

COMPOUND ADVERBS IN OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH

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Abstract. *Compounding in the English language has been thoroughly researched, and various descriptions and classifications have been proposed in linguistic studies. However, little attention was given to parts of speech other than nouns, adjectives and verbs. This work deals with the diachronic study of compound adverbs found in the Old and Middle English texts of the Helsinki Corpus. The compound adverbs of both periods are described and analysed in terms of their structure and meaning. The research aims at describing the development courses of compound adverbs during the two language periods.*

Key words: *compound adverb, word class, corpus, change*

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of the English language, which has continually lasted for over fifteen hundred years, is marked by various changes resulting from both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. The changes have affected all linguistic levels, but the most obvious ones are reflected in the vocabulary. The English word stock has changed considerably due to different word-formation processes and borrowing. It is believed that 85% of Old English words of German origin have been lost (Kastovsky 2005).

The process of compounding in English has had an important impact on the structure and outlook of the English vocabulary throughout its historical development. Much has been written about this word-formation process in English, but many studies primarily deal with compounding in nouns, adjectives and verbs. Other compound word classes have received very poor attention in the literature on morphology. What is found in the literature is mainly just a notion that compounding is characteristic of all word classes, but only compound nouns, adjectives, verbs, and, scarcely adverbs, are described and analysed. After a detailed description of compound nouns, verbs and adjectives, Bauer says that "Compounds of other form classes are found as well, but they are rare and of extremely low productivity" (Bauer 1993: 212), and added one more sentence to the issue. The

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situation with the study of compounding in other word classes of the earlier language periods is even less satisfactory.

In this work we will deal with a diachronic study of compound adverbs. The aim is to describe the structure and meaning of compound adverbs in Old and Middle English, and to follow their developmental courses during the two language periods. This research also aims at finding out whether the overall tendency affecting the reduction of compound forms in Middle English influenced the process of compounding in adverbs as well.

The research relies on the Old and Middle English texts of the Helsinki Corpus, dating from 750 to 1150, and from 1150 to 1500, respectively. The Corpus is described to be the most thorough and resourceful in terms of its relevance and representativeness, since it contains the selection of texts which belong to different genres and registers. The material of the Helsinki Corpus used in this work was obtained from Oxford Text Archive. The compounds were searched for in a traditional way, because no computational tools available to subscribers of the Corpus were at the disposal of the author in this work. The analysis and description of compound adverbs taken from the Corpus relies upon relevant Old and Middle English dictionaries, primarily The Dictionary of Old English (DOE), which defines the English vocabulary from 600 to 1150, Bosworth-Toller's An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online, and the Middle English Dictionary¹, in the electronic version, which covers vocabulary dating from 1100 to 1500.

In this work we will accept the attitude that synchronic and diachronic methods are two connected and intertwined principles, and if we want to study language change, both principles should be utilized. There is no sharp distinction between the two methods, but rather it is "a shifty no-man's-land" (Lass 1998: 12). McMahon uses the metaphor to describe the complementary relation of these two approaches: "a synchronic analysis is like a still picture, whereas a diachronic one is more like a film" (McMahon 2002: 10). We base our diachronic study of compounding in adverbs on the data obtained from the comparison of two successive stages of the language. The differences are interpreted as the result of the historical development of language.

2. COMPOUNDS – CHARACTERISTICS, DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION

Compounds are interesting, and at the same time intriguing and controversial linguistic concepts in terms of their description and analysis. Despite the fact that they are one of the most researched and investigated linguistic phenomena, the issue of their precise definition and classification has not been solved yet (Trips 2009: 132). Compounds are very complex in terms of their structure, and their position within a determined linguistic level is not quite clear, since they connect several important linguistic and non-linguistic areas: syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations; syntax and morphology; and linguistic and pragmatic knowledge (Scalise 2010: 2). They can be positioned at the border between lexis and grammar, because they are "part vocabulary, and part syntax" (Algeo 2007: 74).

