

**Changes in complementation patterns of the verb
pledge, 1710-1993**

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English Philology
Pro Gradu Thesis
Spring 2010

Tampereen yliopisto
 Kieli- ja käännöstieteiden laitos
 Englantilainen filologia

WISHART, THOMAS: Changes in complementation patterns of the verb *pledge*, 1710-1993.

Pro gradu –tutkielma, 92 sivua
 Kevät 2010

Tässä korpuspohjaisessa pro gradu –tutkielmassa keskitytään *pledge*-verbin komplementaatioon vuodesta 1710 vuoteen 1993 saakka. Tutkielman aihe on rajattu siihen, miten tätä verbiä käytetään brittienglannissa. Keskeinen käsite tässä, niin kuin jokaisessa komplementaatioon liittyvässä tutkielmassa, on *valinta*, sillä jokainen verbi ikään kuin valitsee itselleen tietynlaisia komplementteja toisten ollessa mahdottomia. Tässä tutkimuksessa pyritään selvittämään, minkälaisia komplementteja verbi *pledge* valitsi vuosina 1710-1993, ja havainnoimaan mahdollisia muutoksia näiden komplementtien valinnoissa.

Vuosia 1710-1920 koskien kattavaa aineistoa saatiin CLMETEV-korpuksesta (Corpus of Late Modern English Texts – Extended Version), ja tietoja nykyenglannista kerättiin BNC-korpuksesta (The British National Corpus). CLMETEV on jaettu kolmeen 70 vuoden ajanjaksoon, joita jokaista tutkittiin erikseen. BNC korpuksesta valittiin kaksi eri tekstityyppiä: proosa (*prose*) ja journalistinen (*world affairs*) tekstityyppi. Näitä osia tutkitaan ensin erikseen, ja sen jälkeen tulokset yhdistetään.

Tutkimuksen alussa määritellään korpuksset, ja kerrotaan mitä annettavaa korpuksilla on lingvistiselle tutkimukselle. Sen jälkeen esitellään verbimuotoja ja komplementaatiota, ja selvitetään mitä eroa on komplementtien ja adjunktien välillä. Seuraavassa osiossa tarjotaan aiempaa tutkimusta *pledge*-verbistä sanakirjojen, kielioppikirjojen ja tieteellisten artikkelien avulla, ja käsitellään minkälaisia komplementteja voi esiintyä *pledge*-verbin kanssa.

Analyysiosassa tarkkaillaan korpusainesiton avulla *pledge*-verbiä käytössä sekä komplementaatioissa tapahtuneita muutoksia. Tutkielman tulosten mukaan *pledge* saa monia erilaisia komplementteja sekä vanhemmassa että nykypäivän brittienglannissa. Jotkut komplementit ovat jo hävinneet (esim. NP + *upon* –lauseke), monia uusia komplementteja on ilmestynyt, kun taas jotkut komplementit ovat säilyttäneet ”suosionsa” vuosisatoja (esim. NP + *to* + NP –lauseke). Tulokset myös osoittavat, että on olemassa jopa yksitoista komplementtia, jotka eivät ole tulleet esille muissa tutkimuksissa, sanakirjoissa jne., ja että on myös kolme *prep* + NP -lauseketta, joiden olemassaoloa ei myöskään mainita aiemmissa tutkimuksissa.

Avainsanat: korpuslingvistiikka, *pledge*, komplementaatio, korpus, verbi, BNC, CLMETEV

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1. Introduction

Consider sentences (1) – (3) from the British National Corpus:

(1) CF8 73 He also pledged that Midland did not intend to end free banking for personal customers in credit by introducing new charges.

(2) K5D 13742 He pledged an era of innovation and renewal.

(3) A28 85 Professor Ienaga pledged to fight the case right through to the Supreme Court.

These three sentences, all authentic and taken from modern English publications, demonstrate that there are a variety of complements that can be selected by the main (or matrix) verb – here this is *pledge*. The aim of this study is to examine the complementation patterns of *pledge* found in both modern English (1964-1993) and works published in the period 1710 – 1920. When examining the data I aim to observe the development (or, indeed, constancy) of the complementation patterns of this verb.

In this thesis I will seek to examine the post-head complements of *pledge* - that is to say that any examples of *pledge* as a noun, adjective, or pre-verbal participle will not be considered (though reference will be made as to their existence). I should stress that it is not my express purpose to study the semantic nature of the complementation patterns of *pledge* – it is the syntactic nature of complements, and the changes in the frequency of their use over the last 300 years that is of overwhelming interest. On occasion, however, I will make note of semantic qualities should I deem it to be particularly noteworthy.

In addition to being of great personal interest, such studies into complementation patterns that are observed within English are of great importance. Hunston stresses that it is important for learners to understand these complementation patterns as the latter are important to language production “in terms of both accuracy and fluency” (2002, 173), and suggests that incorrect pattern use is “perhaps the greatest source of a sense of non-idiomaticity in English” (ibid).

With these words in mind I chose *pledge* given that it is uncharted territory – with there being no study previously conducted into its complementation patterns. It follows that the results and conclusions that are reached in this work will have implications for other verbs and their complementation patterns and I sincerely believe that my results can be of use to researchers and learners of English for many years to come.

The authentic primary data for this study will be obtained from two different corpora. Historical data is to be obtained by a search of the Extended Version of the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (CLMETEV), which contains texts published between 1710 and 1920. The final period of this study (1964 - 1993) will be covered by the second part of our data, which was obtained by a search of written texts in the British National Corpus (BNC).

Corpus linguistics and our corpora will be explained at greater length in the next section of this study. After that I will move on to examine the important concept of verb complementation in greater detail, before then turning to dictionaries and grammars to see what work exists on the verb *pledge*, and what conclusions and ideas have been put forward. Considerable attention will be paid to the assertions, patterns and theories suggested by the various scholars and I intend to examine (in my conclusion) whether the data I obtain supports their claims or not.

In the following two sections (chapters 5 and 6), I will examine the tokens of *pledge* that my searches reveal. I will first look at the material from the CLMETEV, before then turning to the search results from the BNC. Finally, in the conclusion, I will seek to draw the findings for the four sections of data (CLMETEV 1 – 3 and the BNC) together and to comprehensively examine the diachronic trends and tendencies that the results reveal. The conclusion is also the section in which I will set out my findings as to

whether the diachronic data supports the existing theory concerning the verb *pledge*, and also suggest avenues for future research.

2. Corpora and corpus linguistics

In this chapter I seek to introduce corpus linguistics and methods and tools used when analysing the data that their study can produce. In addition I will introduce the two corpora used in this study (the BNC and CLMETEV).

2.1 Corpus linguistics

Let us now examine some of the general principles of corpus linguistics.

2.1.1 What is a corpus?

Kennedy (1998, 1) defines a corpus as being “a body of written or transcribed speech which can serve as a basis for linguistic analysis and description”. As Kennedy’s definition suggests, a corpus is not just defined in terms of what it is, but also how it is used (Hunston 2002, 2). Corpora have traditionally been understood to be any collection of examples of a language which occur naturally, are not necessarily large in number and have been subsequently collected for linguistic study (ibid). More recently, however the term *corpus* “has been reserved for collections of texts (or parts of text) that are stored and accessed electronically” (ibid). Corpora differ from other electronic representations of text in the way that they are stored. Indeed a corpus is compiled and processed in a way that means that it can be studied “non-linearly” – both in terms of quantity and quality (Hunston 2002, 2). Another important difference between corpora and archived text is that a corpus is not accessed because the user seeks to read the text in question – rather to discover underlying patterns and general tendencies in a given language (Tognini-Bonelli 2001, 55; Hunston 2002, 2).

Given that a corpus seeks to represent the given language as well as possible, it is inevitable that there should be a correlation between the size of a corpus and the extent to which the corpus is a good representation of the language it is intended to reflect.

Increases in the size of corpora have been possible with the advent of electronic corpora, -

with the IT revolution paving the way for producing, accessing and searching large, electronic corpora¹. Such technology has not only saved researchers enormous amounts of time (Biber et al 1998, 23), but has also improved the accuracy of searches (ibid) – with the analysis of large quantities of text by hand proving “prone to error”, as well as being hard to replicate (Kennedy 1998, 5).

2.1.2 Compiling and presenting a corpus

Given that corpora are “finite-sized” (McEnery and Wilson 2001, 32)², it follows that the examples a corpus contains must be somehow selected. Corpora are rarely “haphazard collections of textual material” (Leech 1992, 116) and great care must be taken when compiling a corpus (ibid, 30) so that corpora do not lead to “skewed” results – in which corpora would make certain phenomena look more common than they actually are (ibid, 75). It follows that the selection process should be carried out carefully – with material gathered from a wide range of different spheres and text types, since corpora “attempt to be representatives of the language as a whole” (Kennedy 1998, 3).

In addition one must be careful when presenting a corpus to an audience so that anyone who uses the corpus is aware of the methods which were employed during its compilation and thereby understand whether the samples the corpus contains are likely to be “representative with respect to the phenomena under investigation” (Ball 1994, 295). This latter phenomenon is, of course, a particular issue in the case of corpora that do not even pretend to be representative of the language as a whole (such as corpora containing formal English (i.e. legal records) or, for example, only written sources).

¹ In the early days of this revolution it is interesting to note how Biber (1988, 65) remarks how “computational tools” had saved him several years.

² The fact that corpora are finite-sized is natural, given that it would be impossible to make a list of the (infinite) number of sentences that any language contains.

2.1.3 Problems in finding and representing historical and modern English

We have already discussed problems with corpora in general, and it is important also to think of drawbacks relating specifically to historical corpora. One of the first issues that come to mind is that historical corpora such as the CLMETEV cover an era in which large swathes of the population were illiterate - with only the educated able to write (and the publishing of texts reliant on finances being secured from some person or institution) this leads to the CLMETEV being skewed in terms of its sociolinguistics, genre and register (De Smet 2005, 78). In addition, corpora can only include published works that have survived to this day - works which, after their publication, were deemed to be worthless or, for example, even heretical, may not have survived.

Despite the imperfections of historical corpora, however, our inability to travel back in time to record what people were saying and retrieve everyday writings that have been long since destroyed, means that historical corpora such as the CLMETEV are the best we have and *do* give us a glimpse into early forms of English – albeit only in its written form.

There are also problems with corpora aiming to reflect the “modern” form of any language – they all, for example, face the obvious problem of growing old. However comprehensive the BNC may be (see below) the fact that it only goes up to 1993 means it does not include the significant changes in English over the seventeen years since the BNC was compiled. The largely superficial updates that the BNC has undergone³ are not enough to fully address these problems and some of these changes in British English may only be fully appreciated when the next corpus of modern British English is compiled and released. If one is prepared to study a slightly-less-contemporary than contemporary British English, however, the BNC is an extensive and important resource.

³ See *the BNC User Manual 2005*, <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml.ID=intro>

2.1.4 Sources of error when retrieving data from a corpus

We have already seen that great care must be taken when *compiling* a corpus, but we also see that researchers need to take care when *searching* a corpus – particularly when doing so by electronic means. Two aspects of this problem are those of *recall* and *precision*, where recall refers to the “proportion of relevant information that was retrieved” and precision is the “proportion of retrieved material that is relevant” (1994, 295). As Ball notes (1994, 295) the degree of precision is not necessarily that serious and irrelevant examples can be ignored. It is not, however, possible to ascertain the degree of recall, however, without conducting a manual search of the corpus/corpora in question (Ball 1994, 295-296) - though as we have already read, it should be remembered that manual searches are, themselves, also prone to error (See section 2.1.1, Kennedy 1998, 5).

Issues of recall and precision are also important when examining electronic corpora in which items have been “tagged” according to their word class. Such a method means that scholars can easily search, for example, for all the occurrences of a particular word, word class, construction or even form of punctuation – but if errors are made during the tagging process then issues of recall and precision can be particularly troublesome.

It is important to note that, if we conduct corpus searches by computer – and assume that computers are not going to “forget” to find tokens they have been asked to provide - then issues of precision and recall stem from human error – either during the corpus’ compilation (such as when tagging items) or constructing a search string to retrieve the data. While researchers cannot directly influence the corpus itself, they must ensure that their search strings are comprehensive and error-free (Ball 1994, 296).

2.1.5 Normalised frequencies

As one searches corpora and seeks to measure how often a given word/construction (or type thereof) occurs we are confronted with the problem that the texts and corpora that are being searched are of different length and size. *Normalised frequencies*, which are

calculated by the process of “normalization” (Biber et al 1998, 263) - provide us with a measure of how often a certain word (or type of word) occurs in a given quantity of words (i.e. how many times *pledge* occurs *per million words*). In order to obtain the normalised frequency we need to divide the raw number of tokens by the number of words being searched before then multiplying by a constant. Biber et al provide the following examples of such a calculation where there are twenty modals in a 750 word text (Biber et al 1998, 263). In (4) we see how Biber et al sought to calculate how many times modals occur per 1000 words (i.e. their constant is 1000) and arrive at a normalised frequency of 27.5 per 1,000 words:

$$(4) (20 \text{ modals} / 750 \text{ words}) \times 1000 \text{ modals} = 27.5 \text{ modals per } 1,000 \text{ words.}$$

It follows that modals are common in English so a constant of 1,000 would seem quite appropriate. Given that occurrences of one particular verb, such as *pledge*, are arguably much less frequent than tokens of modal verbs, it would seem appropriate to use a larger constant. As such we will use the constant 1,000,000 – i.e. throughout this study we will be recording how many times the verb *pledge* occurs per million words.

2.1.6 A final word on using corpora in linguistic research

Finally, it is important to remember that while the corpus “can relieve the careful scholar of a lot of tedious work... the meaningful interpretation of this data remains the task of the researcher” (The BNC web manual 2002). Indeed, intuition still has a very important role to play: Leech (1991, 14) writes:

Neither the corpus linguist of the 1950s, who rejected intuition, nor the general linguist of the 1960s, who rejected corpus data, was able to achieve the interaction of data coverage and the insight that characterise the many successful corpus analyses of recent years.

Finally, as we have already touched upon, it is important to remember that:

Corpus linguistics is not an end in itself but is one source of evidence for improving descriptions of the structure and use of languages, and for various

applications, including the processing of natural language by machine and understanding how to learn or teach a language (Kennedy 1998, 1).

Kennedy's point is most important, and once more reminds us of the very real and practical applications that stem from studies such as the present work.

2.2 Corpora used in this study

Let us now look at the two corpora used in this study in more detail.

2.2.1 The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts – Extended Version

The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (CLMETEV) builds on the Corpus of Late English Texts (CLMET) which, in turn, was compiled from a range of late modern English literary texts taken from *Project Gutenberg* and the *Oxford Text Archive* (De Smet 2005, 69). The corpus was then enlarged by adding more texts from the same sources as well as from the *Victorian Women Writers* project. The corpus is divided into three seventy year periods with the sections containing more words as we near the present day – and over 15 million in total. It should be noted that the corpus is not tagged, so the researcher can only look for lexical forms. The main information concerning the corpus is given in table 1 (sources, De Smet 2005, Helsinki University CLMETEV webpage).

Section of the CLMETEV	Work published between the years:	Authors born between the years:	Number of Texts	Number of Authors	Number of Words
Part I	1710-1780	1680-1750	32	23	3,040,000
Part II	1780-1850	1750-1820	64	46	5,720,000
Part III	1850-1920	1820-1890	80	51	6,250,000
Total	1710-1920	1680-1890	176	120	15,010,000

Table 1. The make-up of the CLMETEV

As we have already discussed, it is important to note the way that the corpus was compiled.

De Smet (2005, 70-71) outlines several principles followed in the compilation of the CLMETEV. These can be summarised in the following way:

- a) Each section of the corpus covers a seventy year time period. For a work to be included in a section of the corpus, both the year of publication of the work, and the

year of birth of the author must conform with the criteria (see columns 2 and 3 in the table).

b) All authors are native speakers of British English.

c) There was a 200,000 word limit on the amount of text taken from any individual author.

d) Variation in terms of the type of writing and the social background of the author has been ensured.

It will be interesting to see whether the application of these principles while compiling the CLMETEV were enough to prevent the data which will be retrieved from being skewed in any way.

2.2.2 The British National Corpus

The British National Corpus (BNC) is a 100 million word corpus consisting of both language taken from British publications and also excerpts of transcribed speech (BNC, 2005). While this clearly implies that the corpus contains mainly British English, it is worth noting that the fact that British publications naturally include quotes and excerpts from other varieties of English means that other varieties of English may also occur. The oral/written texts that it contains were “spoken”/published between 1964 and 1993 and make up 10% and 90% of the corpus respectively (BNC 2005). The BNC is also divided into different sections, which enables the researcher and learner to see how different words and phenomena occur in different areas of the language – that is according to language use. Given that this study will be using written texts (see section 1), let us look at the sections from the written English component of the BNC in more detail (see table 2).

Text type	Number of texts	Number of words	Percentage of total words in written section
Imaginative: <i>prose</i>	476	16,496,420	18.8
Informative: <i>natural and pure science</i>	146	3,821,902	4.3
Information: <i>applied science</i>	370	7,174,152	8.2
Informative: <i>social science</i>	526	14,025,537	15.9
Informative: <i>world affairs</i>	483	17,244,534	19.6
Informative: <i>commerce and finance</i>	295	7,341,163	8.3
Informative: <i>arts</i>	261	6,574,857	7.5
Informative; <i>belief</i>	146	3,037,533	3.5
Informative: <i>leisure</i>	438	12,237,834	13.9
Total	3141	87,953,932	100

Table 2. The make-up of the written English component of the BNC

In addition to the points already raised the BNC makes note of the principles according to which these texts were chosen:

For written sources, samples of 45,000 words are taken from various parts of single-author texts. Shorter texts up to a maximum of 45,000 words, or multi-author texts such as magazines and newspapers are included in full. Sampling allows for a wider coverage of texts within the 100 million limit and avoids over-representing idiosyncratic texts (BNC 2005).

The BNC has been updated twice since its release in 1994 and, in its size and scope, it remains a highly important resource for the researcher. Despite its flaws (some claim, for example, that it is over-reliant on written texts), it would seem generally fair to describe it as a “microcosm of current British English” (see Aston and Burnard 1998, 29). It should be noted that while the BNC is approaching the end of its teens (see above), its age and slightly dated English should have no bearing upon our study – hence my willingness to use it in my research.

Finally it is worth mentioning that the corpus is fully tagged – with each word carrying a grammatical tag (*r label*) indicating the part of speech (BNC 2005)⁴. The initial tagging process was performed automatically and had a reported error rate of around 1.7% (BNC 2005).

2.2.3 A final word on using the CLMETEV and BNC in a diachronic study

While we are fortunate to possess data from four successive time periods – covering 273 years, it is worth remembering that there is a relatively long period between the years when the CLMETEV 3 ends (1920) and the BNC begins (1964). Indeed in the time period that separates them there was a major world war and incredible societal change which could not *not* influence British English – the form of English that is being examined here.

