The Complementation and Usage of *Commit*, *Commitment*, and their Inflected Forms from the 18th Century to the Present Day

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämän pro gradu –tutkielman tarkoituksena on tarkastella, kuinka englannin kielen verbiä *commit* sekä sen taivutettuja muotoja *commits*, *committed* ja *committing,* adjektiivia *committed* ja substantiivia *commitment* sekä monikon muotoa *commitments* käytetään toisaalta Britannian englannissa ja toisaalta Amerikan englannissa. Tutkimuksessa selvitettiin, millaiset komplementit liittyvät edellä mainittuihin verbimuotoihin, mitä määritelmiä käytettiin sekä mitkä määritelmät olivat yleisimpiä kussakin ajanjaksossa. Ydinkysymys on, että kumpi lausekomplementti esiintyy yleisemmin Britannian englannissa ja kumpi Amerikan englannissa, perusmuotoinen *to -infinitive* vai gerundiaalinen *to –ing*.

Tutkielma on tehty korpuksen avulla. Käytin Corpus of Late Modern English Texts-korpusta tutkiakseni Britannian englannin kirjallisuutta vuodesta 1710 lähtien vuoteen 1920 asti. Korpuksen ensimmäiseen alitietokantaan sisältyivät tekstit kirjoista 1710–1780-luvulta. Korpuksen toiseen alitietokantaan sisältyivät tekstit kirjoista 1780–1850-luvulta. Korpuksen kolmanteen alitietokantaan sisältyivät tekstit kirjoista 1850–1920-luvulta. Tutkin nyky-Britannian ja -Amerikan englannin kirjallisuutta ja uutislähetyksissä käytettyä puhuttua kieltä Collins Cobuild Demonstration-korpuksen avulla, ja käytin neljää alitietokantaa nimeltään UK books, US books, BBC ja NPR.

Teoreettisessa osassa tutkin lehtikirjoituksien avulla, mitä eroa on komplementilla ja adjunktilla. Tarkastelin myös, miten englannin kielen gerundin tarkoitus eroaa perusmuodon tarkoituksesta. Esittelin, millaisia määritelmiä esiintyy Oxford English Dictionaryssa ja mitä grammaatikot olivat aikaisemmin julkaisseet *commit*-verbistä ja *committed*-adjektiivista.

Selvitin myös, pitävätkö kolme seuraavaa periaatetta paikkansa liittyen *commit-* verbiin, *committed-* adjektiiviin ja *commitment*-substantiiviin: Vosbergin *extraction*-periaate, Rohdenburgin *horror aequi*-periaate ja Allertonin *infinitivitis*-periaate. Vosbergin *extraction*-periaatteen mukaan tilanteissa, joissa elementti otetaan pois alkuperäisestä sijastaan englannin kielen sanajärjestyksen mukaan, perusmuotoinen *to –inf.* rakenne säilyy. Rohdenburgin *horror aequi*-periaatteen mukaan on olemassa tendenssi, että tietyntyyppinen lausekomplementti ei liity verbiin, jolla on sama rakenne, eli verbi valitsee toisenlaisten rakenteiden sisältämän komplementtilauseen komplementiksi itselleen. Allertonin *infinitivitis*-periaatteen mukaan perusmuotoinen komplementtilause liittyy liiallisesti substantiiveihin Amerikan englannissa ja virallisessa kielessä, kun taas brittiläiset käyttävät perusmuotoista komplementtilausetta liiallisesti puhuessaan ja kirjoittaessaan.

1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to give a diachronic overview of the usage of and the complementation patterns selected by the verb *commit* and its inflected forms, *commits*, *committing*, and *committed*; the corresponding de-verbal noun *commitment* and its plural form *commitments*; and *committed* in its de-verbal adjectival form. An inportant focus is the discussion of the frequency of *to infinitive* and *to –ing* complements of the adjectival *committed* from the eighteenth century to today. It will show which senses of the words, as defined by *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) were used in this time period. It will discuss the evolution of the use and the complement selection in British literature in those centuries. This will be contrasted with the use and complement selection in present-day British and American English, and the data for present-day British will also be contrasted with the data for present-day American English.

The nucleus of the analysis is the *to inf.* and *to –ing* complements, but a thorough discussion of the use of all terms in question will be given, such as the patterns of nominal complementation and how complement selection has changed through the centuries (nominal vs. verbal). I will also take the *horror aequi* principle into consideration. Rohdenburg (2003, 236) defines it as such: "the *horror aequi* principle involves the widespread (and presumably universal) tendency to avoid the use of formally (near) identical and (near-) adjacent grammatical elements or structures."

The corpora used for this thesis are the extended version of the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts, also known as the extended version of the Leuven corpus, and the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus. All three sections of the extended Leuven corpus, which deals with British literature from 1710-1780, 1780-1850, and 1850-

1920 (de Smet 2005, 71), will be used in this thesis, and four sub-sections of the Collins Cobuild corpus, which represents present-day English, will be used: UK Books (5.4 million words), US Books (5.6 million words), NPR (3.1 million words), and BBC (2.6 million words). Regarding the extended version of the Leuven corpus, there are 3.0 million words in the first part, 5.8 million words in the second part, and 6.1 million words in the third part.

The research questions of this thesis are as follows:

1. "Which sentential complement, the *to inf*. or the *to –ing,* is more common in British English, and which is more common in American English?

2. How long has this trend been observable in recent centuries?

3. Which senses of *commit* were more common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and to which other senses (which are used more frequently today) have they given way?"

4. Do *commit* and the relevant related words function according to the *horror aequi* principle?

5. Do any sentential complements of the adjective *committed* appear before 1920 in the third section of the extended Leuven corpus?

6. Has infinitivitis, as defined in section 3.2, been detected among the data, and is the infinitive indeed preferred as a complement to *commitment* and *commitments* in American English?

7. Does extraction, as defined in section 3.5, protect the *to inf.* in the case of *committed,* and is extraction is rare among gerundial complements?

2. The corpora

Bauer (2004, 98) modifies Kennedy's (1998, 1) definition of a corpus, "a body of written text or transcribed speech which can serve as a basis for linguistic analysis and description," to read, "a body of language data which can serve as a basis for linguistic analysis and description." According to Bauer (2004, 98-99) a corpus may be public (in that it is easily available to all) or restricted, electronic (allowing for searches) or paper-based (including the Bible, the *OED*, or the complete works of Shakespeare) (2004, 100), or comprised of textual material or word-lists (ibid, 101). The two corpora used in this thesis are electronic and comprised of textual material. I extracted the data by searching for each term within each corpus: the data from the Collins Cobuild corpus was extracted in May and June 2006, and the data from the extended Leuven corpus was extracted in February 2007.

According to de Smet (2005, 70), the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts has been compiled from the texts from the *Project Gutenberg* and the *Oxford Text Archive*. It has been divided into three parts on the basis of the publication of the texts, but the dates of birth of the authors also play a key role in the organization of this corpus (ibid. 70-71). The first part of the corpus contains texts published between 1710 and 1780, only by authors born between 1680 and 1750 (ibid. 71). The texts in the second part were published between 1780 and 1850, and they were written by authors born between 1750 and 1820 (ibid. 71). The texts in the third part were published between 1850 and 1920, and their authors were born between 1820 and 1890 (ibid 71). Each author was represented in only one part of the corpus, regardless of whether his or her works overlap a subsequent part (ibid. 70). The maximum number of words per author is 200,000; each author is British and a native speaker of English (ibid. 71). Most authors are upper-class men (ibid. 71) who were well-

educated and therefore particularly careful about language use (ibid. 79). The corpus

is made of literary, formal texts (ibid.71), such as novels, essays, published

collections of letters, and nonfiction (ibid. 72-78).

UK Books contains the text of contemporary British books, and US Books

was made of the text of contemporary American books. The NPR section contains

transcribed speech broadcasted in news programs and broadcasts by the American

National Public Radio, while the BBC section contains transcribed speech

broadcasted in news programs and broadcasts by the British Broadcasting Company.

Biber et al. (1998, 263) make the important point that corpus researchers must

consider the proportion of tokens to the number of words in a text. The longer a text

is, the more opportunities there are for a token to appear, so a term appearing 100

times in a corpus sub-section that has 3 million words is not as common in the time

frame or language variety in question as is a term that appears 100 times in a corpus

sub-section that has 2 million words. However, the raw frequency counts can be

compared accurately through the process or normalization. According to Biber (ibid.),

"the raw frequency count should be divided by the number of words in the text, and

then multiplied by whatever basis is chosen for norming." It follows this formula:

> (raw frequency / number of words in corpus) x basis for norming =
> number of tokens per the number of words used in the basis for norming.

The number used as the basis for norming should be close to the number of words in

the corpus, text, or corpus sub-section in question. If the corpus sub-section has over 2

million words, an appropriate basis for norming would be 100,000 or 1 million. The

number of words in the corpus can also be rounded to the nearest hundred-thousandth.

To use the previous two examples, the number of tokens in the hypothetical corpus

sub-section could be normed to a basis of 1 million words of text in this way:

Corpus sub-section 1
(100 tokens / 3,000,000) x 1,000,000 = 33.3 tokens per 1 million words

Corpus sub-section 1
(100 tokens / 2,000,000) x 1,000,000 = 50 tokens per 1 million words

The number of words in each corpus sub-section used for this project will be rounded

to the nearest hundred-thousandth for the purpose of normalizing.

Table 1 shows the number of tokens for each term in all three parts of the

extended version of the Leuven corpus.

Form	Extended Leuven 1	Extended Leuven 2	Extended Leuven 3
commit	54	109	92
committed	141	292	192
committing	26	55	33
commits	4	6	7
commitment	3	1	-
commitments	-	-	-
Total	228	463	324

Table 1: The number of tokens in all three parts of the extended version of the Leuven corpus

Form	UK Books	US Books	BBC	NPR
commit	68	56	38	76
committed	227	169	164	182
committing	39	22	34	35
commits	3	11	4	5
commitment	197	217	177	141
commitments	61	42	40	31
Total	595	517	457	470

Table 2: The number of tokens in the UK Books, US Books, BBC, and NPR sections of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus

3. Background

This chapter sets the stage by providing information from previously published

literature relevant to the study. It presents background information from grammars

and secondary literature, such as journal articles, about *commit, commitment,* and their

inflected forms. It uses tables to present the senses from the *OED* that are relevant to

the data in this study. It also differentiates between complements and adjuncts as well as the meaning of gerunds and infinitives.

3.1 Complements vs. adjuncts

Herbst (2004, xxiv) discusses valency theory and differentiates complements from adjuncts. In valency theory, the verb is the center of the sentence because it is what determines how many other elements are required to create a grammatical sentence. In valency theory these elements are known as complements. Herbst illustrates with examples (1), (2), and (3) how some verbs, such as *emerge*, *fracture*, and *evolve* require only one other element (which is the subject of the sentence), but other verbs, such as *produce* or *put* require two or three elements: a subject plus one or two elements following the verb (ibid.):

> (1) As <u>new works by younger artists</u> emerge, <u>the picture the Gallery presents of modern art in the Cornish context</u> will fracture and evolve.

> (2) <u>Cornwall</u> this century has produced <u>two schools of painting of international renown – Newlyn and St. Ives.</u>
>   a. *Cornwall this century has produced.

> (3) <u>I</u> put <u>paper and kindling</u> <u>by the fire</u> last night.
>   a. *I put by the fire.
>   b. *I put paper and kindling

As is clear from (2a), (3a), and (3b), if one of these complements is removed, the sentence is no longer grammatical.

Somers (1987, 12-14) introduces and summarizes three tests pertaining to valency. According to Somers (ibid. 12), the test used with (3), (3a), and (3b), in which an element is removed to see if a sentence is ungrammatical without it (and the element therefore obligatory) is known as the 'elimination test.' According to Somers (ibid. 13) the 'extraction method' involves removing elements such as NP objects and prepositional phrases to see if the sentence loses both its grammaticality and its

meaning, in order to distinguish between complements and adjuncts. The 'backformation' test (ibid. 14) involves transforming the element into a relative clause; the element that has been changed is an adjunct if the relative clause keeps the sentence grammatical and if the sentence retains its original meaning. Examples from Somers (ibid.) are as follows:

(4a) He visited her *in Berlin.*
(4b) He visited her, when he/she stayed in Berlin.
(5a) My friend lives *in Dresden.*
(5b) *My friend lives, when he is in Dresden.
(6a) He put the book *under the table*.
(6b) *He put the book, when he was under the table.
(7a) He died *in Dresden.*
(7b) He died, when he was in Dresden.

Adjuncts, such as *this century* in (2) and *last night* in (3), are neither dependent on the valency of the governing verb nor determined in their form by the governing verb. This means that they can be replaced by a prepositional phrase, an adverb phrase, or an adverbial clause, as illustrated in Herbst's (2004, xxv) examples (3c), (3d), and (3d).

(3) c. I put paper and kindling by the fire *at 5 p.m.*
   d. I put paper and kindling by the fire *then.*
   e. I put paper and kindling by the fire *before I went to bed.*

It is safe to assume from this discussion that prepositional phrases, adverb phrases, and adverbial clauses that denote time are adjuncts, as is *for 20 years* in example (8) (my own example):

(8) The judge committed him to prison *for 20 years.*

According to Herbst (ibid. xxiv), another characteristic of adjuncts is that they occur relatively freely. Herbst (ibid.) uses examples (9) and (10) to illustrate that an adjunct such as *last night* can be freely added to other sentences, regardless of what the verb is.

