TOWARDS A MORE ANALYTIC EXPRESSION OF GRAMMATICAL RELATIONSHIPS: THE USE OF PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS IN EARLY ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE

HANNA RUTKOWSKA

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

ABSTRACT

The focus of my paper is syntactic. It analyses different functions and positions of uninflected words, more precisely prepositions and adverbs, in fifteenth-century English correspondence. By Late Middle English grammatical relationships and meanings previously expressed by means of affixation (inflectional endings and prefixes) had been largely taken over by prepositions and adverbial particles which had become necessary elements in most noun and verb phrases.

Due to their analytic character, constructions containing prepositional and phrasal verbs have been considered of particular interest and are analysed in considerable detail in the paper. Moreover, the use of adverbs in negations, and prepositions and adverbs in relative structures is examined. In order to make the discussion complete, compound prepositions and adverbs are discussed as counterexamples to the general tendency towards a more analytic expression of grammatical relationships.

Medieval constructions containing prepositions and adverbs are often highly idiomatic and differ from Present-day English ones not only in terms of word order but also with regard to meaning. Therefore, some attention is paid throughout the paper to the semantic development of the discussed words.

The Cely letters (1472-88) constitute the basis for the analysis, but some examples are also drawn from the Paston and Plumpton letters.

The present article is hoped to contribute to a better understanding of the language of fifteenth-century written unofficial documents.

0. Introduction

The focus of this paper is syntactic. It analyses different functions and positions of prepositions and adverbs in fifteenth-century English correspondence. The Cely letters (henceforth CL), a collection of the earliest extant commercial letters in English (1472-88), constitute the basis for the analysis (the size of the
corpus is almost 85,000 words), but some examples are also drawn from the Paston and Plumpton letters.

By Late Middle English grammatical relationships and meanings previously expressed by means of affixation (inflectional and derivational affixes) had been largely taken over by prepositions and adverbs which had become necessary elements in most noun and verb phrases. Interestingly, the occurrences of the most frequent prepositions, OF (off, ov), TO (to), AT (att) and IN (in, yn, i, y), amount to over 8,000 words, i.e., nearly ten per cent of all the words in the whole collection of the CL.

My paper is divided into three parts: It will first discuss the functions and distribution of prepositions, then the structure, functions, comparison and distribution of adverbs. Later on, the focus will shift to periphrastic structures involving prepositions and adverbs. Particular attention will be paid to expressions and constructions that have either been changed or altogether lost from the language.

1. Prepositions

1.1. Functions and distribution

In the material analyzed, prepositions, in most cases, retain their full prepositional force (marking the grammatical and semantic relation between two notional words, the latter of which is a substantive or pronoun). In CL prepositions take noun phrases as their complements. Prepositional phrases formed in this way act as complements or adjuncts to verbs and modifiers to nouns and pronouns. As can be seen in the following example, such uses of prepositions closely resemble those found in PDE.

1) Ryght worchepfull syr, I recomend to your goode masterschep, etc., laytyng your masterschep wett the caus of my comynge to Callys was to

1 The numeration of letters from the Cely collection follows Hanham’s (1975) edition of the letters. Additional numbers given in examples correspond to the lines in the electronic version of the CL in the form of a Microsoft Access database that compiled by the present author and used for the purposes of linguistic analysis. All the abbreviations and symbols used in this paper are listed in the Appendix.

2 All the examples from the Plumpton letters come from Kirby (ed.) (1996) (over 38,000 words), and those from the Paston letters (only John Paston III’s and William Paston III’s letters have been analysed) from the Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse available at: http://www.hti.umich.edu/cgi/oc/cme/cme-idm?type=header&lnm=Paston

3 Nearly 50,000 words.

4 The variant ov has been recorded only once: Ryght wyschypfull cossyn, I commaunde you to yow, praying yow to send me halfe a dozen quysschysns and viij yerdes ov benkryss acordyng pareto, of Englyssche yerdes, verduke be colowr (RCD 60: 149).

Towards a more analytic expression of grammatical relationships... 413

com vnto you for a goshawe, as you promysyd me at my laste byeng wyth “you” in London. (61: 85)

Prepositions often occur in collocations with particular verbs referred to as prepositional verbs. However, these are not as strictly fixed as in today’s English. Many of these collocations allow for some variation of the preposition, e.g.,

2) Daultons mother comendys hyr to you and thankys yow for the knuyys that 3e sente to hyr. (RCII 117: 512)

3) Syr, my Loord comendys hym harteley wnto yow, and thankys yow of your letter, and syche tydnyngs as he knowys a wrytys yow parte. (RCII 121: 564)

Prepositions may also be necessary elements in idiomatic prepositional phrases, e.g.,

4) Furthermore sir, as for the byllis of John Eton tat Fedyan axith, in gudd fayth we cantott yett fynde them; Y trowe nor neuer shall. (JC 100: 22)