The precise definition of compounds seems elusive, and there is a myriad of definitions, formulated from different perspectives, casting light on some aspects, but neglecting others, and thus creating a limited perception and understanding of the whole picture. All the definitions endeavour to answer the following questions: "What kind of

¹ When the DOE is finished, it will, along with the Middle English Dictionary and Oxford English Dictionary, give a full description of the vocabulary of the English language.

linguistic unit is a compound?”, and “What kind of linguistic unit is it made of?” (Montermini 2010: 77). Various linguistic units are used in the answer, such as a word, lexeme, base, root, free/ bound morphemes. One of the earliest definitions of compounds was given by Morris: “Two or more words are joined together to make a single term expressing a new notion.” (Morris 1872: 221) Marchand also defined compounds in terms of words as their constituent elements: “When two or more words are combined into a morphological unit we speak of a compound” (Marchand 1960: 11). Another very common unit used to define compounds is a ‘lexeme’. Matthews described compounding as a lexical process “by which a compound lexeme is derived from two or more simple lexemes” (Matthews 2002: 82). The same terminology is used by McMahon, Bauer, Scalise, Kastovsky, Kavka, and Booij, to name some of the linguists. However, if we analyse compounds in English, we can find many examples which violate these definitions. Benczes introduced phrases as constituent elements, claiming that a compound consists of two or more elements, the first of which is a word or a phrase, and the second one is a word (Benczes 2006: 8). The introduction of the term element or a phrase as a constituent of a compound broadens the concept of compound formations on combinations of an independent morpheme and another one whose status is disputable. A more precise and comprehensive explanation of compounds was provided with the introduction of other criteria in linguistic studies. Compounds are defined as complex formations, formed without affixes, spelled as one word, right-headed, inflected as a whole, syntactically inseparable. Pyles includes semantic criteria in the definition: “Putting two or more words together to make a new word with a meaning in some way different...” (Pyles 1964: 276). Compounds are also syntactic-semantic islands, perceived as conceptual units with a specific accent (Scalise 2010: 6).

The classification of compounds depends on various linguistic considerations – semantic, syntactic or morphological (Lieber 2009). Although the formal classification of compounds based on the parts of speech involved shows some drawbacks², still, it is valuable for pragmatic reasons, and illuminates the characteristics of compounds from one aspect, which does not exclude other perspectives. The most studied compounds belong to the class of nouns, verbs and adjectives, while other word classes have been neglected in research. However, the analysis of the Helsinki Corpus reveals many examples of compound words, among which compound adverbs are rather numerous.

3. COMPOUND ADVERBS IN OLD ENGLISH

There are 37 compound adverbs found in the Old English texts of the Corpus. The analysis shows that the majority of the adverbs consist of other adverbs, or prepositions³, and the structure can be illustrated with the following examples:

e.g. ðæræfter, adv. ‘thereafter, after that’ < *ðær*, adv. ‘there, where’ + *æfter*, adv. ‘after’,

e.g. ymbutan, adv. ‘about, around, without’ < *ymb*, adv./ prep. ‘about, by’ + *utan*, adv./ prep. ‘from without’,

² It is called inadequate and simplistic from the perspective of lexical theory (Milojević 2000: 41), or unsatisfactory due to the neglect of semantics (Bloomfield 1963: 344).

³ Adverbs and prepositions can have the same form, and the term particle is often used to denote both.

e.g. ðeahhwæðre, adv. ‘yet, nevertheless, however’ < *ðeah*, adv. ‘yet, still, however’ + *hwæðre*, adv. ‘whither’,

e.g. ætgædere ‘together’ < *æt*, preposition. + *gædere*, adverb. The form *gædere* originated from the verb *gædrían*=*gadrian* ‘to gather’.

Other compound adverbs found in the Old English texts of the Corpus belonging to this structure are the following: *ætgædere*, *ðærmid*, *ðærtoeacan*, *ðærymbutan*, *ðananforð*, *ðiderinn*, *efenneah*, *fulgeorne*, *heononforð*, *heræfter*, *nahwar*, *nahwonan*, *nateshwon*, *nohwær*, *norðaneastan*, *sudaneastan*, *swaðeahhwæðere*, *welgehwear*, and *widerræhtes*.