(9) I walked along the cliff-path.
     a. I walked along the cliff-path *last night.*

(10) He did not want her to come.
     a. He did not want her to come *last night.*

Herbst (ibid. xxv) also points out that an important characteristic of verb complementation is whether or not a complement can serve as the subject of an active or passive clause. Herbst (ibid xxvi) specifies four types of clauses that serve as complements: *ing*-clauses, such as *coming home*; *to infinitive* clauses, such as *to come*; *that*-clauses, such as *that we had to go there*; and *wh*-clauses, such as *how such gossip annoys him*. Vosberg (2003b, 305) makes the important note that the *–ing* complement "has become increasingly established since the late 17th century, resulting in a re-arrangement of the entire system of verb complementation" and that it has often replaced the finite clause and the *to infinitive.* Rohdenburg (2006, 143) refers to this rearrangement as the Great Complement Shift.

In his discussion of complex complements, Herbst (2004, xxvii) raises the question of whether one complement or two follow the verb in a two-valent pattern such as (10b) and a three-valent pattern such as (11).

(10b) No, <u>he</u> didn't want <u>her to come</u>.
(11) <u>He</u> persuaded <u>her</u> <u>to come</u>.

Herbst (ibid.) points out that the following questions are possible:

(10c) Whom did he not want to come?
(11b) Whom did he persuade to come?
(10d) What did he want her to do?
(11c) What did he persuade her to do?

The what-type of question in (11d) does not correspond with (10e) (nor is it possible to create one).

(10e) What did he want?
(11d) *What did he persuade?

This categorizes *her to come* in (11) "as a single complex complement of the type [N to-INF]" (Herbst, ibid.). Another example of a single complex complement is found in (12a); *for us* is the beneficiary of *to sit here*, and therefore (12b) has two separate complements (Herbst, ibid.).

(12a) It's really great <u>for a radio producer to create a show like this</u>.
(12b) It's great <u>for us</u> <u>to sit here</u>.

According to Herbst (ibid. xxviii), certain adverbial complements share the formal properties of adjuncts, because they are independent of the governing verb. A characteristic of this type of complement is that they can be replaced with an adverb phrase, as in (3f); a prepositional phrase, as in (3g); or a *wh*-clause, as in (3h).

(3f) <u>I</u> put <u>paper and kindling</u> <u>there</u>.
(3g) <u>I</u> put <u>paper and kindling</u> <u>onto the logs</u>.
(3h) <u>I</u> put <u>paper and kindling</u> <u>where they belong</u>.

Herbst (ibid.) states,

"Their complement status can only be justified on the grounds that they are either obligatory elements of the valency pattern of the verb (as in the case of *put*) or that the semantic bonds with the verb are so strong that it seems appropriate to consider them as part of the valency of the verb...."

All of the examples that Herbst listed were adverbials of place.

Herbst (ibid. xxxi) defines obligatory complements as complements needed to form a grammatical sentence, given the sense of the governing word; deletion of these complements would make the sentence ungrammatical or change the meaning of the governing word. This is illustrated by (13a), which is my own example.

(13a) <u>I</u> slept from 10:30 to 6:30 in my bed.
(13b) *Slept from 10:30 to 6:30 in my bed.

Herbst (ibid.) states that optional complements can be absent, and the sentence can still be grammatical. My own examples in (14a), (14b), and (14c) illustrate this point.

> (14a) <u>Monet</u> painted <u>the Waterlilies series</u>.
> (14b) <u>Jack and Harry</u> painted <u>the barn</u>.
> (14c) <u>Ron</u> painted to pass the time.

3.2 The gerund vs. the infinitive

Bolinger (1968, 127) has generalized that "a difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning." Here I will briefly discuss Duffley's discussion (2000) of the difference between the gerund and the *to infinitive*. Duffley (2000, 221) comments on "the temporal relation between the events expressed by the complement and the matrix" in examples (15) and (16).

> (15) Ahead was pure blackness; I tried *closing* my eyes; it made not the slightest difference (British National Corpus 1995, G02 565)
> (16) He tried *to close* them, but the eyelids were frozen in place, unable to move. (British National Corpus 1995, G1M 422)

Duffley (ibid.) argues that in (15) the event of *trying* and the event of *closing* are concurrent, but in (16) *to close* is understood as being of the future and unrealized. However, Duffley (ibid. 224) differentiates between the 'subsequent potentiality' of the *to inf.*, which is characteristic of verbs such as *try* and *hope*, and the 'subsequent actualization' of the *to inf.*, which is characteristic of verbs such as *manage* and *get*. Duffley (ibid. 224) summarizes how it has been proposed that *to infinitives* denoting subsequent potentiality possess a *future-tense operator*.

Duffley (ibid. 225) characterizes the gerund as "evoking the whole of the event's interiority as a sum of positions occupied or occupyable by the realizer." However, Duffley (ibid. 228) also demonstrates the gerund's future, simultaneous,

and past relation to the matrix verb in examples (17), (18), and (19). This indicates

that the gerund is more flexible than the infinitive.

(17) I am considering *working* with him on it.
(18) I am enjoying *working* with him on it.
(19) I remember *working* with him on it.

To infinitives take on the properties of NPs, as in (20) (ibid. 229). In some

cases, the *to infinitive* phrase can be replaced with *that/it,* as in (21) and (21b) (ibid

231). VP deletion is possible not only when the *to inf.* follows a matrix verb, as in

(21a) and (22b) (ibid, 231), but following an adjective as in (23a) (ibid. 232).

(20) To remain silent was preferred by everyone.

(21) Not to participate would be foolish.
(21a) Not to would be foolish.
(21b) That/it would be foolish.

(22) I tried not to show it
(22a) I tried not to.
(22b) *I tried that/it.

(23) He was ready to fight.
(23a) He was ready to.

Rudanko (2006) further illustrates VP deletion following an adjective with the

following examples:

(24) Boulez is reluctant to discuss his own music,… (*The Times, BNC*)
(24a) Was Boulez reluctant to discuss his own music?
(24b) Yes, he was reluctant to.

(25) I am addicted to buying duds. (*The Times, BNC*)
(25a) Am I addicted to buying duds?
(25b) *Yes, I am addicted to.

Because the function of VP deletion is linked with prepositional phrases, Duffley

hints that the *to infinitive* construction is a prepositional phrase (2000. 232); the word

to indicates direction (ibid. 230). This is not entirely unbelievable, because Kjellmer

(1980, 80) states, "The use of TO the infinitive marker slowly evolved out of the use of TO the preposition." Denison (1998, 266) makes an interesting comment about the evolution of the *to infinitive*, which is that the shift of infinitive from a nominal to verbal character is virtually complete, and that the *to* in the *to infinitive* has, in the process, become disconnected and detached from the preposition *to*. Duffley (2000, 233) describes the meaning of *to* as a preposition as "that of movement leading to a terminus," in other words it evokes the idea of the action in the matrix verb ending before the action of the infinitive can begin. This puts the matrix verb into the before-position (ibid. 234) and the infinitive into the after-position.

The gerund would logically be the nominal object of *to* within a prepositional phrase, because as Vosberg summarizes (2003a, 197), the *-ing* form was originally a pure noun (albeit a deverbal noun formed through adding the *–ing* to the verb stem), which evolved in such a way that it increasingly developed verbal properties. One further comment on the nominal properties of gerunds and infinitives comes from Dirven (1989, 115), who uses (26) and (27) as an illustration.

> (26) As a child, I loved *to watch* the trains go by.
> (27) As a child, I loved *watching* the trains go by.

Dirven (ibid.) states that the infinitive in (24) referred to each individual experience of watching the trains go by and subsequently the series of those individual events; he likens the *to infinitive* to a countable noun, because countable nouns denote one or more specific occurrences or events. Dirven (ibid.) likens the gerund to an uncountable or mass noun, because the gerund refers to the activity of watching trains in unlimited terms and an unstated amount of time; uncountable or mass nouns refer to vague concepts, just as the watching of trains here was vague.

However, VP deletion is not possible with the adjective *committed*, as example (28g) demonstrates. Examples (28a)-(28g) are mine. The infinitival and gerundial complements can, however, be replaced with *that* or *it*. This indicates that the properties of the preposition *to* may not be as strong with *committed*.

(28a) We are committed to serve you.
(28b) We are committed to serving you.
(28c) We are committed to that/it.
(28d) I am committed to serve you, but he is not committed to serve you.
(28e) Are you both committed to serve me?
(28f) I am committed to serve you, but he is not.
(28g) I am committed to serve you, but he is not committed to*.

Allerton (1988, 21) describes the phenomenon of infinitivitis, which is the selection of the infinitive in contexts where the gerund would normally be selected by unaffected speakers. A growing number of speakers of British English use the infinitive excessively in writing and in formal speaking (1988, 11). The infinitive also prevails in noun complementation in formal and American English (Allerton 1988, 22). This means that the structure in example (30) would be preferred over the one in (29).

(29) There are many ways of cooking omelettes. (Allerton 1988, 20)
(30) There are many ways to cook an omelette. (Allerton 1988, 22)

Allerton summarizes the differences between the infinitive and the gerund in the following list:

"INFINITIVE	GERUND
infrequent activity	regular activity
intermittent activity	continuous activity
interrupted activity	continuing activity
uncompleted activity	completed activity
contingent / possible event	event presented factually
particular time and place	neutral time and place
specific subject	non-specific subject
more verbal character	more nominal character" (1988, 21)

3.3 The OED and the verbal form: commit

To present the *OED*'s senses of the words related to this study, I have made five

tables and placed them in the relevant section of chapter 3: one for *commit*, one for

committed, one for *commitment*, and two for *committing*. The *OED* has two separate

entries for *committing*: one for the participial adjective and one for the verbal

substantive. Each sense which has not been marked as obsolete and one

accompanying example have been quoted from the *OED* and included in the table,

beside the number it is given in the *OED.* The data in the present tables present the

senses that are still in use, which may or may not be relevant to the study for the

thesis.

#	Complementation patterns	Sense and Example from the *OED* (*Commit*)
I		"To give in charge, entrust, consign"
1a	NP to NP	"*trans.* To give to some one to take care of, keep, or deal with; to give in charge or trust, entrust, consign *to* (a person, his care, judgement, etc.). …**1870** Stanhope *Hist. Eng.* II. x. 61 He could not venture to land the troops committed to his charge."
1c	NP to NP	"*refl.* in sense I. also, to trust oneself *to* (the elements, the sea, etc.); formerly also *absol.* = *refl.* ... **1838** S. Parker *Explor. Tour* (1846) 51 Committing myself to God."
1d	NP NP to NP	"*to commit administration:* see quots. … administration of goods [after death] … **1767** Blackstone *Comm.* II. 506 It is necessary for the ordinary to commit administration afresh, of the goods of the deceased not administered."
1e	NP NP to NP	"*to commit to writing* (*to paper,* etc.): to put in writing, write down for preservation, record in writing; so *to commit to history* (obs.). *to commit to memory*; also simply *to commit* (colloq.): to learn by heart. ... **1883** *Manch. Guardian* 22 Oct. 5/4 When the bashful bard had committed his verses to print."
2	NP to NP	"To put into some place or receptacle to be kept safe or dealt with in some way; to consign. *Obs.* exc. in **commit to the earth**, **to the flames**, etc., in which there is now a notion of *deliver*. … **1878** MORLEY *Diderot* I. 165 They committed all the original manuscripts..to the flames."

#	Complementation patterns	Sense and Example from the *OED* (*Commit*)
3		"*spec.* To consign officially to custody or confinement; to send to prison, *esp.* for a short time or for trial:"
3a	NP to NP	"with complement, *to* prison, etc. … **1876** Green *Short Hist.* vii. 351 Four prelates...were..committed on frivolous pretexts to the Tower."
3b	Ø NP	"*simply* … *absol.* **1855** Macaulay *Hist.* IV. 623 Justices were unwilling to commit."
4	NP	"*Legislation.* To refer or entrust (a bill, etc.) to a committee. … **1818** Jas. Mill *Brit. India* III. VI. i. 39 This bill..when, in the language of parliament, it was committed, in other words, considered by the House, when the House calls itself a committee."
III		"To perpetrate or perform (in a bad sense)."
6a	NP	"To do (something wrong or reprehensible); to perpetrate, be guilty of (a crime, offence, etc.). … **1876** Green *Short Hist.* iv. 166 Responsible for crimes committed within its bounds."
6b	NP	"(a folly, an error, etc.) …**1872** E. Peacock *Mabel Heron* I. iv. 70 It is a piece of folly..which I cannot think of permitting her to commit."
6d	NP	"*humorously.* To do, perform (something put by the speaker on a level with an offence). … **1875** Whitney *Life Lang.* viii. 147 A person commits thus an addition to language."
IV		"To put together, join, engage, involve."
9a	NP NP with NP	"To engage (parties) as opponents or competitors, to match; to bring into contest, involve in hostility (*with*) … **1815** EARL BATHURST in Gurw. *Disp. Wellington* X. 5, I apprehend everything from his committing the army with Buonaparte."
9c	NP with NP	"To involve in hostile or disagreeable relations; to embroil." … **1855** MILMAN *Lat. Chr.* (1864) IV. VII. V. 158 The revolted son..whom it was their interest to commit irrevocably with his father."
10a	NP	"To expose by some compromising act to possible risk, danger, or suspicion; to involve, compromise. … **1863** MRS. C. CLARKE *Shaks. Char.* vi. 157 Shakespeare has never once committed his character in such a way that we should refuse cordially to grasp his hand."
10b	NP NP to NP	"To engage or pledge by some implicative act (*to* a particular course). … **1879** Froude *Caesar* xv. 245 Pompey was deeply committed to Caesar's agrarian..law."

