IMPLICATIONAL SCALES AND NP PRONOUN HEADS

María de la Cruz Expósito González
Universidad de La Laguna

ABSTRACT

Implicational scales and accessibility hierarchies provide a means of giving linguistic significance to the fact that certain elements included in specific kinds of texts are themselves indicators of the register to which a text can be assigned. These texts can be ascribed to formal or informal registers and they are usually interpreted as such depending on the selection of certain categories. These can be relative pronouns, pronominal versus noun headwords of NP, among other variables. In this article, I show to what extent this kind of implicational scale has a bearing on the use of pronouns as heads of noun phrases in 15th century documents. The category of the pronoun itself as well as the frequencies with which they are employed are relevant to the formality-informality classification of the text. In this case I have included chancery documents from the fifteenth century in order to study these variables of selection of NP heads from the historical, and at the same time synchronic point of view.

KEY WORDS: Implicational scales, accessibility hierarchy, pronoun, syntax, register.

RESUMEN

Las escalas implicacionales y las jerarquías de acceso son uno de los medios para estudiar la relevancia lingüística del hecho de que ciertos elementos que se incluyen en tipos de texto específicos denoten el estilo de esos textos como registros formales o informales. En este artículo tengo la intención de mostrar hasta qué punto este tipo de escalas implicacionales tiene un efecto sobre el uso de pronombres como núcleos de frases nominales. La categoría del pronombre y las frecuencias porcentuales con que aparecen en los textos son relevantes para el hecho de la formalidad o informalidad en relación con el texto. En este caso, he incluido documentos de la cancillería inglesa del siglo XV para estudiar estas variables de selección de núcleos desde el punto de vista histórico y sincrónico.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Escalas implicacionales, jerarquía de acceso, pronombre, sintaxis, registro.

The use of implicational scales and accessibility hierarchies in research into historical linguistics has a relatively long history (see for exaple Comrie, Keenan, etc.). In this paper I seek to examine the use of pronominal heads in NPs from the point of view of implicational scales so as to arrive at a fine-grained description of

the register of a corpus of texts drawn from the chancery documents of the fifteenth century. In an earlier study (Expósito 1997) I focused on both noun and pronoun heads and arrived at significant results. In this paper, I limit my examination to types of pronoun performing the NP head function making use of the accessibility hierarchies to determine degree of formality or informality of the texts. I also chart the differences between the pronouns, their distribution as regards the simplicity or complexity of the NP and its syntactic function. In the first section of this paper I review the situation of the pronominal system in late Middle English and then in the second section discuss register variables in the chancery documents. I then examine pronoun heads of NPs from a range of perspectives. I look first at their frequency and distribution and then turn to types and uses of pronouns heads. In this account of types and uses I look in detail at personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns and finally at indefinite pronouns.

1. THE PRONOMINAL SYSTEM OF LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH

The pronominal system of Late Middle English went through a series of changes that implied a great simplification of the system of cases. This is reflected by the textual instability and variability of the paradigm as to the number of cases and orthography. In general, the use of pronouns in chancery texts in the first half of the 15th century does not exhibit excessive changes that influence the language of the period, and so they had not been taken into account up to the moment. This can also be expected of the structure of the NPs. We do have to pay attention to, factors such as the nature of the documents that were chosen as the source of this research. This has a particular influence on the choice of pronouns as heads of NPs.

The pronominal units are linguistic items easily affected by various factors of a pragmatic and contextual nature. In fact, a relevant criterion for the definition of the pronoun category is precisely its capacity to indicate "that reference is being made to something which is given or known within the linguistic or situational context" (Quirk et al.: 335). At the same time, in late middle English, as in many other languages nowadays, the use and selection of pronouns is a marker of focus and pragmatic factor relevant for the organization of the text, not just the sentence or the clause. The extratextual, or situational context, the relationship between speaker/hearer, the degree of formality or informality, power relationships, etc. (Mustanoja 1960:127) are all involved in the production of a text.

Messages, in the documents of the English Chancery of the period, have their own framework. They have an effect on the patterns that the text receives and which constitute their structure. They were sent by the king or under his seal, the signet of Henry v; there were other documents, like petitions of mercers and merchants or those of common people, and court records. The documents show certain differences but they were not stratified since most documents were translated by the scribes of the Chancery Inn's of Court, but some of them show peculiarities as to their structure and patterning. Even in those court records and records of events and feuds between the aristocracy as is the case of Adam Moleyns. All these influ-

ence pragmatic dynamics that inspire which units should be in a message, even below the level of consciousness[1]. One example is that of the majestatic address (WE instead of I), one issue liable to cause some changes in the OE pronominal system, in its evolution to ME and later periods. Thus, a number of pronouns and their usages were considered more formal for pragmatic factors such as the ones I include in this paper, as well as issues such as the interaction among speakers (YE instead of THOU and YOU instead of THEE) since they became more frequent, in the evolution towards PDE.

Other components shape the structural patterning of a text, its nature as regards a classification in relation to register or genre (formal/informal, written/oral). The documents analysed impinge on the principles of the proximity between speaker/hearer in this style of discourse or text. This implies that the expression of language is used as oriented to the speaker, or that it is inclined to the hearer which entails that those texts oriented to the speaker are more likely to insert structures that augment or diminish the amount of information available for the listener. All these principles correlate with the frequency and selection of the pronouns, as have been proved in other works, so far in relation to chancery English (Expósito Glez 1997:79).

