# The Development of *long* in Early Modern English: Impersonal Verbs of Desire in Focus

Noelia Castro-Chao
Universidade de Vigo
noelia.castro@uvigo.es

The class of English verbs of Desire in Present-Day English comprises verbs such as *long* or *thirst*, several of which are attested in earlier English in impersonal constructions characterised by the lack of a grammatical subject. In English, the impersonal construction decreased in frequency between 1400 and 1500, and effectively went out of use during the sixteenth century. Previous research has suggested that there is a need for a corpus-based study of not just Middle English, but also Early Modern English, in order to explore the different path(s) of development followed by individual impersonal verbs. The present article, therefore, investigates the development of the impersonal verb *long* (< OE *langian*) with the following objectives: a) to determine when *long* ceases to occur in impersonal constructions; b) to provide a diachronic overview of the personal syntactic patterns that came to replace impersonal constructions in Early Modern English; and c) to identify, within the framework of Construction Grammar, factors that may account for the development of *long* as a prepositional verb.

Keywords: corpus linguistics; diachronic linguistics; impersonal construction; syntactic change; verbs of Desire

. . .

## El desarrollo de *long* en inglés moderno temprano:
## los verbos impersonales de Deseo

La clase de verbos de Deseo engloba predicados como *long* o *thirst*. En estadios anteriores de la lengua inglesa, estos se podían emplear en construcciones impersonales caracterizadas por la ausencia de un sujeto gramatical. En inglés, la construcción impersonal empieza a hacerse más infrecuente entre los años 1400 y 1500 y finalmente desaparece a lo largo del siglo dieciséis. Trabajos previos apuntan la necesidad de acometer un estudio de corpus concerniente tanto al inglés medio como al inglés moderno temprano, lo cual permitiría arrojar luz sobre la(s) diversa(s) trayectoria(s) sintáctica(s) adoptada(s) por los distintos verbos impersonales. En consonancia con ello, el presente artículo investiga el desarrollo del verbo *long* (< OE *langian*) en el inglés moderno temprano con los siguientes objetivos: a) determinar el momento en el que *long* deja de emplearse en construcciones impersonales; b) examinar la evolución de los patrones sintácticos personales que reemplazaron las construcciones impersonales; y c) desde la perspectiva de la Gramática de Construcciones, identificar los factores que inciden en el desarrollo de *long* como verbo de uso preferentemente preposicional.

Palabras clave: lingüística de corpus; lingüística diacrónica; construcción impersonal; cambio sintáctico; verbos de Deseo

## 1. Introduction

This article explores the historical development of the impersonal verb of Desire *long* in the Early Modern English period (EModE). In Present-Day English (PDE), the class of verbs of Desire includes items such as *ache*, *crave*, *hope* and *yearn* which, as defined by Beth Levin, form a syntactically coherent class insofar as they express the first argument—the person that desires something—as the subject of the clause, whereas the second argument—the thing desired—is expressed either as a direct object, as in (1), or as the object of a preposition, as in (2) (1993, 194-95):[1]

(1)    He *needs* <u>new shoes</u>.

(2)    She *longs* for <u>a bright yellow car</u>.

Several verbs of Desire—e.g., *hunger*, *long*, *lust*, *need* and *thirst*—have been found to alternate between impersonal and personal uses in Old English (OE) and/or Middle English (ME), as illustrated in (3) and (4) respectively:

(3)    Mi leoue swete lefdi, to þe me *longeð* swuðe.
       "My beloved sweet lady, I feel a great desire for you"
       [*Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), a1250 in C. Brown *Eng. Lyrics 13th Cent.* (1932) 6]

(4)    Ich *langy* so swiþe after Gorloys his wifue.
       "I have such a great desire for Gorloys's wife"
       [*Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*), c1300 Lay.Brut (Otho C.13) 18918]

Example (3) represents an impersonal construction that lacks a grammatical subject controlling verbal agreement. Example (4), in contrast, represents a personal construction with a grammatical subject, *ich*, controlling verbal agreement. In both cases, the person that desires something has the semantic role of Experiencer—which in (3) is syntactically realised by an objective pronoun, *me*, whereas in (4) it is realised by a subjective pronoun, *ich*—representing the "animate being inwardly affected by an event or characterized by a state" (Traugott 1972, 34; see also Möhlig-Falke 2012, 31n12; Miura 2015, 6). The thing desired in (3) and (4) represents a Stimulus, which refers to something that triggers the event (Fischer and van der Leek 1983, 347). The Stimulus is syntactically realised by the prepositional phrases *to þe* in (3) and *after Gorloys his wifue* in (4).

Authors like Willem van der Gaaf draw a distinction between what he terms *quasi-impersonal* expressions, which include clauses lacking a grammatical subject but containing a (pro)nominal in objective case coding the Experiencer, as in example (3) above, and *really impersonal* expressions which only admit a nonreferential subject *(h)it*

---

[1]    Examples taken from *iWeb Corpus* (Davies 2018). Italics are added in the examples throughout the article.

(e.g., PDE "it snows") (1904, 2). In the present article I follow Ruth Möhlig-Falke in considering as impersonal only those structures that lack a grammatical subject proper, hence excluding from the category patterns with a nonreferential subject (2012, 6).

In English, the impersonal construction is known to have started to disappear in the late ME period between 1400 and 1500 (van der Gaaf 1904, 142; Allen 1995, 279-83), with marginal impersonal instances being recorded until about 1600 (Visser 1963, §§3-43; Traugott 1972, 130-1; Möhlig-Falke 2012, 14-15). Thus, the EModE period, with which this study is specifically concerned, is of interest from a historical point of view insofar as impersonal constructions had recently lost productivity, so that impersonal verbs were in the process of readjusting their argument structure to the new possibilities of the grammatical system of English following the major morphosyntactic changes that had taken place in OE and ME—in particular, the simplification of the case system and the fixation of word order (Allen 1995, 184-85, 213, 441; Fischer et al. 2000, 162-63; Möhlig-Falke 2012, 19, 216).

A great deal of attention has been paid to the variety of factors that may have affected the loss of impersonal patterns in the history of English, giving rise to an extensive literature on the topic that includes standard works in historical linguistics dating back to the early twentieth century (e.g., van der Gaaf 1904; Jespersen [1927] 1961), as well as later publications (McCawley 1976; Elmer 1981; Fischer and van der Leek 1983; Allen 1986, 1995; Trousdale 2008; Möhlig-Falke 2012 and Miura 2015, among many others). However, the development of impersonal verbs in EModE has received comparatively little attention. Previous studies have pointed out that individual verbs adopted a very idiosyncratic range of syntactic uses after the loss of impersonal patterns, some of which coexisted with personal constructions already in OE (Fischer and van der Leek 1983, 346-54; Allen 1995, 286-7; Möhlig-Falke 2012, 3-4), but no study has been carried out to date of the exact range of syntactic uses documented in EModE, nor of how those syntactic uses correlate with individual impersonal verbs.