#	Complementation patterns	Sense and Example from the *OED* (*Commit*)
10c	NP	"*refl.* To compromise oneself. … **1875** Stubbs *Const. Hist.* II. xvii. 604 When the question is put barely before them they avoid committing themselves."
10d	NP to NP	"*refl.* To pledge oneself by implication *to* a course (evil or risky). ... **1839** J. H. NEWMAN *Par. Serm.* IV. ii. 40 This is what comes of committing ourselves to an evil line of conduct."
10e	NP	"*refl.* To enter into commitment (sense 6c). Also *pass.* … **1957** T. KILMARTIN tr. *Aron's Opium of Intellectuals* iv. 127 A philosophy of 'commitment' which restricts itself to interpreting the commitment of others and does not commit itself."

Table 3: Senses of *commit*, as well as examples, taken straight from the *OED* (1989)

It is important to distinguish between the obligatory and optional complements of the verb *commit*. As was discussed in section 3.1, Herbst (2004, xxxi) states that the deletion of an obligatory complement would make the sentence ungrammatical, whereas the deletion of an optional complement would not. The *OED* indicates whether an element is optional with the word *simply*, as with senses 1e 'to commit something to writing' (examples (31) and (32)) and 3b 'to commit somebody to prison' (examples (33), (34), and (35)). Examples (31) – (38) are taken from the *OED*'s (1989) entry for *commit*.

(31) **1875** JOWETT *Plato* (ed. 2) V. 129 No longer compelled to commit *to memory many thousand..verses*.
(32) *Mod.* He always writes his speeches carefully first and then commits *them*.

(33) **1833** HT. MARTINEAU *Three Ages* iii. 96   The magistrates committed *the prisoners to the House of Correction* for one month each.
(34) **1597** SHAKS. *2 Hen IV*, v. ii. 112 You did commit *me*.
(35) **1855** MACAULAY *Hist.* IV. 623 Justices were unwilling to commit.

According to the *OED*, example (32) is just as grammatical as (31), and examples (34) and (35) are just as grammatical as (33).

Somers's (1987, 13) 'extraction method', which was discussed in section 3.1, ties into the discussion of obligatory complements in that especially regarding reflexive complements in a few senses of *commit*, the extraction of the *to NP* complement changes the meaning of the sentence. If *to an evil line of conduct* was removed from example (36), which represents sense 10d 'pledging oneself to a course,' then the sentence may be understood to take on the meaning of 'compromising oneself' of sense 10c, illustrated in (37), or 'entering into commitment' of sense 10e, demonstrated in (38).

(36) **1839** J. H. NEWMAN *Par. Serm.* IV. ii. 40 This is what comes of committing ourselves to an evil line of conduct.
(37) **1875** Stubbs *Const. Hist.* II. xvii. 604 When the question is put barely before them they avoid committing themselves."
(38) **1957** T. KILMARTIN tr. *Aron's Opium of Intellectuals* iv. 127 A philosophy of 'commitment' which restricts itself to interpreting the commitment of others and does not commit itself."

A further comment on sense 3 of *commit* is that elements such as *for felony* in example (39) (my own example) can be proved to be adjuncts through Somers's (1987 13, 14) 'extraction method' and 'backformation' test, which were discussed in section 3.1.

(39) He was committed to prison *for a felony*.
(39a) He was committed to prison.
(39b) ?He was committed to prison, *when/where he committed a felony*.
(39c) *Because he committed a felony*, he was committed to prison.
(39d) He was committed to prison, *because he committed a felony.*

Deleting/extracting the element, as in (39a), does not change the meaning of the sentence. Adding a relative clause, as in (39b), changes the meaning, because the subject in question was obviously committed to prison after he committed the felony (probably after a trial), in a location (most likely a courtroom) other than the place where he committed the felony. The subordinate clause which replaces *for felony* in (39c) and (39d), *because he committed a felony*, moves freely and therefore has the

properties of an adjunct. Prepositional phrases headed by *for* which explain what the

crime was for which the person was sent to jail are therefore adjuncts.

3.4 Background on the verbal form: commit

Biber et al. (1999, 345) list *commit* as a reflexive verb, a verb which "obligatorily or

very frequently combine[s] with reflexive pronouns", as in *commit herself to.*

Reflexive verbs are more common in the written registers of corpora than

conversation (Biber et al. 1999, 345). Poutsma (1916, 838) classifies *commit* as one of

the verbs whose meanings change when they are connected with a reflexive pronoun:

the pronoun loses some of its independent meaning because it has been united with

the verb to express a single idea. This applies to senses 1c ('commit oneself to the

elements'), 10c ('to compromise oneself'), 10d ('to pledge oneself to a course'), and

10e ('to enter into commitment'). Poutsma (1916, 838) illustrates this with the

following example:

> (40) "In later days Miss Sharp would never have committed herself so far as to
> advance opinions the untruth of which would have been so easily detected.
> Thack., Van. Fair, I, Ch. II, 17."

Poutsma (1904, 168-170) classifies *commit* as one of the verbs which takes

two non-prepositional objects, between which a preposition must appear, regardless

of the order of the objects. In the case of *commit*, that preposition is *to* (Poutsma 1904,

170), and it comes before the name of the person (Poutsma 1904, 169), instead of the

thing (Poutsma 1904, 168) as illustrated in the following example (Poutsma 1904,

170):

> (41) "On her deathbed the mother of the boy *committed* him solemnly *to* you.
> Night and Morn., 141"

Poutsma (1914, 398) illustrates another use of commit, the OED's "*humorously*. To

do, perform (something put by the speaker on a level with an offence)" sense 6d, with

the following example:

> (42) "He had always a great notion of committing the amiable. Dick., Pickw.,
> Ch. XIV, 125."

Although use of this kind is unusual, a de-adjectival generic noun preceded by the

definite article may denote a person or a quality in a generalizing way when it occurs

as the object of *to do*, *to commit,* and *to play* (Poutsma 1914, 398).

Rudanko (1996, 71) classifies *commit* as a matrix verb which occurs in the

following two constructions: NP_1 $Verb_1$ (NP_0) *to* PRO $Verb_2$*ing* and NP_1 $Verb_1$

(NP_0) PRO *to* $Verb_2$. In this case NP_1 is "the subject of the matrix clause" and

"characteristically designates a +animate entity" (Rudanko 1996, 77). NP_0 is "the

object of the matrix clause and the controller of PRO", and "it typically designates the

entity that is acted upon by NP_1 and which then undertakes the action expressed by

$Verb_2$" (Rudanko 1996, 77). Rudanko (1996, 77) characterizes *commit* as $Verb_1$ in the

following structure: "$Verb_1$ has the approximate meaning 'act on', 'influence', or

'move', NP_1 moves NP_0 to realize (or realizing) S_2". It is also noted that in sentences

with *commit* and other verbs, such as *dedicate* and *sentence*, NP_1 has authority over

NP_0, as opposed to other verbs, such as *accustom* and *reconcile*, which "express or

may express a gradual process of influencing or of bringing NP_0 around to $Verb_2$*ing*"

(Rudanko 1996, 79).

Rudanko (1996, 71) emphasizes that it is possible for sentential complements

to follow not only the adjective *committed*, but the participle *committed* in passive

constructions and the active form of the verb *commit*, as illustrated in examples (43)

and (44).

(43) "*If we accept our equation (4.1) as a basic structural relation, then we are virtually committed to accepting the view that the level of 'excess demand' for labour had a significant effect on wage rate changes in that period* [LOB J44 179-182, from L. Klein et al., *An econometric Model of the United Kingdom* (Basil Blackwell)]."

(44) "*By what you just said you have committed us to changing our policy –* the example devised by Ian Gurney"

Visser (1973, 2241-2242) categorizes *commit to* in his '*I depended on him to come*'-type, about which he says the following:

"In this type of construction the verb is one of those that form a semantic unit with a following preposition. The (pro)noun that is the subject of the infinitive is consequently at the same time the prepositional object of the introductory verb…the infinitive is always preceded by *to* or *forto*".

Rudanko (1989, 140) points out that this use of *commit to* is obsolete and that Visser's most recent example is from 1450. Rudanko (1989, 140) provided a more modern spelling of that example:

(45) * "To me you have committed to minister the sacrament"

According to Rudanko, this use fits the pattern

$[NP_1 \text{ Verb}_1 [\text{Prep } NP_0]_{PP} [[PRO]_{NP2} \text{ to Verb}_2 \ldots]_{S2}]_{Sl}$ (1989, 134, 140).

3.5 The OED and background on the adjectival forms: committed

Tables 4 and 5 present the *OED*'s senses of the participial adjectives *committed* and *committing*.

#	Complementation patterns	Definition and Example from the *OED* (*Committed*)
a	NP	"Entrusted, delegated; put in prison; done, perpetrated, etc.: see the verb. … **1846** Trench *Mirac.* ix. (1862). 211 The Church binds and looses by a committed, and not an inherent power."
b	NP	"Characterized by COMMITMENT (6c). … **1965** *Guardian* 10 Sept. 11/5 Bees..swarming..round the heads of committed young painters."

Table 4: Senses of *committed*, as well as examples, taken straight from the *OED* (1989)

#	Complementation patterns	Sense and Example from the *OED* (*Committing* (participial adjective))
	NP	"That commits, in various senses; see the verb. …**1886** *Pall Mall G.* 24 Nov. 9/2 The committing magistrates..were among those who memorialized for a reprieve.

Table 5: Senses of *committing* (ppl. a.), taken straight from the *OED* (1989)

According to Leech and Svartvik (2002, 366), premodifiers are defined as modifiers which come after determiners and before the head of a noun phrase. *Committed,* therefore, fits into the category "**-ed participles** as premodifiers" (Leech and Svartvik's 2002, 366). The following examples taken from Leech and Svartvik (2002, 366) illustrate this:

(46) a retired teacher
(47) reduced prices
(48) wanted persons
(49) the defeated army

Rudanko (1999, 12) points out that there are no sentential complements of the adjective *committed* in the Century of Prose Corpus, in the Corpus of Nineteenth Century English, or among the examples in the *OED*. It is worth noting that the *OED* lists examples of this adjective as a premodifier dating back to 1593 (1989). Rudanko (1999, 13) cites an example of a *to inf.* complement of *committed* from a manuscript by Poutsma that dates to 1936.

Rudanko (1999, 13) describes a study he conducted on the sentential complementation of *committed* using sections of COBUILD and the BNC which contained speeches by politicians: he refers to the speakers' preference of the *to –ing* construction as an act of changing it from the "authentic" form of the *to inf.* The *OED*'s entry for *committed* refers the reader to sense 6c of *commitment*, which is "[a]n absolute moral choice of a course of action; hence, the state of being involved in political or social questions, or in furthering a particular doctrine or cause, esp. in

one's literary or artistic expression; moral seriousness or social responsibility in artistic productions" (1989). Rudanko (1999, 13) concluded from the aforementioned study that the sense of "one's literary or artistic expression" has weakened in relation to sentential constructions; the sense of "an absolute moral choice of a course of action" has changed into a more general meaning of an endeavor or duty actually or supposedly entered into.

In Rudanko's (2006, 40) corpus study of the complementation of *accustomed*, he discusses the possibility that extractions protect infinitives. As Vosberg (2003a, 201-202) summarizes, extractions are instances where grammatical elements (which can be nominal objects, prepositional phrases, or even adjuncts) are moved from their original position through topicalization, relativization, clefting, comparativization, and interrogation, or through less common means such as pseudo-clefting, negative NP extraction, and exclamatory extraction. Vosberg's (2003b 308) extraction principle is as follows:

> "In the case of infinitival or gerundial complement options, the infinitive will tend to be favoured in environments where a complement of the subordinate clause is extracted (by topicalization, relativization, comparativization, or interrogation etc.) from its original position and crosses clause boundaries."

Evidence for extractions protecting infinitives in Rudanko's (2006, 40) aforementioned study was that in seven instances of infinitive complements in the *Times* subcorpus of the Bank of English Corpus, four involved extraction. Further evidence of this is that extraction is involved in only 9 of the 90 (10%) instances of *to –ing* complements in the *United States News* subcorpus of the Bank of English Corpus.

3.6 The OED and the nominal forms: commitment and commitments

Tables 6 and 7 present the *OED*'s senses of the nouns *commitment and committing*.

#	Complementation patterns	Definition and Example from the *OED* (*Commitment*)
1a	of NP unto NP of NP to NP	"The action of entrusting, giving in charge, or commending. … **1853** *Tait's Mag.* XX 516 The irrevocable commitment of the public welfare..to the numerical majority."
1b	of NP	"The committing of the care and custody of idiots to a responsible person. … **1885** *Law Rep.* 14 Q. B. Div. 896 the Lords Justices..entrusted..with the care and commitment of the custody of idiots and lunatics."
2a	Ø of NP to NP	"The action of officially consigning to custody or confinement, or the state of being so consigned; imprisonment, confinement, *esp.* previous to trial. … **1883** *19th Cent.* May 904 Juvenile commitments for crime have largely diminished."
2b	Ø to NP	"A warrant or order of committal to prison. … **1836** Marryat *Japhet* lix, My commitment to the county gaol was made out."
3	Ø of NP	"*Legislation.* The action of referring or entrusting (a bill, etc.) to a committee. … **1870** Stanhope *Hist. Eng.* II. 102 Upon the commitment got a sufficient party to add such a Clause."
6a	Ø to NP	"The committing of oneself, or being committed (to a particular course of conduct, etc.) … **1880** E: MYERS in *Hellenica* 5 Without commitment to any especial political opinions."
6b	Ø of NP	"An engagement; a liability; pl. pecuniary obligations. … **1966** *Listener* 17 Mar. 375/1 The cuts in British forces and commitments.."
6c	Ø	"An absolute moral choice of a course of action; hence, the state of being involved in political or social questions, or in furthering a particular doctrine or cause, esp. in one's literary or artistic expression; moral seriousness or social responsibility in artistic productions. … **1961** J. Mander (*title*) The writer and commitment."