Furthermore, the use of pronouns in a specific kind of text is closely related to the frequency of the definite articles in an inverse proportion. So the more pronouns a text contains, the fewer definite articles we will find. These parameters may be applied both to the use of pronouns as determiners and to their function as heads of NPs. There are also intralinguistic factors, like the simplicity or complexity of the phrase, its syntactic function, length, position, etc. that will also be examined even though it is not expected they deviate from general intuitions about language. They might have a special relevance in the selection of the different types of heads, in this particular case, the pronouns, but they do not embody revealing items in the fifteenth century so far.

2. PRONOUN HEADS OF NPS.
FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION

Pronouns appear as NPs heads in 2026 examples, a 30,69% of the total 6602 NPs that constitute the corpus I analysed. In general, the referent is animate and, more specifically, human. Most examples make reference to the speaker, his/her interlocutors or other people referred to in the exposition of the information detailed in the documents.

---

[1] Changes below the level of consciousness are those that take place inspired by the speakers attitudes in their interaction, but of which speakers themselves are not aware.

The pronouns more prone to function as NP heads are personal pronouns, but as can be obsserved, demonstrative pronouns have a certain importance in the frequencies that these texts display, though to a lesser degree than the indefinite pronouns. Demonstratives, according to Downing and Locke (1992:437) tend to have animate/human reference, which restricts their usage when acting as NP heads. The other pronouns do not show an important incidence and have been grouped together.

If we take into account the general frequencies of the category of pronouns, we will note the following schema:
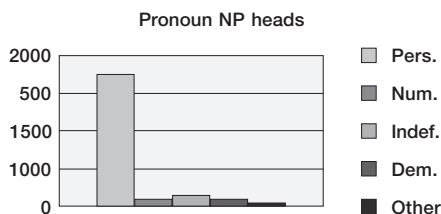

Figure 1.

The personal pronouns are the most common category in the NP slot, followed by the indefinite, demonstrative, numeral, and reflexive, possessive and interrogative pronouns. These have been placed together due to their low frequency. In figure 2, I include the variation in usage within simple and complex NPs depending on the category of the pronoun.

In complex NPs, the number of examples of pronoun heads is considerably reduced and personal pronouns are no longer the most common category indeed, indefinite pronouns are by far the most usual heads. The personal pronouns comprise 91.11% of the total number of pronominal heads. The rest of the units is scarcely represented. Indefinite pronouns (4.34%), demonstratives (3.01%) and the remaining examples (1.5%) constitute residual illustrations. The group of "other" pronouns are in some examples typologically very close to the group of personal pronouns. This is the case of two possessive pronouns,[2] that obviously represent the genitive case of the personal pronouns, and of eight reflexive pronouns that take the

_____

[2] These examples are cases of "second genitive", one of the transformations of the morphological system of Late Middle English (Lass 1992:117 y 119). The origin of these forms is dialectal in the 13th century: "Beginning in the north and northeast midlands in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, a new genitive type arose, with suffixed *-(e)s*, as in *your(e)s, her(e)s, our(e)s,* etc. These spread gradually southwards, appearing in the southeast midlands in the later fourteenth century. The new forms were used (as they still are) in constructions where the possessed noun did not directly follow the genitive of the possessor [...]." What is surprising about the two examples registered in this corpus is that the pronouns function as heads and not as determiners.

function of NP[3] head. An interrogative pronoun has also undertaken the function of NP head.

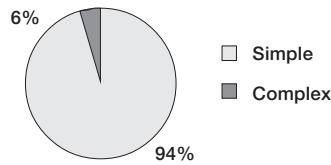
6%

☐ Simple
■ Complex

94%

Figure 2.

In general, it is to be expected that pronouns will be more frequently used in informal texts, and it is also to be expected that their frequency will rise in simple NPs in comparison to their usage in complex NPs, as we saw in the section related to the characteristic features of pronouns as NP heads.

The previous figure shows that, indeed, most pronominal heads are characterized by their preference for simple NPs. The percentage (94.07%) is somewhat higher than the one that Raumolin-Brunberg obtained in her analyses of Th. More's texts, but it is representative of the same tendency. This outcome was the expected one since pronominal heads tend to have a greater referential meaning and as grammatical words do not convey a high lexical meaning. They depend on the context for their reference to be clear, situationally, contextually and textually.
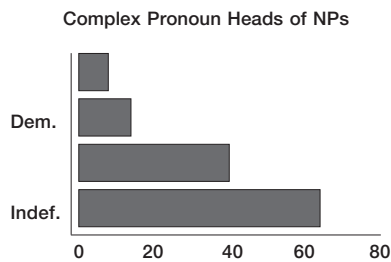
Complex Pronoun Heads of NPs

Figure 3.