An investigation of the EModE period is therefore of interest. As Möhlig-Falke points out, there is a great amount of lexical variation involved in the process of loss, since "some verbs lose their capacity for impersonal use earlier than others" (2012, 19) and "different verbs developed along different syntactic paths" (2012, 23; see also Trousdale 2008, 310; Traugott and Trousdale 2013, 70; Castro-Chao 2019, 134). Ayumi Miura further suggests that there is a need for "a large corpus-based study of not just Old and Middle English but also early Modern English" (2015, 9). More specifically, she notes that further research is needed in the lexical field of Desire as defined by Levin (1993, 194-95), which she separates from her main object of research, namely verbs of Emotion (2015, 56-60, 244). To follow up Miura's suggestion, the overall aim of the present study is to elucidate the path(s) of development followed by impersonal verbs of Desire, taking EModE *long* as a case study. The objectives can be summarised as follows: a) to determine when *long* ceases to occur in impersonal constructions; b) to provide a diachronic overview

of the personal syntactic patterns that came to replace impersonal constructions; and c) to identify factors that may help to explain the development of *long* as a prepositional verb, following the principles of Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, 2006). Regarding the third objective, it is hypothesised that the development of *long* as a prepositional verb represents the emergence of a new construction in the Construction Grammar sense of the term, that is, a conventional form-meaning pairing. The construction in question is interpreted here as a metaphorical extension of an intransitive motion construction where the Goal is realised by a prepositional phrase or an adverbial phrase.

The analysis consists of two parts. First, the relevant entries in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*; Simpson 2000) and the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*; Kurath et al. 1952-2001) are examined with a view to outlining the main syntactic and semantic properties of *long* in the course of its history. Secondly, an empirical investigation of EModE data is conducted on the basis of a dataset extracted from the *Early English Books Online Corpus* (EEBOCorp 1.0; Petré 2013), focusing on the time period 1500-1700.[2]

After this introduction, section 2 looks at the data sources and methodology used in the study. Section 3 focuses on the origin of the verb *long* as well as on the range of syntactic patterns attested in the *OED* and the *MED* quotations. Section 4 presents the results obtained from the analysis of EModE data and is followed by a discussion of the results in section 5. Lastly, section 6 summarises the main findings and conclusions.

## 2. Data Sources and Methodology

The EEBOCorp 1.0 largely reproduces the database provided by EEBO (Davies 2017), and thus includes all texts in EEBO Phase I with no genre, word count balance or codification for text type or subject domain. EEBOCorp 1.0 filters out posthumous as well as non-English texts, and also excludes translations from works by long-deceased authors. The corpus totals 525 million words. Given its large size, research on frequent items may be hindered due to the high number of hits retrieved whenever homonyms are involved, as happens in the present case with the verb *long* versus the adjective and adverb *long*. To solve this, a random selection of 891 texts was made totalling ca. 20 million words, including only texts written in prose between 1500 and 1700. Following the methodology that I adopted in a previous work (Castro-Chao 2019, 136-37), this subcorpus is structured into four sections distributed across four fifty-year subperiods, as summarised in table 1.

---

[2]  I am grateful to Peter Petré for giving me access to EEBOCorp 1.0.

Table 1. Number of texts and word count summary per fifty-year subperiod

| Subperiod | Number of texts | Number of words |
|---|---|---|
| S1 (1500-1549) | 201 | 5,004,310 |
| S2 (1550-1599) | 226 | 4,997,385 |
| S3 (1600-1649) | 230 | 5,003,071 |
| S4 (1650-1700) | 234 | 4,929,518 |
| **Total** | **891** | **19,934,284** |

The dataset of examples retrieved from these 891 texts consists of 341 occurrences of the verb *long*. In order to identify the array of spelling variants for this verb, I first collected the list of possible spellings provided in the *OED* and then checked them against the corpus word list generated with the software tool *AntConc* (Anthony 2019) from EEBOCorp 1.0. The ensuing analysis was carried out by annotating the data for factors concerning the types of clause where *long* occurs, subperiod and subject domain.

## 3. *Long*: Origin and Syntactic Patterning

*Long* (< OE *langian*) is a native formation inherited from Germanic (*OED* 2000a, v.[1]). From the entries in the *OED* and the *MED*, it can be observed that it has a complex history and sense development. The *OED* lists three different entries for this verb, namely *long*, v.[1] "to long for, desire," †*long*, v.[2] "to summon" and *long*, v.[3] "to belong to." For the present purposes, only the lexical entry *long*, v.[1] is taken into account, as it is the only one comprising senses related to the notion of desire. Furthermore, within *long*, v.[1], only the senses contained in branch two, which relate to emotional or physical condition, are considered. Roughly following Möhlig-Falke's formulation (2012, 92), the semantic frame of this family of senses is interpreted as <**Desirer Desired**>, with boldface signalling the lexically profiled participants (Langacker 1987, 491; Goldberg 1995, 45; Möhlig-Falke 2012, 92).[3] These labels are simply more concrete instantiations of the roles of Experiencer and Stimulus introduced in section 1.

According to the *OED*, the *MED* and previous studies, *long* has been recorded in impersonal use since OE times and until the first half of the sixteenth century (Visser 1963, §§29, 33, 679; Elmer 1981, 118-21; Allen 1995, 85, 272; Möhlig-Falke 2012, 52, 152n13, 206-7). In impersonal use, five different types of complements can represent the Desired: genitive (5) or prepositional complement (6), adverbial

---

[3]   As part of the specification of lexical entries, verbs determine which participants of their semantic frame are obligatorily represented as "focal points within the scene" designated by the verb (Goldberg 1995, 44). This is known as the *lexical profile* of a verb, which includes those participant roles that are given a significant degree of *salience* by virtue of their relative degree of prominence (Fillmore 1977, 97).

complement of direction (7), zero complement (8), clausal complement (9) and noun phrase (NP) complement (10).[4]

(5)    Ah hine ð̲æ̲s̲ heardost *langode* hwanne he of ðisse worlde moste.
       "He very earnestly longed for the time when he might leave this world"
       [*OED*, OE *Blickling Homilies* 227]