5) Also syr, he leyde arnyds on me by mothe to sey to you... (JR 57: 75)

6) For sothe, I can hau of Rychard Tywne, mecer, at London ix s. viij d. (RCI 50: 271)

Not infrequently, prepositions, which are part of a collocation with a verb, occur at the end of a clause, e.g.,

7) Item, syr, I vnderstonde that yowre masterschyp wold [th]at John Dalton schuld bye the horesse that he wrote to yow off. (WLC 163: 216)

8) 3e schall onderstond mor at your comynge – yt ys of meyth the cavses I would haue you for. (JD 44: 26)

9) I woll speke wyth John Vandyrhay and soche merchantys as I am acostom to delle wyth. (GC 22: 35)

At times the same preposition occurs twice in the same construction, e.g.,

10) and they hawe grauntyd and gewen a saffcondutt generall durynge the space of x montthes to all maner merchautys, of what nacyon or contrey they be off, brynyng vettell ynto Flaunderes, or ellys nott (WLC 238: 1537)

11)

5 Arnyds means ‘message, errand’ (Hanham 1975: 315).
1.2. Prepositions used as infinitive markers

In some constructions prepositions have lost their prepositional force. This applies to those marking the infinitive form of the verb. The infinitive indicators found in the CL include to, *(ff)*or to, and zero. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the variants to and for to in the authors using more than one indicator of the infinitive. The remaining writers use only the marker to.

Figure 1. Distribution of infinitive indicators to, *(ff)*or to, and for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>to (%)</th>
<th>for (%)</th>
<th>for (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WLC</td>
<td>315 (92)</td>
<td>298 (8)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCII</td>
<td>196 (98)</td>
<td>4 (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCI</td>
<td>29 (32.3)</td>
<td>57 (63.3)</td>
<td>4 (4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WM</td>
<td>15 (33)</td>
<td>30 (67)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD</td>
<td>19 (90)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JR</td>
<td>19 (95)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB</td>
<td>6 (86)</td>
<td>1 (14)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPS</td>
<td>10 (91)</td>
<td>1 (9)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL</td>
<td>4 (80)</td>
<td>1 (20)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>1 (50)</td>
<td>1 (50)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>2 (67)</td>
<td>1 (13)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMD</td>
<td>3 (75)</td>
<td>1 (25)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that to is much more common than for to as the infinitive marker in all authors but two. Only RCI and WM show preference for the variant for to. The percentages of particular forms in their letters are strikingly similar. The fact that both writers belong to the older generation supports the assumption that for to is a receding variant. Several younger writers use it as well but merely occasionally. Below, functional features of all the variants and the differences between them are discussed.

---

6 Other infinitive indicators, till and at, quoted by Mustanoja (1960: 515), have not been recorded either in CL or in the analysed Paston and Plumperton letters.
7 Zero has not been taken into consideration, because of a large number of doubtful cases, where the definite distinction between the infinitive and the subjunctive seems impossible, which renders counts of these forms unreliable.
8 Including 19 occurrences of *ff*or to.
9 The percentages given for the minor writers (EB, JPS, RL, RT, TC, and WMD) are probably of little statistical value, given the sizes of their outputs.
The infinitive form is usually introduced by *to*, which, in this position, does not exhibit its original prepositional functions, but serves merely as an indicator of the infinitive form. The infinitive, preceded by the simple *to*, can also express finality, e.g., *to fet* in example (18) and *to se* in (19).

18) he hathe mayd promysse to be be her wythin xiiij days after Candylmesse to fet tayme away, and he hathe promysid to helpe ycow of 1 li. of Carullus grotts for xvj d. (JPM 142: 117-118)

19) iij dayes afor the wrytyng of thys I departyd from my Loord, and come to se my father and my mother, and the morow after ^thys^ I pwrpos to grasse of God to goo ageyn. (RCII 55: 169)

The complex prepositional indicator *for to* was originally used to express purpose ['in order to', 'for the purpose of'] (Mustanoja 1960: 514; Mossé 1952: 100), and it still occurs in that function in most of the instances found in the *CL*, e.g.,

20) The causc I wryt to the ys for to beware ^of^ resayuyvng of sych goldys as gryte lose ys in at Caleyes. (RCI 20: 90)

21) Syr, my master yowre fadere and my maysterys yowre moder would aweys yow that ye woulde com houre vnto them into Hessex, and nat for to com at London, and for to be mery ther wytn them thys herseft, and so for to do youre pylgrymage. (WM 58: 90-91)

This function of *for to* can also be found in other contemporary letters, e.g.,

22) they schalbe redy in ther defensable aray ... in the West parte on Gateley More the same daye, vpon payne of losyng of ther goodyds and bodyes, for to geynstepe suche persons as is abowtward for to dysstrow owre suffereyn lorde the Kynge and the Comowns of Engeland. (William Paston III 1489: 5)\(^{11}\)

