

The Complementation of *Consent* over the Past Three Centuries

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English Philology
Pro Gradu Thesis
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Spring 2008

Tampereen Yliopisto
 Kieli- ja käännöstieteiden laitos
 Englantilainen filologia

Hällstén, Camilla: *The Complementation of Consent over the Past Three Centuries*

Pro Gradu -tutkielma,
 Toukokuu 2008

Tässä korpuspohjaisessa pro gradu -tutkielmassa tarkastellaan englanninkielen verbin *consent* ja jossain määrin myös samasta verbistä johdetun substantiivin *consent* komplementaatiota kolmen viime vuosisadan ja nykyenglannin osalta.

Komplementaatiotutkimus on kiinnostavaa varsinkin vieraan kielen oppijan näkökulmasta, koska perinteisellä kieliopilla ei ole juurikaan tarjota sääntöjä ohjaamaan oikean komplementin valintaa kullekin verbille (tai substantiiville), esim. sanotaanko *I consent to do it / *I consent doing it / I consent to doing it*. Asiaa mutkistaa vielä se, että verbeillä (ja substantiiveilla) on usein monta vaihtoehtoista komplementtia, jotka eivät kuitenkaan täysin merkityksiltään vastaa toisiaan.

Lisäksi englannin kielessä on ollut käynnissä suuri mullistus 1600-luvulta lähtien, ja se koskee koko komplementaatiojärjestelmää. Rohdenburg (2006) kutsuu tätä muutosta nimellä *The Great Complement Shift*. Muutos etenee eri vauhtia eri verbien kohdalla, mutta yleisesti voidaan olettaa, että gerundikomplementit (-ing muodot) ovat syrjäyttämässä *to*-infinitiivikomplementit. Tässä tutkielmassa pyrin selvittämään, onko muutos vaikuttanut *consent*-verbiin (ja -substantiiviin) 1700-luvulta nykypäivään ja jos on, niin miten.

Tutkielman tavoitteena on selvittää verbin (ja substantiivin) *consent* syntaktisia ja semanttisia ominaisuuksia. Selvitän sanan *consent* eri merkityksiä ja komplementaatiota *Oxford English Dictionary* -sanakirjan ja kielioppikirjojen avulla. Valenssiteoria ja sijakielioppi muodostavat tutkimuksen teoreettisen viitekehyksen.

Keskityn tarkastelemaan kirjoitettua brittiläistä englantia kahden korpuksen avulla. Historiallinen tutkimusmateriaali ajanjaksolta 1710–1920 on kerätty CLMETEV-korpuksesta (*The Extended Version of The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts*) ja nykypäivää edustava tutkimusmateriaali on kerätty BNC-korpuksesta (*The British National Corpus*).

Tutkimus osoittaa, että verbistä *consent* tulee englannin kielessä yhä harvinaisempi tultaessa nykyaikaan. Verbin *consent* yleisin komplementti oli 1700-luvulla *to*-infinitiivi (*'I consent to go'*), mutta nykykielessä *to*-infinitiivi on vasta toisella sijalla. Yleisimmäksi komplementiksi on noussut *to* + substantiivilauseke (*'I consented to it'*). Verbiä *consent* käytetään yleisesti myös täysin ilman komplementtia (*'I consented'*). Suurin mullistus komplementaatioissa on kuitenkin erilaisten gerundien yleistyminen (*'I consented to my going'*, *'I consented to going'*, *'I consented to him going'*), mikä todistaa, että myös verbi *consent* on osa *The Great Complement Shift* -mullistusta.

Asiasanat: komplementaatio, korpuslingvistiikka, valenssiteoria

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1 Introduction

The aim of this pro gradu thesis is to examine the complementation patterns mainly of the verb *consent* but also to some extent of the corresponding noun. Both syntactic and semantic characteristics of *consent* will be described with valency theory as a base. The study is diachronic with a starting point at 1710 and continuing all the way into present-day English. The focus is on written British English with data drawn from two different corpora; the extended version of The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts, henceforth referred to as the CLMETEV corpus, and the British National Corpus, henceforth referred to as the BNC.

Language change will be tracked from the point of view of one word. I expect that the meaning and the uses of the word *consent* may have changed over time, and also some change in its complementation patterns may be expected. Some patterns will disappear, others emerge, or some patterns will gain prominence at the expense of others. One goal is to map these changes for the part of the verb *consent* over the course of the past few centuries.

It has also been claimed by grammarians that the Late Modern English period is a neglected time period in the study of language (De Smet 2005, 69; Denison 1998). This thesis draws data from that period through the CLMETEV corpus and will for its part contribute to that area of study.

The complement patterns of particular interest are the *to* –infinitive pattern and the *to* –ing pattern (although other patterns will be discussed as well). The reason for this interest is the Great Complement Shift (Rohdenburg 2006, 144; Vosberg 2003, 197) which is an ongoing phenomenon that started in the late seventeenth century and it involves a change in the entire system of complementation in the English language. As

for the part of *consent*, my interest is to find out where in that development of complementation it is currently situated and what kinds of changes have been taken place for its part. Generally, it can be expected that there has been a spread of the –ing pattern at the expense of the infinitive and this thesis will examine if this is true for *consent*.

I am also interested in complementation from the point of view of a language learner. I have noticed that errors made in verbal complementation are persistent among language learners and that there is not much help to offer in terms of rules. Intuition seems to be the only rule that is operated on. For EFL learners who lack intuition of a foreign language complementation may seem like an endless mire. Because, as will be argued in section 3.2 on valency theory, verbal complementation is meaning driven, it can actually help predict the type of complementation that can be selected for verbs. As an EFL teacher I hope my thesis brings some clarity into complementation at least for the part of *consent*.

The first half of this thesis examines the theoretical background for the research. The second chapter will discuss the definition of a corpus and why it is useful in the study of language in general as well as specifically for this study. The chapter will also present the two corpora used in this study. The third chapter will establish the theoretical frame-work for this study with the introduction of valency theory and case grammar. The fourth chapter will introduce the verb and noun *consent*. Their meanings will be explored with the help of the Oxford English Dictionary and other dictionaries and the complementation patterns that are known to occur with *consent* will be presented. In chapter five different factors that have an effect on the complementation patterns of verbs will be presented from the point of view of language change. The

concept of control will be introduced in connection with a particular complementation pattern of *consent*.

The senses and complementation patterns that are found in the historical CLMETEV corpus data will be presented in the sixth, seventh and eighth chapters with the help of authentic examples and frequency calculations. The ninth chapter presents the data for present-day English in the BNC corpus. All the research data and my findings will be summarized in chapter ten and final conclusions are drawn in chapter eleven.

2 On Corpora

Tognini-Bonelli (2001, 55) has formulated a definition of a corpus that to me sounds accurate. She describes it as

a computerised collection of authentic texts, amenable to automatic or semi-automatic processing or analysis. The texts are selected according to explicit criteria in order to capture the regularities of a language, a language variety or a sub-language.

In addition to her definition I might add that a corpus can be comprised not only of texts, but of speech also. A corpus can provide a vast amount of authentic examples of language in use and with the help of a concordance program it is quite easily searchable for any words or patterns one is interested in.

2.1 Why corpora are useful in language learning

As an EFL teacher I personally find corpora to be useful tools in my everyday work.

These days many language classrooms are equipped with state of the art computers with internet access. It brings new opportunities for introducing the concept of a corpus in a

hands-on way and show students how they themselves can benefit from using one in their language learning. For example, I have found that it is easy to explain to students that a certain expression may be grammatically correct English but that it is not really used in authentic English by showing the students a sample of sentences from a corpus demonstrating more natural expressions.

Another benefit is that the students can be given a chance to be researchers themselves. The teacher can beforehand choose a set of sentences from a corpus and ask the students (with the help of specific questions on what to look for) to find regularities themselves. Teaching grammar I have found that discoveries made by the student him or herself tend to be more rewarding and will stay in memory. Also matters of collocation (or nuances and connotations) can be discovered quite effectively. I have recommended using corpora alongside a dictionary to friends who are in fields of work (law and finance) that require a high level of written English in their professions. It is a relatively easy and quick way even for non-linguists to check for examples of how a certain word is used.

2.2 From traditional linguistics to corpus linguistics

Corpus linguistics is sometimes viewed as standing in contrast to traditional arm-chair linguistics. Arm-chair linguistics has been explained as a method where a researcher explores the language through introspection or by relying on his own and educated informants' intuitions about language. I will introduce the Chomskyan terms of competence versus performance (Chomsky 1957) to help explain the differences between the two approaches. Explained in the words of the Dutch grammarian Scha (Scha 1990, page number not applicable for the webpage):

The competence consists in the knowledge of language which the language user in principle has; the performance is the result of the psychological process that employs this knowledge (in producing or in interpreting language utterances).

The traditional view that reigned in the latter half of the 20th century was that the proper object of linguistics was “competence and not performance, and its highest aim the modelling of linguistic competence” (Pateman 1987, 127). In other words, grammarians were not interested in analyzing actual speech acts as those may include errors. By contrast, the view of corpus linguistics is that it is primarily concerned with ‘performance’ – the actual instances of language use – and only through that induces the underlying rules of language - ‘competence’. The usefulness of corpora lies also in that they can be used to test the theories of traditional linguistics to check the validity of the theories and if necessary modify or refine them.

2.3 Why corpora are good tools for research

Biber et al (1998, 3-4) regard corpus analysis as a reliable and exhaustive method because it analyzes the actual patterns in natural texts that come from large collections collected according to certain principles. A further advantage is that a computer facilitates the analysing process that is based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

What is highly important for the study at hand is that corpus linguistics is also suitable for researching change in language. Change can be seen as something that is reflected in the variation between occurring patterns from one time period to another. Leech (2003, 233) states that these changes can be studied by counting the frequencies of these patterns. However change does not necessary mean that a pattern (or other phenomenon) completely disappears or that a completely new pattern emerges. The

changes can be more subtle changes in frequencies of something gaining or losing prominence.

Mair (2006) discusses the problems of identifying change, he argues that change can be difficult to detect as there is a lag between change entering the spoken language and change affecting the written language. There is also a delay of sometimes generations before a pattern may be transferred from the language of individual speakers to the general language.

Furthermore, referring to performance and competence, Mair points out that on the basis of historical performance data one may want to “make inferences about the changes that must have occurred in the underlying rule systems; that is, native speakers’ linguistic competence” (2006, 12). However the difficulty lies in that sometimes changes in competence are difficult to detect as the surface structure can look the same even if there actually has been a change in the underlying system (2006, 12-3). As Johansson points out, the data requires “the intelligent analytical mind of the linguist who draws on knowledge of previous studies, on his or her own intuition as well as on observation of texts” (Johansson 1995, 20) so actually the researcher incorporates traditional linguistics into corpus linguistic methodology.

Before presenting the two corpora used in this study, it is worth considering what it is that makes a good corpus – after all we need to know that the corpus is reliable in order to be able trust the results of the research. First, there is the question of size. A large and a small corpus both can be useful – but for studying different phenomena. Generally a small corpus is sufficient for studying phenomena that are frequent in language while larger ones are needed for studying rarer phenomena or patterns. Because this thesis focuses on the verb *consent*, which is a relatively

infrequent word, as well as on the patterns occurring with the word quite large corpora are needed in order to yield sufficient amounts of data.

It is important that the texts of which the corpus is compiled are authentic, that they are “from genuine communications of people going about their normal business (Tognini-Bonelli 2001, 54)”. For a researcher to be able to draw conclusions based on corpora the texts also need to be representative of the language that is being studied – it needs to be large enough for the phenomenon that is studied to yield enough data. It also needs to provide enough texts of similar lengths from a range of different authors so no one individual’s language will be overrepresented. Also the genres of the texts must vary; the ages and genders of the writers must vary if we want the corpus to reflect the language of a real language community.

2.4 The corpora used in this study

In this study the focus is on British English, so the corpora chosen consist only of British texts. They are synchronic and diachronic corpora with texts representing the language of different time periods, the historical CLMETEV corpus is of diachronic nature and the modern BNC is synchronic.

2.4.1 The CLMETEV corpus

The CLMETEV corpus is relatively small compared to the BNC. It is comprised of 15 million words collected from texts ranging from 1710 to 1920 (De Smet 2005).

However, the CLMETEV corpus is certainly large enough for my research purposes, as de Smet points out the size of the corpus is suitable for the research of “relatively

infrequent syntactic patterns, or borderline phenomena between grammar and the lexicon” (2005, 78). The following sections will discuss the make-up of the corpus.

The CLMETEV corpus consists of texts that have been compiled from *Project Gutenberg* and the *Oxford Text Archive* as well as the *Victorian Women Writers project*. It is divided into three parts that make up a seventy-year time period each. The first part includes texts written between 1710 and 1780, the second part between 1780 and 1850 and the third between 1850 and 1920. De Smet (2005, 70-72) lists four principles according to which the compilation has been executed:

1. To increase the homogeneity **within** each subpart (and decrease the homogeneity **between** subparts) all authors are born within corresponding time-spans (see figure). This way no author can be represented in two subparts and historical trends will thus appear more clearly. But, as a result some authors that fall between the categories are not represented at all.

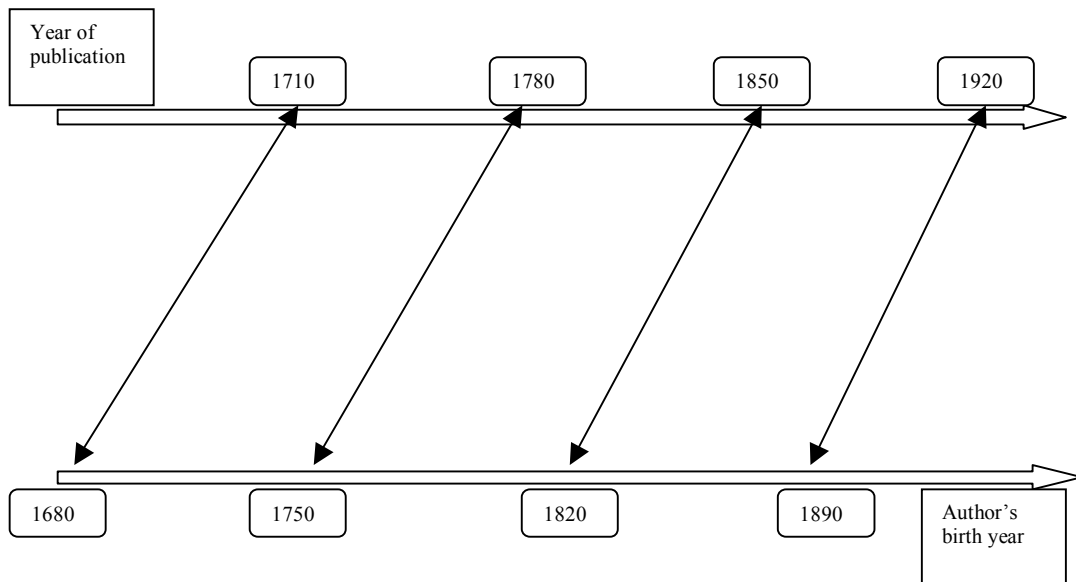


Figure. Corpus sub-periods (de Smet 2005, 71).

