

26)   for I knowe well that Thomas Kesten ys lothe **for to** sell them, for I woust hem neuer **for to** selle non of myn but yeff that Y war there mysellfe. (WM 69: 103)

27)   Wherfor, modyr, we must beseche yow to helpe vs forward wyth a lettyr fro yow to Mastyr Pykenham to remembyr hym **for to** handyll well and dylygently thys mater now thys Lent. (John Paston III 1478: 02)[12]

28)   My sayd Master Gascoygne hath dylygently applyed your matter, as much as is possible **for to** doe, as your servant Geffray can shew vnto you more at large every thing by mouth. (Edward Plumpton 1495: 10)

Apart from the two variants, *to* and *for to*, three instances of *for* directly preceding the infinitive have been found in RCI, and one in JD:[13]

29)   as thay saye, werefor ys faturs hath promysyd **for** (to) make you a quytons under nottarys syne. (RCI 80: 394)

30)   The frendes of here hath spoke wyt me for that mater, but all they wyll not grant a grote **for** (to) geve them (RCI 85: 407)[14]

31)   Se the carthe body be good hassche, and hexsyd rydy **for** goe to worke, for I haue gret nede therto. (RCI 56: 326)

32)   Welbeluffyd brotheyr, I recomaund me vnto you, prayng you **for** do so mvch for me noo at thys tyme, to pay the freyght for a xviij sarplerys wooll and ffellys of Thomas Wigestons tyll my broder Wylliam Dalton or ellys I come (JD 28: 13)

The structures presented above differ in an important way, namely, *for* in example (29) and (32) does not seem to imply any finality, while in (30) and (31) it introduces the infinitive of purpose. These uses of *for* are exceptional in the letters analysed. However, both have been occasionally recorded in other texts in

---

[10] Mustanoja's claim that *for to* "becomes weakened into a mere sign of the infinitive, equivalent to *to*, in the course of the 13th century" does not apply to numerous tokens found in *CL*, where it preserves its function of indicating finality.

[11] The numbers refer to the year and the month when the letter was written.

---

[12] The infinitive marker *for to* becomes rare in later letters by John Paston III.

[13] Mossé (1952: 101) claims that *for* was very rare and found only in the thirteenth century. As the examples from *CL* show, it could also be found in texts from the end of the fifteenth century. No examples of this variant have been found in the Paston letters analysed.

[14] In both examples (*to*) is Hanham's emendation.

Middle English (see Mustanoja 1960: 515, 540).[15]

Additionally, there are several instances of *to* followed immediately by a passive participle form, e.g.,

33)   and the iijde peny at xxv s. for the li., and **to resayuyd** at Bamys marte neste com, and the secon payment vj monyht, and the reste vj monyht after that. (RCI 26: 135)

34)   Item I pray (you) to be ^good^ ffrende to my wyffe in helpeng her in all s(e)che theng as sche hathe **to done** (TK 6: 12)

It seems reasonable to interpret example (33) as the elliptical passive infinitive constructions with the implied (non-expressed) infinitive form of the verb **BE**. However, in example (34) *done* may be interpreted as an archaic infinitive form, not the past participle with the omitted auxiliary.

2. Adverbs

2.1. Structure and distribution

Adverbs differ from prepositions in that they are not purely grammatical words, used for expressing relations between other words. They have their own lexical meanings and add to the meaning of the phrase and clause in which they occur. Adverbs show derivational suffixes and, also, can be inflected by degrees. The suffix -LY (-*ly*, -*le*, -*lay*, -*ley*, -*lye*) is quite commonly used for deriving adverbs from adjectives (this process is still productive in PDE), e.g., *scharply*, *dayly*, *veryly*, *grettely*, *schortlay*, *treulle*, and *trewlye*.