Table 6: Senses of *commitment*, as well as examples, taken straight from the *OED* (1989)

#	Complementation patterns	Sense and Example from the *OED* (*Committing* (verbal substantive))
	Ø of NP of NP of NP	"The action of the verb COMMIT; commission. … **1651** HOBBES *Leviath.* II. xxvii. 151 The Committing of that which the Law forbiddeth."
b	of NP	"The action of referring to a committee: see COMMIT 4. **1640** LD. DIGBY *Parl. Sp.* 9 Feb. 6 The committing of this Petition may give countenance to that designe."

Table 7: Senses of *committing* (verbal substantive), taken straight from the *OED* (1989)

3.7 Relative clauses

According to Leech and Svartvik (2002, 383), "[t]he main function of a relative clause is to modify a noun phrase". In some relative clauses there exists a zero pronoun, whose function is to "[fill] a grammatical position in that clause," even though it is not stated (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 384). Examples (50) and (51), taken straight from Leech & Svartvik (2002, 384), illustrate that the zero pronoun is just as legitimate as the object of *owns* as any other relative pronoun.

> (50) The records *which he owns* are mostly classical.
> (51) The records *he owns* are mostly classical.

Similar examples of the zero pronoun and the expressed relative pronoun are found in relative clauses involving *committed* in the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts.

> (52) he was ignorant of the relation, and from circumstances, innocent and involuntary, formed erroneous opinions concerning *the action which he committed*. (leuven\1710-1780\hume - enquiry concerning the principles of morals.txt, Line 4270)

> (53) I impute no part of the *errours committed* in the regulation of the army to his majesty (leuven\1710-1780\johnson - parliamentary debates 1.txt, Line 4580)

4. The first part of the extended version of the Leuven corpus

This section of the extended version of the Leuven corpus contains data from 1710 to 1780. It yielded 228 relevant tokens for *commit*, *commits*, *committed*, *committing* and *commitment*. A discussion of the non-sentential extractions in my data will not be given in this thesis, because Vosberg's extraction principle is not concerned with them, but rather sentential extractions.

4.1 The verbal forms

The complements of the verb *commit* and its inflections fell into five complementation patterns, with four being nominal and one being zero: *NP* as in example (54), *NP to NP* as in (55), *NP unto NP* as in (56), NP ADV as in (57), and Ø as in (58).

> (54) And this law, my child, is right: for otherwise, if we *commit a smaller evil*, to procure a greater good, certain guilt would be thus incurred, in expectation of contingent advantage. (CLMETEV\clmetev1 (1710-1780)\1728 goldsmith 1766 - the vicar of wakefield.txt, Line 4362)

> (55) The old man deifies prudence; the youth *commits himself to magnanimity and chance*. (CLMETEV\clmetev1 (1710-1780)\1709 johnson 1759 - rasselas, prince of abyssinia.txt, Line 2077)

> (56) and therefore prayed the court, that the *administration* granted to the mother might be revoked, and be *committed unto her*, as next of kin to the deceased, by force of the said statute. (CLMETEV\clmetev1 (1710-1780)\1713 sterne 1759-67 - life and opinions of tristram shandy.txt, Line 6490)

> (57) he saw the earl of Somerset committed *there* for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, and afterwards condemned (CLMETEV\clmetev1 (1710-1780)\1703 cibber 1753 - the lives of the poets 1.txt, Line 6279)

> (58) The question being put for *committing*, not-content, 76; content, 46. (CLMETEV\clmetev1 (1710-1780)\1717 walpole 1735-48 - letters 1735-1748.txt, Line 7587)

Table 8 gives the complementation patterns and their frequencies among *commit* and all its inflections in the first part of the extended Leuven Corpus. In *Table 8* and all tables in this thesis that show figures for frequencies, the number of occurrences within the sub-section of the corpus are to the left, and the calculated figure for number of instances per million words will be in parentheses to the right.

complementation pattern	commit		commits		committed		committing	
NP	35	(11.7)	2	(0.7)	87	(29.0)	18	(6.0)
NP to NP	19	(6.3)	2	(0.7)	51	(17.0)	7	(2.3)
NP unto NP	-		-		1	(0.3)	-	
NP ADV	-		-		2	(0.7)	-	
Ø	-		-		-		1	(0.3)
Total	54		4		141		26	

Table 8: The complementation patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its inflections in the first part of the extended version of the Leuven Corpus (1710-1780)

The *NP* complement is by far the most common, and so far there are only nominal complements. No comments regarding sentential complements can be made, because sentential complements have not appeared yet. As demonstrated in the data for *committed* and in example (56), it was possible to select the preposition *unto*, which is structurally similar to *to* in place of *to,* although *to* was clearly selected more.

It is also important to examine which senses from the *OED* were expressed by the word *commit* in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. This thesis will examine which senses were in use from 1710 to 1920. It will show which senses increased and decreased in use and whether any appear to have been abandoned. *Table 9* shows each sense, quoted from the *OED,* that was expressed by *commit* and its inflections in the first part of the extended Leuven corpus. The column to the far right shows the total number of tokens that fell under each sense in the entire first part of the corpus, as well what percent of the total first part it comprised. In two cases it was difficult to determine which sense a token fell under, and those are recorded in the row labeled *Unknown* underneath all the senses. A discussion of those tokens will

be given. In *Table 7* and all subsequent tables that show the frequency of tokens per

sense per verb and its inflected forms, an asterisk will represent *commit* to save space.

So *s will stand for *commits*, *ed will stand for *committed*, and *ing will stand for

committing.

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
1.a 'to commit someone to someone's care'	NP to NP, NP ADV	10 (3.3)	-	22 (7.3)	2 (0.7)	34 (11.3)
1.c 'to commit oneself to the elements'	NP to NP	2 (0.7)	-	3 (1.0)	2 (0.7)	7 (2.3)
1.d '*to commit administration*'	NP to NP, Ø	-	-	1 (0.3)	-	1 (0.3)
1.e 'to commit something to writing'	NP to NP	3 (1.0)	-	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	6 (2.0)
2. 'to commit to the earth'	NP to NP	2 (0.7)	-	7 (2.3)	-	9 (3.0)
3a 'to commit someone to prison'	NP to NP, NP ADV	-	-	16 (5.3)	1 (0.3)	17 (5.7)
3.b 'to commit someone to prison' (without *to prison*)	NP	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	5 (1.7)	-	7 (2.3)
4. 'to refer a bill to a committee'	NP	-	-	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.7)
6a 'to commit a crime'	NP	26 (8.7)	2 (0.7)	62 (20.7)	16 (5.3)	106 (35.3)
6.b 'to commit an error'	NP	6 (2.0)	-	18 (6.0)	1 (0.3)	25 (8.3)
6.d 'to commit the amiable'	NP	1 (0.3)	-	-	-	1 (0.3)
9a 'to commit opponents (*with*)'	NP	-	-	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.7)
10a 'to compromise'	NP, NP to NP	2 (0.7)	-	2 (0.7)	-	4 (1.3)
10.b 'To pledge (*to a particular course*)'	NP to NP	-	-	1 (0.3)	-	1 (0.3)
10.d 'to pledge oneself to a risky course'	NP to NP	-	1 (0.3)	-	-	1 (0.3)
Unknown		1 (0.3)	-	-	1 (0.3)	2 (0.7)
Total		54	4	141	26	225

Table 9: The frequency of the *OED*'s senses of the verb *commit* among the verbal forms in the first part of the extended Leuven corpus, all quoted from the *OED* (1989).

Of the two tokens whose senses were not clear even from the context, one was from a poem.

> (37) That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses; I mean with great but disproportion'd muses: For if I thought, my judgment were of years, I should *commit thee* surely with thy peers, And tell how far thou did'st our Lily outshine, Or sporting Kid, or Marlow's mighty line. He then goes on to cha ... (CLMETEV\clmetev1 (1710-1780)\1703 cibber 1753 - the lives of the poets 1.txt, Line 7833)

This perhaps expresses sense 9.a ('To engage (parties) as opponents or competitors, to match; to bring into contest, involve in hostility (*with*)' (the *OED*, 1989)) because of the presence of *with*. Perhaps the writer meant sense 1.a ('To give to some one to take care of, keep, or deal with; to give in charge or trust, entrust, consign *to* (a person, his care, judgement, etc.)' (the *OED*, 1989)) and used *with* instead of *to*. The writer may mean that he would commit the person to confinement along with his peers, as in sense 3.b.

The biggest clue provided in the token in example (38) is the phrase 'stolen match.' If 'match' refers to a game, then perhaps this refers to a competition, as in sense 9.a., or perhaps the female character in question rigged the match or cheated in the match and did something wrong, as in sense 6.a. The situation sounds too serious be in reference to a stolen matchstick.

> (38) e had known him; for, this being a *stolen match*, and consequently an unnatural one in the opinion of the good squire, he had, from the time of her *committing it*, abandoned the poor young creature, who was then no more than eighteen, as a monster, and had never since suffered her to be named in his presen… (CLMETEV\clmetev1 (1710-1780)\1707 fielding 1749 - tom jones.txt, Line 6722)

A token which originally seemed to have an unclear sense is worth illustrating here.

> (39) by no means have suffered his right hand to have got engaged: on the contrary, instead of taking off his wig with it, as he did, he ought to have

> *committed that* entirely *to the left*; and then, when the natural exigency my father was under of rubbing his head, called out for his handkerchief, he would h ... (CLMETEV\clmetev1 (1710-1780)\1713 sterne 1759-67 - life and opinions of tristram shandy.txt, Line 1770)

In example (39) *committed* takes on the meaning of 'directed, adjusted, pushed, or put.' After I considered it further, I classified it under sense 10.b ('To pledge (*to* a particular course)'), because the writer meant that *to the left* was *to a particular course*. There is a further discussion of *commit* and *commitment* functioning like this and taking this kind of complement in section 7.1

At 35.3 instances per million words, sense 6.a ('to commit a crime') is most common. Sense 6.b ('to commit an error') comes in third at 8.3 instances per million words, only after sense 1.a ('to commit someone to someone's care'), at 11.3 instances per million words. For that reason, it is important to demonstrate what crimes or errors are said to have been committed in order to see whether certain actions are still associated with *commit* (or are seen as being *committed*) as time goes by. It was difficult to differentiate between sense 6.a and 6.b, because there was often a fine line in the meanings of the complements. The *OED* lists the following as complements of *commit* for sense 6.a: crime, offence, usury, fault, murder, adultery, felony, and treason (1989). It lists these for sense 6.b: folly, error, absurdity, and disproportion (the *OED*, 1989). To specify even more, it lists these as complements for sense 6.d ("*humorously*. To do, perform (something put by the speaker on a level with an offence)."): lampoon, miracle, pun, the amiable, an addition to language (the *OED*, 1989).

4.2 The nominal form

There were three tokens (one per million words) for *commitment*. One (example (40))

had a *to NP* complement, and the remaining two (examples (41) and (42)) had no

complement.

> (40) About a year after his *commitment to the tower*, by the importunity of
> Queen Ann, he was arraign'd at the King's Bench Bar (CLMETEV\clmetev1
> (1710-1780)\1703 cibber 1753 - the lives of the poets 1.txt, Line 1441)

> (41) This deposition was sufficient to justify his *commitment*; and he was
> sent accordingly to Clerkenwell prison (CLMETEV\clmetev1 (1710-
> 1780)\1721 smollett 1771 - the expedition of humphrey clinker.txt, Line 2860)

> (42) upon the parson's swearing it to be the property of Mr Western, he
> desired Mr Fitzpatrick to draw up a *commitment*, which he said he would sign.
> (CLMETEV\clmetev1 (1710-1780)\1707 fielding 1749 - tom jones.txt, Line
> 6812)

Commitment in examples (40) and (41) correspond with the *OED*'s sense 2a for

commitment: "The action of officially consigning to custody or confinement, or the

state of being so consigned; imprisonment, confinement, *esp.* previous to trial"

(1989). The *OED*'s sense 2b for *commitment*, "A warrant or order of committal to

prison," corresponds with example (42).

5. The second part of the extended version of the Leuven corpus

This section of the extended version of the Leuven corpus contains data from 1780 to

1850. It yielded 463 relevant tokens for *commit*, *commits*, *committed*, *committing* and

commitment.

5.1 The verbal forms

There are three complementation patterns to the verbal forms in the second part of the

extended version of the Leuven corpus: *NP*, *NP to NP*, and *NP to inf*. The *NP to inf*

pattern first appeared in 1807 and is illustrated in examples (43) and (44).

(43) she was an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised, yet not so old but that she could learn, and that she would *commit her gentle spirit to be* directed and governed by him in all things (CLMETEV\clmetev2 (1780-1850)\1775 lamb 1807 - tales from shakespeare.txt, Line 3363)

(44) I had *committed myself to swim* on the uncertain waters of London (CLMETEV\clmetev2 (1780-1850)\1779 galt 1821 - ayrshire legatees.txt, Line 3149)

The fact that the *NP to inf* pattern appeared in 1807 and 1821, before the *to inf* pattern ever did leads one to wonder whether the *to inf* pattern developed from the *NP to inf* pattern, since the nominal complementation patterns were the only ones in use before.

Table 10 shows the complementation patterns of all the verbal forms in the second part of the extended version of the Leuven corpus. In this time period too, the *NP* complement is the most common.

complementation pattern	commit		commits		committed		committing	
NP	68	(11.7)	6	(1.1)	207	(35.7)	46	(7.9)
NP to NP	40	(6.9)	-		82	(14.1)	9	(1.6)
NP to inf.	1	(0.2)	-		1	(0.2)	-	
Total	109		6		290		55	

Table 10: The complementation patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its inflections in the second part of the extended version of the Leuven corpus (1780-1850)

Table 11 shows the senses from the *OED* featured in the second part of the extended version of the Leuven corpus for all four three forms.