2. All authors are native speakers of British English, which is essential for this thesis as the target is to research that specific variety.

3. No author is overrepresented in the material as the maximum amount of text from each author has been limited to 200 000 words.
4. There has been an attempt to insure variation of the text genres and the authors social background. As the writers represented in the Gutenberg Project and the Oxford text archive mostly are upper class educated men there has been a conscious effort in the compilation of the corpus to favour women and authors of a lower social status, non-literary texts and lower registers. Indeed, for the CLMETEV corpus the *Victorian Women Writers project* has been added as a source of texts. In spite of this, some bias still remains.

De Smet (2005, 79) mentions one drawback about the CLMETEV corpus – it lacks exact bibliographical data of the original texts i.e. there is no specification as to the exact version of the text that is the basis of the electronic edition, who edited it and what alterations have been made to the original text. Fortunately for this study, de Smet finds it unlikely that other things than spelling and punctuation have been altered. For this reason it is quite safe to assume that structures, for examples the complementation of words remain the same.

A few words about the authors and the texts represented in the corpus. It is important to detect the type of genres and authors represented in the different parts of the corpus in order to be able to make assumptions on whether the conclusions that are made in the latter part of this thesis could be representative of the time-specific language communities in general. This seems to be possible, as De Smet points out:

“...the corpus is biased both sociolinguistically and in terms of genre and register, which makes it unfit for any fine-grained sociolinguistic analysis. However, as long as a sociolinguistic analysis is not the purpose of one’s research, this may not be a fundamental problem... [because] the sociolinguistic make-up of the corpus remains more or less consistent over the different sub-periods...” (De Smet 2005, 78-9)

2.4.2 The BNC

Turning to the make-up of the British National Corpus (the BNC) one immediately notices that it is strikingly larger than the CLMETEV corpus. According to the BNC website the BNC consists of roughly 100 million words. It is a collection of British English that is both written (90%) and spoken (10%). The material has been collected between the 1960s and 1990s and it can be regarded as a synchronic corpus (according to the BNC's homepage).

There are both differences and similarities in the make-up of the CLMETEV and the BNC. The enormous BNC corpus is divided into subparts according to genre. Among those subparts there are two that are compiled of similar genres as the historical CLMETEV: *Imaginative* that includes fictional texts for entertainment purposes (novels and such), *Informative: Belief and thought* which includes texts on religion, ethics and philosophy and also biographies. The *Informative* texts are more factual and essayistic tone than the *Imaginative* texts. The CLMETEV, discussed above in section 2.4.1, includes fictional novels, philosophical essays, letters, works on art, economics, history and politics. The fields of topics are, as one can see, fairly similar but not identical. What makes the whole BNC different from the CLMETEV is that the BNC includes texts from news papers and also spoken language (transcribed, of course) and with a range of topics that is much wider than the CLMETEV's.

In this study, however, I am forced to compare the findings of the two partly different corpora because the verb *consent* is so infrequent in present-day English that the two most similar sub parts mentioned above do not yield enough data. In my opinion, there are enough similarities that I dare to compare the huge BNC corpus and the CLMETEV for the purposes of study of language change, which is the objective of this thesis.

By contrast to the verb, the **noun** *consent* is frequent in present-day English and for its part it is possible to choose a sub part of the BNC that most resembles the CLMETEV. The sub part that I decided to use for the noun's part in this study is the *Imaginative* genre (16.5 million words). The reason for excluding *Informative: Belief and thought* from this study is that when searched for *consent* it mostly yielded sentences of the type that explained the meaning of the word *consent* and thus *consent* did not occur in environments where it could have taken (or not taken) complements naturally.

The BNC (100.5 million words) is about 7 times larger than the CLMETEV corpus (15 million words) and for this reason relative frequencies are used in this study to make it possible to compare the occurring of the patterns. According to Biber et al (1998, 263) normalized frequency can be described as

a way to adjust raw frequency counts from texts of different lengths so that they can be compared accurately... Specifically, 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.

Because *consent* is a relatively infrequent word, in order to make the numbers manageable, the normalized frequencies are calculated per 10 million words.

3 Complementation

This chapter introduces the terms complement and complementation and sheds some light on their definition. It is very important to find a clear and consistent definition for those two terms as it sometimes can be quite difficult for the researcher to decide whether an item is a complement or not. The distinction between complement and adjunct has sometimes been viewed as binary but this thesis will adopt the view

presented by Somers (1984, 507) that their difference is rather as opposite sides of a continuum.

3.1 Complement or adjunct?

The dependents of clause can be divided into two groups – complements and adjuncts.

Somers explains the difference between the two:

“*Complements* are those elements which may be said to be expected to accompany a given verb, or to complete its meaning, while *adjuncts* are essentially optional elements which can be said to complete the meaning of the central predication as a whole” (Somers 1984, 508 the author’s italics).

In this view the verb is seen as the central element in a syntactic structure and the other elements are defined in relation to it. Somers points out: “Elements are assigned complement or adjunct status *with respect to some verb*... [the status is] not an *inherent* feature of some elements” (Somers 1984, 508 author’s own emphasis). For the needs of this thesis arises the practical question of how to differentiate between the two? Bowen (2003) and Somers (1984) present some tests, although they are not without their problems, and they will be presented in the following.

The most commonly used tests according to Somers (1984, 509) are the *elimination test* and the *extraction method*. In the *elimination test* (by Helbig and Schenkel) an element in an active declarative sentence is eliminated to test if the sentence is still grammatical, if it is then the element is not obligatory, if it is not then the element must be syntactically obligatory.

1. He put the book under the table.
2. *He put the book.
3. *He put under the table.
4. *He put.

(from Somers 1984, 509)

According to Brinker (1972, 181 as reported by Somers 1984, 510) the test reveals whether an element is obligatory or optional, not if the element in question is a complement or an adjunct.

The extraction method reveals how closely the elements are associated with the verb and it is therefore suitable for making the distinction between complement and adjunct. Consider:

5. Roses bloom ~~in our garden~~.
6. The farmer ploughs his field ~~in the early morning~~.

We are not allowed to extract *his field* because the basic meaning of the verb would change: “The farmer *ploughs* his field” means to turn over earth with a plough, but the other verb *plough* (in “The farmer *ploughs*”) means to move in a way resembling that of a plough cutting into or going through the soil. Thus *his field* is a complement of *plough*.

According to the principles of the *backformation test* complements are attached to predicates while adjuncts are attached to sentences (Somers 1987, 14-15). In the *backformation test* if an element can be formulated as an embedded clause without changing the basic meaning and without the resulting sentence being ungrammatical then it is an adjunct:

7. He visited her in Berlin. → He visited her when she/he was staying in Berlin.
8. He put the book on the table. → *He put the book when he was on the table. (Somers 1984, 511)

The problem with this test according to Somers is that it is sometimes difficult to choose the appropriate way to embed the clause. For example in the sentence *He put the book on the table* there is no way to form a sentence by backformation without making it ungrammatical.

In the substitution test the verb in the sentence is replaced with another verb with a similar meaning (Somers 1984, 512):

9. He sees a friend in her.
10. ?He sees a friend.
11. He considers her a friend.
12. *He considers a friend.

However, there are some problems with the substitution test. Somers (1984, 13) lists three of them. First, the verb chosen to replace the original verb may just have similar properties as to the complements it takes. Second, some verbs may have many different ways they take complements through e.g. polysemy. And third, some adjuncts may just not semantically be appropriate with the verb.

3.2 Valency theory and the characteristics of complements

Valency theory is grounded on the principle that the verb occupies the central position in the sentence and it is the verb that determines how many other elements need to occur (at least) in the sentence (Herbst 2004, xxiv). The needed elements are called complements and the number of complements a verb takes constitutes its valency.

Using the *elimination test* in combination with the *extraction method* the obligatory elements are revealed:

13. I put paper and kindling by the fire ~~last night~~.
 14. *I put by the fire.
 15. *I put paper and kindling.
- (examples from Herbst 2004, xxiv)

The underlined elements are complements while the element with the dash running through it is an adjunct. It should be noted that Herbst also counts the subject I in the clause as a complement to the governing verb. However, in this thesis the subject will not be counted as a complement because my interest is focused on the post head complements.

The order of the complements is rather fixed in a neutral sentence with no “special effect of topicalization” (Herbst 2004, xxvi) as can be discovered in the following sentences:

16. I put paper and kindling by the fire.
17. *I put by the fire paper and kindling.

When it comes to the form of complements vs. adjuncts it is important to point out that the form of the adjunct is not determined by the governing verb and Herbst (2004, xxiv) demonstrates it by showing that a prepositional phrase, an adverb phrase and an adverbial clause can all function as adjuncts:

18. I put the paper and kindling by the fire at 5 pm.
19. I put the paper and kindling by the fire then.
20. I put the paper and kindling by the fire before I went to bed.

Next, some of the characteristics of complements will be discussed.

Herbst lists possible forms of complements as follows:

1. phrases:
 - noun phrases (NP)
 - prepositional phrases (PP)
2. clauses:
 - ing –clauses (-ing)
 - to –infinitive clauses (*to* -inf)
 - that* –clauses
 - wh* –clauses

In this thesis I will investigate these formal groups of complements in respect to their occurrence with *consent* with a special interest in ing –clauses and *to* –infinitive clauses explained in more detail in chapter 5.

Earlier a complement was defined as an obligatory element in a sentence and it was said that it cannot be left out without rendering the sentence ungrammatical or changing the meaning of the head word but that is only part of the truth. Herbst also mentions optional complements which are explained as having the characteristics of a

complement but not needing to be present in the sentence to make it grammatical (sentence (21) below). In addition there are contextually optional complements which are optional *only* if their referent can be identified in the context (sentence (22) below).

21. He wrote *to Winfred Nicholson*: ‘St Ives is on the edge of Europe and the first English rebuff to those coming from distant parts’.
 22. But where is he now? Does Hannah know?
 (Herbst 2004, xxi-xxii)

Some points also need to be made about the complementation of nouns. As regards the complement vs. adjunct distinction, Bowen (2005, 15) states that it is also applicable to nouns. She points out that the relationship between the derived noun and its complement can be compared with that of a verb and its complement – where the verb’s complement is an NP the noun’s complement will often be a PP:

23. His *criticism* of the book
 24. He *criticised* the book
 (Bowen 2005, 15, my italics)

In the case of *consent* the relationship between the PP *of*-phrase and the NP is, however, different. Compare the following sentences:

25. The *consent* of parliament
 26. The parliament *consented*

The *of*-phrase of the noun (25) could easily be compared with the subject of the verb (26). As stated above in connection with verbal complementation, this study excludes subjects as complements from the scope of the thesis, consequently also *of*-phrases will be excluded.

Bowen mentions that complementation patterns are “inherited” to some extent from the word they are derived from (2005, 1). In the case of the noun *consent* it can thus be expected that it shares some complementation patterns with the verb *consent*. This is a point which will be tested later in the research part of this thesis.

3.3 Case Grammar and Thematic Relations

There is also a semantic aspect to be considered when discussing complements. Herbst addresses two questions: the meanings of the complements and which lexical items can occur as complements (2004, xxix-xxx). It can be useful to specify what kind of semantic features a complement of a particular verb can have, for example ‘+ANIMATE’ or ‘-HUMAN’. Fillmore’s case grammar from 1968 introduces the idea of semantic roles into the connection with valency theory. This section will introduce the principles of his work on case grammar and semantic roles and its later modification in Jackendoff’s (1972) work on thematic relations.

Case grammar relates closely to valency theory, but brings a semantic aspect to it. The principle of case grammar is that the verb’s semantic valence is the factor that determines grammatical structures in the sentence. The relationships in the sentence are expressed in terms of this central verb and a series of case roles: AGENT, THEME, LOCATION, SOURCE and GOAL. THEME is the only obligatory role in every sentence (hence the name thematic relations). The THEME is the object that undergoes whatever is specified by the verb:

- 27. The dot (THEME) is (Verb) inside the circle (LOCATION).
 - 28. The paper (THEME) remained (Verb) on the floor (LOCATION).
 - 29. The ball (THEME) rolled (Verb) down the hill (SOURCE/GOAL).
- (Cook 1989, 129)

All versions of case grammar have in common that they make an attempt at “semantic classification of verbs by deep case roles” (Cook 1989, 8). The three examples above demonstrate different verb types each – state verbs, durational verbs and motional verbs respectively. Interestingly these different types of verbs take different types of case roles that occur with either stative or directional prepositions. For example the durational verb *remain* will take the obligatory THEME and LOCATION

marked by the stative prepositions *in/at/on*, while the motional verb *roll* will take the obligatory THEME and then either a SOURCE or GOAL.

Consent does not easily fit any of the verb categories presented above, but is perhaps best characterized as a cognitive verb (see Visser 1973; Huddleston and Pullum 2002). Rudanko (1998) describes *consent* as displaying the following properties: positive volition, intention and communication. Indeed, *consent* is voluntary and implies intention to do something and – *consent* is (usually) verbally (or otherwise) uttered **by** someone **to** someone.

The roles associated with *consent* could be labelled as EXPERIENCER (if *consent* is seen as something internal, a mental process) or AGENT (if *consent* is something that is communicated) (labels used by among others Cook 1989, 191) – the person giving *consent*, BENEFACTIVE - the person who *consent* is uttered to (not obligatorily present though) and of course the obligatory THEME (also called Object by many) – the matter that is *consented* to.