There is also an interesting group of adverbs which were originally genitive forms of other parts of speech, mainly adjectives, nouns and pronouns, or borrowed the genitive suffix from words belonging to these parts of speech, e.g.,

35)   Thowe I dede nat **allwheys** well (TK 219: 172)

36)   wherfore sir Y hertly beseche and pray you atte þe reuerence of Jhesu consideryng þe feithfull love þat Y owe and bere **towardys** you and so will do duryng my lyf (AN 16: 71)

37)   Thorny I pray yow sell som of myn good Cottys woll that com at Estorn and &e con, and as ffor that at com **syns** I pray yow lat ytt alon tyll Y com (GC 92: 126)

38)   Alsoy syr syn tyt ys soo as it ys of my mayster your fayder, in the reverens of God take it pacyenly and hvrte nott yoursell, for that ^God^ wyll haue done no mane may be **gense** ['against']. (JD 141: 108)

However, there are some related variants without the genitive suffix, e.g.,

39)   my Lordd Chamberleyn lokyth **allwey** when he schall be sent ffor (WLC 176: 317)

40)   I hope ther whas nott a better markett **toward** ffor Cottys woll many a day (GC 109: 190)

41)   As towchyng the mater in your letter of the pour woman, I saw her nevyr **syn** byt as I com by her fathers dor I saw the mayde stond wyth her modyr. (RCII 55: 180)

42)   plesse it you to vnderstond that I am latte comen to London, ande for deyueres causses ande matteres, also well **agayn** Wylliam Brerely as oder (TK 143: 45-47)

Some adverbs do not differ in form from adjectives, e.g., *fast*, *last*, and *long*.

2.2. Comparison

Like adjectives, adverbs in *CL* inflect only by degrees of comparison: positive, comparative, and superlative. Regular comparison takes place through the addition of suffixes: -*ER* (-*ar* and -*er*) to form the comparative degree and -*EST* (-*est* and -*yst*) to form the superlative. Here are several examples of regular comparison:

43)   the [whych] I hawe redd and well vnderstond, an[d t]hat yowre m[asterschypp] marwellyd that I wrytyth non **offtener**. (WLC 201: 657)

44)   yff ʒe wyll be payd here ʒe schall be payd be Ester and **schorttlyer**, ^and^ ʒeff yowre masterschyppys wyll hawe hytt soo. (WLC 208: 873)

45)   and the sayd ffellys lyeth nexte be affte the maste **lowest** vnder the ffellys off Thomas Bettson (WLC 132: 127)

46)   the wyche be bystowyd in the sayd scheppe, all afor the mast and **lowyst** abafte the mast, and yowre broder Rechard Celyys ys ^fellys^ be stowyd abaft the mast vpon myn (WM 130: 149)[16]

---

[15] Mustanoja (1960: 540) mentions that the use of *for* with the plain infinitive may be due to French influence.

---

[16] Only one instance of the variant -*yst* has been recorded.

One can see the beginnings of the periphrastic comparison of adverbs in the analysed letters. However, these are rare. Periphrastic comparison, through the addition of **MORE** to form the comparative degree, and **MOST** to form the superlative is, as in the case of adjectives, only sporadic and marked emotionally. The following are the only examples of periphrastic comparison of adverbs found in the letters:

47) I wryt no mor to you a[t] thys, byt I porpos to wryt **mor schortly**. (RCII 8: 11)

48) I am porpossyd to com hovyr vnto yow whan this marte ys done, and than schall Y tell yow **mor playnle** be movthe. (GC 93: 150)

49) Syr, I hawhe bene spokyn to for a whyfe in ij plassys syn ge departtyd: whon whos be the praysayrs, as schawll whryt to yow **mor playne** in my next letter. (RCII 146: 741)

50) wh[erfor] Y vndyrstond by hym that he wyll take my brodyr an lettyr wherby ʒe sh[all se] hys intent **mor cleyrly**. (GC 41: 74)

51) If you ar any oder wyll haue my serves I to do them sarves **better schep** then any man (TK 219: 149)

All the adverbial periphrases above are in the comparative degree, and in all cases but one the comparative form **MORE** modifies an adverb in the positive degree. In (51) **BETTER** is used to build a structure in the comparative degree.

One instance of multiple comparison, also marked emotionally, has been recorded:

52) as yee schall vnderstond **more clerelyar** be the copy of the sayd saffcondutt, the whych ys sent vnto mastyr Mayer of the Stapell to schew vnto all the Fellyschypp at London. (WLC 238: 1538)

Some constructions combine inflectional and periphrastic devices. These include the gradational comparative and the proportional comparative.