⁴ For a more complete analysis of the linguistic annotation of texts see “tagging” in the *BNC User Manual* (<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/creating.xml.ID=annotation>)

3. Complementation

In this chapter I seek to consider valency theory, which is important as it is the foundation upon which the idea of complementation is built. After examining complements I will then introduce adjuncts and explain how the two differ. The difference is important as this study seeks to examine complements – and not adjuncts. After that I will introduce several important factors related to complementation before finally looking at marked word order.

3.1 The nature of complementation

Let us now examine exactly what is meant by complementation and how to discern whether an element in a sentence is a complement or not.

3.1.1 Valency Theory

The idea of complementation is built on, as well as being a crucial part of, valency theory – the theory derived from looking at a language in such a way as to focus on the company that words keep. Valency theory derives from the framework of dependency grammar and has grown in its significance over the last 40 or so years (Herbst 2004 xiii, xxv).

While it is beyond the bounds of this paper to discuss valency theory in significant depth, the basic assumption of valency theory underpins work on complementation. It states that “the verb occupies a central position in the sentence because the verb determines how many other elements have to occur in order to form a grammatical sentence” (Herbst 2004, xiv). These “other elements”, or *complements*, required to complete a grammatical construction” (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 271) are of particular interest from the point of view of valency theory. It should be noted that while we will be studying the complements of a verb, valency theory also concerns the analysis of the complements of both adjectives and nouns.

3.1.2 Complements

Consider the following sentence from Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 215):

(5) He always reads the paper before breakfast.

Here we see that the sentence contains a subject ('he'), a verb ('reads') and also a direct object 'paper'). There are also two other members of this clause – namely 'always' and 'before breakfast' which we will return to in the following section. It is clear that, grammatically speaking, something would be wrong with the sentence if it did not contain the object – *the paper*. It follows that in example (5) the verb *read* has determined that it requires one element – that is one *complement*.

It should also be noted that there is a distinction between complements that are required or are optional. These are called *core* and *non-core* complements by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 216). NP core complements are generally *noun phrases* (NPs) and non-core complements are usually *prepositional phrases* (PP). I have underlined the post verbal core complements in the following two examples, which are taken from Huddleston and Pullum (ibid):

(6) Kim gave Pat the key.

(7) Kim gave the key to Pat.

As you can see, the prepositional phrase in (7) is a complement (as it is governed by the verb), but is optional or non-core.

It is also worth stressing that complements can take many forms. In (2), (5) AND (6) we have already seen examples of NP complements, and in addition we have seen *that* and *to*-infinitive (*to*-inf) complements (see illustrations (1) and (3) respectively). It is also important to note the possibility of other complements such as a PP (*prep* + NP) phrase⁵ seen in (7) or even of a zero complement.

⁵ It should be noted that I follow the analysis of most scholars in taking the preposition as being part of the complement of the verb – rather than seeing it as belonging to the verb itself. I see examples like "I spoke to

Finally, in addition to the phrasal complements that are listed here there are also four types of clausal complement which can follow a verb. These are: *ing*-clauses (V-ing), *to*-infinitive clauses, *that* clauses and *wh*-clauses (Herbst et al 2004, xxvi).

3.1.3 Adjuncts

If we return to our consideration of (5), we see that *always* and *before breakfast* (which both play an adverbial role in the sentence) are adjuncts – that is that they are not determined in their form by the governing verb. It follows that they could both freely be omitted from (5) and the sentence would still be grammatically sound. It follows that adjuncts can often be classed as such according to their semantic properties – with our given adjuncts being an adjunct of frequency and adjunct of temporal location respectively (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 215).

3.1.4 Determining between complements and adjuncts

Finally it is important to note that the distinction between adjuncts and complements can, at times, be extremely fine – that is that the concepts of complement and adjunct should be seen as two ends of a continuum. While there is clearly always a distinction between the two, different scholars may have different opinions as to which side of the line a certain complement/adjunct belongs⁶. Indeed, one particularly troublesome differentiation is that of discerning between an infinitival clause of purpose and *to*-inf complement of a catenative. Consider the following two examples (both from Huddleston 1984, 212):

(8) He worked late to impress the boss.

(9) He wanted to impress the boss.

Jimmy” as being V (speak) + PP (to Jimmy) rather than V (speak to) + NP (Jimmy). (See Herbst et al 2004, xxvi). I do not, however, use the notation *PP* – rather by using notation of the type: *to* + NP.

⁶ See, for example, Huddleston and Pullum’s widely-respected framework (2002, 221-228) concerning the syntactic and semantic factors which can help discern the difference between the complements and adjuncts.

While these examples may seem closely related, we note that the first of these can be modified by adding the words *in order* before the infinitive. Such a transformation is, not however, possible in the case of (9). This test reveals that the infinitive in (8) is an infinitival clause of purpose, whereas in (9) we are looking at the complement of a catenative. It should also be noted that the test of *obligatoriness*⁷ also suggests that the infinitival clause in (8) is an adjunct and, in the case of (9), a complement. This test is likely to prove invaluable when analysing and classifying our data.

3.2 General factors relating to complementation

There are several other principles or developments in complementation that may be of significance in our study. These include the great complement shift, *horror aequi* as well as the complexity principle. While it remains to be seen if they will be factors in the analysis of my data, they are nonetheless important factors in the area of complementation and will therefore be considered in this study.

3.2.1 The great complement shift

Languages are constantly changing and English is no exception. One relevant factor is noted by Rohdenburg, who states that English “has experienced a *massive* restructuring of its system of sentential complementation” (2006, 143, italics mine) over the past few centuries. This “massive restructuring” is often referred to as the great complement shift.

Rohdenburg lists two categories of changes – the first and, he argues “perhaps most important set of changes” relate to the “extension of prepositional gerunds and directly linked gerunds at the expense of infinitival complements, changes in the rivalry

⁷ This test essentially involves leaving out an element and seeing if the sentence is still grammatical. If it is still grammatical then the element omitted was an adjunct, otherwise the element must be a complement. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 221).

between marked and unmarked infinitives and changes in how dependent interrogative questions are used (Rohdenburg 2006, 143-144).

While the first category is of undoubted importance and interest, it is the second category of changes which would appear more relevant to this study, given that it concerns the “potential range of implied infinitival complements” – and namely the simplification of the control potential which these infinitival complements possess in relation to commissive verbs. In this context Rohdenburg invites the reader to consider the following two examples (for the purposes of this study I have simplified them slightly) (2006, 145):

(10) He promised to return immediately.

(11) He promised (that) he would return immediately.

Rohdenburg states that the *to*-inf form (see (10)) - which was common with commissive verbs like *promise* up to the middle of the 19th century - has “usually been replaced by the finite clause” (1996, 166-168; 1999, 105-106). This assumption is, of course, of great significance to our study – and the verb *promise* – discussed here by Rohdenburg – possesses significant semantic similarity with the verb being studied in my work. It will be very interesting to see if Rohdenburg’s theory is supported by our data.

3.2.2 Bolinger’s generalization

In his work on infinitival and *-ing* complements Bolinger came to the conclusion that “a difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning” given that “a language that permitted syntactic divergences to be systematically redundant would represent a strange kind of economy”(1968, 127). While this theory is important within the sphere of complementation, and will be borne in mind throughout this work, it is not my express aim to delve too deeply into semantic meaning of complementation patterns observed with *pledge* – preferring rather to focus on the syntactic patterns observed.

3.2.3 *Horror aequi*

The *horror aequi* principle - which can also be termed “context-sensitive complement selection” (Rudanko, 2002, 103) - concerns the “universal tendency to avoid the (near-) adjacency of identical grammatical structures” (Rohdenburg 2003, 235; 2006, 147).

Consider Rohdenburg’s examples (2006, 157):

- (12) to dread *to-inf/-ing*
 (13) dreading ***to-inf/-ing***

The bold alternatives in the second part of these constructions (i.e. –ing in (12) and *to-inf* in (13)) are the forms that *horror aequi* would suggest should occur in order that near-occurrence of similar grammatical structures is avoided. It will be interesting to see if we find examples in our data, in which *horror aequi* does not seem to be observed – or whether a lack of examples of similar grammatical structures occurring in close proximity will support *horror aequi*⁸.

3.2.4 Theta criterion and control

According to the theta criterion 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)⁹. Note, however the following (ibid):

- (14) Jean is reluctant to leave.

Example (14), however, possesses three theta roles (that of agent, experiencer and proposition) but only two arguments. To deal with this the theta criterion proposes a *null element* or *null pronoun* to account for this problem in the theta criterion – that of a third NP, which is referred to as PRO (standing for *null pronoun*). The implementation of this theory on (13) results in the following:

- (15) Jean is reluctant [PRO to leave].

⁸ It is worth remembering that Rudanko (2002, 104) reminds us that *horror aequi* is only a tendency.

⁹ Theta (or thematic) roles refer to the precise semantic nature of the relationship between verbs and their arguments. The arguments can, for example, be an *agent/actor*, *patient*, *theme*, *experiencer* *benefactor/beneficiary*, *goal*, *source* or *location*. For more information see Haegeman (1991, 41-42).

According to control theory, PRO can only appear in a non-finite clause and only in the subject position (Carnie 2002, 260).

If we return to (15), we see that the subject NP of the main clause is co-referential with PRO – and examples of this type are referred to as *subject control*. There are also examples of *object control* where the object of the main clause is co-referential with PRO. Example of object control include example (16):

(16) Jean persuaded Robert [PRO to leave].

As we have alluded to above, PRO is not a perfect solution to the “hole” in theta theory (Carnie 2002, 263). Nonetheless, PRO can be used to explain a vast array of data and is - until a better theory comes along - the best that we have (Carnie 2002, 264). It will be interesting to see if our results show tokens with *pledge* to contain examples of subject or object control.

3.2.5 The complexity principle and extractions

This cross-linguistic generalisation states that more explicit constructional options are generally preferred in “cognitively more complex syntactic environments” (Rohdenburg 2006, 146-147). These more complex syntactic environments (or divergence from a more “canonical” sentence structure) may include negative or passive constructions - that is to say examples of *extractions* (Vosberg 2003b, 201-202).

In such environments, we may expect to encounter increased pronoun retention, more finite forms or a greater likelihood of a *to*-inf complement (as opposed to a gerundial complement) (Vosberg 2003b, 321).

These extractions are significant and when analysing our data we will be interested in seeing if complex syntactic environments would appear to correlate with more explicit constructional options. As we examine each of these forms of extraction in turn, we will

also note the original deep structure position of the trace element (which shall be marked by the form [t]. This “trace” symbol refers to the position the extracted form occupied before extraction occurred. Let us look at two very common forms of non-canonical, or *marked*, word order, or *extraction*.

3.2.5.1 *Wh*-questions

The two most widespread examples of non-canonical word order are those of *wh*-questions and passive constructions.

As we turn to consider *wh*-constructions, let us first examine the following two examples (Huang 1997, 123, 125):

(17) What is John buying [t]?

(18) I want to know what John is buying [t].

In both these examples the *wh*-constituent was extracted to its current location after movement took place. It should also be added that *wh*-movement can happen across sentence boundaries as shown in (19):

(19) What do you think that Mary believes that you have done [t]?

3.2.5.2 Passives (including the statal v dynamic passive distinction)

It is also important for us to be clear about the nature of passive constructions and in our work we will be following the widely accepted view on passives as laid out by Perlmutter and Soames (1979, 30-34) – who, referring to a series of selectional restrictions, convincingly make the argument that both passive and active sentences are derived from the same underlying structures.

Another important aspect of passive constructions is that they can be either dynamic or statal in form. Consider the following (20) (Quirk et al, 1985, 170):

(20) In 1972, the Democrats were defeated.

There are two readings of this sentence – with the reader able to interpret either that

- (a) someone defeated the democrats.
 or that:
 (b) the democrats were in the state of having been defeated.

The first of these readings – the *dynamic passive* - (a)) can be singled out by an agent phrase (i.e. by adding “by the Republicans”) or by changing the verb to the progressive aspect. The sentences resulting from these two tests are shown in sentences (21) and (22) below:

- (21) In 1972, the Democrats were defeated by the Republicans.
 (22) In 1972, the Democrats were being defeated.

The second reading of (20) (the *statal passive* reading, (b)) cannot be altered in the way shown in sentences (21) and (22). This is because in this reading, the verb is copular in nature.

Given our interest in marked word order, this theory is extremely important. Examples like “He was *pledged* to make it work” (example, and italics, mine) will have two readings – with the reader understanding *pledge* to be either dynamic or *statal* in nature. There may also be examples that are neither clearly *statal* nor, alternatively, unequivocally dynamic in nature, which may lead to difficulties in classifying our data. When we examine our diachronic data it will be interesting to see whether there appear to be any changes in the tendencies to use either dynamic or *statal* passives – or, indeed, in the use of the passive in general. Given this interest, *statal* passives will be discussed separately (that is, in a separate section to uses of *pledge* in dynamic passive and active sentences) in every section of the analysis of our results.

4. Previous work on *pledge*

In this section we will look at *pledge* in various works of reference including dictionaries, grammars and other publications – including academic papers and books.

4.1 *Pledge* in dictionaries

The senses of *pledge* were examined in the *OED* and Collins Cobuild dictionaries. To help us note the use of *pledge*, I have underlined it when it is found in the illustrations (and will do so throughout my work in the same manner as in examples (1) – (3)).

As has been noted, this study focuses on diachronic data from 1710 until 1993, but it is important that the theory section of this study should take into account examples and theory from before the first year of our corpus data. While it is usually impossible to give exact years in which language changes, if we use Fennell’s analysis then all of the data we shall examine occurs in texts published in the period between the Early Modern English Period and the present day (2001, 136). The Early Modern English period is taken by Fennell as beginning in 1510 and she notes that this period was “a time of tremendous political, economic and social change in Britain that was to change the shape and functioning of the world and with it the English language” (2001, 136). Given that Fennell suggests that the rate of this tremendous change began to slow towards the end of the sixteenth century (and bearing in mind that she gives no precise date for when she feels the Early Modern English period ended and the Modern English period began) the significance of the King James Version of the Bible and Shakespeare’s works is to be used as my justification (see Fennell 2001, 136) in deeming 1590 to be the start of the Modern English period (1590 is the year in which Shakespeare’s works began to be published). This year will also serve as my “cut-off point” and if dictionaries provide illustrations from before this year then these will not be included in this analysis – that is to say no complementation patterns occurring solely in texts published before 1590 will be

considered. While definitions in the dictionary marked as being obsolete are not necessarily of interest to us, the fact that they are few in number (being found only in *OED*, sense 1 and 4a) means that I will include these obsolete definitions in the table below (table 3) in order to provide a broader understanding of the verb *pledge*.

4.1.1 Etymology of the verb *pledge*

Before we look at the entries for *pledge* in both these dictionaries, however, it is interesting to briefly examine the etymology of this word. According to the *OED*, the verbal form of *pledge* would appear to have its origins in the post-classical Latin *plevire*, *plebere* meaning ‘to find securities’ – the earliest recorded use of which is given by the *OED* as occurring in the 8th century AD. With regard to the languages spoken in the British Isles, we see that the *OED* states that Anglo-Norman and Old French adopted the nominal form *plege* (alternatively: *plaige*, *pleige*, *pleje*, *plage*) – having the meaning ‘guarantor’, ‘security’, ‘bail’ or ‘guarantee’ no later than 1080. This nominal form, together with the Anglo-Norman and Middle French verb *pleger* (alternatively: *plegier*, *pleigier*), meaning ‘to stand surety for (a person)’, (c1200 in Old French), ‘to stand surety for (a thing)’, ‘to guarantee’ (beginning of 13th century in Old French), ‘to hold one's own in drinking’ (end of the 14th century) are, according the *OED*, the forms which have evolved to give the verbal form of *pledge* which we see today.

4.1.2 *Pledge* in the *OED*

The *OED* reveals five main senses of the verb *pledge*. Each of these is given in the table below (table 3). I have tried to provide a concise glossary for each of the senses - this is given in the far left column in bold italics. Nearly all of the senses in the *OED* provide illustrations, which present the different complementation patterns, and I have given one example of every complementation pattern found for each sub-sense. If the illustration is active (or dynamic passive) – as is the case in the overwhelming number of examples –

then the background is white. There are also two examples of statal passive constructions – these are given against a grey background.

