

The Complements of the Verb *Confess* in Late Modern English and
Modern English

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Tässä korpuspohjaisessa pro gradu –tutkielmassa tutkitaan verbin *confess* komplementaatiota 1700-luvun alusta 2000-luvulle saakka. Keskeinen käsite komplementaation tutkimuksessa on valinta, sillä jokainen verbi valitsee itselleen tiettyjä komplementteja toisten ollessa mahdottomia. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on selvittää, minkälaisia komplementteja verbi *confess* valitsee.

Tutkielmassa lähdetään liikkeelle korpuksen määrittelystä ja siitä, mitä annettavaa korpuksilla on lingvistiselle tutkimukselle. Tämän jälkeen esitellään teoreettisia lähtökohtia komplementaation tutkimukselle. Tärkeimpiä näistä ovat valenssiteoria, Rohdenburgin *Great Complement Shift* –teoria sekä siihen liittyvät the *complexity principle* –periaate ja ekstraktiot. Myös kontrolliteoriaa referoidaan siltä osin kuin se on tutkimukselle olennaista. Aiempaa tutkimusta *confess*-verbistä tarjotaan kolmen eri sanakirjan avulla, jotka ovat *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* ja *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Edellä mainitut kolme teosta antavat tietoa sekä kyseessä olevan verbin merkityksistä että komplementeista. Tietoa *confess*-verbin valitsemista komplementeista antavat myös lukuisat kielioppikirjat, joita referoidaan sanakirjaosion jälkeen. Tutkimuksen empiirisen osan datan lähteinä toimii kaksi eri korpusta. Ensimmäinen, *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (laajennettu versio), sisältää dataa 1700-luvun alusta 1900-luvun alkupuolella ja toinen, the *British National Corpus*, puolestaan kattaa 1900-luvun loppupuolen.

Tutkimuksen empiirinen osa kertoo, että verbi *confess* saa lukuisia erilaisia komplementteja sekä vanhemmassa että nykypäivän englannin kielessä. *That*-lauseke on säilynyt selvästi yleisimpänä läpi tutkitun ajanjakson. Historiallisessa korpuksessa NP-lauseke on seurannut toisena ja kolmantena rakenteena on ollut parenthetical-fraasi. Näiden lisäksi *confess* on valinnut joukon muita, harvemmin esiintyviä komplementteja. Nykypäivän englannissa *that*-lauseke on edelleen yleisin komplementti, mutta muilta osin on tapahtunut muutoksia. Toiseksi yleisin komplementti on suora esitys ja kolmantena tulevat NP-lausekkeet. Sijat neljä ja viisi menevät prepositio *to* + NP-lauseke ja prepositio *to* + *ing*-muoto komplementeille, joita historiallisessa korpuksessa ei esiintynyt juuri lainkaan. Molemmista korpuksista löytyi myös useita ekstraktioita sekä *complexity principle* –periaatteita tukevia rakenteita, joiden merkitystä komplementaatorakenteille pohditaan työssä. Verbin *confess* semanttinen analyysi osoitti, että lähes joka osiossa verbi esiintyi vain sen yleisimmässä merkityksessä ja muissa merkityksissä vain harvoin.

Asiasanat: *confess*, komplementaatio, korpus, korpuslingvistiikka, verbi

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1 Introduction

Consider the following sentences from the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

- (1) I **confess** I was guilty of disobedience. (Halkett 1699)
- (2) He had to **confess** to a certain sense of failure. (Black 1873)
- (3) Promise me life, and ile **confesse** the truth. (Shakespeare 1596)

As the sentences above show, there are different kinds of patterns that follow the verb *confess*. The occurrence of these patterns, i.e. complements, is not random but instead there are rules and restrictions that determine which patterns are allowed. The purpose of the present thesis is to study the concept of verb complementation and more precisely, the complementation of the verb *confess*, and see what complements are possible and frequent. The keyword in complementation is selection because the matrix verb selects the complementation patterns that are possible and discards others as impossible.

The main motivation for this study is to see if there is a change in progress in the complementation of *confess*, and whether it is following general trends in the area. The study of two corpora from different periods of time will serve as a starting point for this analysis. Another reason to do this study is its benefits to language teaching, since normally any information as to complement selection or the acceptability or likelihood of a complement is not available in teaching. A third reason is linked to the previous one. It will be interesting to see what is special about the complementation of *confess* and perhaps provide some new information on that particular verb.

I will begin my thesis by looking at some background information and theories concerning the matter at hand. Since this is a corpus-based study, I will first present some basic facts about corpora and corpora as a source of data. I will then move on to the notion of complementation and factors bearing on it. After introducing the general field of the present study, I will take a closer look at the verb *confess*. First, a selection of dictionaries and grammars will be studied to see how *confess* is said to be complemented. After this, I will

move on to presenting empirical data. I will examine the verb *confess* in two corpora, the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (the extended version, the CLMETEV) and the *British National Corpus* (the BNC), and see what kind of complementation patterns *confess* has in authentic English data. Finally, I will discuss all the findings, try to highlight the most important findings and see what conclusions can be drawn.

2 On Corpora

2.1 Corpora as a source of data

According to Leech (1968, 88), there are three main ways of getting data about a language: 1) elicited reactions of speakers of a language, 2) introspection of a native speaker linguist and 3) corpus data. Although the first two have had many supporters, e.g. Noam Chomsky, Leech points out the obvious shortcomings of these methods. First, speakers of a language cannot usually offer information about the grammaticality of a language but only about acceptability, and there are no operational ways of eliciting a person's unconscious linguistic knowledge (Leech 1968; 89, 94). Second, introspection as a data collection method is too subjective. Leech gives two basic problems of introspection (1968, 91): 1) two linguists may have differing intuitions depending on their training and 2) a linguist's intuition may be affected by the hypotheses he or she is trying to confirm.

The third way of collecting data, which will be employed in this thesis, is from corpora. In its simplest definition, a corpus is a body of text. However, the word *corpus* often connotes more than that. A corpus is a compilation of texts that is sampled to be maximally representative of the language in question (McEnery and Wilson 1996; 29-30, 103). This means that it is possible to make generalizations based on the findings (ibid. 130). Another quality of corpora is that they are normally finite in size (ibid. 30-31). Nowadays, corpora are also most often electronic – in McEnery and Wilson's terms they are in “machine-readable form” (1996, 31).

Corpora can be compiled for different purposes, be of various sizes and consist of whole texts or parts of texts (Kennedy 1998, 3-4). A corpus that is designed for a linguistic analysis is usually “systematic, planned and structured compilation of text”, which makes it possible to be used as a source of empirical data (Kennedy 1998, 4). As opposed to the other two methods mentioned earlier, Leech highlights the practicability of corpus data (1968, 94).

McEnery and Wilson (1996, 103) point out to the nature of empirical data and also defend the use of corpora in collecting it:

Empirical data enable the linguist to make statements which are objective and based on language as it really is rather than statements which are subjective and based upon the individual's own internalised cognitive perception of the language.

Although empirical data can be collected by other ways than from corpora, McEnery and Wilson consider corpus data and empirical data very closely related (1996, 103).

Corpora can be used for various kinds of linguistic study but for the present thesis, the focus is on the aspects of grammar they have to offer. McEnery and Wilson (1996, 109-110) give two reasons why corpora are important in a syntactic study: first, they give plenty of representative material for the study of grammar and second, it is possible to test grammatical hypotheses and theories with a corpus. One more important point about corpora is that they “are concerned typically not only with what words, structures or uses are possible in a language but also about what is probable – what is likely to occur in language use” (Kennedy 1998, 8). One of the motives behind this thesis is language teaching and the notion of probability of use is very central to it. McEnery and Wilson (1996, 120) refer to studies that have revealed that foreign language textbooks often contain uses of a language that are infrequent or would not even be used by natives. For this reason, they suggest that corpora should be used in producing teaching material “so that the more common choices of usage are given more attention than those which are less common” (ibid.).

Another aim of the present thesis is to study possible changes in the complementation of *confess*. Corpora are very useful for this aspect of linguistic study as well, since the study of language change through history is made possible or at least very much easier as data from past centuries is compiled in corpora available for researchers.

2.2 The corpora used in this thesis

2.2.1 The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (the Extended Version)

The extended version of the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts is a corpus compiled using texts from *Project Gutenberg* and the *Oxford Text Archive*. It covers authentic data of English from the period between 1710 and 1920. It is divided into three sub-periods, which all cover 70 years. The first part comprises 3 million words from the years 1710-1780, the second part 5.8 million words from the years 1780-1850 and the third part 6.1 million words from the years 1850-1920, altogether 14.9 million words. The corpus consists of texts written by native speakers of British English who have all contributed to the corpus with a restricted amount of words. Most of the texts in the corpus are literary texts written by higher class male writers, although some effort has been put to choosing texts from different genres, from writers of different social backgrounds and also to choosing non-literary texts whenever possible. ¹

2.2.2 The British National Corpus

The British National Corpus is another corpus that will be used for the purposes of this thesis. The BNC is a corpus “designed to represent a wide cross-section of British English from the later part of the 20th century, both spoken and written”. Only the written part is included in this study because the CLMETEV does not include spoken texts and I want the two corpora be as comparable as possible. The BNC is quite large, consisting of over 111 million words from different written sources, for example newspapers, academic books, popular fiction, letters, school and university essays. As was already said, the BNC covers the period of time in the late 20th century so it gives a picture of the use of English today. ²

¹ The source for this section is De Smet 2005, pp. 70-71

² The information and quotes in this section are taken from <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>

3 Verb Complementation

3.1 What is a complement?

Consider sentence (1) from Huddleston (1984, 177):

(1) My uncle was using an electric drill.

The above sentence is a very basic English sentence which includes three of the four main elements of a sentence: a subject, a verb and a complement (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 259). According to Herbst et al. (2004, xxiv) “the verb occupies a central position in the sentence” and determines what other elements are needed to form a grammatical sentence. In the example above, the verb *use* works as the predicator and it determines what else the sentence needs. It is possible that a predicator forms the verb phrase alone, but often another constituent or more is required in order for the sentence to make sense (Huddleston 1984, 177). This required constituent is called a complement – “something that is necessary to complete a grammatical construction” (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 271). Compare sentence (1) with sentence (2):

(1) My uncle was **using an electric drill**.
*(2) My uncle was **using**.

It becomes clear in the examples above that the phrase *an electric drill* must be a complement of the verb *use*, since without it the sentence is not grammatical. Huddleston says that *my uncle, was using* and *an electric drill* form the structural nucleus of sentence (1) (1984, 177). Selection is the key in complementation since complements are elements that are “expected to accompany a given verb” not just any verb (Somers 1984, 508).

3.2 Valency theory

In the previous section I quoted Herbst et al. who say that verbs have a very central role in a sentence and they determine the number of obligatory elements in it (2004, xxiv). Next, I will

introduce a concept that is concerned with verbs and their complements – valency theory. Somers (1984, 508) says that “Valency is in principle concerned with relationships between the verbal predicate and the other elements making up a predication. [...] The valency of a given verb is the number of complements it governs.” Besides the predication and the complement(s) in it, the subject of the matrix verb is also counted as a complement (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 216). What do not count as complements are adjuncts and the difference between complements and adjuncts is very central to valency theory (Herbst et al. 2004, xxiv). The distinction will be dealt with in the next section in this thesis. Somers makes an important remark in saying that no element is either a complement or an adjunct inherently but only in relation to some verb (1984, 508).

3.3 Complements versus adjuncts

3.3.1 What is an adjunct?

It was pointed out in the previous section that valency gives the number of obligatory elements the sentence needs to make sense (Herbst et al. 2004, xxiv). Complements fill up the position of these obligatory elements. While complements are something that makes a sentence grammatical, there are often other elements in a sentence that add to the meaning of it but that are not obligatory. These elements are called adjuncts and whereas complements are part of the nucleus of a sentence, adjuncts are extra-nuclear (Huddleston 1984, 177). In other words, they “are not dependant on the valency of a governing verb”, which means that the form or occurrence of an adjunct is not selected by the verb (Herbst et al. 2004, xxiv). Huddleston (1984, 177) offers an example of adjuncts using the same sentence as was used 3.1. Extra-nuclear adjuncts are italicized:

(3) *Unfortunately*, my uncle was using an electric drill *at the very moment*.

There are many kinds of adjuncts (for example of time, place and manner) but what is even more important is that they can have many different forms. Although adjuncts most typically are adverbials or prepositional phrases, they can also be noun phrases, clauses with a finite verb, infinitives, *-ing* participles or *-ed* participles or they can be verbless clauses (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 238-239). Since most of these also appear as complements, it is important to be able to tell when they function as a complement and when as an adjunct.

3.3.2 Distinguishing between complements and adjuncts

Sometimes adjuncts seem to be quite closely related to the matrix verb and therefore, it can be difficult to decide whether something is in fact a complement or an adjunct. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 219-227) introduce eight criteria for elements in a sentence, through which the distinction between complements and adjuncts becomes clearer. These criteria are divided into five syntactic and three semantic ones and I will now briefly introduce these arguments.

a) Licensing

One of the most important principles in complementation is that complements are selected, or licensed, by a given verb (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 219). This means that not all verbs can take a noun phrase complement, for example:

(4) She mentioned the letter.

(5) *She alluded the letter.

Why this is important in making the distinction between complements and adjuncts is that adjuncts (e.g. *for this reason*, *at that time*, *however*) can appear freely with different types of matrix verbs (ibid). In other words, adjuncts are not selected by the verb.

b) Obligatoriness

Another factor that helps telling complements apart from adjuncts is that complements are often obligatory while adjuncts are always optional (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 221). Thus,

leaving out an adjunct does not affect the grammaticality of the sentence. Huddleston and Pullum offer the following examples (ibid.):

- | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|
| (6) She perused <u>the report</u> . | *She perused. | (complement) |
| (7) She left <u>because she was ill</u> . | She left. | (adjunct) |

However, sometimes complements are optional, too. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 221) make a note related to that and say that optional complements are closer to adjuncts than obligatory complements. In addition, the principle of communicative necessity (discussed in section 3.4 later) by Herbst et al. makes it possible for adjuncts, too, to be obligatory in a particular context. However, complements (whether optional or not) are still licensed by matrix verbs and adjuncts are not, so the distinction between these two elements should not become any less justifiable by this information.

c) Anaphora

According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 222) anaphoric expressions are one way to distinguish between complements and adjuncts and they use the phrase *do so* as an example.