(6)    (=3) Mi leoue swete lefdi, t̲o̲ ̲þ̲e̲ me *longeð* swuðe.
       "My beloved sweet lady, I feel a great desire for you"

(7)    Me *longeð* h̲e̲o̲n̲e̲w̲a̲r̲d̲.̲
       "I yearn [to go] hence"
       [*OED*, c1225 (▸?c1200) *St. Katherine* (Royal) (1981) 876]

(8)    And euer me *longed* ay more and more.
       "and I always felt a longing ever more and more"
       [*MED*, c1400 (?c1380) Pearl (Nero A.10) 144]

(9)    Hire *longuede* w̲i̲t̲h̲ ̲h̲i̲r̲e̲ ̲b̲r̲o̲þ̲e̲r̲ ̲t̲o̲ ̲s̲p̲e̲k̲e̲.̲
       "She longed to speak with her brother"
       [*MED*, c1300 SLeg. (LdMisc 108) 198/14]

(10)   Hom *longeþ* tramtris þ̲e̲ ̲t̲r̲e̲w̲e̲.̲
       "He, Tramtris, desires the truth"
       [*MED*, c1330 (?a1300) Tristrem (Auch) 1275]

Personal patterns—in the sense "to desire"—did not arise until the first half of the thirteenth century (Elmer 1981, 119-20; Allen 1995, 228; Möhlig-Falke 2012, 219). This suggests that in its initial stages *long* must have been restricted to impersonal use alone, and that the transition from impersonal to personal use must have taken place between the early thirteenth century—when personal patterns begin to appear in the *OED* and *MED*—and the early sixteenth century—when impersonal patterns cease to be recorded in the *OED*. In personal use, four different types of syntactic patterns have been identified, namely, patterns with clausal complements (11), prepositional patterns (12), patterns with zero complements and patterns with adverbial complements of direction (14). The relative frequency of occurrence for each of these patterns is discussed in the section that follows.

---

[4]  In this and the next paragraph, syntactic patterns are listed by order of first attestation as recorded in the *OED* and *MED* entries.

(11)  þe cwen..*longede* <u>for to seon þis meiden</u>.
      "the queen longed to see this young woman"
      [*MED*, c1225 (?c1200) St.Kath.(1) (Einenkel) 1556]

(12)  Þen þe moþer Neomy *langed* <u>in to hyr land</u> agayn.
      "then the mother Neomy longed {to go} to her land again"
      [*MED*, c1450 (a1425) MOTest. (SeldSup 52) 4490]

(13)  This maide *longede* sore.
      "This maid had a great longing"
      [*OED*, c1300 *Life & Martyrdom Thomas Becket* (Harl. 2277) (1845) l. 45]

(14)  The man had an high harte and sore *longed* <u>vpwarde</u>.
      "The man had a proud heart and yearned sorely {to move} upwards"
      [*OED*, 1548 *Hall's Vnion: Richard III* f. xxvij]

## 4. *Long* in the EModE Period

In this section, I look at the distribution of the occurrences of *long* across the four fifty-year subperiods under investigation. The focus lies on the occurrence and diachronic development of the different syntactic patterns attested in the corpus, to which some observations on the subject domain in which *long* is most frequent are added. Table 2 shows the occurrences of *long* in EModE.

TABLE 2. Frequency distribution of *long* in EModE by fifty-year subperiod and subject domain (percentages between brackets)

| Subject Domain | S1 (1500-1549) | S2 (1550-1599) | S3 (1600-1649) | S4 (1650-1700) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Religion | 108 (80) | 48 (70.59) | 37 (50.68) | 51 (78.46) | 244 (71.55) |
| General Prose | 23 (17.04) | 10 (14.71) | 25 (34.25) | 11 (16.92) | 69 (20.23) |
| History | 1 (0.74) | 6 (8.82) | 8 (10.96) | – | 15 (4.40) |
| Politics | 1 (0.74) | 1 (1.47) | – | 3 (4.62) | 5 (1.47) |
| Philosophy | – | 1 1.47) | 2 (2.74) | – | 3 (0.88) |
| Law | – | – | – | – | – |

| Subject Domain | S1 (1500-1549) | S2 (1550-1599) | S3 (1600-1649) | S4 (1650-1700) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Biology | 2 (1.48) | – | – | – | 2 (0.59) |
| Medicine | – | 1 (1.47) | 1 (1.37) | – | 2 (0.59) |
| Literature | – | 1 (1.47) | – | – | 1 (0.29) |
| Total | 135 (100) | 68 (100) | 73 (100) | 65 (100) | 341 (100) |
| Row % | 39.59% | 19.94% | 21.41% | 19.06% | 100% |

The search yielded a total of 341 tokens. The overall frequency of *long* decreases over the period examined from 39.59% of occurrences in S1 (135 tokens) to 19.06% in S4 (65 tokens), but it should be noted that the abrupt change took place between S1 and S2 and has remained constant since then. In addition, the figures show that the use of *long* in EModE was largely restricted to the religious domain (71.55%, 244 tokens). The general prose domain ranks second in terms of frequency, though considerably further behind with 20.23% (69 tokens). Lagging behind is history with 4.40% of instances (15 tokens), while occurrences in the remaining subject domains—i.e., politics, philosophy, law, biology, medicine and literature—are very low, with few or no attestations. A full account of the role of the religious domain in the diachronic development of syntactic patterns goes beyond the scope of this article, but it is certainly interesting and shall be investigated in detail in future research. At this stage, however, it seems worthwhile to point out that the association of *long* with religious texts holds also for other members of the class of Desire, namely *lust* and *thirst*. In an earlier study, I revealed that *lust* occurs in the religious genre in 86.4% of its occurrences in EModE (236 tokens from a total of 273) (Castro-Chao 2019, 139); as regards *thirst*, the figures are 253 tokens (83.22%) out of 304 (Castro-Chao 2020, 144). These findings are in agreement with the evidence documented in the *OED* and *MED* quotations, which in the majority of instances also occur in religious texts.

In the EModE data, *long* was found to occur in personal use only, impersonal patterns being wholly unattested. If we take into account the chronology of the shift from impersonal to personal use and consider that it must have taken place between the early thirteenth and the early sixteenth centuries (see section 3), it would have been expected for impersonal uses of *long* to be found at least in the early subperiod(s) of EModE. However, the complete absence of impersonal patterns in my data suggests that with this verb the impersonal construction must have become unproductive by 1500, which in turn implies that the impersonal uses documented in the *OED* for the sixteenth century were most probably already marginal at the time. It may be concluded from this that my findings are in broad agreement with the general

account provided in previous work with regard to the timing of the disappearance of impersonal constructions in general, since impersonal patterns have been said to decrease in frequency between 1400 and 1500, with only marginal instances attested during the sixteenth century (see section 1).