Complex pronouns heads are numerically less profuse than in simple NPs. However, we can see that indefinite pronouns are quite likely to be postmodified or qualified. The second category to admit postmodification is that of the personal pronouns. Pronouns as a category, and indefinite and personal pronouns particularly carry a less specific semantic and referential load, that is, they tend to depend

---

[3] These reflexive values have been included as such when they are followed by *self*, since the reflexive use of the personal pronouns has not been statistically divided from non reflexive uses.

more on the contextual significance than the other pronouns and are more accesible to modification. From the point of view of the class of pronoun that functions as head, we do not find many deviations from the implicational scale. In simple NPs, personal pronouns are the most likely to appear (94.75%), in complex ones the indefinite pronouns are the ones that reveal a higher percentage (52.5%), something the semantic nature of these units is liable to favour. The indefinition inherent in this class of pronouns makes them receptive to the presence of elements that add to the meaning in the form of modifications or that qualify them in other aspects. In the chancery documents analysed here these elements tend to be inclined to the use of modification structures that make their meaning explicit or at least their reference clear enough, since the documents did not have a situational/ contextual orientation to make their denotation confusing.

In relation to simple NPs, the conditions are as different as can be. In the next figure the statistics are provided:
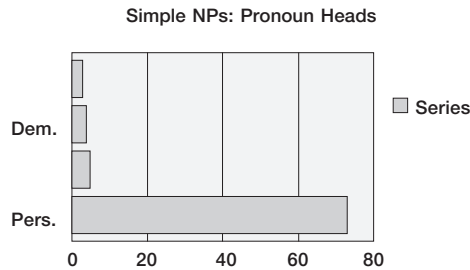
Simple NPs: Pronoun Heads

Figure 4.

In simple NPs, personal pronouns are the ones with the most relevant frequency, indefinite pronouns lose ground considerably, demonstrative pronouns barely appear. This is obviously due to the fact that personal pronouns are usually patent enough both referentially and semantically, since marks of case, number and gender make the presence of further modification unnecessary, though it may still be used. Their deictic value is contextually evident; obviously, this does not imply that they cannot be qualified, as we saw in the earlier figure. Demonstratives can be modified in particular contexts that might require a further specification of their referential meaning. They are included in certain formulaic or non-formulaic modes of treatment typical of the period as are some other pronouns. In this case, most examples refer to the low social status of the speaker/writer or their low political situation.[4] In

---

[4] On other accounts, lollards were still in jail after the time that had passed, and the political insecurity of the realm prior to Henry's kinship still kept people there; besides, the need to be humble in these documents, at least in the petitions, seems to have been a matter of convention for the lower classes.

any case, there are restrictions to postmodification from the grammatical point of view such as the human nature of the extratextual referent, but it is not as customary as for other categories of pronouns. According to Downing and Locke, demonstratives do not function as NP heads, when the reference is animate and human (1992:441). The function of the pronoun can be affected by these factors, as I explain in the following section.

As regards function and the complex/simple variable, we have by now observed the general trends of this category of words in simple/complex NPs. By link-
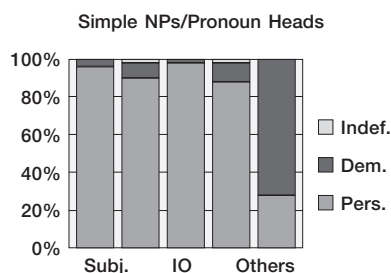

Figure 5.

ing both variables it is possible to see what the preferences of these units are. At the same time, more can be learnt about their syntactic behaviour and grammatical meaning. These classes of pronouns behave in the following manner:

In simple NPs, personal pronouns tend to be by far the most accepted or widely used category. This is so much the case, that it is difficult to distinguish the function of the other pronouns in the figure. Demonstrative pronouns appear as subject, DO, IO, prepositional complements and "other" functions (mostly adverbials[5]); indefinite pronouns, however only appear in DO and prepositional complements, since they show a preference for complex NP, in which their values change considerably, and exhibit a figure more similar to the ones in the implicational scales. Even though the number of elements analysed was high enough, indefinite pronouns do not use simple NPs as much as complex ones. Demonstrative pronouns, which in simple NPs prefer the prepositional complement function, seem to be more likely to appear in DO position, without increasing their incidence as prepositional complements, but slightly. This might be due to the fact that the restrictions on their usage are greater, or to other factors; however the most reasonable explanation is that they take the adverb function rather than functioning as prepositional complement. This finding represents an almost complete contrast to that for com-

---

[5] We have not talked about adverbials before, because prepositional complements seem to have taken their place in these sources.

plex NPs (Expósito 1997:136). In the most complex functions, other classes of pronouns are more likely to be noticed than in the simplest ones. The following figure, however, shows that this syntactic accessibility hierarchy operates here.
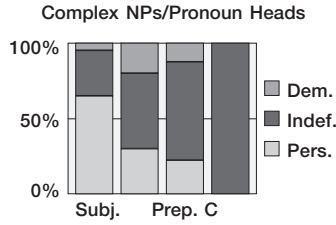
Complex NPs/Pronoun Heads

Figure 6.

Whereas in simple NPs personal pronouns tended to be the chosen category in the majority of examples, in complex NP they lose ground as they approach the most complex functions and reach the ends of the scale in which syntactic complexity is naturally and conceptually higher; the opposite occurs with the indefinite pronouns, which increase their percentages along the implicational scale. The following diagram of areas serves to it better.
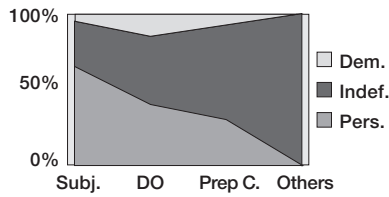

Figure 7.