Sense of <i>Pledge</i>		Illustration	Complement Structures found in the <i>OED</i>
1.	a. <i>trans.</i> To become surety for, make oneself responsible for (a person, thing, or statement). <i>Obs.</i>	No examples post 1590	
	b. <i>trans. to pledge out:</i> to redeem (a thing) from pledge or pawn; to ransom or bail (a person) out of prison, servitude, etc. <i>Obs.</i>	No examples post 1590	
	c. <i>intr.</i> To become surety (for a person or thing). <i>Obs. rare.</i>	No examples post 1590	
2. <i>trans</i> <i>gloss = to promise completed deed</i>	a. To guarantee, give a solemn assurance of; (also) to promise, or undertake to give.	a1616 SHAKESPEARE <i>Henry VI</i> . Yes, I accept her, for she well deserues it, And heere to <u>pledge</u> my Vow, I giue my hand.	NP
		1912 H. ADAMS <i>Mont-Saint-Michel & Chartres</i> . They [sc. the Barons] sent to France for help, and offered the crown of England to young Louis, whose father, Philip Augustus, called a council which <u>pledged</u> support to Louis.	NP+ <i>to</i> + NP
		1686 <i>London Gaz.</i> If already sold or pawn'd,..the money [shall be] return'd for what they are <u>pledg'd</u> for.	<i>for</i> + NP
	b. To promise solemnly (<i>to</i> do something).	2004 <i>Lab Business Week</i> . World leaders from 189 countries <u>pledged</u> to reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters.	<i>to</i> -inf clause
3. <i>trans.</i> <i>gloss = to provide deposit/ stake to prove commitment to performing deed</i>	a. To deposit or assign as security for the repayment of a loan or the performance of an action; to pawn.	1767 W. GUTHRIE et al <i>Gen. Hist. World VII</i> . [Swen's] being taken prisoner by the Vandals, the Danish ladies <u>pledged</u> their jewels for his ransom.	NP + <i>for</i> + NP
		1833 H. MARTINEAU <i>Manch. Strike</i> (new ed.) The son pacing slowly to the pawnbroker's to <u>pledge</u> his aged mother's last blanket.	NP
		1877 J. R. GREEN <i>Short Hist. Eng. People</i> Normandy had been <u>pledged</u> to him by his brother Robert.	NP + <i>to</i> + NP
	b. <i>fig.</i> To promise by the pledge of; to plight or stake (one's life, future, honour, word, etc.).	1890 <i>Spectator</i> To <u>pledge</u> the future to the hilt is a temporary and evanescent joy.	NP + <i>to</i> + NP
		1797 A. RADCLIFFE <i>Italian</i> . I	NP + NP +

		now <u>pledge</u> you that honourable word, that Ellena is innocent.	<i>that</i> clause
		1996 <i>Akron</i> . I have <u>pledged</u> my honor and my life to secure the future of our children.	NP
		1775 R. B. SHERIDAN <i>Rivals</i> . My vows are <u>pledged</u> to her.	<i>to</i> + NP
4. <i>trans.</i> To drink with or to (a person) as a gesture of fidelity, goodwill, etc.	a. To give assurance or promise of friendship or allegiance by the act of drinking together; (also) to drink in response to another; to drink to a health or toast which has been proposed. <i>Obs</i>	<i>No examples provided</i>	
<i>gloss = toast</i>	b. To drink to the health of, drink a toast to; to toast. Now somewhat <i>arch.</i> Formerly <i>occas. intr.</i> , or with drink as object.	a1627 in C. H. Spurgeon <i>Treasury of David</i> . God handleth thee no otherwise than he handled his only Son, who hath <u>pledged</u> thee in this bitter potion.	NP+ <i>in</i> +NP
		1855 C. KINGSLEY <i>Heroes</i> . In his hand a sculptured goblet, as he <u>pledged</u> the merchant kings.	NP
		1616 B. JONSON <i>Forrest</i> . Drinke to me, onely, with thine eyes, And I will <u>pledge</u> with mine.	Zero complement
5. <i>trans.</i>	a. To put (a person) under a pledge; to bind by or as by a pledge. Freq. <i>refl.</i> Usu. with <i>to</i> .	1571 in J. Cranstoun <i>Satirical Poems Reformation</i> . Be justice airis I <u>pledgit</u> all the pepill, Than spairit nane thocht thay wer Innocent.	NP
<i>gloss = entrust to deed/fraternity</i>		1883 <i>Manch.Examine</i> . A resolution.. <u>pledging</u> the House to deal with the subject at the first fitting opportunity.	NP + <i>to</i> -inf clause
		2004 <i>New Straits Times</i> . 11 Apr. 3 A doctor solemnly <u>pledges</u> himself or herself to the service of humanity.	NP + <i>to</i> + NP
	b. <i>U.S.</i> To enrol (a student) in a sorority or fraternity. Of a student: to enrol in or promise to join (a sorority or fraternity). Also <i>intr.</i>	1856 <i>Knickerbocker</i> . With more quiet but busy effort, each selects and ‘ <u>pledges</u> ’ the best men it can lay hands upon.	NP
		1887 <i>Lippincott's Mag</i> . If as a result of several such interviews he is approved, he is asked to ‘ <u>pledge</u> ’, that is, to promise to join the society.	<i>to</i> -inf clause
		1949 <i>Reader's Digest</i> . The rushing season, during which freshmen are <u>pledged</u> to the various houses, was in full swing.	NP + <i>to</i> +NP

Table 3. Senses of pledge in the OED. Pledge has been underlined in the illustrations to as to assist the reader.

After noting the fact that the first sense is given as being wholly obsolete, it is interesting to see the semantic similarity between senses 2 (‘promise completed deed’) and 3 (‘provide deposit/stake to prove commitment to performing deed’). The complementation patterns for these two senses are also similar. Senses 4 (‘to toast’) and 5 (‘entrust to deed/fraternity’) are not so closely interrelated (or connected to senses 2 and 3).

If we return to sense 3b we see from the very definition given by the *OED*, as well as from the illustrations from 1996 and 1797 that pledge can be reflexive in meaning. The second of the two direct objects in the 1797 example (‘my honourable word’) and the direct NP object in the 1996 illustration (‘my honor and my life’) show the speaker willing to give himself (or his ‘good name’, his ‘word’) as a deposit or stake. In addition, the illustration under point 5a from 1883 is also arguably reflexive in nature – with the government body having passed a resolution which *pledges* that government body to a particular course of action or policy.

To conclude we see that the *OED* gives illustrations containing a total of seven complementation patterns. Six of these are found in the active / dynamic passive (zero complement, NP, NP + *to*-infinitive clause, NP + NP + *that* clause, NP + *prep* + NP (namely NP + *to* + NP, NP + *in* + NP and NP + *for* + NP) and *to*-infinitive clause, and one pattern is possible with the statal passive: *prep* + NP (namely *for* + NP and *to* + NP).

4.1.3 Pledge in the Collins Cobuild dictionary

The Collins Cobuild dictionary contains four definitions of the verb *pledge*. As in the previous section, this information has been provided in tabular form, with illustrations of each complementation pattern listed under each sense. The first four columns contain the conventions used in the Cobuild dictionary (i.e. bold, complement notation), while the final column (far right) attempts to represent Cobuild’s notation in accordance with the convention used in my work:

Sense of Pledge	Sense	Illustration	Complements – given by COBUILD	Complements – our notation
1	If someone pledges something, they promise solemnly that they will do or provide a particular thing	A lot of people have <u>pledged</u> a lot of money this evening.	V + O/Report Clause/to-inf	NP <i>that</i> clause report clause <i>to-inf</i> clause
2	If you pledge yourself or someone else to something or to do something, you commit yourself or that person solemnly to follow a particular course of action or to support a particular person, group or idea	The new organisation <u>pledged</u> itself to the revolutionary overthrow of the dictator...	V+O (NG/Refl)+A(t o)/to-inf	NP NP + <i>to</i> + NP
3	If you pledge your word , you make a solemn promise, implying that if you do not fulfil it you will not expect people to believe you ever again	<i>none given</i>	<i>none given</i>	NP (where NP = ‘word’)
4	A pledge is also something that you leave with someone else as a guarantee that you will pay a much larger amount or fulfil an agreement later. Also used as a verb.	The property was <u>pledged</u> as security for loans.	V + O	NP ¹⁰

Table 4. The senses of pledge in Cobuild. Pledge has been underlined in the illustrations so as to assist the reader.

In this table we note that the senses are broadly equivalent to those given in the *OED*.

Cobuild does not, however, contain a ‘to toast’ sense of *pledge* (see *OED*, sense 4), though it does seem to cover the other senses that are included in the *OED*. Nevertheless, the *OED* clearly captures more senses of *pledge* than Cobuild does.

As was the case with examples found in the *OED*, it was interesting to see examples of sentences in which the direct NP object made the sentence reflexive in

¹⁰ It should also be noted that the illustration given in the case of sense 4 could also be read as a stative passive sentence, were it not for the fact that the dictionary gives the extra information that the illustration is of the type V + O (i.e. NP in my notation).

meaning (see the example for sense 2 [‘the new organisation pledged itself...’], and the definition of sense 3 [‘to pledge one’s word’]).

To conclude, then, we see that Cobuild contains examples of five complementation patterns, these are: NP, NP + *prep* + NP (namely NP + *to* + NP), *that* clause, *to*-infinitive clause. In addition, Cobuild suggests that *pledge* may occur in a reported speech parenthetical (see also 4.3.3.2). This is an interesting point and I aim to see if this is indeed the case and, if so, whether the propensity for such a structure to occur varies throughout our diachronic data.

4.2 *Pledge* in grammars

The fact that *pledge* is covered in many of the most respected grammars of English once more emphasises its status as one of the core verbs in the English language. Let us now look at what comments Poutsma, Huddleston and Pullum, Biber et al and Quirk et al make about *pledge*.

Poutsma (1904, 669) includes *pledge* in the category of verbs and adjectives that take the infinitive construction. It is found, Poutsma states, after transitive verbs, such as those which “express an abandoning, a binding, a compelling, an empowering, an enabling or an urging”. *Pledge* is seen to occur in “a (pro)n + *to* + infinitive” construction – which, seeking to present a unified system of representing complements, I will class as a NP + *to*-inf clause complement. In addition to the above information about *pledge*, Poutsma also provides the following illustration (author’s own italics):

(23) The treaty of London of 1841 *pledges* the Sultan *to maintain* the ancient rule of the Ottoman Empire (author’s own italics).

Huddleston and Pullum make two points concerning *pledge*. Firstly, they point out that the verb can be used with mandative constructions¹¹ (2002, 999).

They also state that *pledge* can occur as a catenative verb appearing with both simple and complex constructions, though they note that *pledge* also requires a *to*-infinitive and cannot be followed by a gerund-participle. In addition they add that the simple construction has an ordinary subject, which controls the understood subject of the non-finite. Their theory suggests complements of the word *pledge* are of the type: NP + *to*-inf clause. They do not provide any illustrations of how *pledge* can be used.

Biber et al (1999) make reference to the verb *pledge* when discussing the lexical associations of perfect aspect (463). Here they state that in news and academic prose, *pledge* occurs with the present perfect over 25% of the time – a statistic that they think is particularly significant. They do not, however, give any information or illustrations as to which complementation patterns may follow *pledge*.

Finally, we see that **Quirk et al** (1985, 1182) offer another angle on the verb *pledge*. In their work they refer to the given verb in a general analysis of verbs that are complemented by a finite clause and classify it in a subclass of this category, deeming it a *suasive* verb. Such *suasive* verbs, they say, can be followed by a *that* clause “either with a putative *should* or with the mandative subjunctive”. They add that there is another possibility – namely that of a *that* clause with an indicative verb, though state that this is generally only found in British English. Finally, they also note that an NP + *to*-inf is “a common alternative to the *that* clause for *suasive* verbs”, and add that “for some verbs, such as *allow*, the infinitive construction is far the more usual” (1985, 1193). It will be

¹¹ Mandative constructions fall into the category of modality and are concerned with obligation and permission of the type illustrated in the following example: “the agreement stipulates [that an election must be held next year]” (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 999). For more information see Huddleston and Pullum 996-999.

interesting to see whether *that* clauses or NP + *to*-infinitive constructions are more popular in our data, and whether any diachronic change can be observed. Quirk et al do not provide any illustrations of the use of *pledge*.

* * *

To recap, Poutsma and Huddleston and Pullum as well as Quirk et al all suggest that NP + *to*-inf clause complements are possible with *pledge*. In addition, Quirk et al add that *that* clause complements are possible, while Huddleston and Pullum also claim that *pledge* cannot be followed by a gerund. The information contained within this section is summarized in table 5 (see section 4.4).

4.3 *Pledge* in other literature

Research also revealed other literature containing (brief) considerations of *pledge*. The publications referred to in the following section refer to the category of verbs to which *pledge* can be seen as belonging as well as to the issue of *pledge* and control.

4.3.1 *Pledge* as a ‘verb of devotion’

Hunston (2002, 105) underlines how corpora enable us to notice and study different patterns and states that, having so done, the different patterns can often be grouped together according to their meaning. She then illustrates this theory by stating that one important group of verbs that use the “V n to n pattern” (NP + *to* + NP in my notation) is the subset of “verbs to do with devoting yourself to something” – a group to which Hunston claims *pledge* belongs¹².

Given that Hunston bases her work on contemporary corpus data, it will be interesting to find if my study confirms that *pledge* can be classified as a “V n to n” verb.

¹² Hunston provides the following list of verbs belonging to this group: *abandon, address, apply, commit, confine, dedicate, devote, enslave, limit, pledge, restrict, rivet, tie, give (oneself) over* (2002, 105)

In addition it will be interesting to examine whether this complementation pattern was equally common in all sections of my diachronic data.

4.3.2 *Pledge and control*

In their consideration of control, Culicover and Jackendoff state that, while there would only appear to be one verb (*promise*) that requires the subject to be the unique controller, there would appear to be several other verbs (and adjectives) that take PP complements (*prep* + NP in our notation) and assign unique control to the subject¹³ (2005, 433).

Culicover and Jackendoff provide the following example to demonstrate the use of *pledge* and verbs semantically close to it:

(24) John vows to / pledged to / agreed with / is obligated to Susan to take care of himself/*herself/*oneself.

As we see, (24) contains an example of a *prep* + NP + *to*-inf (namely a *to* + NP + *to*-inf).

Culicover and Jackendoff also add that *pledge* can allow an InfP – a *to*-inf clause in our notation (see illustration (25)) - and that it can also take an indirect object plus some other complement (they give illustration (26) – an example of a *to* + NP + *that* clause complement. Culicover and Jackendoff go on, however, to state that words like *pledge* also exclude the combination of indirect object plus InfP (see illustration (27)) (*to* + NP + *to*-inf in our notation) and suggest that this is “presumably a fact of syntactic selection” (2005, 433). Here are examples of these three complements:

(25) John offered/pledged to leave.

(26) John pledged to Susan that Fred would come.

(27) *John offered/guaranteed/pledged (to) Susan to leave.

¹³ It is interesting to note that Culicover and Jackendoff add that “The nominals of these verbs also require unique control by the subject, as do quite a few semantically related nominals”. While we are not examining nominals in this study, this statement would need to be tested and examined in any further research in this area. Such research would be well-justified, they say, given that the size of this class of nominals and verbs has not received enough attention (2005, 433).

It will be interesting to examine these complementation patterns in our analysis – and particularly interesting to see whether there are examples in which (1) *pledge* does indeed take *prep* + NP complements whilst assign unique control to the subject, and (2) *pledge* allows an indirect object plus infinitive.

4.3.3 The possibility of *pledge* in a parenthetical

In addition to the information provided on *pledge* by the dictionaries, grammars (and textbook(s)) provided above we should also be aware of the possibility of *pledge* occurring in a parenthetical. Here we will examine two such possibilities:

4.3.3.1 *Pledge* in a speaker oriented parenthetical

One possibility, outlined by Ross (1973, 136) is that of *slifting*. Such an analysis sees the parenthetical start out as a main clause whose complement leapfrogs it and ends up to its left. Here are two illustrations provided by Ross to demonstrate this phenomenon - in (29) we see the sentence-initial *I feel* has moved to the end of the sentence:

(28) I feel that Max is a Martian.

(29) Max is a Martian, I feel.

Amongst a myriad of other theories, are ideas such as those by Reinhart (1983) and Corver and Thiersch (2002) who claim that speaker-oriented parentheticals possess an identical structure to that of adverbs, and also the somewhat unorthodox view of De Vries (2005a) who uses parenthesis as evidence to support his idea of *behindance* – a third dimension of grammar in addition to dominance and precedence. While all of the theories are worthy of attention and this area clearly warrants further study, I feel that the idea of Ross is more than sufficient in explaining this phenomenon.

4.3.3.2 *Pledge* in a reported speech parenthetical

In addition to these speaker-oriented parentheticals we should also be aware of the possibility of indirect reported speech, a possibility to which Cobuild was also making reference in its description of *pledge* (sense 3). Consider the example below (taken from Biber et al 1999, 196) (bold and italics in the original):

(30) “Please come too,” **she begged**. – “I’ll be back when I feel like it,” **he said (to her) without emotion**. – “I’m sorry,” **she whimpered**.

Biber et al note that in such reporting clauses the verbs can range from “straightforward verbs of saying to verbs describing the form and function of the speech act (i.e. *beg*)” (Biber et al 1999, 196). In addition to the reporting of spoken and written text, reporting clauses can also refer to unspoken thoughts (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1023).

It is also important to note that there are two main ways of indirectly reporting speech - these are illustrated below (example from Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1024):

EMBEDDED

- (31) (a) She said that she lived alone?
 (32) (a) Did she say if I’ll be invited?

NON-EMBEDDED

- (b) She lived alone, she said
 (b) Will I be invited, did she say?

In the examples of embedded reported speech ((31a) and (32a)), the clause containing the reporting verb is usually understood to be the main clause, and the direct speech seen as the object (though this analysis is not used in cases where the verb in the reporting clause cannot take a direct object (i.e. *whimper*) (Biber et al 1999, 196)).

In the examples of non-embedded reported speech, on the other hand, the reported speech is seen as being the main clause and does not, therefore, function syntactically as a complement of say. The reporting frame in (31b) and (32b) is also seen as a parenthetical (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1024).

4.4 Summary

To finish this section, then, it is worth reviewing the range of complements that can occur with *pledge*. These are given in the table below (table 5), together with the senses that can occur with each complement:

	Complement	Preposition	Source	
Active (or dynamic passive) constructions	Zero complement		<i>OED</i> 4b	
	NP		<i>OED</i> 2a, 3a, 4b, 5a, 5b; Cobuild: 1, 2, 3	
	NP + NP + <i>that</i>		<i>OED</i> 3b	
	NP + <i>prep</i> + NP			<i>OED</i> 2a, 3a, 3b, 5a, 5b; Hunston
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP		(<i>OED</i> 2a, 3a, 3b, 5a, 5b; Cobuild 1, 2; Hunston)
		NP + <i>for</i> + NP		(<i>OED</i> 3a)
		NP + <i>in</i> + NP		(<i>OED</i> 4a)
	NP + <i>to</i> -inf		<i>OED</i> 2a, 3b, 5a; Cobuild: 2; Poutsma; Huddleston and Pullum; Quirk et al	
	<i>prep</i> + NP + <i>to</i> -inf			Culicover and Jackendoff
		<i>to</i> + NP + <i>to</i> -inf		(Culicover and Jackendoff)
<i>prep</i> + NP + <i>that</i>			Culicover and Jackendoff	
	<i>to</i> + NP + <i>that</i>		(Culicover and Jackendoff)	
<i>to</i> -inf		<i>OED</i> 2b, 5b; Cob: 1; Culicover and Jackendoff		
<i>that</i>		Cobuild: 1; Quirk et al		
Statal passive constructions	<i>prep</i> + NP		<i>OED</i> 2a, 3b	
		<i>for</i> + NP	(<i>OED</i> 2a)	
		<i>to</i> + NP	(<i>OED</i> 3b)	

Table 5. The nine complement patterns which our literature suggests are possible with *pledge*. The particular prepositions possible (should the complement contain a preposition) are given in the central column.

It is important to be aware that if the works of reference do not, as I shall, take the statal passive to be a separate structure worthy of study in its own right, then it follows that there may be other complementation patterns that can occur with the statal passive and that can be derived from the active sentence. As can be seen from the table, however, only two illustrations with statal passives were found in the *OED* – both of the *prep* + NP structure.

It is interesting to note that of the nine complementation patterns found in our theory, five of the eight patterns found with active sentences involve an initial post-verbal

NP. In my study I aim to examine the nature of these NPs, and as we have already seen in the two dictionaries, it would appear that *pledge* can be used in sentences that are essentially reflexive – with the post verbal NP required in such a construction. It will be interesting to examine the different NPs that will occupy the direct object position, thus endowing the sentence with reflexive meaning. Likewise, it will be interesting to also examine the NPs which occupy the direct object position and *do not* make the sentence reflexive in nature. The qualities of the direct object NP is an aspect to which I intend to devote considerable attention in my analysis.

In addition, if we look at table 5, which shows the range of complements which can theoretically be found with *pledge*, we see that the same pattern can be associated with a range of meanings. The NP + *to* + NP pattern, for example, would appear to be possible with no less than five sub-senses of the *OED*.