Gradational comparative, a construction "used to indicate that the quality in question increases or decreases at a fairly even rate" (Mustanoja 1960: 281-282), yields one occurrence in the letters. The gradual increase of time is indicated by means of **EVER** and the comparative form of the adverb **LONG**, and the concurrent decrease (or, in this case, deterioration) is expressed by a repetitive construction containing two comparative variants of **EVIL** joined by the conjunction **AND**:

53) and the exchaunge goyth **euer the lenger warsse and wars**. (WLC 234: 1405)

Proportional comparative, expressed by the correlative construction **THE ... THE** occurs twice:

54) **The mor** ys done for hym the more ys he beholdyng// byt me thynky **the mor** comfort that sche haue of hym, and **the mor** helpe he haue of you, the les wyll sche sette by ws. (RCII 47: 139)

55) I pray you that ye woll makt som good man yowre atorney for to do seyell them, for Y wovld fayn they ware y-sould, for **the lengar** that Y keppe them ther **the worsse** woll the fellys be. (WM 58: 95)[17]

The **demonstrative type of proportional comparative**, with a single **THE**, occurs three times in the collection:

56) wherffor ytt whyll be be[st that e] schypp yowr wholl as schortly as e ma / **the sonar** ʒe s[chypp yowr who]ll yt schall stonde /etc. (GC 247: 308)

57) I desyret is Hollynes at I motte do my vayage sennes I was so far forthe, and so is Ollynes sendes me as is inbassador wyth materis of gret inportansse. I treste do be **the sonner** at ome, be Godys grace. (SJW 129: 221-222)

58) Syr, I wryt the playnear to yow for owr father sawe your letter er hyt come to my handys, and wos resenably wel plesyd therwyth, so that ge stonde sewyr. (RCII 47: 145)

In some formulaic expressions, constructions with the comparative form *lever(e)* (*lewer, leuyr, leyuer*) or superlative *leuest* have been found. Apparently, these forms are never used independently, and can only be interpreted as part of an idiom, meaning 'prefer' as a whole unit:

59) for the worschyppffull merchauntys of the town hadd **lever** than myche goode they were owte of the town. (WLC 240: 1588)

60) I haue **lever** my money be note resayuyd tyll anoder tyme radar nor ye schall labor youreselve and not holle. (RCI 73: 372)

A typical feature of the analysed documents is a heavy use of intensifying adverbs, which can modify both adjectives (61-3) and adverbs (64-65), e.g.,

61) and whe whoulde be **ryught glade** and ʒe myhyt be redy to cowm in cowmpeny of my Lady wyth master Mwngewmbre, for he pwrpos to be heyr afor Cyrstemes. (RCII 136: 700)

---

[17] In this example there is an adverb in the first part of the comparison and an adjective in the second.

62)   Wretton at Calles the xvij day of May, wyth **full hewy** hart. (TK 219: 190-191)

63)   yt hat be sayd vnto vs her that ye hath be **sore seke.** (WM 70: 108)

64)   Syr John ys in grehyt trobull, and God knowys **full whrongefowlly.** (RCII 175: 905)

65)   Y am in good whay of my besynesse now, ȝett whas ther **ryght lytyll** done therto whan he departyd. (GC 109: 178)

MUCH and **LITTLE** can modify other adverbs, but they never modify adjectives, e.g.,

66)   Ye schall here **myche more** in thys pertys nor I can at Brytys. (RCI 56: 333)

67)   for the weche my Lorde takyt for a [grete] ple(s)ar for to haue syche ty(d)yng as ye here in thys partyys, for the weche ye may no lese doe but wryt **meche the more** of ty(d)yng, for my Lordys sake. (RCI 90: 443)

68)   and ther I bowgh(t) vjᶜ peltys after iiij s. iiij d. a C and **lytyll moor**, the wych ge schall allwaye haue the ton halff of as long as I haue ony. (JD 141: 111)

Example (67) shows an interesting construction with the definite article inserted between meche (an intensifier) and more (an adverb in the comparative degree). This can probably be considered as an atypical instance of the proportional comparative used for emphasis.

