

The Verb *Decide* and its Complementation in Recent Centuries

Riikka Gummerus
University of Tampere
School of Language, Translation and Literary Studies
English Philology
Pro Gradu Thesis
Spring 2011

Tampereen yliopisto
Englantilainen filologia
Kieli-, käännös- ja kirjallisuustieteiden yksikkö

GUMMERUS, RIIKKA: The Verb *Decide* and its Complementation in Recent Centuries

Pro gradu -tutkielma, 61 sivua
Kevät 2011

Tässä korpuspohjaisessa pro gradu -tutkielmassa tarkastellaan verbiä *decide* ja erityisesti sen komplementaatiota. Komplementaation tutkimuksessa keskeistä on valinnan käsite, sillä jokainen verbi valitsee tietynlaisia komplementteja ja poissulkee muut. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on selvittää, millaiset komplementit ovat mahdollisia verbin *decide* yhteydessä, ja millaisia muutoksia niissä on tapahtunut. Tutkimuksen empiirisen osan aineisto on haettu kahdesta eri korpukselta. Corpus of Late Modern English Texts sisältää tekstejä vuosilta 1710-1920 kolmeen kronologiseen osaan jaettuna. Nykypäivän englantia edustaa puolestaan laaja British National Corpus.

Ensin tarkastelen korpusten luonnetta ja käyttöä kielentutkimuksessa sekä esittelen yksityiskohtaisesti tutkimuksessa käytetyt korpuksat. Seuraavaksi tutustun verbiin *decide* aiemmin tehtyyn tutkimukseen *Oxford English Dictionary*:ssa, kieltenopiskelijoille suunnatuissa sanakirjoissa sekä tärkeimmässä englannin kielioppiteoksissa. Sitten esittelen valenssiteoriaa, tapoja määrittää komplementteja ja eri komplementtien semantiikkaa. Tuon esiin myös aiemmissa tutkimuksissa ehdotettuja komplementtien muutossuuntauksia ja komplementtien kehitykseen vaikuttavia tekijöitä.

Tutkimuksen empiirisessä osassa analysoin jokaisen korpuksen ensin erikseen ja vertailen niitä. Korpusten analyysissä todetaan verbin *decide* yleistyneen koko ajan sekä esiintyvän lähes aina merkityksessä 'valita, tehdä päätös tai ratkaista' ja vain harvoin merkityksessä 'vaikuttaa ratkaisevasti'. Aineistosta löytyi 18 erilaista komplementtia jotka ovat mahdollisia verbin *decide* kanssa. Komplementaatiossa oli havaittavissa huomattava muutos: aineiston ensimmäisessä osassa nominaalikomplementit olivat yleisimpiä mutta nykypäivän englannissa lausekomplementit olivat hallitseva ryhmä. Yleisimmät lausekomplementit olivat *that*-lauseet ja *to*-infinitiivit. Niillä oli joitain semanttisia eroavaisuuksia mutta verbin *decide* kohdalla täysin selkeää eroa näiden kahden välille on mahdoton määrittellä. Nominaalikomplementeista yleisin on nominaalilauseke.

Asiasanat: kielen muutos, komplementaatio, korpus, korpuslingvistiikka, valenssiteoria, verbi

Table of contents

1 Introduction	5
2 Corpora	8
2.1 Definition	8
2.2 Traditional and corpus linguistics	9
2.3 Studying change in corpora	10
2.4 Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (Extended Version)	11
2.5 The British National Corpus (BNC)	14
2.6 Calculating frequencies	15
3 Decide in the literature	16
3.1 Etymology	16
3.2 <i>The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)</i>	16
3.3 Learner's dictionaries and simplified senses	17
3.4 Grammars	19
4 Complementation	21
4.1 Valency theory	21
4.2 Complements versus adjuncts	22
4.3 General meanings of complements	23
4.4 Factors affecting complementation	24
4.4.1 The Great Complement Shift	24
4.4.2 Infinitivitis	25
4.4.3 Horror aequi	25
4.4.4 Bolinger's generalization	26
4.4.5 Cognitive complexity	26
5 Decide in the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts part 1.....	28
5.1 The 'choose' sense	29
5.1.1 Nonsentential complements	30
5.1.2 Sentential complements	32
5.1.3 Extrasemantic factors	33
5.2 The 'affect crucially' sense	34

6 <i>Decide</i> in the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts part 2	35
6.1 The 'choose' sense	36
6.1.1 Nonsentential complements	38
6.1.2 Sentential complements	39
6.1.3 Extrasemantic factors	41
6.2 The 'affect crucially' sense	41
7 <i>Decide</i> in the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts part 3	43
7.1 The 'choose' sense	44
7.1.1 Nonsentential complements	45
7.1.2 Sentential complements	47
7.1.3 Extrasemantic factors	48
7.2 The 'affect crucially' sense	49
8 <i>Decide</i> in the British National Corpus	50
8.1 The 'choose' sense	50
8.1.1 Nonsentential complements	52
8.1.2 Sentential complements	53
8.1.3 Extrasemantic factors	54
8.2 The 'affect crucially' sense	55
9 Conclusion.....	56
References.....	59

1 Introduction

In this thesis I will examine the verb *decide* in Late Modern English and Present Day English, focusing on its complements. A complement is a phrasal constituent selected by a head, in this case the matrix verb *decide*. Consider the following sentences from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, illustrating some of the complements selected by *decide*:

1. His father..had *decided* that he should be brought up to the medical profession. (1852 T. D. Hardy)
2. I have fully *decided* upon this course. (1887 C. J. Abbey)
3. Butler soon after this *decided* against Nonconformity. (1887 C. J. Abbey)

My aim is to discover which complementation patterns are possible and frequent with *decide*, and what kind of semantic differences exist between them. I will analyse authentic corpus data and compare the results to the existing literature on the subject. I am also interested in any changes I can detect in the frequencies of different complements, and how they correspond with the general language change trends presented in the previous literature.

As my historical corpus data I will use the extended version of The Corpus of Late Modern English texts which covers the years 1710-1920. It is divided into three subcorpora of 70 years each, and I will analyse each part separately. This time period is of special interest because it has been noted for example by De Smet (2005, 69) that “the Late Modern English period is the most neglected period in the history of the English language”. As for the authentic Present Day English data I will make use of The British National Corpus, compiled in the 1990s.

The study of complementation is an active field within English studies with recent and upcoming publications. According to Mair (2006. 34), systematic analysis of corpora not only adds to our factual knowledge of the history of English, but "will also contribute to the development of usage- and utterance-based models of linguistic change in theoretical and general linguistics." Change can be tracked and interesting results achieved even by means of

studying just one word, because "grammatical change manifests itself largely in the increased frequency of some variants over others. . . and in differences in the grammatical treatment of individual words" (Greenbaum 1986, 6).

Another reason for why I find complementation and corpora interesting and important is teaching and studying English as a foreign language. Corpora can be used to determine the most frequent words of a language, their typical collocations and central complementation patterns, which can further be used to formulate teaching plans. But more specifically, both accuracy and fluency can be improved by learners internalizing recurrent complementation patterns that can be used to turn words into phrases (Kennedy 1998, 289, Hunston 2002, 167, 174). Complementation is a challenge for language students on all levels, and Hunston (2002, 173) goes as far as to argue that in fact, for very advanced learners, complements are "perhaps the greatest source of a sense of non-idiomaticity in English." Therefore grammar and lexis cannot be treated as distinct phenomena and words need to be taught and learned in context because words without complementation patterns cannot be productively used to form new utterances. I hope that in addition to new detailed information on *decide*, my thesis contributes to understanding the phenomenon of complementation and its regularities.

In the coming chapters I will first discuss corpora and corpus linguistics in general, and introduce the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts and the British National Corpus in more detail. Next I will take a look at *decide* in the literature: in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, two advanced learner's dictionaries and several major grammars of English. I will discuss different theories on complementation, the nature of complements and several factors affecting the choice of complements in general.

In the empirical part of the thesis, I will analyse *decide* in each part of the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts and in the British National Corpus. I will examine the different

senses and the various sentential and non-sentential complementation patterns it selects. Finally I will compare the results from each part of corpus data with each other and the existing literature listed in earlier chapters.

2 Corpora

2.1 Definition

Kennedy (1998, 2) was certainly right in observing that "even the very notion of what constitutes a valid corpus can still be controversial." He for example claims that corpora "can even be made up of collections of citations" (1998, 3) whereas Sinclair (2005) explicitly argues that "a collection of citations is not a corpus."

Apart from details like this, the general definitions of corpora by different linguists are not that far apart. Kennedy himself defines a corpus as "a body of written text or transcribed speech which can serve as a basis for linguistic analysis or description" (1998, 2). Bauer (2002, 99) starts from Kennedy's definition and expands it to include public availability as an important factor. In his opinion an ideal corpus would be :

a body of data which can serve as the basis for linguistic analysis and description and which is available to linguists in general either as an identifiable whole or from easily accessible materials."

He argues that the main benefits of public corpora are replicability, and the fact that their representativeness can be openly questioned and tested (2002, 102; 111). At its best, a public corpus is "a large and readily-available body of agreed-upon data against which hypotheses can be tested" (Bauer 2002, 111).

Sinclair (2005) suggests that to be a corpus, the texts must be selected for the study of language and not some other purpose:

A corpus is a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form, selected according to external criteria to represent, as far as possible, a language or language variety as a source of data for linguistic research.

The results of a corpus analysis can only be generalized if the corpus used is representative of the language under study (Ball 1994, 295). However, no corpus, no matter

how large or well designed, can have exactly the same characteristics as the language itself, because natural language has no limits when it comes to vocabulary or grammatical structures and therefore sentences. In addition, it evolves constantly. Leech (1968, 94) characterises corpora as containing “only an inconsiderable subset of the set of possible sentences of a language”.

Sinclair (2005) acknowledges this problem, but also finds it irrelevant and suggests that linguists should not be overburdened by it.

"Fine. So we sample, like all the other scholars who study unlimitable phenomena. We remain, as they do, aware that the corpus may not capture all the patterns of the language, nor represent them in precisely the correct proportions. In fact there are no such things as "correct proportions" of components of an unlimited population."

2.2 Traditional and corpus linguistics

In traditional linguistics “the empirical basis for linguistic description has tended to be introspective judgements about the legitimacy of example sentences as evidence for the existence of putative rules or processes in a language” (Kennedy 1998, 270). There are various problems with this kind of evidence. For example it is not easy to introspect in a way that is useful for linguistic analysis, and the study is likely to be influenced by the linguists own hypotheses and beliefs, be subjective and generally unreliable (Leech 1968, 87; 90-91). In corpus linguistics, by contrast, evidence is derived directly from texts, and theories are formulated from the data and not vice versa.

Moreover, the focus of linguistic analysis has been on competence, a speaker's idealized knowledge of language, whereas corpus linguistics is interested in the actual use of that competence in producing or interpreting language. However, Leech (1968, 94) argues that this distinction between competence and performance is not only an issue in linguistics, but that it is an example of the contrast between “theoretical terms” and “observational terms”

found in all scientific theories. Thus studying competence through observation of performance is a typical pattern of scientific research.

