Complementation of the Verb *Complain* in Written British English from the 18th Century to the Present Day

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Tässä korpuslingvistiikkaan pohjautuvassa pro gradu -tutkielmassa tarkastellaan verbin *complain* komplementaatiota ja merkityksiä brittienglannissa 1710-luvulta 1990-luvulle. Tutkielman tavoite on selvittää mitä komplementteja verbi *complain* valitsee ja kartoittaa verbin komplementaatiossa tapahtuneita muutoksia viime vuosisatojen aikana.

Teoreettinen viitekehys tutkielmalle luodaan esittelemällä korpuslingvistiikkaa ja korpuksia sekä niiden käytön etuja ja rajoituksia lingvistisessä tutkimuksessa. Lisäksi tarkastellaan tarkemmin komplementaatiota yleisesti sekä erityisesti verbin *complain* kannalta. Verbin *complain* rakennetta ja merkityksiä tarkastellaan myös tarkemmin erityisesti sanakirjan *Oxford English Dictionary* avulla, mutta myös toisten sanakirjojen, kielioppikirjojen sekä muiden lähteiden avulla.

Korpusaineisto tutkielman korpustutkimusosioon kerättiin kahdesta korpuksesta: historiallinen aineisto kerättiin korpuksesta *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (CLMET), joka sisältää kirjallista aineistoa vuosilta 1710–1920. CLMET-korpus koostuu kolmesta 70 vuoden mittaisesta osiosta ja jokaisesta osiosta kerättyä aineistoa käsitellään tutkimuksessa erikseen. Nykyenglannin aineisto kerättiin *British National Corpus* -korpuksesta, jonka aineisto on vuosilta 1960–1993. BNC-korpuksen osalta aineistoksi valittiin tekstityyppi “proosa” (imaginative prose), jotta molempien käytettyjen korpusten tekstityypit vastaisivat toisiaan mahdollisimman tarkasti.

Tutkimus paljasti, että verbi *complain* valitsee laajan kirjon erilaisia komplementteja. Tutkimus paljasti yhteensä 22 erilaista komplementtia verbille *complain*. Lisäksi joitain muutoksia verbin komplementaatiossa havaittiin 1710- ja 1990-lukujen välillä. Merkittävimpänä muutoksena voidaan pitää preposition *about* yleistymistä preposition *of* kustannuksella.

Avainsanat: *complain*, korpuslingvistiikka, komplementaatio, verbi

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1 Introduction

The aim of the current thesis is to examine the different complement patterns of the verb *complain* in historical and present day British English. The study is corpus based and diachronic: corpus data from the 18th century until the present day will be examined in order to identify the different patterns *complain* takes. Also, observations as regards how the distribution between the different patterns has changed during time will be made. The corpus data was collected from two corpora: the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (CLMET) and the *British National Corpus* (BNC).

In the corpus analysis, special attention will be given to patterns with the prepositions *of* and *about*. Following Brorström (1963, 11), the frequency of the preposition *about* has been increasing at the expense of the preposition *of* in the previous centuries. According to Brorström (1963, 11), this extended use of the preposition *about* has not been discussed thoroughly in the literature and my discussion will for its part contribute to this area of study.

In addition to the different complement patterns, the senses of *complain* will be discussed. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) will provide the basis for the discussion of the senses. Also, two learner's dictionaries will be examined. Some attention will also be paid for pattern/meaning relations.

Chapters 2-3 provide information on the subjects of corpus linguistics and complementation. The advantages and disadvantages of using corpus data as a source for linguistic analysis will be discussed. Furthermore, the concepts of precision, recall and normalised frequencies will be presented and the corpora used in the present study will be discussed in more detail. Valency theory, which provides the theoretical background for complementation will also be discussed. In addition, the concepts of complement and adjunct will be presented and the differences between the them will discussed in more detail. Finally, the concepts of control and NP movement, Bolinger's generalisation and insertions and extractions will be touched upon.

Chapter 4 provides background information specifically for the complementation of *complain*. A selection of dictionaries and grammars will be examined in order to learn the characteristics of the verb. Theoretical background for the distribution between the prepositions *of* and *about* will also be given in 4.6. Finally, in 4.7 I will list the research questions that I will try to answer in the corpus analysis section.

Chapter 5 discusses the corpus data drawn from the two corpora. Data drawn from each section of the CLMET and the BNC will be discussed separately and comparisons between the corpora will be made. Also, observations will be made as regards how the present corpus data relates to the facts revealed by the background literature.

2 Corpora and corpus linguistics

In this section, I will discuss the concepts of corpus linguistics and corpora. I will also introduce the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (CLMET) and *the British National Corpus* (BNC), the two corpora used in this study.

2.1 Corpus linguistics

What is the essence of corpus linguistics is not an easy question to answer. Linguists do not seem to agree on whether corpus linguistics is a theoretical approach or only "a bundle of methods" or at best a methodology (Teubert and Krishnamurthy 2007, 1). What can be said, however, is that the starting point of corpus linguistics is always the 'real life' language use (McEnery and Wilson 2001, 1). Corpus linguists collect real life language data from corpora. The OED (s.v. *corpus*, sense 3b) defines *corpus* as "[t]he body of written or spoken material upon which a linguistic analysis is based." More specifically, corpora are carefully selected collections of texts that aim at capturing "the regularities of a language, a language variety or a sub-language" (Tognini-Bonelli 2001, 55).

Nowadays, the term *corpus* is most often used as a synonym for *electronic corpus*: a collection of texts that is stored in electronic form and used as a source of linguistic data (Lindquist 2009, 3). Electronic corpora make it possible to analyse vast amounts of data fairly easily, something that was not possible before electronic corpora. There were corpora even before computers, however: *pre-electronic corpora* are manual collections of linguistic examples written on slips of paper (ibid).

Corpus linguistics provides an alternative for intuition based linguistic studies. Instead of basing research on a linguist's intuition about a language as a researcher and as a native speaker of that language, studies in corpus linguistics are based on corpus data (Aarts 2002, 66). Corpus data reflect the way people use language in speech acts and in writing (Aarts 2002, 63). Thus,

corpus data provide the researcher with the possibility of examining the language in "verbal context": a corpus provides information about the medium in which the writing or speech occurs, about the person who produced the writing or speech, and so on (ibid.). With the methods used in corpus linguistics one is able to conduct a variety of different studies, but as always, there are some limitations, too. I will discuss some of these limitations next.

2.2 Limitations of corpus linguistics

Corpora provide a good source of linguistic data, but corpus linguistics has its limitations, as well. Theoretical linguists have criticised corpus linguistics for only being able to describe languages as seen in corpora, but not being able to say anything about the "true essence" of languages (Aarts 2000, 174). Thus, corpus linguistics is often seen as mainly a quantitative method that involves counting frequencies of certain patterns. Counting frequencies may sometimes be interesting, as such, but still, a qualitative aspect should also be taken into consideration: if possible, it is always interesting to raise questions about why certain patterns are more common than others.

Another limitation in corpus linguistics is that corpora are always finite, though language itself is virtually infinite (Gries 2010, 1). Still, as Leech (1968, 94) points out, "complete verifiability has long been acknowledged to be too high a goal in testing of scientific theories." Mega corpora, such as the *British National Corpus* or the *Bank of English*, do not contain all the possible sentences of the English language, but they are probably big enough for most linguistic studies and they certainly provide plenty of information about the English language (Beaugrande 2007, 107).

When compiling a corpus, data should be collected from a variety of carefully selected sources in order to avoid the corpus being biased. Still, sometimes corpora are biased for practical reasons: data of a certain type can be more easily available than data of some other type. For example, for historical corpora, texts written by male authors are more easily available

than texts written by female authors. When conducting a corpus study, questions about the representativeness of a corpus should always be addressed.

Beaugrande (2007, 102) also raises the question about how a corpus linguist can separate regularities from accidental occurrences. If a corpus contains tokens that are very rare, only occurring in the corpus once or twice, the decision has to be made whether the occurrences are accidental or not. Making this decision might not always be easy.

2.3 Precision and recall

When analysing corpus data one should always consider whether the data is relevant for the particular study or not, and thus whether one can expect reliable results. Ball (1994, 295) discusses two criteria according to which corpus data can be evaluated: precision and recall. Precision "is the proportion of relevant material that was retrieved" (Ball 1994, 295). In other words, if precision is poor, the search yields many irrelevant tokens. Poor precision can be dealt with by manually going through the data and deleting the irrelevant tokens, which can be a rather time-consuming task. Narrowing the search criteria improves precision, but it often leads to a decrease in recall (Ball 1994, 295).

Recall then again "is the proportion of relevant material that was retrieved" (Ball 1994, 295). If recall is poor, many relevant tokens are left out from the data. Poor recall is not as easy to deal with as poor precision: it is very difficult to know what one is missing in their data. The questions about precision and recall should always be addressed when collecting corpus data. Forming a search string always involves finding an ideal balance between the two.

2.4 The corpora used in the present study

In the present study, two corpora were used: the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (abbreviated CLMET) and the *British National Corpus* (BNC). When using two or more

corpora in a study, one should always stop to consider whether the two corpora are comparable or not. Different corpora are compiled using different compilation principles and also the tagging procedures are not the same in all corpora (Lindquist and Levin 2000, 160). In the following, I am going to discuss the corpora used in this study in more detail. The discussion will reveal that the corpora differ in terms of compilation criteria and tagging principles, but I still claim that the two corpora are comparable, because these differences were taken into consideration when collecting data. Firstly, I constructed the search strings with the tagging principles of each corpus in mind, and secondly, I aimed at collecting data of the same text type in each corpus.

2.4.1 The *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts*

The historical data for the present study was gathered from the original and extended versions of the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (CLMET). One of the advantages of using the CLMET is the relatively large size of the corpus: the original version consists of about 9.8 million words and the extended version of nearly 15 million words. Both versions of the CLMET cover a time period of 1710-1920 and they are divided into three sub-sections of 70 years each: 1710-1780, 1780-1850 and 1850-1920 (De Smet 2005, 70). The following table presents the number of words in each subsection of both the original and extended versions of the CLMET (De Smet 2005, 72-78):

Table 1: Number of words in the CLMET original and extended versions

	CLMET (original)	CLMET (extended)[1]
Part 1: 1710-1780	2.1 million	3.0 million
Part 2: 1780-1850	3.7 million	5.7 million
Part 3: 1850-1920	4.0 million	6.3 million
Total	9.8 million	15 million

[1] For information about the extended version, see https://perswww.kuleuven.be/~u0044428/clmetev.htm

The texts for the CLMET were gathered from *Project Gutenberg*[2], a provider of free e-books, and *Oxford Text Archive*[3], a source of digital literary and linguistic resources. For selecting the texts for the corpus, the following language-external criteria were applied (De Smet 2005, 70-72):

1. The selection of texts for each sub-section of the corpus was limited both by the publication year of the text and the birth date of the author (see Figure 1).

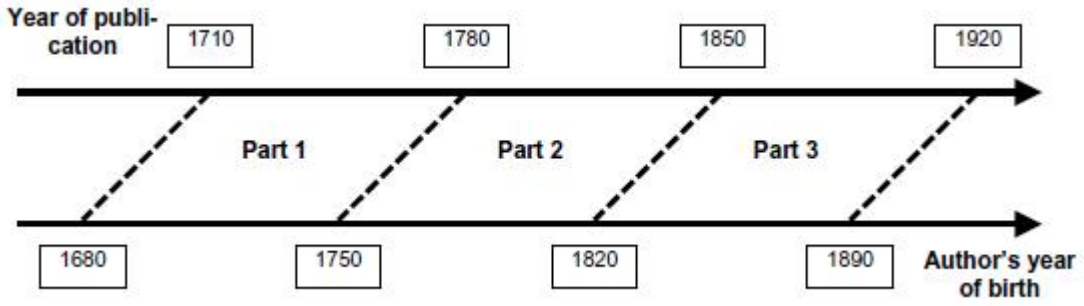

Figure 1: Selection of texts in the sub-periods of the CLMET. (Directly from De Smet 2005, 71)

2. The selected authors were native speakers of British English.
3. The maximum amount of words per author was limited to 200 000 words.
4. Lower register texts and female authors were favoured.[4]

In my study, both the original and extended versions of the CLMET were used in order to obtain an adequate amount of data in each sub-section. For the first part of the CLMET, the extended version was used, because the number of tokens obtained from the original version was not large enough. For the second and third parts of the corpus, the original version provided a suitable amount of data.

[2] http://www.gutenberg.org/
[3] http://ota.ahds.ac.uk/
[4] Lower registers and female authors were favoured in order to make the corpus more varied in terms of social background of the author and text type. Still, the corpus is biased in that it contains mostly literary and formal texts written by male authors.

Because the CLMET is not a tagged corpus, each inflectional form of a word always has to be searched for separately. In the case of the verb *complain*, the inflectional forms *complain, complains, complained,* and *complaining* were the search terms.

2.4.2 The *British National Corpus*

The present-day English data for the current study was gathered from the *British National Corpus* (BNC), the first and probably best-known of all national corpora (Lüdeling and Kytö 2008, 384). The BNC aims at representing present-day British English as broadly as possible and thus a wide range of different text types are included. All in all, the BNC encompasses almost 100 million words, of which 90 % is written texts and 10 % transcribed speech (ibid.).

The texts for the written part of the corpus were selected by applying three criteria: a) *domain*, b) *time*, and c) *medium*. The *domain* criterion defines the subject field of the text (Lüdeling and Kytö 2008, 384). All in all, 75 % of the texts are informative and 25 % imaginative writing (BNC user guide, 2009). The *time* criterion simply refers to the publication date of the text. The texts collected for the BNC, cover the time period between 1960 and 1993 (Burnard, 2007). Finally, the *medium* criterion refers to the medium in which the text occurs, e.g. published books and periodicals or unpublished texts, such as letters (Lüdeling and Kytö 2008, 384; BNC user guide, 2009).

For the spoken part of the corpus, the texts were selected by using two criteria: *demographic* and *context-governed*. The *demographic* section of the spoken corpus includes informal discussions of over a hundred volunteers, whereas the *context-governed* section is a collection of discussions in formal contexts, such as meetings, lectures, etc. (Lüdeling and Kytö 2008, 384).

For the present study, only the written part of the corpus is relevant: the data was drawn from the *Imaginative Prose* domain of the BNC. By selecting the *Imaginative Prose* domain, I wanted to ensure that the text type of the data would correspond to the text type of the CLMET

as closely as possible. The *Imaginative Prose* domain consists of about 16.5 million words of imaginative writing.

The BNC is an annotated corpus. It is tagged with part-of-speech information and it is also annotated with metadata, or contextual information (Lüdeling and Kytö 2008, 384). Because of the part-of-speech tagging, I was able to extract all the verb forms of the verb *complain* by using the search string {complain}_V*.

2.5 Normalised frequencies

There are three basic types of statistics that can be drawn from a corpus: absolute frequencies, percentage values and normalised frequencies. Absolute frequencies, or counting raw numbers of certain patterns in a corpus or a part of a corpus, are the most basic statistics in corpus research (Gries 2010, 6). To be able to see the proportions of different patterns within a corpus, one needs to count percentage values. Sometimes it is also necessary to be able to compare statistics drawn from two or more different corpora. That is when normalised frequencies are needed (Gries 2010, 7).

Normalised frequency is often reported as frequency per 1,000 or 1,000,000 words (Gries 2010, 7). Normalised frequency per million words can be counted according to the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of tokens}}{\text{Number of words in the corpus}} \times 1{,}000{,}000$$

In the corpus analysis part of the present study, the data will be presented with the help of these three basic types of statistics.

3 Complementation

In this chapter, I am going to discuss valency theory, the theory that is the basis for the idea of complementation. I am also going to present the concepts of complement and adjunct and discuss how to differentiate the two from one another. I am also going to briefly discuss the concepts of NP movement and control, Bolinger's generalisation and extractions and insertions.

3.1 Valency theory

The basic idea of valency theory is that the verb governs the central position in a sentence and it determines how many (and what types of) other elements have to occur in a sentence for it to be grammatical (Herbst et al. 2004, xxiv). In valency theory, those elements are called complements and the number of complements a verb takes constitutes the valency of the verb. In sentences, there are also elements that are "not dependent on the valency of the governing verb", and those elements are called adjuncts (ibid.). The differences between complements and adjuncts will be further discussed in 3.2.

There are two views on whether to count the subject as a complement of the governing verb. For instance, in Herbst et al. (2004), the subject of the clause is counted as a complement. In the present study, however, the main interest lies in the post-head complements and the subject will not be counted as a complement.

3.2 The difference between complements and adjuncts

In this section, I will discuss some of the differences between complements and adjuncts in more detail. Herbst et al. (2004, xxiv) provide three characteristics that separate adjuncts from complements:

a) adjuncts can occur relatively freely

b) adjuncts do not have to occur in a fixed order

c) adjuncts are not determined in their form by the governing verb.

Herbst et al. (ibid.) exemplify these characteristics with the adjunct *last night*, which can be added to sentences such as (1)-(3):

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

(2) *Last night* I walked along the cliff-path.

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

The example sentences (1)-(2) show that the adjunct *last night* can be attached to the beginning or the end of the sentence, thus showing that the order in which adjuncts occur is not fixed. The same adjunct *last night* can also be freely attached to various other sentences (such as (3)).