The structure of other compound adverbs shows the presence of nominal elements. The Old English compound adverb *innanbordes* ‘within borders, at home’ consists of the adverb/preposition *innan* ‘in, into, within’ as the determinant and the noun *bordes* which has the function of the determinatum. The compound adverb *utanbordes* ‘abroad’ has the similar structure. Other examples of Old English compound adverbs which contained a noun as a constituent element are the following:

e.g. andergyld ‘in repairmen, in compensation’ < *ander*, prep. ‘under’ + *gyld*, n. ‘a payment of money’,

e.g. eastryht/ eastryhtes ‘east right’ < *east*, n. ‘east’ + *ryht*, adv. ‘right, well, correctly’,

e.g. norðryhte ‘north right’ < *north*, n. ‘north’ + *ryht*, adv. ‘right, well, correctly’.

Compound adverbs could also consist of an adjective, or two adjectives:

e.g. lythwon ‘a little (space, time, quantity)’ < *lyt*, adj./adv. ‘little’ + *hwon*, adj. ‘little’,

e.g. hludswewe ‘with a loud voice’ < *hlud*, adj. ‘loud, sonorous’ + *swege*, adj. ‘sounding’,

or an adjective and a noun:

e.g. eastlang ‘along the east’ < *east*, n. ‘east’ + *lang*, adj. ‘long’, and

e.g. westlang ‘along the west’ < *west*, n. ‘west’ + *lang*, adj. ‘long’.

There is one example found in the Corpus which illustrates the combination of an adjective and a relative pronoun:

e.g. eallswa ‘also, so, so as’ < *eall*, adj. ‘all’ + *swa*, relative pron. ‘as, that’.

The adverb *stæðhlyplice* ‘at a steep inclination’ is composed of a compound adjective *stæðhlyp* and the suffix *lice*, and therefore can be analysed as a formation created as a result of both compounding and derivation⁴.

The meaning of compound adverbs is usually inferred from the separate meanings of their constituent elements, for example:

e.g. nohwær ‘nowhere, in no place’ < *no*, adv. ‘no, not’ + *hwær*, adv. ‘where’,

e.g. ðærmid ‘therewith’ < *ðær*, adv. ‘there’ + *mid*, adv. ‘together’.

The analysis of semantic characteristics of compound adverbs shows that in many cases the meaning of the compound can be reduced to the meaning of one of its constituent elements, but also to the meanings of both elements which are synonymous. These compound adverbs belong to the group of tautological compounds, and their semantics can be illustrated with the following examples:

e.g. ðeahhwæðer ‘yet, but, nevertheless’ < *ðeah*, adv. ‘yet, but, nevertheless’, + *hwæðere*, adv. ‘yet, but, nevertheless’,

⁴ Some linguists (Miller 2012) classify combinations of compounds and affixes as compounds.

e.g. *lythwon* ‘a little (space, time, quantity) < *lyt*, adj./ adv. ‘little’ + *hwon*, adj. ‘little’, e.g. *swaðeahhwæðere* ‘however, yet, nevertheless’ < *swaðeah*, adv. ‘however, yet, nevertheless’ + *hwæðere*, adv. ‘however, yet, nevertheless’.

3.1. Quasi-compound adverbs

There are a number of compound adverbs consisting of morphemes which do not exist as independent words. One of their elements is independent, whose meaning is usually the same as the whole compound, while the second element is usually considered to be void of meaning, e.g. *huruðinga* ‘at last, especially, at any rate’ < *huru* is an adverb ‘at last, especially, at any rate’, and the morpheme *ðinga* is not an independent morpheme. The compound adverb *huruðinga* is described in The Bosworth-Toller’s Dictionary as ‘an emphatic modification of *huru*’.