23) att which time ye may nott faile to send hinder all your booke and some readie man for to answer unto him (Brian Rocilfe 1461: 11)

However, *for to* does not always indicate finality (though this function can be determined in the majority of occurrences). In several cases it introduces a neutral infinitive (especially in RCI), e.g.,

24) the warled ys not good, werefor it ys as good for to lese in the begeyn(yng)g as in the ende (RCI 31: 182)

25) The man of Lyne ys good payment, and that ys mery for to dele wytn syche men. (RCI 31: 187)

26) for I knowe well that Thomas Kesten ys lothe for to sell them, for I wouste hem neuer for to selle non of myn but yeff that Y war there myselfe. (WM 69: 103)

27) Wherfor, modyr, we must beseche you to helpe vs forward wyth a lettr fry yow to Mastyr Pykenham to remebyr hym for to handly well and dylygently thys mater now thys Lent. (John Paston III 1478: 02)\(^{12}\)

28) My sayd Master Gascoygne hath dylygently applied your matter, as much as is possible for to doe, as your servant Geffray can shew unto you more at large every thing by mouth. (Edward Plumpton 1495: 10)

Apart from the two variants, *to* and *for to*, three instances of *for* directly preceding the infinitive have been found in RCI, and one in JD:\(^{13}\)

29) as thay saye, werefor ys faturas hath promysyd for (to) make you a quytons under notarys syne. (RCI 80: 394)

30) The frendes of here hath spoke wyt me for that mater, but all they wyll not grant a grote for (to) give them (RCI 85: 407)\(^{14}\)

31) Se the cartheg body be good hassche, and hexsyd rydy for goe to worke, for I haue gret nede therto. (RCI 56: 326)

32) Welbelulfyd brotheyr, I recomaund me vnto you, prayng you for do so mvch for me noo at thys tymge, to pay the freght for a xviij sparleys woull and sfelys of Thomas Wigestouns tyll my broder Wylliam Dalton or ellys I come (JD 28: 13)

The structures presented above differ in an important way, namely, *for* in example (29) and (32) does not seem to imply any finality, while in (30) and (31) it introduces the infinitive of purpose. These uses of *for* are exceptional in the letters analysed. However, both have been occasionally recorded in other texts in

---

\(^{10}\) Mustanoja's claim that *for to* "becomes weakened into a mere sign of the infinitive, equivalent to *to*, in the course of the 13th century" does not apply to numerous tokens found in *CL*, where it preserves its function of indicating finality.

\(^{11}\) The numbers refer to the year and the month when the letter was written.

\(^{12}\) The infinitive marker *for* becomes rare in later letters by John Paston III.

\(^{13}\) Mossé (1952: 101) claims that *for* was very rare and found only in the thirteenth century. As the examples from *CL* show, it could also be found in texts from the end of the fifteenth century. No examples of this variant have been found in the Paston letters analysed.

\(^{14}\) In both examples (*to* is Hanham's emendation.)
Middle English (see Mustanoja 1960: 515, 540).\(^\text{15}\)

Additionally, there are several instances of to followed immediately by a passive participle form, e.g.,

33) and the iijde peny at xxv s. for the li., and to resayudy at Bamys marte neste com, and the secon payment vj monyht, and the reste vj monyht after that. (RCI 26: 135)

34) Item I pray (you) to be ^good^ fiirende to my wyufe in helpeng her in all s(e)che theng as sche hath to done (TK 6: 12)

It seems reasonable to interpret example (33) as the elliptical passive infinitive constructions with the implied (non-expressed) infinitive form of the verb BE. However, in example (34) done may be interpreted as an archaic infinitive form, not the past participle with the omitted auxiliary.

2. Adverbs

2.1. Structure and distribution

Adverbs differ from prepositions in that they are not purely grammatical words, used for expressing relations between other words. They have their own lexical meanings and add to the meaning of the phrase and clause in which they occur. Adverbs show derivational suffixes and, also, can be inflected by degrees. The suffix -LY (-ly, -le, -lay, -ley, -lye) is quite commonly used for deriving adverbs from adjectives (this process is still productive in PDE), e.g., sharply, dayly, verryly, grettely, schortly, treulle, and trevely.