The following clauses exemplify the fact that adjuncts are not determined by the governing verb (Herbst et al. 2004, xxv):

(4) I put the paper and kindling by the fire *last night*.

(5) I put the paper and kindling by the fire *at 5 p.m*.

(6) I put the paper and kindling by the fire *then*.

(7) I put the paper and kindling by the fire *before I went to bed*.

As is evident from (4)-(7), the NP adjunct *last night* can be replaced by adjuncts of various forms: a prepositional phrase, an adverb phrase or an adverbial clause (Herbst et al. 2004, xxiv-xxv).

Huddleston (1984, 177-226) discusses the problem of distinguishing between complements and adjuncts further. Firstly, he (1984, 177) states that adjuncts are always omissible, whereas complements can either be omissible or obligatory. To test whether an element is omissible or not, one can use the elimination test (Somers 1987, 12). The basic idea of the elimination test is to eliminate an element in a sentence and see whether the remaining sentence is still grammatical and whether the basic meaning of the verb remains the same (ibid.). Somers (1987, 12) exemplifies the test with the following sentences (in which the italicised elements are obligatory):

(8) *I* visit *him* in Berlin.

(9) *I* visit *him*.

(10) **I* visit in Berlin.

(11) **I* visit.

This test shows that *I* and *him* are obligatory elements, whereas *in Berlin* is omissible. The problem with this test, as was already noted earlier, is that it does not separate complements from adjuncts but only obligatory elements from omissible elements (Somers 1987, 13). Sometimes a complement can also be omissible, as in (Huddleston 1984, 179):

(12) She was reading a novel.

The complement, *a novel*, can be omitted and the sentence is still grammatical and the basic meaning of the verb does not change.

Huddleston (1984, 179-180) also points out that complements are prototypically NPs and AdjPs and adjuncts are prototypically AdvPs and PPs. These "correlations between function and class are by no means perfect", however (Huddleston 1984, 179). Huddleston (1984, 180) points out that in some cases NPs can also function as adjuncts, especially when it comes to temporal NPs like *this morning* (or *last night*). Huddleston (1984, 180) also mentions that sometimes PPs and AdvPs can be complements. He exemplifies his statement with:

(13) He treated us badly

Here, the AdvP *badly* is a complement.

All in all, the boundary between adjuncts and complements is fuzzy and according to Huddleston (1984, 180) "differences will be found among grammars as to just where it is drawn".

3.3 Control and NP movement

Next, I will discuss the concepts of control and NP movement. The following two sentences taken from Davies and Dubinsky (2004, 3) exemplify the difference between NP movement and control:

(14) Barnett seemed to understand the formula.

(15) Barnett tried to understand the formula.

The sentences seem to be identical, the structure of each clause is NP-V-to-VP, and the only difference is between the choice of the matrix verb: *seem* vs. *try*. According to Davies and Dubinsky (2004, 3), however, there are major differences between the two sentences.

Sentence (14) is an example of an NP movement construction. In sentence (14), the subject *Barnett* is semantically linked only to the embedded verb *understand*. Sentence (15) is an example of a subject control construction and the subject *Barnett* is semantically linked both to the matrix verb *try* and the embedded verb *understand*. According to Davies and Dubinsky (ibid.) the subject in (15) "is said to 'control' the reference of the subject of the embedded clause and the construction has come to be referred to as 'Subject Control.'" Next, I will discuss some arguments for distinguishing between control and NP movement as presented in Davies and Dubinsky (2004).

According to Davies and Dubinsky (2004, 4) NP movement and control structures have different thematic structures. The following clause taken from Davies and Dubinsky (ibid.) exemplifies:

(16) It seemed that Barnett understood the formula.

Davies and Dubinsky (ibid.) point out that (16) is "truth-conditionally" comparable with (14). In (16), the subject of the verb *understand, Barnett,* has the thematic role of an *experiencer*. *It*, however, is a semantically empty element and has no thematic role, which proves that the verb *seem* does not have to assign a thematic role to its subject. On the other hand, in (15) *Barnett* has two thematic roles in the sentence: the experiencer of *understand* and the agent of *try*. "The

control verb *try*, unlike the raising [or NP movement] verb *seem*, assigns a thematic role to its subject" (Davies and Dubinsky 2004, 4-5), which proves that NP movement and control verbs have different thematic structures. Thus, the following construction is not possible, because the control verb *try* has to assign a thematic role to its subject (my own illustration):

(17) *It tried that Barnett understood the formula.

Davies and Dubinsky (2004, 5) also state that NP movement and control structures behave differently when the complement clause is in the passive. For NP movement structures, the passive complement is synonymous with the same complement in active:

(18) a) Barnett seemed to have read the book.

b) The book seemed to have been read by Barnett.

In the case of control structures, the passive counterpart does not have the same meaning and in some cases the passive counterpart is not possible at all (illustrations from Davies and Dubinsky 2004, 5):

(19) a) The doctor tried to examine Tilman.

b) Tilman tried to be examined by the doctor.

(20) a) Barnett tried to read the book.

b) *The book tried to be read by Barnett.

Sentences 19 a) and 19 b) are not synonymous and 20 b) is not a possible sentence, because the object of the embedded clause in 20 a) is an inanimate object (*a book*).

Finally, two more arguments for distinguishing between control and NP movement structures are relevant here: *the weather it*, or the *it* of meteorological expressions, and existential *there*. Both of these constructions are possible with NP movement verbs whereas they are not possible with control verbs (Davies and Dubinsky 2004, 7). Davies and Dubinsky (ibid.) provide the following examples:

(21) a) It seemed to be raining.

b) There seems to be a unicorn in the garden.

(22) a) *It tried to be raining.

b) *There tried to be a unicorn in the garden.

(21) provides an example of an NP movement verb and thus both 21 a) and 21 b) are possible sentences. (22), then again, provides an example of a control verb and neither 22 a) nor 22 b) are possible sentences.

I will return to the questions of NP movement and control in connection with the verb *complain* in 4.4 after discussing the different patterns *complain* takes. Next, I am going to briefly discuss Bolinger's generalisation and extractions and insertions, which for their part can also have an effect on a verb's complementation.

3.4 Bolinger's generalisation

Bolinger's generalisation "a difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning" (Bolinger 1968, 127) emphasises the economy of languages: there is no need in languages for several different constructions that have identical meanings. Bolinger exemplifies his generalisation with the following examples (Bolinger 1968, 123):

(23) I like him to be nice to you.

(24) I like his being nice to you.

Bolinger (ibid.) claims that (23) expresses a wish (I wish that he would be nice to you) whereas (24) expresses "actual behavior" (I like that he is nice to you). Thus, the *to infinitive* and *to-ing* constructions do not convey identical meanings. I will return to Bolinger's generalisation in the corpus analysis part of the current thesis.

3.5 Extractions and insertions

Extractions are "deviations from the canonical sentence structure" (Vosberg 2003, 201). There are several different types of extraction. Following Huang (1997, 123-129) wh-questions,

topicalized sentences and relative clauses provide examples of extraction. The three above mentioned extraction types are exemplified in the following (examples taken directly from Huang (1997)):

(25) What is John buying?

(26) John's articles, I will never read.

(27) That you were late surprised me.

The three extraction types exemplified here are not the only types of extraction and for a more detailed discussion on the topic refer to Vosberg (2003) and Huang (1997).

Insertions are discontinuous constructions or constructions in which material is inserted between the verb and its complement (Vosberg 2003, 210), exemplified in (28) (taken directly from Vosberg 2003, 211):

(28) I *recollect*, as I passed by one of the pier-glasses, *that* I saw in it his clenched hand offered in wrath to his forehead. (Samuel Richardson 1748, *Clarissa*, 1st ed.)

In (28), there is an insertion between the verb and the *that-clause* complement.

Both extractions and insertions provide an example of a complex environment. According to Rohdenburg (2006, 147), more explicit constructional options are likely to be favoured in "cognitively more complex environments". For example, Vosberg (2003, 211) states that the *-ing* form of a verb is less explicit than the *to infinitive* or the *that-clause* constructions and thus in insertion contexts the *-ing* form is the less likely option than the other two options (see example (28)). For a more detailed discussion on insertions refer to Vosberg (2003).

4 The verb *complain* in selected background literature

In the following, I will discuss the verb *complain* in more detail. The discussion will be based on selected literature: four dictionaries and three grammar books will be used as sources.

4.1 The verb *complain* in the OED

The OED offers a detailed description of *complain* and provides altogether nine different senses and several sub-senses for the verb. The nine main senses presented in the OED are grouped into three larger sense groups (marked I-III in Table 2). In Table 2, I have included the senses the OED provided for *complain* in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The senses and complement patterns that no longer were relevant in the 18th century were disregarded.

Table 2: The senses and complement patterns in the OED

Sense	Examples	Complement patterns
I. To give expression to sorrow or suffering.		
4a. *intr.* (formerly also *refl.*) To give sign of physical suffering or pain, to suffer, to be ailing. (Now *dial.*)	**(1)** Should some neighbour feel a pain Just in the parts where I *complain*. (Swift 1731) **(2)** Wounded soldier! if *complaining*, Sleep nae here and catch your death. (MacNeill 1801) **(3)** He's always *complaining* [i.e. ailing]. (Modern Scots)	*zero*
4b. ***to complain of***: to let it be known that one is suffering from (any pain, or feeling of illness).	**(4)** He's always *compleenin* frae mornin to e'enin, He hosts and he hirples the weary day lang (Burns 1792) **(5)** He..*complained* of a violent pain that had suddenly seized his head. (Arab. Nts. c1850) **(6)** *Complaining* that something was amiss with the beating of his heart. (Wallace 1890) **(7)** What does the patient *complain* of? She complains frequently of headaches. (Mod)	*zero* *of + NP* *that*-clause *of + NP*
II. The expression of suffering passing into that of grievance and blame.		
6. *intr.* To give expression to feelings of illusage, dissatisfaction, or discontent; to murmur, grumble. **a.** *simply*, and const. *against* (*at*).	**(8)** The people *complained* at those extortions they could not resist. (Goldsm. 1771) **(9)** To *complain* against the justice of the [consistory] courts being to *complain* against the Church. (Froude 1856) **(10)** He had that noble spirit which *complains* as little as possible. (Newman 1876)	*at + NP* *against + NP* *zero*
† **6b.** Const. *on*, *upon*. (Also with *indirect passive*.) *Obs.* exc. *poet.*	**(11)** My deare friends, I come to *complaine* upon you, but to your selues. (Carew 1602) **(12)** Ye *complain* on God and on my sway. (Rossetti 1850)	*upon + NP* *on + NP*
6c. Const. *of* or (in mod. use) *about*. Now the leading use.	**(13)** The Heat they *complain* of cannot be in the Weather. (Addison 1711)	*of + NP*

	(14) Everyone I met *complained* bitterly about the injustice of having to earn a living and the peculiar beastliness of his own profession. (Waugh 1949) **(15)**Though he *complained* continually about his captivity..he was cheerful enough. (Vidal 1955) **(16)**The prisoners have *complained* about restrictions on visits, excessive searches and, above all, brutality. (Guardian 1986)	*about + NP*
6d. with *clause*. (Also with *impers. pass.*)	**(17)** Mr. Harley *complained* he could keep nothing from me. (Swift 1710) **(18)** It is *complained* that the Emperor spent his time..with hearing of Organs. (North 1728) **(19)** Ctesippus *complained* that we were talking in secret. (Jowett 1875)	*(that)*-clause
8a. *intr.* (orig. *refl.*) *spec.* To make a formal statement of a grievance *to* or *before* a competent authority; to lodge a complaint, bring a charge. Const. as in 6.	**(20)** One man threatening to *complain* of another, is saying that he will report misconduct to the officer in charge of the quarter-deck. (Smyth 1867) **(21)** Howe the quene of Ingland went and *complayned* her to the kyng of Fraunce..of Syr Hewe Spencer. (Berners 1523) **(22)** Domitius Corbulo..*complained* before the Lords of the Senate on L. Sulla..that, etc. (Grenewey 1598)	*of + NP* *to + NP + of + NP* *before + NP + that-clause*
8b. *to complain of*, at Eton, to report (a boy) to the Headmaster as deserving punishment.	**(23)** Every dame's house is supposed to be under the charge of some master, who is intended to keep an eye upon the boys and set such punishments as are necessary, or *complain* of those who deserve it. (Etonian 1870)	*of + NP*
III. 9a. *transf.* and *fig.* To emit a mournful sound.	**(24)** In a sadly-pleasing strain Let the warbling lute *complain*. (Pope 1708) **(25)** The broad stream in his banks *complaining*. (Tennyson 1832)	*zero*
9b. *Naut.* To groan or creak from over-straining.	**(26)** The Storm made the..Sloop *complain* so much. (*Lond. Gaz* 1722) **(27)** The nipping caused our timbers to *complain* sadly. (Kane 1853)	*zero*

Table 2 reveals some interesting facts about the different senses of the verb *complain* and also, several complement patterns emerge in the entry. The complement patterns are not specified in the OED and thus, I formulated the complement patterns shown in the *Complement pattern* column myself basing them on the example clauses shown in the *Example clauses* column. Altogether, OED provided the verb *complain* with eight different complement patterns in addition to the *zero*-complement: *against + NP*, *at + NP*, *before + NP + that-clause, of + NP*, *on + NP*, *to + NP + of + NP, upon + NP* and *that-clause*.

The leading use of *complain* in present-day English, according to the OED, is sense 6c: "to give expression to feelings of illusage, dissatisfaction, or discontent; to murmur, grumble" used

with the preposition *of* or *about*. The OED (s.v. *complain*, sense 6c.) emphasises that the use of the preposition *about* is particularly common in present-day English. Furthermore, the OED draws attention to the connection between the pattern *to complain of* and sense 4b (to let it be known that one is suffering from (any pain, or feeling of illness)).

4.2 The verb *complain* in learner's dictionaries

In addition to the OED, I decided to take two learner's dictionaries into account in the present study: the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (CALD) and the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD). The CALD gives the following senses for *complain*:

1. to say that something is wrong or not satisfactory
2. to tell someone formally that something is wrong

The CALD also mentions the phrasal verb *complain of something* which can be used "to tell other people that something is making you feel ill" (s.v. *complain*).

The OALD only provides one sense for the verb *complain*:

1. to say that you are annoyed, unhappy or not satisfied about sb/sth.

The OALD also mentions the phrasal verb *complain of something* "to say that you feel ill or are suffering from a pain" and the spoken phrase *can't complain* as in "'How are you?' 'Oh, I can't *complain*' (= I'm all right)" (s.v.).

4.3 Simplified senses

Based on the senses provided by the OED and the learner's dictionaries, I have decided to use the following set of senses when analysing the corpus data in the current thesis:

1. To give expression to feelings of dissatisfaction (OED senses 6a-d, CALD sense 1, OALD sense 1)
2. To give expression to physical suffering (OED sense I, CALD and OALD: *complain of*)
3. To tell someone formally that something is wrong (OED senses 8a-8b, CALD sense 2)
4. Figurative; to emit a mournful sound (OED sense III)

4.4 The verb *complain* in the *Valency Dictionary of English*

The *Valency Dictionary of English* (Herbst et al. 2004, xxix) does not discuss the different senses of words, but it lists complement patterns with authentic illustrations from the Bank of English corpus for a selection of lexical items. For *complain*, Herbst et al. (2004, s.v.) provide a rather wide selection of complement patterns, altogether nineteen patterns. The dictionary uses the symbol *N* to mark nouns or noun phrases in the complementation patterns, but here, I am using the symbol *NP*, as was done with the OED. The complement patterns with example clauses are presented in Table 3:

Table 3: The complement patterns in the *Valency dictionary of English*

Complement pattern	Example clause
monovalent (or the *zero* complement)	Even so, most of those who saw the painting when it was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1830 thought it indecent and *complained*.
that-clause (very frequent)	Radical delegates *complained* that too many concessions have been made to the government, and not enough has been received in return. Many charities *complain* they are feeling the chill from people switching their donations to the National Lottery.
quote/*sentence*	"I don't know what I'm doing wrong," Ray *complained*.
about + NP (very frequent)	She goes on to *complain* about Steve's poor choice of friends.

about + V-ing (very frequent)	Local hospitals have also *complained* about being unable to cope with the influx of Yemeni patients previously treated in Saudi hospitals.
about + NP + V-ing (very frequent)	She gets very lonely and *complains* about me getting home late.
at + NP	Others *complained* at the treatment they suffered recently from bouncers at Brown's Nightclub.
at + V-ing	Labour MP Tony Banks *complained* at being made to stand in for travel-shy colleagues on the grounds that his London residential status made travel less problematic for him.
of + NP (frequent)	The opposition *complained* of the massive use of government funds in ruling party campaigns. She *complained* of sore throat, phlegm in the back of her throat, chest pain, lightheadedness, and dizziness.
of + V-ing (frequent)	Many deaf people *complain*, with some justification, of being treated as stupid simply because they cannot hear.
of + NP + V-ing (frequent)	Customers *complain* of the queues being too long.
to + NP	If you go on like this I'm going to *complain* to Lysenko. (only if clear from context)
to + NP + that-clause	I've had many a frustrated owner on the phone *complaining* to me that their dog just will not keep to his own toys.
to + NP + about + NP	Chris Patten, governor of Hong Kong, has offered to set up an appeals tribunal after legislators *complained* to him about plans to issue 1997 passports ahead of time.
to + NP + about + V-ing	No example provided.
to + NP + at + NP	No example provided.
to + NP + at + V-ing	Her parents have *complained* to the press at being left in the dark.
to + NP + of + NP	Yet on Christmas Eve, he was *complaining* to friends of loneliness and his quest for a lasting relationship.
to + NP + of + V-ing	No example provided.