Another example is the adverb *nateshwon* ‘not at all, by no means’ < *nates* is not an independent morpheme, and *hwon* is an adjective meaning ‘little, few’ (but it usually occurs with substantive or adverbial force – a little). A few more examples illustrate the structure of such compound adverbs:

e.g. *ætnehstan*, adv. ‘at last’ < *æt*, adv. prep. ‘to, before’ + *nehstan*, the second element is not an independent morpheme,

e.g. *hwæthugu/hwæthwega*, adv.⁵ ‘something, somewhat, a little’ < *hwæt*, adv. ‘why, what’ + *hwega*, not an independent morpheme,

e.g. *flocmælum*, adv. ‘by flocks, flockwise’ < *flocc*, n. ‘flock’ + *mælum*, not an independent morpheme, defined as a suffix in Bosworth’s dictionary,

The status and class of some elements of compounds is not always clear, and the last example shows that certain morphemes are defined differently in dictionaries. For example, the adverb *ætgedere* ‘together’ consists of the adverb *æt* and the morpheme *gedere*. The form *gedere* originated from the verb *gadrian/ gædrian* meaning ‘to join, unite’. In the DOE the morpheme *gedere* is described as the second element of compound adverbs, and in Bosworth’s Dictionary it is analysed as an adverb meaning ‘together’.

4. COMPOUND ADVERBS IN MIDDLE ENGLISH

The study of Middle English compounds mainly focused on compound nouns, adjectives and verbs. Other word classes were not analysed in detail, and little was found about these types in the literature. However, the analysis of Middle English texts of the Corpus reveals a great number of examples belonging to other word classes.

There are over 140 compound adverbs found in the Middle English texts of the Corpus. The majority consists of adverbs, but other parts of speech, such as prepositions, nouns, adjectives or pronouns, are also constituent elements. The following example illustrates the structure of compound adverbs consisting of adverbs or prepositions:

e.g. *over-large*, ‘too boldly or imprudently’ < *over*, adv. + *large*⁶, adv.

⁵ This form is also used as a pronoun.

⁶ *Large* is also a noun and an adjective.

Other examples of compound adverbs consisting of particles found in the Middle English texts of the Corpus are the following: *at-foren*, *efter-sones*, *elleshwer/ ellesshwar/ elleswhere*, *elles-whider/ elles-hwider*, *farthermare/ farthurmore, furthermore, forthermare/ forthermare/ forthermoore*, *for-why*, *heræfter*, *herbiforen*, *here-after*, *herebefore*, *herfor*, *her-inne*, *her-of*, *hierafter*, *hwerthurh*, *hwer-with*, *hwiderward*, *in-with*, *more-ouer/ moreover*, *neueremore*, *nowhere/ nohwer, nohwider*, *non-more*, *nowwhar*, *nummore*, *otherhwile/ otherhwiles*, *ootherweyes*, *othere-wise/ otherwise*, *otherwhile*, *ouer-litil*, *ouer-mytil*, *outforth*, *outherwhile*, *out-ouer*, *over-gret*, *over-hastily*, *over-large*, *thærafftierr/ ther-after*, *thærthurh*, *thar-at*, *thare-by*, *tharefore/ therefore*, *thare-to/ ther-too/ there-to/ ther-to*, *thar-of/ there-of/ ther-off*, *thar-with/ therewith/ therwith/ ther-with*, *thar-yn*, *theraboute*, *ther-apon*, *therewithal/ therwithal/ therwith-alle*, *ther-on*, *ther-oute*, *ther-thoru*, *ther-whiles*, *therwhyle*, *through-oute/ thurghout*, *unnderrfoth*, *up-on*, *vpward*, *welner*, *whare-on*, *whare-so*, *wharethourh/ wherethurgh*, *wharfore*, *wherbi*, *wherewith*, *wherfor*, *wherypon*, *withæftan*, and *with-innen*.

There are also several compound adverbs in the Corpus consisting of a particle and a nominal element (noun or adjective): *beforehand*, *now-a-dayes*, *oftentimes/ oftentyme/ ofte-tyme/ oft-tymes*, *ouer-al*, *ouermyht*, *right-wisli*, *thus-gate*⁷, and *wit-all/ with-alle*.

Some compound adverbs have both nominal elements in their structure, as the following examples show: *endlonges*⁸, *enddelong/ endelong/ ende-long*, *mid-daig*⁹, *nihlangne*, and *yister-day*.

e.g. *yister-day*, 'yesterday' < *yister/ yester*, n. 'yesterday' + *day*, n.

e.g. *right-wisli*, 'fairly, in accordance with justice' < *right*, n., adj. + *wisli*, adj. 'of certainty, evidently'.