4 *Consent* in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and other literature

The following sections will introduce the information gathered from the online version of the OED (accessed November 2006). A section will be dedicated to the verb *consent* and the noun *consent* respectively. Some additional information provided by a number of grammars and articles on the word *consent* is also presented.

4.1 The etymology of consent

Etymologically *consent* stems from French *consenter* and Latin ‘consentire’ ‘to feel together’. Especially as a noun the English sense has also been affected by the now obsolete Latin ‘concent’ which means ‘harmony’ or ‘to sing together’ (Weekley, E. 1967).

4.2 The verb consent

The time of inspection of the verb *consent* is the 18th century to the present-day and therefore I will include all senses that the OED lists as relevant for that time. In the table below (table 4-1) I have presented all senses and quotations relevant for the time period in inspections and also suggested two simplified under which the OED senses can all be collected.

Sense	Quote	Simplified sense
†1. To agree together. 1. To agree together, or with another, in opinion or statement; to be of the same mind. Obs. or arch. †b. To agree to a doctrine or statement, also to the author of it; to assent.	1712 STEELE All the wiser Part of Mankind.. has <i>consented</i> in an Error. 1865 BUSHNELL It may be seen how freely they <i>consent</i> in the testimony. (b) 1788 Lond. Mag. This is what all must <i>consent</i> to who have been obliged to ride on horseback.. after a hearty dinner.	‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’
†2. Of things: To agree, be in harmony. Obs.	1794 MARTYN Fifty species all <i>consent</i> in a quinquefid calyx.	
†3. To act or be affected in sympathy. Obs.	1756 BURKE It always made me start a little; the ear-drum suffered a convulsion, and the whole body <i>consented</i> with it.	

Sense	Quote	Simplified sense
II. To agree to a proposal, request, etc. 4. Voluntarily to accede to or acquiesce in what another proposes or desires; to agree, comply, yield.	1848 MACAULAY Argyle, after long resistance, <i>consented</i> .. to divide his little army. 1875 JEVONS When I induce my creditor to <i>consent</i> to my paying a month hence. b.1819 BYRON A little still she strove, and much repented, And whispering 'I will ne'er consent' <i>consented</i> .	'comply'

Table 4-1: Senses of the verb *consent* with quotes.

The obsolete or at least archaic senses 1-3 all have in common the sense of agreeing together, being in harmony and these senses will, for the sake of simplicity, be labelled the 'accord' or 'be unanimous' sense. The remaining sense 4, the only one that is in use in contemporary English according to the OED, involves acceding to a proposal or request and is therefore labelled the 'comply' sense.

For each sense the possible complementation patterns occurring with it are listed below in table 4-2. Some complementation patterns are explicitly referred to in the OED, other patterns have been deduced from the quotes that the OED gives. Also listed are some patterns from slightly older quotes (quotes from the 17th century) as they may turn out to be relevant for the thesis by turning up in the corpus data. These patterns are given in parentheses, with no quotes to illustrate. Italics and underlining by the present author:

Sense	Quote	Complementation pattern
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†I. To agree together. 1. To agree together, or with another, in opinion or statement; to be of the same mind. Obs. or arch. †b. To agree to a doctrine or statement, also to the author of it; to assent.	1712 STEELE All the wiser Part of Mankind.. has <i>consented</i> in an Error. 1865 BUSHNELL It may be seen how freely they <i>consent</i> in the testimony. (b) 1788 Lond. Mag. This is what all must <i>consent</i> to who have been obliged to ride on horseback.. after a hearty dinner.	<i>that</i> -clause <i>in</i> + NP (possibly only NP) (b) <i>to</i> + NP (possibly <i>unto</i> + NP)
†2. Of things: To agree, be in harmony. Obs.	1794 MARTYN Fifty species all <i>consent</i> in a quinquefid calyx.	<i>in</i> + NP (also <i>with</i> +NP, <i>to</i> + <i>wh</i> -clause)
†3. To act or be affected in sympathy. Obs.	1756 BURKE It always made me start a little; the ear-drum suffered a convulsion, and the whole body <i>consented</i> with it.	<i>with</i> + NP
II. To agree to a proposal, request, etc. 4. Voluntarily to accede to or acquiesce in what another proposes or desires; to agree, comply, yield.	1848 MACAULAY Argyle, after long resistance, <i>consented</i> .. to divide his little army. 1875 JEVONS When I induce my creditor to <i>consent</i> to my paying a month hence. b.1819 BYRON A little still she strove, and much repented, And whispering `I will ne'er consent' <i>consented</i> .	<i>to</i> +NP, <i>to</i> -inf, <i>that</i> -clause, (in a quote from 1691 a <i>that</i> -clause with <i>should</i>) <i>to</i> + poss. + -ing or no complement

Table 4-2: Senses of the verb *consent* with patterns in the OED.

As can be seen from table 4-2 above there seems to be some differences as to which complementation patterns can be expected to be found with each sense. In order to condense the information in table 4-2 above, table 4-3 has been created (below): the patterns have been matched with the 'accord' sense or the 'comply' sense. In the middle column are the two patterns that can be found with either sense. Again, the patterns in parentheses were found only with older OED quotes.

The 'accord' sense	Either	The 'comply' sense
<i>in</i> + NP	<i>that</i> -clause	<i>to</i> -inf
(only NP)	<i>to</i> + NP	<i>to</i> + poss. + -ing
(with + NP)		no complement
(to + <i>wh</i> -clause)		(that -clause with <i>should</i>)

Table 4-3: Summary of senses and patterns for the verb *consent*.

A point about the patterns with NP complements (*in* + NP, *only* NP, *with* + NP and *to* + NP): What kind of NPs can be found in the quotes? With *in* the NP is -ANIMATE, it is an idea or a statement (an error, a testimony) and also with *with* the NP is -ANIMATE, it is a function of the body (a convulsion). Other clues are not offered by the OED. I am curious to find out whether my data will support the findings in the OED, that one can only *consent* to something -ANIMATE – an action or an idea.

One additional pattern (discussed further in chapter 5) is hinted at by Quirk et al (1985, 1178): the *to* –ing pattern exemplified by “She *consented to getting engaged*”. This pattern does not occur in the OED and it is with great curiosity that I wait for the data to reveal whether this pattern actually occurs.

4.3 The noun *consent*

As with the verb *consent* also the noun *consent* was searched in the OED for senses relevant to the 18th century and onwards. For the noun *consent* no complements were indicated by the OED so possible complementation patterns were deduced from the OED quotes given for each sense.

Like for the verb *consent* it is possible to distinguish two main senses also for the noun, which for the sake of convenience are also labelled the ‘accord’ and ‘comply’ senses.

Sense of noun, possible complements (if any)	Quote (OED)	Simplified sense
1. Agreement or unity of opinion, consensus, unanimity. Obs. or arch. <i>in</i> + NP	1785 PALEY We are far from a perfect <i>consent</i> in our opinions or feelings. 1879 M. ARNOLD As to the duty of pursuing equality, there is no such <i>consent</i> among us.	‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’

Sense of noun, possible complements (if any)	Quote (OED)	Simplified sense
<p>2. Agreement in feeling, sympathy; also, more generally, harmony, accord, agreement. arch. between NP and NP, <i>to</i>+NP †b. Agreement in faith and doctrine, ecclesiastical communion. Obs. <i>with</i>+NP</p>	<p>1733 POPE Such is the World's great harmony, that springs From Order, Union, full <i>Consent</i> of things. 1794 PALEY The <i>consent</i>... between Saint Paul's speeches and letters is in this respect sufficiently exact. 1870 M. CONWAY Showing the <i>consent</i> of solar systems to the motion of a finger. (4b)1709 STRYPE Wherein is taught our <i>consent</i> with the German... and other reformed churches.</p>	
<p>†3. Phys. and Pathol. A relation of sympathy between one organ or part of the body and another, whereby when the one is affected the other is affected correspondingly. <i>between</i> + NP</p>	<p>1727-51 CHAMBERS <i>Consent</i> of parts, in the animal oeconomy, a certain agreement, or sympathy, by means whereof, when one part is immediately affected, another, at a distance, becomes affected in like manner. 1797 M. BAILLIE Being explained upon the principle of a <i>consent</i> or sympathy existing between the absorbents of [different parts].</p>	
<p>†4. Agreement by a number of persons as to a course of action; concert. Obsolescent exc. as in b. phr. with one <i>consent</i>, by common <i>consent</i>.</p>	<p>1650 HOBBS When the wills of many concur to one and the same action and effect; this concurrence of their wills is called <i>consent</i>. 1780 COWPER But sing and shine by sweet <i>consent</i>. 1874 SIDGWICK Their reception by common <i>consent</i> is still an argument for their validity.</p>	
<p>5. Voluntary agreement; compliance, concurrence, permission. <i>to</i>+NP</p>	<p>1874 GREEN The unanimous demand of her people wrested at last a sullen <i>consent</i> from the Queen. 1875 STUBBS The deliberate assent and <i>consent</i> of a parliament. 1766 F. SHERIDAN Parents... withhold their <i>consents</i> to marriages.</p>	<p>‘comply’</p>
<p>b. prov. Silence gives <i>consent</i></p>	<p>1883 G. LLOYD Well then, I take silence for <i>consent</i>.</p>	

Sense of noun, possible complements (if any)	Quote (OED)	Simplified sense
c. age of <i>consent</i> : the age fixed by law at which a person's <i>consent</i> to certain acts (e.g. marriage, sexual intercourse) is valid in law.	1885 Times 17 July 12/3 Further provision for the protection of women and children is urgently needed... The present age of <i>consent</i> , which is thirteen, is altogether too low.	

Table 4-4: Senses of the noun *consent* with quotes.

Senses 1-4 could roughly be gathered under the label 'accord' and sense 5, with the proverb 'silence gives consent' and the 'age of consent' could approximately be gathered under the sense 'comply'.

As one quickly notices, all examples given with the comply sense in the OED are with zero complement. However, Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1259) say that *consent* as a noun license *to*-infinitive complements (it takes "subjectless infinitivals" similarly to the verb it is derived from) and that *consent* also takes a *for* + subj. construction (not mentioned in the OED). Because as Bowen (2005) mentioned that patterns for the noun are often "inherited" from the verb it is derived from, it is expected that the *to*-infinitive is found with the 'comply' sense of then noun as it was with the verb.

With the 'accord' sense several patterns are indicated by the OED. Note that there is a similarity between the complementation patterns of the verb and the noun in the accord sense: With the 'accord' sense *in* + NP complements can be found for both the noun and the verb. The complementation patterns (and phrases) are summarized in the table below.

The 'accord' sense	Either	The 'comply' sense
<i>in</i> + NP	<i>to</i> + NP	<i>to</i> + inf
<i>between</i> NP and NP		<i>for</i> + subj. construction
<i>with</i> + NP		phr. give <i>consent</i>
(phr. by common <i>consent</i> , with one <i>consent</i>)		phr. age of <i>consent</i>

Table 4-5: Summary of senses and patterns for the noun *consent*.

The nature of the NPs for the part of the noun *consent* is as follows: with *in* the NP is an idea or statement (an opinion), with *with* the NP is a doctrine (the church). In the case of *between* the picture is more versatile: *consent* can be between people, statements or even body organs. The phrases ‘one consent’ or ‘common consent’ refer to a harmony between voices or the agreement of wills. It seems to be possible to refer to *consent* in connection with primarily -ANIMATE objects – ideas – or +ANIMATE objects – parts of a human being (will, voice) or sometimes even the whole person. The verb *consent*, on the other hand, seemed only to allow -ANIMATE NPs – ideas and actions (see section 4.2).

To my delight I found that Collins Cobuild divides the senses of the noun *consent* into two categories, similarly as I had done with the ‘accord’ and ‘comply’ sense. Collins has a point about the authority of ‘comply’: permission given to someone to do something by a person who has authority **over** them. By contrast the ‘accord’ sense expresses agreement about something **between** two or more people or groups. I think this distinction is valid for the verb *consent* too.

5 Factors Bearing on Complementation

This chapter will outline some the possible factors that have an effect on complement selection such as the semantics of complement selection and the changes that are happening to the entire complementation system of English. Attention will especially be paid to the *to* -infinitive complementation pattern and the *to* –ing complementation pattern. I will try to figure out what the differences between the two patterns are in terms of meaning (or if there is a difference at all) and also take a look at the control phenomenon that is associated with the *to* –infinitive pattern. There are also factors that

hinder the advancement of the changes in the complementation system of English, those three factors will be presented in the last sections of this chapter.

5.1 *Semantics of complements*

Bolinger's generalization states that "a difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning" (Bolinger 1968, 127). Bolinger (1968, 127) claims that there must be a difference in meaning between complements because languages are economical and do not easily tolerate redundancy. Hence, two syntactic patterns with the exact same meaning are unlikely to co-exist. In the context of my study on the complementation patterns of *consent*, Bolinger's generalization would imply that whenever I come across a new complementation pattern it must entail that there is a difference in meaning to the other patterns.

According to Dirven (1989, 113) the choice of the right complement is in fact a question of matching the semantics of each complement with the semantics of the governing verb. Meanings of different complements (those I think are relevant to this study with *consent*!) according to Dirven (1989) are summarized below:

- *to* –infinitive

1. I *intend* to go tomorrow.

'A single event, or a series of single events'. A fact, the person is certain she will go tomorrow. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1259) say that the infinitival *to* derives historically from the preposition *to*, and that it is associated with a goal, that it "involves temporal projection onto the future, as with the complements of ... *consent*...".