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
1.a 'to commit someone to someone's care'	NP to NP NP to inf.	14 (2.4)	-	45 (7.8)	4 (0.7)	63 (10.9)
1.c 'to commit oneself to the elements'	NP to NP	3 (0.5)	-	5 (0.9)	2 (0.3)	10 (1.7)
1.e 'to commit something to writing'	NP to NP	20 (3.4)	-	10 (1.7)	1 (0.2)	31 (5.3)
2. 'to commit to the earth'	NP to NP	2 (0.3)	-	6 (1.1)	-	8 (1.4)
3a 'to commit someone to prison'	NP to NP	2 (0.3)	-	14 (2.4)	1 (0.2)	17 (2.9)
3.b 'to commit someone to prison' (without *to prison*)	NP	2 (0.3)	-	3 (0.5)	-	5 (0.9)

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
4. 'to refer a bill to a committee'	NP	-	-	4 (0.7)	-	4 (0.7)
6a 'to commit a crime'	NP	56 (9.7)	6 (1.1)	163 (28.1)	37 (6.4)	262 (45.2)
6.b 'to commit an error'	NP	3 (0.5)	-	23 (4.0)	5 (0.9)	31 (5.3)
6.d 'to commit the amiable'	NP	-	-	1 (0.2)	-	1 (0.2)
9a 'to commit opponents (*with*)'	NP	1 (0.2)	-	1 (0.2)	-	2 (0.3)
10.a 'to compromise'	NP, NP to NP	1 (0.2)	-	5 (0.9)	-	6 (1.1)
10.b 'To pledge (*to* a particular course)'	NP, NP to NP	-	-	-	2 (0.3)	2 (0.3)
10.c 'To compromise oneself.'	NP	5 (0.9)	-	5 (0.9)	3 (0.5)	13 (2.2)
10.d 'to pledge oneself to a risky course'	NP to NP, NP to inf	-	-	2 (0.3)		2 (0.3)
10.e 'To enter into commitment'	NP, NP to NP	-	-	1 (0.2)	-	1 (0.2)
Unknown		-	-	2 (0.3)	-	2 (0.3)
Total		109	6	290	55	460

Table 11: The frequency of the *OED*'s senses of the verb *commit* among the verbal forms in the second part of the extended Leuven corpus, all quoted from the *OED* (1989).

Again, the most common sense is sense 6.a, ('to commit a crime') at 45.2 instances per million words. Sense 1.a, ('to commit someone to someone's care'), comes next, at 10.9 instances per million words. Senses 6.b (committing an error) and 1.e (committing to writing) tie for third at 5.3 occurrences per million words.

It was difficult to decide which sense applied to two tokens for *committed.* Sense 1.c ('to commit oneself to the elements') or sense 10.d ('to pledge oneself to a risky course') could both apply to example (45). In example (46), the Bandana handkerchiefs could be understood to be pledged to a course of export, making sense 10.b ('To pledge (*to* a particular course)') the appropriate sense.

(45) I never made so great an exertion before, which in itself was a proof that it was with the two bladders, pomp and vanity, that I had *committed myself to swim* on the uncertain waters of London; for surely my best exertions were due to my people (CLMETEV\clmetev2 (1780-1850)\1779 galt 1821 - ayrshire legatees.txt, Line 3149)

(46) 'The Bandana *handkerchiefs* manufactured at Glasgow have long superseded the genuine ones, and are now *committed* in large quantities both by the natives and Chines.' (CLMETEV\clmetev2 (1780-1850)\1792 babbage 1832 - the economy of machinery and manufactures.txt, Line 807)

5.2 The adjectival form

There were two examples of *committed* as an adjective (0.3 occurrences per million

words), and both took a *to NP* complement.

(47) For a man, once *committed* headlong *to republican or any other Transcendentalism* (CLMETEV\clmetev2 (1780-1850)\1795 carlyle 1837 - the french revolution.txt, Line 13339)

(48) She eluded them and despised them--or at least she was *committed to the other path* from which retreat was now impossible. (CLMETEV\clmetev2 (1780-1850)\1811 thackeray 1847-8 - vanity fair.txt, Line 11529)

5.3 The nominal form

There was one token for *commitment* (0.2 occurrences per million words), and it took

the *OED*'s sense 3 for *commitment*: "Legislation. The action of referring or entrusting

(a bill, etc.) to a committee" (1989).

(49) the 20th counsel were heard against it; after which, by agreement, the second reading of it took place. On the 23rd the question being put for the *commitment* of it, Lord Viscount Howick (now Earl Grey) began an eloquent speech. After he had proceeded in it some way, he begged leave to enter his protest a ... (CLMETEV\clmetev2 (1780-1850)\1760 clarkson 1839 - the history of the abolition of the african slave-trade.txt, Line 18346)

6. The third part of the extended version of the Leuven corpus

This section of the extended version of the Leuven corpus contains data from 1850 to 1920. It yielded 324 relevant tokens for *commit*, *commits*, *committed*, *committing* and *commitment*.

6.1 The verbal forms

There are 7 complementation patterns to the verbal forms in the third part of the extended version of the Leuven corpus: *NP, NP to NP, NP into NP, NP unto NP, to NP, NP to inf*, and *Ø,* as shown in *Table 12*.

complementation pattern	commit		commits		committed		committing	
NP	63	(10.3)	5	(0.8)	133	(21.8)	25	(4.1)
NP to NP	25	(4.1)	2	(0.3)	42	(6.9)	7	(1.1)
NP into NP	1	(0.2)	-		2	(0.3)	-	
NP unto NP	1	(0.2)	-		1	(0.2)	-	
to NP	1	(0.2)	-		-		-	
NP to inf	-		-		1	(0.2)	-	
Ø	1	(0.2)	-		-		-	
Total	92		7		179		32	

Table 12: The complementation patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its inflections in the third part of the extended version of the Leuven Corpus (1850-1920)

Unto reappears as a replacement for *to*, even though both instances of *unto* are from quotes from the Bible. *Into* joins *unto* as a replacement for *to*. The only instance of a *to NP* complement falls under the *OED*'s sense 1.e of committing something to memory, which usually falls under the *NP to NP* pattern.

> (50) 'I try to strengthen my mind.' 'So I hear,' said he dryly. 'Well, as far as your schools of teaching will allow.' 'That is, you read and *commit to memory*, like other young scholars. Whereunto? Have you no aim? You have, or I am told you are to have, fabulous wealth--a dragon's heap.' (CLMETEV\clmetev3 (1850-1920)\1828 meredith 1870 - the adventures of harry richmond.txt, Line 244)

The example of zero complement involves a discussion of the meaning of *commit*.

> (51) The word used to signify this trust is sometimes rendered "*commit*," as in John ii. 24: "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew

all men." He did not believe in them, or trust them (CLMETEV\clmetev3 (1850- 1920)\1829 booth 1879 - papers on practical religion.txt, Line 2776)

The only token with an *NP to inf* complement is a passivization that falls under the *OED*'s sense 3.b, '*spec.* To consign officially to custody or confinement; to send to prison, *esp.* for a short time or for trial: *simply*' (1989).

(52) *Maria Hatherton* had been *committed to take* her trial at the quarter sessions for the assault upon the children (CLMETEV\clmetev3 (1850- 1920)\1823 yonge 1865 - the clever woman of the family.txt, Line 5133)

Table 13 shows the senses from the *OED* that appeared among the verbal forms.

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
1.a 'to commit someone to someone's care'	NP to NP Ø	6 (1.0)	1 (0.2)	21 (3.4)	1 (0.2)	29 (4.8)
1.c 'to commit oneself to the elements'	NP to NP	4 (0.7)	-	5 (0.8)	-	9 (1.5)
1.e 'to commit something to writing'	NP to NP	1 (0.2)	-	6 (1.0)	1 (0.2)	8 (1.3)
2. 'to commit to the earth'	NP to NP	2 (0.3)	-	4 (0.7)	-	6 (1.0)
3.a 'to commit someone to prison'	NP to NP	-	-	2 (0.3)	-	2 (0.3)
3.b 'to commit someone to prison' (without *to prison*)	NP, NP to inf.	2 (0.3)	-	9 (1.5)	2 (0.3)	13 (2.1)
6.a 'to commit a crime'	NP	41 (6.7)	5 (0.8)	93 (15.2)	16 (2,6)	155 (25.4)
6.b 'to commit an error'	NP	7 (1.1)	-	23 (3.8)	3 (0.5)	33 (5.4)
6.d 'to commit the amiable'	NP	-	-	1 (0.2)	-	1 (0.2)
10a 'to compromise'	NP, NP to NP	3 (0.5)	-	1 (0.2)	-	4 (0.7)
10.b 'To pledge (*to* a particular course)'	NP to NP	3 (0.5)	-	4 (0.7)	-	7 (1.1)
10.c 'To compromise oneself.'	NP	9 (1.5)	-	7 (1.1)	3 (0.5)	19 (3.1)
10.d 'to pledge oneself to a risky course'	NP to NP	4 (0.7)	1 (0.2)	3 (0.5)	4 (0.7)	12 (2.0)
10.e 'To enter into commitment'	NP, NP to NP	8 (1.3)	-	-	1 (0.2)	9 (1.5)

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
Unknown		2 (0.3)	-	-	1 (0.2)	3 (0.5)
Total		92	7	179	32	310

Table 13: The frequency of the *OED*'s senses of the verb *commit* among the verbal forms in the third part of the extended Leuven corpus, all quoted from the *OED* (1989).

Unsurprisingly, sense 6.a ('to commit a crime'), is most common at 25.4 occurrences per million words. Sense, 6.b ('to commit an error'), at 5.4 occurrences per million words, is slightly more common than sense 1.a ('to commit someone to someone's care'), with 4.8 occurrences per million words. The reflexive sense 10.c ('To compromise oneself.') follows at 3.1 occurrences per million words.

Regarding the tokens whose senses were difficult to define, the difficulty with example (53) can be attributed to the fact that the complement is a pronoun and the fact that the token lacks context related to committing. Two possible senses are the ones pertaining to committing a crime or an error, senses 6.a and 6.b.

> (53) ... riage--never had the chance, as you may well suppose; but, in any case, you have some people in the house who would make me mark time before I went *committing it*. They seem the ideal young married people--don't quarrel, have perfect health, agree with everybody, go to church, have children--but I should ... (CLMETEV\clmetev3 (1850-1920)\1867 galsworthy 1904 - the island pharisees.txt, Line 7415)

Two possibilities for example (54) are sense 9.a ('to commit opponents (*with*)') and sense 10.a ('to compromise').

> (54) "The foreigners! It's as plain as a pikestaff. He's brought them, and left the Ruritanians with the King; that's because he wants to *commit the Ruritanians* as deep as he can." "They were none of them among our friends at the lodge, then?" I asked. "I wish they had been," (CLMETEV\clmetev3 (1850-1920)\1863 hope 1894 - the prisoner of zenda.txt, Line 2377)

Two possibilities for example (55) are sense 10.b ('To pledge (*to* a particular course)') and sense 10.d ('to pledge oneself to a risky course').

(55) not one of these nine writers genuineness of the Syriac Epistles. |
condemns the Ignatian letters _Bleek_ will not commit *himself to a* | as
spurious. Bleek alone leaves distinct recognition of the letters | leaves the
matter in some in any form. (CLMETEV\clmetev3 (1850-1920)\1826 cassels
1889 - a reply to dr. lightfoot's essay.txt, Line 1937)

6.2 The adjectival form

In the third part of the extended version of the Leuven corpus, there are 13 instances

of *committed* (2.1 occurrences per million words) functioning as an adjective. Nine

(1.5 occurrences per million words) have an NP complement, as in example (71), and

four (0.7 occurrences per million words) do not, as in example (72).

(56) I am not *committed to the vibration theory* of memory, though
inclined to accept it on a prima facie view. (CLMETEV\clmetev3 (1850-
1920)\1835 butler 1880 - unconscious memory.txt, Line 2031)

(57) "Tell me first," said the puzzled Colonel, "are you *committed*?" "No   one
can be more so." "Engaged!!!" (CLMETEV\clmetev3 (1850-1920)\1823
yonge 1865 - the clever woman of the family.txt, Line 7121)

6.3 The nominal form

Although the third part of the extended version of the Leuven corpus yields no tokens

for *commitment* or *commitments*, there is one instance (0.2 per million words) where

committing, preceded by *the*, occurs as a noun, in the *OED*'s sense 6.a ('to commit a

crime') of *commit*.

(58) it might have been that they had all nefariously gathered together there
for the *committing* of a *crime* (CLMETEV\clmetev3 (1850-1920)\1867
bennett 1908 - the old wives' tale.txt, Line 6102)

7. The Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus: UK Books

The material in the UK Books section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus

comes from books written in British English: its original form was text, not speech.

UK Books yielded 595 tokens of *commit*, *commitment*, and their inflectional forms.

7.1 The verbal forms

In UK Books the complements of the verb *commit* and its inflections fell into nine

complementation patterns, with five being solely nominal, two being nominal and

verbal, one being solely verbal, and one being zero complement: *NP*, *NP to NP*, *NP*

unto NP, *NP against NP* as in (59), *NP NP* (the first NP is an indirect object and the

second is a direct object) as in (60), *NP to inf*, *NP to ing*, *to inf*, and Ø as in (61).