The tendency of personal pronouns to dinimish statistically and that of the indefinite ones to increase is noteworthy. The only aspect left to be explained is the fact that demonstrative pronouns seem to prefer the DO/IO functions. This could be due to the low number of examples, however, in complex NPs they seem to have a tendency to appear in complex functions; this is, they tend to boost their number the more we get further down the scale. This is an exponent of their preference for complex functions.
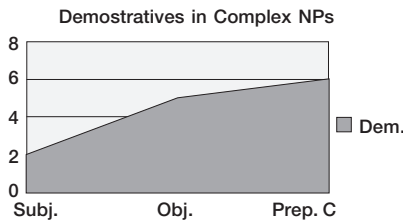
Demostratives in Complex NPs

Figure 8.

The previous figure shows a slight inconsistency in the presentation of the data, since objects seem to retain a greater part of the frequences, even though they go up in the direction of the prepositional complements. This may be due to the fact that there were fewer examples of demonstratives as NP heads, or there might be other restrictions, related to their position as NP head. On the other hand, and as we will see later on, demonstratives have a preference for relative postmodification and *of*-phrase postmodification, and this might explain this figure. In any case, it still follows the same trend.

3. TYPES AND USES

3.1. Personal pronouns

Following the general tendency of most pronominal heads, the percentages of personal pronouns in core position that function in simple NPs is significant (97.83%) and their length tends to be very short (a 98.42% use five or fewer than five word structures). Their casual class is what one would expect. The casual assessment of the different pronominal forms is still respected in these chancery documents, and so *ye* still operates for the nominative case, *you* for the accusative and dative, etc. Their stylistic and pragmatic sense and the forms *ye/you* occur in formal contexts. Thus, these forms of the plural used to refer to the singular and formal are more frequent in chancery texts than those of the singular with familiar reference, widely more infrequent in official letters.

The casual pronominal categorization maintains certain levels of variability in the impersonal constructions. Obviously, the simplification of the casual system that is taking place in the pronoun paradigm throughout the Middle English period causes instability in the system. The tendency to fix the order of the constituents in a phrase or clause has an effect on the use of these units in combination with impersonal verbs. A reinterpretation of these constructions implies a substitution of the pronouns in the dative case which would normally take a preverbal position for one in the nominative case.

- – 16.7 yow semeþ
- – 22.9 as hit semeþ best to your Discrecion
- – 43.14 as us þenkeþ by...
- – 43.25 unto what port þayme is leuest to drawe to
- – 62.8 whan us likeþ
- – 62.11 hym haþ leuer þe forsaid Deanee
- – 67.7 wiþoute þat hym shulde haue neded to poursue ferther unto vs
- – 69.21 us yenkey
- – 69.25 yaim lust
- – 71.11 yow semeth
- – 81.25 us semeth
- – 93.10 you semeth

- 110.30 and so plesit unto hym þat ye be
- 118.8 hit like you
- 151.18 like it
- 153.6 plese it
- 154.11 that itt liked the kyng [...] to giff
- 154.17 that itt liked the kyng
- 154.24 plese itt to your seid wise discrecions
- 155.4 that it please you

Thus, even though the majority of the examples of pronouns preserve their dative case, in samples found in the later letters we can still observe a tendency to change their positions to a postverbal one.

The quality of the documents itself affects the employment of the pronouns considerably. This is particularly true in relation to the personal pronouns. The first person singular pronouns are seen infrequently, since the texts sent by the royal chancery examined show a preference for the majestatic plural, and those petitions that are addressed to the king tend to avoid the direct use of *I*, handling compound structures of deictics, such as demonstratives with complementation, which will ultimately specify their referential meaning, in such phrases as *this your poure seruant*, etc.

The frequency of the different persons is also interesting from other perspectives. The person most statistically numerous is the first one (especially in the plural), making up over 40% of the examples. The second person follows closely with almost 35%, while the third, the least frequent of all, is somewhat below 25%. These values differ greatly from the ones used by More, although, rather than evidencing historical differences, they make reference to the distinctive character of the texts, so we will not compare the results[6].

With regard to the first person, the nominative case is the most frequently used, as opposed to the second person, in which the oblique case[7] is more common. We did not find many deviations for normal usage. The system of the third person is still unstable, and the forms *th-*, *h-*, *þ-* e *y-* (sporadically) are used indistincly. This variability not only reflects the linguistic amalgam of the London of the period, but is also reinforced by the different dialectal origins of some of the petitions. Even though the texts under analysis are restricted to written samples in the hands and language of chancery, which is supposed to try and reach a homogeneous language for the documents; it is evident that a partial translation could be one of the outcomes of this activity on the part of the scribes[8], and so the existence of strata

---

[6] A remarkable fact is that the official and semiofficial letters of More are characterised by a very high frequency of the first person singular and very low figures for the second person plural (Raumolin-Brunberg:156), and so it is impossible to compare.

[7] In this case the term oblique is used in its original meaning of 'non-nominative'.

[8] McIntosh (1963); Benskin and Laing (1981).

indicative of the dialect of origin, even in petitions and corrected documents, should not be forgotten.