As was noted earlier, the selection of complements provided by Herbst et al. is relatively wide. Many such complement patterns are presented here that were not present in the OED. Next, I will briefly discuss a few noteworthy points in Table 3.

Herbst et al. mark *that-clause* complement and complements with the preposition *about* (*about + NP/V-ing, about + NP + V-ing*) as "very frequent" and patterns with the preposition *of* (*of + NP/V-ing, of + NP + V-ing*) as "frequent". This statement is partly in accordance with what we learned in the OED (s.v. *complain*): the leading complement pattern according to the OED is *about/of + NP* and the use of *about* is particularly common in present-day English. The

OED, however, does not provide examples of the patterns with verbs in –ing form, nor does it comment on the commonness of the *that-clause* complement.

Herbst et al. (2004, s.v. *complain*) also make a few other interesting points about the use of *complain*. They state that "[a] person can complain to another person or an institution

- *about* someone
- *about*, *at* or *of* something"

In other words, when the complement is +human, the preposition *about* is used, and when the complement is –human either preposition *about, at,* or *of* can be used. Furthermore, Herbst et al. (ibid.) state that the prepositions *about*, *at*, and *of* are often used as synonyms, but some speakers make a distinction between the prepositions and use *at* "when particular event or action has displeased someone" and *of* "when someone is suffering from a disease or experiencing pain." For the preposition *about*, no specialized use is given.

Finally, I will briefly return to control (see 3.3). *Complain* is a control verb, which can be seen from the following example clause taken from Herbst et al. (2004, s.v. *complain*):

(1) Many deaf people *complain*, with some justification, of being treated as stupid simply because they cannot hear.

The subject of example (1), *many deaf people*, is semantically linked both to the matrix verb *complain* and the embedded verb *being* (*treated*) which (following Davies and Dubinsky (2004, 3)) indicates that the verb *complain* is a control verb. That *complain* is a control verb can also be illustrated by applying 'the weather it' principle (my own example):

(2) *It *complained* about snowing.

Example (2) is not a possible construction and thus the verb *complain* is a control verb. (Notice that in (2), the word form *snowing* is the verb *snow* in the *-ing* form and *it* is the *it* of meteorological expressions.)

4.5 The verb *complain* in selected grammars

In addition to the four dictionaries, I looked at the following three grammars in order to learn more about the verb *complain*: Huddleston and Pullum (2002), Poutsma (1904-1924) and Biber et al. (1999). The complement patterns found in each grammar book are listed below:

- Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 279, 959):
  - *to + NP + about + NP*
  - *to + NP + that-clause*
- Poutsma (1904-1924, 659):
  - *of + V-ing*
  - *at + V-ing*
- Biber et al. (1999, 664, 742)
  - *that-clause*
  - *to + NP + that-clause*
  - *of/about + V-ing*
  - *of/about + NP + V-ing*

The grammars did not reveal any additional patterns to the ones given in the dictionaries.

Next, I will present two interesting aspects about *complain* that were discussed in Huddleston and Pullum (2002). Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1021) make a point about meaning differences between clausal complements and *preposition + NP* complements. The example clauses with *complain* are:

(3) They *complained* that there was no hot water.

(4) They *complained* about the water.

According to Huddleston and Pullum (ibid.) in (3) "the subordinate clause gives the content of their complaint" whereas in (4) "the NP doesn't give the content of the complaint but its topic". The differences between clausal and NP complements will be discussed when turning to the corpus data (see 5.5.4).

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1434-1435) also point out that *complain* cannot be in the passive tense. Consider sentences (5) - (7) (sentence (5) taken directly from Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1435, and (6)-(7) my own illustrations):

(5) We *complained* that there was no hot water.

(6) ?? That there was no hot water was *complained*.

(7) ?? It was *complained* that there was no hot water.

According to Huddleston and Pullum (ibid.) (6)-(7) would not be possible constructions. The OED, however, provides an example in which *complain* is in the passive tense with extraposition:

(8) It is *complained* that the Emperor spent his time(…)with hearing of Organs. (North 1728)

The example in the OED is fairly old, however, and it will be interesting to see whether passive constructions are present in the corpus data.

Finally, I will present a list of all the complement patterns that were provided by the two dictionaries and three grammars:

- *about + NP*
- *about + NP + V-ing*
- *about + V-ing*
- *against + NP*
- *at + NP*
- *at + V-ing*
- *before + NP + that-clause*
- *of + NP*
- *of + NP + V-ing*
- *of + V-ing*
- *on + NP*
- *quote/sentence*
- *(that)-clause*
- *to + NP*
- *to + NP + about + NP*
- *to + NP + about + V-ing*
- *to + NP + at + NP*
- *to + NP + at + V-ing*
- *to + NP + of + NP*
- *to + NP + of + V-ing*
- *to + NP + that-clause*

- *upon + NP*
- *zero*

Complain takes a surprisingly wide selection of complements: altogether twenty-two different patterns and the *zero*-complement can be found in the dictionaries and the grammars.

4.6 The distribution between the prepositions *of* and *about*

Before turning to the corpus data, I will still discuss one topic that possibly affects the complementation of *complain*, namely the distribution between the prepositions *of* and *about*. As was stated in Herbst et al. (2004, s.v. *complain*), in the case of the verb *complain,* the prepositions *of* and *about* (and *at*) can sometimes be used as synonyms. However, Brorström (1963) offers another view on the matter and claims that there are differences between the uses of the prepositions *of* and *about*.

According to Brorström (1963, 11, 325), the use of the preposition *about* (in its sense 'concerning', 'on the subject of') is increasing, especially at the expense of the prepositions *of* and *at*. Brorström (1963, 11) states that traditionally it has been held that *about* and *of* are semantically different and because of that they can be used in different positions: *about* is normally used when details or externals are being discussed, whereas *of* is used when one wants to state a fact. However, the picture is not as simple as this, but the choice between *about* and *of* is sometimes made based on stylistic or rhythmical factors (ibid.). As regards the rhythmical factor, the position of the preposition may sometimes influence the selection of one preposition over the other. When it comes to the stylistic factor, informal texts seem to favour the preposition *about* (Brorström 1963, 11).

In his study, Brorström (1963) discusses the use of the prepositions *of* and *about* in connection with the verbs *say*, *tell*, *talk*, and *speak*. Brorström's study covers the 18th and 19th centuries and the 20th century until the 1950s. In the following, I will present three contexts discussed by Brorström (1963) that may be relevant in the study of the verb *complain*, as well:

preposition + it, *preposition + V-ing* and *what/who/which + verb + preposition*. For a detailed discussion of the study, refer to Brorström (1963).

According to Brorström (1963), the noun *it* was predominantly preceded by the preposition *of* in the 18th century. The picture started to change when moving towards the 20th century. In present-day English, the "short monosyllabic *it*" is in most cases preceded by the preposition *about* when it comes to the verbs *say, tell, talk* and *speak* (Brorström 1963, 14-15). Thus, the position of the preposition before *it* has influenced this change. The pattern *of + it* has not completely disappeared in the 20th century, either. In the following, the patterns *about + it* and *of + it* are exemplified (Brorström 1963, 15, 32, 69, 34, 70):

(9) Have you *said* anything to Mummy about *it*? (Maugham 1930, *The Bread-Winner*, 210)

(10) I wanted to tell you *about it*, but I couldn't. (Isherwood 1954, *The World in the Evening*, 294)

(11) You must have been talking *about it*, Dora. (Christie 1950, *Murder Announced*, 159)

(12) Straker openly treats you as his future employer: it was he who first *told* me *of* it. (Shaw 1903, *Man and Superman*, 166)

(13) Then we *talked of* it and nibbled Bath Oliver biscuits… (Waugh 1945, *Brideshead Revisited*, 75)

The pattern *preposition + V-ing* is discussed in Brorström (1963) in connection with the verbs *say* and *talk*. In the case of *say*, the preposition *of* predominates in the 18th century, but in the 19th and 20th centuries the predominant preposition is *about*. In the case of *talk*, the pattern *preposition + V-ing* is present only in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the preposition *of* predominates even in the 20th century. The *preposition + V-ing* pattern is exemplified in Brorström (1963, 17, 77):

(14) "She *said* something *about* working in the movies." (Shute 1955, *Requiem for a* Wren, 192)

(15) Though Kipps had *said* nothing *of* doing anything of the sort. (Wells 1905, *Kipps*, 233)

(16) She *talked of* becoming a film actress. (Priestley, *Angel Pavement*, 310)

(17) We *talked about* founding his clinic; I was to help him. (Sayers 1928, *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club*, 156)

In the case of the pattern *what/who/which + preposition* the preposition *about* predominates in the 20th century (Brorström 1963). The pattern *what/who/which + of*, however, has not disappeared, either. The pattern is exemplified with the verbs studied by Brorström (1963, 21, 22, 51, 52):

(18) Exactly what did Sarah *tell* you *about* Charles and me? (Isherwood 1954, *The World in the Evening,* 119)

(19) Poirot remembered what Mrs. Oliver had *told* him *of* her conversation with Deirdre Henderson. (Christie 1952, *Mrs. McGinty's Dead*, 141)

(20) "Of course father. What shall we *talk about*?" (Waugh 1945, *Brideshead Revisited*, 54)

(21) I don't care what you *say of* yourself, I know that you can be nothing but what is true and charming. (Maugham 1923, *Our Betters*, 203)

The preposition *of* was more common in the 18th and the 19th centuries with this pattern.

Brorström (1963, 325) concludes that it is probable "that the use of *about* will continue to increase at the expense of other prepositions". Though Brorström's study is fairly old, it will be interesting to learn how his findings relate to the present study and the verb *complain*.

4.7 The research questions

Next, I will list the research questions I am going to try to answer in the corpus analysis section of the present thesis. The questions are based on the facts I learned when reading the previous research done on *complain*.

a) What are the complement patterns of the verb *complain* in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries? Are all the patterns listed in 4.5 present in the corpus data?
    - Are there differences between the frequencies of patterns when moving onwards from the 18th century?

- Has the distribution between the prepositions *about* and *of* changed? Has *about* gained ground at the expense of *of* as Brorstöm (1963) predicted?
- Are there contexts in which either *about* or *of* is preferred (*preposition + it*, *what/who/which + complain + preposition, preposition + V-ing*)?

b) What are the different senses of the verb *complain*?

c) Are there any passive tokens of the verb *complain* in the data?

d) Is there a semantic difference between clausal and *preposition + NP* complements?

e) Is *about* the only preposition used with +human complements?

5 Corpus analysis

Next, I will turn to the corpus data drawn from the CLMET and the BNC. First, I will make some general observations of the data and then discuss the data drawn from each part of the CLMET and the BNC. Finally, I will discuss some themes in more detail.

Table 4 presents the number of analysed tokens and the normalised frequency of the verb *complain* in the CLMET and the BNC[5]:

Table 4: *Complain* in CLMET 1-3 and the BNC

Corpus	Number of tokens	NF per 1 million words
CLMETEV 1 (1710-1780)	176	58.7
CLMET 2 (1780-1850)	253	68.4
CLMET 3 (1850-1920)	127	31.8
BNC	395	47.8

Table 4 shows that the normalised frequency was relatively high in CLMETEV 1 (58.7) and CLMET 2 (68.4), but it decreased significantly when moving onwards to CLMET 3 (31.8). In the BNC, the normalised frequency of *complain* was again higher (47.8), but not as high as it was in CLMETEV 1 or CLMET 2.

Complain takes a wide variety of different complements, altogether the corpus analysis revealed 22 complement patterns and the *zero* complement. Figure 2 presents the number of complement patterns (excluding the *zero* complement) in each part of the CLMET and the BNC:

[5] In Table 4, the irrelevant tokens (that will be discussed later) are left out from the count. Also, in the case of the BNC, the table shows the number of the sample (50 % of all tokens found) that was analysed in the current thesis instead of the number of all tokens found (802 tokens).

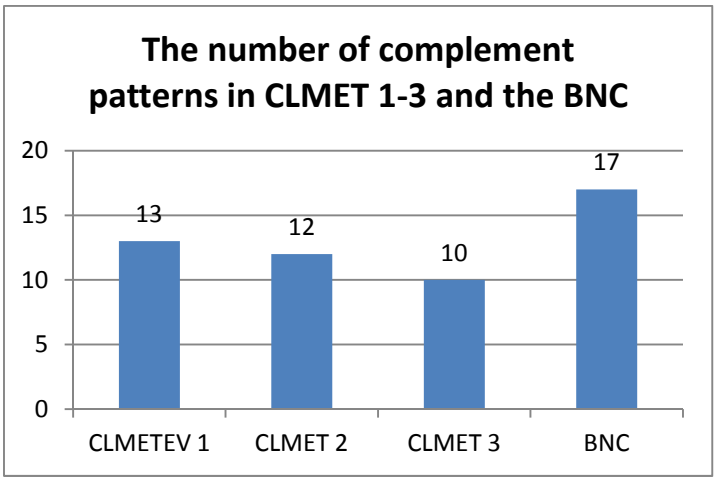

Figure 2: The number of complement patterns in CLMET 1-3 and the BNC

As was mentioned in 4.5, the number of different complement patterns found in the background literature was twenty-two plus the *zero* complement, in other words the number of patterns present in the background literature and the corpus data was the same. The set of patterns found in the background sources and the set of patterns found in the corpus data were not identical, however, and Table 5 shows which of the patterns found in the background literature were present in the current corpus data ('X' marks the pattern which was present in the corpus in question):

Table 5: The patterns of the background literature found in the current data.

	CLMET 1	*CLMET 2*	*CLMET 3*	*BNC*
about + NP		X	X	X
about + NP + V-ing				X
about + V-ing			X	X
against + NP	X	X		X
at + NP				
at + V-ing	X			X
before + NP + that-clause				
of + NP	X	X	X	X
of + NP + V-ing	X	X		
of + V-ing	X	X		X
on + NP		X		
quote/sentence	X	X	X	X
(that)-clause	X	X	X	X
to + NP	X	X	X	X
to + NP + about + NP			X	X
to + NP + about + V-ing				
to + NP + at + NP				
to + NP + at + V-ing				

to + NP + of + NP	X	X	X	X
to + NP + of + V-ing				
to + NP + that-clause	X	X	X	X
upon + NP				
zero	X	X	X	X

Most of the patterns (16 out of 23) listed in the earlier literature were found in the corpus data. Seven of the patterns were present in all three parts of the CLMET and in the BNC (listed below):

- *of + NP*
- *quote/sentence*
- *that-clause*
- *to + NP*
- *to + NP + of + NP*
- *to + NP + that-clause*
- *zero*

These patterns will be discussed in more detail in 5.1-5.4, when each part of the CLMET and the BNC are discussed separately.

Seven of the patterns given in the background literature, however, were not among the current corpus data:

- *at + NP*
- *before + NP + that-clause*
- *to + NP + about + V-ing*
- *to + NP + at + NP*
- *to + NP + at + V-ing*
- *to + NP + of + V-ing*
- *upon + NP*

Three of the patterns that were not present in the corpus data contained the preposition *at*. The only pattern with the preposition *at* present in the current corpus data was the pattern *at + V-ing* that was present in CLMETEV 1 and the BNC. The pattern *upon + NP* was marked as being obsolete in modern English in all but poetic contexts (OED) and, slightly surprisingly, it was not present even in the historical data of the current study. The patterns *to + NP + of + V-ing* and *to*

+ *NP* + *about* + *V-ing* that were presented in Herbst et al. (2004, s.v *complain*) had no realisations in the current corpus data. More research on these patterns could be done, in order to learn whether the patterns are present in some other text type or variety of English. However, it is beyond the scope of this study and the patterns will not be discussed further.

Some patterns were present in the current corpus data but were not presented in the earlier literature. I will present the patterns when discussing the data drawn from each corpus separately in 5.1-5.4.

There were some irrelevant tokens among the corpus data. In CLMETEV 1, there was only one irrelevant token, in CLMET 2 the number of irrelevant tokens was five, in CLMET 3 it was nine and, finally, in the BNC there were six irrelevant tokens. The irrelevant tokens were of two types: they always included the word form *complaining* and the form was used either as a noun or as an adjective (instead of a verb). Some examples of each corpus follow:

CLMETEV 1:

(1) And I heard her say, It was his own fault; there would be an end of all my *complaining* and perverseness, if he was once resolved; and other most impudent aggravations. (Richardson 1740, *Pamela*)

CLMET 2:

(2) …and that selfsame night, Lady Macadam wrote me a very *complaining* letter, for trying to wile away her companion… (Galt 1821, *Annals of the parish*)

(3) Both have a tender, thoughtful grace; and for their lightness, with a certain melancholy *complaining* intermixed, might be stolen from the harp of Aeolus. (Hazlitt 1821–22, *Table talk*)

CLMET 3:

(4) `I don't think they play at all fairly,' Alice began, in rather a *complaining* tone, `and they all quarrel so dreadfully one can't hear oneself speak... (Carroll 1865, *Alice's adventures in Wonderland*)

(5) I promise not to trouble you with any more *complaining*. But how you can live such a life I don't know. (Gissing 1891, *New grub street*)

BNC:

(6) …their aching heads, their over-fed bellies and *complaining* livers… (FB0 13)

(7) This caused much grumbling and *complaining*, as the masons considered they were anyway fighting a losing battle… (H7F 638)

Next, each part of the CLMET and the BNC will be discussed separately.