> (59) the Military Representatives there had full powers to commit *the*
> *Government possibly against my opinion* and take decisions which the British
> Government ought alone to take (UK Books)
>
> (60) They might easily commit a *battalion several companies* -- at the same
> time as pushing tanks and infantry up the valley floor. (UK Books)
>
> (61) It must not be supposed that proceedings *to commit* for contempt of court
> can be instituted only in respect to matters published after criminal
> proceedings have begun. (UK Books)
>
> (62) They went about expressing this in words that *committed* without putting
> them too far out on a limb that other Marxists could easily saw behind them.
> (UK Books)

In example (59), the use of *against* indicates movement in a particular direction, as

does *to*. *To* could have been used in a similar construction, had the opposite of the

course referred to in *my opinion* followed the preposition instead of *my opinion*. In

example (60) *commit* functions like the verb *give* in that it takes a direct object and an

indirect object instead of the *NP to NP* complement pattern as in 'They might easily

commit *several companies to a battalion*.' Example (61) takes on sense 3.b of

commit ('to commit someone to prison') in that it takes no complements at all, as was discussed in section 3.3. Example (62) takes on sense 10b ('To pledge (*to* a particular course)') a sense which is, in fact, vague about complementation. Interestingly enough, all four *NP*s that fell into the *NP to inf* pattern and the *NP to ing* pattern for *commit* were reflexives.

Two tokens had to be thrown out, because they came up as *commit* in the search, but they were actually *commitments* and *committee*. There was a space between commit and *ments*, and there was a hyphen and a page number between *commit* and *tee*, indicating that the word was split at the end of the page and continued on the first line of the following page.

> (63) These days he is a multi-millionaire businessman with worldwide commit ments. (UK Books)

> (64) Thus it was hoped that Welsh mps would be content with a Grand Commit- <197> tee that took no decisions, but would be only a talking shop. (UK Books)

Table 14 shows the complement patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its inflections in UK Books and the frequency per million words (in the table, those frequencies are in parentheses next to the number of tokens).

complementation pattern	commit		commits		committed		committing	
NP	39	(7.2)	3	(0.6)	95	(17.6)	19	(3.5)
NP to NP	19	(3.5)	-		23	(4.3)	16	(3.0)
NP unto NP	1	(0.2)	-		-		-	
NP against NP	1	(0.2)	-		-		-	
NP NP	1	(0.2)	-		-		-	
NP to inf	1	(0.2)	-		3	(0.6)	1	(0.2)
NP to ing	3	(0.6)	-		3	(0.6)	-	
to inf	-				1	(0.2)	1	(0.2)
Ø	1	(0.2)	-		1	(0.2)	-	
Total	66		3		126		37	

Table 14: The complementation patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its inflections in the UK Books sub-section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus

Nominal complements are still far more common in present-day British English literature than sentential complements. The total absence of a *to ing* pattern indicates that it may not be favored in British English, even though the total of 1.2 *NP to -ing* complements per million words slightly exceeds the 1.0 *NP to inf* complements per million words. *Commits* did not select *NP to ing* at all, but that is to be expected, since it tends to yield few results in searches and tends to be limited in complement selection. Although *commit* and *committed* selected *NP to ing* three times each (there were 0.6 instances per million words for each), *committing* did not select it all, but it did select *NP to inf.* and *NP to –ing* once each (0.2 instances per million words for each time). This phenomenon provides evidence that Rohdenburg's *horror aequi* principle applies to this verb as well. Further evidence is that *commit*, which forms the infinitive *to commit*, did not select a *to inf.* complement.

    Table 15 shows each sense, quoted from the *OED,* that was expressed by *commit* and its inflections in UK Books as well as which complementation patterns applied to each sense.

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
1.a 'to commit someone to someone's care'	NP to NP, NP unto NP,	2 (0.4)	-	1 (0.2)	2 (0.4)	5 (0.9)
1.c 'to commit oneself to the elements'	NP to NP	-	-	-	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)
1.e 'to commit something to writing'	NP to NP	2 (0.4)	-	-	4 (0.7)	6 (1.1)
2. 'to commit to the earth'	NP to NP	-	-	1 (0.2)	-	1 (0.2)
3.a 'to commit someone to prison'	NP to NP	-	-	2 (0.4)	1 (0.2)	3 (0.6)
3.b 'to commit someone to prison' (without *to prison*)	NP, Ø	1 (0.2)	-	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)	3 (0.6)
6.a 'to commit a crime'	NP	29 (5.4)	3 (0.6)	87 (16.1)	10 (1.9)	129 (23.9)
6.b 'to commit an error'	NP	-	-	3 (0.6)	-	3 (0.6)
10.a 'to compromise'	NP	1 (0.2)	-	-	1 (0.2)	2 (0.4)

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
10.b 'To pledge (*to* a particular course)'	NP, to inf, NP to NP, NP against NP, NP NP, NP to inf, Ø	13 (2.4)	-	16 (3.0)	7 (1.3)	36 (6.7)
10.c 'To compromise oneself.'	NP	2 (0.4)	-	-	-	2 (0.4)
10.d 'to pledge oneself to a risky course'	NP to NP, NP to ing	9 (1.7)	-	8 (1.5)	4 (0.7)	21 (3.9)
10.e 'To enter into commitment'	NP NP to NP	7 (1.3)	-	7 (1.3)	6 (1.1)	20 (3.7)
Total		66	3	126	37	232

Table 15: The frequency of the *OED*'s senses of the verb *commit* among the verbal forms in the UK Books section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration corpus, all quoted from the *OED* (1989).

At 23.9 tokens per million words, sense 6.a ('to commit a crime') is the most common sense among verbal forms in British literature. Coming in second place is sense 10.b, ('To pledge (*to* a particular course)') with 6.7 tokens per million words. It is no surprise that it is so common, since it took seven complementation patterns, thus reinforcing an earlier comment that the *OED* is vague about what this sense's complementation patterns should be. Following that, sense 10.d ('to pledge oneself to a risky course') is the third most common sense at 3.9 tokens per million words, and sense 10.e ('To enter into commitment') is the fourth most common at 3.7 tokens per million words.

There was one instance where I was not sure of the meaning, but after pondering the matter I realized it was a representative of sense 10b, 'To pledge (*to* a particular course).'

> (93) I tried to get out of the way, brake as much as possible, but you can only do so much in a situation like that. *I* was committed *to the corner* - there was no way I could stop. (UK Books)

In other words, the situation committed the speaker to the corner; *to the corner* was

the particular course in question, even though such an idea of movement (which is

logical given that the complement includes the preposition *to*) is not the first thing

that comes to mind when a speaker of American English thinks of the verb *commit*

and its associations. There were two examples of *commitment to the corner* in UK

Books, indicating that *to the corner* is a collocate of *commit* and *commitment* in

British English when referring to losing control while driving. These examples are

illustrated in examples (65) and (66).

> (65) He was braking, changing down, steering, pumping the throttle, and the
> car appeared on that knife edge of being in control and out of control. He
> made his *commitment to the corner*, the car was pitched in with an arrogance
> that made my eyes open wider. Then – hard on the throttle. I mean, it was a
> master controlling a machine.

> (66) On a turbo you lift off and the power goes away very fast. He got to the
> point of the track where he wanted to make his *commitment to the corner*. The
> car was pitched in with an arrogance that made my eyes open wider. Then -
> hard on the throttle and the thing was driving through the corner.

7.2 The adjectival form

To reiterate, according to the *OED* (1989) sense a of *committed*, the adjective, is

"Entrusted, delegated; put in prison; done, perpetrated, etc.: see the verb." Sense b is

"Characterized by COMMITMENT (6c)." Sense 6c of *commitment* is "An absolute

moral choice of a course of action; hence, the state of being involved in political or

social questions, or in furthering a particular doctrine or cause, esp. in one's literary or

artistic expression; moral seriousness or social responsibility in artistic productions."

The examples that the *OED* gave for both sense 6c of *commitment* and sense b of

committed were from the mid-twentieth century and had to do with art, writing, the

French word *engagement*, existentialism, and communism. However, I categorized

sentences with phrases such as *a committed Catholic*, *a committed Marxist*, and *a*

committed economist as being representatives of that sense (sense b of *committed*), because religions, political ideologies, and professions are connected with doctrine, political and social questions, moral choices, and social responsibility. I categorized sentences with phrases such as *a committed relationship* and *a more committed and enthusiastic way* (UK Books) under sense a of *committed*, because they are more connected to any of the senses of the verb *commit* than to a cause or doctrine.

Among the 40 instances (7.4 per million words) where *committed* functions as an adjective and does not take a *to NP*, *to –ing*, or *to inf.* complement in UK Books, 24 fell under sense b ('doctrine or cause') of *committed*, and 16 fell under sense a ('pledged'). As is shown in Table C, the nominal complement *to NP* is most common at 8.9 tokens per million words. However, there are 1.7 *to –ing* complements per million words and 0.6 *to inf.* complements per million words, indicating that the gerund may be favored in British English.

Complementation pattern	Number of tokens
to NP	48 (8.9)
to –ing	9 (1.7)
to inf.	3 (0.6)
total	60 (11.1)

Table 16: The complementation patterns of the adjective *committed* in UK Books

Although the adjective *committed* is more likely to take a complement (11.1 total instances per million words) than not to (7.4 instances per million words) and the instances of nominal complements (8.9 per million words) outnumber the instances of no complement (7.4 per million words), the instances of no complement still outnumber the instances of sentential complements (altogether 2.3 instances per million words).

In UK Books there are two instances where *commitment* functions as an adjective because it precedes and modifies a noun, as in examples (67) and (68).

(67) the *commitment stage* is about how we carry out timely, future-oriented actions (UK Books)

(68) The final *commitment stage* divides into the timing associated with putting the plan into action, the anticipation of possible outcomes and the development of contingency plans for each potential outcome. UK Books

7.3 The nominal form

There is one instance (0.2 per million words) of *committed* taking the form of

a generalized de-adjectival noun in UK Books.

(69) historical and contemporary capitalist imperialism or international capitalism, which for *the committed* are virtually indistinguishable tags.

There are also two instances (0.4 per million words) of *committing* functioning as a

noun in UK Books, as in examples (70) and (71).

(70) 51 *Committing*: the commitment stage is about how we carry out timely, future-oriented actions. (UK Books)

(71) do they make a decision and commit themselves to a course of action before evaluating all the options, or do they follow the logical route of attending, intending and then *committing*? (UK Books)

Of all the instances of *commitment* functioning as a noun, 94 (17.4 instances

per million) took no complement. There were 59 instances (10.9 per million) of

commitments not taking a complement. *Table 17* shows the complementation patterns

of *commitment* and *commitments* in UK Books.

complementation pattern	commitment	commitments
to NP	83 (15.4)	-
against NP	2 (0.4)	-
of NP	-	1 (0.2)
to inf.	11 (2.0)	1 (0.2)
to -ing	5 (0.9)	-
Total	101 (18.3)	2 (0.4)

Table 17: The complementation patterns of *commitment* and *commitments* in the UK Books sub-section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus

While no complement is most common among instances of *commitment* and *commitments* in UK Books, the nominal complements exceed the sentential complements with *commitment* and equal the number of sentential complements for *commitments*. The *to inf.* complement is clearly favored. Example (72) shows the *to NP* pattern, (73) shows the *of NP* pattern, and example (74) shows the *against NP* pattern.

> (72) the Boers' commitment *to their cause* (UK Books)

> (73) enormous commitments *of time and energy* (UK Books)

> (74) our commitment against abuse and violence to children and young people (UK Books)

Example (75) shows the *to inf.* pattern, and example (76) shows the *to –ing* pattern.

> (75) the President made no specific commitments to buy insurance (UK Books)

> (76) She expressed a commitment *to understanding* her problems (UK Books)

8. The Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus: US Books

The material in the US Books section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus comes from books written in British English: its original form was text, not speech. UK Books yielded 517 tokens of *commit*, *commitment*, and their inflectional forms.

8.1 The verbal forms

In US Books the complements of the verb *commit* and its inflections fell into eight complementation patterns, which was two fewer than in UK Books. Four patterns were solely nominal, two were nominal and verbal, and one was solely verbal: *NP*, *NP to NP*, *to NP*, *NP into NP*, *NP to inf*, *NP to ing*, *to ing*, and Ø.

Interestingly enough, an excerpt of Shakespeare's *Othello* was included among these modern-day US books. It produced five tokens of *committed*, and it is featured in example (77) after being pieced together from the data.

> (77) **Desdemona:** Alas, what ignorant sin have I *committed*[1]?
> **Othello:** Was this fair paper, this most goodly book, Made to write `whore" upon? What *committed*[2]? *Committed*[3]? O thou public commoner! I should make very forges of my cheeks, That would to cinders burn up modesty, Did I but speak thy deeds. What *committed*[4]? Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks; The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets, Is hushed within the hollow mine of earth And will not hear 't. What *committed*[5]? (US Books)

The context makes it clear that all five instances of *committed* refer to Desdemona's 'ignorant sin.' Instances 1, 2, 4, and 5 in example (77) take an *NP* complementation pattern. Because instance 3 takes no complement, it is categorized as having the Ø complementation pattern.

Table 18 shows the complement patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its inflections in US Books and the frequency per million words.

complementation pattern	commit		commits		committed		committing	
NP	41	(7.3)	11	(2.0)	77	(13.9)	19	(3.4)
NP to NP	8	(1.4)	-		7	(1.3)	3	(0.5)
to NP	4	(0.7)	-		-		-	
NP into NP	-		-		2	(0.4)	-	
NP to -ing	1	(0.2)	-		5	(0.9)	-	
NP to inf	-		-		2	(0.4)	-	
to -ing	2	(0.4)	-		-		-	
Ø					1	(0.2)		
Total	56		11		94		22	

Table 18: The complementation patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its inflections in the US Books sub-section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus

The nominal complements are most frequent. The number of *NP to -ing* complements, 1.1 per million words, exceeds the number of *to inf* complements (0.4 *NP* per million words). The opposite of what happened in UK Books happened in US Books: the absence of the *to inf.* complement indicates that American English favors the *to –ing* pattern over that. Although *committing* selects neither *NP to –ing* nor *to –*

ing in this data set, it still does not select *to –ing*; *commit* selects neither *NP to inf.* nor *to inf*. Although weak, this supports Rohdenburg's *horror aequi* principle.