One example they offer is as follows:

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| (8) *I didn't read <u>all the reports</u> but I did so most of them. | (complement) |
| (9) I didn't cover this topic <u>last night</u> but I shall do so on Tuesday. | (adjunct) |

Huddleston and Pullum say (2002, 223) that “the antecedent for *do so* must embrace all ... complements of the verb”. In other words, everything that is referred to by *do so* is part of the complementation of the matrix verb. Therefore, it is not possible to add *most of them* as a complement of *read* after the anaphoric expression *do so* because the complement is already included in it. This is not the case in (9), however. *Do so* includes the complement of *cover* (*this topic*) but not the adjunct *last night* and thus, it is possible to add another time adjunct after the anaphoric expression.

d) Category

In this section, Huddleston and Pullum make generalizations as to the forms of complements and adjuncts. They treat noun phrases, adverbial, prepositional and adjectival phrases and subordinate clauses separately but I will summarize their findings in a few points. First of all, Huddleston and Pullum say that noun phrases and subordinate clauses are usually complements but are found as adjuncts, too. Especially non-finite subordinate clauses can appear as adjuncts. Second of all, adverbial phrases are most often adjuncts but sometimes they are selected by the matrix verb and are, therefore, complements. Finally, prepositional phrases and adjectival phrases can quite freely be either complements or adjuncts (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 223-225). To me, category does not seem the most reliable factor in distinguishing between complements and adjuncts because both functions are found in all categories, albeit some preference does exist.

e) Position

The position of complements in a sentence is quite restricted whereas adjuncts can appear in various places (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 225). For example, subjects appear normally before the verb and prepositional phrases after the verb (basic positions) but both can also appear in a non-basic position (ibid.):

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| (10) <u>She</u> will accept the proposal. | Will <u>she</u> accept the proposal? |
| (11) He gave the beer <u>to Kim</u> . | <u>To Kim</u> he gave the beer. |

f) Argumenthood

Arguments are something that is needed to complete a predication semantically. Different verbs have different kind of argument structures depending on what is the meaning of the verb and what kind of entities are necessarily involved in the action of the verb. Normally, the semantic predicate that decides the number or arguments is also the syntactic predicate of the

clause and by the same principle, arguments required by the semantic predicate are also complements. The relevance of this for adjuncts is that adjuncts are not counted as arguments of a verb, so they are not semantically necessary for the predication. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 226) give the following example where *always* and *before breakfast* are adjuncts and not arguments of *read*:

(12) He *always* **reads** the paper *before breakfast*.

g) Selection

Huddleston and Pullum say that “semantic predicates commonly impose selection restrictions on their arguments” (2002, 227). These restrictions are semantic in nature. For example, *enjoy* requires a +animate first argument (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 227):

(13) Kim **enjoyed** the concert.

*(14) The cheese **enjoyed** the concert.

No restrictions for the semantic type of adjunct are given on the part of semantic predicates.

h) Role

Arguments fill up semantic roles that the semantic predicate calls for (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 227). For example, an argument can have the role of an agent, a patient, an experiencer or a stimulus in a sentence. Here is one example where *Kim* has the role of an agent and *the intruder* the role of a patient (ibid.):

(15) Kim **shot** the intruder.

Huddleston and Pullum make a point that a complement of a certain type does not have the same semantic role in every environment but that “the role depends on the meaning of the verb” (2002, 227). For example, in the following sentence, the object is not a patient, as in (15), but a factitive:

(16) Kim **wrote** the letter.

In contrast to this, adjuncts are interpreted the same in all environments; they do not change their meaning according to the verb (*ibid.*).

3.4 Obligatoriness of complements

Valency theory says that the valency of a verb determines what elements are obligatory in a sentence (see 3.2). However, Herbst et al. make a point about valency not being the only reason for elements to be present in a sentence; he distinguishes between three types of necessity for complementation, which are valency, communicative necessity and structural necessity (2004, xxx). As was explained in 3.2, necessity at the level of valency has to do with the governing verb requiring “a particular complement to be present” (Herbst et al. 2004, xxxi). At this level complements can be either obligatory or optional, contrary to the perception that complements are always obligatory. Obligatory complements are those that the matrix verb requires to be present for the sentence to be grammatical (Herbst et al. 2004, xxxi). In other words, leaving out an obligatory complement would either make the sentence ungrammatical or change the meaning of the matrix verb. Logically, optional complements do not affect the grammaticality of a sentence and they can be left out without change of meaning or ungrammaticality (Herbst et al. 2004, xxxi). Herbst et al. offer the following examples:

- (17) It overlooks Porthmeor Beach. (obligatory)
(18) He wrote to Winifred Nicholson: “St. Ives is on the edge of Europe and the first English rebuff to those coming from distant parts”. (optional)

Communicative necessity means that “an element is necessary in a particular context” and leaving it out would cause the sentence not to make sense anymore (Herbst et al. 2004, xxx). Structural necessity, then, means that different types of clauses need different complements to be present (Herbst et al. 2004, xxx). For example, the verb *sleep* in a declarative clause always needs a subject but in an imperative it does not (*ibid.*):

- (19) I slept all morning under the mulberry tree.
(20) Sleep now!

3.5 Types of verbs

An important factor to be taken into consideration with the complementation of verbs is whether the verb in question is transitive or intransitive, in other words, whether it takes an object or not. However, Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 216) point out that transitivity is not inherent to a verb but instead it “applies to uses of verbs”. For example, *read* can be either intransitive (*She read.*) or transitive (*She read the letter.*) (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 216). These verbs are called dual-transitive (ibid.)

Transitive verbs are further divided into four classes according to the number and nature of objects they take. Quirk et al. (1985, 1170) list these four main types of verb complementation as copular, monotransitive, ditransitive and complex-transitive. Copular complementation only occurs with copular, i.e. linking verbs (*be, seem, appear, etc.*), and the complement is either a subject complement or a predication adjunct (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 259; Quirk et al. 1985, 1171). Monotransitive verbs take one object, which can be either phrasal or clausal and ditransitive verbs take two objects, an indirect and a direct one (Quirk et al. 1985, 1171). The indirect object is usually a noun or a pronoun and the direct object can be either phrasal or clausal as with monotransitive verbs (ibid.). Complex-transitive verbs are different in that they have an object and an object complement, which are a noun phrase and a phrase or a clause, respectively (Quirk et al. 1985, 1171; Leech and Svartvik 2002, 260). Here is an example of each type of verb complementation pattern with complements underlined (from Quirk et al):

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| (21) The girl seemed <u>restless</u> . | (copular) |
| (22) Tom caught <u>the ball</u> . | (monotransitive) |
| (23) They offered <u>her some food</u> . | (ditransitive) |
| (24) They named <u>the ship ‘Zeus’</u> . | (complex-transitive) |

3.6 Types of verb complements

In this section, I will take a closer look at the different types of complements that verbs in English take. The classification will be done mostly on a syntactic level but a touch of semantics will also be brought into it.

3.6.1 Forms of complements

As was mentioned in section 3.5, the complements of a verb are divided into phrasal and clausal complements (Herbst et al. 2004, xxv). Phrasal complements can be 1) noun phrases (*the girl, him, the man I saw*, etc.), 2) adjective phrases (*old, very old, too good to be true*, etc.) or 3) prepositional phrases (*about this topic*, etc) (Herbst et al. 2004, xxv). As for prepositional phrases, there has been some discussion among linguists about whether the prepositions in them should be interpreted as part of the verb phrase or as the head of the prepositional phrase. Consider sentence (25):

(25) Your Uncle Arthur **spoke to someone** at Penzance Market.

There are two ways to interpret the verb: first, that *speak to* is prepositional verb and *someone* is its noun phrase complement, or second, that *speak* is the predicator that is complemented by a prepositional phrase *to someone* (Herbst et al. 2004, xxvi). Herbst et al. (ibid.) support the latter interpretation, as do I, and that is also the way prepositional complements will be dealt with throughout the present thesis.

In addition to phrasal complements, there are four types of clausal complements, i.e. types of subordinate clauses a verb can select: 1) *to*-infinitive clauses, 2) *-ing* clauses, 3) *that*-clauses and 4) *wh*-clauses (Herbst et al. 2004, xxvi). *To*-infinitives and *-ing* clauses are non-finite, which means that neither tense nor modality can be seen in the verb form, and *that*-clauses and *wh*-clauses are finite where these two aspects are seen and where a subject must be

present (Biber et al. 1999, 658). Here is an example of each clausal complement in the same order as above (Quirk et al. 1985, 1171):

- (26) We've decided to move house.
- (27) She enjoys playing squash.
- (28) I think that we have met.
- (29) Can you guess what she said?

3.6.2 Semantics of clausal complements

Dwight Bolinger (1968, 127) has made a claim that “a difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning”. This is known as *Bolinger's Generalization*. What he is saying is that two different forms cannot have the same meaning. Bolinger himself (1968), Allerton (1988) and Dirvén (1989) all discuss the semantics of clausal complements, concentrating mostly on the differences between infinitives and gerunds. The ideas of these three linguists concerning the meaning of complements will now be introduced briefly.

The basic assumption in this matter is that the meaning of a complement affects the interpretation of a given verb (Dirvén 1989, 137). For example, while the infinitive usually denotes “something infrequent, unlikely, or even hypothetical, the gerund refers either to a factual event or regular series of events in the past, or to a likely future event” (Allerton 1988, 14). Allerton gives two pairs of sentences as examples of this. The first two show how the infinitive is preferred when the event is hypothetical and the second two show that the gerund is preferred when referring to actual events in the past (ibid., 13). Allerton marks impossible structures with a small circle and unnatural but existent ones with a question mark:

- (30) a. It would be tactless to mention the accident.
b. ?Mentioning the accident would be tactless.
- (31) a. °It was tactless to mention the accident.
b. Mentioning the accident was tactless.

Bolinger follows this line of thought saying that the difference between the gerund and the infinitive “is a contrast between two aspects: reification versus hypothesis or potentiality”

(1968, 124). Dirvén gives a differing opinion. Consider the following examples (Dirvén 1989, 116):

- (32) It's easy to park your car here.
(33) Parking the car is a problem.

Dirvén says that sentence (32) denotes a single occurrence or a series of single occurrences whereas sentence (33) makes a more abstract notion of parking the car (ibid.). This is almost the exact opposite of the views given by Allerton and Bolinger. However, Allerton grants that “when the non-finite verb is used in a generic sense” the gerund is chosen (1988, 14):

- (34) Smoking is bad for your/one's health. (cf. ?To smoke is bad for your/one's health)

His example above is close to Dirvén's example (33) earlier. All in all, the difference in meaning between the two types of complements affects the range of possible matrix verbs. Both Allerton and Dirvén list verbs or types of verbs that are interpreted differently depending on whether they appear with an infinitive or a gerund or that prefer one or the other type of complement (Allerton 1988 15-23; Dirvén 1989, 119-121 and 125-128). The lists are long and the meaning of the complement itself guides the interpretation of the meaning of a given verb so there is no need to introduce the types of verbs here.

In addition to the difference between infinitives and gerunds, Dirvén explains the meanings of *that*-clauses and *wh*-clauses. *That*-clauses do not just denote states or events but rather give “a mental representation of them in the form of a proposition” (1989, 118). For example, with the verb *see* this means that it does not just say what is seen but “what can be mentally concluded from the physical perception” (ibid.). For this reason, *that*-clause complements often occur with verbs of cognition or communication or with aspectual verbs (ibid. 131). Finally, *wh*-clauses are said to denote “that one element in the information about a state of affairs that is lacking” (ibid. 119). The occurrence of *wh*-clauses is the least restricted when it comes to possible matrix verbs (ibid. 136).

4 Other Factors Concerning Complementation

4.1 The Great Complement Shift

According to Rohdenburg (2006, 143) there is a big change in progress in the sentential complementation of English, which he calls the Great Complement Shift. One of the most important changes is the growing tendency to favour the *-ing* form complement –both prepositional and directly linked – over infinitivals and *that*-clauses (ibid.):

- (1) She delighted to do it.
→(2) She delighted in doing it.

Another change that is going on in the English language concerns interrogative clauses. In environments as in the following examples, the infinitive is becoming more and more prevalent (Rohdenburg 2006, 144):

- (3) She was at a loss (about) what she should do.
→(4) She was at a loss (about) what to do.

In addition to these, there are other transformations going on. What is common to all these changes is that there are three functional constraints that can either speed these changes up or delay them (Rohdenburg 2006; 143, 146). In the following sections 4.2-4.4, these three functional constraints will be introduced in broad outline.

4.2 The complexity principle

There is a concept in the field of linguistics that is a factor in complementation and it is called Rohdenburg's complexity principle. With his words it means that "in the case of more or less explicit grammatical options the more explicit one(s) will tend to be favoured in cognitively more complex environments" (Rohdenburg 2006, 147). In other words, when a sentence is structurally complex, the complement is more likely to be explicit than implicit so that the sentence would be easier to process. There are different kinds of structures where the complexity principle applies, for example, structural discontinuity, negative or interrogative

lower clauses (2006, 148-150). Here is Rohdenburg's example of structural discontinuity (2006, 148):

(5) He hesitated for a very long time about whether he should do it / whether to do it.

(6) He promised his friends when he was challenged about it that he would return immediately / to return immediately.

In both cases, the finite complement clause is more explicit, in other words, easier to process. Rohdenburg says that there is a hierarchy of explicitness among certain structures, with the help of which it is possible to choose explicit complements (2006, 147).

4.3 *Horror aequi*

Another factor that affects complementation is called the *horror aequi*, a term originally created by Brugmann (Rohdenburg 2006, 156). *Horror aequi* is a principle which involves the "tendency to avoid the use of formally (near)identical and (near-)adjacent grammatical elements or structures" (ibid.). To put it more clearly, *horror aequi* means that similar structures should not be used in sequence in a sentence. In practice, a sequence of two *-ing* forms or two *to*-infinitives tends to be avoided, for example. Consider Rohdenburg's examples (2006, 157):

(7) a. to dread	to-inf./-ing
b. dreading	to-inf./-ing

The blackened alternatives on the right to follow the verb form on the left are the ones that are favoured in order to follow *horror aequi* principle.

4.4 Extractions

In a canonical clause structure, the complement of a matrix verb is located after the matrix verb. However, not all English sentences are basic declarative sentences and complements do

not always occupy their normal position inside the verb phrase. Some of these non-canonical structures are constructed through the principle of extraction (Vosberg 2003b, 201). Extraction applies within a sentence or across clause boundaries and it simply means that a complement is moved, i.e. extracted, from its normal position. “Extractions produce so-called filler-gap dependencies” between a constituent missing after the matrix verb and an extra constituent somewhere else in the sentence (Vosberg 2003a, 307; Soames and Perlmutter 1979, 229).