One of the elements of compound adverbs could be a relative pronoun, while the second one is either a noun or an adverb: *euerydel*, *euerywhere*, *eueremar*, *somewhat*, *sumhwile*, *sumhwet/ summwhat*¹⁰, *sumtyme*, and *sumwher*.

There is one example found in the Corpus illustrating the structure of an interjection and an adverb:

e.g. *lanhure* 'at last' < OE *la*, interjection 'oh, ah' + *huru* 'adv. at last'.

The analysis of some Middle English compound adverbs shows that their constituent elements can belong to more than one part of speech:

e.g. *summwhat*, 'somewhat, rather, to some extent' < *som/ sum(e)*, adv. adj. pron. + *what*, adv., adj. conj.,

e.g. *sumwher*, 'somewhere' < *som/ sum(e)*, adv. adj. pron. + *wher*, adv.

Compound adverbs could originate from the corresponding phrases, and the following examples illustrate this:

e.g. *anesweis* 'in any way, anyhow' originates from the genitive phrase *ani + weis*,

e.g. *be-forn-tyme* 'in the past, previously' originates from the phrase *before time*,

e.g. *embehwile*, 'a while ago' originates from the Old English phrase *ymb hwile*.

⁷ The adverb *thus-gate* means 'accordingly, in the aforesaid manner' and the second element is described as a suffix in the Middle English Dictionary, originating from the noun *gate*.

⁸ Originating from *enddelong*.

⁹ The same form is used as a noun and an adjective.

¹⁰ This form is also used as a pronoun.

Some Middle English compound adverbs were created as a result of conversion, and the following examples show which part of speech they originated from:

- e.g. *bakhalf* < noun *bakhalf*,
- e.g. *nothing*/ *no-thyng* < pronoun *nothing*,
- e.g. *ouerpassyngli* 'with excessive fervency' < *overpassinge*, present participle from the verb *overpassen*,
- e.g. *outrage* 'exceedingly' < adjective *outrage*,
- e.g. *sum-deel*/ *sumdel*/ *sum-dele* 'partly' < noun *sōm-dēl*.

The adverb *anfaldeliche* illustrates the difficulty to differentiate with certainty the exact borderline between compounding and derivation, because it consists of the compound adjective *anfalde* and the suffix *-lice*.

The majority of Middle English compound adverbs contain elements inherited from Old English, but there are also two compound adverbs modeled on the foreign pattern:

- e.g. *beforehand* modeled on Latin *prae minibus*, and
- e.g. *depart-dieux* 'certainly, indeed' from the French phrase meaning 'by God'.

Several adverbs found in the Middle English texts of the Corpus contain three morphemes. The examples of string compound adverbs are the following: *with-in-forth*/ *withinth*, *withouth*, *how-so-euer*, *inso-mochel*/ *in-so-mochel*, *natwythstondyng*, *neuerthelatter*, *neuertheles*, and *noght-with-stondyngys*.

4.1. Quasi-compound adverbs

A number of Middle English adverbs are half-motivated, consisting of an independent morpheme, and another one which is not an independent morpheme, and void of meaning.

- e.g. *sunderlepes*, 'separately, individually' < *sunder*, adj., adv. 'separately' + *lepes*, not an independent morpheme,
- e.g. *otherlaker* 'differently, otherwise' < *other* + *laker*, not an independent morpheme,
- e.g. *newlynges* 'recently, lately' < *new*, adj. + *lynges* not an independent morpheme,
- e.g. *nateshwon* 'by no means, not at all' < *nates*, not an independent morpheme + *hwon*, adj. 'little, few'.

5. THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPOUND ADVERBS

The statistical analysis of compound adverbs from Old and Middle English shows an increase in the number of different adverbs used in Middle English. The number of Middle English compound adverbs found in the Corpus is almost four times bigger than the number of Old English ones. The comparative analysis of the compound adverbs of both periods shows several courses Old English forms could have taken.

5.1. The inherited forms from Old English

Only several Old English compound adverbs from the Corpus were also used in the Middle English texts¹¹:

¹¹ The OE compound adverbs consisting of nominal elements, such as *nordaneastan*, or *sudaneastan* also survived into Modern English.