5.1 CLMETEV 1

Table 6 presents the different complement patterns found in CLMETEV 1:

Table 6: *Complain* in CLMETEV 1

Sentential patterns	**Number**	**%**	**Normalised frequency**
at + V-ing	1	0.6 %	0.3
of + V-ing	7	4 %	2.3
of + NP + V-ing	3	1.7 %	1
to + NP + that-clause	2	1.1 %	0.7
that-clause	23	13.1 %	7.7
Total (sentential)	36	~20.5 %	~12
Non-sentential patterns	**Number**	**%**	**Normalised frequency**
against + NP	1	0.6 %	0.3
for + NP	1	0.6 %	0.3
of + NP	90	51.1 %	30
to + NP	5	2.8 %	1.7
to + NP + of + NP	4	2.3 %	1.3
of + NP + to + NP	3	1.7 %	1
to + NP + for + NP	1	0.6 %	0.3
Total (non-sentential)	105	~59.7 %	~35
quote/sentence	2	1.1 %	0.7
zero	33	18.8 %	11
Total (all)	176	~100 %	~58.7

Table 6 reveals that non-sentential patterns were more common than sentential patterns in CLMETEV 1. I will next discuss sentential and non-sentential patterns separately, beginning

with non-sentential patterns. For the sake of convenience, I will also comment on *quote/sentence* and *zero* patterns in the same section as the non-sentential patterns.

5.1.1 CLMETEV 1: non-sentential patterns

As was already mentioned, non-sentential patterns were more common than sentential patterns in CLMETEV 1, altogether there were 105 tokens (59.7 %, NF 35) that represented a non-sentential pattern. Of the non-sentential patterns, the most common pattern by far was *of + NP* (90 tokens, 51.1 %, NF: 30):

(8) '…and I hope you will have no cause, when we go away, to *complain* of the ill behaviour of any of us.' (Fielding 1749, *The governess*)

(9) But, further, you *complained* of ill-treatment here; and mentioned an intention to leave the castle, and seek your fortune elsewhere. (Reeve 1777, *The old English baron*)

Herbst et al. (2004, s.v. *complain*) labelled the pattern *of + NP* as 'frequent' and the OED (s.v. *complain*, sense 6.c.) also mentioned that the "leading use" of the verb *complain* is with the preposition *of* (or in modern use *about*). The other non-sentential patterns were not nearly as frequent as *of + NP*: all the remaining non-sentential patterns had between one and five realisations.

The pattern *against + NP* was realised in the data by one token (0.6 %, NF: 0.3):

(10) …it is neither decent nor prudent to *complain* too loudly against, or to heighten the discontent of the people at a necessary evil. (Johnson 1740-1, *Parliamentary debates*)

Example (10) is interesting in several ways: there is an insertion *too loudly* between the verb *complain* and its complement *against + NP*. Furthermore, the NP *discontent of the people* not only functions as a complement for *complain against* but also to the verb *heighten*.

Five tokens (2.8 %, NF: 1.7) realised the pattern *to + NP* in the data.

(11) The coachman denied the accusation; but the innkeeper told him he had witnesses to prove the horse died two hours after he was brought home, and declared, that if he had not satisfaction for his beast, he would *complain* to the baron, and if he did not do him justice, have recourse to law. (Haywood 1744, *The fortunate foundlings*)

(12) I am extremely sorry you get mine so late. I have desired your brother to *complain* to Mr. Preverau: I get yours pretty regularly. (Walpole 1735-48, *Letters*)

In sentences (11) and (12) the context reveals what is being complained about, because it is not explicitly stated by the complement.

There were three patterns present in the current corpus data that were not discussed in the background literature: *for* + *NP*, *to* + *NP* + *for* + *NP* and *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP*. The patterns *for* + *NP* and *to* + *NP* + *for* + *NP* were realised in the data by a single token (0.6 %, NF: 0.3) each. The patterns are exemplified below:

(13) You shall not *complain* for want of accounts from Mr. Grevenkop, who will frequently write you whatever passes here, in the German language and character: which will improve you in both. (Chesterfield 1746-71, *Letters to his son*)

(14) She called upon Heaven and earth to revenge her wrongs; saying, she would never cease *complaining* to God, and the King, for vengeance and justice. (Reeve 1777, *The old English baron*)

It was interesting to find prepositional complement patterns with the preposition *for* in the data, because the preposition was not discussed in any of the sources used as a background material for the current study. It will also be interesting to learn whether the preposition is present in the later parts of the CLMET or in the BNC.

The third pattern not discussed in the earlier literature, *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP*, was realised in the data by three tokens (1.7 %, NF: 1), exemplified below:

(15) She *complained* of it to the baron de la Valiere, and told him, her whole family had been affronted… (Haywood 1744, *The fortunate foundlings*)

(16) He also made a shift to discover the gentleman who had been so kind as to lend me one of his company, and *complained* of him to the duke of N--, in hopes of seeing him broke for his misdemeanour... (Smollett 1751, *The adventures of Peregrine Pickle*)

Interestingly, another very similar pattern, *to* + *NP* + *of* + *NP*, in which the same prepositional phrases are in the opposite order, was discussed in Herbst et al. (2004, s.v. *complain*) and the OED (s.v. *complain*). According to Bolinger (1968, 127), "a difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning" (as was already mentioned in 3.4) and it is probable that these two similar patterns do not categorically convey the same meaning. The difference in meaning,

in the case of these two patterns, might be a slight change in the emphasis. Compare (15) and (16) with (17) and (18):

(17) She said, `Though politeness had prevented me from *complaining* to my husband's relations of his behaviour, yet they all were very sensible of it…(Fielding 1749, *Tom Jones*)

(18) But, Pamela, said my master, I am sorry to find in some parts of your journal, that Mrs. Jewkes carried her orders a little too far: and I the more take notice of it, because you have not *complained* to me of her behaviour, as she might have expected for some parts of it; though a good deal was occasioned by my strict orders. (Richardson 1740, *Pamela*)

(15) and (16) seem to put more emphasis on what/who is being complained about and (17) and (18) on who the subject is complaining to. Also, the end-weight principle (see Leech and Svartvik 2002, 210-211) might affect the order in which the prepositional phrases are presented: there is a tendency to place the more 'weighty' (usually longer) element towards the end of the clause (which can be seen in examples (15), (16) and (18)). The pattern *to + NP + of + NP* was realised in the data by four tokens (2.3 %, NF: 1.3).

Finally, I will briefly discuss the *zero* complement and the *quote/sentence* complement. *Zero* was fairly common among the CLMETEV 1 data, altogether 33 tokens (18.8 %, NF: 11) were recorded. All in all, it was the second most common complement in the data in terms of percentage value and normalised frequency. The complement is exemplified in the following:

(19) That's a sad coxcomb, said he: How did he behave to you?--Not extraordinarily, sir; but I should not *complain*; for I was even with him; because I thought I ought not to bear with him as with my lady. (Richardson 1740, *Pamela*)

(20) "Indeed, madam," says Amelia," I have no reason to *complain*; Mr. Booth is one of the soberest of men; but now and then to spend a late hour with his friend is… (Fielding 1751, *Amelia*)

The *quote/sentence* pattern was present in the data with two tokens (1.1 %, NF: 0.7):

(21) I was interrupted in the heyday of this soliloquy, with a voice which I took to be of a child, which *complained* "it could not get out." - I look'd up and down the passage, and seeing neither man, woman, nor child, I went out without farther attention. (Sterne 1768, *A sentimental journey through France and Italy)*

(22) Footnote 35: He *complained*, though not with the strictest truth, "Jam fluxisse annos quindecim in quibus, in Illyrico, ad ripam Danubii relegates cum gentibus barbaris luctaret." (Gibbon 1776, *Decline and fall of the Roman Empire 1*)

Lastly, I think it is worth noting that there were no complements with the preposition *about* in CLMETEV 1. OED (s.v. *complain*) stated that *about + NP* is a particularly common pattern in the present-day English use and it will be interesting to see how the situation changes when taking a look at the remaining of the data.

5.1.2 CLMETEV 1: sentential patterns

Of the CLMETEV 1 data, 20.5 % realised a sentential pattern (NF 12). The sentential patterns are presented once more in Table 7:

Table 7: Sentential patterns in CLMETEV 1

Sentential patterns	Number	%	Normalised frequency
at + V-ing	1	0.6 %	0.3
of + V-ing	7	4 %	2.3
of + NP + V-ing	3	1.7 %	1
to + NP + that-clause	2	1.1 %	0.7
that-clause	23	13.1 %	7.7
Total (sentential)	36	~20.5 %	~12

Each sentential pattern among the CLMETEV 1 data was discussed in at least one of the background sources used for the current study.

The most common sentential pattern was *that-clause*, which was altogether the third most common pattern in CLMETEV 1 after *of + NP* and the *zero* complement. *That-clause* was given the label "very frequent" in Herbst et al. (2004, s.v. *complain*). The pattern is exemplified in the following:

(23) Your friend Duval dined with me the other day, and *complained* most grievously that he had not heard from you above a year… (Chesterfield 1746-71, *Letters to his son*)

(24) She bitterly *complained* that he had never obliged her but once… (Smollett 1751, *The adventures of Peregrine Pickle*)

Among the *that-clauses* there were three cases of *that* deletion, exemplified below:

(25) If, after this, you took the graceless lad, Could you *complain*, my friend, he proved so bad? (Pope 1733-4, *An essay on man*)

(26) …Every man, at least, will allege, that he would have accepted it, and *complain* he suffers only by the fault of the government… (Johnson 1740-1, *Parliamentary debates 1*)

(27) He then demanded his billets, together with a mug of beer, and *complaining* it was cold, spread himself before the kitchen fire. (Fielding 1749, *Tom Jones*)

(25) is an interesting case, because *that* deletion affects a clause where there is also an insertion ("my friend"). The insertion makes the clause more complex and in complex contexts I would expect the more explicit version in which *that* is present. What probably explains the *that* deletion is that the sentence is a part of a poem and this particular sentence was chosen for rhythmical reasons. Altogether, there were two cases of insertion among the *that-clauses* in CLMETEV 1 (see examples (23) and (25)).

Another pattern with a *that-clause*, namely *to + NP + that-clause* was present in CLMETEV 1 with two tokens:

(28) He owed both to an accident: In the year 1704 lord treasurer Godolphin happened to *complain* to the lord Hallifax, that the duke of Marlborough's victory at Blenheim, had not been celebrated in verse... (Cibber 1753, *The lives of the poets 3*)

(29) …but at last the beggar getting notice where the dog was, she came to *complain* to Sir Thomas as he was sitting in his hall, that his lady withheld her dog from her…(Cibber 1753, *The lives of the poets 1*)

In (29) there is an insertion "as he was sitting in his hall" between the *NP* complement and the *that-clause* complement.

The patterns *of + V-ing* and *of + NP + V-ing* were present in CLMETEV 1 seven and three times respectively.

(30) …and again, among the errors of the writer he notices, Sir Robert Walpole is made to *complain* of being abandoned by his friends. (Walpole 1735-48, *Letters*)

(31) …having seated her on the floor, he presented her with a glass of wine and water; and, as she *complained* of being faint, enriched the draught with some drops of a certain elixir... (Smollett 1751, *The adventures of Peregrine Pickle*)

(32) …and, being admitted to his presence, began with great freedom, though with great gentleness, to *complain* of his not having dealt with him with more openness. (Fielding 1751, *Amelia*)

(33) I think you can't *complain* now of my not writing to you. (Walpole 1735-48, *Letters*)

Interestingly, there is an insertion "now" between the verb and the complement in (33). Following Rohdenburg (2006, 147), in an insertion context the more explicit *that-clause* is the more probable complement, but here, the less explicit *V-ing* clause is chosen. The inserted section is very short, however, only one word, which might explain the choice of the *V-ing* complement. Also, it is worth noticing that in all three *of + NP + V-ing* tokens in CLMETEV 1, the *NP* was in the possessive form (see (32)-(33)).

Finally, there was one token that realised the pattern *at + V-ing* in CLMETEV 1:

(34) They would not, I am sure, have equal reason to *complain* at contributing to the maintenance of a sett of brave fellows, who, at the hazard of their health, their limbs, and their lives, have maintained the safety and honour of their country… (Fielding 1751, *Amelia*)

5.2 CLMET 2

Table 8 presents the different complement patterns found in CLMET 2:

Table 8: *Complain* in CLMET 2

Sentential patterns	**Number**	**%**	**Normalised frequency**
of + V-ing	6	2.4 %	1.6
of + NP + V-ing	3	1.2 %	0.8
to + NP + that-clause	4	1.6 %	1.1
that-clause	39	15.4 %	10.5
Total (sentential)	52	~20.6 %	~14
Non-sentential patterns	**Number**	**%**	**Normalised frequency**
about + NP	1	0.4 %	0.3
against + NP	2	0.8 %	0.5
of + NP	112	44.3 %	30.3
on + NP	1	0.4 %	0.3
to + NP	10	4 %	2.7
to + NP + of + NP	2	0.8 %	0.5

of + NP + to + NP	7	2.8 %	1.9
Total (non-sentential)	135	~53.5 %	~36.5
quote/sentence	4	1.6 %	1.1
zero	62	24.5 %	16.8
Total (all)	253	~100 %	~68.4

Again, non-sentential patterns were more common than sentential patterns. The non-sentential and sentential patterns will be discussed in more detail below. I will also make comparisons between CLMETEV 1 and CLMET 2.

5.2.1 CLMET 2: non-sentential patterns

As in CLMETEV 1, the most common complement pattern in CLMET 2 was *of + NP* (112 tokens). The percentage value was slightly smaller in CLMET 2 (44.3 %) than in CLMETEV 1 (51.1 %) but the normalised frequency was almost the same: CLMETEV 1: 30 and CLMET 2: 30.3. The pattern is exemplified in the following:

(35) Mrs. Hurst and her sister scarcely opened their mouths, except to *complain* of fatigue, and were evidently impatient to have the house to themselves. (Austen 1813, *Pride and prejudice*)

(36) `I shall not feel myself neglected: while you are doing your duty, Arthur, I shall never *complain* of neglect. (Brontë 1848, *The tenant of Wildfell Hall*)

Other non-sentential patterns were not nearly as common as *of + NP* in CLMET 2. Several patterns were recorded in the data only once or twice, but two patterns were slightly more common (*to + NP* and *of + NP + to + NP*).

To + NP was present in the data with 10 tokens (4 %, NF: 2.7). The pattern was slightly more common than it was in CLMETEV 1 (2.8 %, NF: 1.7). Some example clauses follow:

(37) 'Humph! and meantime you will go and talk me over to Mrs. Hargrave, and write long letters to aunt Maxwell to complain of the wicked wretch you have married?' `I shall *complain* to no one.' (Brontë 1848, *The tenant of Wildfell Hall*)

(38) I waited an hour expecting her, and then went out in great vexation at my disappointment. I *complained* to her mother a day or two after, saying I thought it so

> unlike Sarah's usual propriety of behaviour, that she must mean it as a mark of disrespect. (Hazlitt 1823, *Liber Amoris*)

Here, the context reveals what is being complained about because the complement does not explicitly state it. Also, most of the realisations of this pattern in CLMET 2 were similar to (37) and (38): they were present in the speech of novel characters and the discussion provided a context which revealed the topic of the complaint.

The patterns *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* and *to* + *NP* + *of* + *NP* were present in the data with seven and two tokens respectively. As was mentioned in 5.1.1, only the pattern *to* + *NP* + *of* + *NP* was presented in the background literature, and it is interesting that in CLMET 2, the pattern *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* was more common than the *to* + *NP* + *of* + *NP* pattern. The patterns are exemplified in the following:

(39) Nelson *complained* of this to the captain-general of Catalonia, informing him, that he claimed, for every British ship or squadron, the right of lying, as long as it pleased... (Southey 1813, *Life of Horatio Lord Nelson*)

(40) She *complained* bitterly of all this to her husband. (Austen 1813, *Pride and prejudice*)

(41) But in this round of attention to pleasures and to study, he no more *complained* to Agnes of "excess of business." (Inchbald 1796, *Nature and art*)

(42) A lady was *complaining* to a friend of mine of the credulity of people in attending to quack advertisements... (Hazlitt 1821-1822, *Table talk*)

See to 5.1.1 for a more detailed discussion of these two patterns.

Interestingly, the pattern *about* + *NP* was present in the data with one token:

(43) That's enough; let me alone.--What are you on the point of *complaining* about, Heathcliff?" "Nothing--only look at the almanac on that wall." (Brontë 1847, *Wuthering heights*)

It is worth noting that (43) is an example of imitated spoken language, and as Brorström (1963) claimed, informal contexts, like spoken language, favour the preposition *about* over the preposition *of*. In CLMETEV 1, there were no realisations of *about* + *NP*, and I think it will be interesting to see whether the pattern becomes more common in the third part of the CLMET and in the BNC.