   Table 19 shows each sense, quoted from the *OED,* that was expressed by *commit* and its inflections in US Books as well as which complementation patterns applied to each sense.

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
1.a 'to commit someone to someone's care'	NP to NP NP into NP	1 (0.2)	-	2 (0.4)	-	3 (0.5)
1.c 'to commit oneself to the elements'	NP to NP	1 (0.2)	-	-	1 (0.2)	2 (0.4)
1.e 'to commit something to writing'	NP to NP	-	-	1 (0.2)	-	1 (0.2)
3.a 'to commit someone to prison'	NP to NP	-	-	1 (0.2)	-	1 (0.2)
6.a 'to commit a crime'	NP, Ø	35 (6.3)	8 (1.4)	71 (12.7)	18 (3.2)	132 (23.6)
6.b 'to commit an error'	NP	-	3 (0.5)	4 (0.7)	1 (0.2)	8 (1.4)
6.d 'to commit the amiable'	NP	-	-	1 (0.2)	-	1 (0.2)
10a 'to compromise'	NP	1 (0.2)	-	-	-	1 (0.2)
10.b 'to pledge (*to* a particular course)'	NP, to NP, to ing NP to NP	7 (1.3)	-	8 (1.4)	-	15 (2.7)
10.c 'to compromise oneself.'	NP	4 (0.7)	-	-	-	4 (0.7)
10.d 'to pledge oneself to a risky course'	NP to ing, NP to NP, NP to inf	7 (1.3)	-	6 (1.1)	2 (0.4)	15 (2.7)
Total		56	11	94	22	183

Table 19: The frequency of the *OED*'s senses of the verb *commit* among the verbal forms in the US Books section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration corpus, all quoted from the *OED* (1989).

   Sense 6.a ('to commit a crime') is the most common, with 23.6 instances per million words. The two senses that take sentential complements, 10.b ('to pledge (*to* a particular course)') and 10.d ('to pledge oneself to a risky course') come in second with 2.7 instances per million words each, indicating that the sentential complement

may be gaining on the nominal. Sense 6.b ('to commit an error') is in third place with 1.4 instances per million words.

8.2 The adjectival form

Among the twenty instances (3.6 per million words) where *committed* functions as an adjective and does not take a *to NP*, *to –ing*, or *to inf.* complement in UK Books, seven fell under sense b ('doctrine or cause') of *committed*, and thirteen fell under sense a ('pledged'). As is shown in *Table 20*, the nominal complement *to NP* is most common at 7.3 tokens per million words. There are 2.0 *to –ing* complements per million words and 0.5 *to inf.* complements per million words, indicating that the gerund is favored in American English, as it was in UK Books.

Complementation pattern	Number of tokens
to NP	41 (7.3)
to –ing	11 (2.0)
to inf.	3 (0.5)
total	55 (9.8)

Table 20: The complementation patterns of the adjective *committed* in US Books

The total number of adjectives with complements (9.8 per million words) and the number of instances of nominal complements (7.3 per million words) again outnumber the adjectives that do not take complements (3.6 per million words), which outnumber the total number of instances of sentential complements (2.5 per million words).

There is one sentential relative extraction in US Books, illustrated in example (78).

(78) Wallace's claim that American might would bring forth the Age of the Common Man was a fatuous absurdity, since *the very system* he was committed *to defend* would have to be destroyed. (US Books)

In this example, *the very system* was extracted out of its original position after *to defend* by zero pronoun, as discussed in section 3.7. Because it crosses clause boundaries and because the infinitive is preserved, example (78) is in following with Vosberg's extraction principle.

There are two instances where *commitment* modifies a noun and therefore functions as an adjective in US Books, as illustrated in examples (79) and (80).

(79) it's easy to understand why a cash *commitment equity* - is important (US Books)

(80) The *decision/commitment component* of love has two parts. (US Books)

8.3 The nominal form

Of all the instances of *commitment*, 101 (18.0 instances per million) took no complement. There were 39 instances (7.0 per million) of *commitments* not taking a complement. *Table 21* shows the complementation patterns of *commitment* and *commitments* in US Books.

complementation pattern	commitment	commitments
to NP	77 (13.8)	2 (0.4)
toward NP	1 (0.2)	-
of NP	3 (0.5)	-
of NP to inf.	1 (0.2)	-
to NP to inf.	1 (0.2)	-
to inf.	21 (3.8)	1 (0.2)
to ing	10 (1.8)	-
Total	114 (20.4)	3 (0.5)

Table 21: The complementation patterns of *commitment* and *commitments* in the US Books sub-section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus

The *to inf.* complement was favored over *to –ing* for both *commitment* and *commitments*, and the number of nominal complements exceeded the number of sentential complements. Complements that are both nominal and sentential, *of NP to inf.* (illustrated in example (81)) and *to NP to inf.* (illustrated in example (82)), as well as the *toward NP* pattern (illustrated in example (83)), appeared in this data set.

(81) the Marshall Plan called for the commitment *of billions of dollars to fight* (US Books)

(82) Make a commitment *to your friends to talk it out* (US Books)

(83) he notes an obsessive commitment *toward medical technology* (US Books)

9. The Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus: BBC

The material in the BBC section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus comes from news broadcasts in British English: its original form was speech, not text. BBC yielded 457 tokens of *commit*, *commitment*, and their inflectional forms.

9.1 The verbal forms

In BBC the complements of the verb *commit* and its inflections fell into five complementation patterns, with two being solely nominal and three being nominal and sentential: *NP*, *NP to NP*, *NP to inf*, *NP to ing*, and *NP against –ing* as in (84). In example (84), again, the preposition *against* replaces *to* in a structure that indicates movement.

(84) the Polish Solidarity movement have committed *themselves against supporting* any (BBC)

Table 22 shows the complement patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its inflections in BBC and the frequency per million words.

complementation pattern	commit		commits		committed		committing	
NP	13	(5.0)	3	(1.2)	61	(23.5)	15	(5.7)
NP to NP	18	(6.9)	1	(0.4)	16	(6.2)	13	(5.0)
NP to inf	3	(1.2)	-		2	(0.8)	4	(1.5)
NP to ing	4	(1.5)	-		6	(2.3)	2	(0.8)
NP against -ing	-		-		1	(0.4)	-	
Total	38		4		92		34	

Table 22: The complementation patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its inflections in the BBC sub-section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus

For the most part, the nominal complements exceed the sentential complements, except for the fact that there are 7.7 *to –ing* complements per million words to *committed* and 6.2 *NP to NP* complements per million words.

According to Allerton's idea of infinitivitis, British speakers increasingly use the infinitive in formal speech whereas in normal, unaffected speech they would use the gerund. Speaking on a news broadcast apparently is not formal enough to inhibit the speakers on BBC (they are not giving formal speeches), because with *committed NP to -ing* (2.3 instances per million words) outnumbers *NP to inf.* (0.8 instances per million words). Even with *commit*, there are 1.5 *NP to -ing* complements per million words and 1.2 *NP to inf.* complements per million words.

The exception is with *committing*, which has 1.5 *NP to inf.* complements per million words and only 0.8 *NP to –ing* complements per million words. This and the fact that *committing* did not select the *to –ing* complement and *commit* did not select the *to inf.* complement further support Rohdenburg's *horror aequi* principle. Even the small difference between the occurrence of *NP to inf.* and *NP to –ing* in complementation to *commit* compared with the others (*committed* and *committing*) lends support.

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
3.a 'to commit someone to prison'	NP to NP	1 (0.4)	-	-	-	1 (0.4)
6.a 'to commit a crime'	NP	6 (2.3)	3 (1.2)	58 (22.3)	12 (4.6)	79 (30.4)
6.b 'to commit an error'	NP	2 (0.8)	-	1 (0.4)	2 (0.8)	5 (1.9)
10a 'to compromise'	NP	-	-	1 (0.4)	-	1 (0.4)
10.b 'To pledge (*to* a particular course)'	NP, NP to NP NP to inf. NP to –ing	13 (5.0)	1 (0.4)	10 (3.8)	13 (5.0)	37 (14.2)

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
10.c 'To compromise oneself.'	NP	1 (0.4)	-	-	-	1 (0.4)
10.d 'to pledge oneself to a risky course'	NP to NP, NP to inf., NP to –ing, NP against –ing	15 (5.8)	-	22 (8.5)	7 (2.7)	44 (16.9)
Total		38	4	92	34	168

Table 23: The frequency of the *OED*'s senses of the verb *commit* among the verbal forms in the BBC section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration corpus, all quoted from the *OED* (1989).

The most interesting thing about *Table 23* was that so many of the senses that were retained in modern-day literature were lost in speech. The following senses, which were common to both UK Books and US Books, were lost in BBC: sense 1.a ('to commit someone to someone's care') sense 1.c ('to commit oneself to the elements') and sense 1.e ('to commit something to writing'). The following senses, which were retained in British literature, were lost in BBC: sense 2 ('to commit to the earth') sense 3.b ('to commit someone to prison (without *to prison*)') and sense 10.e ('To enter into commitment'). Sense 6.d ('to commit the amiable'), which was retained in American literature, was lost as well.

The most common sense for the verb *commit* in the BBC was 6.a ('to commit a crime'), at 30.4 instances per million words. Senses which allow for sentential complementation continue to prevail, with sense 10.d ('to pledge oneself to a risky course') coming in second place at 16.9 instances per million words and 10.b ('To pledge (*to* a particular course)') coming in third with 14.2 instances per million words. The sense that is so close to the 'crime' sense, sense 6.b 'to commit an error,' came in fourth with 1.9 instances per million words. The three remaining senses tied for fifth place with 0.4 instances per million words, respectively: sense 10.a ('to compromise,') sense 10.c ('To compromise oneself'), and sense 3.a ('to commit someone to prison')

9.2 The adjectival form

All five instances (1.9 per million words) where *committed* functions as an adjective

and does not take a *to NP*, *to –ing*, or *to inf.* complement in BBC took sense b

('doctrine or cause') of *committed.* As is shown in *Table 24*, the nominal complement

to NP is most common at 19.2 tokens per million words. There are 7.7 *to –ing*

complements per million words and 1.2 *to inf.* complements per million words. This

indicates that the gerund is favored in spoken British English, as it was in UK Books

and US Books. However, this does not lend support to Allerton's infinitivitis idea

either.

Complementation pattern	Number of tokens
to NP	50 (19.2)
to –ing	20 (7.7)
to inf.	3 (1.2)
total	73 (28.1)

Table 24: The complementation patterns of the adjective *committed* in BBC

There was an interesting example that could be mistaken for a sentential extraction in

this data set.

> (85) Japan is to channel much of the *two-thousand-million dollars* it has
> committed *to support* the Gulf multi-national forces through the Gulf
> Cooperation Council (GCC), the regional group consisting of Saudi Arabia,
> Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar. (BBC)

However, because *two-thousand-million dollars* is the object of *committed* and not

to support, it did not cross clause boundaries and is not a sentential extraction.

9.3 The nominal form

Of all the instances of *commitment*, 38 (14.6 instances per million) took no

complement. There were 31 instances (11.9 per million) of *commitments* not taking a

complement. *Table 25* shows the complementation patterns of *commitment* and

commitments in BBC. This data set shows zero complement again in first place,

followed by nominal complements, followed by sentential complements, of which the

to inf. was favored.

complementation pattern	commitment	commitments
to NP	96 (36.9)	5 (1.9)
for NP	2 (0.8)	-
that-clause	2 (0.8)	-
towards -ing	1 (0.4)	-
to inf.	22 (8.5)	4 (1.5)
to –ing	16 (6.2)	-
Total	139 (53.5)	9 (3.5)

Table 25: The complementation patterns of *commitment* and *commitments* in the BBC sub-section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus

However, there were 2 instances (0.8 per million words) of a that-clause

complementing *commitment*, which is a rarity. It is illustrated in examples (86) and

(87). The new and unusual *for NP* pattern is illustrated in example (88), and the

towards –ing pattern is illustrated in example (89).

> (86) A united Germany under a European roof was the message that came from German leaders in the run-up to unification, a commitment *that the new state would not stray beyond the political and security framework defined by its alliances* (BBC)

> (87) Requests were made by developing countries for better terms in the textile trade agreement and in particular for a commitment *that no new trade restrictions would be imposed during the next seventeen months.* (BBC)

> (88) Mr Pik Botha, says that he regards the meaning of the European Community's declaration on Southern Africa as an acknowedgement of President De Klerk's commitment *for the process of reform.* (BBC)

> (89) The Government undertook to review security legislation as part of its commitment *towards lifting* the state of emergency. (BBC)

10. The Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus: NPR

The material in the NPR section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus comes from news broadcasts in American English: its original form was speech, not text. NPR yielded 470 tokens of *commit*, *commitment*, and their inflectional forms.

One piece of data had to be thrown out, because I could not guess what it meant nor whether *YU* was an NP complement or an idiosyncrasy of speech.

> (98) that they've been isolated by the outside world. <p> Adams: Thanks, Sylvia. NPR's Sylvia Poggioli talking with us from Belgrade in Serbia. BELGRADE <p> 9212210213 NO-FLY ENFORCEMENT WILL SHOW US COMMITTED YU, MILITARY AIRCRAFT, UNITED NATIONS Robert Siegel, host: <p> International pressure on Serbia to stop its war in Bosnia heated up this weekend. President Bush and British Prime Minister John (NPR)

10.1 The verbal forms

In NPR the complements of the verb *commit* and its inflections fell into eleven complementation patterns, with six being solely nominal, four being nominal and verbal, and one being zero complement: *NP*, *NP to NP*, *NP into NP, NP there* as in (90), *NP throughout NP* as in (91), *to NP* as in (92), *NP to inf.*, *NP toward –ing* as in (93), *to inf.*, and *to –ing,* and *Ø*.