In traditional linguistics, the appropriateness or likelihood of the example sentences is not of interest. However, corpus studies show that the normal use of language includes “considerable use of recurrent prefabricated constructions” (Kennedy 1998, 270). Thus corpus linguistics is not only concerned with what is possible in a language but also with what is probable or likely to occur in use.

Studies of possibility and probability, or competence and performance, are not, however, mutually exclusive, as Kennedy (1998, 270) explains:

It is thus perfectly legitimate to describe language both in terms of the system we use and our use of this system, and for the description thus to encompass language as possibility as well as probability of use. Moreover, when language is described in terms of probability of occurrence, it is not a denial of our ability to create or understand unique utterances.

Lastly, studies using corpora do not form a new or separate branch of linguistics, but perhaps a new research domain or new methodology (Kennedy 1998, 268). Corpus linguistics is not an automated process of language description, but a tool to answer questions. Corpora are not new, and corpus linguistics did not begin with computers, even though new technologies have clearly made corpora larger, easier to search, more easily available and therefore more popular (Bauer 2002, 111 and Kennedy 1998, 2).

2.3 Studying change in corpora

When studying language change, it can be done from the point of view of competence or performance. According to Mair (2006, 12-13) the competence approach is more theory-dependent and needs a longer timeframe, while studying performance is more common in English linguistics. Mair characterizes the performance approach as "empirical/inductive or utterance-based" (2006, 13).

Mair (2002, 108) concludes that change in performance, in utterances, texts and discourse, shows itself "indirectly – in shifting statistical distributions of constructional variants." The study of grammatical change in progress is therefore not only interested in the first and last occurrences of certain constructions, but their gradual spread and decline (Mair 2002, 109). De Smet (2005, 69) agrees that "it has become increasingly clear that historical change can often be tracked over relatively short time spans in the form of shifting frequencies of use."

Mair finds the use of matching corpora representing "the state of "the language". . . at different times" and their exhaustive analysis the best tools for this kind of study (2002, 109 and 2006, 22) and considers students of English "fortunate" because of the rich and large corpora available, which make it possible to study new and old forms with more delicacy than with most other languages (2006, 34).

Bauer considers discovering change from corpora "relatively straightforward (2002, 105) in that "corpora can be used to make sure our descriptive facts are correct, and to improve the quality of grammatical descriptions and lexicological descriptions. . . As long as care is taken, this descriptive basis can be extended fairly readily to a consideration of variation and change" (Bauer 2002, 110).

Mair (2006, 23) notes that using parallel or matching corpora is "not so much an entirely new method as a widening of the scope of an existing one" with the help of computers. It has a long history in English linguistics - for example different translations of the Bible into English have been used by traditional philologists long before electronic corpora (Mair 2006, 23 and Bauer 2002, 97).

2.4 Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (Extended Version)

The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (CLMET) was compiled by Hendrik de Smet in an

"attempt to open up the rich resources of the Internet to historical linguistic research" (De Smet 2005, 70). The corpus is made up of data available on the Internet via *Project Gutenberg* and the *Oxford Text Archive*. For this study I am using the extended version (CLMETEV) which also has texts from the *Victorian Women Writers project* in order to balance the inevitable gender bias in the texts available from the Late Modern English period.

All the texts are written by native British English speakers. The goal has been to ensure variation with texts from different genres by authors coming from different social backgrounds. Personal letters, literary fiction and scientific writing are included, and the texts are written by both men and women of varying social class. However, the data available is mostly literary and formal, written by men belonging to the upper classes of their society. For obvious reasons, there is no spoken data available (as opposed to the BNC which has 10% spoken texts, see 2.5). Thus the corpus inevitably biased. This bias has been deliberately counteracted by choosing non-literary texts and texts from lower registers whenever available.

This sociolinguistic bias has obvious disadvantages but De Smet (2005, 78-79) does not see them as a problem as long as sociolinguistic analysis is not the main purpose of research, which it is not in this case. What he notes might be more of a problem (De Smet 2005, 79) is the bias in genre and register, i.e. the data consisting mostly of formal writing. This type of texts can be resistant to change and old forms are often preserved the longest in them. However, this is again mostly inevitable because there is for example obviously no spoken data available for the Late Modern English period.

The Corpus of Late Modern English texts is divided into three subcorpora of 70 years each, i.e. 1710-1780, 1780-1850 and 1850-1920. In addition to the texts having been published during a certain period, the authors included in each subpart are also born within a correspondingly restricted period of time (see Figure 1). No author can be included in two subparts. The aim of this is to "increase the homogeneity within each sub-period – and

accordingly, to decrease the homogeneity between sub-periods. Historical trends should, as a result, appear somewhat more clearly" (De Smet 2005, 70).

A corpus of Late Modern English texts

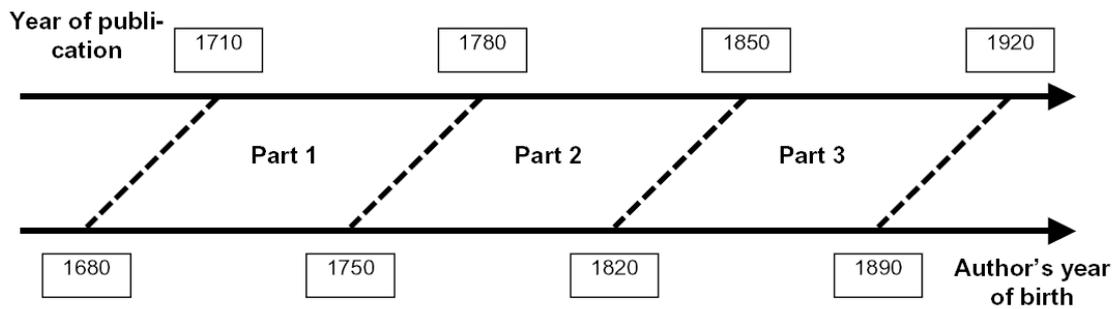


Figure 1: Corpus sub-periods

Figure 1: CLMETEV subcorpora structure (De Smet 2005, 71)

For a historical corpus, the CLMETEV is fairly large – the extended version consists of almost 15 million words, the last subpart being the largest one (see Table 1). Every author's input is restricted to 200,000 words maximum in order to minimise the impact of the idiosyncrasies of individual authors.

The CLMETEV is certainly large enough for the purposes of this study, as *decide* is not a particularly rare verb. De Smet himself (2005, 78) finds it large enough "for the study of relatively infrequent syntactic patterns, or borderline phenomena between grammar and the lexicon, such as lexico-grammatical patterning. . . all of which are of interest in current linguistic theory."

Sub-period	Number of authors	Number of texts	Number of words
1710-1780	23	32	3,037,607
1780-1850	46	64	5,723,988
1850-1920	51	80	6,251,564
TOTAL	120	176	14,970,622

Table 1: CLMETEV subcorpora in numbers

I will use the CLMETV for the diachronic part of my study of *decide*. I will study each subpart separately, and then compare them.

2.5 The British National Corpus (BNC)

For the synchronic part of my study I will use the British National Corpus (BNC). It was designed with academic linguistic research as one of the planned uses, aiming to represent both spoken and written British English of the late 20th century (Burnard 2000).

The BNC consists of around 100 million words. Approximately 10 per cent of the data comes from transcribed speech, and the remaining 90 per cent from written texts. The maximum size of a sample is 45,000 words. The texts come from a wide range of sources (Burnard 2000; Kennedy 1998:50). The BNC is meant to be a general corpus, not restricted to any particular topic or genre.

The earliest imaginative texts are from 1960 and the first informative ones from 1975. The building of the corpus was started in 1991, and finished in 1994. No new texts have been added to the corpus since.

Kennedy (1998, 50) claims that "because the *BNC* has a principled structure for the collection of spoken and written text and is finite in size, it is likely to be a major point of reference for British English."

As such the BNC is not directly comparable to the CLMETEV, but the BNC is divided

into subparts according to domain. The part that best corresponds to the CLMETEV, which mostly contains literary texts, is the imaginative domain, which consists of text that are "fictional, or which are generally perceived to be literary or creative" (Burnard 2000). This subpart has roughly 16.5 million words and is therefore definitely large enough to be studied separately.

2.6 Calculating frequencies

Because the corpora and subcorpora used for this study are significantly different in size, relative or normalized frequencies will be used to compare the results. Biber et al (1998: 263) define normalization as

a way to adjust raw frequency counts from texts of different lengths so that they can be compared accurately. . . . the raw frequency count should be divided by the number of words in the text, and then multiplied by whatever basis is chosen for norming.

In this study normalized frequencies will be calculated per one million words, which is common in studies of English.

However, Ball (1994, 297-299) argues that a more useful way to calculate the frequency of syntactic phenomena would be in terms of number of tokens per independent clause because it is the minimal opportunity for a speaker or writer to choose a certain construction. But he admits that there is no easy and reliable way of calculating the number of clauses in a large corpus without manually going through it, so number of tokens per *N* words must be used as the basis for describing frequency (Ball 1994, 297).

3 *Decide* in the literature

3.1 Etymology

The verb *decide* comes to English via French *décider* 'to decide' from Latin *decidere* 'to cut off, to decide', which in turn originates from Latin *caedere* 'to cut' (Weekley 1967, 421; *Oxford English Dictionary*).

3.2 The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED)

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) lists four current, very similar senses for *decide*, with a number of different complementation patterns. Some of the quotations I've selected from the OED to illustrate the senses are quite old, even considering the historical corpus data. However, this was inevitable as the newest quotation in the OED is from 1887.

The first sense is 'to determine by giving the victory to one side or the other; to bring to a settlement, settle, resolve', and the examples include the complementation patterns *between* + NP (1), *wh*- clause (2) and a noun phrase (NP) (3):

- 1 Bifore þis cause were *descided* bytwene wyse men. (1380 Wyclif)
- 2 Till it be..*decided* who have stood for truth. (1594 Hooker)
- 3 Advocates plead causes, judges *decide* them. (1677 Barrow)

The second sense, 'to bring to a decision or resolve', has a noun phrase complement:

- 4 This 'Tasso' came in good time to *decide* me in a matter upon which I was hesitating. (1836 Southey)

The third sense, 'to settle a question in dispute, to pronounce a final judgement' is said to occur with *between* + NP (5), *in favour of* + NP, *against* + NP and *that*-clause (6), and the examples also have the patterns \emptyset (zero complement) (7), *on* + NP (8) and *for* + NP (9). I interpreted *for* to mean 'on behalf of' in this context.