Finally, after examining whether the complementation patterns listed as being possible and what NPs are found as direct objects of *pledge*, it will also be interesting to see if *pledge* occurs in parenthetical settings, whether Huddleston and Pullum are correct when they assert that *pledge* cannot be followed by a gerund (2002, 999) and also whether our data would seem to support Culicover and Jackendoff's claim that *pledge* cannot take *to* + NP + *to*-inf complementation patterns.

5. *Pledge* in CLMETEV

Let us begin the analysis section by first looking at the data from the CLMETEV.

5.1 Introduction to data retrieved from CLMETEV

Before we begin, I should note that as passive and active structures possess the same underlying structure (see section 3.2.5.2), we will approximate passive structures to active ones – though I will make note of passive constructions – and the relative frequency of statal and dynamic passives.

It should be noted that while I do not seek to dwell upon the semantic nature of complements, on the occasions when a reference to the semantic qualities of a word seem necessary, I will refer to senses as listed in the *OED*. The *OED* has been chosen as the senses seem to capture more meanings, and it will be easier to refer to just one of the two dictionaries used above.

Similarly, one should be aware that, while the entire theory section (chapters 1 – 4) of this work featured a consecutive numbering scheme, the numbering scheme in both chapters 5 and 6 will begin at (1).

The first part of our study was conducted in the CLMETEV and a search was conducted in each section by looking for the four conjugated forms of the verb *pledge* (i.e. ‘*pledges*’, ‘*pledged*’, ‘*pledging*’ and ‘*pledge*’). Before we consider the data that our searches produced, let us briefly discuss search results that will not be taken into account in this study:

	Total tokens retrieved	Nominal Tokens	<i>Pledge</i> in a reported speech parenthetical	Preverbal position	Remaining Tokens for Study
Section 1	29	18	-	-	11
Section 2	170	72	-	2	98
Section 3	110	70	-	-	40
Total	319	160	-	2	149

Table 6: The validity of tokens of *pledge* retrieved in the three sections of CLMETEV

As I have just stated, the search was conducted by looking for the four conjugated forms of the verb *pledge*. A search only for forms, however, is far from perfect given that the forms *pledge* and *pledges* and *pledging* can be either nominal or verbal. It was not, therefore surprising to find that I encountered problems with regard to the issue of precision (see 2.1.4), with searches of the three sections of the corpus producing many nominal forms. Indeed the proportion of the retrieved tokens that were nominal was 62%, 42% and 64% of the total in the three successive sections of the corpus. Here are two examples of nominal examples of the forms *pledges* and *pledge* – they are taken from the first and third parts of CLMETEV respectively:

(1) ...virgins, and all the colleges of priests, in their sacerdotal habits, and bearing before them the sacred pledges of the Roman religion, should advance in solemn procession to meet the Pannonian legions; and, at the same...
(Gibbon 1776, Decline and fall of the Roman Empire, line 554)

(2) ...sunk so low?" said Rachel, in an excited manner. "Rachel," said Ermine, "you must take my beginning as a pledge of my speaking the whole truth. Colonel Keith is certainly not fond of you personally, and rather wonder...
(Yonge 1865, The Clevel woman of the family, line 7670)

In addition to the significant precision issue, our search of CLMETEV 2 also revealed the following two examples in which verbal forms of *pledge* occur in a prenominal position:

(3) See it O Night! With cheerfully pledged wine-cup, hobnobbing to the Reign of Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood, with their wives in best ribands, with...
(Carlyle 1837, The French Revolution, line 17735)

(4) to this worthy and the attendant Jacinte Vivian delivered his patient. Had Vivian Grey left the boudoir a pledged bridegroom his countenance could not have been more triumphant; but he was labouring under unnatural excite...
(Disraeli 1826, Vivian Grey, line 496)

Due to this prenominal position, with the word embedded in the NP, I will not consider such forms in this essay. Their existence, of course, is nonetheless of significance.

Finally, it would seem important to note that a total of 149 tokens is not as large a sample as would be ideal for such a study. Given this small number of tokens (and bearing

in mind the relatively small nature of the CLMETEV) the degree of accuracy of our data may possibly be an issue. While we can observe trends and draw conclusions, we await the arrival of more historical corpora to enable more reliable research into this area.

Now that the tokens that are not under consideration have been mentioned, let us turn our attention to the tokens that are of interest.

5.2 Pledge in CLMETEV 1

The data relating to the verbal forms of *pledge* is presented in the table below. I seek to present complementation patterns which occur with the active and dynamic passive sentences, before looking at patterns observed with the statal passive. In the last line of the table I provide the total number of tokens containing a verbal form of *pledge* and also the total normalised frequency. Complementation patterns are given in alphabetical order. While I hope that the table is clear, should problems occur please consult the footnote¹⁴.

	Complement type	Preposition type	Quantity	Normalised Frequency (NF) (tokens per million)
Active and Dynamic passive	NP		3	0.99
	NP + <i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL	5	1.64
		NP + <i>for</i> + NP	(1)	(0.33)
		NP + <i>in</i> + NP	(1)	(0.33)
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP	(2)	(0.66)
		NP + <i>upon</i> + NP	(1)	(0.33)
NP + <i>that</i>		1	0.33	
Statal Passive	<i>prep</i> + V-ing	TOTAL	1	0.33
		<i>for</i> + V-ing	(1)	(0.33)
Total Verbal forms of Pledge			11	3.62

Table 7. The frequency of the complement patterns observed with *pledge* in CLMETEV 1.

As we can see in table 7, our search produced 11 tokens of the verb *pledge*. Four things about our results are particularly striking – namely that (1) all our dynamic passive and

¹⁴ In the first column of the table I indicate whether the patterns being examined (see column 2) are active/dynamic passive or statal in nature. In the second column from the left I present the complement types, while in the third column I give more information concerning the preposition should the pattern contain such a word. In column 4 (“quantity”) I present the raw frequency of the given complementation pattern of *pledge*. In cases where prepositions are being considered you will see that the number in bold (on the left hand side inside the cells of column 4) corresponds with the total number of examples while the frequency of individual prepositions is found in the relevant cells in brackets – italicised and in brackets. Data for normalised frequency (column 5, far right) is presented in a similar manner to that of quantity.

active tokens contain verb NP objects, (2) there are no examples of *pledge* with infinitive constructions, (3) half of our non-statal examples of *pledge* contain NP + *preposition* complements – including the preposition *upon* that was not listed as a possibility in any of the works consulted for this study), (4) the statal passive is relatively rare – with only one such token, and most notably, (5) two patterns were found, whose existence was not referred to in any of the works of theory, namely: (i) the NP + *that* pattern with dynamic passive and active sentences and (ii) the *for* + V-*ing* complement with statal passives. It should be noted that the V-*ing* element was not listed or mentioned at any point by any work consulted in our theory section.

Let us now look at the tokens which our search did retrieve - concentrating first on tokens found in dynamic passive and active constructions, before then moving on to focus on statal passive forms.

5.2.1 *Pledge* in dynamic passive and active constructions in CLMETEV 1

Of our tokens containing **NP complements**, it was interesting to note that two of these three tokens clearly represent the idea of ‘to toast’ in the *OED* (sense 4). Here is one of these:

(5) ...it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir? Here, Mr. Marlow, here is to our better acquaintance. [Drinks.]
(Marlow, 1773, *He stoops to Conquer*, line 1168)

The other example included the subject pledging his cap:

(6) ...side of his sentry-box; the means of effecting which occurring to his fancy at the same time, though he had pledged his cap, he thought it in no danger from the miscarriage of his projects. Upon turning it this way...
(Sterne 1759-67, *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, line 10224)

As one can see, none of the examples are reflexive in nature, rather we see the speaker pledging items of value or (other) people.

Another complement observed in active and dynamic passive sentences was that of **NP + *prep* + NP** and indeed half of the total number of tokens of *pledge* in CLMETEV 1 occurred with prepositional constructions. In active and dynamic passive sentences there were four prepositions observed: *for*, *in*, *to*, *upon*. To begin with let us look at illustrations of the first two of these. It is interesting to note that illustration (7) is reflexive in meaning.

(7) ...the bravest youths on Christian ground. He is warm too; and from the short knowledge I have of him, I will pledge myself for his veracity: if what he reports of himself were not true, he would not utter it--and for me... (Walpole 1764, The Castle of Otranto, line 3040)

(8) ...at it began to be late, and that the gates would be shut in a little time, he filled up a parting glass, and pledged her in equal quantity. Her blood was too much chilled to be warmed even by this extraordinary dose, which... (Smollett 1751, The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle, line 107)

Illustration (8) is interesting given that it is an example of the ‘to toast’ sense of *pledge*.

While we have just seen (in (5)) that an NP complement is possible with *pledge*, it is interesting to see how (8) confirms the existence of the additional pattern: NP + *in* + NP with the very same sense of *pledge* (*OED* sense 4).

The most frequent preposition found in NP + *prep* complements was that of *to* - with two tokens of this preposition, compared to one token each of NP + *in/for/upon*. Here is an illustration of this NP + *to* + NP pattern:

(9) ...under this roof: ye shall do your pleasure. But come, give me a goblet of wine; ye will not refuse to pledge me to the healths of your fair mistresses." The principal Knight sighed and crossed himself, and was... (Walpole 1764, The Castle of Otranto, line 2279)

I suggest that illustration (9) is an example of sense 4 (‘to toast’) – although the possibility of an NP + *to* + NP complement is not listed with this sense in the *OED*.

In the final type of NP + *prep* + NP complement, the preposition was *upon* – a preposition that neither the dictionaries nor grammars consulted suggested was possible with *pledge*:

- (10) HARDCASTLE. And I'm astonished at the deliberate intrepidity of his assurance.
 SIR CHARLES. I dare pledge my life and honour upon his truth.
 HARDCASTLE. Here comes my daughter, and I would stake my happiness up...
 (Goldsmith 1773, *She Stoops to Conquer*, line 3111)

Illustration (10) is interesting given its reflexive meaning, with the speaker pledging his life and honour. It was interesting to note that one of the remaining direct object NP phrases in the NP + *prep* + NP structure was reflexive in meaning (see illustration (7)), while the other three tokens contained examples of the subject pledging items of value or people (see (11)):

- (11) ...puddings smoked upon the board. Asleep and naked as an Indian lay, An honest factor stole a gem away: He pledged it to the knight; the knight had wit, So kept the diamond, and the rogue was bit. Some scruple rose...
 (Pope 1733-4, *An Essay on Man*, line 2789)

Finally our results also provided us with one token containing an NP + *that* complement:

- (12) His pretended patron persuaded him to convert his commission into the money he wanted, and pledged his honour, that in a very short time he would provide him another. This circumstance appeared favourable...
 (Cibber 1753, *The Lives of the Poets*, line 4087)

As with several of our other tokens, we see that the sentence essentially reflexive in nature.

In (12) – we see the subject ready put his honour “on the line” in order to show his commitment to carrying out the given deed.

5.2.2 *Pledge* in statal passive constructions in CLMETEV 1

As I mentioned above, there was only one example of a statal passive retrieved by my search. It would appear to be an example of sense 5 (*‘entrust to deed, fraternity’*) in the *OED*:

- (13) The estates of the proprietors of this bank were worth several millions, and, by their subscription to the original bond or contract of the bank, were really pledged for answering all its engagements. By means of the great credit which so great a *pledge* necessarily gave it... (Smith 1766, *Wealth of Nations*, line 5472)

While I do believe the passive in (13) is statal – referring to the state in which the estates of the proprietors were – I understand that it could also be argued that this token is an example of a dynamic passive – with the act of being pledged under discussion. This example highlights the difficulties in classifying some examples.

If we turn to the look at the nature of the complement then we see that it is extremely interesting to note the presence of the *V-ing* element in the prepositional phrase (‘answering’). This element did not occur in any of the illustrations given for *pledge* in any of the works of reference.

5.2.3 Review

In conclusion, then, our results show that *pledge* occurred in works printed between 1710 and 1780. It took NP, NP + *that*, NP + *prep* + NP complements and the statal passive form of *pledge* (i.e. ‘they were pledged’) was also being used in the language. We cannot, of course, conclude that complementation patterns not found in this section of the CLMETEV (i.e. *to-inf* complements) are impossible, though their absence from this corpus would suggest that it is unlikely that they were very common in the written language of this time.

The NP + *that* and NP + *upon* + NP structure (as a particular type of NP + *prep* + NP) with actives and dynamic passives, together with the *V-ing* with statal passives are particularly interesting given that they are not listed in the dictionaries.

5.3 *Pledge* in CLMETEV 2

The verbal forms that are eligible for consideration are presented in the table below¹⁵. As one can see, a far wider range of complements was found than in the first section of the corpus (CLMETEV 1):

¹⁵ Should one find the table unclear, please consult footnote X.

	Complement type	Preposition type	Quantity	Normalised Frequency (NF) (tokens per million)	
Active and Dynamic Passive	NP		16	2.80	
	NP + <i>as</i>		1	0.17	
	NP + NP + <i>that</i>		1	0.17	
	NP + NP + <i>as</i>		1	0.17	
	NP + NP + <i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL		1	0.17
		NP + NP + <i>to</i> + NP		(1)	(0.17)
	NP + <i>prep</i> + NP (+ <i>that</i>)	TOTAL		36	6.29
		NP + <i>for</i> + NP		(6)	(1.05)
		NP + <i>in</i> + NP		(1)	(0.17)
		NP + <i>on</i> + NP		(1)	(0.17)
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP		(25)	(4.37)
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP + <i>that</i>		(1)	(0.17)
		NP + <i>upon</i> + NP		(2)	(0.35)
	NP + <i>that</i>		11	1.92	
NP + <i>to</i> -inf		19	3.32		
Statal Passives	<i>zero</i>		3	0.52	
	<i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL	6	1.05	
		<i>for</i> + NP		(1)	(0.17)
		<i>to</i> + NP		(5)	(0.87)
<i>to</i> -inf		3	0.52		
Total Verbal forms of Pledge			98	17.13	

Table 8. The frequency of complement patterns observed with *pledge* in CLMETEV 2

If we now consider the information shown within table 8, I believe that there are three general trends that are particularly noteworthy. These are that (1) almost a quarter of the total number of tokens are NP + *to*-inf complements (compared to no such examples in CLMETEV 1), (2) NP + *to* is overwhelmingly the most common preposition (*to* is the preposition in 71% of (NP +) NP + *prep* + NP complements), (3) statal passives make up around 10% of the tokens found, and (4) that CLMETEV 2 contains several types of complements which are not listed in the dictionaries or grammars – these include NP + *as*, NP + NP + *as*, NP + NP + *prep* + NP, NP + *prep* + NP + *that*, are NP + NP + *that* and NP + *that* with active and dynamic passives as well as zero complements and *to*-inf clauses with statal passives.

Let us now look at these - and other points - in more detail.

5.3.1 *Pledge* in dynamic passive and active constructions in CLMETEV 2

There were sixteen examples of non-statal **NP** complements in our sample. It was interesting to note that four of these were reflexive in nature with the subject pledging his or her ‘word’ on two occasions as well as one example of both ‘himself’ and one’s ‘faith’ and one’s ‘honour’ being pledged. Here are examples of the latter three NP direct objects:

(14) I was exposed to new persecution; and, because I had, before arriving at what is termed years of discretion, pledged my faith, I was treated by the world, as bound for ever to a man whose vices were notorious.

(Wollstonecraft 1798, Maria, line 4846)

(15) ...it cost you trouble and earnest entreaty to make her otherwise?

BARON [angrily]. Yes.

ANHALT. You pledged your honour?

BARON [confused]. Yes.

ANHALT. Called God to witness?

(Inchbald 1798, Lovers’ Vows, line 2593)

It is interesting to note that while (15) is a question, it does not contain marked word order.

Two of the NP complement tokens were also good examples of extraction – namely of (dynamic) passives. Here is an example of one of these:

(16) ...the Venetian glasses of clouded white. All followed his example; the bottle was sent round, his health was pledged, and the Grand Duke of Johannisberger again spoke: "Again, Sir Stranger, briefly, but heartily, welcome!

(Disraeli 1826, Vivian Gray, line 5685)

As mentioned above, it was particularly surprising to see the existence of a + *as* element within complements, given that this pattern was not contained within any of the works of theory consulted for this work. The + *as* element was found in both **NP + as** and **NP + NP + as** patterns. Here are two examples of the former pattern, and one of the latter:

(17) ...it out of the power of fate to separate them." As her husband she now received him, and he solemnly pledged himself as her protector--and eternal friend. There was one peculiarity in Maria's mind: she was...

(Wollstonecraft 1798, Maria, line 4544)

(18) ...his health!' Hugh readily complied--pouring no liquor on the floor when he drank this toast--and they pledged the secretary as a man after their own hearts, in a bumper. Chapter 45 While the worst passions...

(Dickens 1841, Barnaby Rudge, line 8257)

(19) ...with jealousy, even while it touched him to compassion. But compassion itself came too late. Had Ione even pledged him her hand as his reward, he could not now- his evidence given- the populace excited- have saved the ...
(Bulwer-Lytton 1834, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, line 11947)

As one can see, with regard to the NP + as tokens, (17) is reflexive whereas (18) is not. Illustration (19) is also reflexive – the female subject’s readiness to get married in a culture (that of ancient Rome), in which the a wife’s status was one of complete submission to her husband, means that the idea of putting oneself forward to get married would certainly make the sentence reflexive.

The next pattern we shall consider, that of an **NP + NP + *that*** complementation pattern is of interest having been contained in our literature:

(20) ...of your wish is to me a sacred command. Be reconciled, my angel, to your God, yourself, and me: and I pledge you Sylvander's honour--an oath I daresay you will trust without reserve--that you shall never more have...
(Burns 1780-1796, *Letters*, line 5952)

While this example may not initially appear to be reflexive in nature – it would seem that the speaker is somehow associated with Sylvander (i.e. it may be the house or a society to which he belongs - or even his name) – otherwise we are left to wonder why he would be pledging someone *else*’s honour. Further research reveals this assumption to be incorrect and Sylvander is actually the name that Burns uses to refer to himself in this letter (written to Agnes McLehose)¹⁶ – i.e. the sentence is reflexive.