The pattern *against + NP* was present in CLMET 2 with two tokens (0.8 %, NF: 0.5). The frequency of the pattern was almost the same as it was in CLMETEV 1, in which the NF of the pattern was 0.3 (0.6 %). The pattern is exemplified in the following:

(44) ...that a certain people under our national protection should *complain*, not against our monarch and a few favourite advisers, but against our WHOLE LEGISLATIVE BODY... (Burns 1780-1796, *Letters*)

(45) The Greek priest of the place was despatched on a mission to the Governor of Jerusalem (Aboo Goosh), in order to *complain* against the proceedings of the Sheik and obtain a restitution of the bride. (Kinglake 1844, *Eothen*)

The pattern *on + NP*, which was not present in CLMETEV 1, had a single realisation in CLMET 2:

(46) ...he looked around, and discerning no known objects, he cast his hands to heaven for pity, and *complained* on those ruthless men who had beguiled him with a promise of conveying him home to his country... (Lamb 1808, *Adventures of Ulysses*)

This pattern was presented in the OED (s.v. *complain*, sense 6.b.) though it was noted that it is obsolete in other than poetic contexts. Table 5 showed that the pattern *on + NP* only is present in CLMET 2. In the light of the present study, the pattern seems to be of minor significance, when it comes to the complementation of *complain*.

As in CLMETEV 1, the *zero* complement was fairly common in CLMET 2, as well: 62 tokens (24.5 %, NF: 16.8) were recorded. In fact, the pattern was even more common in CLMET 2 than it was in the first part of the corpus (CLMETEV 1: 18.8 %, NF: 11). The pattern is exemplified below:

(47) Nobody can tell what I suffer! But it is always so. Those who do not *complain* are never pitied." (Austen 1813, *Pride and prejudice*)

Finally, the *quote/sentence* complement was present in the CLMET 2 data with four realisations (1.6 %, NF: 1.1). The pattern was only slightly more common than it was in CLMETEV 1 (1.1 %, NF: 0.7). The pattern is exemplified in the following:

(48) No shoes, though it is winter; no clothes; some have not even arms: 'In the Army of the South,' *complains* an honourable Member, 'there are thirty thousand pairs of breeches wanting,'-- a most scandalous want. (Carlyle 1837, *The French Revolution*)

5.2.2 CLMET 2: sentential patterns

Table 9 presents the sentential patterns in CLMET 2 once again:

Table 9: Sentential patterns in CLMET 2

Sentential patterns	Number	%	Normalised frequency
of + V-ing	6	2.4 %	1.6
of + NP + V-ing	3	1.2 %	0.8
to + NP + that-clause	4	1.6 %	1.1
that-clause	39	15.4 %	10.5
Total (sentential)	52	~20.6 %	~14

About 20.6 % of all the CLMET 2 data realised a sentential pattern (NF: 14, cf. CLMETEV 1, 20.5 %, NF: 12). All the sentential patterns present in CLMET 2 were also presented in at least one of the background sources. As in CLMETEV 1, the most common sentential complement pattern in CLMET 2 was the *that-clause* pattern with 39 tokens (15.4 %, NF: 10.5). Altogether, the *that-clause* pattern was the third most common pattern in CLMET 2 in terms of normalised frequency and percentage value. The pattern is exemplified in the following:

(49) Some of the youngest of his employers had, it is true, at times *complained* that he made mistakes of halfpence and pence in their accounts; but as these affairs could never be brought to a public trial, Fisher's character and consequence were undiminished… (Edgeworth 1796, *The parent's assistant*)

(50) Nelson had superintended the whole business of that yard with the most rigid exactness, and he *complained* that he was neglected. (Southey 1813, *Life of Horatio Lord Nelson*)

Among the *that-clauses* there was a single token of *that* deletion:

(51) If she *complained* she was ill, it was with the certainty that her languor would be admired… (Inchbald 1796, *Nature and art*)

Also, there were two tokens with an insertion between the verb and the complement:

(52) Yet you *complain* at other times that no one ever took such liberties with you as I have done. (Hazlitt 1823, *Liber Amoris*)

(53) He *complains* loudly that he is classed with Chabots, with swindling Stockjobbers; that his Indictment is a list of platitudes and horrors. (Carlyle 1837, *The French Revolution*)

The pattern *to* + *NP* + *that-clause* was present in CLMET 2 with four tokens (1.6 %, NF: 1.1). The frequency of the pattern was only slightly smaller in CLMETEV 1 (1.1 %, NF: 0.7). The pattern is exemplified in the following:

(54) Upon this the very sentinels scampered off, and every vessel came out of the mole. A shipowner *complained* to the commodore that the municipality refused to let him take his goods out of the custom-house. (Southey 1813, *Life of Horatio Lord Nelson*)

(55) Abernethy thinks his pill an infallible cure for all disorders. A person once *complaining* to his physician that he thought his mode of treatment had not answered, he assured him it was the best in the world... (Hazlitt 1821-1822, *Table talk*)

The patterns *of* + *V-ing* and *of* + *NP* + *V-ing* were realised in the data by six and three tokens respectively. The normalised frequencies were slightly smaller in CLMET 2 than in CLMETEV 1: the NF of the pattern *of* + *V-ing* was 2.3 in CLMETEV 1 whereas it was 1.6 in CLMET 2, in the case of the pattern *of* + *NP* + *V-ing* the normalised frequencies were CLMETEV 1: 1 and CLMET 2: 0.8. Examples of the patterns follow:

(56) My wife will receive the moiety of my wages, while I am absent, mi Lor, and therefore will have no reason to *complain* of being deserted. (Borrow 1843, *Bible in Spain*)

(57) I stirred up the cinders, and fetched a scuttleful myself. The invalid *complained* of being covered with ashes; but he had a tiresome cough, and looked feverish and ill, so I did not rebuke his temper. (Brontë 1847, *Wuthering heights*)

(58) You once *complained* of my _not_ writing;--I will "heap coals of fire upon your head" by _not_ *complaining* of your _not_ reading. (Byron 1810-1813, *Letters*)

(59) Claudio was to wait but a few days before he was to be married to his fair lady; yet he *complained* of the interval being tedious, as indeed most young men are impatient when they are waiting for the accomplishment of any event they have set their hearts upon... (Lamb 1807, *Tales from Shakespeare*)

In CLEMT 2 (unlike in CLMETEV 1), not all NPs in the *of* + *NP* + *V-ing* patterns were possessive forms: (58) provides two examples of possessive NPs whereas (59) is an example of an accusative NP.

5.3 CLMET 3

Table 10 presents the different complement patterns found in CLMET 3:

Table 10: *Complain* in CLMET 3

Sentential patterns	**Number**	**%**	**Normalised frequency**
about + V-ing	1	0.8 %	0.3
to + NP + that-clause	1	0.8 %	0.3
that-clause	15	11.8 %	3.8
Total (sentential)	17	~13.4 %	~4.3
Non-sentential patterns	**Number**	**%**	**Normalised frequency**
about + NP	1	0.8 %	0.3
to + NP	5	3.9 %	1.3
to + NP + about + NP	1	0.8 %	0.3
of + NP	64	50.4 %	16
to + NP + of + NP	2	1.6 %	0.5
of + NP + to + NP	1	0.8 %	0.3
Total (non-sentential)	74	~58.3 %	~18.5
quote/sentence	6	4.7 %	1.5
zero	30	23.6 %	7.5
Total (all)	127	~100 %	~31.8

Non-sentential patterns were more common than sentential patterns, as they were in CLMET 1 and 2. The non-sentential and sentential patterns will be discussed in the following with comparisons to the previous parts of the CLMET.

5.3.1 CLMET 3: non-sentential patterns

As in the two previous parts of the CLMET, the most common complement in CLMET 3 was *of + NP* (64 tokens, 50.4 %, NF 16). The percentage value was higher in CLMET 3 (50.4 %) than in CLMET 2 (44.3 %), but the NF was significantly lower in CLMET 3 (16) than in CLMET 2 (30.3) or CLMETEV 1 (30). It is worth noting, however, that on the whole, the NF of the verb *complain* decreased significantly from CLMETEV 1 (58.7) and CLMET 2 (68.4) to CLMET 3

(31.8), which affected the NF of individual patterns, as well. The complement pattern *of + NP* is exemplified in the following:

(60) "I've got only one thing to say. I don't deserve to be helped; and I don't question or *complain* of my punishment; it is just, it ought to have happened. (Chesterton 1914, *The wisdom of Father Brown*)

(61) Its ostensible purpose was to *complain* of the picture postcards. Right at the end, in a few nonchalant sentences, she offered to adopt the child... (Forster 1905, *Where angels fear to tread*)

In CLMET 3, there were five other non-sentential patterns most of which were realised by one token only. The pattern *about + NP* was present in the data with a single token (0.8 %, NF 0.3). The NF of this pattern was the same as it was in CLMET 2.

(62) 'Poor old fellow!' said Everard, with feeling. 'Does he *complain* about his wife?' 'He never has done till now, but there's a sentence here that reads doubtfully. (Gissing 1893, *The odd woman*)

As in CLMET 2, the only *about + NP* token was present in an imitated speech context. For a more detailed discussion on this see 5.2.1.

Another pattern with the preposition *about* in CLMET 3 was *to + NP + about + NP* which appeared in the data once (0.8 %, NF: 0.3). This pattern was not present in the earlier parts of the CLMET:

(63) But the inhabitants *complained* to the police about it, and a watch was set for him one night, and he was captured. (Jerome 1889, *Three men in a boat*)

In (63) it is notable that the preposition *about* is followed by the noun *it*. As Brorström (1963) claimed, rhythmical reasons affect the choice of a preposition and the "short monosyllabic *it*" is often preceded by the preposition *about*, especially in modern English (Brorström 1963, 14-15).

The pattern *to + NP* was realised in the data by five tokens (3.9 %, NF: 1.3). In comparison, the percentage values and the normalised frequencies in the earlier parts of the CLMET were: CLMETEV 1: 2.8 %, NF: 1.7 and CLMET 2: 4 %, NF: 2.7. The pattern is exemplified in the following:

(64) …because of late she had been obliged to barricade the door of the cubicle with a chest of drawers, owing to the propensities of a new tenant of the sixth floor. It was useless to *complain* to the concierge; the sole effective argument was the chest of drawers, and even that was frailer than Sophia could have wished. (Bennett 1908, *The old wives' tale*)

Here, as with other tokens of this type, the context revealed the topic of the complaint.

The patterns *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* and *to* + *NP* + *of* + *NP* were realised in the data by one and two tokens respectively. The NF of the pattern *to* + *NP* + *of* + *NP* was 0.5 in CLMET 3 (cf. CLMET 2 NF: 0.5 and CLMETEV 1 NF: 1.3). The NF of the pattern *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* was 0.3 in CLMET 3, which was lower than in CLMETEV 1 (1) and CLMET 2 (1.9). The patterns are exemplified in the following:

(65) …and she likewise *complained* to her husband of his brother's jealousy of her welcome from her own people… (Yonge 1912, *The caged lion*)

(66) He never, as I have said, *complained* of his father to me... (Butler 1903, *The way of all flesh*)

With the exception of the pattern *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP*, all non-sentential patterns were discussed in the background literature.

5.3.2 CLMET 3: sentential patterns

Table 11 shows the different sentential complement patterns found in CLMET 3.

Table 11: Sentential patterns in CLMET 3

Sentential patterns	Number	%	Normalised frequency
about + V-ing	1	0.8 %	0.3
to + NP + that-clause	1	0.8 %	0.3
that-clause	15	11.8 %	3.8
Total (sentential)	17	~13.4 %	~4.3

There were only three different sentential patterns among the CLMET 3 data. Two of the patterns were realised by one token only, but the *that-clause* pattern was more common with as many as 15 tokens (11.8 %, NF: 3.8). In addition, there was one realisation of the pattern *to* + *NP* + *that-clause*. The patterns are exemplified below:

(67) You say that I ill-treated my dear wife. It is not so. I have never ill-treated any one. You *complain* that there is no love in this marriage. I prove that there is, and you become still more angry. (Forster 1905, *Where angels fear to tread*)

(68) The next thing was to eat the comfits: this caused some noise and confusion, as the large birds *complained* that they could not taste theirs, and the small ones choked and had to be patted on the back. (Carroll 1865, *Alice's adventures in Wonderland*)

(69) If I am to be loyal to the truth, I must record that some of the other little boys presently *complained* to Mary Grace that I put out my tongue at them in mockery, during the service in the Room, to remind them that I now broke bread as one of the Saints and that they did not. (Gosse 1907, *Father and son*)

Among the *that-clause* patterns there was a single token that had an insertion between the verb and the complement:

(70) …he began to ask her about the funeral, and, finding that she knew nothing, *complained* bitterly that, if they didn't take care, everything would go wrong. (Galsworthy 1906, *The man of property*)

Also, one token with *that* deletion was recoded:

(71) "And how is dear Irene?" Soames's smile died. "Pretty well," he said. "*Complains* she can't sleep; she sleeps a great deal better than I do," and he looked at his wife, who was talking to Bosinney by the door. (Galsworthy 1906, *The man of property*)

One *about + V-ing* token was also recorded:

(72) When I am inclined to *complain* about having worked so many years and taken nothing but debt, though I feel the want of money so continually... (Butler 1883, Notebooks)

This pattern was not present in the earlier parts of the CLMET. It will be interesting to see if it will gain ground in the BNC.

5.4 The BNC

As was mentioned earlier, the data for this part of the thesis was gathered from the Imaginative Prose domain of the BNC. The search string used was {complain}_V*. The search yielded 802 tokens and the data was then thinned down into a random selection of 50 % (401 tokens). Of these 401 tokens one was disregarded, because one sentence was in the data twice and five were disregarded because they were irrelevant for the current thesis (see 5).

Table 12 shows the different complement patterns found in the BNC:

Table 12: *Complain* in the BNC

Sentential patterns	**Number**	**%**	**Normalised frequency**
about + V-ing	5	1.3 %	0.6
about + NP + V-ing	5	1.3 %	0.6
about + wh-clause	2	0.5 %	0.2
at + V-ing	3	0.8 %	0.4
of + -V-ing	4	1 %	0.5
of + wh-clause	1	0.3 %	0.1
to + NP + that-clause	1	0.3 %	0.1
that-clause	31	7.8 %	3.8
wh-clause	2	0.5 %	0.2
Total (sentential)	54	~13.7 %	~6.5
Non-sentential patterns	**Number**	**%**	**Normalised frequency**
about + NP	53	13.4 %	6.4
against + NP	2	0.5 %	0.2
of + NP	31	7.8 %	3.8
to + NP	11	2.8 %	1.3
to + NP + about + NP	7	1.9 %	0.8
about + NP + to + NP	1	0.3 %	0.1
to + NP + of + NP	1	0.3 %	0.1
Total (non-sentential)	106	~26.8 %	~12.8
quote/sentence	95	24.1 %	11.5
zero	140	35.4 %	17
Total (all)	395	~100 %	~47.8

The non-sentential patterns were again more common than the sentential patterns. As I did with the CLMET, I will now discuss non-sentential and sentential patterns separately and make comparisons with the CLMET data. For the sake of convenience, I am going to comment on the *zero* complement and the *quote/sentence* complement in the same section as the non-sentential patterns, like I did with the CLMET data.

5.4.1 BNC: non-sentential patterns

In the BNC, the pattern *of + NP* was no longer the most common pattern, as it had been throughout the three parts of the CLMET. Of the non-sentential patterns in the BNC, the most common pattern was *about + NP*. Even more common were the *zero* complement and the *quote/sentence* complement, but I will return to those patterns slightly later. *About + NP* was realised in the BNC data by 53 tokens (13.4 %, NF: 6.4). The pattern was significantly more common in the BNC than in any part of the CLMET (CLMETEV 1: no tokens, CLMET 2: 0.4 %, NF: 0.3, CLMET 3: 0.8 %, NF: 0.3).

(73) A diner called the waiter over to *complain* about his food. (CHR 686)

(74) Nor had he had any reason to *complain* about the security measures surrounding visitors to the base. (FRF 2653)

Of + NP pattern, on the other hand, was clearly less common in the BNC than in the CLMET. In the BNC, the pattern was realised by 31 tokens (7.8 %, NF: 3.8). In comparison, the percentage values and the normalised frequencies in the CLMET were the following: CLMETEV 1: 51.1 % NF: 30, CLMET 2: 44.3 %, NF: 30.3 and CLMET 3: 50.4 %, NF: 16. The pattern is exemplified in the following.

(75) Geoffrey said he had *complained* earlier of toothache. (FNU 271)

(76) …and then send a servant to *complain* of the quality. (EFJ 1995)

As Brorström (1963) predicted, the frequency of the preposition *about* seems to be increasing at the expense of the preposition *of*. I will discuss the prepositions *about* and *of* in more detail in 5.5.3.

To + NP was present in the data with 11 tokens (2.8 %, NF: 1.3). The normalised frequency was the same as in CLMET 3. In CLMET 2, the NF of the pattern was 2.7 and in CLMETEV 1 1.7. All in all, the frequency of the pattern has been relatively low in all the corpora.

(77) Alfie then shut the gate and ambled off to the house, shaking his head in perplexity, to *complain* to a sympathetic Dora in the kitchen. (H8X 1879)

(78) You'd *complain* to the management if I refused to cut your hair?' (HA9 141)

The pattern *to + NP + about + NP* was realised by seven tokens and the pattern *about + NP + to + NP* by a single token in the BNC data. The patterns were not present in the CLMET. The pattern *about + NP + to + NP* was the only non-sentential complement in the BNC that was not discussed in the background literature. The patterns are exemplified in the following:

(79) He could have *complained* to the top about my basic lack of professionalism… (A0F 525)

(80) …so they *complained* enjoyably to each other about the local council. (AB9 747)

(81) It was after that that he *complained* about the brakes to Morrison. (GUF 3786)

Interestingly, the pattern *to + NP + of + NP* only had one realisation in the BNC data and the pattern *of + NP + to + NP* had none.