There is also an interesting group of adverbs which were originally genitive forms of other parts of speech, mainly adjectives, nouns and pronouns, or borrowed the genitive suffix from words belonging to these parts of speech, e.g.,

35) Thowe I dede nat allwheys well (TK 219: 172)

36) wherfore sir Y hertly besche and pray you atte pe reuerence of Jhesu consideryng pe feithfull love pat Y owe and bere towardys you and so will do durying my lyf (AN 16: 71)

37) Thorny I pray yow sell som of myn good Cottsyl woll that com at Estorn and &e con, and as ffor that at com syns I pray yow lat ytt aloyn tyll Y com (GC 92: 126)

38) Alsoy syr syn tyt ys soo as it ys of my master your fayder, in the reverens of God take it pacyenly and hvrt e nytssh yorself, for that ^God^ wyll haue done no mane may be gense ["against"]: (JD 141: 108)

However, there are some related variants without the genitive suffix, e.g.,

39) my Lordd Chamberleyn lokyth allwey when he schall be sent ffor (WLC 176: 317)

40) I hope ther whas not a better markett toward ffor Cottsyl woll many a day (GC 109: 190)

41) As towchynng the mater in your letter of the pour woman, I saw her neytyr syn byt as I com by her fathers dor I saw the mayde stond wyth her modyr. (RCII 55: 180)

42) plesse it you to vnderstond that I am latte come to London, anfe for deuyers cauesse ande matueres, also well agayn Wylliam Brerely as oder (TK 143: 45-47)

Some adverbs do not differ in form from adjectives, e.g., fast, last, and long.

2.2. Comparison

Like adjectives, adverbs in CL inflect only by degrees of comparison: positive, comparative, and superlative. Regular comparison takes place through the addition of suffixes: -ER (-ar and -er) to form the comparative degree and -EST (-est and -yst) to form the superlative. Here are several examples of regular comparison:

43) the [whych] I have redd and well vnderstond, an[d] that yowre m[asteschypp] marwellyd that I wrythyn non offteyn. (WLC 201: 657)

44) yff 3e wyll be payd here 3e schall be payd by Ester and schorttlywer, ^and^ 3eff yowre masterschypys wyll haue hytt soo. (WLC 208: 873)

45) and the sayd ffellys lyeth neste be affte the maste lowest vnder the ffellys off Thomas Betson (WLC 132: 127)

46) the wyche be bystowyd in the sayd scheppe, all afor the mast and lowyst abaffte the mast, and yowre borde Rechad Celyys ys ^ffellys^ be stowyd abaffte the mast vpon myn (WM 130: 149)\(^\text{16}\)

\(^\text{15}\) Mustanoja (1960: 540) mentions that the use of for with the plain infinitive may be due to French influence.

\(^\text{16}\) Only one instance of the variant -yst has been recorded.
One can see the beginnings of the periphrastic comparison of adverbs in the analysed letters. However, these are rare. Periphrastic comparison, through the addition of \textit{MORE} to form the comparative degree, and \textit{MOST} to form the superlative is, as in the case of adjectives, only sporadic and marked emotionally. The following are the only examples of periphrastic comparison of adverbs found in the letters:

47) I wryt no mor to you a[t] thyys, but I porpos to wryt \textit{mor scortly}. (RCII 8: 11)

48) I am porpossyd to com hovyr vnto yow whan this marte ys done, and than schall Y tell yow \textit{mor playne} be movthe. (GC 93: 150)

49) Syr, I hawe bene spokyn to for a whylfe in ijs plassys syn ge depeartyd: whon whos be the praysayrs, as schawll wryt to yow \textit{mor playne} in my next letter. (RCII 146: 741)

50) wh[erfor] Y vndyrstand by hym that he wyll take my brodyr an lettyr wheryb 3e sh[all se] hys intent \textit{mor clerly}. (GC 41: 74)

51) If you ar any oder wyll have my servys I to do them servys \textbf{better schep} then any man (TK 219: 149)

All the adverbial periphrases above are in the comparative degree, and in all cases but one the comparative form \textit{MORE} modifies an adverb in the positive degree. In (51) \textbf{BETTER} is used to build a structure in the comparative degree.

One instance of multiple comparison, also marked emotionally, has been recorded:

52) as yee schall vnderstand \textit{more clerlyar} be the copie of the sayd saffondytt, the whych ys sent vnto mastyr Mayer of the Stapell to schew vnto all the Fellyschyp at London. (WLC 238: 1538)

Some constructions combine inflectional and periphrastic devices. These include the gradational comparative and the proportional comparative.

\textbf{Gradational comparative}, a construction "used to indicate that the quality in question increases or decreases at a fairly even rate" (Mustanoja 1960: 281-282), yields one occurrence in the letters. The gradual increase of time is indicated by means of \textit{EVER} and the comparative form of the adverb \textit{LONG}, and the concurrent decrease (or, in this case, deterioration) is expressed by a repetitive construction containing two comparative variants of \textit{EVIL} joined by the conjunction \textit{AND}:

53) and the exchauncyng goyth \textbf{euer the lenger worsse and wars}. (WLC 234: 1405)

\textbf{Proportional comparative}, expressed by the correlative construction \textit{THE ... THE} occurs twice:

54) The \textit{mor} ys done for hym the more ys he beholdyng// byt me thynky the \textit{mor} comfort that sche haue of hym, and the \textit{mor} helpe he haue of you, the les wyll sche sette by ws. (RCII 47: 139)