The personal syntactic patterns documented in EEBOCorp 1.0 for the 1500-1700 period under study vary in the number and the nature of the arguments expressed. The decreasing order of frequency is as follows: prepositional patterns, patterns with clausal complements, patterns with zero complements and patterns with adverbial complements, respectively illustrated in (15) to (18) (Table 3). These do not fully correspond to the personal syntactic patterns attested in the *OED* and *MED* entries (see section 3), since the adverbial complements of direction documented in the *OED* are unattested in my corpus. It is also of note that the NP complements documented in the *MED* in impersonal use—see example (10) above—do not have a personal correlate either in the *OED* itself or in the corpus data.[5]

(15)   The .xlvi. is that ye *longe* <u>for euerlastynge lyfe</u> with all your mynde and inward desyre.
       [1517, D00000998462170000]

(16)   And therfore wept he te~derly and *longyd* <u>to lyue lenger</u>.
       [1529, D00000998400190000]

(17)   I knew a pore woma~ with childe which *longed* and beinge overcome~ of her passio~ eate flesh on a fredaye which thinge she durst not confesse in the space of xviij. yeres.
       [1528, D00000998406010000]

(18)   How be yt sythe ye *longe* so sore <u>therfore</u>.
       [1534, D00000998375060000]

Table 3 shows the raw frequencies for each of the documented personal patterns and figure 1 portrays their diachronic development across the four fifty-year subperiods under analysis.

---

[5]   Translations are provided only for OE and ME examples. As for examples from the EModE period, they have not been translated on the assumption that they are usually intelligible to the general modern reader.

TABLE 3. Frequency of personal patterns of *long* in EModE by fifty-year subperiod
(percentages between brackets)

| Complementation pattern | S1 (1500-1549) | S2 (1550-1599) | S3 (1600-1649) | S4 (1650-1700) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Prepositional | 69 (51.11) | 42 (61.76) | 49 (67.12) | 43 (66.15) | 203 (59.53) |
| Clausal | 54 (40) | 25 (36.76) | 22 (30.14) | 20 (30.77) | 121 (35.48) |
| Zero | 7 (5.19) | 1 (1.47) | 2 (2.74) | 2 (3.08) | 12 (3.52) |
| Adverbial | 5 (3.70) | – | – | – | 5 (1.47) |
| **Total** | 135 (100) | 68 (100) | 73 (100) | 65 (100) | 341 (100) |

FIGURE 1. Diachronic development of personal patterns of *long* in EModE
(relative frequencies)
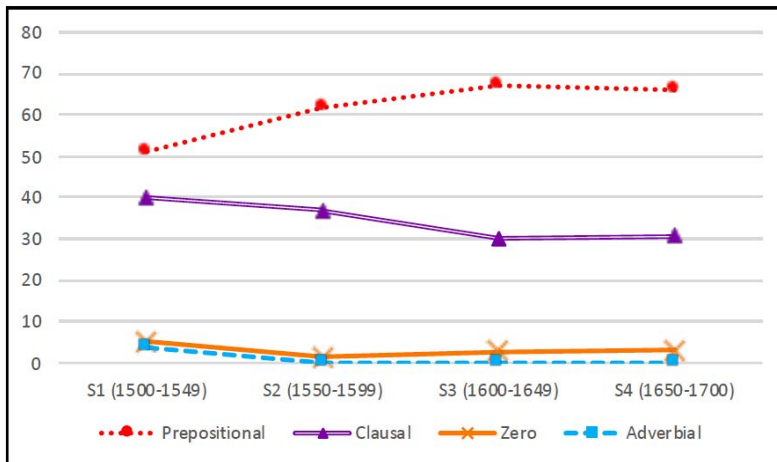


The relative frequencies show that there is an overall predominance of the prepositional pattern (59.53%, 203 tokens), which remains the most frequent in all subperiods and is already well established by the early sixteenth century (S3). For their part, patterns of *long* with clausal complements constitute the second most frequent use at 35.48% (121 tokens), a trend that also remains constant across the four subperiods. The most frequent realisation of clausal complements are *to*-infinitive clauses (96.69%, 117 tokens out of 121); very sporadically, they may also be realised by finite clauses introduced by *till/*

*until* (3.31%, 4 tokens), as in (19) below (cf. *OED* 2000a, v.[1] II. 6. †b.).[6] Patterns with zero and adverbial complements are at the opposite end of the spectrum, showing very low frequencies at 3.52% and 1.47% (12 and 5 tokens respectively).

(19)  Thou *long'st* till thy corn be in the barn.
      {1668, D00000113808040000}

From a diachronic perspective, prepositional patterns show a tendency to increase in relative frequency, from 51.11% in S1 (69 tokens) to 61.76% in S2 (42 tokens) and 67.12% in S3 (49 tokens); in S4, however, they remain stable at 66.15% (43 tokens), although a slight progression seems to be still at work, as the relative frequency of S4 scores higher than that of S2 (61.76%). As for prepositional patterns, the relative increase goes hand in hand with the relative decrease of clausal complements, which represent a notable percentage of uses in S1 and S2—respectively at 40% (54 tokens) and 36.76% (25 tokens)—but decrease slightly to 30.14% in S3 (22 tokens) and then remain stable at 30.77% in S4 (20 tokens)—around 9% lower than the value of S1 (40%). Finally, zero complements remain at a low proportion throughout the entire period, starting at 5.19% in S1 (7 tokens), dropping to 1.47% in S2 (1 token), rising again to 2.74% in S3 (2 tokens) and then to 3.08% in S4 (2 tokens). It appears that, like clausal patterns, the overall tendency is for zero complements to decrease, since the percentages in S2 (1.47%), S3 (2.74%) and S4 (3.08%) are all lower than in S1 (5.19%).

## 5. Data Discussion

This section addresses the factors that may have influenced the frequency and development of the syntactic patterns observed with *long* in EModE (table 3 and figure 1). As indicated in section 4, the predominant structures are prepositional and clausal patterns, which largely coincide with the syntactic uses that have survived into PDE (*Lexico.com* 2019a):

(20)  she *longed* for a little more excitement.

(21)  we are *longing* to see the new baby. [no longer available]

---

⁶  *Till/until* clauses are analysed as complements because they may be replaced with prototypical complement clauses without any apparent change in meaning (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 962; López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2015, 190). For instance, they may be replaced with a finite *that*-complement clause—"You long that your corn is in the barn" in (19)—or by a nonfinite *to*-infinitive clause with an explicit subject—"You long for your corn to be in the barn." The occurrence of *till/until* in complementiser function clearly deserves further investigation and will be the topic of a separate study.