Vosberg lists eight different types of extractions, which are topicalization, relativization, comparativization, interrogation, clefting, pseudo-clefting, negative NP extraction and exclamatory extraction (2003b, 201-202). Examples of the first six are given below (Pollard and Sag 1994, 157; Vosberg 2003b, 202; Quirk et al 1985, 1383; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1372). Gaps are marked with a line:

- (8) Anything you don't eat **put** ____ back in the fridge. (topicalization)
 (9) This is the politician who Sandy **loves** _____. (relativization)
- (10) 'Twas her Charming Face and modest Look (comparativization)
 that represented to him a thousand more Beauties
and taking Graces, than he **remembered ever to**
have seen ____ in his Unconstant and Faithless Mistress.
- (11) I wonder who Sandy **loves** _____. (interrogation)
 (12) It is his callousness that I shall **ignore** _____. (it-clefting)
 (13) What I shall **ignore** ____ is his callousness. (pseudo-clefting)

The implications that extractions have on complement choice are that, according to Vosberg (2003b, 202), the infinitive is favoured over the *-ing* form in an extraction construction.

Indeed, the extraction principle says that

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

4.5 NP movement and control predicates

There is a principle in English called the *theta criterion*, according to which there “must be a one-to-one mapping between the number of theta roles and the number of arguments in a sentence” (Carnie 2002, 260). In other words, each theta role is assigned to only one argument and each argument can be assigned only one theta role. The theta criterion has special implications to non-finite constructions. There are two kinds of matrix predicates in English that have different argument structures and therefore, their non-finite constructions differ. First, consider the following examples from Carnie (2002, 255):

- (1) Jean is likely to leave.
- (2) Jean is reluctant to leave.

On the surface, the lower clauses of the sentences above seem to be lacking the one argument that *leave* needs. This is not really the case. I will first briefly explain the structure of sentence (1) and then move on to sentence (2), which of more interest to the present thesis.

As was already mentioned, *leave* needs one argument and assigns the theta role of an agent (Carnie 2002, 260). The argument of *leave* in sentence (1) is *Jean*. *Be likely*, on the other hand, is an NP movement predicate that as its simplest forms sentences like *It is likely that Jeans leaves*. Introductory *it* does not assign any theta role, so *be likely* only assigns the thematic role of proposition (Jean to leave). This way there is an empty subject place in the higher clause. To form sentence (1), the subject of *leave* moves through NP movement to that place leaving a trace that is coreferential with *Jean*. This way *Jean* is still an argument of *leave* even though it is located apart from its head. Here are illustrations of sentence (1) before and after NP movement from Carnie (2002; 255, 258) (trace is marked by *t*):

- (3) _____ is likely [Jean to leave].
- (4) Jean_i is likely [_i to leave].

Sentence (2) seems to be similar to sentence (1) but it is actually constructed in a very different way. *Be reluctant* is a control predicate that has two arguments and assigns both

the theta role of an experiencer and a proposition – someone who is reluctant and the thing he/she is reluctant about (Carnie 2002, 259). If *Jean* is already the experiencer of *be reluctant*, it cannot be the agent of *leave* because of the theta criterion. Yet, *leave* needs a subject and wants to assign the role of an agent to it. Nothing moves in control sentences, contrary to NP movement, but instead “there is a special kind of null NP in the subject position” of the lower clause, called PRO and it is controlled by the noun phrase that gives it its meaning (*Jean* in this case) (Carnie 2002; 260, 270). PRO is an understood subject of the lower clause that is assigned whatever theta role the lower verb gives to it. Here is the simplified deep structure of sentence (2):

(5) $Jean_i$ is reluctant [PRO_i to leave].

PRO makes sentences like (2) possible as it serves as an argument of the lower clause and is assigned the necessary theta role. Thanks to PRO, the theta criterion is not violated as each argument has its own theta role. Control constructions and control predicates get their name from control theory, which concerns the relations between noun phrases and PRO in non-finite constructions. Basically, “the NP that serves as PRO’s antecedent is called its controller” (Carnie 2002, 270). Not always is the antecedent the subject of the higher clause but it can also be the object of it. The structures of subject-control and object-control are illustrated in the examples below (Carnie 2002, 267):

(6) $Jean_i$ is reluctant [PRO_i to leave].

(7) Jean persuaded Robert_i [PRO_i to leave].

In example (6), PRO is coreferential with, i.e. controlled by, the higher clause subject and in (7) it is controlled by the higher clause object.

Since NP movement and control constructions are so alike, some tests have been developed to distinguish between NP movement and control predicates. One of the test-types is a weather *it* test (Davies and Dubinsky 2004, 8). When an NP movement predicate and a control predicate are put in a weather *it* construction, the result is seen in examples (8) and (9)

respectively. I am using the same predicates here as elsewhere in this section, although these are not the ones Davies and Dubinsky use (ibid.):

- (8) It is likely to have rained. (NP movement)
(9) *It is reluctant to have rained. (control)

As the asterisk reveals, control predicates are not possible with weather *it*, whereas NP movement predicate works well.

The verb under study in the present thesis is *confess*. Testing *confess* with a weather *it* construction forms the following sentence:

- (10) * It **confesses** to have rained.

It becomes clear using the weather *it* test that *confess* is a control verb. When it comes to the question whether *confess* is a subject-control or object-control, it is the former because PRO is coreferential with the subject of the higher clause. The complementation patterns of *confess* will be discussed in chapter five but for now it is enough to know that the *to*-infinitival and the *to* + *-ing*-clause complements of *confess* are cases of subject-control. Example (11) is from Poutsma (1904, 575) and example (12) from Rudanko (1996, 56):

- (11) I_i **confess** [PRO_i to measure things by the rules of common wisdom].
(12) John_i **confessed** [PRO_i to cheating].

Confess with a *to*-infinitival complement clause is quite rare but possible, especially when it is preceded by a noun phrase (Quirk et al. 1985, 1181). Palmer adds that the *to*-infinitive has to have a noun phrase between the verb and the infinitive (1965, 201). Whether obligatory or not, when there is a noun phrase, *confess* does not involve subject-control. Example (13) illustrates this kind of a structure and it comes from Palmer (1965, 201):

- (13) They **confess** John to be dead.

Without going into too much detail, it seems that sentence (13) is either a case of object-control or subject-to-object NP movement. The fact that *John* gets a role from *be dead* but not from *confess* supports the latter view (Carnie 2002, 264-265).

5 Previous Work on the Verb *Confess*

In this section, I will introduce previous work and study concerning the verb *confess*. First, I will find out what senses the verb has in three dictionaries, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (hereon the *OALD*) and the *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (hereon the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary*). Then, I will move on to examining a selection of grammars and see what they have to say about the complementation of *confess*. In this section, at least the following grammar books will be consulted: *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Quirk et al., *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* by Biber et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* by Huddleston and Pullum, *A Grammar of Late Modern English* by Poutsma and *A Communicative Grammar of English* by Leech and Svartvik.

5.1 *Confess* in dictionaries

5.1.1 *Confess* in the *Oxford English Dictionary*

The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives several different senses for the verb *confess* (s.v. *confess*). Altogether, there are nine different senses for the verb and some of them have additional sub-senses. I did not feel that there was a need to keep all these senses separate, especially as some of them are very close in meaning. Therefore, I have cut down the number of senses to four. The *OED* is not very explicit in listing all the possible complements for each sense but with the help of the examples provided I have worked out the complements, as well.

a) The first sense of *confess* is “to admit with guilt/shame”. This is a large category and includes most of the senses given in the *OED*. What all of them have in common is that the verb *confess* denotes admitting “something which one has kept or allowed to remain secret as being prejudicial or inconvenient to oneself” or to “admit a crime, charge, fault, weakness or

the like”. This sense of *confess* can have both the transitive and the intransitive function and have many different complements in both cases. As a transitive verb, possible complements are a noun phrase, a *that*-clause, a *wh*-clause and an NP + *to*-infinitive. An example of each is given below in the same order:

- (1) Promise me life, and ile **confesse** the truth. (Shakespeare 1596)
- (2) I have to **confess** that I loved Miss Oldcastle. (G. Macdonald 1866)
- (3) **Confessing** how the love Which thus began in innocence, betray’d My unsuspecting heart. (Southey 1814)
- (4) I **confess** myself to be rather...confounded than convinced. (Berkeley 1732)

The *OED* says that in the NP + *to*-infinitive complement (example 4), the object can be left out when it is a reflexive pronoun and the infinitive when it is *to be*. This only applies to one of them if both are present. *Confess* is also said to introduce “a statement made in the form of a disclosure of private feeling or opinion”, in which case it has the sense “I must say” and is complemented by a *that*-clause.

In its intransitive function, *confess* in this sense selects the complements *to* + NP, *to*-infinitive or *to* + *-ing*-clause. Examples in the same order are:

- (5) He had to **confess** to a certain sense of failure. (Lever 1840)
- (6) I **confess** to have borrowed freely. (E. Warburton 1845)
- (7) I **confess** to finding no little pleasure in such explorations. (1879)

The *OED* gives further information about the last two of the complements above, saying that these forms originally come from the complement NP + infinitive mentioned earlier (example 4). Of these three forms (*confess myself to be*, *confess to have*, *confess to finding*), the *-ing*-clause is the most common nowadays (*OED*). According to the *OED*, the first type of complement in the sentences above of *confess* (5) is also sometimes just a shorter version of the *-ing*-clause complement: “I **confess** to [having] a personal dread”.

There are also two specific senses of the verb *confess* that are counted under the sense “to admit with guilt or shame” and they are the legal and religious senses. The legal sense does not diverge from the cases illustrated above but there are some specialities to the

religious sense. It means “to acknowledge sins orally, with repentance and desire of absolution”. As a transitive verb, it is complemented either by a noun phrase, a reflexive pronoun or by the prepositional phrase *of* + NP:

- (8) **Confesse** your faults one to another, and pray one for another... (Bible 1611)
- (9) The young count..**confessed** himself, set his house in order. (Jameson 1850)
- (10) **Confesse** thee freely of thy sinne. (Shakespeare 1604)

The addressee or the hearer of the confession can optionally be expressed with *to* NP, as in sentence (8) above. The religious sense of *confess* also has an intransitive function. The addressee can be expressed by *to* NP complement and it has the same meaning as the transitive use with a reflexive pronoun complement:

- (11) To answer that, I should **confesse** to you. (Shakespeare 1592)

b) Secondly, *confess* has the sense “to acknowledge or recognize (something or that someone is/has something), to accept and also to acknowledge one’s belief”. This sense I will call “to recognize, acknowledge” because all of the senses listed here denote acceptance or appreciation. All uses of this sense are transitive and can be complemented by either a noun phrase (12), a *that*-clause (13), a *wh*-clause or an NP + *to*-infinitive with the same rules as in the previous sense (14). Here are some examples:

- (12) He whom I **confess** and adore. (Jameson 1848)
- (13) [She] **confessed** assuredly, that in the sacrament was conteyned cryst Ihesu. (Fisher 1509)
- (14) The Kings of Cyprus and Armenia sent to Henry VI to **confess** themselves his vassals and ask his help. (Bryce 1875)

c) The third of the *OED* senses for *confess* is different from the ones already mentioned. It means to reveal or “make known by circumstances, “to be evidence of, to manifest”. This sense is said to be figurative and appear in poetical language. Most of the examples contain a noun phrase complement but there is also one *that*-clause complement. Here is one example:

- (15) Mighty sufferings mighty guilt **confess**. (Blackmore 1700)

One difference between this sense and the other is that the subject of *confess* does not have to be +animate with this sense.

d) The religious sense was already introduced earlier but there is a sub-sense in it that does not fall under the title “to admit with guilt or shame”. This sense is “of a priest: to hear the confession of, to shrive”. This sense is complemented by a noun phrase. The passive “to be confessed of” is also found in this sense:

(16) I went to see and **confess** an old man. (1889 Tablet)

(17) A Peasant..was **confessed**, and received the Sacrament. (Lithgow 1632)

5.1.2 *Confess* in the *OALD* and the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary*

In this section I will introduce two more dictionaries, which have somewhat more simplified classification of the senses of the verb *confess*. I will consult both dictionaries in order to see what kind of senses they offer and what kind of complementation patterns are given for each sense. The *OALD* and the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* have 3 senses in common for *confess* and they are the following:

a) “To admit, especially formally or to the police that you have done something wrong or illegal” and “admit you have committed a crime”. There is both the intransitive and the transitive variant of this sense. The intransitive selects either a *to* + NP or a *to* + *-ing*-clause complement and the transitive either a noun phrase or a *that*-clause complement. Here are a couple of examples:

(18) She **confessed** to the murder. (*OALD*)

(19) Ted had openly **confessed** his guilt to me. (*Collins Cobuild Dictionary*)

b) The second sense is “to admit something that you feel ashamed or embarrassed about”. A range of complements are found with this sense. The *OALD* gives the intransitive function and the *to* + NP and *to* + *-ing*-clause complements here, as well. For the transitive verb, a noun

phrase, a *that*-clause, direct speech (example 20), and a (complex-transitive) reflexive pronoun + complement (example 21) are all possible complements. Here are some examples:

- (20) “I worry about money”, she **confessed**. (*Collins Cobuild Dictionary*)
(21) I **confess** myself bewildered by their explanation. (*OALD*)

Linked to this sense is the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* sense for the phrases “I confess” and “I must confess”, which mean “to apologize slightly for admitting something that you are rather ashamed of or that you think might offend or annoy someone else”. According to the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary*, a phrase like this functions as a kind of adverbial and appears either sentence initially or within a sentence between commas:

- (22) **I must confess** that I find him a bore... (*Collins Cobuild Dictionary*)

The first two senses in this section correspond to sense a) in the *OED* section (see 5.1.1 earlier).

c) The third sense that is mentioned in both dictionaries at hand is to “tell God or priest about your sins so that you can be forgiven”. The *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* compares this sense to the sense of the verb *communicate*. The intransitive variant can take a *to* NP complement to express the recipient or hearer of the confession and the transitive one takes a noun phrase complement and optionally the *to* NP complement. This sense is clearly the same as the religious sense under sense a) in the *OED* section (see 5.1.1).

d) Finally, the *OALD* lists a sense “(of a priest) to hear somebody confess their sins” and says it takes a noun phrase complement. This is similar to the sense d) included in the *OED* section.

5.1.3 Summary of the dictionary sections

In this section, I have summarized in a table the findings made in the dictionaries. I have made explicit the joining of original *OED* senses and come up with a simplified sense that covers all

the senses in each category. *OALD* or *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* senses are given when they have something valuable to add.