- 5 Let heaven *decide* Between me and my foes. (1749 Smollett)
 6 His father..had *decided* that he should be brought up to the medical profession. (1852 T. D. Hardy)
 7 Who shall *decide*, when Doctors disagree? (1732 Pope)
 8 To judge and to *decide* on the authority of historical monuments. (1794 Sullivan)
 9 Moments when our passions speak and *decide* for us. (1863 Geo. Eliot)

For the fourth sense, 'to come to a conclusion, make up one's mind; determine, resolve', the *OED* lists *to*-infinitives (10), *on* + *-ing* (11), *upon* + NP (12) and *against* + NP (13):

- 10 An English monarch now *decided* to reign without a Parliament. (1830 D'Israeli)
 11 Have you *decided* on going? (1887 C. J. Abbey)
 12 I have fully *decided* upon this course. (1887 C. J. Abbey)
 13 Butler soon after this *decided* against Nonconformity. (1887 C. J. Abbey)

The Oxford English dictionary also lists two obsolete senses for *decide*. The fifth sense, 'to cut off, separate' is marked obsolete and rare, but has one example from 1579 with the complement NP + *from* + NP:

- 14 Again, our seat denies us traffick here, The sea too near decides us from the rest. (1579 in Fuller *Holy & Prof. St.*)

There is also a second entry for *decide* in the *OED*, meaning 'to fall off'. However, it is marked both obsolete and rare, with only one example from 1657. It is intransitive and does not take complements:

- 15 The flowers of Hellebore in whose middle when they are ready to *decide*, grow short husks. (1657 Tomlinson)

The data I will analyse for this thesis starts from the year 1710. Even though both of these quotes are older, the senses might still be found in the historical data, most likely in the first subcorpus of CLMETEV.

3.3 Learner's dictionaries and simplified senses

I also looked up the verb *decide* in two corpus-based learner's dictionaries: *The Cambridge*

Advanced Learner's Dictionary and *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, which gave two and four senses for *decide* respectively:

Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary

1. to choose something, especially after thinking carefully about several possibilities
2. to be the reason or situation that makes a particular result happen

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English

1. to think carefully about the different possibilities that are available and choose one of them:
2. to make an official or legal judgement
3. to affect the result of something
4. to be the reason why somebody does something

Based on the *Oxford English Dictionary* and these learner's dictionaries I suggest two simplified senses for the verb *decide* in Present Day English: 'choose' and 'affect crucially':

1 'choose'

OED senses 1, 3 and 4

Cambridge sense 1

Oxford senses 1 and 2

to choose from a number of possibilities, to make a decision, to settle a question

In the end, we decided to go to the theatre. (Cambridge)

She decided that she wanted to live in France. (Oxford)

2 'affect crucially'

OED sense 2

Cambridge sense 2

Oxford senses 3 and 4

to crucially affect the outcome of something, to be the reason for something

Tim's mistake decided the game. (Cambridge)

They offered me free accommodation for a year, and that decided me. (Oxford)

I will analyse these senses separately in my corpus data.

3.4 Grammars

Biber et al claim that *decide* takes *that*-clauses (1999: 663), *wh*-clauses (686), *whether*-clauses (692) and *to*-clauses (693), and that *ing*-clauses are not possible (755). Poutsma's *Grammar of Late Modern English* mentions preposition + *-ing* patterns (example 16) and *to*-infinitives (example 17), the latter being more common (1904: 664):

- 16 Robert *decided* upon going by this train.
 17 He *decides* to tell her the rest later in the evening.

Huddleston and Pullum discuss *on* + NP (2002: 660) (18), *that*-clauses (958), *wh*-clauses (976) and *to*-infinitives (1226):

- 18 We can't *decide* on a colour.

Quirk et al have a slightly different approach. They treat *decide* as a prepositional verb, *decide on*, taking noun phrases and *-ing*-clauses (ie. *on* + NP and *on* + *-ing*) (1985, 1188). But “the preposition that normally cooccurs with certain verbs and adjectives is omitted before a *that*-clause or infinitive clause” (1985, 659):

- 19 We've *decided* to move to a new house.

For *wh*-clauses (1184) *on* is optional:

- 20 They haven't yet *decided* (on) which flight they will take.

Quirk et al (1985, 1022, 1181) also list *decide* as a verb that can be used in reporting clauses for introducing direct speech.

Furthermore, *decide* can select *that*-clauses either with putative *should* or the mandative subjunctive (Quirk et al 1985, 1182):

- 20 People are demanding that she *should leave* the company. (putative
 should)
 21 People are demanding that she *leave* the company. (subjunctive)

Putative *should* is used in *that*-clauses when the main clause contain verbs that "express a necessity, plan or intention for the future ... to convey the notion of a 'putative' situation,

which is recognized as possibly existing or coming into existence" (Quirk et al 1985, 1014). In other words, "to represent something as an idea rather than as a fact" (Leech & Svartvik 2002, 149).

Subjunctives are used in similar situations. A subjunctive is a "clause that is finite but tenseless, containing the plain form of the verb" (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 993). However, the subjunctive is often identical with the present tense as it contains the plain form of the verb, except in the third person singular (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 994). The only exception is the verb *be*, where the subjunctive form *be* is distinct from the indicative forms *am*, *is* and *are* (Quirk et al 1985, 155):

- 22 It's vital that he *keep* them informed. (subjunctive)
- 23 It's vital that he *keeps* them informed. (non-subjunctive)
- 24 It's vital that we *keep* them informed. (indeterminate)

The putative *should* is more commonly used in British English while the subjunctive is typical of American English (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 995, Leech & Svartvik 2002, 396).

4 Complementation

4.1 Valency theory

There are several slightly different theories describing complementation and for this thesis I have chosen to follow valency theory. Valency theory is a model of language that was originally invented by the French linguist Tesnière and further developed in many European countries, strongly influenced by the demands of foreign language teaching (Herbst et al 2004, xxiii). It has become the most popular in Germany where it is considered the classical approach to language description (Somers 1984, 507).

According to Herbst et al (2004, xxiv), the basic assumption of valency theory is 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." These elements are called complements, and the number of complements a verb selects constitutes its valency. Because the valency of a verb is the main factor in creating the structure of a sentence, the verb becomes the highest element of the sentence and the complements are dependent on it (Herbst et al 2004, xxiv).

Other elements can naturally also occur in sentences, but the ones that are not selected by the verb are called adjuncts in valency theory (Herbst et al 2004, xxiv). The distinction between complements and adjuncts is essential to valency theory. The basic difference is that complements are selected by the matrix verb while adjuncts are not, and therefore they can occur more freely. The adjunct or complement status is not, however, an inherent feature of an element, but it only exists in relation to a particular verb (Somers 1984, 508).

4.2 Complements versus adjuncts

The occurrence, form and number of complements always depends on the matrix verb of a sentence, whereas adjuncts are not syntactically restricted (Huddleston 1984, 178-179). Complements are subject to more grammatical rules, whereas the number, combination and form of adjuncts is controlled more by semantic and stylistic factors (Huddleston 1984, 179).

Adjuncts are always omissible, and discarding an adjunct will not result in ungrammaticality, whereas complements may be obligatory:

- 1a My uncle was using an electric drill at that very moment.
- 1b My uncle was using an electric drill. (adjunct omitted)
- 1c *My uncle was using at that very moment. (complement omitted)

If dropping an element leads to ungrammaticality or a radical change in the meaning of the verb, the dropped element can be considered a complement. Note how the meaning of *drive* changes in this example:

- 2a He drives the minister mad.
- 2b He drives the minister.

Just testing whether an element can be omitted or not is not enough to determine if it is a complement or an adjunct, but the influence of the matrix verb has to be taken into consideration as well. Here *a novel* is a complement even though it can be left out:

- 3a She was reading a novel.
- 3b She was reading.

Somers (1987, 17-18) suggests an ultimate test for distinguishing complements from adjuncts, which he calls the 'do so' test. As the phrase *do so* is a proform for a verb phrase and complements are a part of a verb phrase, they can be replaced by *do so* and can not exist alongside it. The minimum element that can be substituted is the verb and its complements (Somers 1987, 18). Adjuncts, on the other hand, can exist alongside the proform *do so*:

- 4a John took a trip *last Tuesday*, and I'm going to do so *tomorrow*. (adjunct)
- 4b *John took a trip *to London*, and I'm going to do so *to York*. (complement)

However there is no absolute line between complements and adjuncts - some cases are more prototypical than others (Huddleston 1984, 180).

4.3 General meanings of complements

Different types of complements can also have meanings associated with them independent of whatever matrix verb they are selected by in a sentence. Allerton (1988, 21) suggests that infinitives describe infrequent (as opposed to regular) or intermittent (as opposed to continuous) activity and imply a specific time and place, whereas Dirven (1989, 116) notes that they denote "a single occurrence of an event or a state or a series of such single occasions." Duffley (2000, 224,233-234) proposes that *to*-infinitives involve "subsequent potentiality" in that the action of the complement clause comes after that of the matrix verb, but is left unrealized so far.

In contrast to the events expressed by *to*- infinitives, *that*-clauses are more mental in nature, for example describing propositions or facts (Dirven 1989, 118). Quirk et al (1972, 660) agree:

That complement clauses ... are commonly used to report the speech, thoughts, attitudes or emotions of humans. In these constructions, the subject of the main clause refers to the human participant, the lexical verb ... presents the type of reporting (e.g. speech or thought) and the *that*-clause presents the reported speech, thought, or attitude.

Whether, *if* and *wh*- clauses obviously indicate a lack of information about the state of affairs (Dirven 1989, 118-119).

As for the complements of *decide* specifically, Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1021) mention meaning differences between sentential and preposition + NP complements such as

- 5 We decided that the proposal would be impossible to implement.
- 6 We decided on a trip to the zoo.

They observe that the *on* + NP construction expresses a choice concerning what to do, while

the *that*-clause involves coming to the conclusion that a certain proposition is true. On the other hand, Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1226) also suggest an absence of meaning differences, namely that "in many cases the non-finite complement has a finite alternant or near-alternant":

- 7 They demanded to be heard
8 They demanded that they be heard.

4.4 Factors affecting complementation

4.4.1 The Great Complement Shift

According to Rohdenburg (2006, 143) the English language has undergone a major reorganization in its system of sentential complementation, which he calls the Great Complement Shift. It has been going on since late Middle English times (Vosberg 2009, 213) and has virtually reached completion by now (Rohdenburg 2006, 144), further advanced in American English than in British English (Vosberg 2009, 226-227). One of the phenomena covered by the Great Complement Shift is *-ing* complements becoming more common at the expense of *to*-infinitives. It applies to both directly linked gerunds (example 7) and prepositional gerunds (example 8):

- 9 She dreaded to go there. > She dreaded going there.
10 She delighted to do it. > She delighted in doing it.

I am interested to see whether this tendency holds true for the verb *decide*, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* mentions at least one gerundial complement, namely *on + ing*, for *decide*.

4.4.2 Infinitivitis

Allerton (1998, 11) argues that more and more British English speakers tend to prefer infinitives to gerunds in writing and when speaking in formal contexts. They overuse the infinitive, regardless of meaning, and the distinction between infinitive and gerund is sometimes blurred or lost. Allerton calls this phenomenon 'infinitivitis' (1998, 11,22).

Following this theory, infinitives can, then, be expected to be slightly overrepresented when studying corpora consisting of only written (CLMETEV) or mostly written (BNC) texts. However, the differences between gerunds and infinitives are certainly not completely lost.