This shows that by the EModE period, *long* had already adapted its argument structure to the new grammatical possibilities of the English language (see section 1); that is, in EModE *long* had not only completed the shift to personal use, but it had also become established in the patterns of complementation that have survived to the present day.

With regard to the diffusion of the pattern with prepositional complements, this finding is in accordance with Levin's classification of the verb as a member of the prepositional class in PDE (1993, 194-95), as also happens with other members of the class of Desire such as *ache for*, *itch for* or *pine for*. Their patterning contrasts with the behaviour of a few other verbs of Desire—*desire*, *need* or *want*—which in PDE have adopted NP complements rather than prepositional complements (see example (1)).[7] A question that naturally arises is why *long* adopted prepositional phrase (PP) rather than NP complements as it transitioned into personal use. In this regard, it also needs to be borne in mind that, judging from the *MED* entry quotations, the impersonal use of *long* in ME alternated between NP and PP complements (see examples (6) and (10)). Thus, *long* might have been expected to develop NP rather than PP complementation once impersonal constructions were lost. However, the data examined clearly show that this is not the case in EModE, since PP complements constitute the sole alternative for the (pro)nominal expression of the Desired participant and, in addition, they show a diachronic tendency to increase in relative frequency throughout the period.

As regards the pattern with clausal complements, there is an overall preference for *to*-infinitive clauses over the finite realisation by *till/until*-clauses. This may be connected to the lexical nature of the class of verbs of Desire since, according to Douglas Biber et al., infinitive clauses are "commonly used to report intentions, desires, efforts, perceptual states, and various other general actions," and are associated with a wide variety of semantic classes including verbs of Desire—*hope*, *wish*—and verbs of Intention—*decide*, *choose*—among others (1999, 693). On these grounds, the clear predominance of *to*-infinitive clauses could be attributed to the lexical field to which *long* belongs. In the same way, Michael Noonan points out that the kinds of predicates he terms *desiderative* "express a desire that some state or event may be realized in the future" (1985, 122) and thus have determined time reference (DTR). From this it follows that desideratives typically take reduced complements, for instance subjunctive complement clauses in languages where these are available, or infinitives.

Moving on to the patterns with few attestations, the low frequency of zero complements is to be expected if we take into account that *long* is a two-place predicate with the semantic frame <**Desirer Desired**> (section 3). The syntactic omission of a

---

[7]   The difference in patterning between prepositional—*ache for* or *long for*—and nonprepositional verbs of Desire—*desire* or *need*—might in some cases be connected to lexical semantics, since the prepositional predicates profile a Desired that acts as an Endpoint—to which the Desirer's attention is directed—whereas nonprepositional predicates such as *need* profile a Needed that rather represents a Theme (Loureiro-Porto 2005, 80). However, in the case of the nonprepositional *desire*, the verb profiles a Desired just like the prepositional verbs themselves. In view of this semantic parallel, a corpus-based study needs to be carried out in order to discern the factors that enable *desire* to express the Desired by an NP rather than a PP complement.

participant, in this case the Desired, is naturally disfavoured. In fact, zero complements are restricted to contexts where the unexpressed participant can be retrieved from the co(n)text (Fillmore 1986, 96). For instance, in (17) above the antecedent subject—*a pore woma~ with childe*—feels a longing for something that is unexpressed, but can be understood from the co(n)text insofar as what the woman desires to do is to eat, which is what ultimately leads her to sin when she finally yields to eating *flesh on a fredaye*.

As for patterns with adverbial complements of direction, the analysis yields only five instances (see (18) above). In all five cases, the adverbial complement is realised by the adverb *therefore*—"for that (thing, act, etc.); for that, for it" (*OED* 2000b, 2000c, adv. and n.)—which suggests that the construction was fossilised by this time and that its productivity in EModE must have been limited. The *OED* and the *MED* (see, for example, *OED* 2000a, v.[1] †5. and 6.a.) provide evidence that *long* could occur with adverbial complements of direction in earlier stages in both impersonal (22) and personal use (23).[8]

(22) Þiss ʒife ʒifeþþ haliʒ gast..Forr aʒʒ hemm *langeþþ* heþennwarrd.
"The Holy Ghost gives this gift... for they always long [to go] hence"
[*OED*, c1175 *Ormulum* (Burchfield transcript) l. 5490]

(23) For therat I *lang* moche.
"For I greatly long [to go] there"
[*OED*, c1500 *Melusine* (1895) 72]

Previous studies have shown that the construction with an adverb of direction constituted an established pattern of English from OE until EModE (Visser 1963; Fanego 2017; Huber 2017). According to Fredericus Visser, the type of construction with an adverb of direction, which he conflates with the variant with a prepositional phrase, could occur with modal auxiliary verbs such as *dare*, *must* or *should* (1963, §178):

(24) 1557, these folke that are in religioun *shall* out.

Visser notes that the pattern was idiomatic and fully productive for a long period of the history of English. This is corroborated in recent research on motion expressions in the history of English (Fanego 2017, 45-46; Huber 2017, 176-8; see also Visser 1963, §§178-80 and Fanego 1992, 25-26) which identifies the pattern with directional phrases since OE times and well into the sixteenth century with English premodals—*can*, *dare*, *may*, *might*, *mote* "be allowed, must," *must*, *mun* "may, must," *shall*, *should*, *will*, *would*—and with several ME verbs of intention and determination such as *amen* (< OF

---

[8] For the use of *thereat* as a complement of direction with verbs of motion, see the *OED* (2000d, adv. 1.b.) and the *MED* (1952-2001b, adv. 1. (c) and 2. (b))—for instance, 1517, *He cast a stonne ther att* "he threw a stone in that direction" (*OED*).

*aesmer*) "to plan, intend," *atlen* (< ON \**ahtil*-) "to intend, plan, to advance," *entenden* (< OF *entendre*) "to intend," *listen* (< OE *lystan*) "to desire," *menen* (< OE *mænan*) "to intend, plan, mean" and *purposen* (< OF *proposer*), among others. *Long*, like its close synonym *list* "to desire," clearly belongs here as well since, as mentioned, it was sometimes able to govern a directional phrase.

The pattern with directional phrases might be related to the one with adverbial complements attested in my data (see (18) above), since they both express the Desired by means of an adverbial phrase. In this regard, the diachrony of adverbial patterns in the corpus, which are marginally attested only in S1 (1500-1549), ties in with the timing proposed in previous studies for the disappearance of the pattern with directional phrases following premodals and verbs of intention and determination, a pattern which, according to Visser, does not survive beyond the EModE period (1963, §178).