Dictionary sense	Complements	Simplified sense
SENSE 1 <i>OED</i> senses 1. to declare or disclose, to admit 6. to plead guilty to, own to, to admit, to acknowledge 7. to admit the truth of a charge, to admit as proved, legally valid 8. to acknowledge sins orally, with repentance - to admit something that you feel ashamed or embarrassed about (<i>OALD</i>)	NP <i>that</i> -clause <i>wh</i> -clause NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive <i>to -ing</i> <i>to</i> -infinitive <i>to</i> NP direct speech refl. + complement reflexive <i>of</i> + NP	1. to admit
SENSE 2 <i>OED</i> senses 2. to acknowledge, concede or grant 3. to acknowledge one's belief, to avow formally 4. to acknowledge or formally recognize (a person or a thing) as having a certain character or certain claims; to own, avow, declare belief in or adhesion to	NP <i>that</i> -clause <i>wh</i> -clause NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive	2. to recognize, to acknowledge
SENSE 3 <i>OED</i> sense 5. to make known or reveal by circumstances, to be evidence of, to manifest, prove, attest	NP <i>that</i> -clause	3. to reveal, to be evidence of
SENSE 4 <i>OED</i> sense 9. of a priest: to hear the confession of, to shrive	NP	4. to shrive

Table 1. Summary of the senses and complements of *confess*.

As can be seen in Table 1 above, sense 1 has the most different complementation patterns, and such that the other senses do not have. On the other hand, all the senses take a noun phrase complement and three out of four the *that*-clause complement. Distinguishing between the

four senses in the empirical part of this thesis should, therefore, be most useful to start with these two complements as almost all the sense appear with them.

5.2 *Confess* in a selection of grammars

The verb *confess* selects several complementation patterns. According to Quirk et al. (1985; 1180, 1197), *confess* is a factual speech act verb that introduces indirect statements and is complemented by a *that*-clause. Unfortunately, none of the illustrations include *confess* itself but a similar kind of verb:

(1) They admit that she was misled.

Biber et al. (1999, 664) list *confess* in the pattern *verb + to NP + that-clause*. There the prepositional phrase *to NP* is the recipient of the thing confessed. According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 959), the prepositional phrase in the construction is optional.

Both the *to*-infinitive and the gerund are listed as possible complements of *confess*. Quirk et al. (1985, 1181) and Palmer (1965, 210) introduce a complement where a noun phrase is followed by a *to*-infinitive. The example illustrates the verb *admit* which acts like *confess*:

(2) They admit John to be dead.

According to Poutsma (1904, 575), a plain infinitive is possible when the noun phrase between *confess* and a *to*-infinitive is a reflexive, in which case it can be dropped:

(3) I **confess** to measure things by the rules of common wisdom.

Otherwise, the infinitive is very rare and only used “describing a person or a thing in a state” with the copula *to be* (see example (3)) (Poutsma 1904; 574, 587).

Quirk et al. (1985, 1189-1190) list the *-ing*-clause as a complement of *confess* and also Leech and Svartvik (2002, 406) say the gerund is a complement of *confess*. Here, either a

perfective or a non-perfective form can be used interchangeably to refer to the past. Once again, Quirk et al. (ibid.) do not provide an example of *confess* itself:

- (4) I admit seeing it.
- (5) I admit having seen it.

Palmer (1965, 201) adds that whereas the *to*-infinitive needs a noun phrase (see example (2)), with an *-ing* form it is not used. He continues saying that the preposition *to* is often present in the construction above (ibid.):

- (6) I admit to being a fool.

Confess can also appear in a complex-transitive construction (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 265). Here, the object is normally a reflexive. The object complement can be either a noun phrase or an adjective:

- (7) He **confessed** himself puzzled by her response.

6 *Confess* in the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts, the Extended Version

Before going on to analyzing empirical data of the verb *confess*, one clarifying point needs to be made. Although some grammarians consider the subject of a verb to be one of its complements, I do not follow this thought in this thesis. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 216) say that subject as a complement of a verb is considered external to the verb phrase. As the aim of this thesis is to look into the verb phrase that is headed by *confess*, subjects as complements will not be taken into account.

6.1 *Confess* in the first part of the CLMETEV: 1710-1780

For this part of the thesis, authentic data was drawn from the first part of the CLMETEV, which consists of 3,037,607 words written in the years 1710-1780. The aim was to see which senses of *confess* are represented and what kind of complementation patterns *confess* has had in earlier years. A search was performed to obtain all the possible forms of the verb *confess*, i.e. *confess*, *confesses*, *confessed* and *confessing*. This search yielded 342 tokens, of which a random sample of 170 (50%) was taken for further examination. Among the tokens, there were four instances where *confess* had no complement at all. These four have been taken into account as zero complements in the total number of complements, but since this thesis investigates actual complements, zero complements will not be discussed in more detail. Here is one example of a zero complement:

(1) But pray, sir, said I, is this fair, just, or honest? I am no criminal; and I won't **confess**. O, my girl! said he, many an innocent person has been put to the torture. (Richardson 1740, *Pamela*, line 9260)

Before going to the complement patterns found in the data, I will briefly discuss the different senses of *confess* that could be detected in the first part of the CLMETEV. The task of distinguishing between the four different senses introduced in section 5.1, proved not to be easy. Especially the difference between senses 1 and 2 seemed to be difficult to perceive

sometimes. To be able to make the decisions, I simply tried to make out whether the confessing was more like admitting, especially with guilt or shame, or whether it expressed recognition or confession with pride. The distribution of different senses is shown in Table 2 below.

Sense	1. to admit	2. to recognize, acknowledge	3. to reveal	4. to shrive
Number of tokens	161	7	1	1

Table 2. Senses of *confess* in the CLMETEV Part I.

Table 2 shows that sense 1 is by far the most frequent with 161 tokens. Seven tokens of sense 2 were also found but only one of senses 3 and 4 each. Here are examples of each sense in the same order:

- (2) Till I had read the book, I **confess** I did not know all the extent and powers of the English language. (Chesterfield 1746-71, Letters to His Son on the Art, line 10660)
- (3) Her birth, her beauty, crowds and courts **confess**; Chaste matrons praise her... (Pope 1733-34, An Essay on Man, line 5822)
- (4) Knowledge is certainly one the means of pleasure, as is **confessed** by the natural desire ... (Johnson 1759, Rasselas, line 985)
- (5) 'I sent for thee to **confess** him, 'said Manfred, sternly; 'not to plead for him. (Walpole 1764, The Castle of Otranto, line1877)

With senses 1 and 2 the difference was found quite often in the semantics of the complement. Especially with noun phrase complements and complex-transitive complements *confess* could be of either sense, depending on the meaning of the complement. Here are examples of a complex-transitive complement in sense 1 and in sense 2, respectively:

- (6) ... the man has already **confessed** himself the author of the libel, and may, therefore, be punished without farther examination. (Johnson 1740-1, Parliamentary Debates 1, line 1160)
- (7) Heaven to mankind impartial we **confess**, if all are equal in their happiness. (Pope 1733-4, An Essay on Man, line 1358)

Simply put, the noun phrase in example (6) denotes a negative concept and cannot therefore exemplify recognizing or proud admitting. Overall, complement patterns did not help much in distinguishing between the senses. Most tokens of sense 2 were either noun phrases or

complex-transitives but otherwise complements varied in every sense, especially sense 1 that covers the vast majority of the senses found. For this reason, I found it most useful to start the analysis from the senses that had the fewest complement alternatives and work it from there. In practice, this meant that I interpreted tokens of *confess* with a noun phrase, a *that*-clause, NP + infinitive and complex-transitives most meticulously (see 5.1.3).

The CLMETEV had a lot more to offer syntactically than semantically when it comes to the verb *confess*. The random sample of 170 tokens was analyzed and the results can be seen in Table 3 below. The two different figures after parentheticals will be explained later in section 6.1.7.

Complement	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency per one million words
that-clause	71	46.8
NP	47	31.0
to NP + that-clause	5	3.29
NP + to-infinitive	5	3.29
NP + NP	4	2.63
NP + Adj.	4	2.63
NP + that-clause	3	1.98
NP + to NP	2	1.32
wh-clause	2	1.32
direct question	2	1.32
to NP	2	1.32
parenthetical	19 (30)	12.5
zero	4	2.63
Total	170	111.9

Table 3. Complements of *confess* in the CLMETEV Part I.

As can be seen in the table, *confess* has various complementation patterns. In the following sections, I will examine each complement more closely starting from the most common one.

However, I have grouped some complements together because they share some element or are otherwise similar. In the case of two complements in one instance, the second was most often *to* NP that expresses the addressee of the confession. Because of its optional nature and quite a free occurrence with the other complement types, it is always dealt together with the complement that is obligatory. For this reason, the order of dealing with the complements is not completely analogous to the table.

6.1.1 *Confess* + *that*-clause, *confess* + *to* NP + *that*-clause, *confess* + NP + *that*-clause and *confess* + *on* + NP + *that*-clause

Earlier work on the verb gave grounds to expect many *that*-clauses and, indeed, it was the most frequent complement in the data analyzed (71 tokens, 41.8% of all). In many cases, the complementizer *that* was omitted (example 9) and there were some passives (example 10), as well:

(8) ...the scenes, must have been witness to the _fourberie_; the poor woman was therefore obliged to **confess** that she had none in the house; “but, madam,” said she, “I can get any kind of mutton in an... (Fielding 1749, Tom Jones, line 6261)

(9) ...that you could not afford time to return the visits of the ladies in this country; and I must **confess** I had been guilty of a little rudeness this way (Fielding 1749, Tom Jones, line 8424)

(10) ... but it must **be confessed**, that of the comedies, the former was of much more liberal and manly character than... (Gibbon 1776, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire 1, line 14947)

In one of the *that*-clause complements of *confess*, a part of the complement clause was extracted through the principle of relativization:

(11) ...and must have something very surprising in your story, which you must **confess** I have a right to hear. (Fielding 1749, Tom Jones, line 2149)

In addition to actual extractions, another interesting finding among *that*-clauses is one *as*-clause. First, consider the following illustration:

(12) Knowledge is certainly one of the means of pleasure, as is **confessed** by the natural desire, which every mind feels of increasing its ideas. (Johnson 1759, Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia, line 985)

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1146) call this kind of construction an adjunct of comparison. They give the example of a sentence *As I have already observed, no reason has yet been offered for this change*, where there is a gap after *observe* in the *as*-clause. In a structure without the *as*-clause, there would be a *that*-clause complement in the place of the gap, as in *What I have already observed is that no reason has yet been offered for this change* (ibid. 1147). Furthermore, Huddleston and Pullum say that *as*-clauses are quite similar to supplementary relative clauses, as in *He phoned home every day, which he'd promised to do* (2002, 1147). That information gives support to the assumption that *as*-clauses are a construction close to extractions. Indeed, in example (12) above, the *that*-clause complement *Knowledge is certainly one of the means of pleasure* is extracted from its original place after *confess*.

In 13 instances, there was an element inserted between *confess* and its *that*-clause complement. Some of the insertions were clauses that added something or commented on the content of the clause. There were also adjuncts of manner and place and nouns of addressing the hearer, e.g. *sir, my dear*. The fact that most of the insertions found in the data (18 altogether) occurred with *that*-clauses and that *that* was only omitted in two cases is interesting because it seems to confirm the complexity principle in the case of a structural discontinuity (see 4.2).

In addition to simple *that*-clause complements, there were many patterns with a *that*-clause that had another complement, too. In section 5.2 in this thesis, it was pointed out by Biber et al. that *confess* can also take an optional prepositional phrase *to* NP before a *that*-clause, and there were five of such cases in the corpus data:

(13) “My Lord, “ said the knight, “ I will **confess to you**, that the first thing that touched my heart in his favour, is a strong resemblance he bear... (Reeve 1777, The Old English Baron, line 604)

There were also three special cases where there was an NP followed by a *that*-clause after *confess*:

(14) ...but to which their greatest admirers have never attempted seriously to resort in practice. I **confess them**, that I have no sort of reliance upon either a Triennial Parliament of a Place-Bill. (Burke 1770, Thoughts on the Present Discontents, line 2349).

(15) Perhaps you’ll think it was generosity that made me do all this. But no. To my shame I **confess it**, my only design was to keep the license and let the ‘Squire know that I could prove it upon hi... (Goldsmith 1766, The Vicar of Wakefield, line 6541)

In the first example, the NP seems to be an indirect object, which is an interesting finding since Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 309) say that *confess* cannot have an indirect object but instead takes the preposition *to* to express the addressee. The second example (15) is a more problematic one. At first glance it seems to be an illustration of extraposition (Quirk and Greenbaum 1973, 424). However, it could also be a case right dislocation, where the complement clause is moved to the right and a pronoun is left in its place (Ross 1986, 257).

One instance among *that*-clauses contained an *on* + NP construction. At first glance it seems to be a complement of *confess* that is not listed in any of the previous work. However, a closer inspection of the illustration tells that *on* + NP is in fact an inserted adjunct:

(16) It must be **confessed on this head**, that, as our air blows hot and cold – wet and dry, ten times a day, we have them ... (Sterne 1759-67, Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, line 2820)

6.1.2 *Confess* + NP, *confess* + NP + *to* NP, *confess* + *to* NP

The second most frequent complement of *confess* was a noun phrase with 47 (27.6%) instances. Here are some examples:

(17) ...“you shall be protected and rewarded for the discovery.” “Goody, “ said Oswald, “**confess the whole truth**, and I will protect you from harm and from blame... (Reeve 1777, *The Old English Baron*, line 2185)

(18) ...the pries stood on one side of the bed, the surgeon on the other; the former exhorted him to **confess his sins**, the other desired he might be left to his repose. (Reeve 1777, *The Old English Baron*, line 4309)

There was no one noun phrase that would have covered a majority of the noun phrase complements. However, noun phrases that denote some fault or wrong-doing were most common, e.g. *fault*, *sin*, *folly* or *adultery*. Among more neutral nouns, *truth* was the most frequent. Often was the noun a pronoun *it* that referred to some previous or following thing. In three occasions, there was an insertion between *confess* and noun phrase. Twice there was an inserted clause and once a phrase to address the hearer (*my dear*).

As with *that*-clause complements, there were 2 instances where there was the optional phrase *to* NP to express the recipient of the confession. In this case, the prepositional phrase followed the obligatory complement:

(19) ...O these are in his head, and in his heart too, or he would not **confess them to me** at such instant. (Richardson 1740, *Pamela*, line 3199)

The pattern *to* NP as the only complement was illustrated in two tokens in the data.