2.3. Compounds

Adverbs found in the letters are often compound forms. Some of these are relative markers and will be mentioned below in the section on relative clauses. Others include, for example, the adverbs **THEREOF, HEREOF, THEREIN, THERETO**, etc., in the forms *ther(e)of(f), þerof, her(e)of(f), ther(e)in, þerin, theryn, þeryn, ther(e)to, þareto*, and *þerto*, e.g.,

69)   Item, syr, as ffor syche ^newellys^ as ys here, plese hytt yow to comen wyth the brynger **herof** and he wyll tell yow, for I darre nott wryght, etc. (WLC 216: 1172)

70)   Syr, as for John Cely ys bell, Y can her nothyng **therof**, and Y haue spoken vnto John Tatte **therof**, and he answar me he hat no seche yt y-comen. (WM 39: 40)

71)   and ther he sawe a lyttyll cheste in hys chambur, and owr brother lockyd hys bokys **therin** (RCII 19: 46)

The use of compound adverbs cited above can be explained by the lack of the possessive form of the neuter personal pronoun **IT**. Many of the forms cited above are still used in formal contexts in PDE, but are probably much less frequent. They are analysable as morphologically complex forms, consisting of an adverb and a preposition. However, many adverbs perceived today as morphologically simple forms originated, in fact, in phrases, whose parts were once written separately, e.g., the adverb *away* (from OE *on weȝ*), the preposition *among* (< OE *on ȝemang*[18]), and the preposition and adverb *before* (OE *beforan*[19]) and *about* (from OE *on-bútan*[20]). Such changes in the orthographic shape of the words are certainly due to phonological developments, but they have also been accompanied (or, possibly, caused) by a semantic and morphological reanalysis. As these words have ceased to be perceived as compounds, it can be claimed that, in this case, compounding does not have to be a counterexample to analytic tendencies in the English language. On the contrary, these examples reflect the tendency to associate one meaning with one form, which is, in itself, analytic.

3. Periphrastic constructions involving adverbs and/or prepositions

3.1. Negation

A common type of periphrastic construction containing adverbs is negation. The negative adverbs used in the letters include: **NO** (*no*), **NOT** (*non, not(e), noot, nott(e)*[21] *nat*[22] *nat(t)(e)*), **NEVER** (*neffyr, ner(e), nevyr, newer*), **NEITHER** (*neder, noder*), **NONE** (*non(e)*), and *not(h)yng* 'not at all', **NOWHERE** (*nowher*).

Negative adverbs follow the verbs that they modify, e.g.,

72)   Y answard hem aȝyn yt myt **nat** so be. (WM 39: 44)

73)   Thowffe the be not past ij of a color or iij it skyllys **not** - blew, or tawne, or grene, or vyolet. (JD 51: 46)

---

[18] *ȝemang* meant 'mingling; assemblage; crowd' (*OED*).

[19] From *bi-* 'by'; 'about' +*foran*, the dative form of *for* (properly an adverb) used as an adjective or noun (*OED*). [19]

[20] From *on in*, *on* + *bútan* 'without, outside of' (itself an earlier comb. of *be* 'by, near' + *útan* properly locative of *út* 'out', used adjectively or substantively). The primary meaning of *on-bútan* was thus, on or by the outside of, hence around, wholly or partially (*OED*).

[21] *Nott* is used mainly by WLC, whereas *notte* occurs only in RBC. Both forms are rare, found in the North-West Midlands, and occasionally in the London area and South-West. (See *LALME*: 376).

[22] This variant is preferred by WM, TK, WMD, and JPS. It is rather infrequent, found in the Midlands, the London area and the South-East. (See *LALME*: 373).

74) I ham **notte** well intredyd, ffor I haue **notte** mony by me to pay the xvj s. viij d. of the sarpler hafter the ratte. (RBC 21: 29)

75) I knowe **not** whow myche mony that I haue ressayvyd of tham tyll I se the oblygacions. (HB 135: 117)

76) euery man that hath howssynge wyth(owt) the gatys ys warnyd to remeve hys howsse as schorttly as he can ynto the towne [...] and yff he **do nott** stond at hys owne aventture at syche tyme that schall ^'come^ to be pluckyd schorttly down, or ellys burnyd ffor the schortter warke. (WLC 115: 67-68)

Example (76) contains the verb **DO**. In the *CL* it did not function as an auxiliary, but still only as a lexical verb.