A functional relation may be said to exist between prepositional and adverbial complements in that they can both denote the Goal or Endpoint of directed motion. In fact, the *OED* and the *MED* also record the directional sense with prepositional complements both in impersonal (25) and personal use (26):

(25) Þa ongan hine eft *langian* <u>on his cyþþe</u>.
     "then he began to long again for his native land"
     [*OED*, OE *Blickling Homilies* 113]

(26) So *longid* this lady with lust <u>to the Temple</u>.
     "So did this lady long with delight [to go] to the Temple"
     [MED, c1540 (?a1400) Destr.Troy (Htrn 388) 2914]

This might be the reason for the fact that both prepositional and adverbial patterns allow the Desired to be construed as a metaphorical Endpoint or Goal to which the Desirer's attention is directed, as may be observed in (27) and (28):

(27) Last of all, let this serue to exhort all true Christians to liue godly in this present life, and always to look for, yea, and *long* for [i.e., "direct attention towards"] death [=Endpoint]
     [1619, D00000998495310000]

(28) vut also we sholde wyllyngely and gladly *longe* [i.e., "direct attention towards"] therfore. [i.e., "for that/it=Endpoint"]
     [1525, D00000998459980000]

In light of this functional connection, the hypothesis is here put forward that both patterns instantiate the same argument structure construction in the Construction Grammar sense of the term (Goldberg 1995, 3-4; Goldberg 2006, 2019; Hilpert [2014]

2019). Construction Grammar is a cognitive model of grammar that views language as consisting of a large network of constructions, or stored pairings of form and meaning, of varying levels of generality and productivity. Constructions are not unordered, but rather highly structured by means of various kinds of *inheritance links* (Goldberg 1995, 72-98) that either relate higher and lower levels of abstraction in the constructional network or link a given construction to other constructions in the network. More specifically, *metaphorical links* (Goldberg 1995, 81), which are of particular relevance to the research reported in this article, "connect a basic sense of a construction with an extended sense" (Hilpert [2014] 2019, 61).
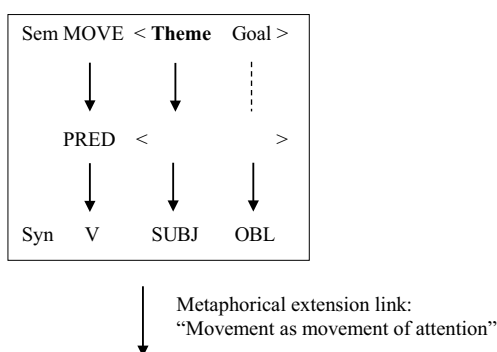
In the case under discussion, I would argue that the prepositional—*long for death*—and adverbial—*longe therfore*—patterns instantiated with *long* can be interpreted as a metaphorical extension of an intransitive motion construction. In its basic, prototypical form, this consists of an intransitive verb governing a prepositional or adverbial Goal (Goldberg 1995, 78, 115; Huber 2017, 20-23):

(29)  I put my water down and *ran* <u>to the door</u>. [= Goal, prepositional phrase]
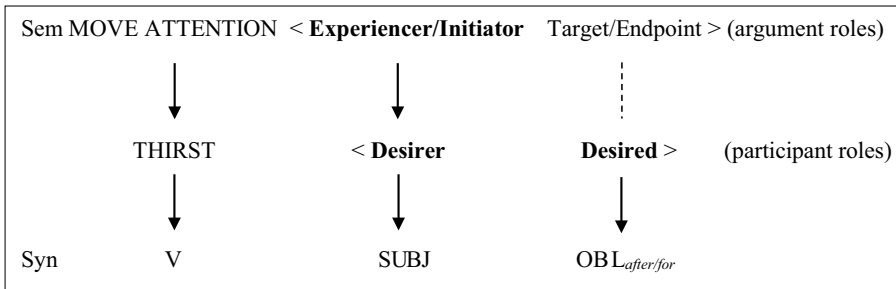
(30)  *Run* <u>forward</u>. [= Goal, adverbial phrase][9]

The intransitive motion construction is represented in figure 2, with boldface indicating the profiled roles (Goldberg 1995, 78; Perek 2008, 29).[10] The metaphorical extension of the intransitive motion construction is represented in figure 3, which conveys the meaning "move-attention" and, syntactically, specifies a subject Experiencer and a prepositional or adverbial phrase representing a Target.

FIGURE 2. The intransitive motion construction (after Goldberg 1995, 78)



---

FIGURE 3. Metaphorical extension of the intransitive motion construction + *long*

Sem MOVE ATTENTION  < **Experiencer/Initiator**    Target/Endpoint > (argument roles)

THIRST          < **Desirer**          **Desired** >      (participant roles)

Syn          V                    SUBJ            OBL*after/for*

The metaphorical extension of the intransitive motion construction denotes "movement as movement of attention" via a metaphorical extension link (Goldberg 1995, 88-89; Traugott and Trousdale 2013, 60-61). The metaphorical extension differs from the source construction in that, while the latter denotes literal movement, the former denotes a metaphorical movement of attention directed from an Experiencer to a Target, with the meaning glossed roughly as "Experiencer moves-attention towards Target."

The link with the domain of motion accounts for the fact that both prepositional and adverbial complements designated literal direction in earlier English. This link is also necessary to explain why an infinitive of motion has to be implied in the pattern with directional adverbs:

(31)   The man […] sore *longed* vpwarde. [i.e., "yearned [to move] upwards"]
       [*OED*, 1548 *Hall's Vnion: Richard III* f. xxvij]

The *OED* treats this pattern as an incomplete version of a construction with an explicit verb of motion (*OED* 2000a v.[1] †5.; *OED* 2000e v. III. 24.; Visser 1963, §178). Hence, from the perspective taken here, one may hypothesise that the implied motion meaning is determined at the level of the construction, which conveys the notion of movement in spite of the fact that it is not explicitly expressed at the lexical level (Goldberg 1995, 152, 159).