4.4.3 Horror aequi

Another extragrammatic factor determining the choice of complements is the *horror aequi* principle. It is defined by Rohdenburg (2003, 236; 2006, 156) as

the widespread (and presumably universal) tendency to avoid the use of formally (near-) identical and (near-)adjacent (non-coordinate) grammatical elements or structures.

These avoided structures can be for example two immediately successive *-ing* forms, known as the *double -ing constraint* (Vosberg 2003b, 315). There is also an aversion to sequences of *to*-infinitives, even though according to Vosberg (2003b, 315) this tendency is not as strong. This kind of repetition can be avoided if the second *to*-infinitive complement is delayed by an element inserted after the matrix verb (Rohdenburg 2003, 236).

Thus in the corpus data there are not likely to be many such repetitive sequences, and two *to*-infinitives may be separated by intervening material. However, this is only a tendency and not an absolute rule, so violations are to be expected.

4.4.4 Bolinger's generalization

According to the so-called Bolinger's generalization "a difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning" (Bolinger 1968, 127), because Bolinger argues that a systematically redundant language would be strange and uneconomical. However, potential differences are not necessarily operative differences in all contexts, but can be stored in the speaker's competence (Bolinger 1968, 122). Thus in the corpus data, different patterns might imply different senses, and different senses can be expected to occur with different patterns.

4.4.5 Cognitive complexity

Yet another factor affecting the choice of complements is the so-called complexity principle. Rohdenburg (1996, 151) defines it like this: "In the case of more or less explicit grammatical options the more explicit one(s) will tend to be favoured in cognitively more complex environments." In English cognitive complexity is created by, among other factors, discontinuous constructions, that is insertions and extractions.

Changes to the canonical sentence structure are called extractions (Vosberg 2003a, 201). Extractions are created by relativization, comparativization, topicalization and interrogation (Vosberg 2003b, 307):

11 Which question did he hesitate to answer?

The further away from its normal place a complement is, the more difficult it is to process (Vosberg 2003b, 307).

Structural discontinuity, or insertions, happen when there is intervening material between the matrix verb and its complement clause making it difficult to process. (Vosberg 2003a, 217). Again, the longer the inserted element is, the more complex the sentence becomes.

12 He hesitated for a very long time about whether he should do it.

To-infinitives are more explicit than gerundials (Vosberg 2003a, 202, Rohdenburg 2006, 153-154) and finite clauses are more explicit than non-finite ones (Vosberg 2003a, 217). In finite *that*-clauses, the subordinator *that* can often be omitted. However, Rohdenburg (1996, 160-161) estimates that with more complex clauses, *that* is often left in to make the clause more explicit. I will analyze the insertions and extractions that appear in my corpus data and try to see if certain kinds of complements are preferred in those contexts.

5 *Decide* in the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts part 1

The first subcorpus of the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts covers texts written between 1710 and 1780, containing 3,037,607 words. The CLMETEV is not a tagged corpus so it was not possible to search it for the verb *decide* only. A search was carried out for all the forms of the word instead: *decide*, *decides*, *decided* and *deciding*. This yielded a total of 139 tokens, but nine of them were instances of the adjective *decided* and therefore irrelevant:

1 A man requires very little knowledge and experience of the world, to understand glaring, high- colored, and *decided* characters; they are but few, and they strike at first (Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 17990)

2 those who for many years had been active in such affairs should show that they had formed some clear and *decided* idea of the principles of Colony government; and were capable of drawing out something like a platform of the ground (Burke 1775 - on conciliation with america.txt, Line 79)

In one example the word *decide* was a part of a French phrase:

3 If it is a quick and hasty manner of speaking that people mistake 'pour *decide* et brusque', prevent their mistakes for the future by speaking more deliberately. (Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 15327)

After discarding these there were 129 tokens left, giving *decide* a normalized frequency of 42 instances per million words. I decided to analyse all the relevant tokens since it seemed like a manageable number.

Almost in all, 116 tokens, *decide* was used in the simplified sense 'to choose', and only 13 in the 'affect crucially' sense. I will analyse the complementation of these senses separately. The senses marked obsolete in the *OED*, 'to separate' and 'to fall off' were not found in the data.

CLMETEV 1	Tokens	NF per million	%
'choose'	116	38	90
'affect crucially'	13	4	10
Total	129	42	100

Table 2:
Senses of decide found in CLMETEV part 1

5.1 The 'choose' sense

With the 'choose' sense of *decide*, the subject of the main clause was usually a person (example 4), and in some cases a body of people, for example a parliament or assembly (example 5). No other general context for the use of this sense could be found.

4 May you *decide* with wisdom! (Burke 1775 - on conciliation with america.txt, Line 1908)

5 That he thought the title of either person was equal; and since the Parliament was to *decide* the matter, he judged it would much better please that Prince, who was now become their Protector, and was also in it ... (Cibber 1753 - the lives of the poets 3.txt, Line 8750)

There were 15 different complements for the 'choose' sense of *decide*. Eight sentences had a zero complement:

6 Some learned men, proud of their knowledge, only speak to *decide*, and give judgment without appeal (Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 1952)

7 This motion, which condemns without hearing, and *decides* without examining, I cannot but reject, and hope your lordships will concur with me. (Johnson 1740-1 - parliamentary debates 1.txt, Line 7912)

Three sentences had two complements.

8 P. S. Lady Chesterfield bids me tell you, that she *decides* entirely in your favor against Mr. Grevenkop, and even against herself. (Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 5486)

9 In the ninth chapter of the seventh book of our history, we left Sophia, after a long debate between love and duty, *deciding* the cause, as it usually, I

believe, happens, in favour of the former. (Fielding 1749 - tom jones.txt, Line 6873)

10 But Heaven forbid that I should compel my child to give her hand, where she cannot bestow her heart! Speak freely, and decide this point for me and for yourself. (Reeve 1777 - the old english baron.txt, Line 6040)

I have divided the complements to sentential and nonsentential ones, and will now discuss them separately in the following subsections.

	Tokens	NF per million	%
Ø	8	2.6	7
NONSENTENTIAL	89	29	74
NP	52	16.8	44
<i>concerning</i> + NP	5	1.6	4.3
<i>upon</i> + NP	10	3.3	8.6
<i>on</i> + NP	4	1.3	3.5
<i>of</i> + NP	2	0.6	1.7
<i>in favour of</i> + NP	8	2.6	6.9
<i>for</i> + NP ('in favour of')	1	0.3	0.85
<i>against</i> + NP	3	1	2.5
<i>between</i> + NP	2	0.6	1.7
<i>for</i> + NP ('on behalf of')	2	0.6	1.7
SENTENTIAL	22	7.2	19
<i>whether</i>	11	3.6	9.5
<i>that</i>	4	1.3	3.5
<i>wh-</i>	4	1.3	3.5
<i>to</i>	2	0.6	1.7
<i>on + ing</i>	1	0.3	0.85
TOTAL	119	38	100

Table 3:
Complements of the 'choose' sense in CLMETEV part 1

5.1.1 Nonsentential complements

There were significantly more nonsentential than sentential complements in the data. The

most common complement was a noun phrase with 52 tokens, and the most common nouns heading the noun phrases were *question* (10 tokens), *dispute* (5) and *controversy* (4).

11 This diversity of opinions was supported by a variety of quotations from medical authors, ancient as well as modern; but these were not of sufficient authority, or, at least, not explicit enough to *decide the dispute*; for there are many schisms in medicine, as well as in religion, and each sect can quote the fathers in support of the tenets they profess. (Mollett 1751 - the adventures of peregrine pickle.txt, Line 2513)

12 By what phenomena in nature can we pretend to *decide the controversy*? (Hume 1779 - dialogues concerning natural religion.txt, Line 1389)

The second most frequent group was complements referring to the issue at hand: *upon* + NP (10 tokens), *on* + NP (4 tokens), *concerning* + NP (5 tokens) and *of* + NP (2 tokens), all occurring with inanimate noun phrases. Of these, only *upon* + NP was mentioned in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

13 A rabble of any kind could be introduced into the assemblies of the people, could drive out the real citizens, and *decide upon the affairs of the republic*, as if they themselves had been such. (Smith 1766 - wealth of nations.txt, Line 17341)

14 The capital leading questions *on which* you must this day *decide* are these two: First, whether you ought to concede; and secondly, what your concession ought to be. (Burke 1775 - on conciliation with america.txt, Line 185)

15 with what assurance can we *decide concerning the origin of worlds*, or trace their history from eternity to eternity? (Hume 1779 - dialogues concerning natural religion.txt, Line 166)

16 but, on the other hand, as large Italian pictures are now out of fashion at Paris, where fashion *decides of everything*, and as these pictures are too large for common rooms, they may possibly come within the price above lim ...(Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 15134)

There were also complements for choosing between the two sides of an argument or the people arguing: *in favour of* (8 tokens), *against* + NP (3 tokens), *between* + NP (2 tokens) and *for* + NP (1 token). Here *for* is used in the sense 'in favour of', which is not listed in the *OED*.

17 Though our judgment will upon the whole *decide in favour of Raffaele*: yet he never takes that firm hold and entire possession of the mind in such a manner as to desire nothing else, and feel nothing wanting. (Reynolds 1769-76 - seven discourses on art.txt, Line 2454)

18 in my little reading upon such contests as these, the sense of mankind has at least as often *decided against the superior as the subordinate power*. (Burke 1775 - on conciliation with america.txt, Line 905)

19 'Is she,' said my aunt, bridling herself, 'fit to *decide between us*?' (Fielding 1751 - amelia.txt, Line 6465)

20 the alteration of his vote would have made it even; and then the Speaker, I suppose, would have chosen the merciful side, and *decided for us*. (Walpole 1735-48 - letters 1735-1748.txt, Line 4593)

For + NP was also used to indicate making a decision on behalf of somebody else, which is the sense used in the *OED* example. This use of *for*, however, might be a borderline case between adjunct and complement.

21 It is not ours to make election for ourselves: heaven, our fathers, and our husbands must *decide for us*. (Walpole 1764 - the castle of otranto.txt, Line 3315)

5.1.2 Sentential complements

Sentential complements were relatively rare in the first part of the CLMETEV. The most frequent ones were *whether* (11 tokens) where the choice is between two alternatives, *wh*-clauses (4 tokens) and *that*-clauses (4 tokens).

22 Nor was it, I believe, easy to *decide whether Mr. Bennet or myself were most delighted with his lordship and Mrs. Ellison* (Fielding 1751 - amelia.txt, Line 6935)

23 Each sect thinks its own is the best; and I know no infallible judge in this world, to *decide which is the best*. (Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 1902)

24 I cannot find in my heart to inquire into the intrinsic merit of that person--I hastily *decide in myself that he can have none*; and am not sure that I should not even be sorry to know that he had any. (Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 9012)

There were two *to*-infinitives. There was also one prepositional gerund, *on + ing*, which is not mentioned in the *OED*.