- (*to*) -ing forms

2. I *intend* going tomorrow.

3. I always *enjoyed* him singing that song.

4. I always *enjoyed* his singing that song.

5. I always *enjoyed* his singing of that song.
6. I always *enjoyed* singing that song.

‘An incomplete/unrealised action, vague’. In (2) the person has vaguely planned to go tomorrow, it is less certain than (1). The -ing form in (3) (4) (5) and (6) implies a less specified event (the whole song might not have been sung) and especially (6) does not specify any single event, just the idea of it. Dirven (1989, 118) feels that the –ing in (4) and (5) is much like a mass noun in that does not put “boundaries on a conceptual region” which I understand as meaning that the event is detached from any **actual** event and represents more of an **idea** of an event. Also Vosberg (2003b, 323) is of the opinion that the -ing form has in fact retained more of its nominal character than is generally thought, it is more of a syntactic hybrid. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1259) are of the opinion that “the gerund [-ing] is associated with what is current and actual” and that it is “connected with the nominal source of most gerundial complements” but that these are only historical tendencies. Also Rudanko (2000, 29) makes a comment on the difference in direct relation to the verb *consent* - ‘*consent* to do something’ vs. ‘*consent* to doing something’. He suggests that the *to* –infinitive is more immediate or actual while the *to* –ing denotes something more mediated or potential.

- *that* –clause

7. They *agreed* that the price was too high.
8. *compare: to* -infinitive: She *agreed* to go home.

‘Denotes a mental construct, a proposition’. With the verb *agree* (which is similar in meaning to *consent*!) *that* means ‘to be unanimous’, whereas *to* (in the *to* –infinitive) means that the person ‘*consented* to a proposition’.

- *for* –construction

9. I *asked* for John to meet Mary.
10. *compare: I asked* John to meet Mary.

‘Potential or hypothetical occurrence of event or state’. Dirven argues that (9) is even more potential (uncertain) than (10) because the *I* in the matrix clause “exerts no influence on the subject of the complement clause *John*” (1989, 122).

- *wh* –clauses

11. Now tell me what to do.

12. He knew very well where to go.

The *wh* –element indicates the information that is missing from the clause. Used in both affirmative and negative sentences.

5.2 The Great Complement Shift

There is an on-going re-arrangement of the complementation system in English, a phenomenon which has been dubbed as the Great Complement Shift by Rohdenburg (2006, 143). Vosberg (2003a, 197) and Rohdenburg (2006, 145) claim that this shift has been in action since the late seventeenth century and for some verbs it is now coming to a completion. The Great Complement Shift involves the increase in the –ing form as a sentential complement at the expense of the *to* -infinitive and *that* -clauses.

13. She *delighted to do* it. → She *delighted in doing* it.

14. She was *used/accustomed to do* it. → He was *used/accustomed to doing* it.

15. She *avoided/dreaded to go* there. → She *avoided/dreaded going* there.

(Rohdenburg 2006, 143-4)

Rohdenburg points out that a “phenomenon of syntactic regularization” is taking place. The infinitival *to* in the first version of sentence (14) has been re-analyzed as a *to* preposition in the second version of the sentence (see also Rudanko 1998, 346). The –ing form originally developed from a pure noun (Vosberg 2003b, 305, Vosberg 2003a, 197) formed by adding the suffix –ing to the verb stem. But as time went by it developed more verbal properties and came to be accepted as a complement alongside

others. This study will help explore to what extent the –ing form has developed (if at all) to an acceptable complement of *consent*.

5.3 Control

The term ‘control’ stems from the assumption that there can sometimes be an understood element in the complement clause of a certain group(s) of verbs. I.e. some verbs can appear in a control structure while others cannot – control is a property of a verb. Consider the sentence from Davies and Dubinsky (2004, 3):

16. [[Barnett]^{NP} [tried]^{Higher Verb} [[PRO] to [understand]^{Lower Verb} [the formula]^{NP}]_{S2}]_{S1}.

The label PRO is a generally accepted term (see Carnie 2002, Rudanko 2002) for the understood but immaterialized subject of the lower clause. It is assumed that the subject of the higher clause *Barnett* is also linked to the lower clause verb *understand*, therefore it is said that the higher NP *Barnett* ‘controls’ the reference of the lower clause subject.

One can ask why there is a need for the PRO phenomenon. According to Chomsky (1986, 84; see also Carnie 2002 and Haegeman 1994) there is a need for an empty category (PRO) as a consequence of the Projection Principle which states that a “lexical structure must be represented categorically at every syntactic level”. In other words PRO must be present (understood) even if it is not phonetically realized.

Consent can be classified as a control verb. This does not mean that it only takes control patterns as complements but that it is one option. The occurrence of the *to*-infinitive control pattern i.e. ‘*consent* to do something’ and its frequency will be discussed further in the analysis part of this thesis.

5.4 *Horror aequi*

... the *horror aequi* principle involves the widespread (and presumably universal) tendency to avoid the use of formally (near)identical or (near-) adjacent grammatical elements or structures... (Rohdenburg 2003, 236)

The *horror aequi* principle in the context of complementation predicts that a verb in the infinitive will not select a *to*-infinitive as a complement and that there is even more aversion for a verb in the –ing form to select an –ing form complement. In stead, based on evidence by Vosberg (2003b), it can be expected that a verb in the infinitive will more likely select and –ing form as complement and a verb in the -ing form will select an infinitive complement. The prediction in the case of *consent* is clarified below.

- sentences with the matrix verb *consenting* will select a *to* – infinitive complement
- sentences with the matrix verb *consent* will likely select an -ing complement over a *to* –infinitive

It must, however, be kept in mind that the choice of complement is not limited to these two (*to* –infinitive and an -ing form complement) and that the whole picture is more complicated with a diverse array of possibilities (for example *to* + NP, *in* + NP, *with* + NP, *that* –clauses, *wh* –clauses etc.).

5.5 *The extraction principle*

In the case of infinitival or gerundial complements options, the infinitive will tend to be favoured in environments where a complement of the subordinate clause is extracted from its original position and crosses clause boundaries. ‘The extraction principle’ (Vosberg 2003b, 308)

It should be pointed out that Rudanko, in his 2006 work, also shows that this principle applies not only to extracted complements but also to extracted adjuncts. Thus in the

case of extractions from the lower clause, I can expect the extraction rather to be from a *to* –infinitive clause than an –ing clause (or a finite clause, for that matter).

5.6 Structural discontinuity

In the case of more or less explicit constructional options the more explicit one(s) will tend to be favoured in cognitively more complex environments. ‘The complexity principle’ (Rohdenburg 2006, 147)

When there are intervening elements between the matrix verb and its complement, that is called structural discontinuity (see (17) below). Structural discontinuity is a type of complex environment that Rohdenburg describes in his complexity principle.

Rohdenburg (2006, 148) predicts (with substantiated evidence) that a finite clause will be favoured in the case of structural discontinuity because it is more explicit than a *to* –infinitive.

17. He *promised* his friends when he was challenged about it that he would return immediately/to return immediately. (from Rohdenburg 2006, 148)

Vosberg (2003a, 211) adds that environments with structural discontinuity will favour other complements, including *to* –infinitives, over (*to*) –ing forms. This leads me to conclude that in terms of explicitness finite clauses (e.g. *that* –clauses) are more explicit than *to* –infinitives, which in turn are more explicit than (*to*) –ing complements. Indeed, Vosberg (2003b, 323) does conclude that the “*to* –infinitive is syntactically more specific and therefore easier to process than the –ing form”. This assumption will be tested in the analysis part of the thesis in the case of *consent*.

5.7 Points about Consent in the Literature

Quirk et al (1985, section 16.28) discuss monotransitive complementation in connection with the verb *consent*. They mention that it forms complements with NPs as prepositional objects and thus analyze *consent* as a prepositional verb. ‘Prepositional verb’ means that the *to* following *consent* is analyzed as part of the verb. They also note that the *to* is deleted with *that* –clauses or *to* -infinitives, but that the *to* may reappear in the corresponding passive or in extraction. Quirk et al (1985, section 16.38) also point out that *consent* also takes a subjectless *to* -infinitive as a direct object.

Huddelston and Pullum (2002, 1227) mention that a *for* -complex is possible with *consent*, an example of which would be:

18. He had *consented* for his son to be admitted...
(my own sentence)

They (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1259) agree that *consent* as a noun licenses the *to* -infinitive - the same as the verb it is derived from.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1240-1) discuss the *to* -infinitive vs. –ing form complementation and state that “where a verb allows both...[one should] find a difference in meaning that is at least partly motivated by their general characteristics [of the *to* -inf and gerund [-ing], that is]”. However, they also state that one “cannot assign distinct meanings to the form-types [*to* -infinitive and -ing] and treat the selection as semantically determined”. My conclusion, therefore that they think it is perhaps possible to find **some** difference between the two complementation patterns as regards meaning in connection with *consent*.

6 The CLMETEV Corpus: Part One (1710-1780)

The search words used in eliciting data from the corpus were the base form and the inflected forms of the verb *consent*. The search yielded altogether 302 tokens of which 155 were analyzed as nouns and 147 as verbs. In this chapter a section is devoted to the examining of each.

6.1 The verb *consent*: Senses found in the data

The OED contains examples with the verb *consent* used with both the ‘accord’ and the ‘comply’ sense during the 18th century. However, I was very surprised that **all** sentences in the data from the first part of the CLMETEV corpus with the verb *consent* fall under the ‘comply’ sense (5. below):

‘comply’	II. To agree to a proposal, request, etc. 4. Voluntarily to accede to or acquiesce in what another proposes or desires; to agree, comply, yield.
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As for the context with the ‘comply’ sense it is most frequently related to marriage and divorce. In the rest of the cases *consent* is used when accepting or refusing a request. In example 1, *consent* is used in the context of marriage and in example 2 in accepting a request, both examples are from the L1 data:

1. She *consented* to marry the Duke of Modena, in order to obtain the liberty of her lover, who was confined in the Bastille, for conspiring against the Regent. (Walpole (1745-48) Letters, line 12660)
2. ...my feverishness seemed to be gone; and I was so mended by evening, that I begged her indulgence in my closet, to be left to myself; which she *consented* to, it being double-barred the day before, and I assuring her that all my contrivances, as she called them, were at an end... (Richardson (1740) Pamela, line 7023)

6.2 The verb consent: Complementation patterns found in the data

As there were no instances of the ‘accord’ sense in the data I could only expect to find patterns related to the ‘comply’ sense. Those patterns, as mentioned in the OED were:

‘comply’	<i>to</i> + NP
	<i>to</i> + inf
	<i>that</i> –clause (possibly even a <i>that</i> –clause with <i>should</i>)
	<i>to</i> + poss. + -ing
	or no complement at all

My expectations were realized as all the complements that were expected turned up in the data. To my surprise there were a few sentences with extractions, usually a relative clause. These sentences were counted as their own group and they appear in the table under the label ‘extraction’. Table 6-1 (below) summarizes the complements that were found in the data and the frequencies for them according to each verb form. To the right, a column displays the normalized frequencies:

Complement	<i>consent</i>	<i>consented</i>	<i>consents</i>	<i>consenting</i>	all forms	1710-1780: NF per 10 million words
<i>to</i> + NP	34	14	1	3	52	173.3
<i>to</i> + inf.	21	29	1	5	56	186.7
<i>that</i> –clause	3	3	0	0	6	20
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + -ing	2	2	0	0	4	13.3
∅	7	11	1	0	19	63.3
extraction	2	8	0	0	10	33.3
total	69	67	3	8	147	490

Table 6-1: CLMETEV 1 (1710-1780), Raw frequencies of the complements and normalized frequencies.

Next, I will give authentic examples from each of the groups and point out my observations. The control pattern *to* –infinitive, turned out to be the most frequent in the data, examples given below:

3. But, had I married a princess, I could not have done so. I must have loved her exceedingly well, before I had *consented to knit the knot* with her, and preferred her to all her sex; for without this, Pamela, indifferences, if not disgusts, will arise... (Richardson 1740 - pamela.txt, Line 18095)
4. But Frederic, your Lord, is nearest in blood. I have *consented to put my title to the issue of the sword*. Does that imply a vicious title? (Walpole 1764 - the castle of otranto.txt, Line 2318)

The *to* + NP's, the second most frequent pattern, were normally of the form *to* + NP (5), although sometimes the NP may be preceded by a possessive pronoun. Note that the NP complement is -HUMAN, a proposition, just as the OED predicted.

5. ... till he would not absolutely recede from his engagements; but purposing to gain time, he demanded of Manfred if it was true in fact that Hippolita *consented to the divorce*. The Prince, transported to find no other obstacle, and depending on his influence over his wife, assured the Marquis it was so, an ... (Walpole 1764 - the castle of otranto.txt, Line 3880)
6. Mrs. Teachum was pleased, that little Polly so gratefully remembered the old woman, who had been so kind to her; and readily *consented to their choice*, and approved of their determination. Being soon equipped for their walk, they set out, attended by two maidservants... (Fielding 1749 - the governess.txt, Line 4659)

Interestingly, there is one sentence (7) where the NP (removal) is rather verbal (as it is derived from a verb) and also the possessive is present. This finding struck me as somewhat similar to the *to* + poss.pron + -ing -construction (8) where the verb has a nominal character and the possessive is again present.

7. ... and honour, the value of which I did not then know, a house was furnished according to my directions; and I signified my intention to Lord B--, who *consented to my removal*, with this proviso, that I should continue to see him. I wrote also to his relation, Mr. B--,

who, in his answer, observed, that it ... (Smollett 1751 - the adventures of peregrine pickle.txt, Line 7163)

8. ... endorf, when you are talking to Madame de St. Germain. Mr. Harte informs me, that he has reimbursed you of part of your losses in Germany; and I *consent to his reimbursing you* of the whole, now that I know you deserve it. I shall grudge you nothing, nor shall you want anything that you desire... (Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 534)

The *that* -clauses all had a modal present in the *that* -clause, either *should* (in 4 sentences) or *shall* (in 1 sentence). As discussed above, the OED only indicated the possibility of this pattern in one quote (and it was from 1690). My data suggests that the *that* -clause with a modal is a viable complementation option still in the 18th century.