The Target argument shares with Goals the fact that they both represent unaffected entities. As David Dowty points out, Goals are characterised by a lack of affectedness that distinguishes them from Themes, the former often being realised by oblique grammatical relations (1991, 578):[11]

(32)   John *put* the lamp [=affected Theme] on the table. [=unaffected Goal]

The Desired participant of the verb is apt to be fused with the Target argument of the construction because it likewise acts as an unaffected entity; that is, the Desired

---

[11] Dowty points out that the Goal *the table* may be argued to be affected under certain circumstances (1991, 578n20).

acts as the Endpoint of the Desirer's attention, but it does not undergo a change of state as a result of the emotion of desire (see example (15) above; Croft 1991, 217-18). In other words, the Desired participant is apt to be fused with the Target argument of the construction because both are semantically compatible in that they are, like Goals, construed as unaffected Endpoints. This claim accords with Adele Goldberg's observation that only roles "which are semantically compatible can be fused" (1995, 50).

As a consequence of the integration of *long* into the intransitive motion construction, the verb's lexical meaning is coerced into a metaphorical reading as a movement or inclination towards the desired object, as becomes apparent in the following paraphrase of example (28) above:[12]

(33)  we sholde wyllyngely and gladly *longe* therfore. [i.e., "be inclined towards that/ it"]

In other words, it is because the Desired is construed as an extension of the Goal argument that it is conceptualised as the Endpoint of the Desirer's direction of attention, with the construction itself adding "a motion interpretation to verbs that do not lexically code motion" (Goldberg 1995, 160). This, in turn, allows the construal of the emotion of desire as an inclination or movement of attention towards the desired object.

Finally, the interpretation of the semantics and syntax of *long* summarised above and represented in figure 3 also makes it possible to account for the fact that NP complements have failed to prosper with EModE *long*. As is widely known, the transitive construction involves an Agent acting on a Patient that is highly affected by the event denoted by the verb (Trousdale 2008, 313):

(34)  He *broke* the vase. [=affected Patient]

Hence, given that the semantics of the transitive construction involves total affectedness of the Patient, the transitive construction does not fit with the semantic nature of the Desired as an unaffected Endpoint. This may have prompted the verb *long* to abandon NP complements altogether after it transitioned into personal use, with prepositional complements becoming the preferred option for the (pro)nominal expression of the Desired.

As regards possible motivations for the metaphorical extension process undergone by *long*, this consisted, as discussed above, in a change from coding a relation of physical movement (Theme → Goal)—see example (7)—to coding a relation of abstract (attentional) movement (Experiencer → Target)—see example (27). Numerous parallels for this course of development can be found in the literature on semantic change (among many others, with regard to evaluative adjectives see Núñez-Pertejo 2017). In the case

---

[12] In this regard, the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* classifies *long* in the category "wish or inclination" (Kay et al. 2009, 02.05.03).

of the verb *long*, the trigger for the semantic extension may have been, in all likelihood, the overwhelming association of this verb with religious contexts alluding to the soul's aspiration for union with God, as reported in section 4.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present article has investigated the syntactic development of the impersonal verb *long* in EModE, paying particular attention to the diachronic development of the different syntactic patterns that replaced impersonal constructions. First, the analysis considered the relevant entries in the *OED* and the *MED*. Secondly, an empirical investigation was carried out on a total of 341 tokens extracted from EEBOCorp 1.0 (1500-1700). The data analysis yielded the following findings and conclusions. According to the *OED* and the *MED*, *long* was recorded in impersonal use from OE times until the first half of the sixteenth century, whereas personal patterns—in the sense "to desire"—did not develop until the first half of the thirteenth century. In the EModE corpus examined, however, impersonal uses are unattested, which implies that the impersonal construction must have become unproductive by 1500, with the impersonal uses documented in the *OED* in the sixteenth century being most probably already marginal at that time. The evidence in this study can thus be said to be in broad agreement with the general account provided in previous works with regard to the dates of disappearance of impersonal constructions in general, namely, the decrease in frequency between 1400 and 1500 with only marginal instances in the sixteenth century.

The personal patterns documented in the corpus data exhibit a range of syntactic structures that are predominantly represented by prepositional patterns, followed at a distance by clausal ones. The findings also show that the use of *long* was largely restricted to the religious domain throughout EModE. Diachronically, it can be observed that prepositional complements become the most frequent variant in personal use, showing a tendency to increase in relative frequency over the course of the period studied. Clausal patterns, for their part, tend to decrease and are realised by *to*-infinitive clauses in the vast majority of cases, and only sporadically by finite clauses introduced by *till/until*. Patterns with zero complements represent the least frequent syntactic variant and show a diachronic tendency to decrease. The unexpressed argument involves a participant that is lexically profiled—the Desired—but is left unexpressed because it is retrievable from the co(n)text. Lastly, patterns with adverbial complements are only marginally attested in the early sixteenth century, being exclusively realised by the adverb *therefore* "for that (thing, act, etc.); for that, for it."

Adverbial patterns are functionally related to prepositional ones in that they both allow the Desired to be construed as the Endpoint or metaphorical Goal of the Desirer's attention. Within the framework of Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, 2006), both patterns have been tentatively interpreted as instances of a construction

conveying the meaning "move-attention," which constitutes a metaphorical extension of an intransitive motion construction specifying a prepositional or an adverbial Goal. Such an interpretation serves to explain why the *OED* and the *MED* record directional phrases with *long* in earlier English. It also helps us better understand the diachronic diffusion of prepositional patterns observed in EModE (see table 3 and figure 1), which may be seen as an effect of the following two factors: first, the Desired participant is semantically compatible with the oblique Goal of the intransitive motion construction in that both act as unaffected Endpoints; second, the semantics of the transitive construction involves an argument that is construed as an affected Patient rather than an unaffected Goal. As a result, EModE *long* selects prepositional rather than NP complements for the (pro)nominal expression of the Desired, and this eventually led the verb to abandon NP complements altogether after it transitioned into personal use.

To conclude, I would like to put forward some avenues that might be fruitfully pursued in order to further develop the findings presented in this article. For instance, it might be of interest to expand the scope of study to include the (late) ME period, in the belief that a large corpus-based investigation of ME *longen* would provide a more robust empirical basis than the current dataset from the *OED* and *MED* entries. In addition, a comparative study of prepositional verbs of Desire such as *ache for* or *long for* and nonprepositional verbs such as *desire* or *need* would also be beneficial with a view to discerning the factors that account for differences in terms of syntactic patterning.

WORKS CITED

ALLEN, Cynthia. 1986. "Reconsidering the History of *like*." *Journal of Linguistics* 22 (2): 375-409.

—. 1995. *Case Marking and Reanalysis: Grammatical Relations from Old to Early Modern English*. Oxford: Clarendon.

ANTHONY, Laurence. 2019. *AntConc* (version 3.5.8). Tokyo: Waseda University. [Accessed February 15, 2020].

BIBER, Douglas et al. 1999. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.