Negative adverbs may also modify other adverbs. Then they are in pre-position, e.g.,

77) In owr ffathyrs dewte he hathe me truly, and he con **none** ffardyr go but to me, and the mater ys soyche I trow I conot gese hym. (GC 4: 10)

78) Ytt whas **no** mor but all yowr howld woll, and as ffor the new, ytt ys the iijde peny, vj monthys and vj monthys, and so myght Y a done syn I come vnto Calles. (GC 22: 38)

Other words that can carry some negative meaning include, e.g., the adverb **LITTLE** and the preposition **SAVE**.

79) And allsoo syr, I cannott spare thys mony tell tyme I hawe made a sale, ffor all schall be **lykyll** inowe to paye yowre costom and subsede. (WLC 202: 689)

80) I pray yow delyuer hym no more of my mony: he saythe yow **lettyll** worchepe, that yow schowlde howe ys man xx s. and abatte ytt of my dewtte. (RBC 21: 34)

81) and he hath sent hytt to Calles redy, and I hawe receyued hytt euerythyng acordyng to yowre remembravnce, **sawe** the cortens be stayned but on the ton syde. (WLC 189: 516)

There are several examples of multiple negation in the letters. Presumably, two or three negatives were felt as stronger than a single negative. This seems to be confirmed by the examples below, e.g.,

82) Syr, he ys **noo** stydffast man, **nor** he owyth yow **noo** goodd wyll thow3th he make a ffayer fface, ffor I hawe spoken to hym ffor yowre warrantys xx tymys. (WLC 170: 291)

83) But **noo** man saythe **nor** doyth **nothyng** to **noon** Englyscheman, but that they maye resorte too and ffroo as they hawe doon yn tymes past; saweng only men ben affardde off Frenschemen. (WLC 211: 985)

84) I awyse you to lene hym **no** mony, **ne** do **no** thyng wyth hym byt afor record. (RCII 47: 141)

85) Syr, I pray you lette hyme **not** se thys letter **ne** tell hym **note** of tys 3end byt of the qwetans, and hy hyme to Hawelay in as gret haste as ye can. (RCII 86: 324)

The negative constructions in the above examples all seem to carry some emotional weight.

3.2. Relative clauses

Among numerous relative markers there are adverbs and adverbial compounds, e.g., **HOW** (*how(e), whow(e)*), **WHERE** (*wher(e), were*), **WHEREFORE** (*wherfor(e), wer(e)for(e), qwherfor*), of **WHEREOF** (*wher(e)of, wer(e)of, wheroff, qwherof*), **WHEREIN** (*wher(e)in*), and **WHEREBY** (*(q)wherby*).

86) I pray you send me word **how** 3e do in tho maters, and qwate your profur wos, and wyth hom, and ther schawl be nothyng be doyn heyr byt 3e schaull haue knowlege. (RCII 55: 182)

87) the wych ffellys lay **wher** my broder Wylliam Dalton ffellys lay. (JD 44: 21)

88) and i the nexte mony that I ressauyd for owyr father whos xxx li. **qwherof** I loste xx s. in gowlde, a my sowll I whot not qwheyr. (RCII 74: 213)

89) Howr father has ressauyd a letter frome yow **wherby** he wndyrstond of the salle: ij sarpellys and a peke. (RCII 117: 513)

Relative clauses may also be introduced by prepositional phrases, consisting of a preposition, the definite article and a relative pronoun, e.g.,

90) and she hath delyuerd hym youre bylle of youre hand, **be the wiche** he must reseyue of you now att this marte, iiij xj li. (JC 101: 31)

91) for I ow hym iiij li., **of the whyche** he hathe a byll of my hand (TC 172: 239)

92) Also syr, Y vnderstond that a lytell befor yowre comyng to Calles John Dallton had sovud all myn hoder fellys the wyche Y had in Calles, **for the wyche**, syr, Y thankt yow and hem bothe hartteley (WM 149: 168)

93)   And he wyll dosoe I schall be ys good frende, and that he schall wyll un-
       derstand in tyme to com, **for the weche** I wyll be glade for to doe for
       hym and wyll hymselve. (RCI 11: 28)

I was struck by the frequency of the phrase *for the weche* in RCI and decided
to analyse its distribution in other authors' writings. It turned out that 81 out of
93 instances found in all the *CL* occurred in RCI's letters. His application of the
marker was also pretty peculiar. Whereas in other writers' letters *for* was only
used as part of a prepositional verb (in most cases the verb **THANK**), in Rich-
ard the elder's letters it must have lost its prepositional force and was not related
to any particular verb in the subordinate clause. Rather, the sequence *for the
weche* had to be analysed as one grammatical (and semantic) entity correspond-
ing to **WHEREFORE** used by other authors (94-95). The only other writer us-
ing the phrase occasionally in a similar way is WLC (96).