The **NP (+NP) + *preposition*** complementation pattern was very frequent with 36 of the 86 active/dynamic passive tokens occurring in this category. While a surprisingly wide range of prepositions were observed (*for, in, on, to, upon*) it was interesting to note the “popularity” that the preposition *to* enjoys within CLMETEV 2 on occasions when the NP + *preposition* construction is employed. In the non-statal examples of this construction

¹⁶ See Burns’ letter to Agnes McLehose, from 25th January 1788 <http://burnsletters.wordpress.com/>

we see *pledge* occur in NP + *to* + NP (see illustration (21)) and NP + NP + *to* + NP (see illustration (22)) respectively:

(21) ... here should be a Barring Out. The arrangement of the affair was left to their new manager, to whom they all pledged implicit obedience. Obedience, it seems, is necessary, even from rebels to their ringleaders; not...
(Edgeworth 1796-1801, *The Parent's Assistant*, line 12613)

(22) ...note of invitation--stop--no, this is another paper--I thought I had h, but it's of no consequence, and I pledge you my word to the fact. If we had come - and it was only one of Mrs. Wenham's headaches which prevented us...
(Thackeray 1847-8, *Vanity Fair*, line 17413)

Both of these examples are very interesting – (21) is interesting given the marked word order observed in the relative clause and, this indeed serves as a very good illustration of the phenomenon of extraction. Illustration (22) is of interest given its reflexive meaning – with the initial NP being one's 'word' and the sentence thus being. All in all 34 of the 36 tokens of NP (+NP) + *prep* + NP were reflexive in nature. While of these tokens were clearly reflexive (containing an NP which was a personal reflexive pronoun, 'his vows', 'my word', 'my affection', 'my troth', there were also examples where the NP was: 'my taste and judgement' and, as we saw in (21), 'my obedience'. I feel that the latter two NP complements represent the speaker laying down such a large part of who he or she is as a deposit or stake, that these sentences should also be seen as reflexive.

Finally in our consideration of NP (+NP) + *prep* + NP it is important to look at the examples which were not reflexive:

(23) ...his occasion, from the responsibility of dictating an award in direct violation of the faith which had been pledged to the Society and to the public? and, did the Council, intent on exercising a power so rarely committed to... (Babbage 1830, *Reflections on the Decline of Science in England*, line 3174)

(24) ...the present motion. Sir Archibald Edmonstone rose, and asked whether the present motion went so far as to pledge those who voted for it to a total and immediate abolition. Mr. Alderman Watson rose next...
(Clarkson 1839, *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade*, line 13737)

In addition to noting the continued use of *upon* in the NP + *prep* + NP complementation pattern (see CLMETEV 1 analysis, section 5.2.1) - despite it not being included in any illustrations in the grammars or the dictionaries, it was also interesting to note the presence of *on* as a preposition in the NP + *prep* + NP structure, as none of the works of reference suggested that this pattern existed. The two examples of NP + *upon* + NP as well as the example of NP + *on* + NP are given below, and all are clearly reflexive in nature. It is interesting to see how in illustrations (25) and (26) the speaker pledges his '(whole) credit' – clearly a phrase very close in meaning to the idea of 'pledging one's word':

(25) ...at once, the lease is, ab origine, null and void. I have detected a capital flaw in the body of it. I pledge my credit upon it, sir, it can't stand a single term in law or equity." The attorney observed that at...
(Edgeworth 1796-1801, *The Parent's Assistant*, line 3896)

(26) ...with apparent incredulity. "Are you sure of that, Mr. Case?" "Sure! As I told you before, sir, I'd pledge my whole credit upon the thing--I'd stake my existence." "THAT'S SOMETHING," said Sir Arthur, as if he...
(Edgeworth 1796-1801, *The Parent's Assistant*, line 3906)

(27) ...and if their testimony shall not outweigh my supposed guilt, I must be condemned, although I would pledge my salvation on my innocence." Several witnesses were called who had known her for many years, and they...
(Shelley 1818, *Frankenstein*, line 2401)

I should add that it was only after much deliberation, that I decided that the *on* + NP element of the NP + *on* + NP complement in illustrations (27) is part of the complement (rather than being an adjunct)¹⁷.

There were also six tokens of NP + *for* + NP and of which all but one was reflexive in meaning. Here is one example of a reflexive meaning (28) and the token which was not reflexive (29):

¹⁷ This possibility was not also listed in our reference material, but using (admittedly very fallible) native-speaker intuition, I would suggest that an *on*-complement would feel like a natural option in the cases where *pledge* is being used in the sense of 'providing a deposit/stake to prove commitment to performing a deed' (*OED*, sense 3b).

(28) ...the shoulder, he said to him: "Put up your pencils and follow me, I can depend upon your integrity; I have pledged myself for it. Bring your note-book with you, and follow me; I will this day show you something that will...
(Edgeworth 1796-1801, *The Parent's Assistant*, line 16137)

(29) ...a little money. If nobody will pay it, I will sell Bronte and the Emperor of Russia's box." And he actually pledged Bronte for L6600 if there should be any difficulty about paying the bills.
(Southey 1813, *Life of Horatio Lord Nelson*, line 5404)

One would suggest that the meaning of *pledge* in (29) is such that it would be unlikely to see one pledge *oneself* for a sum of money (see *OED*, sense 3a) – so it is not surprising to see that this token is not reflexive. It follows that the meaning of *pledge* in (29) corresponds with *OED* sense 3b in illustration (28), as it does in the other four tokens not given here.

Finally in our treatment of NP + *prep* + NP we also see one token of NP + *in* + NP. As in CLMETEV 1, the meaning of the token with this preposition was not reflexive. It would seem clear that the 'to toast' sense of *pledge* here means that the NP would be extremely likely to be a person other than the speaker (one is, after all, unlikely to toast oneself). Here is the NP + *in* + NP token:

(30) ...own good bodies, and by way of reward and act of courtesy unto this noble and accomplished stranger, let us pledge him in some foreign grape of fame, to which he may perhaps be more accustomed than unto the ever-preferable...
(Disraeli 1826, *Vivian Grey*, 6011)

We also saw that in addition to the NP + *prep* + NP examples, one further token with a similar structure was found – namely that of an NP + *to* + NP + *that* clause of which there was one token – which is clearly reflexive in nature due to the reflexive pronoun in the direct object NP position:

(31) ...a vision than a human being; but this is my last day of mortal existence. Unable to resist any longer, I pledged myself to my devoted friend that on this day we should die together, and trust to the charity of the...
(Hogg 1824, *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, line 8199)

As with NP + *that* complements (see (32)), illustration (31) is of interest as the possibility/existence of such a complement is not referred to by the grammars and dictionaries.

Finally, it was also interesting to examine the balance of NP + *that* and NP + *to-inf* clauses found within our sample – with 11 and 19 tokens being found respectively. As mentioned above, the presence of NP + *that* clauses is interesting given that such a complement is not listed in the *OED*. Here is one of the tokens of the NP + *that* complementation pattern:

(32) ...for their relief. His pretended patron persuaded him to convert his commission into the money he wanted, and pledged his honour, that in a very short time he would provide him another. This circumstance appeared favourable...
(Cibber 1753, *The Lives of the Poets*, line 4087)

As was also the case in example (13) we see that the NP in (32) is the very *honour* of the speaker himself - which of course means that the sentence is reflexive in nature. This is actually the case with all eleven tokens adhering to this pattern – with the deposit or stake always being offered in accordance with sense 3b in the *OED*, making the sentence reflexive. In six of the eleven sentences the ‘deposit/stake’ is reflexive personal pronoun (see, for example, (33)), in three of the sentences (including example (32)) the speaker pledges one’s honour (in one further example the subject’s ‘word of honour’ is being pledged) and one token contains an example in which ‘the credit of the theatre’ is being pledged (see illustration (34)):

(33) ...to one who has so often saved your life and has put his own at stake to do so? Do you pledge yourself that you will henceforth be guided by my counsel, and follow me whithersoever I choose to lead?"
(Hogg 1824, *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, line 7844)

(34) ...the market may be blown into the air. This, ladies and gentlemen, may at first make provisions RISE, but we pledge the credit of our theatre that they will soon FALL again, and people be supplied, as usual, with vegetables.
(Smith, and Smith 1812, *Rejected Addresses*, line 2944).

We also note that (33) is a good example of extraction.

With regard to NP + *to*-inf complements, it should be said that such a large quantity of tokens was surprising given their absence in the first part of the CLMETEV. In this section, we see that this pattern was made up of both active (18 tokens) and dynamic passive (1 token) constructions. The latter group are comparable to the statal passives' *to*-inf complement of which there were three tokens. Upon closer inspection as to the nature of the NP direct objects we see that 18 of the 19 sentences contain NP direct objects which make the sentence reflexive – 13 of these were reflexive personal pronouns (see example (35)) with one further example in which the NP was 'itself' – in which a political organ (one of the houses of the British parliament) is both subject and direct object (see (36)):

(35) ...all my affairs are going on as badly as possible, and I have no hopes or plans to better them as I long ago pledged myself never to sell Newstead, which I mean to hold in defiance of the Devil and Man.
(Byron 1810-1813, Letters 1810-1813, line 1723)

(36) ...it became the dignity of their proceedings to obstruct the progress of an inquiry, which the House had pledged itself to undertake. Their conduct, indeed, seemed extraordinary on this occasion.
(Clarkson 1839, The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-trade, line 9968)

The other semantically reflexive NP direct objects were: 'her soul', 'all he is worth', 'the house' (see above), 'her word of honour' and 'England'. In the latter example (with 'England') we see that the supreme ruler, the monarch, has pledged his country to a certain policy.

(37) Tell him the Houses of Parliament have met, and that there has been a speech from the throne, pledging England to preserve the integrity of the Sultan's dominions. DRAGOMAN (to the Pasha).
(Kinglake 1844, Eothen, line 293)

Given that the total and unequivocal authority of the King over his country (England) – I feel that (37) should be classed as reflexive, though appreciate that other scholars may have a different view.

The one example of a non-reflexive sentence is the dynamic passive with NP + *to*-inf given in the following sentence:

(38) ...the ministry of the many thousand authorized instructors, who were by their institute solemnly enjoined and pledged not to teach a different sort of doctrine, and not to fail of teaching this; if, we repeat, this faith, so...
(Foster 1821, An Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance, line 2506)

It is worth noting that the passive *pledge* in (38) would appear to be close to being statal in form. However, with emphasis in this illustration being on the *giving* of the *pledge* (rather than the state of *being pledged*) – this token was classed as a dynamic passive.

5.3.2 *Pledge* in statal passive constructions in CLMETEV 2

As in CLMETEV 1, statal passives make up around 10% of the total number of tokens.

Here are examples of each of the three complement types observed in CLMETEV 2 (zero complement, *to*-infinitive, *prep* + NP (namely *to* + NP)) in turn. Both the zero complement and *to*-inf pattern were not featured in any of the theory consulted for the present study.

(39) ...this day we should die together, and trust to the charity of the children of men for a grave. I am solemnly pledged; and, though I dared to repent, I am aware he will not be gainsaid, for he is raging with despair at his...
(Hogg 1824, Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, line 8201)

(40) ...rule and method, does not enable him to go on with the spirit, vigour, and variety that he does. He is not pledged to repeat himself. Every new Register is a kind of new Prospectus. He blesses himself from all ties and...
(Hazlitt 1821-2, Table Talk, line 2969)

(41) ...means to preserve that health which is necessary for the performance of the ceremonies to which we are pledged. At to-morrow's dawn our bugle sounds, and thou, stranger, may engage the wild boar at our side; at...
(Disraeli 1826, Vivian Grey, line 5810)

It is interesting to note the good example of extraction seen in (41), in which *pledge* occurs in a relative clause.

As has already been noted, it may well be that works of reference did not provide examples of *pledge* with the statal passive on the basis that these works may not see the statal passive as worthy of separate analysis (rather being equivalent to active sentences).

5.3.3 Review

We saw that several complementation patterns are observed within our data that were not listed in the dictionaries and grammars (i.e. NP + *as*, NP + NP, NP + NP + *as* etc.).

In the case of NP + NP complements, we see that their meaning corresponds to the ‘provide deposit/stake’ sense given in the *OED*. We also note that an NP + *to* + NP complement (listed under in sense 3b (‘provide deposit/stake’) in the *OED*) would appear to be a very close substitute structure to the NP + NP structure given here.

The NP (+ NP) + *as* tokens were of particular interest given the fact that none of the works consulted for this project list *as* as a possible element in a complement. I suggest that *pledge* in examples (18) and (19) corresponds to sense 2a of *pledge* (‘promising a completed action’) and that NP + NP + *as* should be seen as a complementation patterns in their own right.

We also noted the complementation patterns NP + *upon* + NP and NP + *on* + NP. In section 5.2.1 I suggested that NP + *upon* + NP seemed to correspond with sense 3b and that the same idea could be expressed with an NP + *that* clause complement; and tokens (25) and (26) would appear to add more weight to this argument, while (27) suggests that NP + *on* + NP is also possible – sharing the same sense as the aforementioned NP + *upon* + NP structure.

It was also interesting to see that the tokens obtained in our search of CLMETEV 2 contained several examples of extraction – including passives, imperatives and questions.

Another significant point is that many specific texts clearly contain multiple tokens of *pledge*. This suggests that the high rate at which *pledge* occurs in CLMETEV 2 may be

down to many authors with a high propensity to use *pledge* being included. One may note, for example, that illustrations (17), (30) and (41) are all from Disraeli's Vivian Grey, and there are also, for example, multiple tokens of *pledge* from Hogg's 1824 book the *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Examples (25) and (26) are particularly interesting given that they both illustrate the same pattern (NP + *upon* + NP) and occur in very close proximity of one another. Tokens occurring in such close proximity and including two identical complementation patterns are less weighty evidence in support of a complementation pattern given that they are essentially the same token. It follows that two tokens of NP + *upon* + NP from different authors would represent more 'valid' data in support of this complementation pattern. This serves as a reminder of the fact that corpora need to contain a wide range of sources and authors to avoid data being 'skewed' (see sections 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and 2.2.1) i.e. leading to the overrepresentation of a certain term or construction within a given sample.

Finally, we also noted that there were a considerable number of examples in which the direct object NP made the sentence reflexive. There are clearly many nouns that can give the sentence reflexive meaning.

5.4 Pledge in CLMETEV 3

The table below shows the complements that were found with verbal *pledge* in this section¹⁸:

¹⁸ Should one find the table unclear, please consult footnote 14.

	Complement type	Preposition type	Quantity	Normalised Frequency (NF) (tokens per million)
Active and Dynamic Passive	NP		10	1.6
	NP + <i>prep</i> + NP (+ <i>that</i>)	TOTAL	22	3.56
		NP + <i>for</i> + NP	(1)	(0.16)
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP	(21)	(3.20)
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP + <i>that</i>	(1)	(0.16)
	NP + <i>prep</i> + V- <i>ing</i>	TOTAL	1	0.16
		NP + <i>to</i> + V- <i>ing</i>	(1)	(0.16)
NP + <i>that</i>		1	0.16	
NP + <i>to</i> -inf		23	3.68	
Statal Passives	Zero complement		2	0.32
	NP		1	0.16
	<i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL	6	0.96
		<i>to</i> + NP	(6)	(0.96)
<i>to</i> -inf		4	0.64	
Verbal forms of Pledge			70	11.2

Table 9. The frequency of complement patterns observed with *pledge* in CLMETEV 3

There are several things that we note as we look at the table. These are that (1) only four complementation patterns are observed in both statal and non-statal examples of *pledge* (i.e. eight patterns in total), (2) NP + *prep* + NP and NP + *to*-inf are equally common in the active and dynamic passive examples – these two patterns account for 81% of the non-statal data (46 out of 57 tokens) between them, (3) the third most frequent pattern in tokens in which *pledge* occurs in active and dynamic passive sentences is an NP complement (constituting 18% of examples in non-statal tokens), (4) 13 out of the 70 tokens (i.e. 19%) of our total number of tokens are examples of statal passives, (5) the most popular complements with statal passives are *prep* + NP and *to*-inf - these two patterns cover 46% of 29% of the statal tokens (i.e. 6 out of 14 and 4 out of 14 respectively), (6) the complementation pattern NP + *to* + V-*ing* (namely NP + *to* + V-*ing*) – a pattern whose presence was not revealed in our theory section, was also found in our data. In addition to this narrow range of complementation patterns, we should also note that *pledge* also occurred significantly less than in CLMETEV 2.

Let us now look at our data in more detail.

5.4.1 *Pledge* in dynamic passive and active constructions in CLMETEV 3

The majority of our tokens (81%) were not statal passives, and will be considered in this section. The first type of complement to be examined was that of an **NP** complement.

There were ten examples of an NP complement, of which four were reflexive in nature (the subject in three cases being one's 'word' (see illustration (42)), and on one occasion the reflexive pronoun 'himself' (see (43)):

(42) ...that woman resist seductions? Fleetwood's wrath with her for refusing him and inducing him in spite to pledge his word elsewhere, haphazard, pricked a curiosity to know whether the woman could be--and easily!
(Meredith 1895, *The Amazing Marriage*, line 7905)

(43) ...way, which had led him to devote himself in heart to the cloister, though never permitted openly to pledge himself. Then the discovery that the world was less thorny than he had expected; the allurements of royal...
(Yonge 1870, *The Caged Lion*, line 7185)

In the other non-reflexive NP-complement sentences we saw two tokens (from the same text and same author) describing financial institutions being ready to 'pledge credit' (see illustration (44)), while the other four tokens contained miscellaneous NP direct objects, and were not reflexive in meaning (see, for example (45)):

(44) ...has withdrawn, its balance from the bankers. It might give its aid, lend Exchequer bills, or otherwise pledge its credit for the moment, but when the exigency was passed it might let the offending banks suffer.
(Bagehot 1873, *Lombard Street*, line 1796)

(45) The Duke first consulted a select company, who promised their own services, but declined to pledge any one else. It was held that no Norman was bound to follow the Duke in an attempt to win for himself a...
(Freeman 1888, *William the Conqueror*, line 2046)

Our results also contain a significant number of **NP + *prep* + NP** tokens – with this complementation pattern proving as frequent as the NP + *to*-inf pattern. The NP + *to* + NP complement is frequent – and the data contains just example of NP + *for* + NP complement (given here):

(46) ...writ the matter straight to Robsart. The lad is weak, and may be tampered with.' 'He knows that I have pledged my honour for him,' said James. Bedford's thin lips moved at the corners. 'Nay,' said James, not...
(Yonge, the Caged Lion, line 7904)

As we can see, the meaning of (46) is clearly reflexive, with the speaker's 'honour' being pledged.

If we turn to the tokens of NP + *to* + NP, we see that the majority are reflexive – with eleven tokens containing reflexive personal pronouns in the direct object NP position, three tokens in which 'word' is the direct object NP, one token in which 'vow' is the NP and one token in which 'hand' is the NP:

(47) ...buried among the archives of the Family, my good Mr. Richmond. The Princess Elizabeth thoughtlessly pledged her hand to the young sonneteer. Of course, she could not fulfil her engagement.' 'Why not?'
(Meredith 1870, The Adventures of Harry Richmond, line 2098)

One cannot help being slightly surprised that this is the only token of one 'pledging one's hand' in the entire CLEMTEV. Given the way in which pledging / promising / giving one's hand is understood by all to mean 'promise to marry', I feel we would have been justified in expecting more tokens in which *pledge*'s direct object NP was *hand*.