Among the 47 noun phrase complements there were two extraction cases and one passivized sentence, which I take to be a similar kind of construction to extractions. Here is an example of both constructions:

(20) Her birth, her beauty, crowds and courts **confess**... (Pope 1733-4, *An Essay on Man*, line 5718)

(21) ...and his virtues are **confessed** by his enemies of the opposite faction. (Cibber 1753, *The Lives of the Poets*, line 9382)

6.1.3 *Confess* + NP + *to*-infinitive

In addition to *that*-clauses and noun phrase complements, which stand out as the most frequent, there were several complementation patterns which all had only a few instances. The

pattern NP + *to*-infinitive appeared five times (3%). What is interesting about finding infinitives in the data is, first, that the infinitival complement is not listed as a very likely complement of *confess* (see 5.2) and second, that there were two extractions (22) and two passive constructions (23) among the infinitives:

(22) “This, sir, is one of the dangers of solitude, which the hermit has **confessed not always to promote** goodness... (Johnson 1759, *Rasselas –Prince of Abyssinia*, line 3555)

(23) Sannazarius, who transferred the scene to the sea-shore, though he presented the most magnificent object in nature, **is confessed to have erred** in his choice. (Hume 1751, *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, line 1946)

As I already mentioned in the previous section, although passivization is not said to be one of the extraction principles (see section 4.4 earlier), I think that it is very close to those constructions because part of the complement is moved to the left leaving a gap in its normal place. The extraction principle says that the infinitival is a common type of complement clause in an extraction sentence (see 4.4). Keeping that and the fact that *to*-infinitives are rare with *confess* in mind, it is possible that the *to*-infinitives are, in part, triggered by extraction.

6.1.4 *Confess* + NP + NP, *confess* + NP + Adj.

Confess was said to sometimes occur in a complex-transitive construction, but normally only with a reflexive as the object. There were 4 instances of the pattern NP + NP and 4 instances of the pattern NP + Adj. but the object was a reflexive only in 5 cases. Here are some examples:

(24) ...however it be answered, it cannot be of great importance: the man has already **confessed himself the author** of the libel, and may, therefore, be punished without farther examination. (Johnson 1740-1, *Parliamentary Debates*, line 1160)

(25) ...ported his opinion with proofs from reason and experience, which even those who oppose them have **confessed themselves unable** to answer ... (Johnson 1740-1, *Parliamentary Debates*, line 4755)

(26) ...yet did you know how dear this self-denial costs me, you would **confess** it the greatest proof of affection ever man gave... (Haywood 1744, *The Fortunate Foundlings*, line 7033)

The *OED* brought up the fact that when *confess* has the NP + infinitive complement, the infinitive can be left out if it is *to be* (see 5.1.1). Therefore, it can be that all the tokens in this section are, in fact, instances of the complement NP + infinitive which was discussed in section 6.1.3 above. Following this interpretation, the object complements in the examples above would be kind of shortened sentences. However, while there is no clear proof of what is the right interpretation, I have chosen to treat the complex-transitive NP + NP and NP + Adj. cases separate from the NP + infinitive cases.

6.1.5 *Confess* + *wh*-clause

Wh-clauses were not listed as a complement of *confess* by any grammar but in the *OED*, this pattern was illustrated in two examples, the more recent of which was from the 19th century (see 5.1.1). In the first part of the CLMETEV, there were two *wh*-complements for *confess*:

(27) ...to assure her how sincerely she should regret her absence, and **confessed** how much of the regularity and harmony of her school she owed to her good example... (Fielding 1749, *The Governess*, line 5222)

6.1.6 *Confess* + direct question

There were two illustrations of *confess* in the data that I was not sure how to analyze. I have categorized them as a direct question complement. One example from the corpus:

(28) ...minds of men, hath one quality, at least, of a fever, which is to prefer coldness in the object. **Confess**, dear Will, is there not something vastly refreshing in the cool air of a prude?" (Fielding 1751, *Amelia*, line 917)

This kind of complement could also be a modified *that*-clause because the content of the confession is expressed in the complement clause, which is the case with *that*-clauses. As can

be seen in the example above, there was one insertion that addresses the hearer. In the other instance, there was an adjunct of time inserted between *confess* and direct question.

6.1.7 *Confess* in a parenthetical

The last type of construction in which *confess* often occurred is in a parenthetical. None of the grammar consulted in section 5.2 mentioned these but I think that parentheticals are close to what the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* calls an adverbial use of the verb *confess* (see 5.1.2b). John Ross (1973, 133-134) deals with parenthetical constructions in his article and he says that they are formed through a process called *slifting*. This process moves a sentence-final *that*-clause to the left and leaves the main clause last. Ross illustrates this with an example where the sentence *I feel that Max is a Martian* is changed to *Max is a Martian, I feel*. According to Ross (1973, 136) *confess* is a verb that allows this *slifting* and indeed, there were 30 (17.6%) instances of this construction in the corpus data. Not always was the parenthetical (i.e. main clause) last in the sentence but appeared also in the middle like an insertion. A few examples:

(29) ...for true religion, is my abhorrence of vulgar superstitions; and I indulge a peculiar pleasure, I **confess**, in pushing such principles, sometimes into absurdity, sometimes into impiety. (Hume 1779, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, line 2971)

(30) Your instance, CLEANTHES, said he, drawn from books and language, being familiar, has, I **confess**, so much more force on that account... (Hume 1779, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, line 1794)

The most common phrases to appear in a parenthetical were ‘I confess’ and ‘I must confess’. In some cases, the verb *confess* had a complement inside the parenthetical (e.g. a noun phrase) and then the phrase was most often ‘to **confess** the truth’. The complements inside a parenthetical have been dealt with in according sections earlier in this thesis. This is the reason why there are two different numbers of the parenthetical complement in Table 3. The cases

that have not been counted elsewhere are given first (i.e. 19 tokens) and then the total number of parentheticals is given in parenthesis (i.e. 30).

6.2 *Confess* in the second part of the CLMETEV: 1780-1850

The second part of the CLMETEV consists of 5,723,988 words. A search for all the possible forms of *confess* produced 556 tokens and a random sample of 183 (one third) was chosen to be taken a closer look at. Of the 183 instances of the verb *confess*, three were excluded because they were adjectives:

- 1) But, oh! how terrible is it when the **confessed** criminal has been but a moment before our friend! (Disraeli 1826, Vivian Grey, line 4509)

After excluding irrelevant tokens, there were 180 tokens left to analyze. Like in section 6.1, I will first discuss all the different senses of *confess* found in the data and then move on to syntactic analyses.

The distribution of the four senses of *confess* does not differ greatly from the one in the first part of the corpus. The findings are summarized in Table 4 below.

Sense	1. to admit	2. to recognize, acknowledge	3. to reveal	4. to shrive
Number of tokens	173	6	1	-

Table 4. Senses of *confess* in the CLMETEV Part II.

Again, sense 1 is the most frequent, with sense 2 following next and then sense 3 with one token. No tokens of sense 4 were found in the second part of the corpus. When analyzing the senses, I paid special attention first to noun phrases, then *that*-clauses and finally to complex-transitive complements since they are the three common complements that all the senses have (see Table 1). Since sense 1 is the most frequent and typical sense of *confess* and there was nothing new to that category in the second part of the corpus, here are examples of senses 2 and 3, which are more rare and interesting:

(2) ... an occurrence, which, at the time, excited no small wonderment and sympathy, and in which it was **confessed** by many that I performed a very judicious part. (Galt 1823, *The Provost*, line 3243)

(3) ... might no longer make a secret of your true regard for me, which your actions (but not your words) **confessed**. (Hazlitt 1823, *Liber Amoris*, line 2823)

Some of the senses were, again, hard to decide on and could perhaps be argued to belong to some other class.

The syntactic findings made in the second part of the CLMETEV are summarized in Table 5 below. There were once again zero complements (4) in the data, which are included in the total but which will not be discussed further in the thesis:

(4) Will he **confess**? – can he not be persuaded that in his delirium he struck the blow? (Bulwer-Lytton 1834, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, line 10448)

Complement	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency per one million words
that-clause	79	41.4
NP	43	22.5
to NP + that-clause	8	4.19
NP + to NP	6	3.14
NP + Adj.	4	2.10
NP + that-clause	3	1.57
to NP + NP	2	1.05
NP + NP	2	1.05
NP + to-infinitive	2	1.05
wh-clause	1	0.52
to-infinitive	1	0.52
gerund	1	0.52
on + NP + to NP	1	0.52
parenthetical	23 (28)	12.1
zero	4	2.10
Total	180	94.3

Table 5. Complements of *confess* in the CLMETEV Part II.

A quick inspection of the table reveals that not much has changed in the complementation of *confess* compared to the first part of the CLMETEV. The overall frequency is a little smaller and the frequency of almost all the complements has also decreased. In the next section I will examine all the types of complements, in the same manner as in section 6.1.

6.2.1 *Confess + that-clause, confess + to NP + that-clause and confess + NP + that-clause*

That-clause complement was the most prominent one for *confess* in the second part of the corpus, too, with 79 instances (43.9% of all) but its normalized frequency has even decreased a little, even though among the complements, it is a little more prominent. Most cases of *that*-clauses were normal but I did detect one extraction of a complement (6) and four *as*-clauses (7), which were introduced in 6.1.1. Here are some examples:

(5) And would you have to **confess**, that they excite no interest which would not instantly give place to... (Foster 1821, *An Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance*, line 533)

(6) ...in his school there were but two books for the use of his pupils, and these he confessed contained but little good. (Borrow 1842, *Bible in Spain*, line 17207)

(7) And this is the truth, but it is also true, as I have freely **confessed**, that my sense of danger during the whole period was lively and continuous. (Kinglake 1844, *Eothen*, line 6133)

In eight tokens, there was an insertion between *confess* and the *that*-clause. The insertions were clauses, commentary clauses or adjuncts but not one stood out as a frequent phrase. Many of the clauses inserted are quite long, so the appearance of an explicit *that*-clause is justified. In addition, *that* was present in all but one instance, which adds to the explicitness.

That-clauses appeared as the second complement in constructions with two complements, too. In eight cases, the recipient or the hearer of the confession was expressed with *to* NP complement before the *that*-clause complement. Among these, there was one case

where a part of the *that*-clause complement was extracted from its original place by topicalization (8). Here are two examples of *to* NP + *that*-clause complements:

(8) Captain Sabre has been most assiduous in his attentions, and I must **confess** to your sympathising bosom, that I do begin to find that he has an interest in mine. (Galt 1821, Ayrshire Legatees, line 2830)

(9) The first part of the Battle of Hastings, he confessed to Mr. Barrett, that he had written himself. (Cary 1846, Lives of the English Poets, line 9593)

The other construction with two complements is NP + *that*-clause complement and there were three of these in the data. These were, again cases which are either extraposition or right dislocation (see example (15) in section 6.1.1). Here is an example:

(10) ...being ashamed to **confess** the truth, that I was afraid to pass the soldiers. (Hunt 1820-1, Memoirs of Henry Hunt 1, line 972)

6.2.2 *Confess* + NP, *confess* + NP + *to* NP and *confess* + *to* NP + NP

As in the first part of the corpus, the NP complement was the second most common in the second part, too (43 instances, 23.9%). Nothing unusual could be detected in most of these cases, except for two extractions and one insertion. The other one of the extractions involves relativization and the other one interrogation. Here is also an example of the insertion case:

(11) ...might no longer make a secret of your true regard for me, which your actions (but not your words) **confessed**. (Hazlitt 1823, Liber Amoris, line 2823)

(12) ...if I pressed hem for it; how much would she **confess**, and how she would endeavour to excuse herself. (Brontë 1848, The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, line 6884)

(13) Be calm and frank, and **confess** at once all that weighs on your heart. (Brontë 1847, Wuthering Heights, line 11838)

As for the other complements in this section (i.e. NP + *to* NP and *to* NP + NP), I think they are instances of the same pattern, where the noun phrase expresses the content of the confession and the *to* NP the addressee of the confession. Perhaps for stylistic or structural reasons, the *to* NP part appears before the noun phrase complement in the other one and not after it, as is

more common. There were six cases of the type NP + *to* NP and two of the type *to* NP + NP.

Here is one example of each ordering:

(14) It introduces Lord St. Aldobrand on his road homeward, and next Imogine in the convent, **confessing** the foulness of her heart to the prior. (Coleridge 1817, Biographia Literaria, line 12029)

(15)...and **confessing** to me her sorrow that she had endeavoured to raise a bad spirit between him and Hareton. (Brontë 1847, Wuthering Heights, line 14262)

In one instance, the NP was extracted and in one case, the *to* NP complement was extracted.

Both involve relativization.

6.2.3 *Confess* + NP + adjective and *confess* + NP + NP

Altogether, there were 6 instances of the complex-transitive construction with *confess* in the second part of the corpus. Four of these had a noun phrase followed by an adjective and two of these had a noun phrase followed by a noun phrase. All but one had a reflexive pronoun as the first NP, which was stated to be the normal case in the grammar section (see 5.2.). Here is one example:

(16) ... as not to be confounded with the herd of vulgar mob flatterers, I am not ashamed to **confess** myself solicitous. (Cottle 1847, Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey, line 3690)

6.2.4 *Confess* + NP + infinitive and *confess* + infinitive

The data included two instances of the NP + infinitive construction and in both, the noun phrase was a reflexive pronoun. Surprisingly, I also found one case where *confess* was complemented by just a *to*-infinitive clause. Palmer says (1965, 201) that an infinitive needs a noun phrase preceding it but in this case there was no noun phrase. Here are examples of an infinitive with and without a noun phrase:

(17) ... Lizzy will, I am sure, be incapable of triumphing in her better judgment, at my expense, when I **confess** myself to have been entirely deceived ... (Austen 1813, Pride and Prejudice, line 5432)

(18) “Albeit, I must **confess to be** half in doubt, whether I should bring it forth or no... (Coleridge 1817, *Biographia Literaria*, line 2820)

Of course, the case above could be one where the NP is omitted because it is a reflexive pronoun (see section 5.1.1.).

6.2.5 *Confess* + *wh*-clause

Once was *confess* complemented by a *wh*-clause and it involved extraction. Here is the only illustration of a *wh*-clause:

(19) ... if they did not **confess how they came by this ring of Helena’s** they should be both put to death. (Lamb 1807, *Tales from Shakespeare*, line 5819)

The rarity of *wh*-clauses should not come as a surprise as they only appear in a few *OED* examples.