9. ... your goodness so greatly confounds me. Can I, who am so well acquainted with the many great obligations Mr. Booth already hath to your generosity, *consent that you should add* more to a debt we never can pay?" The colonel stopt her short, protesting that she misplaced the obligation; for, that if to ...(Fielding 1751 - amelia.txt, Line 8226)
10. ... 4 Letter 11 To Richard West, Esq. Rheims, (163) June 18, 1739, N. S. Dear West, How I am to fill up this letter is not easy to divine. I have *consented that Gray shall give* an account of our situation and proceedings; (164) and have left myself at the mercy of my own' invention--a most terrible res ...(Walpole 1735-48 - letters 1735-1748.txt, Line 228)

In one sentence the modal was present alone without a *that* -clause. Because *that* could easily be inserted into the sentence this sentence was equated with the other *that*-clauses in table 6-1 above:

11. ...than they would do condemned felons, that he knowing the power of prince Menzikoff, and fearing to disoblige one so dear to him by a refusal, *consented they should be removed* into an upper part of the prison where they would have more air, and also that they should have an allowance of meat every d ... (Haywood 1744 - the fortunate foundlings.txt, Line 7489)

In quite a few cases *consent* was zero complemented (12), also in the case of extractions (Ø in Table 5 above):

12. ... over her head, could not have been more alarming to mademoiselle Charlotta than the news she now heard; but her father commanded, the princess had *consented*, and there was no remedy to be hoped: she took leave of her royal mistress with a shower of unfeigned tears, after which she retired to her apartme ... (Haywood 1744 - the fortunate foundlings.txt, Line 2858)

As regards structural discontinuity, it was scarce (only found in three sentences) in the data and the intervening element was only a single word:

13. Margery *consented* reluctantly to part with the jewels; and, after some further conversation, they took leave of her. (Reeve 1777 - the old english baron.txt, Line 2400)

Presumably as a result of the absence of the ‘accord’ sense some complementation patterns that were expected to be found were thus also absent. The absent complementation patterns associated with the accord sense in the 18th century were: *in* + NP, and from the 17th century a bare NP, *with* + NP, and *to* + *wh* -clause. Neither were there found any instances of the complementation with *to* -ing, which is consistent with Rudanko's (2002) findings from other corpora compiled of texts from the same time period as my study.

6.3 *The noun consent: senses and patterns*

One token revealed a sentence where the word class was difficult to determine:

14. ... grave been guilty of any offence, capital or otherwise, the ministry might have called him to account for it; but their contriving, and the king's *consenting* to so bloody a purpose, is methinks such a stain upon them, as can never be wiped off... (Cibber (1753) The lives of the poets, line 8635)

At first the form *consenting* indicates that it is an inflection of the verb. But on closer inspection it was concluded that the form *consenting* may not be characterized as a verb judging from its function in the sentence – it clearly displays noun-like behaviour, with the NP in the possessive. It is a borderline case between a verb and a noun, I interpret it

as a verbal noun. The sentence is therefore included in the *consent* as a noun –group.

Also the plural form *consents* occurred in the nouns:

15. Their *consents*, replied he, I should have thought my duty to ask; but not yours madam. (Richardson (1740) –pamela.txt, Line 17085)

As for the rest of the 153 tokens it was easy to determine their noun status. They were all of the expected form *consent*.

As for the two senses of *consent*, ‘comply’ and ‘accord’, both were indeed represented in the data, although, the ‘comply’ sense was decidedly much more prominently represented. In the table below the frequencies of each are presented:

The ‘accord’ sense	The ‘comply’ sense
23	131

The following two sections will discuss the patterns found with each sense separately.

6.3.1 The ‘accord’ sense

The examples in the OED led me to expect a variety of complementation patterns to be found with the ‘accord’ sense in my data. These patterns are summarized in the table below:

‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’	<i>in</i> + NP
	<i>between</i> NP and NP
	<i>with</i> + NP
	phr. by common <i>consent</i> , with one <i>consent</i>

However, to my disappointment *consent* was always zero complemented in the data.

Turning to the different sub senses captured by the terms ‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’, I decided to see how the senses were distributed in my 23 sentences. These are summarized below:

	Sense in OED	Freq.
‘accord’	1. Agreement or unity of opinion, consensus, unanimity. obs.	9

‘be unanimous’	2. Agreement in feeling, sympathy; also, more generally, harmony, accord, agreement. obs. †b. Agreement in faith and doctrine, ecclesiastical communion	1
	†3. Phys. and Pathol. A relation of sympathy between one organ or part of the body and another, whereby when the one is affected the other is affected correspondingly.	0
	†4. Agreement by a number of persons as to a course of action; concert.	7
	b. phr. with one <i>consent</i> , by common <i>consent</i> .	6

Table 6-2: CLMETEV 1 (1710-1780), Noun: Senses and frequencies of ‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’.

The first sense regarding the unanimity of opinions was found in texts dealing with issues of laws and rules or discussion about morality.

16. ... however, the outlines of that treaty are, by mutual and tacit *consent*, the general rules of our present commerce with France. (Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 13177)

Of the second sense which describes harmony only one instance was found. Curiously, it is the same sentence by Pope that was quoted in the OED:

17. Such is the world's great harmony, that springs From order, union, full *consent* of things: Where small and great, where weak and mighty, made To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade... (Pope 1733-4 - an essay on man.txt, Line 1239)

The fourth sense was definitely the most common one. It expressed unanimity of decision regarding course of action and included the phrase ‘by common consent’.

Other versions of the phrase found in the data were:

- by general/universal/common/joint *consent*
- by tacit/silent *consent*
- by mutual *consent*

18. ... one would think that all the cooks in the world, on some great merry-meeting with the barbers, by joint *consent* had said--Come, let us all go live at Paris: the French love good eating--they are all gourmands--we shall rank high; if their god is their belly- ... (Sterne 1759-67 - life and opinions of tristran shandy.txt, Line 11482)

6.3.2 The ‘comply’ sense

Here is a summary of the ‘comply’ sense:

‘comply’	5. Voluntary agreement; compliance, concurrence, permission.	127
	b. prov. Silence gives <i>consent</i>	4
	c. age of <i>consent</i> : the age fixed by law at which a person's <i>consent</i> to certain acts (e.g. marriage, sexual intercourse) is valid in law.	0

Table 6-3: CLMETEV (1710-1780), Noun: Senses and frequencies of ‘comply’

The overwhelmingly most common type of sentence in the data was in context of agreeing or refusing a request, particularly a proposal of marriage:

19. As this was the only article to which he refused his *consent*, it was no longer insisted on. (Gibbon (1776)-decline and fall of the roman empire 1.txt, Line 12851)
20. Or would you the Frowns of a Lady prevent, She too has this palpable Failing, The Perquisite softens her into *Consent*; That Reason with all is prevailing. (Gay 1728 - the beggar's opera.txt, Line 1772)

One particular sentence captures the nature of this ‘comply’ sense of *consent*: “Their admission of supernatural truths is much less an active *consent* than a cold and passive acquiescence” (Gibbon 1776 - decline and fall of the roman empire 1.txt, Line 19947).

Indeed, when one takes a closer look at the sentences *consent* seems to be something that is actively sought or actively and voluntarily given. Expressions such as the following are abundantly found in the data:

- to gain/obtain/receive/have (ones) *consent*
- to give (ones) *consent*
- to ask/force/extract/solicit (ones) *consent*
- to refuse (ones) *consent*
- free *consent* to (usu.) marry

It should be pointed out that the noun *consent* nearly always appears with the subject in possessive – it is as if *consent* is ‘owned’ by someone and it is something that can be given away.

Also the proverb ‘silence gives *consent*’ was present in the data:

21. This compliment and humiliation had some effect upon Tabby; but she made no reply; and Clinker, taking silence for *consent*, gave his attendance at dinner. Smollett 1771 - the expedition of humphrey clinker.txt, Line 242)

The expected patterns according to the OED and other literature (as discussed in section) were:

‘comply’	<i>to</i> -inf
	<i>to</i> + NP
	<i>for</i> + subj. construction

Indeed, these patterns were found in the data. But, in addition, *that* –clauses (seemingly “inherited” from the verb) were also found. Below the frequencies are summarized:

Complement	Frequency
<i>to</i> + NP	7
<i>to</i> -inf	9
<i>that</i> –clause	3
∅	110
<i>for</i> + NP	1
extractions	1
total	131

Table 6-4: CLMETEV 1 (1710-1780), The noun *consent*: Frequencies of complements.

Also for the frequencies for the ‘comply’ sense the zero complementation pattern was by far the most common:

22. Their *consents*, replied he, I should have thought it my duty to ask; but not yours, madam. (Richardson 1740 - pamela.txt, Line 17085)

Of the other patterns the *to* -infinitive pattern was the most prominent closely followed by the *to* + NP –pattern (as was the case for the verb!):

23. I will not be answerable especially having never given my *consent to receive* them, and having opened the box ignorantly, without knowing the contents (Walpole 1735-48 - letters 1735-1748.txt, Line 19070).
24. ...but I am afraid it will produce an explanation with Mr Barton, who will, no doubt, avow his passion, and solicit their *consent to a connexion* which my soul abhors; for, my dearest Letty, it is not in my power to love Mr Barton...(Smollett 1771 - the expedition of humphrey clinker.txt, Line 2400)

The only *for* –construction, although it was not a *for - to* construction as I had anticipated because of Huddleston and Pullum’s statement (2002, 1227; see also section 5.8 of this thesis) see was this:

25. But there at last they contrived, by the help of old Trusty, who had their real guardian's *consent for it*, both to get away; and Lady Harriet married Mr. Camply directly... (Fielding 1749 - the governess.txt, Line 4262)

All three *that* –constructions appeared with the modals *should* and *may*:

26. ...Lord Brumpton embraced his son, and gave his *consent, that he should marry* Lady Charlotte; and they were all pleased and happy.'(fielding 1749 - the governess.txt, Line 4296)
27. He intimates his protection, instead of his friendship, by a gracious nod, instead of a usual bow; and rather signifies his *consent that you may*, than his invitation that you *should sit, walk, eat, or drink* with him. (Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 10026)

7 The CLMETEV Corpus: part two (1780-1850)

Consent and its inflected forms yielded altogether 466 tokens from the second part of the CLMETEV corpus. Of them 286 instances were analyzed as verbs and 180 as nouns. Again, a section will be devoted to each group.

7.1 *The verb consent: the senses found in the data*

Although the OED lists the ‘accord’ sense as relevant for the time period of the second part of the CLMETEV corpus I was not confident I would find instances of it in my data because I had not found any in the first part either and the ‘accord’ sense could with reason be expected to only become rarer as the data approaches more recent times. To my surprise, however, I found three instances of the ‘accord’ sense.

1. ...and it was sufficiently evident that the society of either would be a burthen rather than a pleasure to the other, they *consented*, by a sort of silent compact, that each should be at liberty to follow his own inclination. (Godwin 1794 - the adventures of caleb williams.txt, Line 2531)
2. He was liberal in his way of thinking; and why might not we, like many other married people, who were above vulgar prejudices, tacitly *consent to let each other follow their own inclination*? (Wollstonecraft 1798 - maria.txt, Line 3802)
3. Pleading now for the examination of him only, and under these particular circumstances, I was attended to. It was *consented*, in consequence of the little time which was now left for preparing and printing the report, that I should make out his evidence from his journal ...(Clarkson 1839 - the history of the abolition of the african slave-trade.txt, Line 8600)

In all cases there is a mutual decision **between** two or more people, no person has authority **over** the other, so it is not a question of giving permission. It is interesting that the first two sentences are eerily similar: in both it is agreed that persons should be able to “follow their own inclination”, yet the authors and texts are different. In one case, the complementation is a *to*-infinitive while the two others are *that*-clauses with modals.

As for the ‘comply’ sense, again, the data fell into the contexts of accepting or refusing a request/a proposal (4). In this second part of the CLMETEV the context of *consenting* to marriage or divorce had somewhat diminished. The NP of the higher clause, the entity that performs the *consenting* is usually +HUMAN, a person. However, there were a couple of occasions in the data where the NP was –HUMAN. In

those cases, the NP was usually a part of the person or a property of the person – a part for whole, where the part of a person represents the whole person (see (5)).

4. Mrs Harrel, whose feelings were not very acute, finding the persuasions of her brother were seconded by her own fatigue, *consented to follow his advice*, and desired him to begin his search immediately. (Burney 1782 - cecilia 1-2.txt, Line 15009)
5. I beg your pardon, my dear and much valued friend, for writing to you on this very unfashionable, unsightly sheet-- **My poverty but not my will consents**. (Burns 1780-96 - letters 1780-1796.txt, Line 9930)

7.2 The verb consent: the patterns found in the data

All the patterns that were found in the first part of the corpus (with the verb) were also found in the second part. But, an additional pattern was now found with the verb *consent* that earlier had only appeared with the noun: the *for* –pattern. A completely new pattern that had not been encountered anywhere in previous data or literature also emerged: *thereto*. The table below summarises the frequencies of the complements:

Complement	<i>consent</i>	<i>consented</i>	<i>consents</i>	<i>consenting</i>	all forms
<i>to</i> + NP	31	14	0	3	48
<i>to</i> -inf	60	65	6	7	138
<i>that</i> –clause	2	7	1	0	10
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + -ing	5	1	0	0	6
∅	23	30	2	3	58
extraction	8	13	1	0	22
<i>for</i>	0	1	0	0	1
<i>thereto</i>	1	1	0	1	3
total	130	132	10	14	286

Table 7-1: CLMETEV 2 (1780-1850), Frequencies of the complements.

The *to* -infinitives (6) are very strongly represented in the data, with zero complementation (7) in second place:

6. The die is cast; I have *consented to return* if we are not destroyed. (Shelly 1818 - frankenstein.txt, Line 7004)
7. Most willingly I *consented*, and immediately brought him his desk. (Brontë 1848 - the tenant of wildfell hall.txt, Line 24069)

The *to* + NP's (8) occupy third place with the NP referent being –HUMAN, generally a proposition.