55) I pray you that ye wolle mak som good man yowre attorney for to do seyell them, for Y wyll fayn they ware ye-sould, for \textit{the lenger} that Y keppe them ther \textit{the worsse} wolle the fellys be. (WM 58: 95)\footnote{In this example there is an adverb in the first part of the comparison and an adjective in the second.}

The \textbf{demonstrative type of proportional comparative}, with a single \textit{THE}, occurs three times in the collection:

56) wherffor ytty wyll be be[st that e] schypp yowr wholl as schortly as e ma \textit{/ the sonar} ye s[chypp yowr who]\ill yt schall stonde /etc. (GC 247: 308)

57) I desyreth is Hollynes at I motte do my voyage sennes I was so far forth, and so is Ollynes sendes me as is inbassador wyth materis of gret importansse. I treste do be \textit{the sonner} at one, be Godys grace. (SJW 129: 221-222)

58) Syr, I wryt the playnear to yow for owr father sawe your letter er hyt come to my hardys, and wos resenably wel plesyd therwryth, so that ge stonde seyrwr. (RCII 47: 145)

In some formulaic expressions, constructions with the comparative form \textit{levere(e)} (\textit{lewe}, \textit{leyur}, \textit{leyuer}) or superlative \textit{leuest} have been found. Apparently, these forms are never used independently, and can only be interpreted as part of an idiom, meaning 'prefer' as a whole unit:

59) for the worschypfull merchaunts of the town hadd \textit{lever} than myche goode they were owte of the town. (WLC 240: 1588)

60) I haue \textit{lever} my money be note resayuyd tyll anoder tyme radar nor ye schall labor youreselue and not holle. (RCI 73: 372)

A typical feature of the analysed documents is a heavy use of intensifying adverbs, which can modify both adjectives (61-3) and adverbs (64-65), e.g.,

61) and whe whoolde be \textit{ryught glade} and 3e myhty be redy to cowm in cowmpeny of my Lady wyth master Mwngewmbre, for he pwropos to be heyr afor Cyrsctemes. (RCII 136: 700)
Towards a more analytic expression of grammatical relationships ...

The use of compound adverbs cited above can be explained by the lack of the possessive form of the neuter personal pronoun IT. Many of the forms cited above are still used in formal contexts in PDE, but are probably much less frequent. They are analysable as morphologically complex forms, consisting of an adverb and a preposition. However, many adverbs perceived today as morphologically simple forms originated, in fact, in phrases, whose parts were once written separately, e.g., the adverb away (from OE on we5y), the preposition among (< OE on zemang18), and the preposition and adverb before (OE beforan19) and about (from OE on-butan20). Such changes in the orthographic shape of the words are certainly due to phonological developments, but they have also been accompanied (or, possibly, caused) by a semantic and morphological reanalysis. As these words have ceased to be perceived as compounds, it can be claimed that, in this case, compounding does not have to be a counterexample to analytic tendencies in the English language. On the contrary, these examples reflect the tendency to associate one meaning with one form, which is, in itself, analytic.

3. Periphrastic constructions involving adverbs and/or prepositions

3.1. Negation

A common type of periphrastic construction containing adverbs is negation. The negative adverbs used in the letters include: NO (no), NOT (non, not(e), noot, not(e)21 nat(e)- nat(t)(e)), NEVER (neffyr, nere(e), nevyr, newer), NEITHER (neder, noder), NONE (non(e)), and not(h)yn 'not at all', NOWHERE (nowher).

Negative adverbs follow the verbs that they modify, e.g.,

72) Y answard hem a3yn yt myt nat so be. (WM 39: 44)

73) Thowffe the be not past ij of a color or iij it skyllys not - blew, or tawne, or grene, or vyolet. (JD 51: 46)

---

18 zemang meant 'mingling; assemblage; crowd' (OED).
19 From bi- 'by'; 'about' + foran, the dative form of for (properly an adverb) used as an adjective or noun (OED).
20 From on in, on + butan 'without, outside of' (itself an earlier comb. of be 'by, near' + útan properly locative of út 'out', used adjectively or substantively). The primary meaning of on-butan was thus, on or by the outside of, hence around, wholly or partially (OED).
21 Not is used mainly by WLC, whereas note occurs only in RBC. Both forms are rare, found in the North-West Midlands, and occasionally in the London area and South-West. (See LALME: 376).
22 This variant is preferred by WM, TK, WMD, and JPS. It is rather infrequent, found in the Midlands, the London area and the South-East. (See LALME: 373).
Towards a more analytic expression of grammatical relationships ...