6.2.6 *Confess* + gerund

Although the gerundial complement of *confess* was mentioned in almost every source consulted in chapter 5, I found the first instance of that only in the second part of the corpus and still, there was only one. It is also noteworthy that there is no preposition *to* in front of the gerund, contrary to the information given in the dictionaries and grammars. Here is the sentence where it occurred:

(20) ...after protesting his innocence in the most forcible terms, **confessed having been** with such a woman in such a house... (Hogg 1824, *Private Momoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, line 3391)

6.2.7 *Confess* + *on* + NP + *to* NP

Once again, I detected one instance of the *on* + NP construction. However, it is not absolutely clear that the prepositional phrase is a complement because it could also be an adjunct meaning “at this point”. I think both interpretations are possible considering the context:

(21) This seems reasonable; but why should I **confess on this point to a painter?** or why confess at all? (de Quincy 1822, Confessions of an English Opium Eater, line 2325)

6.2.8 Confess in a parenthetical

In the second part of the corpus, there were 23 cases of the parenthetical construction (28 if those dealt in relevant sections are counted in). Most of the cases were either of the form “I confess” or “it must be confessed”. In those cases where there was a noun phrase complement inside the parenthetical phrase, the noun phrase was most often *the truth*. Here are some examples:

(22) The inclosed ballad is, **I confess**, too local... (Burns 1780-96, Letters 1780-1796, line 9413)

(23) I do not venture to say that mine would; it has suffered, and, **it must be confessed**, survived. (Thackeray 1847-8, Vanity Fair, line 231)

(24) ... and would not soon grow tired of; and, to **confess the truth**, I rather liked him ... (Brontë 1847, Agnes Grey, line 5498)

6.3 Confess in the third part of the CLMETEV: 1850-1920

The third part of the CLMETEV contains 6,251,564 words from texts written in 1850-1920. Altogether, there were 431 instances of the verb *confess*, of which a random sample of 215 (50%) was chosen for further study. Once again, the search produced two irrelevant tokens, which both included a participial adjective of *confess*. These excluded, there were 213 tokens of *confess* to analyze more carefully. Semantic analysis of the data brought up the same results as in the first two parts, i.e. a clear majority of sense 1, a few instances of sense 2 and only a couple of sense 3 and 4. The number of each sense is represented in Table 6:

Sense	1. to admit	2. to recognize, acknowledge	3. to reveal	4. to shrive
Number of tokens	205	5	1	2

Table 6. Senses of *confess* in the CLMETEV Part III.

All the different senses were found among noun phrase complements, with one exception of a *to* + NP complement with sense 2. Here are examples of noun phrases with senses 1, 2, 3 and 4 in that order:

(1) ... **confess** your past unfaithfulness in your dealings with them, ... (Booth 1879, Papers on Practical Religion, line 371)

(2) You cannot be a Christian, and not **confess** Christ. (Booth 1880, Papers on Aggressive Christianity, line 1768)

(3) 'Breeze, bird, and flower **confess** the hour.' (Hardy 1873, A Pair of Blue Eyes, line 10405)

(4) In a few days the friar returned to **confess** me, as he had arranged with the abbess ... (Blind 1885, Tarantella, line 6802)

The cases above are all quite prototypical of the sense they represent. In addition, the fact that all include a noun phrase complement makes it easy to compare them and see the difference the noun phrase itself may bring to the interpretation of the sense.

Coming now to the syntactic analysis of the third part of the CLMETEV, the findings of the analysis are presented in Table 7 below. There were quite a number of zero complements (13) which are counted as a result but will not be dealt with further. Here are examples of a zero complement and an excluded adjective case:

(5) No! up and **confess**, and forsake, and wash again. (Booth 1879, Papers on Practical Religion, line 4473)

(6) These are the **confessed** objects of the movement whereby men are to be made lady-like... (Linton 1885, The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland, line 10298)

The first conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of the table below is that the frequency of the verb in the corpus has decreased compared to the earlier parts of the corpus. The normalized frequency of the verb has decreased almost by a half from the first part of the corpus. Nevertheless, the same complement types are still prevailing and some new ones could also be detected. The following sections deal with each complement type separately.

Complement	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency per one million words
that-clause	89	28.5
NP	60	19.2
to + NP	9	2.88
NP + to NP	6	1.92
to NP + that-clause	5	1.6
direct speech	4	1.28
to NP	3	0.96
NP + to-infinitive	3	0.96
to-infinitive	2	0.64
as much + to NP	2	0.64
NP + Adj.	1	0.32
to + -ing	1	0.32
as much as that	1	0.32
parenthetical	14 (18)	4.48
zero	13	4.16
Total	213	68.1

Table 7. Complements of *confess* in the CLMETEV Part III.

6.3.1 *Confess* + *that*-clause, *confess* + *to* NP + *that*-clause

Yet again, the most common complement of *confess* was a *that*-clause with 89 tokens (41.8% of all). The instances of a *that*-clause complement brought few surprises. Only one extraction through passivization could be found. Here is an example of the extraction:

(7) That Sir Martin was a pluralist must be **confessed**, but he was most conscientious in providing substitutes, ... (Yonge 1870, *The Caged Lion*, line 2793)

Seven instances of a *that*-clause complement were preceded by an insertion. Most of the insertions were adjuncts of manner or time but some commentary or explaining clauses were inserted, too. Once again, only in two cases was *that* omitted. The rest of the *that*-clause

complements were normal cases. Quite often the complementizer *that* was left out. The recipient of the confession was again expressed by a *to* NP complement in a five cases.

6.3.2 *Confess* + NP, *confess* + NP + *to* NP, *confess* + *to* NP

The second most common complement of *confess* in the third part of the CLMETEV was a noun phrase, as in the two earlier parts. There were 60 tokens of an NP complement (28.2%). Most cases were normal but one *as*-clause and even as many as seven extractions were found. Three of the extractions involved relativization and four involved passivization. Here is an example of an *as*-clause and an extraction of each type:

(8) I only say that the chances are very much against it, marrying from such motives as you **confess**. (Gissing 1893, *The Odd Woman*, line 3329)

(9) I prayed with the anguish which no man need blush to feel nor be ashamed to **confess**, ... (Linton 1885, *The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland* 1-3, line 12077)

(10) If the illness had only been **confessed**, those who watched the King anxiously would have had more hope ... (Yonge 1870, *The Caged Lion*, line 5639)

One illustration of a noun phrase complement had an extra element inserted between the verb and the complement and this element was an adjunct (*confess*) *before the world*. In six cases the addressee of the confession was expressed with *to* NP –complement. One of these had the preposition *unto* instead of *to*. There were also three intransitive instances of *confess* that were only complemented by the optional complement *to* NP.

6.3.3 *Confess* + *to* + NP

One of the most common complements of *confess*, according to previous work on the verb, is *to* + NP. However, it is only in this third part of the CLMETEV that this complement comes up with 9 tokens. Here are some illustrations of the complement:

(11) And yet I **confess to a certain superstitious creeping of my skin** as I spoke. (Linton 1885, *The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland* 1-3, line 14744)

(12) ... I must **confess** to an impulse which almost made me beg the station-master's company on my walk; ... (Hope 1898, Rupert of Hentzau, line 635)

The noun in the complement varied but it was never a personal pronoun. In the case of a personal pronoun, *to* + NP expresses the recipient of the confession (see, e.g. 6.3.2). For the sake of keeping these two complements separate, the recipient complement is marked as *to* NP.

6.3.4 *Confess* + direct speech

The *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* listed direct speech as one of the complements of *confess*. In these constructions, *confess* functions as the reporting verb. In the data corpus data, there were four instances of *confess* followed by direct speech. Here is one illustration:

(13) "I do remember something about it, now that you mention it, dear," the good woman would **confess**. (Jerome 1909, *They and I*, line 3211)

One might have expected even more instances of this complement type because the main material for the CLMETEV is novels which quite often contain dialogues. However, it is also only in this last part of the historical corpus that this complement comes up.

6.3.5 *Confess* + *to*-infinitive, *confess* + NP + *to*-infinitive

The *to*-infinitive as the only complement has not proven to be very common for *confess* and the last part of the CLMETEV does not make an exception (5 cases). Two cases of a *to*-infinitival complement were found, both of which are in past tense. Here are some examples:

(14) It is with shame that I **confess** to have asked myself a question so heretical. (Galsworthy 1904, *The Island Pharisees*, line 7926)

(15) ... and that he **confesses** his own estimates to be very "vague," justly entitles us to disregard those estimates, ... (Huxley 1894, *Discourses*, line 8317)

In three cases, the infinitive was preceded by a noun phrase (example 15 above). One of them involved relativization:

(16) ... which is the only excuse I can offer for a prejudice I confess to be both illiberal and unphilosophical. (Linton 1885, The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland 1-3, line 7162)

6.3.6 Confess + as much

The third part of the CLMETEV brought one new complement type for *confess*. In two cases, *confess* was followed by *as much* + *to* NP and once by *as much as* + *that*-clause. Here is an illustration of both types:

(17) He has evidently discovered that Laura secretly dislikes him (she **confessed as much to me** when I pressed her on the subject) – but he has also found that she is extravagant.. (Collins 1859-60, The Woman in White, line 1097)

(18) “I’m waiting for a plain answer, and no lie. You’ve already **confessed as much as that the money you told me on your honour you put out to interest** ... (Meredith 1870, The Adventures of Harry Richmond, line 10209)

In both cases *as much* refers to something that has already been said or will be said next. If there was more to work with, a question could be raised whether these constructions are actually *that*-clause complements so that, for example, sentence 17 would actually be *She confessed to me that she secretly dislikes him*.

6.3.7 Confess + to + -ing-clause

There was one instance of an *-ing*-clause complement in the data. Although this is the only case of it, it is now in the form that all the dictionaries and some grammars suggested, i.e. with the preposition *to* preceding it.

(19) Must **confess to being a little startled** by the account of your adventure on Lord Mayor’s Day ... (Caine 1897, The Christian, line 6611)

6.3.8 Confess + NP + adjective

In one instance, there was a noun phrase followed by an adjective after the verb *confess*:

(20) ... and Mrs. Dearmer yawned openly, and **confessed** herself bored. (Brebner 1910, The Brown Mask, line 9465)

This is an illustration of the complex-transitive complementation that has been proven to occur with *confess* (see 6.1.4 and 6.2.3). Once again, one might raise the question of whether this is really a case of a NP + infinitive where the infinitive has been left out as it is *to be* (see section 5.1.1).

6.3.9 *Confess* in a parenthetical

Parenthetical constructions were quite frequent in the first two parts of the CLMETEV and so they are in the last part as well. However, it is not as common here as before, with only 18 instances (8.5% of all). Here is one example:

(20) No one wishing to be first, it was then, **I confess**, that the thought just crossed my mind that... (Baker 1855, Eight Years' Wandering in Ceylon, line 8902)

Most of the parentheticals had the form "I confess" (11). In addition to these, there were two "it must be confessed" and one "he confessed" parentheticals.

6.4 Summary of the CLMETEV sections

One of the most important findings in the CLMETEV is that *confess* has become less frequent the closer we come to the present day. In the first part, there were 111.9 tokens of *confess* in a million words and only 68.1 in the third part. However, the same complement types have retained their position among the complements of *confess*. Even the order of frequency of each complement type has stayed almost the same throughout the period of the years 1710-1920. *That*-clauses are the most frequent in each sub-corpus, followed by noun phrases and parentheticals. In addition to these three complements, none of the rest is very frequent.

Among the most interesting discoveries are the above-mentioned parentheticals, which proved to be very common with *confess*. Another interesting thing is the lack or small

number of *to* + NP and *to* + *-ing*-clause complements, because most sources consulted in sections 5.1 and 5.2 mentioned them as one of the most common complements of *confess*. However, there were a few tokens of each in the last part of the CLMETEV so one might expect to see more in the BNC. *As*-clauses, i.e. adjuncts of comparison, were also a nice finding because this kind of construction was not mentioned by any of the sources. Extractions and insertions also added to the variation of the complementation of *confess*. Especially the insertions found were interesting because they seemed to prove the complexity principle as most of the insertions occurred with *that*-clauses and moreover, *that* was rarely omitted.

The analysis of different senses in the CLMETEV did not reveal big surprises. Sense 1 was the most prominent in all the sub-corpora while the other senses had only a few if any tokens in the data. It will be interesting to see if there are any changes in the distribution of senses moving on to the BNC data.

As a summary before moving on to the BNC, *confess* is most frequently found in sense 1 and with either a *that*-clause or noun phrase complement or in a parenthetical construction.

7 *Confess* in the British National Corpus; a look at present-day English

After examining the complementation patterns of *confess* in historical data, it is time to take a look at present-day English. The British National Corpus offers authentic data from the late 20th century and serves as a comparison to the historical data presented in the previous chapter. However, one has to bear in mind that these two corpora contain a different set of text types and therefore, they are not fully comparable. I will start by looking at the BNC as a whole to give a general picture of the complementation patterns of *confess* in present-day English. After this, I will examine one particular text type inside the BNC, i.e. imaginative prose, and compare it to the historical data. Of all the different text types, imaginative prose is chosen because it is most similar to the CLMETEV and contains the same type of texts. Therefore, comparison between these two corpora is valid and significant for the purposes of this thesis.

7.1 *Confess* in the British National Corpus

The British National Corpus contains 111,244,375 words of contemporary English taken from different written and spoken sources. For this thesis, only the written part (87,903,571 words) is taken into consideration because that way the comparison between the two corpora is the most valid, as the CLMETEV only contains written data. A lemma search of *confess* yielded 1494 tokens of the verb, of which a random sample of 50% (747) was taken to represent the corpus. Of these, seven had to be excluded because they were adjectives. That way, there were 740 tokens of *confess* that were analyzed further. The distribution of different senses of *confess* in the data are shown in table 8 below:

Sense	1. to admit	2. to recognize, acknowledge	3. to reveal	4. to shrive
Number of tokens	735	4	-	1

Table 8. Senses of *confess* in the BNC

Table 8 speaks for itself and tells that the matter of senses is even clearer than in the CLMETEV. Only a very small minority of the tokens illustrate some other sense than sense 1. Although it is clear that the first connotation of *confess* that comes to mind is “to admit”, I did not expect that the other senses would be so rare in such a large corpus as the BNC is. Here are examples of each sense found:

(1) ... the prison chaplain, did his best to persuade Linkworth to **confess** his crime. (H9U 1090)

(2) ... the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not **confess** Jesus is not of God. (G3A 1723)

(3) ... she was forbidden to go to church, and had to **be confessed** and absolved in a private chapel. (CFX 747)

As regards senses other than sense 1, they all appeared with a noun phrase complement. Example (3) above shows the one case which had a noun phrase extracted in sense 4.