25 Cook at once decided to have recourse to his usual practice, and get either the king or some principal chief on board (Cook 1768-71 - captain cook's journal.txt, Line 1070)

26 On his way he went into Port Jackson, and immediately decided on settling there. (Cook 1768-71 - captain cook's journal.txt, Line 13070)

5.1.3 Extragrammatical factors

Extractions were relatively common, with 33 tokens (28% of sentences). Passivisation was by far the most frequent reason, but there was also relativisation (example 27) and topicalisation (example 28):

27 The capital leading questions on which you must this day *decide* are these two: First, whether you ought to concede; and secondly, what your concession ought to be. (Burke 1775 - on conciliation with america.txt, Line 185)

28 Whether the unalienable right of a free subject is not infringed, by the question put to the person at our bar, the house must *decide*. (Johnson 1740-1 - parliamentary debates 1.txt, Line 1058)

12 sentences (10%) had some element inserted between the matrix verb and the complement. No pattern was found in the inserted elements or the complements affected – both varied a lot.

29 One man *decides* peremptorily upon every subject, betrays his ignorance upon many, and shows a disgusting presumption upon the rest. (Chesterfield 1746-71 - letters to his son on the art....txt, Line 11795)

30 He *decides*, like a true lover of all curious cultivation, in favour of the vineyard (Smith 1766 - wealth of nations.txt, Line 390)

The *horror aequi* principle, or the tendency to avoid sequences of formally identical grammatical structures, had one violation in this part of the corpus:

31 From these variations of temper proceeds the great difficulty of deciding concerning the actions and resolutions of men, where there is any

contrariety of motives and passions. (Hume 1739-40 - treatise of human nature.txt, Line 7856)

5.2 The 'affect crucially' sense

The 'affect crucially' sense was found 13 times in the data. In each case it had a nonsentential noun phrase complement. The noun phrase complements were all inanimate, as were the subjects:

32 But though the decision of the one question *decides the other*; yet that we may the more easily discover the principles of human nature, from whence the decision arises, w ... (Hume 1739-40 - treatise of human nature.txt, Line 486)

33 Only remember, that I will not be trifled with; and what you give for answer will absolutely *decide your fate*, without expostulation, or farther trouble. (Richardson 1740 - pamela.txt, Line 7449)

The context was often a battle or war:

34 a single battle, as it has often happened, *decided the fate of this great island*; and when Constantius landed on the shores of Kent, he found them covered with obedient ... (Gibbon 1776 - decline and fall of the roman empire 1.txt, Line 13711)

35 Two engagements, the one near the Hellespont, the other in the narrow defiles of Cilicia, *decided the fate of his Syrian competitor*; and the troops of Europe asserted their usual ascendant over the effeminate natives ... (Gibbon 1776 - decline and fall of the roman empire 1.txt, Line 802)

There were five passive sentences with the complement extracted:

36 *The long discord between the civil and military powers was decided* by a war, in which the former had obtained a complete victory. (Gibbon 1776 - decline and fall of the roman empire 1.txt, Line 4457)

37 The troops on both sides displayed the same valor and discipline; and *the victory was once more decided* by the superior abilities of Constantine, who directed a body of five thousand men to gain an advantageous height, fr ... (Gibbon 1776 - decline and fall of the roman empire 1.txt, Line 17378)

There were no *horror aequi* violations or insertions, and no sentence had more than one complement.

6 *Decide* in the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts part 2

The second part of the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts includes texts from a period between 1780 and 1850, amounting to 5,723,988 words. Again I carried out a search for all the forms of the word *decide*; *decide*, *decides*, *decided* and *deciding*. This resulted in 476 tokens, of which I decided to take a random sample of 50%, i.e. 238 tokens by selecting every other token. This was done in order to match my other corpus samples and to keep the total numbers manageable. Out of this number I had to discard 59 tokens where *decided* was used as an adjective:

1 "Nothing, sir," answered Hardy, in a *decided*, yet modest manner; "nothing but what I said last night." "Nothing more?" "Nothing more, sir." (Edgeworth 1796-1801 - the parent's assistant.txt, Line 17737)

2 On the subject of procuring slaves, he gave it as his *decided* opinion that many of the inhabitants of Africa were kidnapped by each other, as they were travelling on the roads (Clarkson 1839 - the history of the abolition of the african slave-trade.txt, Line 4851)

After deleting the irrelevant tokens I had 179 left, making the normalized frequency of *decide* 62 per million words compared to 42 per million in the first part of the CLMETEV.

This increase in frequency was all due to the 'choose' sense becoming more popular, its normalized frequency growing from 38 to 58 per million, while the 'affect crucially' sense stayed at the same frequency of 4 instances per million on average. In the coming sections I will analyse the complementation of these two senses separately. No other senses were found in the sampled data.

CLMETEV 2	Tokens	NF per million	%
'choose'	167	58	93
'affect crucially'	12	4	7
Total	179	62	100

Table 4:
Senses of *decide* found in CLMETEV part 2

6.1 The 'choose' sense

With the 'choose' sense of *decide*, the subject of the verb was almost always human (example 3) and sometimes a public institution like a court, assembly or jury (example 4). No other general context for this sense was found.

3 The censor who is to *decide* on the result of the whole, should be a person of great sagacity, and capable of pronouncing upon a given amount of the most imperfect and incidental indications. (Godwin 1831 - thoughts on man.txt, Line 831)

4 ... and that he would not probably have found, before the public discussion of this subject, one woman in a hundred who did not believe particular circumstances would enable the Court of Chancery to *decide* her claim to the custody of her infant children. (Norton 1839 - a plain letter to the lord chancellor on the infant custody bill.txt, Line 547)

I found 16 different complements for this sense of *decide* in the data. A fifth of all tokens did not have a complement at all:

5 These various testimonies to the conversational eminence of Mr. Coleridge, and from men the best qualified to *decide*, must satisfy every mind, that in this one quality he scarcely ever had a superior, or perhaps an equal. (Cottle 1847 - reminiscences of samuel taylor coleridge and robert southey.txt, Line 9079)

6 ...these nurslings of improved pedagogy are taught to dispute and *decide*; to suspect all but their own and their lecturer's wisdom; and to hold nothing sacred from their contempt, but their own contemptible arrogance. (Coleridge 1817 - biographia literaria.txt, Line 228)

Four sentences had two complements. In each case one of the complements referred to

the issue to be decided, and the other to choosing sides:

7 Mr Godwin appears to me to have *decided this question against himself* in his essay on 'Avarice and Profusion' in the Enquirer. (Malthus 1834 - an essay on the principle of population.txt, Line 4496)

8 The case was *decided in favour of Beaumarchais* in 1754. (Byron 1810-3 - letters 1810-1813.txt, Line 4219)

I have divided the complements to sentential and nonsentential ones, and will now discuss them separately in the following subsections.

	Tokens	NF per million	%
Ø	31	11	19
<i>NONSENTENTIAL</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>58</i>
NP	43	15	26
<i>upon</i> + NP	18	6.3	11
<i>on</i> + NP	19	6.6	11
<i>concerning</i> + NP	1	0.35	0.6
<i>about</i> + NP	1	0.35	0.6
<i>in favour of</i> + NP	7	2.4	4
<i>between</i> + NP	3	1.0	1.8
<i>against</i> + NP	6	2.1	3.6
<i>for</i> + NP ('on behalf of')	3	1.0	1.8
<i>SENTENTIAL</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>that</i>	15	5.2	9
<i>(that)</i>	1	0.35	0.6
<i>whether</i>	4	1.4	2.4
<i>wh-</i>	8	2.8	4.8
<i>to</i>	6	2.1	3.6
<i>on</i> + <i>ing</i>	1	0.35	0.6
<i>upon</i> + <i>ing</i>	4	1.4	2.4
TOTAL	171	58	100

Table 5:
Complements of the 'choose' sense in CLMETEV part 2

6.1.1 Nonsentential complements

A clear majority of all complements found in this part of the data were again nonsentential. The most common one of them was a noun phrase complement with 43 tokens, and the head of the noun phrase was often *case*, *matter*, *question* or the pronoun *it*:

9 ...on the contrary, he said, in a vehement manner, that he was sure there must be some corrupt understanding among us, otherwise a matter of such importance could not have been *decided* by a silent vote; and at every session of the council, till some new matter of difference cast up, he continued cuckooing about the lamp-job, as he called it, till he had sickened every body out of all patience. (Galt 1823 - the provost.txt, Line 2961)

10 "I regret to say, Colonel, that the question is one that I cannot *decide*." (Disraeli 1826 - vivian grey.txt, Line 1976)

The second most common group was complements referring to the issue at hand: *upon* + NP (18 tokens), *on* + NP (19 tokens), *concerning* + NP (1 token) and *about* + NP (1 token), all occurring with inanimate noun phrases. Out of these, *about* + NP was a new complement that did not appear in the *Oxford English Dictionary* nor in the first part of The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts.

11 Before they are acquainted with the true difference between verse and prose, before they are prepared to *decide* upon the poetical merit of Lily and Virgil, they are called upon to write Latin verse themselves. (Godwin 1783-4 - four early pamphlets.txt, Line 2652)

12 But while the imaginations of other people will carry them away to form wrong judgments of our conduct, and to *decide* on it by slight appearances, one's happiness must in some measure be always at the mercy of chance. (Austen 1811 - Sense and sensibility.txt, Line 2249)

13 Mr. Coleridge having requested me to *decide* concerning the introduction into his volume of the two preceding Poems, I approved of the second, with certain alterations, (which was accordingly printed,) and rejected the first, for the reasons assigned in the following letter. (Cottle 1847 - reminiscences of samuel taylor coleridge and robert southey.txt, Line 4041)

14 Excited by which rumours and hearsays they will *decide* about the weightiest matters; and necessarily repent next moment that they did it, on such guidance of uncertain reports, and many a traveller answering with

mere fictions to please them, and get off.
(Carlyle 1837 - the french revolution.txt, Line 3363)

The rest of the nonsentential complements referred to choosing sides: *in favour of* + NP (7 tokens), *against* + NP (6 tokens) and *between* + NP (3 tokens):

15 The parties stood thus: The two mothers, though each really convinced that her own son was the tallest, politely *decided* in favour of the other. (Austen 1811 - Sense and sensibility.txt, Line 1723)

16 Let it be observed that I am here supposing the imagined judge, to whom I appeal, to have already *decided* against the poet's theory, as far as it is different from the principles of the art, generally acknowledged. (Coleridge 1817 - biographia literaria.txt, Line 8576)

17 The contest was here to be *decided* between despotism and liberty, whether there is a principle in man, by which a handful of individuals, pervaded with ... (Godwin 1831 - thoughts on man.txt, Line 5230)

For + NP was used to indicate making a decision on behalf of somebody. Its complement status is still questionable, but it is at least a frequent collocate of *decide*.

18 "You may consult the old woman," said Archer, bursting out a-laughing, "about what's right and wrong, if you please; but no old woman shall *decide* for me." (Edgeworth 1796-1801 - the parent's assistant.txt, Line 12629)

6.1.2 Sentential complements

The normalized frequency of sentential complements doubled compared to the first part of the CLMETEV, from 7.2 to 14 per million. *That*-clause became the most common one of them (16 tokens) with *wh*- (8 tokens) and *whether*-clauses (4 tokens). 50% of the *that*-clauses had a putative *should* in them (example 20).