The pronominal person is correlated, as we have repeatedly mentioned, with the degree of implication between speaker, listener and message in the discursive act. According to Chafe (1985:116-17, in Raumolin-Brunberg 1991:157) there are three types of implication, each one of them related to the selection of a specific person:

> (1) ego involvement, which is shown most obviously in the use of first person pronouns, (2) involvement with the hearer, seen for instance in the employment of second person pronouns, and (3) involvement with the subject matter.

In my sources, the implication with the addresser is evident and preponderant over the rest. Most documents show, as was to be expected due to the sociopolitical relations during the period, these preferences, even from the thematic point of view, since the person of the king is above that of his subjects, who have to follow his orders and wishes. The content of the message or the theme seems to be less relevant in this case. In relation to this factors, Raumolin-Bunberg's analysis (1991: 157) reaches the conclusion that there was a direct correlation between "ego involment and the private domain of language use." Chancery documents belong to the public domain and therefore the results obtained are obviously contradictory with Raumolin-Brunberg's analyses, since the sources belong to opposite styles. This divergence does not have a clear explanation, but in any case More's writings contain a higher frequency of the first person pronoun than the chancery documents.

The frequency of the functions of the personal pronouns coincides with their case, since we cannot observe any sign of instability of the second person as to case marks, for instance. The following figure portraits NP functions with personal pronouns as heads.

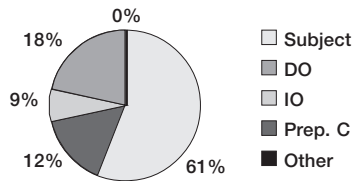**Function on NPs with Personal Pronouns as Heads**

Figure 9.

The subject function represents around a 60.61% of pronouns, and this concurs with the fact that personal pronouns in the nominative case obtain 60% of the references. Pronouns in the direct object function reach 12.02%. Indirect objects only include 8.88%. The prepositional complements are more common than the last two with 18.09%. All these oblique functions comprise about 40% of the total number of pronouns; again we can point out the coincidence with the general

casual distribution, with slight differences motivated in both cases by the examples of *it* and its variants, whose value is multicasual.

Closely related to the value of the personal pronouns is the frequency of the possessive pronouns, an illustration of the "second genitive", that fulfills in this corpus the function of head of an NP. As regards the eight examples of reflexive pronouns, they are closely associated with the personal pronouns.

As a sample of the usage of the pronoun heads in simple NPs, we offer here the following letter that can be taken as representative in relation to the structure of the rest of the chancery documents analised.

[1418 C81/1364/48 Signet of Henry V; Fisher et al. No.19]

(1) By þe Kyng:

Worshipful fader in god. *We* sende *you* closed herewiþynne. two supplicacions taken *vnto vs* þetoone yn name of (2) Thomas Brounflet knight Robert Wiclyff clerc / and Iohn Ellerker / and þe toþer in name of Robert Wiclyff p<er>son of þe (3) chirche of Rudby and William Reson chaplein. to þat eende / þat *we* wolde yeue *hem* licence to enfeffe (4) Iohn hohom knight / william ake and Robert Constable Escuier yn þe Manoirs of Baynton. Birdsale. Doncastre. Rosyngton & (5) Bramham in yorkshire w<ith> þapp<er>tenances so þ<at> *þey* beyng in possession / þerof might enfeffe (6) Maude somtyme wife (of)* Pierres Mauley knight yn þe forme more fully specifie(d)* w<ith> in (7) þe supplicacions aforsaide. Þe whiche *we* haue granted: Whar fore *we* wol þat vppon þe teneur of þe same (8) supplicacions *ye* doo mak(e)* oure l<ett>res patentes. Vnder our greet seel of oure saide licence after þe cours (9) and forme of oure Chancellerie vsed in like cas afore þis tyme. Yeuen vnder our signet at Baieux þe .iiij. day of Auril

As regards complex NPs, the following examples are a good illustrative selection of the uses of pronoun heads in our sources. The most frequent among them are those that include an NP with an *of*-phrase as postmodifier.

– 5.4 ye of þe Cite of Bathe
– 5.5 þey of þe said Chirche
– 43.19 þai of fflandres and also of hollande
– 57.3 þei of .iiij. membres of flandres
– 69.7 yay of flaundres
– 69.17 yay of Gene

The second most frequent option among postmodifiers of personal pronouns is that introduced by relative pronouns. The following phrases illustrate their capacity to retain very complex structures, which can be numerous in some of them.

– 30.8 þey þat shal come to vs wiþ him
– 96.11 he þat shal come fro yow with hem
– 110.20 he [is rekiueryd & wiþ his grace shal be wiþ yow in al goodly haste] whoom and oþer þat we send now vn to yow to assiste yow as for þe tyme in

counsail / we pray yow goodly & effectuelly to hier in swiche þinges as þay shal auise yow of fro tyme to tyme for þe worship of god þe goode of vs & of yow & of our Reaumes & Duchie abouesaid [...]

– 121.2 he þat calleth him Duc of Bourgoigne
– 130.59 for he yaf *him* drink *which he hadde lesse cause to loue þanne him menyng be Enderby*   [italics added]
– 131.22 for theim / that by goddes grace shull be drawen forth there / for to comense in Gramer and also be ordered preestes and than ordeyned in to diuerse Contrees of this land there to porveye theim annuels and seruices and to teche Gramer in places / where Scoles ben voide and stande now desolat thurgh the seid defaute Of the which seid scolers And of other as your seid Preest hath done / afore this tyme / withouten supportacion and helpe
– 139.41 to hem þat so shall take þeime
– 143.11 to theym þat were prisoners withynne a prison of the said Cite called Neugate
– 144.8 hym which hath ben knowledged sethen of Summe of the said persons
– 146.7 to þem þat verraily knowe the seid weyke made of flax
– 147.32 hem that such ben

The remaining postmodifiers that appear in complex NPs with a pronominal head are considerably less common than the previous ones. They are characterized in general by a lesser complexity and length of their structure.