94)   ȝe schall onderstond that I intende to depart into Ynglond as sone as the
       martt ys done, **wherfor** yff you come not yoursellff I pray you sende me
       word whom you wyll that I schall leyff such thengkys of yours. (JD 18:
       6-7)

95)   Syr, I haue not the praysment of my brothers Robarddys fellys, nether of
       Wylliam Daulltons owlde fellys, **wherfor** I wold haue wrytyng how I
       schuld be demenyd. (RCII 34: 100)

96)   they all be warnyd to voyde the town off Cales and the Marches, wyffe,
       chyldern and goodes be Fryday nexte com, payn off deth, **ffor the whych**
       I trow Botrell woll ^nott^ dyshease yow off yowre howsse noo lenger,
       etc. (WLC 185: 449-450)

Although RCI showed a marked predilection for the prepositional relative
marker *for the weche*, he did use the relative adverb **WHEREFORE** 21 times,
e.g.,

97)   The sekenese ys sore in London, **werefor** meche pepyll of the Sete ys
       into the contre for fere of the sekenese. (RCI 52: 288)

98)   The horse ys fayer, God saue hym and Send Loye, **werefore** God send
       you a schapeman for hym and redy money in hand. (RCI 52: 297)

I have found no instances of the sequence **FOR THE WHICH** in the letters
by John Paston III and William Paston III. In the whole collection of the Plump-
ton letters there is only one occurrence of the phrase:

99)   I take me oonly to your good wyll and thankfull disposition, **for the
       which** I hartely thanke you. (Henry Percy 1487: 11)

However, in Percy's letter the preposition *for* collocates with the verb
THANK. In light of the evidence available one can conclude that RCI's use of
the phrase constitutes an idiosyncrasy rather than a generally accepted feature.

3.3. Phrasal and prepositional verbs

Prepositions often occur in collocations with particular verbs forming structures
referred to as prepositional verbs. However, these are not as strictly fixed as in
today's English. Many of these collocations allow for some variation of the
preposition, e.g.,

100)   Daultons mother comendys hyr to you and **thankys** yow **for** the knyuys
       that ge sente to hyr. (RCII 117: 512)

101)   Syr, my Loord comendys hym harttely wnto yow, and **thankys** yow **of**
       your letter, and syche tydyngys as he knowys a wryttys yow parte. (RCII
       121: 564)

102)   ffor I hawe wrytten to hym and allsoo I hawe ben theyr and **spoken wyth**
       hym. (WLC 202: 681)

103)   And whereas yowre masterschypp wrytytyth that I remember lytyll that
       ye badd me **speke to** John Delowppys that he schuld wryte to Peter Bayle
       & Delyte. (WLC 202: 680)

104)   Syr, plese hit yowre masterschypp to vnderstond that John Dalton and I
       hawe **spoken** many tymes **vnto** master Lefftenaunte ffor payment of
       yowre warrantys off xv s. off the pownd. (WLC 164: 241)

In example (100) the verb **THANK** occurs in collocation with the preposition
FOR, but in (101), in a different letter by the same writer it collocates with **OF**.
In the second set of examples (102-103) there is variation between the use of
WITH, TO and **UNTO**. Again, the variation occurs in the writings of the same
author. Prepositions following **THANK** (and **RECEIVE**) seem to be inter-
changeable. This shows inconsistency or hesitation on the part the authors.
However, in case of **SPEAK**, I have spotted some differences in the syntactic
structures in which different prepositions are used. All the three, **WITH, TO**
and **UNTO**, introduce the prepositional phrase constituting the indirect object of
the verb. But, if **TO** or **UNTO** are used, the indirect object is followed by an ad-
junct and/or another clause, specifying the objective of the conversation (such
as, e.g., asking for a favour or giving somebody orders). If **WITH** is chosen,
ususaly no adjunct follows and the verb phrase seems to concentrate only on
the action expressed by the verb and on the identity of the person spoken to.
       Some collocations of verbs and prepositions seem to be well established and
do not allow for prepositional variation, e.g.,