(82) My father feared my mother as much as I did and wished me to please and agree with her always, for when I did not she would *complain* to him of my behaviour…

Seemingly, in patterns like these the preposition *about* is gaining ground at the expense of the preposition *of*. Still, more data should be analysed before drawing definite conclusions.

Finally, the non-sentential pattern *against + NP* was present in the data with two tokens (0.5 %, NF: 0.2). In comparison, the normalised frequencies of the pattern in the CLMET were: CLMETEV 1: 0.3, CLMET 2: 0.5 and CLMET 3: 0. *Against + NP* has been a rare pattern throughout the data, but it has not ceased to exist even in the present-day English:

(83) Ada Gaily *complained*, had always *complained*, loud and long and bitterly, against the tenor of her life. (AD1 156)

(84) The only complaint — and she was not really *complaining* against her uncle, perhaps I should rather say the cause for depression — was that from time to time she was very homesick and longed to see her mother and girls of her own age. (H9G 137)

Lastly, I will briefly discuss the two most common patterns of the BNC data: *zero* and *quote/sentence*. The *zero* complement was the most common complement in the BNC, more than a third of all the data realised the pattern whereas in the CLMET the percentage value was between 18.8 % and 24.5 %. The normalised frequency of the pattern in each corpus was:

CLMETEV 1: 11, CLMET 2: 16.8, CLMET 3: 7.5 and BNC: 17. As is evident, the NF was almost the same in CLMET 2 and the BNC.

(85) 'I've never *complained*,' Merrill objected. (HA7 774)

(86) '…so naturally, he *complained* and the doctor shrugged his shoulders and said, well, after all your friend is a private patient.' (HH9 2622)

There were ten tokens that represented the phrasal expression "can't *complain*" (see 4.2) in the BNC data (exemplified below):

(87) 'So I developed five acres on my own account and things just went on from there. Can't *complain*. It makes a decent living.' (CKB 939)

(88) 'Nice to see Stubby again; Good God, the power structure in a town this size was more formidable than politics in New York City. Come on, Arthur, you can't *complain*, boyo! You're being offered all the protection of the law. We'll keep the crowds back as you wash your dirty linen in public.' (GUD 1427)

The *quote/sentence* complement was present in the data with 95 tokens (24.1 %, 11.5). It is interesting that almost a quarter of the data realised the pattern in the BNC when the percentage value of the pattern was between 1.1 % and 4.7 % in the CLMET. Also, the NF is significantly higher in the BNC than in the CLMET (CLMETEV 1: 0.7, CLMET 2: 1.1, CLMET 3: 1.5).

(89) 'It will be very boring,' Owen *complained*. (HTX 1799)

(90) 'You're unnatural,' he would *complain*. (HGJ 1266)

5.4.2 BNC: sentential patterns

The number of different sentential patterns in the BNC was significantly higher than in the three parts of the CLMET, there were altogether nine different complement patterns among the BNC data. The complement patterns are presented once again in the following table:

Table 13: Sentential patterns in the BNC

Sentential patterns	Number	%	Normalised frequency
about + V-ing	5	1.3 %	0.6
about + NP + V-ing	5	1.3 %	0.6
about + wh-clause	2	0.5 %	0.2

at + V-ing	3	0.8 %	0.4
of + -V-ing	4	1 %	0.5
of + wh-clause	1	0.3 %	0.1
to + NP + that-clause	1	0.3 %	0.1
that-clause	31	7.8 %	3.8
wh-clause	2	0.5 %	0.2
Total (sentential)	54	13.7 %	6.5

Though the number of complement patterns was higher in the BNC, the percentage value and the normalised frequency were relatively low. The most common sentential pattern in the BNC was the *that-clause* pattern, like it was in the three parts of the CLMET, as well.

(91) You sound like all those parents who *complain* that their children use the house like a hotel. (FSP 2320)

(92) He *complained* that my titles were vague and pretentious, and smelt of the blue-stocking. (G1A 2339)

That deletion was present in six of the *that-clause* tokens:

(93) You can't *complain* I don't tell you things. (AD1 2954)

(94) During a break in which the designer's assistant smeared the mirror above the fireplace with vaseline — ; Meredith had *complained* it reflected too much light — Dawn Allenby apologised for the drenching smell of eau de Cologne that pervaded her person. (FNU 353)

Also, there were three tokens with an insertion between the verb and the complement (exemplified below):

(95) I didn't see her often, but whenever we met she would *complain* gently that they never went anywhere because Derek was always so busy or the babbas were teething or undergoing the whooping cough. (G06 1626)

There was also one token that represented the pattern *to + NP + that-clause* in the BNC data:

(96) She *complained* to the madam that she never went into that room. (FPX 2926)

There were three different complement patterns with a *wh-clause* among the BNC data: *about + wh-clause* (2 tokens), *of + wh-clause* (1 token) and *wh-clause* (2 tokens). These patterns were not present in the CLMET and they were the only sentential patterns in the BNC

that were not presented in the background literature. The patterns are exemplified in the following:

(97) Marius wrote a letter to his son last November — this is a copy of it — *complaining* in humble terms about how he'd left himself short by the gift and not taken inflation into account, and would Nigel let him have a small income from various shares and properties? (GUF 4348)

(98) She *complained* of how it stung, but eventually her lamenting subsided and she rested her head against his shoulders. (GW2 2793)

(99) 'Hear that, boys? Typical woman! She'll drink the Tizer and eat the crisps, and still *complain* where they come from!' (CR6 1858)

Both of the *about + wh-clause* patterns had an insertion between the verb and the complement (see 97).

The patterns *about + V-ing*, and *of + V-ing* were realised in the data by five and four tokens respectively.

(100) Lewis-Ann sat under a huge umbrella, fully clothed, *complaining* bitterly about being too hot. (AS7 1596)

(101) It seemed shocking that he should feel he had a right to *complain* about being woken up when the country was on the verge of civil war. (CEX 2266)

(102) Uncle Jack called to *complain* of being kept in the dark just when his expertise in such matters — of which Charlotte was unaware — might be most valuable. (G0N 1584)

(103) 'Anna's going to be all right, thanks to all of you. She's *complaining* of feeling hungry. If there was something she could eat … ' (HHC 1237)

(100) is the only example of an *about + V-ing* token that had an insertion between the verb and the complement.

About + NP + V-ing was realised in the data by five tokens.

(104) Miss Lodsworth had a busy summer. When she wasn't inveighing against cruelty to ponies and disgusting language at Rutshire Polo Club, and furiously ringing up Ricky to *complain* about Perdita thundering ponies five abreast down Eldercombe High Street, she was writing to Dancer, to grumble about cheeky builders, truculent security guards, and Alsatians chasing her cat, Smudge. (CA0 9)

(105) Had to do it see, dad's been *complaining* about me being lazy. (CKD 2111)

(106) He was the one who'd *complained* the most loudly and vociferously about Blend Six not being up to the job, that the burn characteristics were wrong, that the car was running uneven. (HGM 314)

Example (106) is the only *about + NP + V-ing* pattern that had an insertion between the verb and the complement. It is also worth noting that each *about + NP + V-ing* token had an accusative NP and no possessive forms were recorded.

Finally, the pattern *at + V-ing* had three realisations in the BNC (0.8 %, NF: 0.4):

(107) ‘She was *complaining* at not being able to get through because my number was engaged and I said I'd been talking to you. (HNJ 2843)

(108) His sore thighs *complained* at being back on a horse. (CMP 2362)

(109) The agents *complained* fiercely at having to stand twelve hours on Whitehall's pavements in pouring November rain, clutching maps and papers, waiting to be called; but there was no other way to get through the work. (HP0 382)

In (109) there is an insertion (“fiercely”) between the verb and the complement. *At + V-ing* was not present in CLMET 2-3, but there was a single realisation of the pattern in CLMETEV 1 (0.6 %, NF: 0.3).

5.5 Findings

Next, I will turn to comparing the observations I have made concerning the data drawn from CLMET 1-3 and the BNC.

5.5.1 Summary of the corpus data

As was mentioned in 5, the corpus analysis revealed altogether 22 (plus *zero*) complement patterns for the verb *complain*. Among those patterns that were common in all parts of the CLMET and the BNC were the *zero* complement and the *that-clause* complement. The percentage value of the *zero* pattern varied between 18.8 % (CLMETEV 1) and 35.4 % (BNC) and the NF between 7.5 (CLMET 3) and 17 (BNC). The percentage value of the *that-clause* pattern varied between 7.8 % (BNC) and 15.4 % (CLMET 2) and the NF between 3.8 (CLMET

3, BNC) and 10.5 (CLMET 2). Seemingly, the *that-clause* complement is becoming less common when moving onwards from the 18th century. Still, it is clearly not on the verge of vanishing completely.

Four of the patterns recorded in the data were realised by one token only in a single corpus. Those patterns were:

a) *for* + *NP* (CLMETEV 1)
b) *to* + *NP* + *for* + *NP* (CLMETEV 1)
c) *on* + *NP* (CLMET 2)
d) *of* + *wh-clause* (BNC)

Only one of these patterns, namely *on* + *NP*, was discussed in the background literature (see 4.1).

In 5.1.1, I wondered whether the patterns here marked (a)-(b) would continue to exist in CLMET 2-3 or in the BNC. Unfortunately they did not. The preposition *for* only was present in CLMETEV 1. It is thus probable that a prepositional phrase with the preposition *for* is not regularly used as a complement of *complain* and the two tokens in CLMETEV 1 were more or less accidental.

As noted, the pattern *on* + *NP* was discussed in the background literature (in the OED), but it was marked as being obsolete in all but poetic contexts. In the historical data, I expected to find more than one token representing the pattern, but seemingly the pattern was not very common in the earlier centuries either. The related pattern given in the OED, *upon* + *NP*, was not present in the data, at all.

The pattern *of* + *wh-clause* only had a single realisation in the BNC data. There were also two other patterns with a *wh-clause* present in the BNC: *of* + *wh-clause* and *about* + *wh-clause* both of which had two realisations. Altogether, the patterns with a *wh-clause* were not very common in the BNC and they were not at all present in the CLMET. Still, I think more data could be analysed in order to find out whether the patterns really were non-existent in historical

English (or whether the non-existence in the present study is due to a chance) and whether the patterns become more common in the future.

The *quote/sentence* pattern gained ground when moving onwards from CLMETEV 1. In CLMETEV 1, the normalised frequency of the *quote/sentence* pattern was mere 0.7 (1.1 % of the data), but in the BNC the NF had increased to 11.5 (24.1 % of the data). All in all, the *quote/sentence* pattern was the second most common pattern in the BNC in terms of percentage value and normalised frequency. In Herbst et al. (2004, s.v. *complain*) the *quote/sentence* pattern was not labelled as being common, but in the light of the present study, perhaps such a label could be added.

Also, the patterns with the preposition *about* gained ground at the expense of the preposition *of*. The preposition *about* was not present in CLMETEV 1, at all. In CLMET 2, there was a single pattern with the preposition *about* (*about + NP*) and the number of patterns increased, when moving onwards to CLMET 3 and the BNC. I will discuss the increasing frequency of the preposition *about* in more detail in 5.5.3. In the same paragraph, I will also discuss the patterns with the preposition *of*. For now, I can say that the development of the frequency of the preposition *of* has been the opposite of that of the preposition *about*.

Three of the patterns were fairly uncommon throughout the corpus data, but still, they show no sign of disappearing completely. Those patterns were *to + NP + that-clause*, *against + NP* and *to + NP*. The most common of the patterns listed was *to + NP* with a NF varying from 1.3 (CLMET 3, BNC) to 2.7 (CLMET 2). *Against + NP* was present in CLMET 1-2 and the BNC, but not in CLMET 3. The NF varied from 0.2 (BNC) to 0.5 (CLMET 2). The pattern *to + NP + that-clause* had realisations in each part of the CLMET and in the BNC, but the frequency of the pattern remained low. The normalised frequency remained between 0.1 (BNC) and 1.1 (CLMET 2)

Finally, *at + V-ing* was an interesting pattern in that it appeared in CLMETEV 1 with a single token (0.6 %, NF: 0.3), was absent in CLMET 2-3 and reappeared in the BNC with three

tokens (0.8 %, NF: 0.4). It would be interesting to learn what will happen to the pattern in the future.

5.5.2 The senses of the verb *complain*

In 4.3, I listed the simplified senses for the verb *complain* and in what follows, I am going to discuss the different senses of the verb *complain* further. The following table shows the distribution between the different senses in the CLMET and the BNC:

Table 14: Senses of *complain* in CLMET 1-3 and the BNC

	CLMET 1			CLMET 2			CLMET 3			BNC		
	tokens	%	NF	tokens	%	NF	tokens	%	NF	tokens	%	NF
1. To give expression to feelings of dissatisfaction	160	90.9	53.3	231	91.3	65.7	114	89.8	30.5	361	91.4	43.6
2. To give expression to physical suffering	6	3.4	2	13	5.1	3.6	6	4.7	1.6	20	5	2.4
3. To tell someone formally that something is wrong	10	5.7	3.3	9	3.6	2.2	7	5.5	1.8	13	3.3	1.6
4. Figurative; to emit a mournful sound	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2	0.1

The most common sense by far was sense 1 (To give expression to feelings of dissatisfaction): around 90 % of the data realised sense 1 in each corpus. The commonness of sense 1 was expected, because it was marked as the leading use in the OED. The topics of dissatisfaction and complaint are of many different kinds, as the following examples from the BNC show:

(110) Last week listeners were *complaining* about the supposed increase in American accents on Radio 4. (BNT 1591)

(111) Mr Evans only *complained* once, about burnt potatoes… (EFJ 1590)

(112) 'This mask could ruin my style,' he *complained*. (H94 4546)

(113) Sir Rupert *complained* that one of the buckles on his shoes was loose (the shot was only going to reveal his right ear and shoulder). (GUF 3404)

(114) 'I spoke to him on the phone to *complain* about him putting my name in an article. (JY9 1613)

Interestingly, there were four tokens that had a -human subject among the sense 1 tokens. All the tokens were found among the BNC data:

(115) I hear her voice *complaining* of the ill-manners of the police at a road block. (FAJ 69)

(116) Riven pulled his cloak up about his neck, his bones aching and stiff and his legs still *complaining* about the horse between them. (GWF 1048)

(117) His limbs ceased to *complain* about the riding, and he slept more easily on the hard ground at night. (GWF 2549)

(118) His sore thighs *complained* at being back on a horse. (CMP 2362)

In (115), *her voice* is used as a subject instead of *her*, probably because of stylistic reasons. (116)-(118) are examples of figurative use of *complain*. Limbs cannot explicitly express their complaint about having to through some action (here riding), but a person can feel their "complaint" in his or her body.