– 81.11 to vs warde
– 81.11 to hym warde
– 96.6 of hem alle
– 117.10 thay bothe
– 130.16 as too of þeime within þe barre
– 130.21 amonges þeime iiij<e>

3.2. INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

The indefinite pronominal heads make up about a 4.34% of the total of pronouns in complex functions. With 88 examples, they constitute the most frequent class of pronouns, although the distance between them and the personal pronouns is great. Its uses in the structure of the NP are also possible in the determiner position, in which they make up the third group in number and frequency. In comparison with Raumolin-Brunberg's results, here elements like *such,* as well as *all*, *every*, *each*, *none*, *other*, etc, are used in the group of indefinite pronouns[9], are

---

[9] Despite the fact that from a semantic-referential point of viewthere are many similarities between *such* and demonstrative pronouns, due to its anaphoric capacity: to refer to clausal anteced-

thus not directly comparable with Raumolin-Brunberg's findings, even though the frequences are similar.

This group is the only one with a clear preference for complex structures among the pronouns registered in our corpus. From the total number of indefinite pronoun heads, 71.59% is preferred in complex NPs, and the remaining 28.40% in simple structures.

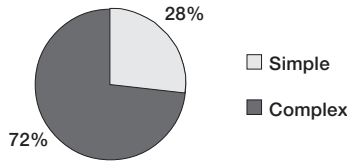**Pronoun Headwords in Simple and Complex NPs**

Figure 10.

The indefinite pronoun heads tend to deviate from the rest of the pronouns in that they usually take short NPs less frequently than is typical of other classes of pronouns. This does not mean that their examples are long; as a matter of fact a 53.40% of the cases come into view in NPs that are less than five words long, but this percentage is normally higher in the rest of the pronominal categories.

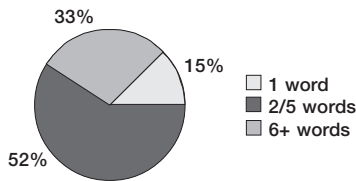**Lenght NP with Pronoun Headwords**

Figure 11.

The functions implemented by these indefinite pronominal heads are mainly three, even though there are some sporadic cases in which they perform other functions. The resulting percentages are the following:

---

ents, and to be preceded by indefinite determiners, etc.; from the syntactic-structural point of view it contains analogies with indefinite pronouns, mostly in relation to its tendency to appear with postmodifications, and so in complex structures.
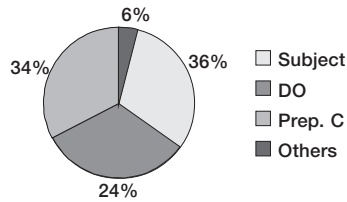
Indefinite Pronouns as Headwords of NPs

Figure 12.

The most frequent function is that of direct object, 36.36%, similar in number and percentage to prepositional complements (34.09%). Subjects represent 23.86%, while the rest of the functions only reach 5.68% of the cases under analysis.

The indefinite pronouns are characterised by their tendency to include postmodifications in their phrase structure; however, premodification, as for pronouns in general, is not usual. The following figure introduces the types and frequences of postmodifying structures that function with indefinite noun heads.

Postmodifying patterns of Indefinite Pronouns as Headwords of NPs

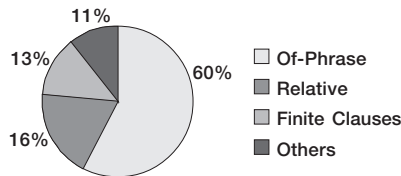

Figure 13.

The most usual postmodifier that functions with indefinite pronouns is the *of-phrase*, typical of partitive structures such as *all of, none of, each of,* etc. These represent 60.31% of complex indefinite pronouns. The other postmodifiers have a very similar value, 15.87%, for relative clauses, 12.69% for subordinate clauses of the type introduced by *as*[10] and 11.11% for the remaining categories, that is, prepositional phrases, adverbs and adjectives.

---

[10] These constructions have been occasionally analysed as relative. The use of *as* as a relative particle was common in previous stages of the language and frequent in contemporary English. Nonetheless, constructions like *such as* and *such that* are not always accepted as such, and so I have analysed them as a separate class from the other relatives.

It is clear that the usual context with indefinite pronouns is that of complex NPs. The following selection of examples depict a sample of the uses in chancery texts. Most of these complex contexts with postmodification are found in the form of prepositional phrases with *of* whose semantic configuration is very similar to partitive phrases.