> (90) the US says that it wouldn't--doesn't see itself committing *ground troops there* (NPR)

> (91) At the two-day meeting in Brussels, NATO defense ministers broke new ground and endorsed plans to commit *forces throughout Europe*. (NPR)

> (92) the Iraqi ambassador refused to commit *to the resolutions* (NPR)

> (93) Japan has committed *billions toward defraying* the costs of the war. (NPR)

> *Table 26* shows the complement patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its

inflections in NPR and the frequency per million words.

complementation pattern	commit		commits		committed		committing	
NP	50	(16.1)	4	(1.3)	81	(26.1)	23	(7.4)
NP to NP	17	(5.5)	-		17	(5.5)	7	(2.3)
NP into NP	2	(0.6)	-		-		1	(0.3)
NP there	-		-		-		1	(0.3)
NP throughout NP	1	(0.3)	-		-		-	
to NP	1	(0.3)	-		1	(0.3)	-	
NP to inf.	2	(0.6)	1	(0.3)	3	(1.0)	2	(0.6)
NP toward –ing	-		-		1	(0.3)	-	
to inf.	-		-		-		1	(0.3)
to -ing	2	(0.6)	-		-		-	
Ø	1	(0.3)	-		1	(0.3)	-	
Total	76		5		103		35	

Table 26: The complementation patterns of the verbal forms of *commit* and its inflections in the NPR sub-section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus

NPR offers the greatest variety of complement patterns. The nominal complements, especially *NP,* lead again. Each inflection selects the *NP to inf.* pattern, at a total of 2.5 instances per million words. However, *commit* selects *to –ing* (0.6 instances per million words) and never *to inf. Committing* selects *NP to inf.* (0.6 instances per million words) and *to inf.* (0.3 instances per million words) and never any complement patterns including the gerund. This is further support for the *horror aequi* principle.

Table 27 shows each sense, quoted from the *OED,* that was expressed by *commit* and its inflections in NPR as well as which complementation patterns applied to each sense.

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
1.e 'to commit something to writing'	NP to NP	-	-	3 (1.0)	1 (0.3)	4 (1.3)
3.a 'to commit someone to prison'	NP to NP	-	-	3 (1.0)	-	3 (1.0)
6.a 'to commit a crime'	NP	39 (12.6)	4 (1.3)	75 (24.2)	19 (6.1)	137 (44.2)
6.b 'to commit an error'	NP	2 (0.6)	-	1 (0.3)	-	3 (1.0)

OED sense	pattern	commit	*s	*ed	*ing	total
10.b 'To pledge (*to* a particular course)'	NP to inf., NP there, NP into NP, NP, Ø, NP to NP, to –ing, NP throughout NP, to NP	30 (9.7)	1 (0.3)	15 (4.8)	12 (3.9)	58 (18.7)
10.c 'To compromise oneself.'	NP	2 (0.6)	-	-	-	2 (0.6)
10.d 'to pledge oneself to a risky course'	NP to inf., NP to NP,	3 (1.0)	-	7 (2.3)	2 (0.6)	12 (3.9)
Unknown	NP	-	-	-	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)
Total		76	5	104	35	220

Table 27: The frequency of the *OED*'s senses of the verb *commit* among the verbal forms in the NPR section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration corpus, all quoted from the *OED* (1989).

Several senses were lost from present-day literature in American broadcasted speech as well: sense 1.a ('to commit someone to someone's care'), sense 1.c ('to commit oneself to the elements'), sense 2. ('to commit to the earth'), sense 3.b ('to commit someone to prison (without *to prison*)'), sense 6.d ('to commit the amiable') and sense 10.e ('To enter into commitment'). The only exception was sense 1.e ('to commit something to writing'), which was retained. Sense 6.a ('to commit a crime') again was most common, with 44.2 instances per million words. Sense 10.b ('To pledge (*to* a particular course)'), with 18.7 instances per million words, was far ahead of its usual rival, sense 10.d ('to pledge oneself to a risky course') which had 3.9 instances per million words.

It was difficult for me to distinguish whether example (94) took sense 10.b ('To pledge (*to* a particular course)') or sense 10.a ('to compromise'). Additional context would have helped. Had there been a *to NP* complement or similar adverbial complement following *the US government*, it would have been easier to determine that it took sense 10.b.

(94) of State Baker today in Jerusalem. <p> Baker is taking a cautious approach to the proposal. He says details are still to be worked out, and he says he wants to talk to Arab leaders before committing *the US government*. Baker goes on to meet with Egyptian, Saudi, Syrian and Jordanian officials this week. Jean Cochran, newscaster: <p> Iraq today dismissed out-of-hand a proposal to establish (NPR)

10.2 The adjectival form

Among the 14 instances (4.5 per million words) where *committed* functions as an adjective and does not take a *to NP*, *to –ing*, or *to inf.* complement in NPR, 4 fell under sense b ('doctrine or cause') of *committed*, and 10 fell under sense a ('pledged'). *Table 28* shows that the nominal complement *to NP* is most common at 11.9 tokens per million words. The *to –ing* complements, at 7.1 instances per million words is favored over the *to inf.* (at 1.0 instances per million words) in spoken American English.

Complementation pattern	Number of tokens
to NP	37 (11.9)
to –ing	22 (7.1)
to inf.	3 (1.0)
total	62 (20.0)

Table 28: The complementation patterns of the adjective *committed* in NPR

There was one instance of *commitment* functioning as a premodifying adjective in NPR, as illustrated in example (95).

(95) Gellerman: Obviously a terminal relationship--a computer with *a commitment problem.* (NPR)

10.3 The nominal form

The adjective *committed* functioned as a generalized de-verbal noun in one instance (0.3 per million words) in NPR. In is illustrated in example (96).

(96) 12 trainloads and 200 busloads of supporters organized by Mr. Graham and thousands of churches across the old empire—young and old, Baptists and Orthodox believers, *the committed* and the curious (NPR)

Of all the instances of *commitment* functioning as a noun, 34 (11.0 instances per million) took no complement. There were 25 instances (10.9 per million) of *commitments* not taking a complement. *Table 29* shows the complementation patterns of *commitment* and *commitments* in NPR.

complementation pattern	commitment	commitments
to NP	59 (19.0)	2 (0.6)
of NP	4 (1.3)	1 (0.3)
for NP	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)
that-clause	3 (1.0)	-
to inf.	31 (10.0)	2 (0.6)
to –ing	6 (1.9)	-
for -ing	2 (0.6)	-
Total	106 (34.2)	6 (1.9)

Table 29: The complementation patterns of *commitment* and *commitments* in the NPR sub-section of the Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus

The zero complement pattern appears to be losing ground in spoken American English: the *to NP* pattern as a complement to *commitment* at 19.0 instances per million words was more frequent than zero complement (11.0 instances per million words). However, zero complement was still more common than nominal complements to *commitments*. There were still fewer sentential complements than nominal complements, and the *to inf.* was still favored. Rarer complementation patterns were included in this data set: *of NP*, illustrated by example (96); the that-clause, illustrated by examples (97), (98), and (99); *for NP*, illustrated by example (100); and *for –ing*, illustrated by example (101).

> (96) Rather, it just seems to be that he had given a commitment *of five to six months* to the secretary-general and he feels that he's taken the talks as far as he can go now and he has to return to other duties (NPR)

> (97) no clear-cut commitment *that the occupation itself, the regime of the occupation, will end* (NPR)

> (98) the United Nations should enforce its resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict with the same commitment *that it carried out demands that Iraq get out of Kuwait* (NPR)

(99) the Kuwait government's commitment *that American firms would win the lion's share of reconstruction work* (NPR)

(100) Latest loan package comes two weeks after Northwest received a commitment *for $900 million* in employee concessions over three years. (NPR)

(101) we did see an ebbing of commitment--federal commitment, idea-wise and money-wise--*for providing* safe, decent housing for people (NPR)

11. Conclusion

There were only nominal complements of the verb *commit* and its inflections, including the *NP to NP* pattern in the first part of the extended version of the Leuven corpus, from 1710 to 1780. In the second part, from 1780 to 1850, there were two instances of the *NP to inf.* pattern (0.4 occurrences per million words), the first of which appeared in 1807. There was one instance (0.2 occurrences per million words) of the *NP to inf.* pattern in the third part, from 1850-1920. In the present-day samples there were the patterns *NP to inf.*, *NP to –ing, to inf.*, and *to –ing*.

One of the goals of this thesis was to find out whether the adjective *committed* took sentential complements before 1920. There were no sentential complements of *committed* as an adjective in any part of the extended Leuven corpus, which, given the size of the extended Leuven corpus, indicates that it generally did not take sentential complements before 1920. This leaves the example of the *to inf.* complement dating back to 1936 in Rudanko (1999, 13), discussed in section 3.5, as being the earliest sentential complement of the adjective *committed*.

As for Rohdenburg's *horror aequi* principle, the verb *committing* never took the *to –ing* complement in any of the four subsections of the Collins Cobuild corpus. However, it did take *NP to ing* as a complement twice (0.8 occurrences per million

words) in BBC. It probably preferred that over the *to –ing* complement because there was a *to NP* separating the two gerunds. The verb *commit* never took *to inf.* as a complement, but it took *NP to inf.* as its complement 6 times total (spanning UK Books, BBC, and NPR, at 2.0 occurrences per million words). Even then, *commit* was never in its infinitive form, *to commit*; it too must have favored the *NP to inf.* pattern over the *to inf.* pattern because there was a *to NP* separating the two verbs. I judge this as sufficient evidence that the verb in question did in fact function according to Rohdenburg's *horror aequi* principle.

In the only example of sentential extraction, example (78) in US Books, extraction does protect the infinitive. Sentential extraction was nonexistent among *to –ing* complements.

According to Allerton's (1988, 22) idea of infinitivitis, the infinitive prevails in noun complementation in formal and American English. This is true in the case of *commitment* and *commitments*: the infinitival complements outnumber the gerundial complements in all four parts of the Collins Cobuild corpus. After combining the figures for *commitment* and *commitments*, the total frequency for infinitival complements is 27.0 per million words, and the total frequency for gerundial complements is 12.0 per million words.

However, I did not find the other principles of infinitivitis to be true. According to Allerton (1988, 11), a growing number of speakers of British English use the infinitive excessively in writing and in formal speaking. In UK Books there were 2 instances of the *to inf* complement (0.4 occurrences per million words) as a complement to the verb, which can hardly be considered excessive. In UK Books the frequency of the *NP to -ing* complement, at 1.2 instances per million words, was even slightly greater than the frequency of the *NP to inf.* complement, at 1.0 instance per

million words. In UK Books for the adjective *committed* there were 1.7 *–to ing* complements per million words and 0.6 *to inf.* complements per million words. As was argued in section 9.1, the speech on BBC broadcasts must not have been formal enough, because the *to –ing* complement occurred more frequently than the *to inf.* complement, and the *NP to –ing* complement occurred more frequently than the *NP to inf.* complement. Even as complements to the adjective in BBC, there were 7.7 instances of the *to –ing* pattern per million words as opposed to 1.2 instances of the *to inf.* pattern per million words.

Regarding the frequency of the senses of the verb *commit* since 1710, sense 6.a ('to commit a crime') was the most common sense in all seven sections of the corpora used for this thesis: it has been the most common sense since 1710. Many of the senses that were present in British literature between 1710 and 1920 were gone in present-day speech. Sense 1.a ('to commit someone to someone's care'), which was the second most frequent between 1710 and 1780 at 11.3 instances per million words, had 10.9 instances per million words between 1780 and 1850, 4.8 instances per million words between 1850 and 1920, 0.9 instances per million words in UK Books, and 0.5 instances per million words in US Books. After such a great increase, it was nonexistent in BBC and NPR, indicating that it may be in the process of becoming obsolete.

The frequencies of senses 10.b and 10.d have increased throughout the centuries, in large part because the sentential complements fall under that sense. Sense 10.b ('To pledge (*to* a particular course)') had 0.3 occurrences per million words between 1710 and 1850, 1.1 occurrences per million words between 1850 and 1920, 2.7 occurrences per million words in US Books, 6.7 occurrences per million words in UK Books, 14.2 occurrences per million words in BBC, and 18.7

occurrences per million words in NPR. Sense 10.d ('to pledge oneself to a risky course') had 0.3 occurrences per million words between 1710 and 1850, 2.0 occurrences per million words between 1850 and 1920, 2.7 occurrences per million words in US Books, 3.9 occurrences per million words in UK Books and NPR, and 16.9 occurrences per million words in BBC.

As to which sentential complement, the *to inf.* or the *to –ing,* is more common in British English, and which is more common in American English, unfortunately the trend has been observable in only the twentieth century after 1935. The infinitive has already been established as being more common for *commitment* and *commitments.* For this discussion, BBC and UK Books are combined to represent British English, and NPR and US Books are combined to represent American English.

In terms of the complementation of the adjective *committed*, the *to –ing* pattern was more common in both British (at 9.4 instances per million words) and American (at 9.1 instances per million words). There were 1.8 *to inf.* complements per million words in British English and 1.5 *to –ing* complements per million words in American English.

In terms of the complementation of the verb *commit* and its inflections, the *to inf.* (at 0.4 instances per million words) pattern is more common in British English because there are no instances of *to –ing*. In American English the *to ing* pattern (at 1.0 instances per million words) is more common than the *to inf.* pattern (at 0.3 instances per million words). Regarding complementation patterns that are both nominal and sentential, such as *NP to -ing*, the gerundial complement, at 6.2 occurrences per million words is more common than the infinitival complement (4.5 occurrences per million words) in British English. In American English the infinitival

complement (2.5 instances per million words) is more common than the gerundial

complement (1.4 instances per million words).

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Corpora
The Extended Corpus of Late Modern English Texts
The Collins Cobuild Demonstration Corpus