105) Ytt ys so that I **loke ffor** my Lord of Sent Jonys dayly, and at his comyng I wholl breng ^hym^ appon the way or do as my broder shall avysse me to do/ (GC 124: 240)

106) Syr, ye schall vnderstond that we **lokt for** hem her ayen wytin thys iij wekys, etc. (WM 58: 87)

107) Ryght [re]uer[en]d and worchupfull Ser, [I r]ecomend me vnto [you wyth] reuerence, as a s[p]ows how to dow to [h]y[r] spow[s], as [h]artely as [I can], euermore dessyr(y)ng to **her of** your wellfar. (MC 222: 129)

108) Ryght trusty frende, I hertely comaunde me vnto yow, desyreng euermor to **her of** your welfar, whyche I pray God contynew vnto his pleser, amen. (TG 64: 245)

As in Present-Day English, adverbs often collocate with verbs, forming periphrastic structures called phrasal verbs. Below follow several examples of the most common structures of this kind:

109) Syr yff yt plesse yow that yow will **lett** hit **owt**, I pray yow that I may haue ij of the romes off the stabull. (JD 180: 137)

110) and soo I hawe causyd Wylliam Smyth preuely to **cast owte** anoder sarpler. (WLC 234: 1428)

111) Prayng you hertely that ge will vowchsaff to take the payne as to by ffor me such stuff nessessary as I most nedes occupy, and to **lay owte** the money vnto your comyng. (RR 42: 160)

112) and then **take** hym **wpe** and ser hym, and lette hym stand in the dede of whyntter. (RCII 193: 915)

113) my master yowre fader wovld that Rechard Cely schuld **bryng hover** anoder govshawke wyt hem, yeff ye covd bey any at Calles for viij or ix s. (WM 39: 51)

As can be seen in the examples, the adverbial particle usually follows the verb immediately. However, in the cases where a pronoun is the direct object, it takes the position between the verb and the adverb (109 and 112).

Apart from prepositional and phrasal verbs discussed above, one can also find numerous verbs that have to be followed by two particles: an adverb and a preposition. Here follow several examples:

114) I am in whay wyth Gyshbryght Van Whennysbarge ffor an ij of yowr sarpleris: Y hope Y shall **go thorow wyth** hym. (GC 109: 198)

115) And so, syr, ^Y^ vnderstond ther remayng behynd wheche be mad and sore brent, ij^cxxv felles, the wyche ye woll do yowre best to **put away wyt** yowre fellys, for the wyche, syr, Y thanke yow hartley. (WM 149: 165)

116) I tolde hym he schulde geyff me redy money or he **went owt of** Cales or ellys he schulde haueff no wooll of me at thys tyme, and soo we departyd. (JD 18: 5)

Some multi-word verbs found in the letters have been lost from the language over time or have different meanings in PDE, e.g.,

117) The Dewke askyth noothyng off hem but mony, and he wyll take syche men wyth hym to **goo vppon** ['attack'] the Frenschemen as plesyd hym. (WLC 186: 466)

118) And there the Lefftenaunt schewyd vnto them how that the Fellyschypp ffownd them grewyd wyth the[m] becawse they were sworne ffyrst vnto the Stappell and **browght vpp** ['raised to a good position'] theyr. (WLC 208: 887)

119) Item, syr, the same day I spake to master Leffetenaunt ffor payment off yowre warrantys, or ellys that they myght be **sett vppon** ['deducted from'] yowre byllys off costom and sobsede ^as he promysyd me beffore^. (WLC 170: 287)

120) and I departyd from London on Estyrn Ewyn, and I cowd not **get frome** ['leave'] my Loord of Sent Jonys not paste iij days togyddyr syn Estyr Ewe. (RCII 55: 168)

4. Conclusions

In the present paper the author has aimed at presenting an overview of different functions assumed by prepositions and adverbs as well as the main periphrastic constructions (i.e., negation, relative clauses, and multi-word verbs) in which they occur in the analysed letters. Adverbs and prepositions are often discussed together in the same sub-section. This is due to the fact that both can occur in similar constructions. Therefore, the classification of words into clear-cut classes, such as prepositions and adverbs, is often problematic. An extreme example of this functional and distributional overlapping could be seen in the discussion of the phrase *for the wech(e)*.