83) But noo man saythe nor doyth nothing to noon Englyscheman, but that they maye resorte too and ffroo as they have doen ym tymes past; saweng only men ben affarredde off Freschemen. (WLC 211: 985)

84) I awyse you to lene hym no mony, ne do no thyng wyth hym byt afor record. (RCII 47: 141)

85) Syr, I pray you lette hym not se thyss letters ne tell hym noote of tys ysend byt of the qwetans, and hy hym to Hawelay in as gret haste as ye can. (RCII 86: 324)

The negative constructions in the above examples all seem to carry some emotional weight.

3.2. Relative clauses

Among numerous relative markers there are adverbs and adverbial compounds, e.g., HOW (how(e), how(e)), WHERE (where(e), were), WHEREFORE (wherefor(e), werefor(e), qwerfor), of WHEREOF (where(e)of, were(e)of, wheroff, qwerof), WHEREIN (where(e)in), and WHEREBY ((q)wherby).

86) I pray you send me word how 3e do in tho maters, and qwate your profur wos, and wyth hom, and ther schawl be nothing be doyn heyr byt 3e schaul haue knowlege. (RCII 55: 182)

87) the wych ffellys lay wher my broder Wylliam Dalton ffellys lay. (JD 44: 21)

88) and i the nexte mony that I ressayd for owyr father whos xxx li. qwherof I loste xx s. in gowlde, a my sowll I whot not qweye. (RCII 74: 213)

89) Howr father has ressayd a letter frome yow wherby he wnderystond of the salle: iij sarpeyls and a peke. (RCII 117: 513)

Relative clauses may also be introduced by prepositional phrases, consisting of a preposition, the definite article and a relative pronoun, e.g.,

90) and she hath delyuerd hym youre bylle of youre hand, be the wiche he must resyue of you now att this marte, iijj xj li. (JC 101: 31)

91) for I ow hym iij li., of the whyche he hathe a byll of my hand (TC 172: 239)

92) Also syr, Y vnderstond that a lytell befor ywre comyng to Calles John Dalton had sovud all myn hoder ffellys the wyche Y had in Calles, for the wyche, syr, Y thankt yow and hem bothe hartelely (WM 149: 168)

Example (76) contains the verb DO. In the CL it did not function as an auxiliary, but still only as a lexical verb.

Negative adverbs may also modify other adverbs. Then they are in pre-position, e.g.,

77) In owr ffathyrs dewte he hathe me truly, and he con none ffardyr go but to me, and the mater ys soychce I trow I conot gese hym. (GC 4: 10)

78) Ytt whas no mor but all yowr howld woll, and as ffor the new, ytt ys the iiijde peny, vj monthys and vj monthys, and so myght Y a done syn I come vnto Calles. (GC 22: 38)

Other words that can carry some negative meaning include, e.g., the adverb LITTLE and the preposition SAVE.

79) And allso syr, I cannot spare thyse mony tell tyme I haue made a sale, ffor all schall be lykylly inowte to paye yowre costom and subsede. (WLC 202: 689)

80) I pray yow deluyuer hym no more of my mony: he saythe yow lettyll worchephe, that yow schowlde howe ys man xx s. and abatte ytt of my dewtte. (RCII 21: 34)

81) and he hath sent hytt to Calles redy, and I haue receyued hytt euerythynge acording to yowre remembravnc, sawe the cortens be stayned but on the ton syde. (WLC 189: 516)

There are several examples of multiple negation in the letters. Presumably, two or three negatives were felt as stronger than a single negative. This seems to be confirmed by the examples below, e.g.,

82) Syr, he ys noo stydfast man, nor he owyth yow noo goodd wyll thowth he make a ffayer fface, ffor I haue spoken to hym ffor yowre warrantys xx tymys. (WLC 170: 291)
93) And he wyll dosoe I schall be ys good frende, and that he schall wyll understand in tym to com, for the weche I wyll be glade for to doe for hym and wyll hymselfe. (RCI 11: 28)

I was struck by the frequency of the phrase for the weche in RCI and decided to analyse its distribution in other authors' writings. It turned out that 81 out of 93 instances found in all the CL occurred in RCI's letters. His application of the marker was also pretty peculiar. Whereas in other writers' letters for was only used as part of a prepositional verb (in most cases the verb THANK), in Richard the elder's letters it must have lost its prepositional force and was not related to any particular verb in the subordinate clause. Rather, the sequence for the weche had to be analysed as one grammatical (and semantic) entity corresponding to WHEREFORE used by other authors (94-95). The only other writer using the phrase occasionally in a similar way is WLC (95).