– 1.5 eny of þeim
– 1.6 to eche of hem
– 1.15 to eueriche of þeim
– 1.16 eueriche of þees styles
– 2.4 vpon eche of þe said maistres
– 6.7 oon of þe prestes of owr Chapelle þat soiourneth at wyndesore
– 31.7 many of his goodes
– 32.6 by certaine of our sougettes. of Cornewaille
– 39.5 of noon of þe possessions þat Longeth þerto yn no wyse
– 64.3 oon of þe contendentes of þe prouoste of þe Oriell
– 64.9 neither of hem
– 64.12 any of hem
– 65.6 to any of oure suggettes
– 66.6 nouther of þaim
– 69.31 non of yaires
– 69.32 noon of oure ennemys
– 104.8 in sum of oure parcs þere
– 105.7 to euerych of hem
– 110.17 oþer of our sugites hier
– 113.36 othr of his sougets
– 116.10 one of my. Councellours yn the Reaume of Englond
– 121.13 with oþer of oure feod men and trewe subgitt3 to whom we write sembly for þe good of vs you oure Reaume and subgitt3 of þe same
– 130.16 some of þeime
– 130.25 to euerich of þis
– 130.57 oþer of his felaws
– 133.4 to euch of þeim
– 139.7 for euerich of þe saide Archiers on fote
– 141.30 euerich .of theym. to whom hit appertenith
– 142.1 on of þe Clerkes of youre Corone
– 143.15 eny of the said sommes
– 149.5 vpon any of hem beyng in the seid parliament or from thens retournyng homeward
– 154.15 other of the seid mysdoers

Other examples correspond to contexts with postmodifying finite clauses; these might take relative clauses and some consecutive or correlative ones with *that* and *as*.

– 1.9 to as many to gider as shal lyke þe said Commissioners
– 13.5 al þat þey may

- 55.6 such as yow þenkeþ resounable in þe cas.
- 64.14 al suche as been þaire attornes or doers yn Court spirituel or temporel
- 74.4 al þat þe same bille conteneth
- 77.8 al þat is possible
- 80.7 such as þe cas Requireth
- 82.7 al þat he aught to haue of right in this partie
- 84.8 of al that thay been bounde by right and Reson to contente hym of touch-
  ing the Dettes abouesaide
- 131.11 in Somoch that as he knoweth and credibly is informed on the Est partie
  of the wey / ledyng from Hampton to Couentre / and so forth no ferther
  North than Rypton / ben voide. lx. scoles. and mo / beside all other Countres
  of this your lond the which haue ben occupied all at ones with in this .l. yere
- 137.6 such othr as shalbe declared vnto you at youre commyng
- 147.28 non suche that haue so duellyd atte the sayd Stwys
- 154.22 in alle that thay in any wise godely myght doo

The remaining examples normally exhibits postmodifications with preposi-
tional phrases, adjectives in post-head position and non-finite phrases (past participle).

- 19.3 þetoone yn name of Thomas Brounflet knight Robert Wiclyff clerc / and
  Iohn Ellerker / and þe toþer in name of Robert Wiclyff person of þe chirche
  of Rudby and William Reson chapelein.
- 32.14 for non oþer semblable
- 69.38 other in commandement from yaire souueraines
- 99.3 oon called Mareschal Des Rues

3.3. DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

Demonstrative pronouns do not include many deviations in their behav-
iour as heads of the NP if they are compared with the general tendency of the
pronouns. These elements appear to a great extent (80.32%) in simple structures.
They also correlate with short noun phrases: 81.96% of their examples are phrases
with less than five words.
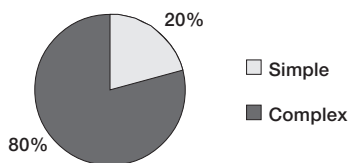
Demonstrative Pronoun as Headwords of NPs

Figure 14.

The frequences of the demonstrative heads do vary in comparison both with personal pronouns and with indefinite ones if we pay attention to the function that its phrase carries in the clause, although few differences were found, it must be said.

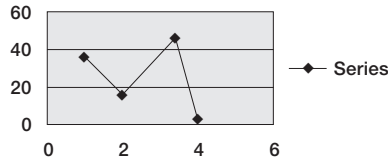**Function of Demonstrative Pronouns as Headwords of NPs**

Figure 15.

The highest frequency (44.26%) is attained by the prepositional complements. This one is followed by the subject function, 37.70%, and direct objects 16.39%. The "other" functions represent a 1.63%.

As regards the postmodification that qualifies demonstrative heads, in eleven of the twelve examples of complex NPs in which this operates, they are relative clauses. The remaining example includes an *of*-phrase.

The NPs that follow serve as a representative exemplification of the demonstrative pronouns in complex NP structures.

– 50.4 for þat þat is behynde and due vnto hym
– 65.4 þat that right and lawe wollen yn þe cas / but þat oþersyde beeth wel avysed
– 65.8 þoo þat he accuseth
– 76.4 of þat / that is due vnto hym of þannuite þat he takeþ at oure Eschequer by oure lettres patentes
– 110.24 to þat þat þe said bisshop of london & c.
– 120.20 ouer þat þat he haue for þe seuretee of þe same M<l> marc
– 130.36 to þat þe which was seid vnto him
– 130.90 in þat shulde be demanded him of þe Ryot doon at Bedford[11]
– 131.5 ouer those þat most nedes teche and abide stille there
– 139.15 all þat that he shall lak duryng þe tyme aforesaid
– 139.36 þo of his saide Retenue
– 139.38 þo þat bere þe armes of ffraunce except also him þat calleth him Duc of Bourgoigne and all his mareschalx and lieutenant3 generalx / the which