The evidence provided shows that the distribution and functions of prepositions and adverbs in fifteenth-century correspondence do not differ greatly from the present-day usage. However, some features alien to modern grammar have

been spotted and discussed, e.g., the infinitive markers *for* and *for to*, frequent use of compound relative adverbs, and multiple negation.

Although there are some traces of inflection in adverbs and productive compounding processes in both prepositions and adverbs, the general tendency for these words is to occur in periphrastic structures contributing to the analytic character of the language.

The discussion has been based on the *CL* and only occasionally referred to other collections of letters. Certainly, deeper analysis and comparison of the *CL* with other contemporary letters will help determine which features are the authors' idiosyncrasies and which reflect more general tendencies in the language.

REFERENCES

Allen, Cynthia
  1995   *Case marking and reanalysis: Grammatical relations from Old to Early Modern English*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Barber, Charles
  1997   *Early Modern English*. (2nd edition). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Blake, Norman (ed.)
  1992   *The Cambridge history of the English language. Volume II: 1066-1476*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Carstensen, Broder
  1959   *Studien zur Syntax des Nomens, Pronomens und der Negation in den* Paston Letters. Bochum-Langdeer: Verlag Heinr. Pöppinghaus.
Davis, Norman
  1954   "The language of the Pastons", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 40: 119-144.
Denison, David
  1993   *English historical syntax: Verbal constructions*. London: Longman.
Gairdner, James (ed.)
  1983   *The Paston letters*. Gloucester: Alan Sutton.
Hanham, Alison (ed.)
  1975   *The Cely letters: 1472-88*. London: Oxford University Press.
Jack, George B.
  1978   "Negation in Later Middle English prose", *Archivum Linguisticum* 9: 58-71.
Kirby, Joan
  1996   *The Plumpton letters and papers*. London: Cambridge University Press
Kurath, Hans – Sherman M. Kuhn (eds.)
  1956-2001 *Middle English Dictionary*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Langenfelt, Gösta
  1933   *Select studies in colloquial English of the late Middle Ages*. Lund: Håkan Ohlsson.
Lass, Roger (ed.)
  1999   *The Cambridge history of the English language. Volume III: 1476-1776*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Mossé, Fernand
  1952   *A handbook of Middle English*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press.
McIntosh, Angus, Michael – L. Samuels – Michael Benskin
  1986   *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English: Volume I*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press.

Mustanoja, Tauno F.
  1960   *A Middle English syntax*. Helsinki: Société Néophilologique.
Wright, Laura
  2000   *The development of standard English: 1300-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

INTERNET SOURCES

Wyld, Henry Cecil
  1936   *A history of Modern colloquial English*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, at: http://www.hti.umich.edu/cgi/c/cme/cme-idx?type=header&idno=Paston

APPENDIX

Abbreviations

Names of the writers:

AN	Anonymous author of the drafts 16 and 17
EB	Edmond Bedyngfeld
GC	George Cely
HB	Harry Bryan
JC	John Cely
JD	John Dalton
JPM	Joyce Parmenter
JPS	John Pasmer
JR	John Roosse
MC	Margery Cely
RBC	Robert Cely
RCD	R. Coldale
RCI	Richard Cely senior
RCII	Richard Cely junior
RL	Ralph Lemyngton
RR	Robert Radclyff
RT	Roland Thornburght
SJW	Sir John Weston
TC	Thomas Colton
TG	Thomas Granger
TK	Thomas Kesten
WLC	William Cely
WD	William Dalton
WM	William Maryon

WMD   William Mydwynter

Other

CL   *Cely Letters*
LALME   *Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, vol. 1
MED   *Middle English Dictionary*
OED   *Oxford English Dictionary* on-line

Symbols used in examples

[ ]   enclose reconstructions, omissions and explanations
( )   enclose emendations
^ ^   enclose interlineations