94) 3e schall understand that I intende to depart into Ynglond as some as the marre ys done, wherfor yff you come not yourself! I pray you send me word whom you wyll that I schall levyff such thengks of yours. (JD 18: 6-7)

95) Syr, I haue not the praysment of my brothers Robardys fellys, nether of Wylliam Daultons owld fellys, wherfor I wold haue wrytynge how I schuld be demenyd. (RCII 34: 100)

96) they all be warnyd to voyde the town off Cales and the Marches, wyffe, childern and goodes be Fryday nexte com, payn off deth, for the wych I trow Botrell woll ^not^ dyshease yow off yowre howsse noo longer, etc. (WLC 185: 449-450)

Although RCI showed a marked predilection for the prepositional relative marker for the weche, he did use the relative adverb WHEREFORE 21 times, e.g.,

97) The sekenese ys sore in London, werefore meche pepyll of the Sete ys into the centre for fere of the sekenese. (RCI 52: 288)

98) The horse ys fayer, God saue hym and Send Loye, werefore God send you a schaipeman for hym and redy money in hand. (RCI 52: 297)

I have found no instances of the sequence FOR THE WHICH in the letters by John Paston III and William Paston III. In the whole collection of the Plumptton letters there is only one occurrence of the phrase:

99) I take me oonly to your good wyll and thankfull disposition, for the which I hartely thanke you. (Henry Percy 1487: 11)

However, in Percy's letter the preposition for collocates with the verb THANK. In light of the evidence available one can conclude that RCI's use of the phrase constitutes an idiosyncrasy rather than a generally accepted feature.

3.3. Phrasal and prepositional verbs

Prepositions often occur in collocations with particular verbs forming structures referred to as prepositional verbs. However, these are not as strictly fixed as in today's English. Many of these collocations allow for some variation of the preposition, e.g.,

100) Daultons mother comendys hyr to you and thankys yow for the knuyys that ge sente to hyr. (RCI 117: 512)

101) Syr, my Lord comendys hym hartely wnto yow, and thankys yow of your letter, and whych tydyngys as he knowys a wrytys yow parte. (RCII 121: 564)

102) fflor I haue wrytten to hym and allsoe I haue ben theyr and spoken wyth hym. (WLC 202: 681)

103) And whereas yowre masterschyppe wrynthyth that I remember lyttill that ye badd me speke to John Delowppys that he schuld wryte to Peter Bayle & Delyte. (WLC 202: 680)

104) Syr, plese hit yowre masterschyppe to understond that John Dalton and I haue spoken many tymes vnto master Lefthenante fflor payment of yowre warantys off xv s. off the pownd. (WLC 164: 241)

In example (100) the verb THANK occurs in collocation with the preposition FOR, but in (101), in a different letter by the same writer it collocates with OF. In the second set of examples (102-103) there is variation between the use of WITH, TO and UNTO. Again, the variation occurs in the writings of the same author. Prepositions following THANK (and RECEIVE) seem to be interchangeable. This shows inconsistency or hesitation on the part the authors. However, in case of SPEAK, I have spotted some differences in the syntactic structures in which different prepositions are used. All the three, WITH, TO and UNTO, introduce the prepositional phrase constituting the indirect object of the verb. But, if TO or UNTO are used, the indirect object is followed by an adjunct and/or another clause, specifying the objective of the conversation (such as, e.g., asking for a favour or giving somebody orders). If WITH is chosen, usually no adjunct follows and the verb phrase seems to concentrate only on the action expressed by the verb and on the identity of the person spoken to.

Some collocations of verbs and prepositions seem to be well established and do not allow for prepositional variation, e.g.,
105) Ytt ys so that I loke for my Lord of Sent Jonys dayly, and at his comyng I wholl breng *hym* appon the way or do as my broder shall avyssye me to do/ (GC 124: 240)

106) Syr, ye schall vnderstond that we loken for hem her ayen wythin thyss iiij wekys, etc. (WM 58: 87)

107) Ryght [re]ueur[en]d and worchipfull Ser, [I r]eccmend me vnto [you wyth] reverence, as a s[p]ows how to dow to [h]y[r] spow[s], as [h]artely as I can], euermore dessyr[yn]g to her of your weuffar. (MC 222: 129)

108) Ryght trusty frende, I hertely commaunde me vnto yow, desyreng euermor to her of your weffar, whych I pray God contyne vnto his pleris, amen. (TG 64: 245)

As in Present-Day English, adverbs often collocate with verbs, forming periphrastic structures called phrasal verbs. Below follow several examples of the most common structures of this kind:

109) Syr yff yt plese yow that yow will let hit owt, I pray yow that I may have ij of the rimes off the stuball. (JD 180: 137)

110) and soo I hawe causyd Wylliam Smyth preuely to cast owte anoder sarpler. (WLC 234: 1428)

111) Prayng you hertely that ge will vowchsaft to take the payne as to by for me such stuff nessessary as I most nedes occupy, and to lay owte the money vnto your comyng. (RR 42: 160)

112) and then take hym wpe and ser hym, and lette hym stand in the dede of whynetter. (RCII 193: 915)

113) my master yowre fader wovld that Rechard Cely schuld bryng hover anoder govshawwe wyt hem, yeff ye covyd bey any at Calles for viij or ix s. (WM 39: 51)

As can be seen in the examples, the adverbial particle usually follows the verb immediately. However, in the cases where a pronoun is the direct object, it takes the position between the verb and the adverb (109 and 112).