8. ...they came to Baptista's house, where there was a large company assembled to celebrate the wedding of Bianca and Lucentio, Baptista having willingly *consented to the marriage of Bianca* when he had got Katharine off his hands. (Lamb 1807 - tales from shakespeare.txt, Line 6222)

All *that* –clauses, again, appear with a modal:

9. "Mr. von Philipson," said he, "as a personal favour to yourself, and to my own great inconvenience, I *consented that in this interview you should be attended by a friend*." (Disraeli 1826 - vivian grey.txt, Line 9707)

The extractions are surprisingly uniform with two main variations, with an extracted NP or a relative clause with *which*:

10. My brother lost some money to him; and finding him plentifully supplied, he requested that he would come again in the evening, to which he *consented*. (Brontë 1847 - wuthering heights.txt, Line 4425)
11. During this state of things, to which the weakness of Spain, and not her will, *consented*, the enemy's fleet did not venture to put to sea. (Southey 1813 - life of horatio lord nelson.txt, Line 7497)
12. To a Children's Parliament would I gladly *consent*; or even lower if ye wished it. (Carlyle 1837 - the french revolution.txt, Line 801)

The *to* + poss.pron + -ing –pattern is also found most notably with the form ‘to consent’ of the verb:

13. ...perhaps he thought it unreasonable, unjust; but I knew that he would never be brought to *consent to my giving* way to it. (Godwin 1794 - the adventures of caleb williams.txt, Line 2820)

Huddelston and Pullum (2002, 1227) mentioned that the *for – to* - construction is possible with the verb *consent* and now in the second part of the CLMETEV it emerges. However, it should be noted that only one such instance was found in the data, so we are dealing with a rare pattern:

14. Barbara's avarice was moved, she *consented for this ransom to liberate her prisoner*. (Edgeworth 1796-1801 - the parent's assistant.txt, Line 3581)

Apart from the already familiar patterns a completely new one also emerged: *thereto*. Three instances of it were found, so at first glance it appears to be a new emerging pattern. However, one soon notices that the *thereto* –pattern only appears in a single text by one author, so it is possible that its occurrence is only a peculiarity of that one particular author's language and not a phenomenon that appears more broadly in the language community.

15. The outcry, in consequence, both against the dean of guild, and especially against the magistrates and council for *consenting thereto*, was so extraordinary, and I was so openly upbraided for being so long lukewarm, that I was, in a manner, forced again forward to take a p ... (Galt 1823 - the provost.txt, Line 1696)
16. ... to be paid eighteen pence a bottom-room, per ANNUM, by the proprietors of the pews; and, on sounding the heritors, I found them all most willing to *consent thereto*, glad to be relieved from the awful expense of gutting and replenishing such a great concern as the kirk was. (Galt 1823 - the provost.txt, Line 1867)
17. ...to build a cotton-mill on its banks, beneath the Witch-linn, which being on a corner of the Wheatrig, the property of Mr Cayenne, he not only *consented thereto*, but took a part in the profit or loss therein...(Galt 1823 - the provost.txt, Line 4123)

As for structural discontinuity (i.e. elements that intervene between the verb and its complement), it was not frequent, with only 5 such sentences. The number of words that intruded the verb-complement unit was relatively small, only 3 words on average. The complements were of the form *to* + NP (two instances, see (18) below) and *to* -infinitive (three instances, see (19) below).

18. I also wrote to Mr. Southey, and expressed a hope, that if he found it impossible at the present moment to return to cordiality, he would at least *consent* when he met Mr. Coleridge, to restrain the indignant look, which was painfully manifest on both countenances. (Cottle 1847 - reminiscences of samuel taylor coleridge and robert southey.txt, Line 3545)
19. ...if he refused to comply, I should demand the performance of her promise, to *consent* at once to our union without it. (Hunt h 1820-2 - memoirs of henry hunt 1.txt, Line 5600)

Normalized frequencies were calculated for the complementation patterns, which makes different parts of the corpora (they are of slightly different sizes) easier to compare. The table below summarizes the frequencies for the first and second part of the CLMETEV corpus.

Complement	1710-1780: NF per 10 million words	1780-1850: NF per 10 million words
<i>to</i> + NP	173.3	84.2
<i>to</i> -inf	186.7	242.1
<i>that</i> -clause	20	17.5
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + -ing	13.3	10.5
Ø	63.3	101.8
extraction	33.3	38.6
<i>for</i>	0	1.8
<i>thereto</i>	0	5.3
total	490	501.8

Table 7-2: Comparison of normalized frequencies between CLMETEV1 and CLMETEV2.

The frequency of occurrence of the verb *consent* in the two sub corpora is roughly similar. The complementation pattern that dramatically has gained most ground is the *to* -infinitive, while the *to* + NP pattern has lost prominence just as dramatically. The zero complementation has also become more common while the other patterns have not undergone as much change. As mentioned, *thereto* is a peculiarity in the statistics since it only appears in the language of one author.

7.3 The noun *consent*: senses and patterns

Both senses of the noun *consent* can be found in the data. Again, the ‘comply’ sense wins an overwhelming majority over the ‘accord’ sense. The table below summarizes their frequencies:

The ‘accord’ sense	The ‘comply’ sense
31	149

The next two sections will deal with each sense separately.

7.3.1 The ‘accord’ sense

A summary of the different sub senses:

	Sense in OED	Freq.
‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’	1. Agreement or unity of opinion, consensus, unanimity. obs.	9
	2. Agreement in feeling, sympathy; also, more generally, harmony, accord, agreement. obs. †b. Agreement in faith and doctrine, ecclesiastical communion	1
	†3. Phys. and Pathol. A relation of sympathy between one organ or part of the body and another, whereby when the one is affected the other is affected correspondingly.	1
	†4. Agreement by a number of persons as to a course of action; concert.	3
	b. phr. with one <i>consent</i> , by common <i>consent</i> .	17

Table 7-7-3: CLMETEV 2 (1780-1850), Noun: Senses and frequencies of ‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’.

The most frequent sub sense was number 4 in the OED, usually occurring with the phrase ‘by common consent’ or a variation of it. In the second part of the CLMETEV one more complementation pattern with the noun *consent* in the ‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’ was observed (only the zero complementation was present in the first part). However, the complementation pattern was extremely rare – only one instance was found:

Consent approximately equals ‘consensus’ and it appears with a *that* -clause with the modal *should*:

20. ...the bill having been previously read a second time was to be committed, petitions from interested persons had been brought against it, and *consent* had been obtained, that both council and evidence should be heard. (Clarkson 1839 - the history of the abolition of the african slave-trade.txt, Line 7576)

The most common sense by far was the phrase ‘by common consent’. In some sentences ‘by one/unanimous consent’ appeared as an intervening element between a verb and its *to* -infinitive complement or *that* –clause complement – note that it is not ‘by one consent’ that takes the complement here:

21. ...the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women *seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts* freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race ... (Dickens 1843 - a christmas carol in prose.txt, Line 267)
22. ...a mock election of Master of the Sports was proposed, and the hero of my tale had the splendid gratification of *being chosen by unanimous consent to this new office*. (Disraeli 1826 - vivian grey.txt, Line 2919)

As for the other, rare, sub senses the following two sentences were observed. In one sentence there are echoes from the old latin word ‘concent’ meaning ‘to sing together’ or ‘harmony’. That is the exact context of the following sentence:

23. Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak! And scarcely have they disappeared Ere the prelusive hymn is heard;-- *With one consent* the people rejoice, Filling the church with a lofty voice! They sing a service which they feel: For 'tis the sun-rise now of zeal; (Coleridge 1817 - biographia literaria.txt, Line 9674)

There is also one occurrence where there is harmony between body organs. The sentence seems to mix the two senses of body organs being affected by one another and the sense of sympathy or harmony:

24. My hopes are derived from the prophets and the evangelists. Believing in them with a calm and settled faith, with that *consent* of the will and heart and understanding which constitutes religious belief, and in them the clear annunciation of that kingdom of God upon earth... (Southey 1829 - sir thomas more.txt, Line 1143)

7.3.2 The 'comply' sense

Here is a summary of the 'comply' sense:

'comply'	5. Voluntary agreement; compliance, concurrence, permission.	147
	b. prov. Silence gives <i>consent</i>	2
	c. age of <i>consent</i> : the age fixed by law at which a person's <i>consent</i> to certain acts (e.g. marriage, sexual intercourse) is valid in law.	0

Table 7-4: CLMETEV 2 (1780-1850), Noun: Senses and frequencies of 'comply'

As can be observed from the table above, there were only two sentences with the proverb 'silence gives consent' (25) and all the rest of the sentences expressed voluntary agreement or permission.

25. "I did not at first deign to reply. But perceiving that he affected to take my *silence for consent*, I told him that, 'If he would not go to another bed, or allow me, I should sit up in my study all night.' (Wollstonecraft 1798 - maria.txt, Line 3703)

The frequencies of the complementation patterns for the 'comply' sense are recorded in table 7-3 below:

Complement	Frequency
<i>to</i> + NP	14
<i>to</i> -inf	12
<i>that</i> -clause	4
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + -ing	2
Ø	115
NP -ing	1
<i>to</i> -wh	1
total	149

Table 7-5: CLMETEV 2 (1780-1850), The noun *consent*: Frequencies of complements.

As can be seen from the table above, the overwhelmingly most frequent pattern was, again, zero complementation:

26. "Yes," said Catherine, stroking his long soft hair. "If I could only get papa's *consent* I'd spend half my time with you. Pretty Linton! I wish you were my brother." (Brontë 1847 - wuthering heights.txt, Line 10579)

Almost equally represented in numbers were the *to* –infinitive (27) and the *to* + NP (28):

27. ... and by his artful representations he had likewise induced her grandfather to *give his consent to the visit*... (Ainsworth 1843 - windsor castle.txt, Line 8185)
28. Though really I ought to beg your pardon, for he is one of your admirers." "Oh pray make no stranger of me! you *have my free consent to say whatever you please* of him." (Burney 1782 - cecilia 1-2.txt, Line 19120)

Again, all the *that* –clauses occurred with the modal *should*:

29. ...and that Marina showed herself not averse to his proposals; only he made it a condition, before he *gave his consent, that they should visit* with him the shrine of the Ephesian Diana; to whose temple they shortly after all three undertook a voyage... (Lamb 1807 - tales from shakespeare.txt, Line 10850)

I encountered two different –ing complementation patterns in the data. One was the already familiar *to* + poss + -ing –pattern (31) and the other was a slight variation of it, but a completely new pattern still, that can be described as *to* + NP + -ing (32):

30. ... that there was some hay about, and although this was of very trivial moment, it being a very small quantity, yet he positively refused to *give his consent to my going*. (Hunt h 1820-2 - memoirs of henry hunt 1.txt, Line 2876)
31. "That's the truth, Ready, and it is on that account that I consider that a parent is justified in *refusing his consent to his son going* to sea, if he can properly provide for him in any other profession. (Marryat 1841 - masterman ready.txt, Line 1048)

I also found one *wh*-clause in the data:

32. I considered that the best reformations are those which proceed step by step, and stop at that point where *the consent to what has*

been established becomes general; and so I governed myself, and therefore interfered no farther... (Galt 1821 - annals of the parish.txt, Line 5913)

8 The CLMETEV Corpus: part three (1850-1920)

Consent and its inflected forms yielded altogether 359 tokens from the third part of the CLMETEV corpus. Of them, 252 instances were analyzed as verbs and 107 as nouns. Again, a section will be devoted to each group.

Before venturing into the jungle of complementation patterns in the data, I must address an issue with the form *consenting* that I stumbled upon in this third part of the corpus. It is not immediately clear into what word class one should analyze *consenting*, sometimes it is difficult to determine even with context. This third part of the corpus yielded 18 instances with the form *consenting* and in half of those the analysis is challenging. *Consenting* has retained much of its noun-qualities even as a verb and can sometimes be seen as on the border between verb and noun – a nominal verb or a verbal noun. But to make the picture even more complex *consenting* can also be used as an adjective, in this case called an adjectival verb. So we are struggling with three word classes here. Next I will present some challenging sentences and my analysis of the word class of *consenting*.

In the following sentences *consenting* was used as an adjective. Therefore, I concluded that it is a verbal adjective and not a form of the verb.

1. She could not talk this out with anybody, except now and then an utterance to the *consenting* Mr. Mauleverer, but in general she would have been shocked to put these surging thoughts into words. (Yonge 1865 - the clever woman of the family.txt, Line 1947)

2. We entered the palace merrily, and presently Peterborough, who had worn a studious forehead in the midst of his *consenting* laughter, observed, 'Well, you know, there is more in that than appears on the surface.' (Meredith 1870 - the adventures of harry richmond.txt, Line 2550)

In these sentences *consenting* was judged to be a verbal noun, because it displays noun-like behaviour (occurs with a possessive pronoun):

3. His *consenting* at all to let her visit his patient seemed to afford one proof of this, and his readiness in making admissions which could scarcely have escaped th ... (Collins 1859-60 - the woman in white.txt, Line 10104)
4. "I ought to warn you that in the event of your *consenting* to be my wife it may be years before our union can be consummated, for I cannot marry till a college living is offered me. (Butler 1903 - the way of all flesh.txt, Line 1763)

8.1 The verb consent: the senses found in the data

The rare 'accord' sense was not represented among the verbs in the third part of the corpus. There was one sentence where the 'accord' interpretation could have been plausible, but the context is insufficient:

5. There's a virus. I'm not open to it. Others are.' Hereupon Woodseer, wishing to have his individuality recognised in the universality it *consented* to, remarked on an exchequer that could not afford to lose, and a disposition free of the craving to win. (Meredith 1895 - the amazing marriage.txt, Line 1769)

The marriage as the most typical context seems to be in further decline and the most common context involves *consenting* to some course of action that is suggested. It is usually a person who does the *consenting*, but in three sentences there is a case of part for whole – a human's body part answers for the whole person:

6. She said not a word. Why should she? her object was won. Give her that, and **a woman's tongue** will *consent to rest*. The dreaded weapon rest, also when she is kept spinning by the whip. (Meredith 1895 - the amazing marriage.txt, Line 4560)

7. ...confidence in Him to whom I have given myself, that I do not believe He will permit me to be snatched from Him, so long as **my will** does not *consent*. yonge 1870 - the caged lion.txt, Line 7492, N/A:
8. 'Wedlock on the spot to this gentleman, or to Sir Boemond a week hence.' Esclairmonde was very white. '**My will** shall not *consent to a present breach of vow* to save a future one,' she said, in a scarce audible voice. (Yonge 1870 - the caged lion.txt, Line 7656)

8.2 The verb consent: the patterns found in the data

Here is a summary of the patterns found in the data:

Complement	<i>consent</i>	<i>consented</i>	<i>consents</i>	<i>consenting</i>	all forms
<i>to</i> + NP	30	16	1	5	52
<i>to</i> -inf	37	60	5	3	105
<i>that</i> -clause	1	2	0	0	3
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + -ing	3	5	0	0	8
∅	30	42	2	2	76
extraction	2	4	0	0	6
<i>with</i>	0	0	0	1	1
<i>to</i> -ing	1	0	0	0	1
total	104	129	8	11	252

Table 8-1: CLMETEV 3 (1850-1920), Frequencies of the complements.