OE: *ðærafter*, ME: *thæraffterr*, MnE: *thereafter*,
 OE: *nohwæ/ nahwar*, ME: *nowhere/ nohwer/ nowwhar*, MnE: *nowhere*,
 OE *ðærmid* ‘therewith’, ME *ther-with*, MnE *therewith*,
 OE *heræfter*, ME *here-after*, MnE *hereafter*.

All the above mentioned Old English adverbs had different spelling or slightly changed forms in Middle English. The main change refers to the new spelling conventions in Middle English, whereby the OE *ð* was replaced by *the*, and the vowel *æ* was no longer used. The morpheme *æfter* was changed into *after*, which illustrates backing of vowels. The morpheme *mid* was replaced by the new morpheme *with*. The change of the morpheme *hwæ/ hwar* illustrates the weakening of consonants, where the initial sound *h* was lost or deleted.

What strikes most are the semantic characteristics of these adverbs, which did not change from Old to Modern English.

5.2. A group of Old English adverbs no longer used in Middle English

There is a group of Old English compound adverbs which were not found in the Middle English texts of the Corpus, and this finding is also supported by the study of Middle English dictionaries, which do not cite these adverbs – either in the same or modified forms. The following Old English compound adverbs were no longer used in Middle English: *ætgædere*, *ætnehtan*, *andergylde*, *ðærtoeacan*, *ðærymbutan*, *ðananforð*, *ðeahhwæðre/ ðeahhwæðre/ ðeahhwæðere/ ðeahhweðre*, *ðiderinn*.

5.3. New compound adverbs in Middle English

The vocabulary of Middle English was enriched by a number of new compound adverbs, and the following examples illustrate some of them: *anesweis*, *anfaldeliche*, *thærthurh*, *therefore/ therefore*, *therewithal/ therwithal*, *ther-oute*, *ther-thoru*, *ther-whiles*, *therwhyle*, *therwith-alle*, *through-oute/ thurghout*, *thus-gate*, *beforehand*, *depart-dieux*.

The analysis of a number of compound adverbs found in the Middle English texts of the Corpus reveals that there are no corresponding Old English forms. However, even though they are not found in the Middle English texts of the Corpus, the study of Old English dictionaries reveals their existence in Old English, but with slightly different forms. The following compound adverbs illustrate this: OE *ætforan* < ME *at-foren*, OE *þæræt* < *thar-at*, OE *þærbig* < *thare-by*, OE *þærto* < ME *thare-to/ ther-too*.

6. CONCLUSION

The generally accepted view among linguists is that compared to Old English, compounding was in decline in the Middle English period. However, the study of Old and Middle English texts of the Helsinki Corpus shows the considerable increase in the number of compound adverbs used in the latter language period. This result confronts the overall tendency of replacing native compound forms with the borrowed formations in Middle English.

Apart from making quantitative findings, this research also followed the development courses of compound adverbs in the two language periods: which of them survived, which were lost from the language, and which were newly introduced in the Middle English period. Those adverbs which survived into Middle English showed slight changes affecting

their spelling, and some of them had modified forms resulting from regular sound changes. Their semantic analysis supports the fact that, unlike lexical words, the meaning of grammatical words is less prone to change, and all the surviving adverbs had the same meanings as they had had in the earlier period. The influence of French was also traced in a couple of Middle English compound adverbs.

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SLOŽENI PRILOZI U STAROENGLLESKOM I SREDNJOENGLLESKOM PERIODU

U lingvističkim istraživanjima proces kompozicije je temeljno istraživano, i brojne klasifikacije i opisi se mogu naći u literaturi. Međutim, osim složenih imenica, prideva i glagola, malo pažnje je posvećeno drugim vrstama reči. Ovaj rad bavi se dijahronim proučavanjem složenih priloga pronađenih u tekstovima Helsinškog korpusa staroengleskog i srednjoengleskog perioda. Složeni prilozima oba perioda su analizirani i opisana je njihova struktura i značenje. Cilj istraživanja jeste da opiše tokove razvoja složenih priloga tokom ova dva jezička perioda.

Ključne reči: *složeni prilog, vrsta reči, korpus, promena*