19 At last we *decided* that it would be better to find our way back to the Cape, and deliver ourselves up as prisoners, for we were tired out with fatigue and constant danger. (Marryat 1841 - masterman ready.txt, Line 6267)

20 As for the fowls and chickens, it was *decided* they should be left, as Ready and William could look after them on their occasional visits. (Marryat 1841 - masterman ready.txt, Line 8213)

21 It is a curious question to *decide* how far punishments and rewards may be made effectual to determine the religion of nations and generations of men. (Godwin 1831 - thoughts on man.txt, Line 6691)

22 There are few things which the public are less able to judge of than the quality of drugs; and when these are compounded into medicines it is scarcely possible, even for medical men, to *decide* whether pure or adulterated ingredients have been employed. (Babbage 1832 - the economy of machinery and manufactures.txt, Line 4296)

To-infinitives came up 6 times. There was one instance of the prepositional gerund *on + ing* and four instances of a similar new pattern *upon + ing*, not found in the *OED* or the first part of the historical corpus.

23 On the whole, he was such a mysterious and incomprehensible character, that Mr. Perch *decided* not to mention him to Mrs. Perch at all, in case of giving rise to any disagreeable consequences. (Dickens 1848 - dombey and son.txt, Line 16547)

24 Here there was no "mad caprice," but he calmly *decided* to leave Cambridge and join Southey in his plans for the future, and commence the profession on which they had mutually agreed. (Gillman 1838 - the life of samuel taylor coleridge.txt)

25 This strange autograph Letter the National Assembly *decides* on printing; on transmitting to the Eighty-three Departments, with exegetic commentary, short but pithy. (Carlyle 1837 - the french revolution.txt, Line 5107)

26 We had walked till past noon, and were very much tired; we *decided* upon taking our dinner under a large tree, and we threw ourselves down in the shade. (Marryat 1841 - masterman ready.txt, Line 6011)

27 I think Mr Seagrave had better use the axe with me; and you and Juno can, when I have shown you how, hang the timber to the axle, and wheel it out to the place where we have *decided* upon building the house. (Marryat 1841 - masterman ready.txt)

That-clauses are characterised as describing single events while gerundials refer to regular, continuous or general activity (Allerton 1988, 21). This does not appear to be true for *decide*, as *to*-infinitives (examples 23 and 24) and gerundials (25-27) both describe specific single events. This might be because deciding is by definition something that only happens once, and there is no "state of deciding" that somebody can stay in.

6.1.3 Extragrammatic factors

Extractions were relatively common, with 37 tokens (22% of sentences). All extracted complements were nonsentential.

28 "I regret to say, Colonel, that the question is one that I cannot *decide*."
"Sir, I wish you good morning," said the Colonel, very drily; and, staring keenly at Vivian, he walked away. (Disraeli 1826 - vivian grey.txt, Line 1976)

29 But without any vindictive feelings towards England, for he ever professed and exercised charity towards his enemies, attributing their conduct entirely to their ignorance and prejudice, upon this step he nevertheless felt it his duty to *decide*. (Disraeli 1837 - venetia.txt, Line 7460)

5 sentences (3%) had some element inserted between the matrix verb and the complement. No pattern was found in the inserted elements or the complements affected – each case was different.

30 He *decided*, however, in favour of stratagem. (Dickens 1848 - dombey and son.txt, Line 5603)

There were no violations to the *horror aequi* principle in this part of the corpus.

6.2 The 'affect crucially' sense

The 'affect crucially' sense was found only 12 times in this part of the data. In each case it had a nonsentential noun phrase complement. Two of the NP complements referred to people, and the rest were inanimate. All the subjects were inanimate noun phrases as well.

31 He's wavering, but I think this will *decide* him. (Gaskell 1848 - mary barton.txt, Line 10871)

32 At last, the true policy of the part I had played began to be understood; and I got far more credit for the way in which I had turned both parties so well to my own advantage, than if I had been the means of *deciding* the election by my single vote. (Galt 1823 - the provost.txt, Line 4512)

The context was often a war or something to do with fate:

33... and some assert that, had the others defended themselves with half the fury which the old vixen queen displayed, the result of the battle which decided the fate of Portugal would have been widely different. (Borrow 1842 - bible in spain.txt, Line 362)

34 Yet, mixing in the giddy circle under restraint, these butterflies long to flutter at large, for the first affection of their souls is their own persons, to which their attention has been called with the most sedulous care, whilst they were preparing for the period that decides their fate for life. (Wollstonecraft 1792 - vindication of the rights of woman.txt, Line 8308)

Two sentences had the NP complement extracted because of passivisation:

35 The first was a short, thick man, whose only business was dealing certain portions of playing cards with quick succession one after the other: and as the fate of the table was *decided* by this process, did his companion, a very tall, thin man, throw various pieces of money upon certain stakes, which were deposited by the bystanders on different parts of the table... (Disraeli 1826 - vivian grey.txt, Line 2337)

There were no *horror aequi* violations or insertions, and no sentence had more than one complement.

7 *Decide* in the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts part 3

The third subcorpus of the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts covers texts written between 1850 and 1920, containing 6,251,564 words. Again, a search was carried out for all the forms of the word: *decide*, *decides*, *decided* and *deciding*, which yielded a total of 724 tokens. Out of these I selected every third token, that is 241 tokens altogether, to match my other corpus samples. Out of this number I had to discard 27 irrelevant tokens, mostly where *decided* was used as an adjective.

1 Tom had no sort of objection to whey, but he had a *decided* liking for curds, which were forbidden as unwholesome; and there was seldom a morning that he did not manage to secure a handful of hard curds, in defiance of Charity and of the farmer's wife. (Hughes 1857 - tom brown's school days.txt, Line 664)

2 In these days I lived at a small private boarding-house kept by a dear, good woman with a magnificent contralto voice, formidable eyebrows, a *decided* beard and moustache, and hands as large and strong as a man's. (Linton 1885 - the autobiography of christopher kirkland 1-3.txt, Line 4203)

After deleting them there were 214 tokens left, which gives *decide* a normalized frequency of 103 per million words, which is much higher than in the first two parts. Again, the dramatic increase in frequency happened with the 'choose' sense, while the 'affect crucially' sense stayed at roughly the same frequency. In the coming sections I will analyse the complementation of these two senses separately. No other senses were found in the sampled data.

CLMETEV 3	Tokens	NF per million	%
'choose'	206	99	96
'affect crucially'	8	4	4
Total	214	103	100

Table 6:
Senses of decide found in CLMETEV part 3

7.1 The 'choose' sense

With the 'choose' sense of *decide*, the subject of the main clause was almost always a person (example 3), and in some cases a body of people, for example a government (example 4). No other general context for the use of this sense could be found.

3 In effect he did not know what he wished, even when he found that the Queen had *decided* against going across the sea, and that therefore all the ladies would remain with her at Shene or Windsor. (Yonge 1870 - the caged lion.txt, Line 2878)

4 There remained thirty-one ships which, as far as could be ascertained, account for the additional force which the Government had *decided* to put in commission, more than two-thirds of them being ships of the line. (Bridge 1899-1902 - sea-power and other studies.txt, Line 3715)

I found 15 different complements for this sense of *decide* in the data. A tenth of all tokens did not have a complement at all:

5 They went out into the courtyard together and walked to and fro, planning, scheming, contriving, *deciding*. (Caine 1897 - the christian.txt, Line 16999)

6 Due, in whatever proportions, to the abstract principles he had formulated for himself, or in spite of them, there was the loyal conscience within him, *deciding*, judging himself and every one else, with a wonderful sort of authority. (Pater 1885 - marius the epicurian - vol. 1.txt, Line 5448)

In three cases *decide* was used as a reporting clause for direct speech, which was a new function in the data:

7 "It's the end of the world really at the same time," *decided* Judy, to a chorus of general approval, "not only the end of Mr. Jinks." (Blackwood 1915 - the extra day.txt, Line 1054)

8 "We'll go to the End of the World," he *decided* gravely, the moment he had changed. "There's something going on there. Quick!" (Blackwood 1915 - the extra day.txt, Line 2859)

9 "Too wrong to matter," *decided* Uncle Felix. "They're always slow or fast." (Blackwood 1915 - the extra day.txt, Line 5974)

Unlike in the first two parts, no sentence had more than one complement. I have divided the complements to sentential and nonsentential ones, and will now discuss them

separately in the following subsections.

	Tokens	NF per million	%
Ø	19	9.1	9.2
direct speech	3	1.4	1.5
NONSENTENTIAL	56	27	27
NP	28	13	13
<i>about</i> + NP	1	0.5	0.5
<i>upon</i> + NP	7	3.4	3.4
<i>on</i> + NP	10	4.8	4.9
<i>in favour of</i> + NP	1	0.5	0.5
<i>for</i> + NP ('in favour of')	3	1.4	1.5
<i>against</i> + NP	4	1.9	1.9
<i>between</i> + NP	1	0.5	0.5
<i>for</i> + NP ('on behalf of')	1	0.5	0.5
SENTENTIAL	128	62	63
<i>whether</i>	11	5.3	5.3
<i>wh-</i>	20	9.6	9.7
<i>that</i>	42	21	21
<i>(that)</i>	1	0.5	0.5
<i>to</i>	53	25	26
<i>on + ing</i>	1	0.5	0.5
TOTAL	206	99	100

Table 7
Complements of the 'choose' sense in CLMETEV part 3

7.1.1 Nonsentential complements

In the final part of the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts the ratio of sentential to nonsentential complements turned completely around. For the first time nonsentential complements were in the minority with 27% of all tokens. Of the nonsentential complements noun phrases were still the most common ones. The noun phrase was often the pronoun *it* or *nothing*.

10 ... she decided that she would determine the lease next year, so as to be on the safe side; but immediately afterwards she decided that she could *decide nothing*. (Bennett 1908 - the old wives' tale.txt, Line 5998)

11 What should the mass of women decide if they do not *decide their general place in the State?* (Chesterton 1912 - what's wrong with the world.txt, Line 2446)

Several other nonsentential complements also referred to the issue at hand: *on* + NP (10 tokens), *upon* + NP (7 tokens) and *about* + NP (1 token), all occurring with inanimate noun phrases.

12 They come back, accompanied by Count Fosco and his wife, who propose to settle somewhere in the neighbourhood of London, and who have engaged to stay at Blackwater Park for the summer months before *deciding on a place of residence*. (Collins 1859-60 - the woman in white.txt, Line 27)

13 But he had *decided upon a story of the kind natural to him*; a 'thin' story, and one which it would be difficult to spin into three volumes. (Gissing 1891 - new grub street.txt, Line 5545)

14 Oh, and what did Monica *decide about*-- about--really, what *_was_* I going to ask? (Gissing 1893 - the odd woman.txt, Line 10218)

The rest of the nonsentential complements were for choosing between the two sides of an argument or the people arguing: *against* + NP (4 tokens), *for* + NP (3 tokens), *in favour of* (1 token) and *between* + NP (1 token) and . Here *for* is used in the sense 'in favour of'.