_____

[11] As we can observe, this example has two possible interpretations, a demonstrative followed by a zero relative, or an absolute relative *þat.*

shall remayne and be prisoners vnto þe kyng oure said souuerain / lorde
and for þe which he shall make resonable agreement to him or to hem þat
so shall take þeime

3.4. OTHER PRONOUNS

This group of pronouns includes the only case of interrogative pronoun
that takes the head of the NP in our sources, and the numerals; up to a total number
of twenty examples, that stand for about 0.99% of the total outcome of pronomi-
nal heads. In the chancery documents, numerals have a tendency to introduce sim-
ple and short NPs (85% of their occurrences) and function as part of prepositional
complements. There are three examples in which this kind of head functions in
complex NPs, two are modified by *of*-phrases

– 139.30 as þe thridde of þe thriddes
– 130.19 hou many of þe iustices
– 139.5 himself accompted onely on horsbak

CONCLUSIONS

We do not find special deviations as regards the general tendency of chan-
cery documents in relation to the uses of pronouns as headwords of NPs. Moreover,
variables such as simple/complex and the function of the pronoun, the data still
follow some similarities related to the implicational hierarchies and the accessibility
theories as we saw in the section on pronouns as heads of NPs. As regards simple/
complex NPs the tendency is for them to be more frequent as simple than as com-
plex NPs. This changes depending on the category of the pronoun: personal pro-
nouns tend to prefer simple environments and indefinite pronouns tend to prefer
complex environments.

In relation to function, the same situation arises and the implicational hierar-
chies coincide with the cases of the pronouns, both in frequency, case and function.

In the case of pronouns we have to bear in mind that they are highly af-
fected by pragmatic and thematic factors that will influence the choice of units as
well as absolute and relative frequencies. All of them have a considerable effect on
the language of the examples and their structure.

The kind of reference implied by pronouns tends to be animate, and hu-
man. Again, it is the thematic configuration of the documents that concurs with
this linguistic variable. The personal pronouns are the most frequent among these
categories, and they, in the same way possessives in determiner position, exhibit a
tendency to prefer simple rather than complex structures; on the contrary, indefi-
nite pronouns are used in complex contexts, as we mentioned before.

All pronouns (particularly personal ones) are inclined to appear in medial
position, although in initial position they are common, even more than NPs with

noun headwords. They are employed in short NPs; the only units that take longer phrases are the indefinite pronouns, since they are not generally inserted in short NPs. In turn, demonstrative pronouns are different from personal and indefinite ones because they usually function as prepositional complements, rather than subject, direct or indirect objects. They are also more likely to be postmodified by relative clauses instead of by *of*-phrases.

WORKS CITED

BENSKIN, Michael and M. LAING. "Translation and *Michsprachen* in Middle English Manuscripts." *So Meny People, Longages and Tonges: Philological Essays in Scots and Medieval English Presented to Angus McIntosh*. Ed. M. Benskin and M.L. Samuels. Edinburgh: Late Middle English Linguistic Atlas Project. 1981. 55-106.

BIBER, Douglas. *Variation Accross Speech and Writing*. Cambrige: Cambridge UP, 1988.

QUIRK, Randolph, Sidney GREENBAUM, Geoffrey LEECH and Jan SVARTVIK. *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. London: Longman, 1972.

DE HAAN, P. *Postmodifying Clauses in the English NP*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989.

DEKEYSER, X. and Mia Ingels. "Socio-historical Aspects of Relativization in Late 16th-century English: ca.1550-1600." *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 21 (1988): 25-39.

DEKEYSER, Xavier. "Relativicers (sic) in Early Modern English: A Dynamic Quantitative Approach." *Historical Syntax*. Ed. Jacek Fisiak. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984.

DOWNING, A. and P. LOCKE. *A University Course in English Grammar*. London: Prentice Hall, 1992.

EXPÓSITO GONZÁLEZ, Mª Cruz. *La estructura del sintagma nominal en el inglés de la cancillería: 1400-1450*. Barcelona: Kadle, 1997.

—— *Aspectos de la relativización en la historia de la lengua*. La Laguna: MdeG ed, 2002.

KEENAN, E. and B. COMRIE. "Noun Phrase Accessibility and Universal Grammar." *Universal Grammar: Fifteen Essays*. London: Croom Helm, 1987. 3-45.

KEENAN, Edward L. *Universal Grammar*. London: Croom Helm, 1987.

LASS, R. "Phonology and Morphology." *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Vol. II: 1066-1476*. Ed. Norman Blake. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. 23-155.

MCINTOSH, A. "A New Approach to Middle English Dialectology." *Middle English Dialectology*. 1963. Ed. M. Laing. Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP. 1981.

MUSTANOJA, T.F. *A Middle English Syntax*. Part I. Helsinki: Mémoires de la Société Neophilologique de Helsinki 23, 1960.

RAUMOLIN-BRUNBERG, H. *The Noun-phrase in Early Sixteenth-century English: A Study Based on Sir Thomas More's Writings*. Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 1991.

ROMAINE, S. "Some Historical and Social Dimensions of Syntactic Change in Middle Scots Relative Clauses." *English Historical Linguistics: Studies in Development*. Ed. N.F. Blake and Ch. Jones. Cectal Conference Paper Series, No. 3. U of Shefield. 1984. 101-22.