There were five more tokens in which the direct object NP of the pattern NP + *prep* + NP pattern was not reflexive. In these sentences we saw three examples of sums of money/financial commodities being pledged ('his salary', 'those bills', 'his securities') and two examples in which people were pledged: 'the disciples' and 'me'). Here are examples of both of these types of NP direct object:

(48) ...consequence, be able to secure an advance of all he needed from his banker. Why should he not be able to pledge his salary, or a portion of it, to an Institution which would enable him to pay off his debt, on terms that...
(Booth 1890, In Darkest England and the Way Out, line 8539)

(49) She still had the pen in her hand, but she made no approach to signing her name with it. "If my signature pledges me to anything," she said, "surely I have some claim to know what that pledge is?" He lifted up the parch...
(Collins 1859-1860, The Woman in White, line 2136)

In the case of (49), it was difficult to decide whether it should be classed as reflexive or not. After much deliberation, however, I decided that I should follow the lead set by the speaker herself in viewing her signature as a separate subject/entity to that of her herself.

It is also interesting to note the presence (albeit with only one token) of the **NP + prep + NP + that clause** construction, as seen in (50). As we can clearly see, the sentence is reflexive in meaning – with the NP being a reflexive personal pronoun:

(50) ...is peeping at somebody else's. No danger of the dad being mixed up with Companies? Let's hope not. Julia pledged her word to Janet that I would look after the old squire. I suppose I can go home this evening?
(Meredith 1870, the Adventures of Harry Richmond, line 9003)

One particularly interesting complementation pattern – and one not found in the theory consulted for this study – was that of **NP + prep + V-ing**. This pattern was only found once – here is the token in question.

(51) I understood at once--for my sympathies are your sympathies--why you wished to see her here before you pledged yourself to inviting Lady Glyde. You are most right, sir, in hesitating to receive the wife until you are...
(Collins 1859-60, The Woman in White, line 7187)

As one can see, this illustration would appear to be reflexive – containing, as it does, a reflexive pronoun in the direct object NP position. This said, however, it should be noted that the phrase ‘why you wished... inviting Lady Glyde’ does not appear to make much sense. Given that the small section ‘you pledged yourself to inviting Lady Glyde’ is a well-formed sentence, I nevertheless included it in my analysis.

The next pattern to consider was that of the **NP + that** pattern. It is similar to illustration (50) – it also reflexive, with ‘word’ again occupying the direct object NP position:

(52) "Then, be silent," said Queen Raucacoaxine.
"All I have to say," continued Daffodil, "is that I pledge my word that, if they are not pardoned, I won't go out at the Throne Hall roof to-night."
(Webster 1884, Daffodil and the Croaxaxicans, line 11405)

Finally we see that with regard to the **NP + *to*-infinitive construction** there are a significant number of examples of this pattern - with every single one of the tokens (all 23 tokens) being active (as opposed to dynamic passive) in nature. In addition we also saw that all of the tokens were reflexive in meaning due to the nature of the NP direct object. Sixteen of the direct objects of the NP were personal reflexive pronouns (see, for example, (53)). Of the six other reflexive sentences, there were four examples of the type ‘word’ and two with ‘honour’ - both in accordance with *OED* sense 3b (‘deposit/stake’). In addition there was one token in which a political body pledges itself towards a particular course of action or policy (see illustration (54)).

(53) ...doors, no doubt, leading into the hall and into the rooms on each side of the library, which the Count had pledged himself to examine. The first object that I saw was the red spark again travelling out into the night from...
(Collins 1859-60, *The Woman in White*, line 5698)

(54) ...recognised a sentence or two taken bodily from the Labour Clarion of the preceding week. Then a resolution pledging the meeting to support the Liberal candidate was passed unanimously amid evident excitement. It was the...
(Ward 1894, *Marcella* 1, line 9932)

We see clearly in illustration (54) that the meeting passes the resolution which then commits the (very same) meeting to support the Liberal candidate.

Let us now move on to look at the tokens from the CLMETEV which contain *pledge* in statal passives.

5.4.2 Pledge in statal passive constructions in CLMETEV 3

Thirteen of the 70 (19%) of our examples contained statal passives and these passives can be classified as belonging to one of four patterns. **Zero complements** – not contained in the theory consulted for this work - made up the first pattern observed, of which there were two tokens:

(56) It is a fault to speak of the outer world except on especial need. We have taken the vows, too, and are pledged for life--I am, at all events. Still, if you could have told me anything---- But I am much to blame. I must...
(Caine 1897, *The Christian*, line 6089)

(57) ...for me, as a saint for a poor outcast on earth!' 'Hush,' said Esclairmonde; 'I am no saint--only a maiden pledged. But, Sir, I thank you fervently. You have lightened my heart of one of my fears.' Malcolm could not...
(Yonge 1870, *The Caged Lion*, line 7560)

While (57) may initially appear difficult to classify, it can be represented as a relative clause (“maiden who had been *pledged*”) and therefore it should be classified as an example of a zero complement. The use of this participle is interesting and it is also interesting to see it in a post-verbal position.

In addition to the above, our search also returned one token of an **NP** complement. This was the only example of such a construction in a statal passive in any of our diachronic material:

(58) ...that of the precious stone. As she looked at me thus, I felt like one who drains to intoxication the wine pledged him by an enchantress.
"Oh, my child,' I said, smiling, 'the more beautiful a thing is, the...
(Blind 1885, *Tarantella*, line 5621)

Finally, I should note that our sample also contained four *to-infinitive* and six *prep + NP* constructions in statal passive sentences. These made up the other 10 (of the 13) tokens containing statal passives. Here is an example of each of these in turn:

(59) ...my father surrendered it to him, with the reservation, that Jorian intended an association of backbiters pledged to reveal all they knew, whereas the Club, in its present form, was an engine of morality and decency, and a...
(Meredith 1870, *The Adventures of Harry Richmond*, line 5744)

(60)...exist in relation to our Scheme, seeing that we are endeavouring to raise the standard of labour and are pledged to a war to the death against sweating in every shape and form. But, it will be asked, how do these...
(Booth 1890, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, line 4334)

As has already been mentioned, the *to-inf* pattern with the statal passive, as seen in illustration (59) was not found in our theory, although it is, of course, possible that some works may equate this statal passive construction with the active sentence (and hence include it within an NP + *to-ing* structure. It follows, for example, that the zero

complementation pattern with statal passives would be equated to the NP
complementation pattern with active sentences.

5.4.3 Review

Firstly it was interesting to note the relatively narrow range of complements with which *pledge* occurred – with the NP + *to*-inf construction and NP + *prep* + NP clauses making up well over half the tokens retrieved in a search of CLMETEV 3. It was also interesting to note the ‘popularity’ of the preposition *to* in cases when the NP + *prep* + NP pattern occurred.

A thorough evaluation of changes and trends observed over the time period covered by CLMETEV will be undertaken in the conclusion.

6. *Pledge* in the BNC

I will now examine the tokens of *pledge* retrieved from the BNC.

6.1 Introduction to data retrieved from BNC

In accordance with the methodology pursued in section 5, I will continue to approximate dynamic passive structures to active ones, while analysing statal passive separately. As in the previous section, I do not seek to dwell upon the semantic nature of complements, though on the occasions when a reference to the semantic qualities of a word seem necessary, I will refer to the senses as listed in the *OED*. It should also be noted that, as in chapter 5, the illustrations will be numbered from (1) onwards.

Results were retrieved from the BNC by conducting a lemma search, which should provide all declined forms of *pledge*. Initially I searched for *pledge* in the *prose* section – as this is the section of the BNC which bears most resemblance (in terms of the type of literature in question) to the material contained in the CLMETEV corpus. My search, however, produced just 47 tokens (see below) from this section (which contains 16.5 million words). After considering all the literature types in the BNC, I decided that the *world affairs* section was the second most comparable area to CLMETEV texts. A search of this section provided 531 tokens (see below) from this 17.2 million word section of the BNC.

While both the *prose* and *world affairs* sections were chosen to make comparison with the CLMETEV as meaningful as possible, it should be stressed that these two sections of the BNC do contain very different text types. As such I have chosen to analyse these sections separately below, before combining my results in the last part of this section (section 6.5).

6.2 BNC tokens of *pledge* ineligible for consideration

Before I start my analysis I will briefly mention examples that will not be considered in my analysis. The nature of such examples is given in the table below:

	Total Tokens retrieved	Nominal Tokens	<i>Pledge</i> in a reported speech parenthetical	Preverbal position	Remaining Tokens for Study
Imaginative prose	47	3	3	1	40
World affairs	531	34	5	1	491
Total	578	37	8	2	531

Table 10: The validity of tokens of *pledge* retrieved by a search of the BNC

Despite the fact that the BNC is a tagged corpus, it was remarkable to see so many nominal forms being retrieved – with over 6% of retrieved tokens in both *prose* and *world affairs* sections not being examples of verbal forms. This would seem to leave the level of precision extraordinarily compromised. Here are two examples of nominal tokens of *pledge*. They were found in the *prose* and *world affairs* sections respectively:

(1) K8S 1838 It did not please him; almost he wished the first pledge back again, so naked did he feel now without his armour of obstinacy.

(2) HHV 17270 I give my hon. Friend that pledge with a great deal of enthusiasm.

It is important to note that *pledge* can occur in cases of reported speech and our search produced eight such tokens – all of which were examples of non-embedded reported speech. As such the reported speech will not be analysed as a syntactic complement of *pledge* (see section 4.3.3.2). Here is an illustration of *pledge* in this context - it is from the *world affairs* section:

(3) K5D 573 Security lapses at Frankfurt airport that let an armed hijacker on to a Lufthansa airliner will be tracked down, the German government pledged yesterday.

Similarly, I do not intend to examine *pledge* when it occurs in preverbal positions and is embedded in the NP. Both sections of the BNC contained one such example, and both

tokens are given below. It should be noted that illustration (4) (from the *prose* section) runs to 244 words, so a shortened version is given here:

(4) G3J 122 ... and he had on previous occasions himself been the applicant on the company's behalf, he being an avowed and pledged advocate of the company...

(5) JXM 1708 The new group did not in fact achieve its target of 100,000 pledged supporters and had faded away by March.

Finally it is worth noting that 531 tokens from the two sections of the BNC (with a combined word total of 33.7 million) represents a good sample (in terms of its size) from which it will be possible to observe trends and draw conclusions.

6.3 Pledge in the *prose* section of the BNC

Our data revealed the following complementation patterns¹⁹:

	Complement type	Preposition type	Quantity	Normalised Frequency (NF) (tokens per million)	
Active and Dynamic Passive	Zero complement		1	0.06	
	NP		13	0.79	
	NP + NP		3	0.18	
	NP + <i>to</i> -inf		4	0.24	
	NP + <i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL		11	0.67
		NP + <i>for</i> + NP		(2)	(0.12)
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP		(9)	(0.55)
	<i>prep</i> + NP (+ <i>that</i>)	TOTAL		1	0.06
		<i>to</i> + NP + <i>that</i>		(1)	0.06
	<i>to</i> -inf		1	0.06	
Statal Passives	<i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL	1	0.06	
		<i>for</i> + NP	(1)	(0.06)	
	<i>to</i> -inf		5	0.30	
Total verbal forms of Pledge			40	2.42	

Table 11. The frequency of complement patterns of *pledge* observed within the *prose* section of the BNC.

It would seem particularly noteworthy that (1) NPs are the single largest group of complements, (2) NP + *prep* + NP constructions are only slightly less frequent than NP complements, with NP + *to* + NP occurring most often, (3) *to*-infinitive complements are rare, (4) *that* clauses are not found in our data, and (5) the statal passive occurs in 15% of cases with *pledge*.

¹⁹ Should one find the table unclear, please consult footnote 14.

Let us now look at our data in more detail.

6.3.1 *Pledge in active and dynamic passive constructions in BNC prose*

There was one example of a **zero complement** in my data, while there were 13 examples of **NP** complements – all of which were active sentences. Surprisingly, only one of the thirteen sentences was reflexive in meaning, with non-reflexive NPs pledged including, amongst other things: body parts, geographical areas, ‘support’²⁰ and ‘friendship’. Let us now look at one of the tokens retrieved in our study:

(6) FBO 1462 A young, a beautiful, a fairy-story mother, dying with the greatest of grace, as immortality asserted itself and pledged its reassurance in the night of air of her departure.

The single reflexive illustration is given below:

(7) FU6 1396 We pledged our identities, secure in the conventions of our trade; that someone would be watching.

I should add that I only classified (7) as reflexive after much deliberation, but feel that the pledging of one’s ‘identities’ is sufficient reason to it to be understood as reflexive.

As we turn our attention to **NP + NP** complements, it was noticed that they were all remarkably similar – with the direct object NP being a personal object pronoun and the second being a form of one’s bond, one’s credibility as a ‘deposit/stake’ (see *OED* sense 3b) – i.e. essentially reflexive in meaning. Two tokens of the NP + NP complementation pattern (from different authors and sources)²¹ were identical (see (8) and (9)), both containing ‘you’ as the first object NP and ‘my word’ as the second. All three examples are given below:

(8) HGG 753 And I pledge you my word, and I take my fee.

²⁰ It is worth noting that while pledging *support*’ is undoubtedly very similar to the idea of pledging *honour*, *one’s word/oneself* (all phrases that I have classed as being reflexive in nature), the idea of *support* is not so 100% and wholehearted an action and, I feel, does not possess such an overarching meaning of putting oneself on the line. This is why I have classified *pledging support* as non-reflexive in meaning.

²¹ The fact that the same pattern (or indeed almost the same token) is observed in different texts by different authors is significant (see for example, my treatment of NP + *upon* + NP (section 5.3.3).

(9) K8S 1831 ‘I pledge you my word,’ said Harry with a tearing gasp, ‘I’ll not misuse them.’

The fact that *pledge NP + (my) word* occurs twice would also seem to support the decision by the editors of the Cobuild dictionary to assign *pledge one’s word* its own sense in their treatment of the verbal form of *pledge*.

The **NP + *prep* + NP** construction was a very frequent pattern, with 11 of the 34 tokens in the active voice belonging to this category. While there were two examples of the preposition *for*, *to* was the most frequently occurring preposition. All the retrieved tokens were in active sentences and there were no examples of extraction. It is also interesting to note that both examples of the NP + *for* + NP structure are reflexive in nature (with ‘honour’ and ‘themselves’ being the NP objects). In the NP + *to* + NP pattern we see six tokens with a reflexive meaning (the NP subjects are ‘my honour’ (see (10)), ‘loyalty’ (see (11)), ‘alliance’, ‘allegiance’ and ‘my sword’ (illustration (12))). Of the six non-reflexive tokens, with a person or people being pledged in four tokens, an object in one (13), while in one final token (14) a sum of money is being pledged.

Here are four illustrations of the NP + *prep* + NP pattern. Illustration (11) features the NP + *for* + NP, illustration (12) contains an NP + *to* + NP structure with reflexive meaning, while illustrations (13) and (14) contain an NP + *to* + NP structure – without reflexive meaning:

(10) HGG 1030 I pledge my own honour for it.

(11) GOL 534 Then he pledged loyalty to Frick and to his leadership.

(12) GVL 500 I've long since pledge my sword to any who would help rid this borough of the damned Daine.

(13) AEA 1075 She had pledged the one to Daniel, the other to herself.

(14) JY7 145 And he's pledged five per cent of tonight's take to the Children's Aid Fund, which means — ’

While all these examples are noteworthy, the NP in (12) is particularly interesting given that it has not occurred at any point so far in this study. In the literal reading of the sentence, we see that the speaker in (12) is willing to put his life on the line in order to achieve the stated aim.

The **NP + *to*-infinitive** construction accounted for 10% of our total number of tokens. All the examples were in the active and all were reflexive in meaning (there were three examples of a reflexive personal pronoun NP and one token in which one's 'word' was pledged). Here are two of our tokens:

(15) AON 2505 No, they had not 'intimidated' the proprietors, they had urged them to sign documents pledging themselves to appeal to government to rescind the Act.

(16) K8S 32 It was unthinkable to pledge his word to stay for a fixed term when he might not be able to keep it.

Another complementation pattern observed in our data was that of a ***prep* + NP + *that* clause** pattern. This pattern is of particular interest given that it was not observed (with non-statal tokens) at any stage in our study so far, and was only illustrated by Culicover and Jackendoff (see section 4.3.2):

(17) HWA 2172 Between these walls, Carrington, I will pledge to you that there are plotters in high places, and as an indicator of just how high, I will add that Lord Halifax himself is possibly among them.

The meaning of *pledge* here is clearly extremely close to that of the verb *promise*. – though, despite the absence of an NP direct object, seems more 'solemn' than that of making a simple promise. Finally, our tokens contained one example of a ***to*-infinitive** complement. While this is listed by the *OED* as being possible, I did not encounter it in the historical corpora. Here is the illustration of this pattern:

(18) Four assassins stood before him and pledged to know no rest till they brought him Alarielle's corpse.

This sentence is also a very clear example of subject control and I would suggest that it also contains a sense of reflexive meaning – despite there being no direct object NP ‘helping’ to make it so.

6.3.2 *Pledge in statal passive constructions in BNC prose*

Only two complementation patterns were observed in this section – five tokens of a *to-infinitive* complement and one token containing a *prep + NP* complement. Here are illustrations of each of these patterns:

(19) CKB 3114 There is no better way of intensifying the treasured feeling of individuality than the possession of a secret which the individual is pledged to guard.

(20) HOD 599 On top of the general fall in the value of property pledged for various loans, and used to inflate share values, the Thames estuary land deal has put the group on the rocks.

As has already been mentioned, the *to-inf* with the statal passive is not mentioned in our works of reference, although it may well be that those works would equate this with the active sentence (i.e. NP + *to-inf*) – which *is* given in those publications.

6.3.3 Review

As our study has moved into the modern era, with tokens from contemporary English – it was interesting to note the appearance of new complementation patterns that have not been observed in our study so far. What is more, it is of great interest to note the presence of NP + NP and *prep + NP + that* complements in dynamic passive and active sentences and the *to-inf* pattern with statal passive – all patterns not listed by the works of reference.

6.4 *Pledge* in the world affairs section of the BNC

The complementation patterns recorded in this section of the BNC are recorded in the table²². As one can see from the quantity column, the raw numbers of tokens are far higher than in any other section of our diachronic study.

	Complement type	Preposition type	Quantity	Normalised Frequency (NF) (tokens per million)	
Active and Dynamic Passive	NP		141	8.18	
	NP + NP		1	0.06	
	NP + <i>to</i> -inf		31	1.80	
	NP + <i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL		52	3.02
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP		(48)	(2.78)
		NP + <i>towards</i> + NP		(4)	(0.23)
	<i>prep</i> + NP + <i>that</i>	TOTAL		1	0.06
		<i>to</i> + NP + <i>that</i>		(1)	(0.06)
	<i>that</i>		60	3.50	
<i>to</i> -inf		154	8.93		
Statal Passives	<i>zero</i>		23	1.33	
	<i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL	8	0.48	
		<i>to</i> + NP		(8)	(0.48)
	<i>prep</i> + V- <i>ing</i>	TOTAL	2	0.12	
		<i>to</i> + V- <i>ing</i>		(2)	(0.12)
<i>to</i> -inf		18	1.04		
Total Verbal forms of <i>Pledge</i>			491	28.47	

Table 12. The frequency of complement patterns of *pledge* observed with the world affairs section of the BNC

As we look at the table there are many notable points. These include (1) the overwhelming frequency of NP and *to*-inf constructions in non-statal examples (these account for 67% of the tokens in the non-statal section), (2) the relatively high frequency of *that* clauses in the non-statal passive data, (3) the fact that *to* (or the semantically close *towards*) are the only prepositions in both statal and non-statal tokens containing prepositions, (4) the fact that statal examples make up around 10% of the data and contains three patterns not listed in the theory section of this work, (5) the fact that the general trends observed in the non-statal passive examples are also found in the statal-passive section: with *to*-inf and *zero* complements proving frequent in the statal passives section. (6) the presence of a *prep* +

²² Should one find the table unclear, please consult footnote 14.