The syntactic analysis of the BNC data proved to be much more fruitful than the semantic analysis of the verb *confess*. Several patterns were found and there were changes in the frequencies, too, compared to the CLMETEV. The different complements of *confess* in the BNC data are represented in Table 9 below. What is noteworthy in the corpus data is that there were a lot of zero complements in the BNC, i.e. 72, which is ten per cent of all the tokens. As such, this is an interesting finding but the cases with a zero complement will not be studied further as the aim of this thesis is to see what kind of actual complements the verb *confess* takes. Here are examples of the tokens left out of analysis, i.e. an adjective and a zero complement:

(4) ... bargaining to the curiosity that while Boesky, a **confessed** criminal, can arrange special deals... (A9L 64)

(5) She would have to **confess** later. (HGK 1210)

Complement	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency per one million words
that-clause	225	5.12
direct speech	127	2.89
NP	82	1.87
to + NP	60	1.37
to + -ing	58	1.32
to NP + that-clause	22	0.50
to NP	15	0.34
NP + to NP	13	0.30
complex-transitive	8	0.18
direct speech + to NP	6	0.14
wh-clause	4	0.09
to NP + wh-clause	3	0.07
to-infinitive	3	0.07
as much	3	0.07
miscellaneous	4	0.09
parenthetical	35	0.80
zero	72	1.64
Total	740	16.8

Table 9. Complements of *confess* in the BNC.

As can be seen in the table, the frequency of *confess* in the BNC is not very high, only 16.8 tokens in one million words. The frequency is remarkably smaller than in the CLMETEV, continuing the tendency of decrease that started already in the last part of the historical corpus. In the following sections, all the different complements will be discussed. The complements in the ‘miscellaneous’ group will each be dealt with the complements that are the closest to them.

7.1.1 *Confess* + *that*-clause, *confess* + *to* NP + *that*-clause

The frequency of a *that*-clause complement has been a little over 40 per cent throughout the data analyzed and in the BNC, it is again the most frequent with 225 tokens even though its frequency has decreased a little (30.4% of all). This is probably explained by the appearance of a few new complements that will be discussed later. Four extractions were found among the

that-clause complements. All of them involve noun phrase relativization from the complement clause. Here is one example of an ordinary *that*-clause and an extraction case:

(6) He would not let me off the hook until I had **confessed** that I could no longer work with my boss (AMC 1424)

(7) ...articulate and faithful to inflexible socialist principles, which I must **confess** I have never shared. (FPN 865)

In addition to the extractions, there were also as many as six *as*-constructions that are a close relation to extractions, in my opinion, and even as many as 20 insertion cases. Here is one illustration of a *that*-clause in an *as*-construction and with an insertion:

(8) ...was aware of Ken's sexual problems, just as he had **confessed** then in those letters to Val Orford and Annette Kerr. (J0W 273)

(9) ... and Beckford's contractor **confessed** upon his death-bed that he had not provided it with foundations ... (FAE 106)

The basis for considering *as*-clauses as *that*-clause complements is the canonical version of them. For example, the sentence above in its normal form would be "He had **confessed** that X was aware of Ken's sexual problems". As regards the insertions, it is important that of the 27 insertions found in the BNC, 20 appear with a *that*-clause. This supports, again, the complexity principle, especially as only a few tokens had *that* omitted. Most of the insertions were either adjuncts of place, manner or time but a few instances of an inserted commentary or explanatory clause were detected, too.

One other interesting thing about the *that*-clause complements is that some of them are almost like direct speech. Consider the following illustration from the BNC:

(10) Although, when he had got it off his chest, he **confessed** that 'I am afraid I have been rather carried away' ... (EDE 119)

These cases are counted as *that*-clauses firstly because there is the complementizer *that* and secondly because they are like quotes built inside a sentence and are not a direct speech preceded by a reporting verb per se.

As in all the other sub-corpora studied, there were cases where the addressee of the confession was expressed by the complement *to* NP (22) in the BNC as well. What is interesting about these is that two extractions could be detected. Both involve topicalization of the optional *to* NP element so the extraction is in a way only partial. However, here is an example of an extracted *to* NP complement:

(11) To her he **confessed** that he hoped residence at Lincoln would banish his 'moods'... (ABL 1188)

7.1.2 *Confess* + direct speech, *confess* + *to* NP + direct speech, *confess* + NP + direct speech, *confess* + *of* + direct speech

Probably the most remarkable change in the complementation from the CLMETEV is the large number of direct speech complements that came up in the BNC data. As many as 127 (17.2%) of the tokens contained a direct speech complement. Considering that the BNC includes much data from other than fictional sources, one could have assumed that the situation would be the other way around so that the CLMETEV would have contained more direct speech complements. However, as most of the direct speech complements seem to come from fictional sources in the BNC as well, the increase in the frequency is probably due to a change in the complementation. The *OED* did not list direct speech as a complement of *confess* and as it mainly contains illustrations that are relatively old, it can be suggested that the direct speech complement is a feature of modern English as the results here show. Here is an example of direct speech:

(12) 'I just don't understand, Madame, ' Ellie **confessed**, 'I never even knew my mother.' (EEW 1176)

As in many other complementation patterns of *confess*, it is also possible to express the addressee with a direct speech complement. *To* NP complement always follows directly after *confess*. An illustration of one case:

(13) 'I feel like a criminal, 'he **confessed** innocently to Eva once, in a moment of forgetfulness... (C8E 1574)

The two last types of complement that are mentioned in the heading of this section are part of the miscellaneous group but since both have direct speech as a part of the complementation, they are discussed here. Firstly, one case with a noun phrase in the reporting clause preceding direct speech was found. Secondly, there was one instance of an *of* + NP in the reporting clause. Here is an example of each finding:

(14) But Gallop had doubts, or rather **confesses** an ambivalence: 'But we cannot be sure that this ...' (A6D 365)

(15) Of Seraphina, John **confesses**: ...she remained to me always unattainable and romantic – unique ... (EC8 743)

Of + NP is listed as a complement of *confess* but only to mean 'confess sins' in the religious context. Example (15) does not have a religious context but instead *of* + NP means to 'confess about Seraphina'. For this reason, this is an interesting finding, although the only one so far.

7.1.3 *Confess* + NP, *confess* + NP + *to* NP, *confess* + *to* NP

The noun phrase complement had to lose its second place to direct speech complement but it is still the third most common complement of *confess* in the BNC with 82 tokens (11.1% of all). Compared to the other corpus, it has suffered some decrease in frequency, most likely for the same reason as *that*-clauses, i.e. the emergence of new frequent complements. Among the noun phrases, there are various kinds of nouns. There are both nouns and pronouns but not one stands out as more common than some other. Many of the nouns denote some negative quality, feeling, fault or weakness but then again, there are also nouns that are neutral in this sense or even positive. Here are some examples in the same order as mentioned above:

(16) Eventually coaxed from his seclusion by his lance master, Dauntless **confessed** his doubts and disillusionment. (GW2 775)

(17) Aged 28 and every inch the tall, pragmatic bassist, Granville **confesses** his own particular field of expertise with remarkable candour ... (CK4 586)

(18) One night and morning didn't give her the right to **confess** her love when it might just be a burden to him. (JXV 2962)

Among the noun phrase complements, three extractions and one insertion were found but otherwise these cases offer nothing new syntactically. Some variation is brought by the optional *to* NP that expresses the addressee (11 instances). One of those involved extraction. In two cases, *to* NP preceded the NP, an occurrence that I interpret to be a version of NP + *to* NP complement. Here is an example of the deviating forms of NP + *to* NP, i.e. the extraction case and one where the components are the other way around:

(19) ... may have some dreadful secret in his past that he wants to **confess** to you... (JYE 4105)

(20) At thirty-two, he **confesses** to Louise the manner in which he has spent many hours of ... (G1A 1617)

As was believed in section 6.2.2, the reasons for the differing ordering of elements in example (20) are probably structural as the direct object functions as a correlate to a relative pronoun. The clause would be difficult to process if 'to Louise' intervened between a relative pronoun and its head. In addition to these, *to* NP was the only complement of *confess* in 15 instances.

7.1.4 *Confess* + *to* + NP

Now we come to the complements that have taken away some of the dominance of *that*-clauses and NP complements. The first of these is *to* + NP with 60 tokens (8.1%). Although the normalized frequency is very small, its frequency compared to the other complements of *confess* and to other sub-corpora studied is considerable. Here are a couple of examples of the complement in question:

(21) ... of Scotland are teeming with interesting things too, and I **confess** to a penchant for peering into dark, ... (AS3 770)

(22) It was Marje's decision to **confess** to her secret relationship with the dashing newspaper lawyer. (CBF 4814)

As with NP complements, there are different kind of nouns present in *to* + NP constructions, too. While confessions to some wrong-doing or shameful thing are most common, there are nouns that do not denote anything like that. However, the verb *confess* itself implies that the thing confessed is somehow compromising, so not even the nouns that are neutral or positive as such are totally free of that sense (see example 21).

In one case there was another complement following *to* + NP, i.e. *to* NP and one insertion was also found. The illustrations are as follows:

(23) He has **confessed** to most of the charges to court investigators and western reporters and ... (K5M 820)

(24) She **confessed**, too, to the tension she had felt ... (CH6 8986)

7.1.5 *Confess* + *to* + *-ing*-clause

The other complement that has increased enormously is *to* + *-ing*-clause complement with 58 instances (7.8 %). Of these, 48 were in the present and 10 in the past tense. This is one of the most interesting findings in the data because it proves the Great Complement Shift, which says that *-ing* forms are becoming more and more common in English (Rohdenburg 2006, 143). In addition, *confess* with a *to* + *-ing*-clause complement proves Dirvén's interpretation of the meaning of the gerund wrong or at least highly doubtful. Dirvén says (1989, 116-118) that the gerund denotes something abstract or non-individualised event but this is not the case with *confess* because one usually confesses precisely to individual events or actions. For this reason, Allerton and Bolinger's interpretation of the gerund as denoting factual, single events in the past is more applicable here (see 3.6.2). Another interesting thing is that while Allerton says that the gerund also denotes likely future events, this does not seem to be possible with

confess as the verb is used to refer to things in the past. The following examples illustrate the to + -ing-clause complements in the data:

(25) When she **confessed** to shooting Martin no one could doubt she had it in her... (FNU 356)

(26) The employers and their allies **confessed** to having been overwhelmed. (FES 1005)

Despite the tense difference, both forms are used to refer to the past (see 5.2).

There was one extraction from the lower clause among the complement type in question, and it involves relativization. Moreover, in four instances an inserted element intervened the complementation. One bare *-ing* form was also found. Here are examples of each finding:

(27) ...sums were separate from the 128,300 million yen which they had already **confessed** to paying between 1987 and 1990, ... (HLC 1074)

(28) In 1989 he **confessed** at a show trial to trafficking in gold and ivory, and... (ABJ 1281)

(29) Despite all its important news, I have to **confess** first turning to 'Where are they now' and ... (EE6 327)

Example (29) is one of the four miscellaneous complements but is treated here with other types of *-ing*-clause complements.

7.1.6 *Confess* + complex-transitive complementation

In this section, the complex-transitive complements reflexive + adjective (6), reflexive + NP (1) and NP + NP (1) will be discussed. Here is first an illustration of each:

(30) ... and cricket-lover who had done much to restore outside sports broadcasting, **confessed** himself happy. (CU0 704)

(31) ... he wrote, **confessing** himself a conscientious objector with a very seared conscience. (GSX 775)

(32) ... take them through the ugliest country you can find, **confess** them the miserable things they are, and spend nothing on them... (AR0 620)

The number or percentage of these complex-transitives has not been remarkable in any of the corpora but it has slowly become less frequent, from the 4.8% in the first part of the CLMETEV to the 1.2% in the BNC. One possible explanation for this change could be that the complex-transitive pattern is rather a formal one, even old-fashioned and has been replaced by other complements, e.g. *to* +*-ing*-clause. All but one had a reflexive as the first noun phrase, so nothing new can be said on the structural side of these constructions.

7.1.7 *Confess* + *wh*-clause, *confess* + *to* NP + *wh*-clause

Seven of the tokens of *confess* had a *wh*-clause as a complement, and three of them were preceded by *to* NP. None of the instances of *wh*-clauses offer any surprises so here is just an illustration of both types mentioned above.

(33) ... that we are in very subjective territory here and I have already **confessed** where my own preferences lie, but ... (C9L 495)

(34) The truth is that I'm finding it damnably hard to **confess** to you what happened between Lotta and myself, ... (HA5 2499)

7.1.8 *Confess* + *to*-infinitive

In the BNC data, there were three instances of a *to*-infinitival complement. One of those had an extraction through relativization. An illustration of a normal case and an extraction construction is offered below:

(35) 'It is dramatic stuff, I believe, though I **confess** not to have read any. (ADS 995)

(36) He studied first under a scholar of Aydin, whose name Taskopruzade **confesses** to have been told by his father but to have forgotten, ... (H7S 638)

Example (36) proves the extraction principle, according to which the *to*-infinitive is common in an extraction environment (see 4.4 earlier).

Interestingly, one insertion case was also found in the data. The inserted element is not very long, so it is not so clear-cut whether this finding violates the complexity principle. Here is the illustration of the insertion:

(37) ...though he may have confessed in so doing to be guided by its general policy. (FRA 47)

7.1.9 *Confess* + *as much*

As much is a complement of *confess* that came up in the last sub-corpus of the CLMETEV. In the BNC, it appeared three times. Two of these have *to* NP expressing the addressee. An example of each type:

(38) ... though she was now married), and indeed Wolfgang had recently **confessed as much** – he truly had loved her, ... (CEW 502)

(39) Jeanne Hébuterne had just discovered that she was pregnant and she had **confessed as much to her mother**. (ANF 1409)

Once again, *as much* seems to refer to something already said or to something that follows.

7.1.10 *Confess* in a parenthetical

Parentheticals – or adverbials as the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* calls them – were again one of the common constructions to occur with *confess*. However, 35 tokens (37 including those counted elsewhere) and 4.7% of all is a lot less than in the CLMETEV. Indeed, parentheticals seem to be another construction in addition to complex-transitives that has slowly decreased in percentage the closer we come to present-day English. My own suggestion for the reason is the difference in the types of sources used in each corpus. The parenthetical construction seems to fit better in fictional than factual writing. The study of a different text type will hopefully shed some light to this discussion. There are different kinds of forms in the parentheticals found but three most common ones are ‘I must confess’, ‘I have to confess’ and ‘I confess (with different pronouns)’. Here is one example of each in the same order as above:

(40) But one, **I must confess**, that has limited appeal. (H97 843)

(41) ‘Yes, but half of it, **I have to confess**, was the effect of deliberate choosing. (AB3 86)

(42) This kind of compromise, **we confess**, raises as many questions as it answers. (EDD 1026)

7.1.11 *Confess* + *about* + NP

One of the complements in the miscellaneous group has not been counted elsewhere because it does not have any close relation to the other complements. The complement *about* + NP was detected once in the data and here is the illustration:

(43) Sir Brian **confessed** about his fight against his sin, his will to do good and ... (K95 1879)

As the only instance of this complement, the sentence above does not offer much to say about but the interest of the illustration lies in the fact that the preposition *about* seems to be unnecessary. ‘**Confessed** his fight against his sin’ would suffice to express the same idea.