15 ... in which he considers that I am "quite unconscious of the distinction between the infinitive and indicative;" a point upon which "any fairly trained schoolboy" would *decide against my reasoning*. (Cassels 1889 - a reply to dr. lightfoot's essay.txt, Line 213)

16 Still, there's an adventurous vein in them, and they *decided for the risk*. (Gissing 1891 - new grub street.txt, Line 5257)

17 "If I were you. I should *decide in favour of pink*," said the Frau Obertribunalprocurator, emphatically; "pink is a sweet pretty colour, and, to my thinking, always so becoming to dark eyes such as your Mina's." (Blind 1885 - tarantella 1.txt, Line 2045)

18 William's appeal to the Pope to *decide between two claimants for the English crown* strengthened Gregory not a little in his daring claim to

dispose of the crowns of Rome, of Italy, and of Germany. (Freeman 1888 - william the conqueror.txt, Line 1782)

Again, *for* + NP in the sense 'on behalf of somebody' was found once. It is still a borderline case between adjunct and complement, but it has kept its frequent collocata status.

19 But Lucy seems very uncertain, and in these days young people must decide for themselves. (Forster 1908 - a room with a view.txt, Line 3014)

7.1.2 Sentential complements

The normalized frequency of sentential complements more than quadrupled compared to the second part of the CLMETEV, from 14 to 62 per million. The frequency of *to*-infinitives jumped dramatically from 2 to 25 per million, making them the most common complement (26% of all tokens) and *that*-clauses were popular too (21%). The putative *should* appeared in 23% of the *that*-clauses (example 22).

20 In these circumstances Colonel Broadwood decided to send the Camel Corps back to the zeriba under cover of a gunboat, which, watchfully observing the progress of the fight, was coming downstream to assist. (Churchill 1899 - the river war.txt, Line 8995)

21 After a few years of struggling, less with her than with himself, he decided that he would take his own separate course, and let her take hers. (Craik 1850 - olive 1-3.txt, Line 2556)

22 Guachapeara's verdict on the dress-growing possibilities might reasonably be considered final, so it was at once decided that Prince Brekekex and Daffodil should be married that day week. (Webster - 1884 daffodil and the croaxaxicans.txt, Line 6959)

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1021) claim that with *decide*, *that*-clauses involve coming to the conclusion that a certain proposition is true. This did not seem to hold true in this part of the corpus data, as the overwhelming majority of *that*-clauses described a single event of decision-making, just like *to*-infinitives (examples 23 and 24). Only in a few cases did the *that*-clause have to do with figuring out the truth (example 25).

23 One day in a German town, 'etant dans la misere', I *decided to try the French consul*. (Galsworthy 1904 - the island pharisees.txt)

24 We were stopping down at Yarmouth, and we *decided we would go for a trip up the Yare*. (Jerome 1889 - three men in a boat.txt)

25 I wonder whether he would feel disposed to cry out before a real Michael Angelo, if the critics had *decided that it was not genuine*, or before a reputed Michael Angelo which was really by someone else. (Butler 1903 - the way of all flesh.txt)

There were also *wh*-clauses, *whether*-clauses and one *on + ing* pattern:

26 "What I hate," said Shelton, "is the way we men *decide what women are to bear*, and then call them immoral, decadent, or what you will, if they don't fall in with our views." (Galsworthy 1904 - the island pharisees.txt, Line 4599)

27 The scene was a drawing-room, softly lighted by electric lamps, with a cat (Shelton could not *decide whether she was real or not*) asleep upon the mat. (Galsworthy 1904 - the island pharisees.txt, Line 1230)

28 Money being a greater object to him than time, the clerk *decides on going to the cheaper house*. (Butler 1880 - unconscious memory.txt, Line 4847)

7.1.3 Extragrammatic factors

Extractions became less common with only 9% of all tokens having a complement extracted.

Most extracted complements were nonsentential.

29 Small matters are *decided* by the chiefs alone; great matters are submitted by the chiefs to the assembled nation. (Bagehot 1869 - physics and politics.txt, Line 1573)

30 That was a point which she had for ever *decided*. (Bennett 1908 - the old wives' tale.txt, Line 11217)

Seven sentences had some element inserted between the matrix verb and the complement. The type of complement affected by this varied.

31 She *decided*, however, that she could make perfectly plain the conditions upon which the Hopgoods would be present, and the next day she sent Madge a little note ... (Rutherford 1896 - clara hopgood.txt, Line 1226)

There were no violations to the *horror aequi* principle in this part of the corpus.

7.2 The 'affect crucially' sense

The 'affect crucially' sense was found only 8 times in the last part of the CLMETEV. For the first time in the corpus data. For the first time it had more than one kind of complements.

	Tokens	NF per million	%
NP	5	2.4	62.5
NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive	3	1.4	37.5
TOTAL	8	3.8	100

Table 8
Complements of the 'affect crucially' sense in CLMETEV part 3

Noun phrases were still the most common complement:

32 Another shot from the same place once more disturbed them, and, while they winded the unseen enemy, two more shots in quick succession from the old quarter *decided* their opinion, and they stalked proudly through the water towards the shore. (Baker 1854 - the rifle and the hound in ceylon.txt, Line 2496)

The new pattern was NP + *to*-clause, referring to causing a person to do something. This complement is not mentioned in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

33 It was Sophia's list slippers which had finally *decided* Amy to drop the mask of deference. (Bennett 1908 - the old wives' tale.txt, Line 16323)

34 What *decided* her to go? (Rutherford 1893 - catherine furze.txt, Line 4482)

The subject of every sentence was an inanimate noun phrases. There were no *horror aequi* violations, extractions or insertions, and no sentence had more than one complement.

8 *Decide* in the British National Corpus

The British National Corpus, representing British English of the late 20th century in this study, is a tagged corpus, so it was possible to search for only the cases where *decide* was used as a verb. I used the Sketch Engine to make a lemma search on *decide* in the imaginative text type subdomain. This yielded a total of 4649 tokens, of which I took a random sample of 5%, ie. 232 tokens. There were no tagging mistakes found, so it was not necessary to discard any of the tokens as irrelevant.

Decide continued to dramatically increase in frequency, now 281 per million in this text type. Again, the 'choose' sense was much more common than 'affect crucially'. In the coming sections I will analyse the complementation of these two senses separately. No other senses were found in the sampled data.

BNC	Tokens	NF per million	%
'choose'	229	278	99
'affect crucially'	2	3.6	1
Total	232	281	100

Table 9
Senses of decide found in the BNC imaginative text type

8.1 The 'choose' sense

With the 'choose' sense of *decide*, the subject of the main clause was almost always a person (example 1), and sometimes a more or less defined group of people (examples 2 and 3). No other general context for the use of this sense could be found.

1 'But Adam eventually *decided* that he couldn't afford such sentimental generosity.' (FBP)

2 ‘The Panel of Judges was summoned, to *decide* which of you had the stronger vein of wolfblood,’ said Dierdriu. (G10)

3 The powers that be have *decided* that various lists have to be drawn up, including one of all those who survived. (AN7)

There were 14 different complements for the 'choose' sense of *decide* in the data. Some tokens did not have a complement at all (example 4). *Decide* was also increasingly used in reporting clause introducing direct speech (example 5). Sometimes the reported speech was a person's thoughts, their internal monologue (examples 6 and 7).

4 She'd choose, she'd *decide*, it was her body, her life. (BP8)

5 ‘This looks a lot like appendicitis,’ she *decided*. ‘I’m going to send you to the hospital, Rosie.’ (JYA)

6 A suite here for one night would cost, she *decided*, a couple of weeks of her former salary. (H97)

7 As in so many other things, she *decided* with a sigh, being out of one's own country for such long stretches of time, left one behind the times. (SEB)

One sentence had two complements:

8 That question was *decided* for her in a most terrible way. (K8V)

I have divided the complements to sentential and nonsentential ones, and will now discuss them separately in the following subsections.

	Tokens	NF per million	%
Ø	8	9.7	3.5
direct speech	15	18	6.6
NONSENTENTIAL	13	16	5.7
NP	3	3.6	1.3
<i>about</i> + NP	1	1.2	0.4
<i>upon</i> + NP	1	1.2	0.4
<i>on</i> + NP	5	6.1	2.2
<i>against</i> + NP	1	1.2	0.4
<i>for</i> + NP ('on behalf of')	2	2.4	0.9
SENTENTIAL	194	232	85
<i>whether</i>	4	4.8	1.7
<i>if</i>	1	1.2	0.4
<i>wh-</i>	27	33	12
<i>that</i>	34	41	15
<i>(that)</i>	40	48	17
<i>to</i>	88	108	39
TOTAL	229	278	100

Table 10

Complements of the 'choose' sense in the BNC imaginative text type

8.1.1 Nonsentential complements

Nonsentential complements selected by *decide* became rare in the British National Corpus.

Most of the nonsentential complements described the issue at hand, like *on* +NP (5 tokens),

NP (3), *about* + NP (1) and *upon* + NP (1):

9 Roman was the last man to turn aside once he had *decided* on a course of action. (H8J)

10 When he just *decides* something without even thinking of me, I hate him, I really do! (CEY)

11 She has to *decide* about bathing costumes. (HGU)

12 Consequently, when it came to *deciding* upon holiday locations, there

were rarely arguments. (AS7)

There was only one complement for choosing between two sides of an argument, *against* + NP, and *for* + NP was used two times to indicate making a decision on behalf of somebody else:

13 Again he hesitated, as if he wanted to say something more; but he evidently *decided* against it. (BMU)

14 'I want you to *decide* for me,' answered his client. (GV7)

8.1.2 Sentential complements

Sentential complements dramatically increased in frequency again from 62 per million in CLMETEV 3 to 232 per million in the BNC. *To*-complements were still the most common ones (88 tokens) but *that*-clauses came close (74 tokens). 5% of the *that*-clauses had a putative *should* in them (example 18).

15 They had both agreed to adopt after two years of unfruitful marriage, but *decided* to bypass the responsibilities of looking after a baby. (KA2)

16 The powers that be have *decided* that various lists have to be drawn up, including one of all those who survived. (AN7)

17 It began when she *decided* she needed new curtains for her front room. (FPM)

18 H7H She *decided* at once that the orchid should be for Lally.

As for the semantics of the sentential complements, Dirven claims that *to*-infinitives denote a single occurrence of an event while *that*-clauses are more mental in nature, for example describing propositions or facts (Dirven 1989, 116-118). With *decide*, it is extremely difficult to make such a distinction as it is by definition a mental activity:

19 In the end she *decided* to leave it to fate. (H8S)

20 I *decided* I would postpone hostilities for a while. (HWC)

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1021) argue that with *decide*, *that*-clauses involve coming to the conclusion that a certain proposition is true. This is a possibility (example 21), but certainly not the only use for *that*-clauses. *That*-clauses can just as well report on a plan of action, and this was in fact more common in the data (example 22):

21 Plumfield continued talking in a nasal voice and she decided that he must be a demon to live with. (FAB)

22 Sara had *decided* that she would move down to Moorlake at once. (J54)

There were also 27 *wh*-clauses, 4 *whether*-clauses and one *if*-clause:

23 Alison would have had to *decide* where to put her own clothes, though perhaps she had left most of them still at her flat. (APM)

24 I picked up the file and stood with it in my hands for a few minutes before *deciding* whether to examine its contents. (FAT)

25 'It's up to his doctor to *decide* if he'll be fit enough to return to work. (EF1)

Unlike in the CLMETEV, there were no tokens with a preposition + *ing* complement in my sample of present-day English data. To find out whether they had disappeared completely, I searched for *decide* followed by *on* + *ing* in the imaginative text type in its entirety. There were only two tokens with this pattern in 16.5 million words, making it extremely rare in present day English. A similar search for *decide upon* + *ing* returned no matches.