V-ing construction with statal passives – not only is this pattern not listed in our works of reference, the *V-ing* element is not listed as being possible anywhere, at any stage.

Let us now look at our data in more detail.

6.4.1 Pledge in active and dynamic passive constructions in the BNC *world affairs* section

As we have just seen, the **NP** pattern was extremely frequent in this part of the BNC but it was interesting to note that just four sentences from the 141 retrieved by the search were reflexive in their nature. The head nouns in these NP objects were ‘himself’, ‘vow’, ‘faith’ and ‘(own) lives’. Here are examples of the first two of these:

(21) H7C 298 Kilfedder refused to pledge himself and was reported to have said "I have no intention of being anybody's dummy", which does not seem to have damaged him electorally.

(22) ADD 92 Ten-year-olds being sworn into the Deutsches Jungvolk and Deutsche Jungmädelschaft on that day had to pledge an almost religious vow: ‘You, Führer, are for us our command!’

As we move on to look at the 137 tokens that were not reflexive, it was impossible not to note that the head of the NP complements was often *support* (observed in 35 tokens) and that the (semantically close terms) *aid/investment/funding* was also very common (found in 42 tokens). Examples of both of these are given below. In addition we see that many of the other words found in the NP position would be at home in political discourse, with words like ‘elections’, ‘cooperation’, ‘veto’, ‘purge’, ‘curb [on something]’, ‘review’, ‘policy’, ‘increase’, ‘enforcement’, ‘inquiry’, ‘reforms’ ‘solidarity’, ‘crackdown’, ‘abolition’ etc. Examples of the last two NP objects are given below, together with tokens containing the direct objects ‘support’ and ‘aid’:

(23) E9R 734 Chairman Ed Abbott said the appeal would begin in earnest soon and he confirmed that Mr Rhys-Jones had pledged his support.

(24) HL6 2196 MEED of April 5 reported that only an estimated US\$4,536 million to US\$6,924 million of the US\$13,500 million pledged by the Saudi government had so far been paid.

(25) K4W 5793 THE chairman of governors at a school plagued by bus pests has pledged a continued crackdown on the problem.

(26) K4W 2924 Tory candidate Graham Robb has pledged the abolition of Cleveland County Council if he becomes Hartlepool's MP.

It was interesting to see that illustration (24) is one of only four dynamic passive sentences found amongst the 141 NP complement tokens.

Our tokens also contained one example of an **NP + NP** complement. This occurs in a dynamic passive sentence – a sentence which is clearly not reflexive in meaning:

(27) K41 1274 Mr McFadyen said: 'We've already been pledged financial support by several organisations if we can get part of the old school building as a community centre.'

This sentence is equated to the active 'they have already pledged us financial support' – hence it being classified as containing an NP + NP complement.

NP + to-infinitive constructions were also relatively frequent, with 7% of our non-statal tokens containing such a complement. In the majority of cases (18 out of 31) the NP was a reflexive pronoun:

(28) HKW 487 He promised "a moral renewal in political leadership" and pledged himself to root out state corruption, to combat drug trafficking and to investigate human rights abuses.

In the other 13 reflexive tokens we saw that the reflective sense came from a political figure pledging one's party to a certain cause or policy (29) or a document (approved or originally written by the person/group occupying the direct object position in the present sentence) compelling the object NP to a certain cause or policy. Here is an example of each of these:

(29) AD2 471 Under pressure from Westminster, he pledged his government to continue the O'Neill reforms.

(30) HKR 534 Amid tight security the Presidents of the United States, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia met in the Colombian Caribbean resort of Cartagena and signed on Feb. 15 the Cartagena Declaration, pledging their governments to intensify and co-ordinate efforts to curb the consumption, production and trafficking of cocaine.

Given that so few NP complements had reflexive meaning, it seems extraordinary that very single one of the NP + *to*-inf tokens should be reflexive in nature.

The NP + *prep* + NP structure was also frequent. As in previous sections of our study, *to* was the most frequent preposition. This pattern occurs in the dynamic passive in only four of the 48 tokens of *pledge*. The other pattern of interest is that of whether or not sentences are reflexive or not and we see that 21 of the 48 sentences can be classified as such – with one of these sentences containing a parallel non-reflexive element (see (33)). Amongst these 21 reflexive sentences there were seven tokens containing reflexive personal pronouns, five tokens in which the initial NP was ‘allegiance’, five tokens in which it was ‘loyalty’ and one token in which it was the speaker’s ‘immediate future’ (see illustration (32)). Here are three illustrations containing this reflexive structure:

(31) K5M 9294 In front of the congress, he quickly took stock of the situation, and forgetting his allegiance to Yeltsin, pledged loyalty to parliament, the constitution and the people.

(32) HJ3 5483 Ferris was on the verge of signing for Linfield last season but has decided now to pledge his immediate future to the Lurgan club, who are expected to announced a major kit sponsorship shortly.

(33) EWG 452 The expression "New Deal" was first used by Roosevelt in his speech accepting the Democratic Party nomination as its presidential candidate in July 1932, when he said "I pledge you, I pledge myself to a new deal for the American people. "

As mentioned above, illustration (33) is particularly interesting given the way in which it features the subject, verb and direct object twice, before these two forms share a common *prep* + NP element. I suggest the alternative ‘I pledge us to a new deal...’ would also have been possible, but was not chosen with the speaker choosing to emphasize that he was

pledging both his audience and himself to the ‘new deal’ – a oratory device which the speaker must have believed gave his speech more force²³.

The majority of tokens found with the NP + *to* + NP pattern were not reflexive. Of these 28 tokens²⁴ the initial NP referred to a sum of money on no fewer than 17 occasions (see (34)) and ‘support’ (see (35)) in five of the tokens. In other tokens the NP was ‘kingdom’, ‘commitment’, ‘renunciation’, ‘healths’, ‘goods’ as well as ‘the doctor’ and ‘you’ (as was also seen in illustration (33)). Here are three examples illustrating the NP + *to* + NP pattern with non-reflexive meaning:

(34) HL4 1665 During a meeting of the Philippines' consultative group, organized by the World Bank in Hong Kong on Feb. 26, the group pledged a total of \$3,300 million to the Philippines in the form of loans and grants for the current year.

(35) HL4 1611 The small Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) — whose ideological position was to the right of the LDP — also pledged its support to the government.

(36) HXX 1160 Adam of Bremen reports that Cnut had intended Swegen to rule Norway, Harthacnut Denmark, and Harold England, and the *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham that he made Harold the English king, but the *Encomium* says that he not only promised Emma that any son of hers should be heir, but later on oath pledged the whole kingdom subject to him to Harthacnut, who received oaths of loyalty from English nobles.

Unlike one of our previous examples (see chapter 5, illustration (37)). I suggest that the ‘whole kingdom subject to him’ is not, here, synonymous with the king himself. In (36), the king is only able to pledge this kingdom on the basis that it is separate from the king himself.

It was also interesting to note the appearance of the preposition *towards* in this section of the BNC. This preposition was not found in any of the other sections of corpora looked at in this study, and was not noted in the theory although this is clearly

²³ I would also question the grammatical accuracy of the utterance ‘I pledge you to new deal’. I suggest that the speaker is promising ‘a new deal for the American people’ – therefore ‘I pledge you a new deal’ or ‘I pledge the American people a new deal’ would appear to be more grammatically accurate constructions. If we read the speaker’s words literally, then the construction would appear to be in accordance with sense 3 in the *OED*, suggesting that the audience are being offered as a ‘deposit’ or stake’ in this political promise’.

²⁴ This number includes illustration (33) – which also contained a reflexive construction and was therefore also classified as such.

semantically close to *to*. It was also interesting to note that there are the same number of active and dynamic passive sentences found in this section of the BNC with *towards* – two tokens of each were found. Here is one example of each type:

(37) HL6 112 On April 4 the UK pledged £21,000,000 (about \$37,000,000) towards UN and other international relief efforts to help Kurdish refugees.

(38) HKV 2243 After the Paris meeting it was announced that about 85 per cent of this amount had been pledged with donors promising \$300,000,000 in debt relief and between \$800,000,000 and \$900,000,000 in grants and loans, mainly to finance imports required for the economic recovery programme.

In both (37) and (38) as well as in the other two examples (not given here) the NP object is a sum of money – or a percentage thereof. It follows that the sentences are not reflexive.

As has already been mentioned, our tokens also contained one example of the *prep* + NP + *that* clause pattern. While this pattern is not listed in the dictionaries or grammars consulted in this study, an example of this pattern is provided by Culicover and Jackendoff (see section 3.2.4). The preposition in our token, as in that provided by Culicover and Jackendoff, is *to*:

(39) HHV 4884 I pledge to the House that there will be no lack of effort by the Government to make a success of that programme.

Here we see that the meaning of *pledge* is very close to that of *promise* – though we cannot help but feel that the *promise* is far more serious or sincere. It almost feels as though it is reflexive in meaning – but that the direct object NP that would overtly make it reflexive has been omitted.

Our sample contained 60 tokens with *that* clauses – all of which were found in active sentences, with no tokens containing marked word order. It should be noted that there were examples where – in accordance with the rules of English grammar – *that* was omitted. Here are two illustrations of this pattern, note that *that* is omitted in illustration (40):

(40) HHX 15737 The right hon. Gentleman said: ' That is a firm commitment, costed and clear that I pledge our Labour Government will carry out.'

(41) HJ4 4270 Last December, as the soaring bill for bomb damage rocketed through the ceiling of the Compensation Agency's budget, the Secretary of State pledged that claims would be met.

In addition to being good examples of *that*-omission, illustrations (40) and (41) are also excellent examples of subject control, such as mentioned by Culicover and Jackendoff (see section 3.2.4). What is more we also see that (40) is also a very good example of relative clause extraction (see section 3.2.5.1).

Finally, it was interesting to note the high number of tokens containing *to-***infinitives**. As with the NP + *to*-inf pattern, it was interesting to note that the subject of the sentence could be a person, group of people or a document (or part of a document). Here are illustrations with a personal subject and a "document subject":

(42) They pledged to strive "for the constitution of a large common political formation which would be pluralist and decentralized".

(43) In preparation for the first National Assembly elections, scheduled for Dec. 21 [see p. 38291], the main opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) at its fifth national congress on Oct. 13 announced a draft manifesto containing a new clause pledging to "build a Taiwanese republic with independent sovereignty" and to redefine the territory of Taiwan, subject to a national plebiscite.

Once more we see that that these illustrations are excellent examples of subject control (see section 3.2.4). If we were to return to our analysis of [PRO] then we see that illustration 42 could be represented in the following manner:

(42a) They pledged [PRO to strive...]

What is more we see that the meaning in both (41) and (42) is close to the reflexive meaning common in tokens retrieved from the CLMETEV – yet here we see that there is no reflexive element - no direct object NP.

6.4.2 *Pledge* in statal passive constructions in the BNC *world affairs* section

The **zero complement** was very frequent amidst statal passive illustrations, with 45% of the total number of statal passives containing no complement. In the vast majority of tokens, the subject is an amount of money/aid. Here is an illustration:

(44) HL9 2551 US\$140,000,000 already pledged by the International Development Association towards a social fund set up to cushion the impact of economic reforms [see p. 38209] was to be topped up to US\$500,000,000.

The ***to-inf* complement** was also frequent in statal passive constructions. It was interesting to note that in all these tokens the subject is a political grouping/government /country.

Here are two illustrations:

(45) ANR 997 France was pledged to support Piedmont, as a result of an agreement made in 1858, though only if Austria was the aggressor.

(46) CCC 842 Such a story would have been heavily damaging to the electoral prospects of the Labour Party as it was pledged to end such speculation.

It was interesting to see that – as was in the case in active and dynamic passive sentences in this section of the BNC – *to* is also the preposition of choice in statal passive *prep* + NP constructions. Here is an illustration of one of our tokens:

(47) K55 1597 He said the council is pledged to quality service throughout the town and cars parked in gardens did not match that pledge.

The preposition *to* was also frequent in one other complementation pattern with statal passives – a pattern which is all the more fascinating as it was not listed in any of the theory consulted while reading existing literature on *pledge*. Indeed, both examples of a ***prep* + *V-ing*** complement occur with the preposition *to*. Here are these tokens:

(48) The Liberal Democrats are pledged to cutting those forces by 50 per cent.

(49) HHV 14771 I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising such a point, rather than displaying the ridiculous opposition that we have seen from Labour, which still seems pledged to getting rid of some of the finest schools in the state education system.

These two tokens are most interesting given that they are rare in my study (with these two tokens being two of only three tokens that represent a *prep* + *V-ing* pattern – with the

statal passive (although it should be noted that there is one further, active, token containing NP + *prep* + V-*ing* (namely NP + *to* + V-*ing*) which could/would be equated to the pattern found here in the statal passive if statal passives were not being analysed separately). It is extremely interesting to see this pattern as the V-*ing* element could easily be replaced by a *to*-inf or NP i.e. in the case of (48) ‘pledged to cut those forces by 50 per cent...’ or ‘pledged to a cut in those forces of 50 per cent’ or ‘pledged to a 50 per cent cut in those forces’. We see that illustration (48) would need a little modification in order for an NP element to be possible. The important point to be noted here, however, is the fact that Bolinger’s generalisation (see section 3.2.2) makes it quite clear that the difference between syntactic form means there must be a difference in meaning between the *to* + V-*ing* pattern seen here and the ‘alternative’ (yet similar) NP + *to* + NP pattern. It is, of course, impossible for us to know for sure why a *prep* + V-*ing* phrase has been chosen over *prep* + NP or *prep* + *to*-inf alternatives. I suggest, however, that the *prep* + V-*ing* phrase contains a little more dynamism and maybe creates a sense that the subject really is ready and completely committed to do the action pledged, whereas the *prep* + NP and *prep* + *to*-inf phrases possibly feel as though the *pledge* is more theoretical and abstract.

6.4.3 Review

It was interesting to note how this section of our data provided a spread of results very different from any of the other sections. While the all the sections so far (CLMETEV 1 – 3 and BNC *prose*) have been prose-focused, it is interesting to see how a different text-type can provide a very different type of complementation pattern – with BNC *world affairs* containing an exceptionally large number of NP and, especially, *to*-inf complements when compared to the other sections.

The appearance new complement structure not listed by the *OED* was also interesting, with *towards* + NP clearly proving possible in cases where money is being

donated/promised. I suggest that this is close to *OED* sense 2a (‘promising a deed’).

Arguably of even more interest was the previously unrecorded *prep + V-ing* complementation pattern – indeed at no point during reading a range of works of reference was a *V-ing* element mooted as a possible member of a complementation pattern. Both the BNC *world affairs* tokens containing *prep + V-ing* contained the preposition *to* and were similar in their structure – with both *V-ing* elements being such that they could have been replaced by an NP or a *to-inf* clause.

Finally it was interesting to note that there were no tokens of an NP + *that* pattern – a pattern to which the *OED* made no reference. It follows that the NP + *that* pattern may be rare in modern English – a fact which may explain its omission from the *OED*.

6.5 Pledge in combined data for both *prose* and *world affairs* sections of the BNC

As we conclude this section on the BNC data, let us now compare the frequency with which the complementation patterns occurred in the *prose* and *world affairs* sections of this corpus. In addition to the information previously given, the distribution of the complements has also been calculated (see the shaded columns that are 5th and 7th from the left). These columns represent the frequency with which a given complementation pattern of *pledge* occurs in each section of the corpus.

The final two columns of the table represent the data combined for these two sections of the BNC, and was compiled by calculating the total number of tokens by the combined total of words for the two sections. The second of these columns (the shaded column on the far right) is similar to columns 5 and 7 in that it contains information regarding the percentage of (combined) BNC data corresponding to each complementation pattern of *pledge*.

	Complement type	Preposition type	NF (words per million) (<i>prose</i>)	Relative frequency of pattern in <i>prose</i> section (as % of all relevant tokens.	NF (words per million) (<i>world affairs</i>)	Relative frequency of pattern in <i>world affairs</i> section (as % of all relevant tokens.	NF (per million) for combined <i>prose</i> and <i>world affairs</i> data	Relative frequency of pattern in both <i>prose</i> and <i>world affairs</i> sections (as %)	
Active and Dynamic Passive	zero		0.06	2.5	-	-	0.03	0.2	
	NP		0.79	32.6	8.18	28.7	4.56	28.9	
	NP + NP		0.18	7.4	0.06	0.2	0.12	0.8	
	NP + <i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL		0.67	27.7	3.02	10.6	1.87	11.8
		NP + <i>for</i> + NP		(0.12)	(5.0)	-	-	(0.06)	(0.4)
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP		(0.55)	(22.7)	(2.79)	(9.8)	(1.69)	(10.7)
		NP + <i>towards</i> + NP		-	-	(0.23)	(0.8)	(0.12)	(0.8)
	NP + <i>to</i> - <i>inf</i>		0.24	10.0	1.80	6.3	1.04	6.6	
	<i>prep</i> + NP (+ <i>that</i>)	TOTAL		0.06	2.5	0.06	0.2	0.06	3.8
		<i>to</i> + NP + <i>that</i>		(0.06)	(2.5)	(0.06)	(0.2)	(0.06)	(0.4)
	<i>that</i>		-	-	3.48	12.2	1.78	11.3	
	<i>to</i> - <i>inf</i>		0.06	2.5	8.93	31.4	4.59	29.0	
Statal Passives	zero		-	-	1.33	4.7	0.68	4.3	
	<i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL	0.06	2.5	0.48	1.6	0.27	1.7	
		<i>for</i> + NP	(0.06)	(2.5)	-	-	(0.03)	(0.2)	
		<i>to</i> + NP	-	-	(0.48)	(1.6)	(0.24)	(1.5)	
	<i>prep</i> + V- <i>ing</i>	TOTAL	-	-	0.12	0.4	0.06	3.8	
		<i>to</i> + V- <i>ing</i>	-	-	(0.12)	(0.4)	(0.06)	(3.8)	
<i>to</i> - <i>inf</i>		0.30	12.4	1.04	3.7	0.68	4.3		
Total Verbal forms of Pledge			2.42	100	28.47	100	15.82	100	

Table 13. Complement pattern of pledge for BNC prose and world affairs subsections and for the two sections combined. The table also shows the proportion of tokens of a certain complement pattern as a percentage of the total number of tokens for a certain section.