7.2 *Confess* in imaginative prose; a comparison to the CLMETEV

In this section, I will discuss one particular text type inside the BNC and the complementation of *confess* in it. Whereas the previous sections gave a general picture of *confess* in present-day English, imaginative prose serves as a point of comparison to the CLMETEV because they are both compiled mainly of literary texts. Thus, I will introduce any interesting findings in imaginative prose and make comparisons to the historical corpus.

In the imaginative prose domain, there are 16,496,408 words. A lemma search for the verb *confess* was performed to get all the possible forms of the verb (i.e. *confess*, *confesses*, *confessed*, *confessing*). This search yielded 561 tokens, of which a random sample of 50 per cent (284 tokens) was taken for further examination. One token had to be excluded from the discussion as it included an adjective, so altogether 283 tokens were analyzed. The

results of the analysis are presented in Table 10 below. As the table shows, zero complement was the third most common complement of *confess* in imaginative prose. As such, this is interesting and it repeats the result that the BNC showed, as well. However, zero complements will hereon be excluded from the discussion. Otherwise, I will only concentrate on findings that tell something important or that in comparison to the CLMETEV have changed. Therefore, the discussion of the results will not be as systematic as with other corpora in this thesis.

Complement	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency per one million words
direct speech	71	8.61
that-clause	59	7.15
NP	33	4
to + NP	13	1.58
NP + to NP	12	1.45
to + -ing-clause	11	1.33
to NP	7	0.85
to NP + that-clause	7	0.85
wh-clause	2	0.24
to NP + wh-clause	2	0.24
NP + Adj.	1	0.12
as much	1	0.12
about + NP	1	0.12
direct speech + to NP	1	0.12
parenthetical	19	0.23
zero	43	5.21
Total	283	34.3

Table 10. Complements of *confess* in imaginative prose.

7.2.1 Frequency of *confess*

The overall frequency of the verb in question is a lot lower in imaginative prose than in the CLMETEV. The frequency has decreased steadily right from the first part of the CLMETEV, from 111.9 tokens in a million to 34.3 in a million in imaginative prose. It is difficult to suggest any other reason for this than that the verb simply has become rarer. Perhaps it has been replaced by some other verb, for example, *admit*. However, in imaginative prose, *confess*

is three times as frequent as in the whole BNC and this is interesting. It shows that *confess* is possibly more common in fictional and literary writing than in any given text.

The higher frequency of *confess* in the CLMETEV logically means that the frequency of each complement type is also higher in that corpus – with a few exceptions. The normalized frequencies of the complements found in imaginative prose are lower than in the CLMETEV except for the direct speech complement and *to+ -ing*-clause complement, which have more tokens per one million words in imaginative prose. Because almost all the normalized frequencies are lower in imaginative prose than in the CLMETEV, it is not meaningful to discuss the differences or similarities in terms of normalized frequency but instead talk about percentages within each sub-corpus and make comparisons between those. One more interesting thing about the normalized frequencies is that, as in the whole BNC, the differences between the complements have evened out in imaginative prose. There are still a few complements that stand out as the most frequent but the differences are not as great as in the CLMETEV.

7.2.2 Complementation of *confess* in imaginative prose and the CLMETEV

The first difference and at the same time the most remarkable is the prominence of direct speech complement in imaginative prose. The normalized frequency was 8.61 whereas in the third part of the CLMETEV it was 1.28 and in the two earlier parts, there were not direct speech complements at all. There has definitely been a change here. 25.1 % of the complements in imaginative prose were direct speech, as opposed to 1.8 % in the third part of the CLMETEV. As I said in section 7.1.2, it is a little surprising that the CLMETEV does not contain more direct speech complements but instead they really become common in present-day English. The fact that the *OED* did not give illustrations of a direct speech complement for *confess*, backs up the suggestion that this complement type is a feature of modern English.

That-clauses have lost some of their prevalence in the imaginative prose domain. Only 20.1 % of the complements are *that*-clauses whereas the percentage in all the parts of the CLMETEV was over 40. This difference might be explained by the emergence of the direct speech complement. Direct speech and *that*-clauses both express the contents of a confession but in different ways. Perhaps the direct speech complement has been chosen over a *that*-clause complement because in literary writing, there is often dialogue. That could explain the decrease in the number of *that*-clause complements in imaginative prose.

The third most common complement in the imaginative prose domain is a noun phrase. It is the second most common in each part of the CLMETEV but its frequency has decreased a little in imaginative prose (33 tokens, 11.7 %, see tables 3, 5 and 7). The most probable reason for this change is the emergence of the *to* + NP complement with 13 tokens (4.6 %). Of course, these complements are different but I think they share something. The difference between “I confessed a murder” and “I confessed to a murder” is not very great. Thus, perhaps the emergence of the *to* + NP complement has affected the number of noun phrase complements. With the *to* + NP has come up the complement *to* + *-ing*-clause, which was rare in the CLMETEV. 11 tokens (3.9%) in imaginative prose is not vastly more than one token (0.5 %) in the CLMETEV but there exists a difference. Both the *to* + NP and *to* + *-ing*-clause complements are a result of a change in the complementation of *confess*. The change shows in the whole BNC and in imaginative prose, as well. Therefore, their appearance is not a question of text type.

The parenthetical construction was quite frequent in the CLMETEV; the third most common complement of *confess* in each part. The number of parentheticals has decreased from the first part of the CLMETEV to the BNC (from 17.6 % to 4.7 %). I suggested earlier that the reason would be stylistic, in that parentheticals fit better in literary writing than in factual writing because of their commentary-like nature. In imaginative prose, the percentage

of parentheticals is 6.7, which shows that they are a little more common in fictional texts. However, the stylistic difference does not explain the overall decrease in frequency. It seems that this is again one of those complements of *confess* that have undergone a change.

As a summary, the complementation of *confess* in the CLMETEV and the imaginative prose domain is quite similar. With the exception of the direct speech complement, *to* + NP and *to* + *-ing*-clause complements, the list of complements looks the same as in the three sub-corpora of the CLMETEV. However, closer inspection reveals changes that the study of the whole BNC already showed. Among these are the above-mentioned three constructions and, in addition, the frequencies of the complements that imaginative prose and the CLMETEV share have decreased. There are still many *that*-clauses and noun phrase complements, and even parentheticals, but all these have become more infrequent mostly because new complements have emerged as a result of change in the complementation patterns of *confess*. I chose not to discuss the least frequent complements of *confess* in imaginative prose (see table 10) because a few tokens or just one do not give enough support for any conclusions. The differences and similarities become clear in the discussion of the major complementation patterns in the two corpora.

7.3 Summary of the BNC sections

The BNC shows a little different picture of the complementation of *confess* compared to the CLMETEV. First of all, the overall frequency of the verb has been cut down to only 16.8 tokens in a million words. At the same time, the frequencies of each complement type have naturally decreased. Nevertheless, almost all the complements found in the CLMETEV are still present but there are changes in the likelihood of each complement.

That-clauses were, again, the most common type of complement, covering 30% of all the complements. The second most common complement was interestingly direct speech

that had come up only occasionally in the historical data. Noun phrase complements took their place as one of the probable complements and were the third most common type. The most remarkable change in the complementation of *confess* in the BNC is the huge increase of *to* + NP and *to* + *-ing*-clause complements. There are still a lot less of these than, for example, *that*-clauses but compared to the CLMETEV where these two complements were rare, this is an interesting finding. In addition, they have affected the frequency of common complements, e.g. *that*-clauses and noun phrases, so that they have had to lose some of their prominence. One other noteworthy thing about the BNC is that parentheticals are not as frequent among the complements of *confess*. The reason suggested for this is that the BNC contains a lot more non-literary texts than the CLMETEV so that as a feature of literary writing, they have become more and more infrequent.

The comparison between imaginative prose and the CLMETEV revealed much the same changes as the BNC as a whole. Direct speech complement had become the most frequent in imaginative prose whereas in the CLMETEV, there were only 4 tokens in the third part of it. The *to* + NP and *to* + *-ing*-clause complements were another difference between the two corpora as both complements were very rare in the CLMETEV. These three above-mentioned findings follow the same line of changes that were detected in the whole BNC. Otherwise the complementation of *confess* was quite similar in imaginative prose and the CLMETEV. Most types of complements were still present in imaginative prose but the differences in frequency and percentages had decreased because new complements were gaining ground.

As for the senses of *confess* in the BNC, the analysis showed that sense 1 was by far the most common, followed by a few instances of sense 2 and one of sense 4. Almost in every case the differences were found among noun phrase complements. In imaginative prose, sense 1 was the only sense that could be detected.

8. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to study the concept of complementation and more specifically, the complementation of the verb *confess*. The first motivation for doing the study was to see whether the complementation of the verb has stayed stable through the period of time from the 18th century to present day or whether there have been changes, especially such that have been going on more generally in the complementation of English verbs. The second motivation was the benefits of this kind of a study for language teaching. The likelihood or frequency of different complements of a verb are not talked about and such information is often not even available in language learning contexts. In addition, the information that a corpus can give on a given verb would be very beneficial in writing foreign language text books, so that they would not contain patterns or complements that are not really used or are rare. A third motive was to shed some light on the particular verb *confess* and see if there is anything new to offer to the information concerning that verb.

Before introducing the empirical data and its analysis, the theoretical background of the study was introduced. One of the most important theories is valency theory, according to which a verb has a central position in a sentence and decides what other obligatory elements, i.e. complements, are needed for the sentence to make sense. The keyword here is selection – complements are selected by the verb whereas other elements are not. After introducing valency theory and other concepts related to that, a categorizing of the types of complements and verbs of English was carried out. Finally, some principles affecting verb complementation were introduced. One of these is the Great Complement Shift. It claims that there are changes going on in the complementation of English verbs, one of which is the expansion of *-ing*-clause complements at the expense of the *to*-infinitival ones. In addition to the Great Complement Shift, the complexity principle, *horror aequi* and extractions were

briefly discussed in the theory part of this thesis. Finally, NP movement and control predicates were discussed to the extent that was relevant for the present study.

Next in the thesis, previous work on the verb *confess* was presented. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gave 9 senses for the verb but some of them were joined together and finally I came up with four senses for the verb and these were 1) to admit (with guilt or shame), 2) to recognize, acknowledge, 3) to reveal and 4) to shrive. Both the dictionaries and grammar consulted offered several possible complements for *confess*. Most of the sources listed at least the following complements: a *that*-clause, noun phrase, *to* + NP, *to* +*-ing*-clause, direct speech and a complex-transitive complement.

The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts served as a source of data for the years 1710-1920. Altogether 563 tokens of the verb *confess* revealed the same complements as the most common ones in each sub-corpus, i.e. *that*-clauses, noun phrases and *confess* in a parenthetical construction, which was a new finding. These three complements were the most common, but a few instances of the complex-transitive and infinitival complementation patterns were also found in the sub-corpora, although they became more and more infrequent. *To* + NP and *to* + *-ing*-clause complements did not come up until the last part of the corpus, the same as with direct speech complement. To sum up the findings, the CLMETEV did not introduce all the complement types of *confess* mentioned in the previous work as common as could have been expected but then again, *that*-clauses and noun phrases certainly are one of the most likely complements of *confess* and back up the existing information on the verb. Moreover, a few constructions came up in the CLMETEV that were not mentioned in any of the sources consulted in the theory part. These were *on* + NP and *as much* complements. However, there were so few of each that no firm conclusions could be drawn. As for the senses, sense 1 one was by far the most common. Some instances of sense 2 were also found, but senses 3 and 4 were very rare.

The British National Corpus gave a present-day English point of reference for the present study. 740 tokens of *confess* were analyzed and discussed. While the same complements were still prevailing in the BNC, i.e. *that*-clauses and noun phrases, the increased frequency of *to* + NP and *to* + *-ing*-clause complements was clearly observable. The emergence of these two complements began in the last part of the CLMETEV (1850-1920) with a few tokens and in the BNC, their frequency is already close to that of noun phrases. Considering that the frequency of *that*-clauses has also decreased, this change is a clear sign of the Great Complement Shift in progress because one of its claims was that *-ing* forms were increasing at the expense of *to*-infinitives and *that*-clauses. Another big change in the BNC compared to the CLMETEV is the increased number of the direct speech complement. In the BNC, the complements mentioned in chapter 5 do all come up and are quite common, too, unlike in the CLMETEV. In addition, while the range of common complements grew a little, the number and especially the frequency of rare complements decreased. *About* + NP was a new finding in the BNC but one instance was not enough to say anything about that. In addition to the different complementation patterns found, it should be noted that the overall frequency of *confess* has decreased significantly from the first part of the CLMETEV to the BNC (from 111.9 to 16.8 per one million words). One possible explanation for this might be the use of the verb *admit*, but this would, of course, need further study. The main finding made on the basis of studying imaginative prose text type was that the complementation of the verb has undergone some changes compared to the CLMETEV, a similar type of corpus. There were some new complements that decreased the frequency of the most prevailing complements in the historical data.

The most interesting findings made in the two corpora are parentheticals, the changes in the complementation of *confess*, mainly the appearance and increase in frequency of the *to* + NP, *to* + *-ing*-clause and direct speech complement, and the different kinds of

constructions that affect the complementation of *confess*, mainly extractions and insertions. Both of these phenomena made the complementation of *confess* not as simple as one might have expected at first. One thing that would definitely deserve more attention is the semantics of the complements of the verb, noun phrases in particular. In section 7.1.4, I discussed the semantics of the noun phrases in the complement *to* + NP and made the suggestion that the meaning of the complement is never free from the connotations of the verb *confess*. The noun phrases in the above-mentioned construction and pure noun phrase complements would probably offer some interesting material for further semantic analysis and comparison between them would be interesting.

As a summary, while the verb *confess* selected several complements in both the CLMETEV and the BNC, a few complements stood out in both corpora. In the CLMETEV, *that*-clauses, noun phrases and parentheticals were the most common and in the BNC, *that*-clauses, direct speech, noun phrases, *to* + NP and *to* + *-ing*-clauses, in that order. Choosing either one of these should be a safe choice, although there were differences in the frequencies and thereby, in the likelihood of each of these complements. These findings also confirm what was said in previous work on the verb, but the frequencies and a little uneven appearance of them in the two corpora offers new information on the verb. In present-day English, the range of complements that are likely to occur with *confess* is greater than in late modern English, where *that*-clauses, noun phrases and parentheticals clearly stood out. The Great Complement Shift and other changes were also proven to be in progress and the likelihood of different complements should benefit language teaching. All the aims of performing the study of the complementation of *confess* were thereby achieved.

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