Again, normalized frequencies were calculated to highlight the differences in the frequencies of the patterns in the second and third parts of the CLMETEV corpus:

Complement	1780-1850: NF per 10 million words	1850-1920: NF per 10 million words
<i>to</i> + NP	84.2	82.5
<i>to</i> -inf	242.1	166.7
<i>that</i> -clause	17.5	4.7
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + -ing	10.5	12.7
∅	101.8	120.6
extraction	38.6	9.5

<i>for</i>	1.8	0
<i>thereto</i>	5.3	0
<i>with</i>	0	1.6
<i>to -ing</i>	0	1.6
total	501.8	400

Table 8-2: Comparison of normalized frequencies between parts 2 and 3 of the CLMETEV.

There is a decrease in the overall frequency of the verb *consent* from CLMETEV 2 to CLMETEV 3. As regards the distribution of its complementation patterns there is a slight decrease in the frequency of the *to* + NP –pattern and the *to* + poss.pron + -ing – pattern. The *to* –infinitives continue to be the most frequent in spite of a very dramatic decrease. There is also a drop in the occurrence of the *that* –clauses and an even bigger drop in extractions. The zero complementation is steadily gaining ground. The third part of the corpus also sees the emergence of the *to* –ing pattern that has been eagerly awaited. The triumph is however limited because only one instance of the pattern was found.

The familiar patterns *to* + NP (9), *to* -infinitive (10), *that* –clause (11) with a modal *should*, *to* + poss.pron + -ing (12) and zero complementation (13) that we already encountered in the first and second part of the CLMETEV were again well represented:

9. ...the authorities have *consented to a most alarming inroad* upon several of the principal streets. (Bird 1856 - the englishwoman in america.txt, Line 8443)
10. When suddenly called by her own name, she nearly fainted with agitation. She was in a condition of terrible poverty and shame, but at once *consented*, on hearing of her mother's enquiries, to go into one of our Canadian Rescue Homes. (Booth 1890 - in darkest england and the way out.txt, Line 7841)
11. The admiral *consented that his daughter should go*, as soon as he heard that Miss Kirby was to stay. (Meredith 1895 - the amazing marriage.txt, Line 2550)

12. 'It may be so,' said Bedford; 'and yet I would I had not *consented to his going* where that woman of Hainault might work on him to fret the Lady Esclairmonde.' (Yonge 1870 - the caged lion.txt, Line 7915)
13. You'll come, won't you, Amy?' Amy readily *consented*, for she too had hopes, though circumstances blurred them. (Gissing 1891 - new grub street.txt, Line 16626)

Also extractions were present, although few in number. They were surprisingly similar to one another. The extracted element was usually the word *this* (in four cases out of six, see (14)) and *this* was standing for the extracted clause. In one sentence the extracted element was an NP, a children's parliament (15):

14. After she had been in his service some little time he proposed that she should take a trip to London. To this she very gladly *consented*, all the more so when he offered to take her himself to a good appointment he had secured for her. (Booth 1890 - in darkest england and the way out.txt, Line 8798)
15. ...with 'screams from the Opposition benches,' and 'the honourable Member borne out in hysterics?' To a Children's Parliament would I gladly *consent*; or even lower if ye wished it. (Carlyle 1837 - the french revolution.txt, Line 801)

The two new patterns that emerged in the second part of the corpus, the *thereto* and *for* –clauses, were **not** present at all in the verb data. Instead two other patterns emerged in the last part of the CLMETEV: *with* + NP (16) where the NP notably is +ANIMATE, a person (this is contradictory to the OED's indications!) and the much anticipated *to* –ing –pattern (17).

16. Less extreme than she, I was just by so much the farther from the grace of truth; and to keep my pace would have been *consenting with sinners*. (Linton 1885 - the autobiography of christopher kirkland 1-3.txt, Line 11194)
17. "My dear, that is not a sufficient change for you. Ely is a different climate, and I cannot *consent to quartering you on a stranger* for so long." (Rutherford 1893 - catherine furze.txt, Line 905)

As for structural discontinuity, it continues to be rare with *consent* and the intervening segments are only very short. Of the two sentences that I found one was *to* –infinitive complemented and the other *to* + NP -complemented:

18. Miss Halcombe's own impression was that the owner of the Asylum had not been received into the confidence of Sir Percival and the Count. His *consenting at all to let her visit his patient* seemed to afford one proof of this... (Collins 1859-60 - the woman in white.txt, Line 10104)
19. Rachel *consented the more readily to the postponement of the holiday*... (Yonge 1865 - the clever woman of the family.txt, Line 3298)

8.3 The noun *consent*: senses and patterns

The two sections that follow will deal with the two senses separately. Again, both senses of the noun *consent* can be found among the 107 tokens in data. And once again, the ‘comply’ sense wins an overwhelming majority over the ‘accord’ sense. The table below summarizes their frequencies:

The ‘accord’ sense	The ‘comply’ sense
21	86

8.3.1 The ‘accord’ sense

Turning to the different sub senses captured by the terms ‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’. Here is the distribution of the sub senses:

	Sense in OED	Freq.
‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’	1. Agreement or unity of opinion, consensus, unanimity. obs.	2
	2. Agreement in feeling, sympathy; also, more generally, harmony, accord, agreement. obs. †b. Agreement in faith and doctrine, ecclesiastical communion	0
	†3. Phys. and Pathol. A relation of sympathy between one organ or part of the body and another, whereby when the one is affected the other is affected correspondingly.	0

	†4. Agreement by a number of persons as to a course of action; concert.	1
	b. phr. with one <i>consent</i> , by common <i>consent</i> .	18

Table 8-3: CLMETEV 1 (1710-1780), Noun: Senses and frequencies of 'accord' 'be unanimous'.

The first sense regarding the unanimity of opinions was found in texts dealing with social sciences or politics.

20. For we are all alike in our worship of genius that has passed through the fire. Nor can this universal instinctive *consent* be explained otherwise than as the welling up of a spring whose sources lie deep in the conviction that great as this world is, it masks a greater... (Butler 1912 - notebooks.txt, Line 6934)
21. Government does not rest on force. Government is force; it rests on *consent* or a conception of justice. A king or a community holding a certain thing to be abnormal, evil, uses the general strength to crush it out... (Chesterton 1912 - what's wrong with the world.txt, Line 3382)

All the other sentences fell under sense 4 in the OED, and almost exclusively under the phrase 'by common consent' or one of the variations of it. All but one sentence were zero complemented. The one sentence which was not appeared with a *that* -clause and a modal *should*:

22. And some declared it could not be allowed for foreign monks to have a claim to inherit English property. There was a general *consent*, that if the Earl of Fleetwood went to the extreme of making over his property to those monks, he should be pronounced insane and incapable. (Meredith 1895 - the amazing marriage.txt, Line 7704)

8.3.2 The 'comply' sense

Here is a summary of the 'comply' sense:

'comply'	5. Voluntary agreement; compliance, concurrence, permission.	85
	b. prov. Silence gives <i>consent</i>	1
	c. age of <i>consent</i> : the age fixed by law at which a person's <i>consent</i> to certain acts (e.g. marriage, sexual intercourse) is valid in law.	0

Table 8-4: CLMETEV 2 (1780-1850), Noun: Senses and frequencies of 'comply'

As can be observed from the table above, there was only one sentence with the proverb ‘silence gives consent’ (23) and all the rest of the sentences expressed voluntary agreement or permission.

23. He did listen, apparently; and she *took his silence for consent*, for she ended with-- "Well, then, it is quite settled; the ball shall be at Merivale, on the 20th of next month?" (Craik 1850 - olive 1-3.txt, Line 2777)

Below are the complement patterns summarized:

Complement	Frequency
<i>to</i> + NP	10
<i>to</i> -inf	3
<i>that</i> -clause	0
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + -ing	1
∅	70
<i>for</i>	2
total	86

Table 8-5: CLMETEV 3 (1850-1920), Complementation patterns of the noun *consent*.

The most frequent pattern continues to be the zero complement:

24. A King of the English can do nothing without the *consent* of his Witan. (Freeman 1888 - william the conqueror.txt, Line 1964)

The *to* + NP (27) has now far exceeded the popularity of the *to* -infinitive (28) pattern:

25. Why was she not more politic? Would it not have been possible to gratify him, and yet to gain his *consent to legal marriage*? (Gissing 1893 - the odd woman.txt, Line 11728)
26. Rebecca Wythan under earth, the earl was briefly informed of Lady Fleetwood's *consent to quit Wales*, obedient to a summons two months old, --and that she would be properly escorted; for the which her lord had made provision. (Meredith 1895 - the amazing marriage.txt, Line 10487)

Remarkably, there are no *that* -clauses with the ‘comply’ sense of *consent* – the only *that* -clause in the data appeared with the ‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’ sense. But, I have found two *for* -patterns, but they are not of *for* – *to* kind. However, these are from the

same text and the same author. Therefore, it is not safe to assume that the pattern is necessarily much used.

27. At the beginning of this year he wrote to me, in a letter which I will presently give in full, that he had obtained Dr. Krause's *consent* for a translation, and had arranged with Mr. Dallas, before my book was "announced." (Butler 1880 - unconscious memory.txt, Line 1196)

28. I may add that I had obtained Dr. Krause's *consent* for a translation, and had arranged with Mr. Dallas before your book was announced. (Butler 1880 - unconscious memory.txt, Line 1560)

And finally there is an *to* + poss. pron + -ing pattern (29):

29. My father gave his formal *consent* to my going up to London for a year for the purpose of studying at the British Museum, and writing the book on which I had set my heart. (Linton 1885 - the autobiography of christopher kirkland 1-3.txt, Line 3914)

9 The British National Corpus: Contemporary British English

Consent becomes even less frequent, even rare used as a verb, in contemporary English compared with the historical data. It has decreased from a normalized frequency of 500 per 10 million words in CLMETEV 2 to only 60 per 10 million in the BNC. The decrease is drastic.

Altogether 794 tokens were collected from the BNC. The lemma search for the verb *consent* yielded 662 tokens in the entire BNC and the search for the noun *consent* yielded a massive 3343 tokens. Because the number of nouns was far too large for the scope of this thesis, I decided to limit the search for the noun into the one sub part that most resembled the CLMETEV, the BNC *Imaginative*. This search yielded a more manageable number of tokens – 132.

However, not all tokens that the concordance offered as verbs were in fact verbs and neither were all offered nouns really nouns. The number of verbs and nouns I finally ended up with were 611 and 131 respectively. Next, I will give some examples of sentences where the tagging of the verb/noun was wrongly analyzed by the concordance with my correction after the sentence in **bold**.

1. FA1 In deciding whether a breach of agreed standards is in itself cause for action , the field man will again set the pollution in the context of its location before judging the degree by which it exceeds the consented level. *tagged as a verb* → **verbal adjective**
2. H82 Good God, man, you don't need her *consent*. *tagged as a verb* → **noun**
3. J77 ...limited company or other corporation all licences *consents* approvals and notices required be given by... *tagged as a verb* → **noun**
4. Admitting this, it might nevertheless be claimed that a person's *consenting* entails, as a matter of the meaning of `consent', not only that he acted in the way I have described, but that his action has the purported normative consequences. *tagged as a verb* → **verbal noun**

Within the verb data, there emerged a new sense in connection with the form *consenting*. The OED describes the sense as follows:

consenting adult: an adult who *consents* to something, esp. To an act of homosexuality; a homosexual.

I have treated *consenting* as a verbal adjective and excluded it from my data. However, I cannot refrain from making a point about the OED definition. My findings prove the OED definition to be imprecise - in my data 'consenting adult' does not refer to a homosexual only to a person (sexual orientation not being an issue) who *consents* to sex.

5. GR3 It reached a climax in 1977 when another troupe of actors took over a shop in the main street of Shiraz, hard by the mosque, and performed in the shop and on the pavement a play that involved a full frontal rape and laws acts between naked, **consenting** actors.

9.1 *The verb consent: the senses found in the data*

The ‘accord’ sense is, I was surprised to find, present in two sentences in the data.

Consent is used in the sense ‘to be unanimous’ twice in the same legal text “Child protection law”.

6. J76 If all parties *consent*, and the guardian has had an opportunity to make representations, the court may grant the request without a hearing.
7. J76 Where all parties *consent*, the court may make, vary or revoke directions without the need for attendance at court.

Apart from those two sentences in the rest of the data the verb *consent* is used in the ‘comply’ sense. The material also shows that the use of *consent* has become more ‘specialized’ - it is used in legal contexts almost exclusively:

8. J76 The child must be fully aware of what he or she is *consenting* to and what the possible consequences may be.

9.2 *The verb consent: the patterns found in the data*

Before proceeding to present the complementation patterns I must point out that because some of the texts in BNC were legal texts that were fairly complex, the complement was not always easy to spot, sometimes it was impossible. The following three sentences were listed as ‘other’ in my data simply because of their complexity:

9. HXV It was held that *volenti* did not apply on these facts as the plaintiff had not *consented* to or absolved the defendant from subsequent negligence on his part. “Law of tort”
10. HC1 Subsequent legislation and regulation have only supplemented the 1974 Act that made directors, managers and other officers liable to prosecution where they have *consented* to or have connived at the committing of any offence or where an offence has been caused by neglect on their part. “news”
11. FD0 ` Notwithstanding the provisions of the preceding article , the judicial or administrative authority of the requested state is not bound to

order the return of the child if the person , institution or other body which opposes its return establishes that -- (a) the person , institution or other body having the care of the person of the child was not actually exercising the custody rights at the time of removal or retention , or had *consented* to or subsequently acquiesced in the removal or retention ;
 “The weekly law reports 1992”

Here is a summary of the complementation patterns and their frequencies occurring with the verb *consent*:

Complement	<i>consent</i>	<i>consented</i>	<i>consents</i>	<i>consenting</i>	all forms
<i>to</i> + NP	114	99	11	11	235
<i>to</i> -inf	37	56	1	8	102
<i>that</i> -clause	0	1	1	0	2
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + -ing	6	8	0	0	14
∅	95	61	5	11	172
extractions	9	19	0	1	29
<i>to</i> + NP + -ing	13	20	0	0	33
<i>for</i>	1	0	0	0	1
<i>to</i> -ing	10	5	1	0	16
<i>wh</i> -clause	2	0	0	0	2
other	0	3	1	1	5
total	287	272	20	32	611

Table 9-1: BNC (contemporary BrE), Summary of the frequencies of complements of the verb *consent*.