26 We had to *decide* on travelling third or first class. (CEY)

27 She had *decided* on making her career in industrial nursing after leaving general nursing, even though at first she had had reservations and wondered if she had made the right move. (JXY)

8.1.3 Extrasemantic factors

In this part of the corpus insertions were more frequent than extractions with 14 sentences

having an element inserted between the matrix verb and the complement. One sentence even had two insertions (example 30).

28 The only thing that stopped him was that he couldn't *decide* exactly what the problem was. (CJX)

29 It was the thing she did best, and she had *decided* long ago that she would study in earnest as soon as she left school. (BMU)

30 He also *decided* at that moment, to his own amazement, that somehow, some time, he would have her as his wife. (B3J)

There were only four extractions. The type of complement affected by insertions and extractions varied a lot with no detectable general trends.

31 I look forward to hearing what Senhora Rocha *decides*. (JY9)

32 Whether it was better than lying in the clearing, I couldn't *decide*. (ADY)

There were no violations to the *horror aequi* principle in this part of the data.

8.2 The 'affect crucially' sense

The 'affect crucially' sense was found only three times in my sample of the BNC. In all three cases it had a noun phrase complement, which was in one sentence extracted because of passivisation:

33 But the cognoscenti know that the grip can be everything: in itself it can *decide* the entire bout. (FP1)

34 By 1513, the dispute had grown to such proportions that, before the Battle of Flodden, when James IV challenged the Earl of Surrey to single-handed combat to *decide* their two nations' grievances, the rewards to the victor were to include the return of the town of Berwick to Scotland, and the removal of the Esk fish garth. (AS7)

35 His fate was *decided* by a seminar on dating. (APR)

The subject of every sentence was an inanimate noun phrases. There were no *horror aequi* violations or insertions, and no sentence had more than one complement.

9 Conclusion

Of the simplified sense 'choose' and 'affect crucially', 'choose' was significantly more common in all the studied corpora and its frequency constantly increased, from 42 per million in the first part of the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts to 281 per million in the British National Corpus. This sense of *decide* also went through a dramatic change in its complementation patterns, nonsentential complements decreasing from 75% to only 5% while sentential complements rose from 20% to 90%. *That*-clauses and *to*-infinitives were the most common sentential complements, *wh*-clauses and *whether*-clauses were somewhat regular and preposition + *ing* patterns were extremely rare. Direct NP objects were the most frequent nonsentential complements with marginal prepositional constructions. The use of *decide* in reporting clauses for direct speech or thought also increased in the corpus data.

There were 18 different complementation patterns for *decide* altogether in the corpus data. All the complementation patterns listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* were found in the corpus data. In addition to those I found five new ones, namely *for* + NP (in the sense 'in favour of'), *about* + NP, *concerning* + NP, *of* + NP, *on* + NP (similar to *upon* + NP mentioned in the *OED*) and *upon* + *ing* (similar to *on* + *ing* mentioned in the *OED*). These new findings were relatively infrequent. All the complements mentioned in major English grammars were found, too. However, Quirk et al's approach, where *decide* is treated as a prepositional verb *decide on* with the preposition omitted in certain cases, seems rather awkward and unnecessarily complex, as in the corpus data *decide* occurred almost always without the preposition *on*.

As for the semantics of the complements, Bolinger (1968, 127) argues that a difference in form always suggests a difference in meaning. Dirven claims that *to*-infinitives denote a single occurrence of an event while *that*-clauses are more mental in nature, for

example describing propositions or facts (Dirven 1989, 116-118). While neither is untrue in the corpus data, such a contrast is difficult to ascertain as *decide* is by definition a mental activity, and there is no 'state of deciding' that somebody can stay in. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1021) argue that with *decide*, *on* + NP expresses a choice concerning what to do, while *that*-clauses involve coming to the conclusion that a certain proposition is true. This seems true for *on* + NP, but it is certainly not the only possible use for *that*-clauses. *That*-clauses can just as well report on a plan of action, and do so frequently in the corpus data.

The putative *should* was not found in the first part of the CLMETEV, probably because there were only four *that*-clauses where it would even have been possible. It was then found in all the other corpora but kept decreasing in frequency: in 50% of *that*-clauses in the second part of CLMETEV, 23% in part three and only 5% in the BNC.

No subjunctives were found, but that might be because they are not always distinguishable from the indicative. The subjunctive is also claimed to be more of a feature of American English (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 396, Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 995).

The simplified sense 'choose' was fairly infrequent in all studied corpora, its normalized frequency always approximately 4 per million words. It mostly selected NP complements, but some NP + *to*-infinitive patterns, which were not mentioned in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, were also found in the third part of the Corpus of Late Modern English texts. The rare and obsolete senses of *decide* mentioned in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'to cut off' and 'to fall off' were not encountered in the corpus data, nor were any new senses found.

There was only one horror aequi principle violation in the data, found in the first part of the CLMETEV. Rohdenburg (2003, 236) proposes that potential violations of the principle might be avoided by insertions, but no such cases were found.

Rohdenburg's Great Complement Shift (2006, 143) does not seem to hold true for

decide, as gerundial complements were infrequent in all subparts of the CLMETEV, and had almost completely disappeared by the British National Corpus.

The complexity principle (Rohdenburg 2006, 146-147) predicts that more explicit constructions are preferred in cognitively complex environments. Finite clauses are supposed to be more explicit than non-finite ones, and *that*-clauses with the subordinator *that* are more explicit than ones where it is omitted. In the corpus data extractions and insertions were possible with almost all types of complements but there were subtle differences in frequencies. Both CLMETEV part 3 and the BNC had overall more *to*-infinitives than *that*-clauses, but in sentences with insertions *that*-clauses were more common. *That* was also omitted less often in sentences with insertions. However, extractions involving sentential complements were overall so rare that it was not possible to detect any differences there.

10 Bibliography

Primary sources

CLMETEV The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (extended version)

BNC British National Corpus

Secondary sources

Allerton, D. 1998. "'Infinitivitis' in English." In Klegraf, J. and Nehls, D. eds., *Essays on the English Language and Applied Linguistics on the Occasion of Gerhard Nickel's 60th Birthday*. Heidelberg: Julius Groos Verlag, 11-23.

Ball, C. 1994. "Automated Text Analysis: Cautionary Tales." *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 9, 4: 295-302.

Bauer, L. 2002. "Inferring Variation and Change from Public Corpora." In Chambers J. K., Trudgill P., and Schilling-Estes N. eds., *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 97-144.

Biber, D., Conrad, S. and Reppen, R. 1998. *Corpus linguistics – Investigating language structure and use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, D. et al 1999. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. London: Longman.

Bolinger, D. 1968. "Entailment and the Meaning of Structures." *Glossa* 2, 2: 119-127.

Burnard, L, ed. 2000. *Reference Guide for the British National Corpus*. [Internet] Oxford University. Available from <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/docs/URG/>. [Accessed 15 February 2010]

De Smet, H. 2005. "A corpus of Late Modern English texts." *ICAME Journal No. 29*: 69-82.

Dirven, R. 1989. "A Cognitive Perspective on Complementation." In D. Jaspers et al. eds., *Sentential Complementation and the Lexicon*. Dordrecht: Foris.

Duffley, P. 2000. "Gerund versus Infinitive as Complement of Transitive Verbs in English." *Journal of English Linguistics* 28, 221-248.

Greenbaum, S. 1986. "The Grammar of Contemporary English and the Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language." In Leitner, G. ed., *The English Reference Grammar*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 6-14.

- Herbst, T. et al. 2004. *A Valency Dictionary of English*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Huddleston, R. and Pullum, G. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Huddleston, R. 1984. *Introduction to the Grammar of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hunston, S. 2002. "Pattern grammar, language teaching and linguistic variation." In Reppen, R et al. eds., *Using Corpora to Explore Linguistic Variation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kennedy, G. 1998. *An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics*. London: Longman.
- Leech, G. 1968. "Some Assumptions in the Metatheory of Linguistics." *Linguistics* 39: 87-102.
- Leech, G. and Svartvik, J. 2002. *A Communicative Grammar of English*. London: Longman.
- Mair, C. 2002. "Three changing patterns of verb complementation in Late Modern English: a real-time study based on matching text corpora." *English Language and Linguistics* 6, 1: 105-131.
- Mair, C. 2006. *Twentieth-Century English History, Variation and Standardization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford English Dictionary Online*. [Internet] Oxford University Press. Available from <<http://www.oed.com/>>. [Accessed 24 Sept 2010]
- Poutsma, H. 1904. *A Grammar of Late Modern English: Part I, The Sentence: Section I, The Elements of the Sentence*. Groningen: P. Noordhoff.
- Quirk, R. et al 1972. *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. London: Longman.
- Rohdenburg, G. 1996. "Cognitive Complexity and Increased Grammatical Explicitness." *Cognitive Linguistics* 7, 149-182.
- Rohdenburg, G. 2003. "Cognitive complexity and *horror aequi* as factors determining the use of interrogative clause linkers in English." In G. Rohdenburg and B. Mondorf eds., *Determinants of Grammatical Variation in English*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 205-249.
- Rohdenburg, G. 2006. "The Role of Functional Constrains in the Evolution of the English Complementation System." In Christiane Dalton-Puffer et al. eds., *Syntax, Style and Grammatical Norms*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Sinclair, J. "Corpus and Text - Basic Principles." In *Developing Linguistic Corpora: a Guide to Good Practice*, ed. Wynne, M., 1-16. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Somers, H. L. 1984. "On the Validity of the Complement-Adjunct Distinction in Valency Grammar." *Linguistics* 22, 507-530.

Somers, H. L. 1987. *Valency and Case in Computational Linguistic*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.

Vosberg, U. 2003a. "Cognitive Complexity and the Establishment of *-ing* Constructions with Retrospective Verbs in Modern English." In M. Dossena and C. Jones, eds., *Insights into Late Modern English*. Bern: Peter Lang, 197-220.

Vosberg, U. 2003b. "The Role of Extractions and *Horror Aequi* in the Evolution of *-ing* complements in Modern English." In G. Rohdenburg and B. Mondorf eds., *Determinants of Grammatical Variation in English*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 305-328.

Vosberg, U. 2009. "Non-finite complements." In G. Rohdenburg and J. Schlüter, eds., *One Language, Two Grammars?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Walter, E., ed. 2005. *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weekley, E. 1967. *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English Volume I. A-K*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc.

Wehmeier, S, ed. 2005. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. 7th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.