Sense 2 (To give expression to physical suffering) was not nearly as common as sense 1, but still, there were tokens of it in each corpus. There seemed to be a connection between sense 2 and the pattern *of + NP*, which was no surprise since the OED and the learner's dictionaries already indicated the connection (see 4.1-4.2). The following table shows the patterns that were present with sense 2:

Table 15: Complement patterns with sense 2 in CLMET 1-3 and the BNC

	CLMET 1		CLMET 2		CLMET 3		BNC	
	Number	NF	Number	NF	Number	NF	Number	NF
of + NP	5	1.7	11	3	5	1.3	18	2.2
of + V-ing	1	0.3	1	0.3	-	-	-	-
that-clause	-	-	1	0.3	1	0.3	-	-
about + NP	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.1
of + wh-clause		-	-	-	-	-	1	0.1
Total	6	2	13	3.6	6	1.6	20	2.4

As is evident from Table 15, *of + NP* was the most common pattern in each corpus with sense 2. The pattern *of + NP* with sense 2 will be exemplified below:

(119) "We were scarce settled in our new lodgings," continued Mrs. Bennet, "when my husband began to *complain* of a pain in his inside. (Fielding 1751, *Amelia*)

(120) The following night she seemed more impatient still, and on the third from recovering my company she *complained* of a headache and left me. (Brontë 1847, *Wuthering Heights*)

(121) In Sheen my companion suddenly *complained* of faintness and thirst, and we decided to try one of the houses. (Wells 1898, *The War of the Worlds*)

(122) 'It's possible it could be flu. Has he *complained* of a headache at all?' (JXW 1586)

(123) At quarter to eleven her old friend Jerry, the Valium addict, wandered in *complaining* of stomach pains and said he'd taken another overdose. (JYB 3157)

The dominance of the *of + NP* pattern was particularly clear in the BNC: altogether 18 out of 20 tokens realised the pattern *of + NP* and a mere 1 out of 20 realised the pattern *about + NP*. Also, there was one token that realised the pattern *of + wh-clause* (see example (129)). It was claimed in 5.5.1 that the preposition *of* is becoming more infrequent at the expense of the preposition *about*, but in the case of sense 2, *of* clearly remains the more common preposition. The only *about + NP* pattern is exemplified in the following:

(124) Colonel Feather had then expressed a worry that children could easily reach over and scoop up a fingerful of frosting, perhaps spoiling someone's chances, so he and Mr Doran — the latter *complaining* mightily about his lumbago — had moved the cakes to the back of the table. (A0D 1077)

All the other patterns with sense 2 were present in the data with one realisation only. The patterns are exemplified below starting from CLMETEV 1:

(125) …he presented her with a glass of wine and water; and, as she *complained* of being faint, enriched the draught with some drops of a certain elixir… (Smollett 1751, *The adventures of Peregrine Pickle*)

(126) If I *complained* of being ill, it was asked why I made myself so. (Hazlitt 1821-1822, *Table talk*)

(127) If she *complained* she was ill, it was with the certainty that her languor would be admired… (Inchbald 1796, *Nature and art*)

(128) They tell her clever things that Julius Caesar said; observations made by Marcus Aurelius that, pondered over, might help her to become a beautiful character. She *complains* that it produces a strange buzzy feeling in her head… (Jerome 1909, *They and I*)

(129) This he kneaded into a pulp and then gave to Cleo to hold against her scratched cheek. She *complained* of how it stung, but eventually her lamenting subsided and she rested her head against his shoulders. (GW2 2793)

There were a few tokens that represented sense 3 (To tell someone formally that something is wrong) in each corpus:

(130) The man, as it directly tended to accuse himself, refused to answer. They *complained* to the House, and after a long debate he was committed to the serjeant-at-arms; and to-day, I hear, for still refusing, will be sent to Newgate. (Walpole 1735-48, *Letters*)

(131) He can *complain* in Letter after Letter, to a National Convention, to France, to Posterity, the Universe; grow ever more querulous indignant;--till at last may he not grow wearisome? (Carlyle 1837, *The French Revolution*)

(132) … and said that I was much tempted to return to the town instantly, *complain* of him to the alcalde, and have him punished at any expense. (Borrow 1843, *Bible in Spain*)

(133) But the inhabitants *complained* to the police about it, and a watch was set for him one night, and he was captured. (Jerome 1889, *Three men in a boat*)

(134) "Another point. I must speak to Chalkeley." "Yes, rather; you must *complain* to Chalkeley." "It's no good his saying he is not responsible for those men. He is responsible." (Forster 1910, *Howards End*)

(135) Shannon shook her head wonderingly. 'You'd *complain* to the management if I refused to cut your hair?' she guessed. 'But that's despicable.' (HA9 141)

(136) In recent months the residents of the area around the bar had been *complaining* almost nightly to the police about the noise that went on until the small hours and about the hypodermics left strewn around the piazza, a serious health hazard to the children who played there during the day. (CJX 1809)

There seems to be a connection between sense 3 and the pattern *to + NP + about + NP*: the only realisation of the pattern represented sense 3 in CLMET 3 (see example (133)) and five out of thirteen tokens that represented sense 3 realised the pattern in the BNC.

Finally, sense 4 (figurative) was highly rare: there was only one token that represented sense 4 in the present corpus data. The token was recorded in the BNC:

(137) He changed gear at precisely the wrong moment and the car bucked and *complained*. (CMJ 1616)

5.5.3 The prepositions *of* and *about*

As was discussed earlier in 4.6, Brorström (1963) stated that the frequency of the preposition *about* is increasing at the expense of other prepositions, especially the preposition *of*. In the following, I am going to discuss how Brorström's ideas relate to the present data.

Figure 3 presents the normalised frequencies per million words of all patterns with the prepositions *of* and *about* counted in the current corpus data: [6]

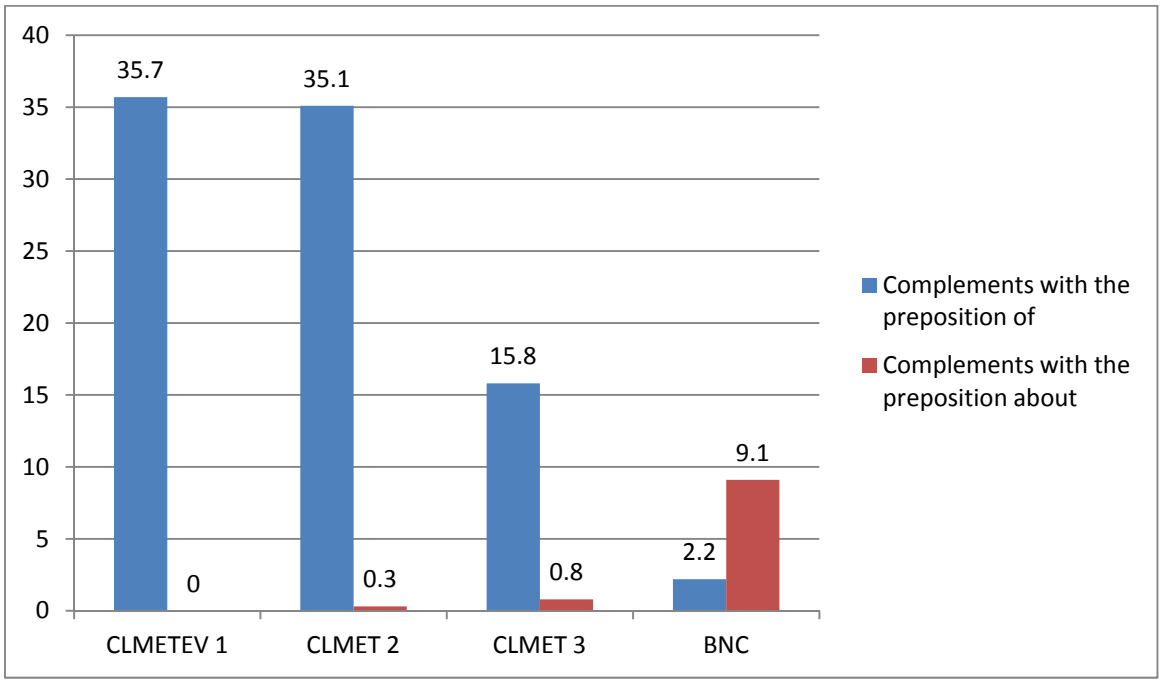

Figure 3: the NF of patterns with *of* and *about*

As expected, the figure shows that the frequency of the patterns with the preposition *of* has been decreasing and that of the patterns with the preposition *about* has been increasing. The increasing frequency of the preposition *about* explains the decreasing frequency of the preposition *of*, but only partly. The preposition *of* seems not to be directly replaced by the preposition *about,* but other patterns (such as the *quote/sentence* pattern) have probably also affected the decrease of the *of* patterns.

[6] Patterns with the preposition *of*: *of* + *NP*, *to* + *NP* + *of* + *NP*, *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP*, *of* + *V-ing*, *of* + *NP* + *V-ing*, and *of* + *wh-clause*. Patterns with the preposition *about*: *about* + *NP*, *to* + *NP* + *about* + *NP*, *about* + *NP* + *to* + *NP*, *about* + *V-ing*, *about* + *NP* + *V-ing* and *about* + *wh-clause*.

Some of the patterns found in the current data had, as it were, two variants: one variant with the preposition *of* and another with the preposition *about*. Those patterns were:

- *of/about + NP*
- *to + NP + of/about + NP*
- *of/about + NP + to + NP*
- *of/about + V-ing*
- *of/about + NP + V-ing*

Next, I will discuss these patterns in more detail, and see whether the statements made by Brorström (1963) apply here. Firstly, Figure 4 shows the normalised frequencies of the patterns *of/about + NP* in the CLMET and the BNC:

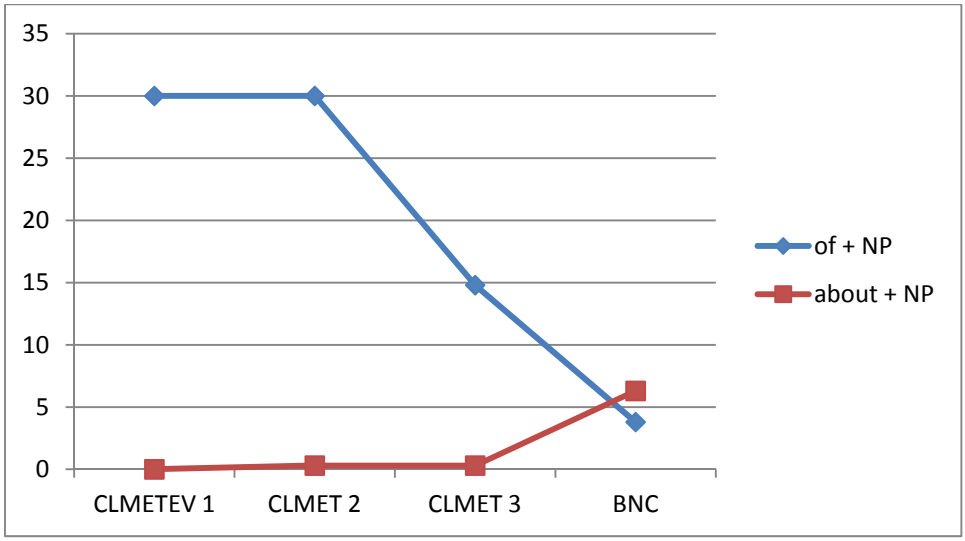

Figure 4: NF of the patterns *of/about + NP*

Figure 4 shows that the NF of the pattern *of + NP* has decreased (from 30 to 3.8) and that the NF of the pattern *about + NP* has increased (from 0 to 6.4) when moving from CLMETEV 1 to the BNC. It seems that when it comes to the patterns *about/of + NP* the current data is in accordance with what Brorström (1963) suggested: the preposition *about* seems to be gaining ground at the expense of the preposition *of*. Still, it is worth noting that in the BNC, the pattern *about + NP* is not hugely more common than the pattern *of + NP*: there were 53 realisations (13.4 % of the data) of the pattern *about + NP* and 31 realisations (7.8 % of the data) of the pattern *of + NP*. Also, it should be kept in mind that there was at least one context in which the

pattern *of* + *NP* was notably more common than the *about* + *NP* pattern, namely with sense 2 (To give expression to physical suffering), as was discussed in 5.5.2.

Figure 5 shows the frequencies of the patterns *to* + *NP* + *of/about* + *NP* and *of/about* + *NP* + *to* + *NP*:

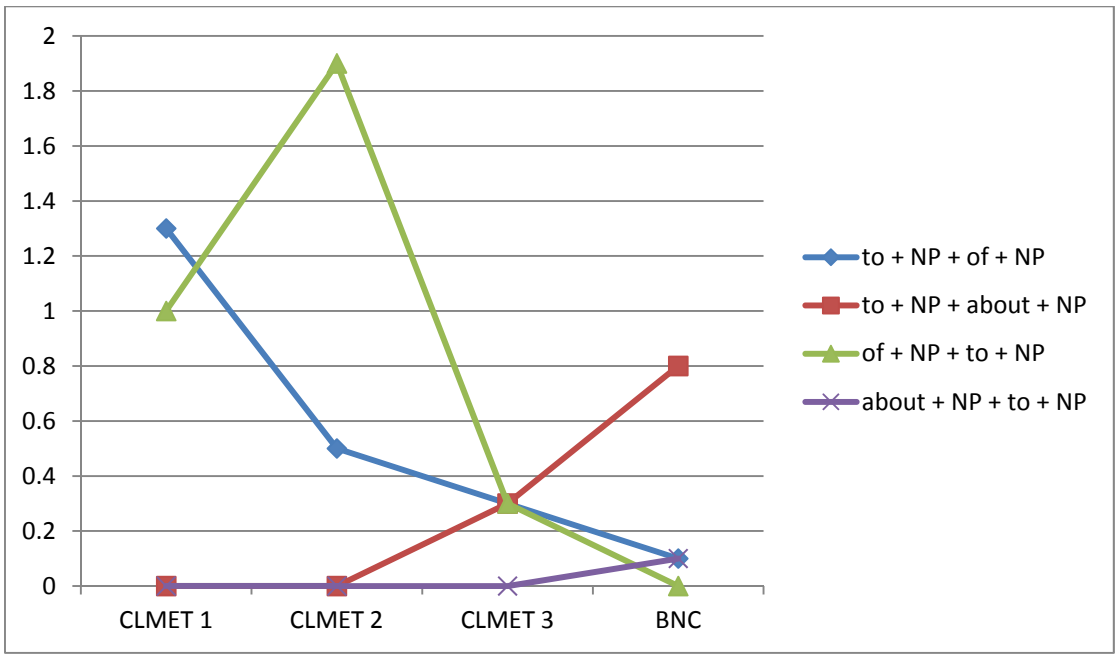

Figure 5: The NF of the patterns *to* + *NP* + *of/about* + *NP* and *of/about* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* in the CLMET and the BNC

Figure 5 shows that the patterns with the preposition *of* had a downward trend, whereas the patterns with the preposition *about* had an upward trend when moving towards the present-day English. It is noteworthy, however, that only the pattern *to* + *NP* + *about* + *NP* was notably more common than the *of* patterns in the BNC (with 7 tokens). The patterns *about* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* and *to* + *NP* + *of* + *NP* had a single realisation in the BNC and the *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* pattern was not present at all in the BNC.

Figure 6 shows the normalised frequencies of the patterns *of/about* + *V-ing* and *of/about* + *NP* + *V-ing*. It should be noted that Brorström suggested that *preposition* + *V-ing* is one of those contexts which especially favours the preposition *about* (particularly in present-day English):

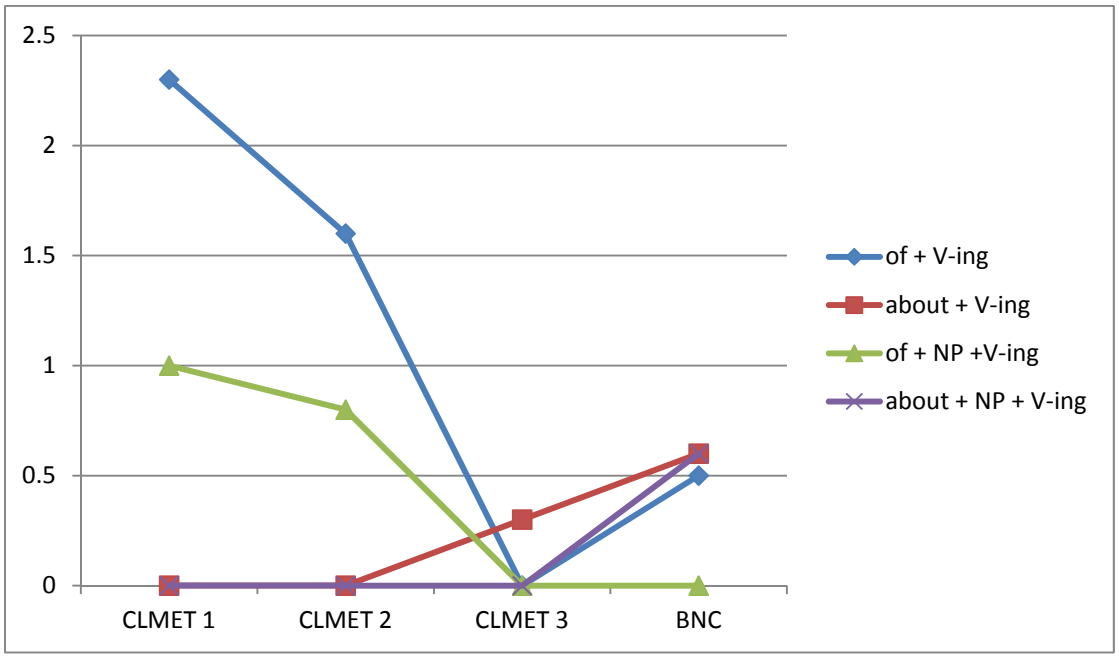

Figure 6: The NF of the patterns *of/about + V-ing* and *of/about + NP + V-ing* in the CLMET and the BNC

Again, there was a downward trend for the *of* patterns and an upward trend for the *about* patterns. The pattern *of + NP + V-ing* was no longer present in CLMET 3 and the BNC. The pattern *of + V-ing* had no realisations in CLMET 3 but it reappeared in the BNC with four tokens. It is interesting that the *of + V-ing* pattern was virtually as common in the BNC as the *about + V-ing* and *about + NP + V-ing* patterns (5 tokens each). The NF of the pattern *of + V-ing* was notably lower in the BNC than it was in CLMET 1-2 but it seems that the pattern is still present even in the present-day English. All in all, what can be said about figures 4-6 is that though the patterns with the preposition *about* became more common and the patterns with the preposition *of* became less common, there were no huge differences between the frequencies of the patterns when looking at the present-day (BNC) data.

Following Brorström (1963), it is probable that especially in certain contexts the preposition *about* is more common than the preposition *of*. As mentioned earlier in 4.6, those contexts are *preposition + it*, *what/who/which + verb + preposition* and *preposition + V-ing*. Table 16 shows the number of tokens and the normalised frequencies per million words of the patterns at issue (the patterns *about/of + V-ing* were excluded, because they already were covered earlier in this section):

Table 16: The frequencies of the patterns *of/about + it* and *what/who/which + of/about*

	of + it		*about + it*		*what/who/which + verb + of*		*what/who/which + verb + about*	
	Number	*NF*	*Number*	*NF*	*Number*	*NF*	*Number*	*NF*
CLMET 1	1	0.3	0	0	9	3	0	0
CLMET 2	2	0.8	0	0	4	1.6	1	0.3
CLMET 3	3	0.8	0	0	6	1.5	0	0
BNC	0	0	3	0.4	2	0.2	2	0.2

Firstly, Table 16 shows that there were very few tokens that represented these patterns among the present corpus data and it is important to bear this in mind when making conclusions based on the data.