In the following table are the normalized frequencies for the last part of the CLMETEV compared with the BNC. Because the overall frequency of the verb *consent* has decreased so dramatically the normalized frequencies alone do not easily reveal how the frequencies of the complementation patterns are distributed, one only notices a sharp decrease in all patterns. Therefore, I have calculated percentages to show how the patterns are distributed within the CLMETEV 3 and the BNC:

Complement	NF per 10 million words, CLMETEV 3	Distribution of complements, percentage	NF per 10 million words, BNC	Distribution of complements, percentage
<i>to</i> + NP	82.5	21 %	23.4	38 %
<i>to</i> -inf	166.7	42 %	10.1	17 %

<i>that</i> –clause	4.7	1 %	0.2	≈0 %
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + -ing	12.7	3 %	1.4	2 %
∅	120.6	30 %	17.1	28 %
extraction	9.5	2 %	2.9	5 %
<i>for</i>	0	0	0.1	≈0 %
<i>with</i>	1.6	≈0 %	0	0
<i>to</i> -ing	1.6	≈0 %	1.6	3 %
<i>wh</i> -clause	0	0	0.2	≈0 %
other	0	0	0.5	1 %
<i>to</i> + NP + -ing	0	0	3.3	5 %
total	400	100 %	60.8	100 %

Table 9-2: Normalized frequencies and percentages of frequencies of complements of the CLMETEV 3 and the BNC.

There is a dramatic **increase** in the *to* + NP pattern and in present-day British English it has emerged as the most prominent pattern. There is an equally dramatic **decrease** in the *to* –infinitive pattern.

12. FRB The Attorney-General has to *consent to any prosecution under the Act* and such cases have been fairly infrequent.
13. H7P But would Mr Moon *consent to come alone*?

It is interesting that among the *to* + NP patterns I could find an NP in the –ing form – it seems like a mixed-breed of a verb and noun. Notice the difference if the NP was to be substituted by a verbal –ing – the meaning would change! In sentence (14) it is someone else taking the items while in sentence (15) it is the shop manager himself who takes the items.

14. HXE Accordingly Morris was applied with the result that the accused was not guilty because the shop manager had *consented to the taking* of the items . “Criminal law”
15. ...because the shop manager had *consented to taking* the items. (my own sentence)

As for the nature of the NP that is *consented* to. It is, again, usually –HUMAN, a proposition (16), but there were a couple of sentences from the same text where a person was *consented* to (17)(18):

16. ASK Traditionally, the law has said that allowing someone who is terminally ill to die is lawful, but bringing about his or her death is unlawful, even if he or she *consents* or requests it. “ Treat me right: essays on medical law”
17. GW1 There is hardly any modern authority which suggests, as did the judges in Clarence, that either a wife can unilaterally in certain circumstances withdraw her *consent*, or else that the ambit of *consent* is restricted so that a wife is not deemed to *consent* to her husband where his conduct is egregious.
18. GW1 A man may believe that a woman who has consented to him before or *consented* frequently to others will consent again and that her `no` is equally a sham.

Patterns fading into obscurity are the *that* –clause (19) (but it is notable that the *that* - *should* complementation pattern continues to exist because it was only mentioned in the OED in a sentence from 1690), the *for* –pattern (19) and the *wh* –clause (20)(21). Of those, only the *that* –clause has earlier had some prominence. In the BNC data the *for* – pattern is now of the *for* – *to* kind that Huddleston and Pullum had in mind (2002, 1227).

19. HPT At last Lothar *consented* on oath that the father should give Charles any part of the kingdom he wanted , and moreover that he (Lothar) would be his guardian and protector against all his enemies now and in the future".
20. EG0 They said if we did n't *consent* for him to claim for the two of us, they 'd summons me and him for aiding and abetting.
21. EVP Is democracy a means of bringing about that the people shall *consent* to what the government proposes to do, or that the government shall do what the people want?
22. EVP The people can *consent* to whatever form of civil or constitutional rule they like.

There is also some decrease in the amount of zero complementation with *consent*:

23. AJC Even if she *consents*, in fact this has no effect in law.

Extractions, on the other hand, are slightly rising in number. Somehow, I suspect that it may be in connection with the large amount of legal texts, which tend to have very complex sentences, at hand in the BNC *Imaginative*:

24. ASK Having established the point that it is the patient who ultimately may set the limits to the doctor 's intervention, it is now necessary to consider the duties which arise in the usual circumstances in which treatment is *consented to*.

25. J73 The member will be bound by the rules to which he has *consented*.

There is a dramatic increase in the occurrence of –ing complements. The *to* + poss.pron + -ing (26) may be losing its prominence but it is readily compensated by the sharp increase in *to* –ing (27) and the *to* + NP + -ing –patterns (28). I had anticipated the emergence of the *to* –ing pattern on the basis of the findings of Rudanko (2000) but the strong emergence of the *to* + NP + -ing pattern was a complete surprise that is not documented in the literature in connection with *consent*.

26. ANH ‘I *consented to his being the leader*.’

27. HGS Byron tipped it gently into his brandy Shelley *consented to having a draught in wine*.

28. HXV The defence of volenti would fail as Brian may be aware that John is drunk but he did not *consent to him driving negligently*.

Structural discontinuity is next to inexistent, it occurs in only one sentence in a legal text. From the sentence it would seem at first glance that *consent* could also take a bare NP as complement, but in my opinion, it seems more like a complement of *request* (which does take a bare NP complement) than of *consent*:

29. ASK Traditionally, the law has said that allowing someone who is terminally ill to die is lawful, but bringing about his or her death is unlawful, even if he or she *consents or requests it*.

9.3 The noun *consent*: senses and patterns

The two sections that follow will deal with the two senses separately. Still in present-day English both senses of the noun *consent* can be found among the 131 tokens of data. And once again, the ‘comply’ sense wins an overwhelming majority over the ‘accord’ sense. The table below summarizes their frequencies:

The ‘accord’ sense	The ‘comply’ sense
27	104

9.3.1 The ‘accord’ sense

Turning to the different sub senses captured by the terms ‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’. Here is the distribution of the sub senses:

	Sense in OED	Freq.
‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’	1. Agreement or unity of opinion, consensus, unanimity. obs.	0
	2. Agreement in feeling, sympathy; also, more generally, harmony, accord, agreement. obs. †b. Agreement in faith and doctrine, ecclesiastical communion	0
	†3. Phys. and Pathol. A relation of sympathy between one organ or part of the body and another, whereby when the one is affected the other is affected correspondingly.	0
	†4. Agreement by a number of persons as to a course of action; concert.	0
	b. phr. with one <i>consent</i> , by common <i>consent</i> .	27

Table 9-9-3: BNC, Noun: Senses and frequencies of ‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’.

In present-day English only sense 4 in the OED seems to have survived judging from the data. Variations of the phrase were:

- by tacit/unspoken *consent*
- by mutual *consent*
- by common *consent*

Interestingly the phrase ‘by one consent’ which was quite prominent in the earlier data, did not occur at all in the BNC. All the senses ‘accord’ ‘be unanimous’ were zero complemented.

9.3.2 The ‘comply’ sense

Here is a summary of the ‘comply’ sense:

‘comply’	5. Voluntary agreement; compliance, concurrence, permission.	93
	b. prov. Silence gives <i>consent</i>	8
	c. age of <i>consent</i> : the age fixed by law at which a person's <i>consent</i> to certain acts (e.g. marriage, sexual intercourse) is valid in law.	3

Table 9-4: CLMETEV 2 (1780-1850), Noun: Senses and frequencies of ‘comply’

As can be observed from the table above, there were eight sentences with the proverb ‘silence gives consent’ (30), which is a remarkable increase from the one sentence that was found in CLMETEV 3.

30. FPH He had taken her surprised silence for *consent*.

For the first time in all of the data the concept of ‘age of consent’ emerges:

31. FB9 Jail-bait, actually. She looks well over the age of *consent*.

All the rest of the sentences expressed voluntary agreement or permission, sense 5 in the OED. The frequencies of the complements are given below:

Complement	Frequency
<i>to</i> + NP	12
<i>to</i> -inf	2
<i>that</i> -clause	1
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + -ing	1
Ø	84
<i>for</i>	3
<i>to</i> -ing	1
total	104

<i>to</i> + NP	52	173.3	48	84.2	52	82.5	235	23.4
<i>to</i> –inf	56	186.7	138	242.1	105	166.7	102	10.1
<i>that</i> –clause	6	20	10	17.5	3	4.7	2	0.2
<i>to</i> + poss.pron + - ing	4	13.3	6	10.5	8	12.7	14	1.4
∅	19	63.3	58	101.8	76	120.6	172	17.1
extraction	10	33.3	22	38.6	6	9.5	29	2.9
<i>for</i>	0		1	1.8	0		1	0.1
<i>thereto</i>	0		3	5.3	0		0	
<i>with</i>	0		0		1	1.6	0	
<i>to</i> –ing	0		0		1	1.6	16	1.6
<i>wh</i> –clause	0		0		0		2	0.2
other	0		0		0		5	0.5
<i>to</i> + NP –ing	0		0		0		33	3.3
total	147	490	286	501.8	252	400	611	60.8

Table 10-1: Summary of all complementation data for the verb *consent*, raw frequencies and normalized frequencies.

11 Conclusion

In this thesis I have explored the syntactic and semantic characteristics of the verb *consent* and also to some extent the noun *consent* from the point of view of language change. I have attempted to map the changes in the complementation system of *consent* and many developments were indeed observed in the data.

One of the points of interest was to discover if Bolinger's (1968) generalization was true in the case of *consent*, i.e. if the fact that there are different complementation patterns of *consent* implies that there is also a difference in meaning between them. To some limited extent the claim could be substantiated by evidence in the OED and in the corpus data, especially for the part of the noun. The OED listed a different variety of patterns to occur with the 'comply' sense than with the 'accord'

sense, which verifies Bolinger's generalization. The corpus data, however, revealed only little because of the large amount of zero complementation occurring with the 'accord' sense. Having said that, there was some (although extremely limited) evidence in the noun and verb data (three 'accord' sentences in CLMETEV 2 and another in CLMETEV 3) to suggest that the *that* -clause with a modal *should* does carry some of the meaning of 'agree **together** as to a course of action' rather than the giving of permission. Also two instances (both in CLMETEV 2) of the *to* -infinitive were observed with the 'accord' sense, but the extreme rarity of the pattern prevents me from jumping to conclusions based on it.

The semantic fields of the NPs connected with *consent* also deserve some attention. The EXPERIENCER/AGENT was almost exclusively a person, but in a couple of these cases there was a phenomenon of part for whole – where a body part or property (tongue, will, poverty, voice) represents the whole person. The THEME (or Object) being *consented* on was normally -ANIMATE, a course of action or a proposition, but a few rare cases of the +ANIMATE and +HUMAN THEMES were found namely *consenting* to a person. More specifically, the THEME was often marriage or divorce in the beginning of the time span observed but the THEME evolved into *consenting* to sex or agreeing to a legal contract in present-day English.

The reason I also wanted to explore extractions was to see what kind of effect it has on the change of complementation patterns. Unfortunately, the types of extractions with an element from the lower clause being extracted were not spotted in the data. Moreover, the zero complementation pattern was abundant.

Also structural discontinuity was scarce throughout the corpus data and offered very little. The prediction was that -ing forms would not be favoured in environments with structural discontinuity, but primarily finite complements and in a

second place *to* –infinitives. My data supports that prediction for the most part as the environment in fact was normally that of *to* –infinitives (though not *that* –clauses!).

The decrease in the overall frequency of the verb *consent* was very dramatic. Also the changes in the complementation patterns of *consent* over the centuries were often dramatic.

The most common pattern, the *to* + NP pattern ('I *consented* to it'), experienced a dramatic decrease from the 18th century to the 20th. However, the *to* + NP rapidly more than regained its prominence that it now enjoys in present-day English. The second most prominent pattern, the zero complementation ('I *consented*'), experienced a rise that peaked in the 20th century. The *to* –infinitive ('I *consented* to go') that now occupies a strong third place among the patterns, started out in the 18th century as the strongest pattern. The *that* –clause ('I *consented* that we should go'), although never nearly as prominent as the two mentioned above has now lost even the small foothold it had in the 18th century.

The most remarkable change has occurred with the –ing forms gaining strong ground in the complementation system. This change confirms that the Great Complement Shift is in fact also affecting *consent* in the predicted manner. The change is by no means complete and an increase among the –ing patterns can still be expected. The group of –ing patterns started first gaining ground with the *to* + poss.pron + -ing – pattern ('I *consented* to his going') that appeared already in the 18th century data. Its frequency is experiencing a slight decrease towards present-day, but its decrease is readily compensated by the other –ing patterns: *to* –ing ('I *consented* to going') and especially by the *to* + NP + –ing ('I *consented* to him going'). In fact, together they form the fourth most common complementation pattern. The first emergence of the *to* –ing pattern occurred in the 19th century and it has experienced a dramatic surge in

present-day English and. At the side of the *to* –ing pattern there is an even more dramatic increase in the *to* + NP + –ing pattern, it alone can stand as the fourth most common complementation pattern.

Several patterns with *consent* were and continue to be marginal. Among those are the *for* – *to* –pattern, *with* –pattern and the *wh* – clause and also *thereto*, which only appeared in the text of one author.

This study has contributed for its humble part to the research on the Great Complement Shift in English and has attempted to provide an illustration of the different characteristics associated with *consent*. For future research there remains the question of how the complementation of *consent*, which clearly is in turmoil, will evolve and which patterns will emerge as the survivors. Especially the strong emergence of the *to* + NP + -ing pattern invites further study as well as the question of differentiating between meanings of the modern complementation patterns of the ‘comply’ sense of *consent*.

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