If we begin by comparing the data for the two sections of the corpus we note that the most interesting thing is the sheer frequency of *pledge* in the *world affairs* section when compared to the *prose* section – indeed *pledge* proves over ten times more likely to occur in texts relating to world affairs.

With regard to individual complementation patterns, it is interesting to note similarities – such as a comparable propensity for NP and NP + *to*-*inf* complements to occur in both these subsections of the BNC.

As we move on to look at the differences, however, we see that these are numerous. *That* clauses and *to*-inf clauses, for example, make up over 12% and 31% respectively of the tokens in BNC *world affairs*, but make up just 0% (i.e. no tokens) and 2.5% of the total in the *prose* section. Two patterns that stand out as being particularly common with *pledge* in the *prose* section are those of NP + *prep* + NP with the dynamic passive/active and also *to*-inf clauses in statal passive constructions. A higher proportion of tokens of *pledge* are also examples of the statal passive in the *prose* section (14.9% compared to 11.5% in section relating to *world affairs*).

In the last two columns – revealing the combined data for our two sections of the BNC - we see that *to*-inf clauses and NP complements in active or dynamic passive sentences are overwhelmingly the most common complements - accounting for just under 60% of all tokens between them. Non-statal examples of *that* clauses and NP + *prep* + NP complements make up about 10% each of total tokens. In addition we see that statal passives make up a similar proportion (10.6%) of the total number of tokens.

Another important point is the reduction is the lower number of reflexive sentences with an initial NP direct object. One wonders whether such sentences are less popular in modern English – possibly having been replaced by + *that* and + *to*-inf sentences – patterns which possibly contain the sense of ‘solemn promise’ previously (in the CLMETEV for example) expressed by NP + *possible other element(s)* patterns.

To close, it is worth underlining once more that the two sections of the BNC contain very different complementation patterns and it is a shame that a search of the *prose* section of the BNC provided so few tokens that I was required to search for other tokens. Nonetheless, the data does show quite clearly the way that *pledge* tends to favour different complementation patterns according to the type of text in question. Despite the different nature of the two complementation patterns, however, I believe that the

combined data deserves very close attention and comparison with the rest of our diachronic data will be of real interest.

7. Conclusion

In this final section of this study I seek to review the data collected in the four sections of this study and observe trends and tendencies that are revealed in the diachronic data. At the same time I seek to answer various assumptions, assertions and theories that were brought to the fore in the theory section.

Before we begin, however, it is important to mention once more the imperfections in our data. In addition to concern listed in sections 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and 2.2.1, our study would seem to have produced evidence that the CLMETEV may indeed contain skewed data (see section 5.3.3). In addition our research has to rely on BNC data which is particularly “unbalanced” – containing tokens from two separate parts of the corpus – parts which ultimately turned out to contain very different complementation patterns.

As for the data: I have represented it in tabular form below (see table 15). I make no apologies for its statistical nature as without numbers and statistics it would be much harder to collect meaningful data – let alone explain and review it. As with table 14, the grey columns in table 15 express the proportion of tokens corresponding to a particular complementation pattern as a percentage. Should some readers find the table simply too daunting, they should not despair: I will, naturally, outline the majority of the main tendencies in the section below.

	Complement type	Preposition type	CLLMETEV 1 (1710-1780) NF (words per million)	Relative frequency of pattern in CLMETEV 1 (as %)	CLLMETEV 2 (1780-1850) NF (words per million)	Relative frequency of pattern in CLMETEV 2 (as %)	CLLMETEV 3 (1850-1920) NF (words per million)	Relative frequency of pattern in CLMETEV 3 (as %)	NF (per million) for combined <i>prose</i> and <i>world affairs</i> data	Relative frequency of pattern in both <i>prose</i> and <i>world affairs</i> sections (as %)	
Active and Dyna. Pass.	zero complement		-	-	-	-	-	-	0.03	0.2	
	NP		0.99	27.3	2.8	16.3	1.6	14.3	4.56	28.9	
	NP + <i>as</i>		-	-	0.17	1.0	-	-	-	-	
	NP + NP		-	-	-	-	-	-	0.12	0.8	
	NP + NP + <i>as</i>		-	-	0.17	1.0	-	-	-	-	
	NP + NP + <i>that</i>		-	-	0.17	1.0	-	-	-	-	
	NP + NP + <i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL		-	-	0.17	1.0	-	-	-	-
		NP + NP + <i>to</i> + NP			-	(0.17)	(1.0)	-	-		
	NP + <i>prep</i> + NP (+ <i>that</i>)	TOTAL		1.64	45.3	6.29	36.7	3.56	32.9	1.87	11.8
		NP + <i>for</i> + NP		(0.33)	(9.1)	(1.05)	(6.1)	(0.16)	(1.4)	(0.06)	(0.4)
		NP + <i>in</i> + NP		(0.33)	(9.1)	(0.17)	(1.0)	-	-	-	-
		NP + <i>on</i> + NP		-	-	(0.17)	(1.0)	-	-	-	-
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP		(0.66)	(18.2)	(4.37)	(25.5)	(3.20)	30	(1.69)	(10.7)
		NP + <i>to</i> + NP + <i>that</i>		-	-	(0.17)	(1.0)	(0.16)	(1.4)	-	-
		NP + <i>towards</i> + NP		-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.12)	(0.8)
	NP + <i>prep</i> + V- <i>ing</i>	TOTAL		-	-			0.16	1.4	-	-
		NP + <i>to</i> + V- <i>ing</i>		-	-			(0.16)	(1.4)	-	-
	NP + <i>that</i>		0.99	27.3	1.92	11.2	0.16	1.4	-	-	
	NP + <i>to</i> -inf		-	-	3.32	19.4	3.68	32.9	1.04	6.6	
	<i>prep</i> + NP + <i>that</i>	TOTAL		-	-	-	-	-	-	0.06	3.8
<i>to</i> + NP + <i>that</i>			-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.06)	(3.8)	
<i>that</i>		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.78	11.3	
<i>to</i> -inf		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.59	29.0	
Statal Passiv es	<i>zero</i>		-	-	0.52	3.0	0.32	3.0	0.68	4.3	
	NP		-	-	-	-	0.16	1.4	-	-	
	<i>prep</i> + NP	TOTAL		-	-	1.05	6.1	0.96	8.6	0.27	1.7
		<i>for</i> + NP		-	-	(0.17)	(1.0)	-	-	(0.03)	(0.2)
		<i>to</i> + NP		-	-	(0.87)	(5.1)	(0.96)	(8.6)	(0.24)	(1.5)
	<i>prep</i> + V- <i>ing</i>	TOTAL		0.33	9.1	-	-	-	-	0.06	3.8
		<i>for</i> + V- <i>ing</i>		(0.33)	(9.1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>to</i> + V- <i>ing</i>		-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.06)	(3.8)
<i>to</i> -inf		-	-	0.52	3.0	0.64	5.7	0.68	4.3		
Total Verbal forms		3.62	100	17.13	100	11.2	100	15.82	100		

Table 14. The normalised and relative frequency of pledge's complementation patterns as observed in CCLMETV and BNC (world affairs and prose) corpora.

First and foremost we see from the normalised frequencies of the total verbal forms of *pledge*, that its use would appear to vary significantly – the extraordinary difference in the frequency with which the verb is used in CLMETEV 2 compared to CLMETEV 1 and even CLMETEV 3 would arguably suggest that there may be issues related to the accuracy of this corpora. It would therefore be difficult to make any hard-and-fast comments regarding changes in the frequency with which the verb *pledge* is used.

Before we examine the trends observed within individual complementation patterns, it is interesting also to note the sheer size of the table – that is the range of complementation patterns observed in our data – with CLMETEV 2 and the BNC sections proving particularly rich in terms of the number of patterns observed. All the complementation patterns mentioned in our sources (see table 5) were found, bar one. This pattern that was not contained within our data is given in table 15, below:

<p>Complementation patterns listed in our references, but not observed in our diachronic data</p>	<p><i>Prep + NP + to-inf</i> (namely <i>to + NP + to-inf</i>)</p>
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Table 15 Patterns of pledge that our theory gives as possible, yet not observed in our data.

Our research also found eleven complementation patterns, which were not referred to in our works of reference. These are shown in table 16.

Complementation patterns found in the data but not listed in our references	Found with the active (or dynamic passive)	NP + <i>as</i> NP + NP NP + NP + <i>as</i> NP + NP + <i>prep</i> + NP (namely NP + NP + <i>to</i> + NP) NP + NP + <i>that</i> NP + <i>prep</i> + NP + <i>that</i> (namely NP + <i>to</i> + NP + <i>that</i>) NP + <i>prep</i> + V- <i>ing</i>
	Found with the statal passive	zero complement NP <i>prep</i> + V- <i>ing</i> (namely <i>for</i> + V- <i>ing</i> and <i>to</i> + V- <i>ing</i>) <i>to</i> -inf

Table 16. Complementation patterns of *pledge not* contained within the works of reference, yet uncovered during our study.

It should be noted that if we see the ‘new’ statal passive complementation patterns as such then we essentially build on the assumption that the works of reference also treat statal passives separately – that is not analysed together with the dynamic passive and active sentences. This may, however, not be the case as there may be many scholars (possibly among the authors and editors whose works were consulted for this study) who do not agree with the approach which I have taken – feeling instead that the statal passive sentences should have been equated to active sentences. If this approach is taken (and statal passives are equated to active sentences) then all of the statal passive complementation patterns *are* accounted for in the theory – except for the *prep* + V-*ing* pattern (which would be NP + *prep* + V-*ing* when equated to an active sentence). It follows that if such an approach were taken we would only have seven ‘new’ complementation patterns – although this is still quite an impressive number.

In addition to the completely new complementation patterns, we also saw examples of NP + *prep* + NP that were not listed in our works of reference. These are shown in table 17:

<p>NP + <i>prep</i> + NP complementation patterns not listed in our references</p>	<p>NP + <i>on</i> + NP NP + <i>towards</i> + NP NP + <i>upon</i> + NP</p>
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Table 17. NP + prep + NP patterns encountered with *pledge* during our study – yet not contained within the works of reference.

As has already been noted, NP + *on* + NP would appear to be very close in meaning to NP + *upon* + NP. The NP + *towards* + NP construction would appear extremely close to NP + *to* + NP in contexts when some type of money or aid/investment has been promised.

In addition to considering complementation patterns that were not recorded (see table 15), it should also be noted that there is no evidence to suggest that *pledge* can be followed by a gerund. This, of course, supports Culicover and Jackendoff's claim that such a complementation pattern is not possible. Having said this, however, it should of course be remembered that the absence of a pattern (or word) from a corpora does not mean that it does not exist. This is particular true in the case of relatively small corpora like CLMETEV²⁵.

If we now think about the trends observed concerning individual complementation patterns over this period then we see that there are only nine trends that would appear to be 'hard and fast'. These are:

(1) The decreasing popularity of the NP + *prep* + NP pattern with *pledge* – almost half of the tokens in the our data from 1710-1780 were of this type, but only just over a tenth of the tokens from our sections of the BNC correspond to this pattern.

(2) NP + *to* + NP is overwhelmingly the most popular type of NP + *prep* + NP complement throughout our dynamic passive/active diachronic data. Indeed, over the four sections of our study we see that 41%, 69%, 91% and 91% of the NP + *prep* + NP tokens

²⁵ If, for example, a word or complementation pattern, for example, occurs just once every 2.1 million words, the likelihood that it will be contained within a corpus of one million words is less than 50%.

are of the type NP + *to* + NP. The closely-related *to* + NP pattern is also overwhelmingly the pattern of choice in *prep* + NP patterns amidst the statal passives – although it was not found in CLMETEV 1. It is, however, worth noting that at most (in CLMETEV 3), only 39%²⁶ of the total number of tokens correspond to this pattern. This would suggest that Hunston’s suggestion that *pledge* is an example of a “V n to n” verb (see section 4.3.1) is at best an oversimplification

(3) The NP + *upon* + NP and NP + *in* + NP complementation patterns would appear to have died away (their popularity reduced as a proportion of recorded tokens in the period from 1710-1780 and these two patterns were not found in our data after 1787 and 1826 respectively). While the NP + *for* + NP pattern still exists, we see that it made up a progressively smaller share of the total dynamic passive/active tokens in each successive section of our study. In stark contrast to these three patterns, the NP + *towards* + NP pattern was not found in any tokens before the BNC – i.e. it would seem to have emerged quite recently.

(4) The NP + *that* pattern made up a smaller and smaller proportion of the tokens over the three parts of the CLMETEV before seemingly becoming “extinct”. The fact that this pattern is not found in the BNC is particularly interesting given that it was the second most frequent pattern in our data from 1710-1780 – with over a quarter of the tokens from CLMETEV 1 being of this type.

(5) We also see that *prep* + NP + *that* (namely *to* + NP + *that*), *that* clause and *to*-inf complements are only found in our most recent data – with no tokens of these in any section of the CLMETEV. The fact that the *to*-inf pattern would seem to have appeared so recently is extraordinary given that it has become so popular – making up almost a third of all our tokens from the sections of the BNC data studied here. When we examine the

²⁶ This statistic includes the NP + *to* + NP pattern with the dynamic passive/active and *to* + NP with the statal passive. It has been exceptionally combined here, given that Hunston – in her analysis – may have equated the statal passive to the active.

normalised frequencies of the two lattermost complementation patterns in more detail we see that *to*-inf clauses are almost three times more common than *that* clauses in the BNC data. This suggests that *pledge* could well be one of the suasive verbs that Quirk et al claim can take both complements, yet prefer the *to*-inf (see section 4.2).

As we focus upon the growth in popularity of *to*-inf and *that* clauses in the BNC data, it is interesting to return and consider the popularity of NP + *to*-inf and NP + *that* clauses in our historical data and namely their popularity with reflexive meaning (particularly in accordance with *OED* sense 3b). Is it, for example, possible that the NP object (in accordance with sense 3b a ‘deposit’ or ‘stake’ to show that you will do something) is omitted in more contemporary English? While it is hard to be too confident in our hypothesis, it is surely possible that this is the case and would, for example, explain the reduction in frequency of NP + *to*-inf and NP + *that* clauses from the CLMETEV era to the BNC and the relative popularity that *to*-inf and *that* clauses enjoy in the more recent data.

Finally, while considering *to*-inf clauses it is worth noting at this point that our data does not provide us with any evidence to support Rohdenburg’s claims that finite clauses seem to be displacing the *to*-inf form given that both of these complementation patterns were only observed in BNC data (therefore not allowing any diachronic consideration as to tendencies observed in their usage).

It was also interesting to note that *that* clause complements appeared in our data after the NP + *that* structure ceased to occur. It would be interesting to undertake further research to see whether this tendency is true throughout the language (and not just in written English and the text types examined here), and how closely related these complements are.

(6) In addition to the way in which the above patterns either grow or reduce in popularity, we also see that NP complements are found throughout our diachronic data. Despite fluctuations in this pattern's "popularity" (it corresponds to an ever-decreasing amount of tokens in the CLMETEV before "regaining favour" in our BNC data) about 15-30% of our tokens in each of our four diachronic sections are examples of an NP complement.

(7) Similarly we see that the share of the tokens which correspond to the statal passive remains relatively constant throughout the four sections of our study – with about 10-15% of the uses of the examples of *pledge* being statal in nature.

(8) The NP complement with the statal passive only occurs in CLMETEV 3. Of the three remaining patterns (zero, *prep* + NP and *to*-inf complements), *prep* + NP and *to*-inf occur do not appear in CLMETEV 1, with the first tokens of these dating from 1783 and 1822 respectively.

(9) It is also important to remember that there are a number of patterns which occurred in one or two non-successive parts of the corpus – i.e. the degree of their usage would appear to fluctuate. Such patterns include NP + NP, NP + NP + *as*, NP + NP + *prep* + NP (namely NP + NP + *to* + NP) patterns with dynamic passive and active tokens as well as NP complements with the statal passive. It would be interesting to conduct further research as to the "health" of these patterns and as to whether larger corpora would reveal their present use.

There are three final points raised in the theory section that I would like to briefly discuss here. The first point is that I was unable to find any examples of the (near-) adjacency of identical grammatical structures – a fact that would appear to support the *horror aequi* principle (see section 3.2.3). Secondly, the issue of control with *pledge* was raised by Culicover and Jackendoff (see section 4.3.2) and our data did not contain any

examples of anything other than subject control – confirming the work of the aforementioned scholars who appear to suggest that *pledge* is a very good example of subject control. Finally we did indeed find examples of *pledge* in reported speech parentheticals – but only in the BNC (see section 6.2).

* * *

To close, I would like to say that I hope that I have succeeded in shedding light on this humble, yet important verb, and earnestly believe that my work can and will be of use - not only to future learners of English, but also (given that I have learnt a lot) to native speakers. My research clearly suggests that there are many complementation patterns of *pledge* which have been overlooked in the existing literature, and we are once more reminded as to the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the English language.

I have already mentioned that I have shed light on one verb, but, as I stated in the introduction, verbs are interrelated. As such it would be interesting, for example, to continue the line of research that I have been pursuing on these pages by comparing the complementation patterns of *pledge* with other closely related verbs – such as those listed by Hunston (see section 4.3.1).

In addition, I hope there are plenty of opportunities left to examine this verb – and the clear imperfections in our corpora mean that this verb deserves more research. It would be interesting, for example, to see whether the complementation pattern presented in our references, but not present in our data was actually possible (is it, for example, only used in the spoken language or non-prose/journalistic texts?) While one may have to wait for new corpora to be compiled (or start compiling new corpora oneself?!) it would be fascinating to both observe more historical data containing tokens of *pledge*, and also be able to examine more tokens of *pledge* from other texts containing what the BNC terms ‘*(imaginative) prose*’.

Another interesting angle for future research could include conducting a study into the complementation patterns of *pledge* in other “Englishes”. Such research would not only be able to shed light on forms such as American, Australian and Indian English, but comparing the complementation patterns observed in these types and the British English looked at here would also be of great interest to researchers, learners and native-speakers of English alike²⁷.

Finally, there is of course room for further research into the semantic qualities of the complements of *pledge*, given the way that this study has concentrated on the syntactic qualities of its complements. Such research would provide another dimension to the brief and incomplete analysis of the changes in complementation patterns of the verb *pledge*, (1710-1993) which I sought to undertake above.

²⁷ Complementation patterns in American English would be of particular interest given that this variety of English is home to the most famous use of (and therein complementation pattern) of *pledge*, namely the NP + *prep* + NP structure heard in “I *pledge* allegiance to the flag...”. While it would be hard to prove, the almost daily utterance of this phrase by Americans during their school years may well have significantly influenced (and be *significantly influencing*) the complementation patterns observed with *pledge*, as well as the very “popularity” of *pledge* as a verb in US English.

References

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