Apart from prepositional and phrasal verbs discussed above, one can also find numerous verbs that have to be followed by two particles: an adverb and a preposition. Here follow several examples:

114) I am in whay wyth Gyshbryght Van Whennysbarge for an iij of yowr sarplris: Y hope Y shall go thorow wyth hym. (GC 109: 198)

115) And so, syr, *Y* vnderstond ther remayng behynd wheche be mad and sore brent, ij*xxv felles, the wyche ye woll do yowre best to put away wyt yowre fellys, for the wyche, syr, Y thanke yow hartely. (WM 149: 165)

116) I tolde hym he schulde geyff me redy money or he went owt of Cales or ellys he schulde haueff no woolIch of me at this tyme, and soo we departyd. (JD 18: 5)

Some multi-word verbs found in the letters have been lost from the language over time or have different meanings in PDE, e.g.,

117) The Dewke askyth noothing off hem but mony, and he wyll take syche men wyth hym to goo vpon [*attack*] the Frenschemen as plesyd hym. (WLC 186: 466)

118) And there the Leftenaut schewyd vnto them how that the Felleschyp fownt hem grewyd wyth them[.] because they were sorne fyrst vnto the Stappell and browght vpp [*raised to a good position*] theyr. (WLC 208: 887)

119) Item, syr, the same day I spake to master Leftenaut for payment off yowre warrants, or ellys that they myght be sett vpon [*deducted from*] yowre byllys off costom and sobsed s as he promoysyd me before. (WLC 170: 287)

120) and I departyd from London on Estym Ewyn, and I cound not get frome [*leave*] my Lord of Sent Jonys not paste iiij days togyddyryn syn Estyr Ewe. (RCII 55: 168)

4. Conclusions

In the present paper the author has aimed at presenting an overview of different functions assumed by prepositions and adverbs as well as the main periphrastic constructions (i.e., negation, relative clauses, and multi-word verbs) in which they occur in the analysed letters. Adverbs and prepositions are often discussed together in the same sub-section. This is due to the fact that both can occur in similar constructions. Therefore, the classification of words into clear-cut classes, such as prepositions and adverbs, is often problematic. An extreme example of this functional and distributional overlapping could be seen in the discussion of the phrase for the wech(e).

The evidence provided shows that the distribution and functions of prepositions and adverbs in fifteenth-century correspondence do not differ greatly from the present-day usage. However, some features alien to modern grammar have
been spotted and discussed, e.g., the infinitive markers for and for to, frequent use of compound relative adverbs, and multiple negation.

Although there are some traces of inflection in adverbs and productive compounding processes in both prepositions and adverbs, the general tendency for these words is to occur in periphrastic structures contributing to the analytic character of the language.

The discussion has been based on the CL and only occasionally referred to other collections of letters. Certainly, deeper analysis and comparison of the CL with other contemporary letters will help determine which features are the authors' idiosyncrasies and which reflect more general tendencies in the language.

REFERENCES

Allen, Cynthia

Barber, Charles

Blake, Norman (ed.)

Carstensen, Broder

Davis, Norman

Denison, David

Gairdner, James (ed.)

Hanham, Alison (ed.)

Jack, George B.

Kirby, Joan

Kurath, Hans – Sherman M. Kuhn (eds.)

Langenfelt, Gösta
1933 Select studies in colloquial English of the late Middle Ages. Lund: Håkan Ohlsson.

Lass, Roger (ed.)

Mossé, Fernand

McIntosh, Angus – L. Samuels – Michael Benskin

Mustanoja, Tauno F.

Wright, Laura

INTERNET SOURCES

Wyld, Henry Cecil

APPENDIX

Abbreviations

Names of the writers:

AN Anonymous author of the drafts 16 and 17
EB Edmond Bedyngfeld
GC George Cely
HB Harry Bryan
JC John Cely
JD John Dalton
JPM Joyce Parmenter
JPS John Pasmer
JR John Roosse
MC Margery Cely
RBC Robert Cely
RCD R. Coldale
RCI Richard Cely senior
RCII Richard Cely junior
RL Ralph Lemyntgon
RR Robert Radelyff
RT Roland Thornburght
SJW Sir John Weston
TC Thomas Colton
TG Thomas Granger
TK Thomas Kesten
WLC William Cely
WD William Dalton
WM William Maryon
WMD  William Mydwynter

Other

CL     Cely Letters
LALME  Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English, vol. 1
MED    Middle English Dictionary
OED    Oxford English Dictionary on-line

Symbols used in examples

[ ]    enclose reconstructions, omissions and explanations
( )    enclose emendations
^^     enclose interlineations