The pattern *of + it* was completely non-existent in the present-day data, whereas the pattern *about + it* only was present in the present-day data. Table 16 suggests that in the historical data the preposition *of* was more probable in this context and in the present-day data the more probable preposition was *about*. The number of relevant tokens, however, was so small that I think it is impossible to draw any definite conclusions about how the prepositions *about* and *of* generally are used in these contexts with the verb *complain*. More research on this issue could be done. The patterns are exemplified in the following:

(138) She *complained of it* to the baron de la Valiere, and told him, her whole family had been affronted…(Haywood 1744, *The fortunate foundlings*)

(139) On the contrary, she was as much disposed to *complain of it* as her husband. (Austen 1813, *Pride and prejudice*)

(140) So far from thinking the quality attributed to us a defect, I wish that those who *complain of it* were far more right than I much fear they are. (Bagehott 1872, *Physics and politics*)

(141) He loathed the boot and *complained about it* constantly, but he wouldn't admit defeat. (AEB 3296)

The normalised frequency of the pattern *what/who/which + verb + of* became smaller when moving onwards from CLMETEV 1 (CLMETEV 1: 3, BNC: 0.2). The pattern *what/who/which*

+ *verb* + *about* only had three realisations in the whole of the corpus data: one in CLMET 2 (NF: 0.3) and two in the BNC (NF: 0.2). In the BNC, the patterns *what/who/which* + *verb* + *of* and *what/who/which* + *verb* + *about* had the same amount of tokens, in other words they were as common (or as rare). Based on so few tokens, I am unwilling to conclude whether the present corpus data is in accordance with what Brorström stated about *what/who/which* and the selection between the prepositions *about* and *of*. It might be interesting, however, that the only *about* complement that was present in CLMET 2 was an example of the context in question:

(142) That's enough; let me alone.--What are you on the point of *complaining about*, Heathcliff?" "Nothing--only look at the almanac on that wall." (Brontë 1847, *Wuthering Heights*)

It should also be kept in mind that Brorström (1963, 11) suggested that in informal contexts the preposition *about* is more common than *of* and (142) is an example of (imitated) spoken language and thus probably of an informal context. Next, a few more examples of these two patterns follow:

(143) Not that his ill-nature is all the grievance *of which* I *complain*; exclusive of the personal disgust I entertain for him... (Smollett 1751, *The adventures of Peregrine Pickle*)

(144) 'The face is what one goes by, generally,' Alice remarked in a thoughtful tone. 'That's just *what* I *complain of*,' said Humpty Dumpty. (Carroll 1871, *Through the looking glass*)

(145) He was like a kind of martyr, it was as if all my failings were stones that were thrown at him and *which* he never *complained of*. (CJT 1634)

Also, Vosberg (2003) is relevant here. Examples (142)-(145) are examples of "deviations from the canonical sentence structure" or extraction (Vosberg 2003, 147). More research could be done on how the extraction context affects the selection between the prepositions *about* and *of*.

5.5.4 Semantic differences between sentential complements and *preposition + NP* complements

The following two example clauses from CLMETEV 1 show how a clausal *(that)-clause* complement differs from a prepositional *of + NP* complement. Both clauses are from Fielding (1749):

(146) He then demanded his billets, together with a mug of beer, and *complaining* it was cold, spread himself before the kitchen fire. (Fielding 1749, *Tom Jones*)

(147) "Surely, sir, you are not mad," said Partridge. "Indeed, I am," answered Jones, "if ascending this hill be madness; but as you *complain* so much of the cold already, I would have you stay below. (Fielding 1749, *Tom Jones*)

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1021) claimed that a subordinate clause (such as *that-clause*) conveys the content of a complaint, whereas a *preposition + NP* complement (such as *of + NP*) conveys the topic of the complaint. The example clauses (146) and (147) are in accordance with Huddleston and Pullum (ibid.): in (146) the content of the complaint is "it was cold" (at that particular moment) whereas in (147) the topic of the complaint is cold in a more general fashion. It is also possible to interpret (146) as meaning that the "mug of beer" was cold, but the structure of the clause remains the same. Next, I will exemplify clausal and prepositional patterns further.

(148)-(150) provide clear examples of a *preposition + NP* complement giving the topic of a complaint:

(148) …and, if others think as well of your poetry as I do, you will have no cause to *complain* of your readers. (Byron 1810-1813, *Letters*)

(149) 'Ay, ay, we shall see, Muster Gashford, we shall see. You won't have to *complain* of me,' returned the other, shaking his head. (Dickens 1841, *Barnaby Rudge*)

(150) He took to picking up pretty young girls just so that he could *complain* about her. (AC3 86)

Here, "your readers", "me" and "her" are the topics of the complaint, but the precise content of the complaint remains unclear (why somebody is complaining about them). Not all *preposition + NP* tokens were as easy to analyse as (148)-(150), however. In the following, I am going to

give a few examples of the *preposition + NP* pattern that could be interpreted as giving the content of the complaint:

(151) Thus at last they find (such is the greatness of human misery, it reconciles even contradictions), that they *complain* at once of the shortness of life, and of its vanity and sorrow. (Hume 1779, *Dialogues concerning natural religion*)

(152) When I remembered that this man had had the audacity to *complain* of our gardener's obstinacy, my tongue itched to "go on" in other words than my mistress's. (Collins 1868, *The Moonstone*)

(153) He made idle banter as they watched for the van, and Doyle grimaced and *complained* about the lack of 'peace and quiet' in that particular car at that particular time. (CE5 2227)

It is possible to interpret (151)-(153) so that the NP does convey the content of the complaint. In (151), the content is "life is short", in (152) "the gardener is obstinate" and in (153), "there is no 'peace and quiet'". Still, examples (151)-(153) can also be analysed as conveying the topic of the complaint.

When it comes to the *that-clause* complements the picture was fairly clear: *that-clause* complements always seemed to convey the content of the complaint instead of the topic:

(154) Whatever it was, I could no longer *complain* that she treated me more like a brother than a lover. (G13 2822)

The same goes for other clausal complement patterns, such as *about + V-ing* and *of + V-ing,* they always seemed to give the content of the complaint:

(155) Lewis-Ann sat under a huge umbrella, fully clothed, *complaining* bitterly about being too hot. (AS7 1596)

(156) The plan supposes him *complaining* of being put to death by the blundering discord of his two physicians. (Walpole 1735-48, *Letters* 1735-1748)

(157) She's *complaining* of feeling hungry. (HHC 1237)

5.5.5 Passives

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1434-1435) claimed that *complain* cannot be in the passive. Still, there were a few passives in the corpus data, most of them in CLMETEV 1. The following table shows the amounts of passives in each corpus:

Table 17: Passives

	Number of passives	NF of passives
CLMETEV 1	11	3.7
CLMET 2	2	0.5
CLMET 3	4	1
BNC	1	0.1

All the passives found in the corpus data were passive relative clauses:

(158) …for it might fail from such obstacles as nothing could surmount, and the inconveniencies which are *complained* of might be the consequences of other causes acting at the same time... (Johnson 1740-1, *Parliamentary debates 1*)

(159) We are in the discussion of this question, sir, to consider that we are engaged in a war against a nation from which insults, depredations, oppressions, and cruelties, have been long *complained* of, and against which we are, therefore, to act with a resolution proportioned to the injuries which we have suffered, and to our desire of vengeance. (Johnson 1740-1, *Parliamentary debates 1*)

(160) Mr. SANDYS spoke next, to this effect:--Sir, I believe the grievance, so much *complained* of by the right honourable member, is not difficult to be removed without a new act of the legislature… (Johnson 1740-1, *Parliamentary debates 1*)

(161) …and therefore, instead of considering how to remedy the mischiefs *complained* of, they bent their thoughts to get rid of their monitor: as if the not hearing of faults was equivalent to ... (Cibber 1753, *The lives of the poets 3*)

(162) Loud music, *complained* of by the neighbours on shore, thumped and echoed from cheerful Bluebird on the middle Reach. (H0R 2553)

Out of the eleven passive tokens found in CLMETEV 1 nine came from the same source: Johnson 1740-1, *Parliamentary debates 1*. *Parliamentary debates* is a collection of texts that imitate the real debates of the British parliament. The debates were presented as fiction, because for political reasons, it was forbidden to publish the real debates in the 1740's, at the time the debates were published (Johnson 1740-41). The language used in the debates imitates the speech of the parliament members. The style of the text is laborious, the sentences are long and the vocabulary complex. It seems that the passive relative clauses in connection with the verb *complain* might be a part of the style of the text. However, without thoroughly examining the texts, the above analysis remains a hypothesis.

Finally, none of the passive clauses found in the present data were of the same type as the passive example given in the OED (s.v. *complain*) (with extraposition):

- It is *complained* that the Emperor spent his time(…)with hearing of Organs. (North 1728)

In the BNC, there was only one passive token (see (162)), and I think it is fairly safe to say that in written present-day English, *complain* is very rarely in the passive.

5.5.6 The prepositions *of* and *about* and +human complements

As was mentioned in 4.4, Herbst et al. (2004, s.v. *complain*) claimed that "[a] person can complain to another person or an institution

- *about* someone
- *about*, *at* or *of* something"

In other words, with +human complements only the preposition *about* could be expected. It should be noted, however, that the preposition *about* was not present in the CLMETEV 1 data and that it was highly rare in CLMET 2-3 also. Thus, I think it is likely that +human complements are accompanied with the preposition *of*, as well, at least in the CLMET. The following table presents the distribution of the prepositions *of* and *about* with +human complements (the patterns *about/of* + *NP, to* + *NP* + *about/of* + *NP* and *about/of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* were included):

Table 18: the prepositions *of* and *about* with +human NPs

	CLMETEV 1		CLMET 2		CLMET 3		BNC	
	Number	NF	Number	NF	Number	NF	Number	NF
of + +human NP	3	1	10	2.7	6	1.5	1	0.1
about + +human NP	0	0	0	0	2	0.3	7	0.8

As predicted, with +human NP complements the preposition *about* was not the only preposition used. In all four corpora, there were tokens that had the preposition *of* with a +human NP. The preposition *about* with a +human NP was restricted to CLMET 3 and the BNC. The BNC data, however, was more or less in accordance with Herbst et al. (2004): seven out of eight tokens of this type selected the preposition *about* in the BNC. Still, one must bear in mind that the number

of relevant tokens was relatively low in the BNC and for reliable results more data should be analysed. The patterns are exemplified in the following:

(163) …and, if others think as well of your poetry as I do, you will have no cause to *complain* of your readers. (Byron 1810-1813, *Letters*)

(164) You won't have to *complain* of me,' returned the other, shaking his head. 'I am sure I shall not,' said the secretary in the same mild ... (Dickens 1841, *Barnaby Rudge*)

(165) Though why should I *complain* of her," Rebecca added…(Thackeray 1847-8, *Vanity Fair*)

(166) I'll find out if his father is still alive, and I will write HIM a note *complaining* of HIS son, and I'll state pretty clearly that his son is a blithering idiot!" (Grossmith 1888-9, *The Diary of a Nobody*)

(167) Young Collins — he teaches Latin for his sins — reported to the Bodens when the coach got back to Comerbourne, not to *complain* of the kid, but so that they shouldn't be worried about his non-arrival. (H8L 899)

(168) 'Oh, no, nothing like that. I can't *complain* about Silvia. She's working like a beaver and improving in leaps and bounds.' (JXT 3859)

(169) Scarlet had found it all very puzzling and upsetting: she couldn't envisage herself telephoning her first husband's second wife to *complain* about her child — even if they hadn't gone to Australia. (G1D 1411)

6 Conclusion

In 4.7, I listed the research questions I wanted to answer in my thesis and in this chapter I will see whether I was able to answer them.

Firstly, I simply wanted to list the different complement patterns for the verb *complain* and see how the patterns relate to the list of patterns given in the background sources. As was stated in 5, the corpus analysis revealed altogether 22 (plus *zero*) complement patterns for the verb *complain*. Many of the patterns were the same as in the background sources, but still there were seven patterns that were discussed in the background literature, but were not present in the current corpus data (see 5). Also, among the corpus data, there were altogether seven patterns that were not presented in any of the background sources. The patterns were:

- *for* + *NP* (CLMETEV 1)
- *to* + *NP* + *for* + *NP* (CLMETEV 1)
- *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* (CLMET 1-3)
- *about* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* (BNC)
- *about* + *wh-clause* (BNC)
- *of* + *wh-clause* (BNC)
- *wh-clause* (BNC)

Many of these patterns only had a few realisations in the corpus data. The patterns *for* + *NP* and *to* + *NP* + *for* + *NP* seemed more or less accidental occurrences and prepositional phrases with the preposition *for* did not seem to be regularly used as complements for the verb *complain*. The patterns with a *wh-clause* were present in the BNC data only and whether the *wh-clause* patterns are an essential part of the complementation of *complain* remains an area for further analysis. Furthermore, the pattern *of* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* had a few realisations in each part of the CLMET, and though it no longer was present in the BNC data, it seemingly was a part of the complementation of *complain* in the earlier centuries. *About* + *NP* + *to* + *NP* only had a single realisation in the BNC and in the light of the present study, it does not seem to be an essential part of the complementation of *complain*.

Secondly, I wanted to examine how the frequencies of individual patterns had changed when moving onwards from the 18th century. The data revealed that the complement pattern *of + NP* was the most common complement in CLMET 1-3 in terms of percentage value and normalised frequency. In the BNC, *of + NP* lost its place as the commonest complement: there were three patterns that were more common than the *of + NP* pattern, namely *zero*, *quote/sentence* and *about + NP*. Thus, the present study was in accordance with Brorström (1963) at least to some extent: the preposition *about* became more common at the expense of the preposition *of*. Still, it is interesting that in the BNC, the patterns with the preposition *about* were not significantly more common than the patterns with the preposition *of*. The patterns with these two prepositions were more or less as common and interestingly, the pattern *of + NP* was the more common pattern with sense 2 (To give expression to physical suffering).

Also, as was already noted, the *quote/sentence* and the *zero* patterns became more frequent when moving onwards from CLMETEV 1 and I believe that the increasing frequency of these two patterns also affected the decrease in frequency of the *of + NP* pattern. The *zero* complement was fairly common from beginning to end, but it was at its commonest in the BNC. *Quote/sentence* pattern was almost non-existent in CLMETEV 1 but in the BNC, as much as 24.1 % of the data realised the pattern (NF 11.5). Another pattern worth mentioning here, namely the *that-clause* pattern, was fairly common in the CLMET and the BNC. Seemingly, it has been, and still is, an essential part of the complementation of *complain*. The remaining patterns were not as common as the ones discussed here (for a more detailed discussion see 5.5.1).

I also wanted to concentrate on the distribution between the prepositions *of* and *about* in more detail following the ideas of Brorström (1963). As noted, the frequency of the pattern *of + NP* was on the decrease and *about + NP* on the increase and the same was true for other patterns with the corresponding prepositions, though the differences in the frequency were not very significant in the BNC. In 5.5.3, I also elaborated the ideas of Brorström (1963) about the

contexts in which the preposition *about* is more probable than *of* (*preposition + it, what/who/which + verb + prep.* and *prep. + V-ing*). Unfortunately, the numbers of the tokens that realised the contexts Brorström discussed were low, and no firm conclusions could be drawn. Further studies on this subject could be conducted.

I addition, one of my aims was to discuss the different senses of the verb *complain*. I was able to find all four simplified senses (listed in 4.3) in the data. The most common sense in both CLMET and the BNC was sense 1 (To give expression to feelings of dissatisfaction). Senses 2 (To give expression to physical suffering) and 3 (To tell someone formally that something is wrong) were less common, and sense 4 (Figurative; to emit a mournful sound) only had a single realisation in the BNC. I also identified another figurative use for the verb *complain* discussed under sense 1 (see 5.5.2 examples (116)-(118)). One clear pattern-meaning connection was found: especially in present-day English, the pattern *of + NP* is commonly used with sense 2 (To give expression to physical suffering).

Furthermore, I wanted to see whether the present data was in accordance with Huddleston and Pullum (2002), who claimed that *complain* cannot be in the passive. I was able to find some passives among the present corpus data, but they were all passive relative clauses and no main clauses in the passive with or without extraposition were recorded. The present data indicates that in present-day English, *complain* is very rarely in the passive.

I also wanted to examine another point suggested by Huddleston and Pullum (2002): are there differences between *preposition + NP* complements and clausal complements. The data was in accordance with Huddleston and Pullum (2002) at least to some degree: the clausal complements did seem to convey the content of the complaint whereas *preposition + NP* complements conveyed the topic. As a whole, the picture was not as straightforward as this, however: there were some cases in which it was not completely clear whether the NP complement conveyed the topic or the content of a complaint (see 5.5.4).

Finally, I wanted to see whether a point made by Herbst et al. (2004) was in accordance with the present data. Herbst et al. claimed that +human complements usually select the preposition *about* over other prepositions, mainly *of*. It seems that the current data is more or less in accordance with the claim made by Herbst et al. when it comes to the present-day data: +human noun phrase complements did select the preposition *about* in seven cases out of eight. In historical data, the connection was not as clear as it was in the BNC.

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