CASTRO-CHAO, Noelia. 2019. "Changes in Argument Structure in Early Modern English with Special Reference to Verbs of Desire: A Case Study of *lust*." *Research in Corpus Linguistics* 7: 129-54.

—. 2020. *Argument Structure in Flux: The Development of Impersonal Constructions in Middle and Early Modern English, with Special Reference to Verbs of Desire*. Bern: Peter Lang.

COLE, Roger William, ed. 1997. *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*. Bloomington: Indiana UP.

CROFT, William. 1991. *Syntactic Categories and Grammatical Relations: The Cognitive Organization of Information*. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P.

DAVIES, Mark. 2017. *Early English Books Online* (= EEBO). SAMUELS Project. [Accessed February 15, 2020].

—. 2018. *The 14 Billion Word iWeb Corpus*. [Accessed February 15, 2020].

DOWTY, David. 1991. "Thematic Proto-Roles and Argument Selection." *Language* 67 (3): 547-619.

ELMER, Willy. 1981. *Diachronic Grammar: The History of Old and Middle English Subjectless Constructions*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

FANEGO, Teresa. 1992. *Infinitive Complements in Shakespeare's English: Synchronic and Diachronic Aspects*. Santiago de Compostela: Servicio de Publicacións e Intercambio Científico, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.

—. 2017. *"The trolley rumbled through the tunnel*: On the History of the English Intransitive Motion Construction." *Folia Linguistica Historica* 38: 29-73.

FILLMORE, Charles J. 1977. "Topics in Lexical Semantics." In Cole 1977, 76-138.

—. 1986. "Pragmatically Controlled Zero Anaphora." *Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Linguistics Society, 95-107.

FISCHER, Olga and Frederike van der Leek. 1983. "The Demise of the Old English Impersonal Construction." *Journal of Linguistics* 19 (2): 337-68.

FISCHER, Olga et al. 2000. *The Syntax of Early English*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

FITZMAURICE, Susan and Donka Minkova, eds. 2008. *Studies in the History of the English Language IV*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

GOLDBERG, Adele. 1995. *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P.

—. 2006. *Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

—. 2019. *Explain Me This*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP.

HILPERT, Martin. (2014) 2019. *Construction Grammar and Its Application to English*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP.

HUBER, Judith. 2017. *Motion and the English Verb: A Diachronic Study*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

HUDDLESTON, Rodney and Geoffrey K. Pullum. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

JESPERSEN, Otto. (1927) 1961. *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles. Part III: Syntax (vol. 2)*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

KAY, Christian et al., eds. 2009. *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary: With Additional Materials from A Thesaurus of Old English*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford UP. [Accessed February 15, 2020].

KURATH, Hans, Sherman McAllister Kuhn and Robert Lewis, eds. 1952-2001. *Middle English Dictionary*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P. [Accessed February 15, 2020].

LANGACKER, Ronald W. 1987. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar, vol. 1: Theoretical Prerequisites*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP.

LEVIN, Beth. 1993. *English Verb Classes and Alternations: A Preliminary Investigation*. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P.

LEXICO.COM. 2019a. s. v. "Long." [Accessed February 15, 2020].

LÓPEZ-COUSO, María José and Belén Méndez-Naya. 2015. "Secondary Grammaticalization in Clause Combining: From Adverbial Subordination to Complementation in English." *Language Sciences* 47: 188-98.

LOUREIRO-PORTO, Lucía. 2005. "The Semantic Predecessors of *need*: From Old to Early Modern English." PhD diss., University of Santiago de Compostela.

MCCAWLEY, Noriko Akatsuka. 1976. "From OE/ME 'Impersonal' to 'Personal' Constructions: What is a 'Subject-Less' S?" In Steever, Walker and Mufwene 1976, 192-204.

MIDDLE ENGLISH DICTIONARY. 1952-2001a. s. v. "Lŏ̆ngen." [Accessed February 15, 2020].

—. 1952-2001b. s. v. "Thĕ̆r-at." [Accessed February 15, 2020].

MIURA, Ayumi. 2015. *Middle English Verbs of Emotion and Impersonal Constructions: Verb Meaning and Syntax in Diachrony*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

MÖHLIG-FALKE, Ruth. 2012. *The Early English Impersonal Construction: An Analysis of Verbal and Constructional Meaning*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

NOONAN, Michael. 1985. "Complementation." In Shopen 1985, 42-140.

NÚÑEZ-PERTEJO, Paloma. 2017. "'Terrific-Looking Creatures and Terrific, Funny Guys': On the Historical Development of English *terrific*." *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies* 55: 65-85.

OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY. 2000a. s. v. "Long." [Accessed February 15, 2020].

—. 2000b. s. v. "Therefore." [Accessed February 15, 2020].

—. 2000c. s. v. "Therefor." [Accessed February 15, 2020].

—. 2000d. s. v. "Thereat." [Accessed February 15, 2020].

—. 2000e. s. v. "Shall." [Accessed February 15, 2020].

PEREK, Florent. 2008. "Towards a Constructional Approach to Automatic Argument Structure Acquisition: The Case of Oblique Phrases." Master's thesis, Université de Lille III.

PETRÉ, Peter. 2013. *Early English Books Online Corpus 1.0*. Leuven: KU Leuven.

SHOPEN, Timothy, ed. 1985. *Complex Constructions*. Vol 2, *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

SIMPSON, John, ed. 2000. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP. [Accessed February 15, 2020].

STEEVER, Sanford, Carol Walker and Salikoko Mufwene, eds. 1976. *Papers from the Parasession on Diachronic Syntax*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Linguistics Society.

TRAUGOTT, Elizabeth Closs. 1972. *A History of English Syntax: A Transformational Approach to the History of English Sentence Structure*. New York and London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs and Graeme Trousdale. 2013. *Constructionalization and Constructional Changes*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Trousdale, Graeme. 2008. "Words and Constructions in Grammaticalization: The End of the English Impersonal Construction." In Fitzmaurice and Minkova 2008, 301-26.

Van der Gaaf, Willem. 1904. *The Transition from the Impersonal to the Personal Construction in Middle English*. Heidelberg: C. Winter.

Visser, Fredericus. 1963. *Syntactical Units with One Verb*. Part 1, *An Historical Syntax of the English Language*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Noelia Castro-Chao holds a BA in English Language and Literature and a PhD in English Linguistics (May 2020). Until November 2019, she worked under funding from an FPU grant at the University of Santiago de Compostela, where she is currently a researcher at the unit for "*Variation, Linguistic Change and Grammaticalization*." Her research interests include historical syntax and semantics, corpus linguistics and Construction Grammar.