IN-PHRASES FROM A SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVE. EVIDENCE FROM *THE YORK CYCLE*[1]

Cristina Mourón-Figueroa

University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

ABSTRACT

The York Cycle has been chosen as the corpus for a semantic study of *in*-prepositional phrases. The text belongs to a linguistic period in which the presence of *in*-phs had already increased. The total number of instances amounts to 1,420, which have been classified according to the semantic criteria of the *MED*. Taking into account the different semantic fields of the *MED*, the samples have been ascribed to three main distinct categories: spatial, temporal, and figurative. Generally speaking, the analysis will show a slight predominance of the figurative sense (52.81%) over the spatial sense (45.21%). Likewise, it will also emphasize the extremely low frequency of *in*-phs with a temporal meaning (1.97%). In addition, it will also account for *in*-phs dependent of a verb and an adjective. Moreover, the study will also prove that, in *The York Cycle*, the most common spatial meaning in PE of the preposition *in* when referring to something 'enclosed' or within a building, ship, etc. only amounts to 13.86% (within the spatial sense) whereas the use of the figurative meaning of the preposition plus a noun implying a state or condition rises to 59.06% within the figurative sense.

In broad terms, there are two contending perspectives regarding the relationship between preposition and complement. From the point of view of stratificational semantics, Bennet (1975: 116), for example, believes that the choice of the preposition (i.e. *in*, *at*, *on*) depends on the element functioning as complement (context). Thus, the characteristics of the object the element refers to play a very important role. *In* would, then, express "locative interior" or "enclosure". Referring to two entities, A and B, *in* would mean 'the interior of B is the location of A'. Leech (1969: 3), on the contrary, defends that the preposition ascribes a

specific dimensionality to the following NP which, in the case of *in*, would refer to an area or volume perceived as two- or three-dimensional. There are, then, two different ways of considering the following example: *The key is in the drawer*. According to Leech (1969: 249), the preposition conveys the message that the drawer is where the key is located and ascribes to the drawer the property of being three-dimensional. Bennett (1975: 71) himself, however, believes that the sentence simply conveys the message that the interior of the drawer is where the key is located. This author (1975: 113-115) sees no difference with regard to temporal uses of the preposition *in* which he also considers to be "locative interior" for both temporal and spatial uses. Hawkins (1993: 329) states that there are two basic relations expressed by prepositions: coincidence (*at*, *in*, *on*) and separation (*away*, *of*, *out of*). For Cuyckens (1993: 32), Bennett's description of *in* is not sufficient, as the notion of "interior" is not present in all uses of this preposition. He rather believes that *in* describes a coincidence relation between two arguments, *x* (trajector) and a three-dimensional container or a two-dimensional surface, *y* (landmark). Dirven (1993: 76) affirms that the meaning of a spatial preposition may extend from physical space into more abstract domains. The ability for prepositions to express other than spatial meanings is not arbitrary but rather suggests a highly motivated system. In effect, *in* denotes space as an enclosure or volume and pervades all its extensions: time-span, enclosure, state (emotional expressions), area (wider areas), manner/means (abstract), circumstance (extension of state and manner), and cause or reason (sense of enclosure).

As is well-known, prepositional phrases replaced case forms in lOE and eME. This decline of case-forms has been explained by two different theories within the functional perspective.[2] According to the first of these, the so-called "push-chain mechanism", prepositional constructions replaced case-forms. On the contrary, the second theory, known as "drag-chain mechanism", proposes that prepositions began to be used to fill the gap left by the incipient disappearance of case endings and, in this way, ambiguity would be avoided. Rauh (1993: 101), for instance, distinguishes between case and lexical prepositions. The former represent grammaticalisations of originally autonomous lexical forms. The latter (among which *in* with spatial meaning is included) assign roles themselves: location, path, goal, etc., because they have developed from spatial adverbs and thus from elements of a lexical category.

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[2]   The other perspective comprises lexical criteria. Scholars such as Traugott (1972) and Horgan (1981) have applied them to lexical structures in specific texts but it seems that this method has come across many difficulties when comparing texts of different characteristics (dialect, style, etc.).

Lundskær-Nielsen (1993: 12) agrees with Kniezsa (1991: 223) and affirms that positionally non-fixed adverbs or particles entered into phrasal constructions with NPs and that the preposition in Middle English assumes a heavier functional load since there was no longer support from inflectional endings. This author undertook a semantic analysis of *at*, *in* and *on* in Middle English and proved that the range of uses of the preposition *in* increased in Middle English. On some occassions, the preposition collocates with the verb and verb and preposition form a single semantic unit.

As I will also show in my analysis and as Lundskær-Nielsen (1993: 183-187) indicates, in Middle English there is a great increase in the use of *in*, especially in examples with figurative and abtract meanings. In short, the semantics of *in*, *at*, *on* varies along a scale that has a spatial sense at one end (iconic state) and an abstract sense (symbolic signs) at the other. Temporal instances are not so frequent and the preposition *in* undergoes a process of grammaticalisation in phrases like *in general*, *in vain*, *in special* after having lost its information-content.

Following Iglesias-Rábade (2003a), I will consider that prepositions enclose a semantic meaning which is used in topological relations (positional or static), especially in the case of *in*.

1. General classification of *in*-phrases

This paper offers a semantic analysis of 1,420 *in*-prepositional phrases based on *The York Cycle*. The samples have been classified considering Iglesias-Rábade's (2003a) semantic classification of *in*-phs based on the *MED*. According to this classification, *in*-phs belong to three main categories or could express three distinct meanings: spatial, temporal and figurative. In this paper, I will undertake a classification of these three main types into further subtypes according to a more detailed classification established by the *MED* which proposes different subtypes for each semantic field. Tables with the different occurrences and rates will be provided in order to illustrate this point.

The total amount of samples found in the corpus are classified into three semantic fields: spatial, temporal and figurative:

Table 1. Semantic classification of *in*-phrases

Meaning	Tokens	% (with regard to the total number of instances)
Spatial	642	45.21
Temporal	28	1.97
Figurative	750	52.81
Total:	1.420	

As for general results, it is important to emphasize the slight predominance of figurative instances (750 tokens, 52.81%) over phrases with a spatial sense[3] (642, 45.21%). According to Iglesias-Rábade (2003a: 66), Middle English shows a surprisingly high number of occurrences of *in*-phs with a figurative meaning as compared with the figures found in the spatial category. As may be inferred from Table 1, the rate of *in*-phs with a figurative meaning is only slightly higher than that of the spatial category. The reason for this may lie in the fact that the corpus analysed by Iglesias-Rábade (the *Helsinki corpus of Middle English*, *HCME*) contains a higher number of instances. However, I might affirm that my results do participate in this tendency, that is, there is a transition from a spatial meaning to a more abstract and figurative one from 1350 onwards (Iglesias-Rábade 2003a: 75), although Beadle (1982: 10-11) believes that the *Registrum*, i.e. the copy containing the complete text of *The York Cycle*, dates from the period between 1463-1477.

A further conclusion that might be gathered from Table 1 relates to the fact that the number of instances with a temporal sense are almost irrelevant when compared with the total amount of *in*-phs (1.97%). The reason for this low rate may be that this meaning is generally covered by the preposition *at* (Iglesias-Rábade 2003a: 75).

2. Analysis of data

In what follows, I will undertake a subclassification of the three categories and I will analyse and comment the subtypes more in detail:

2.1. Spatial meaning

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[3]   Spatial is understood as "tangible or physical location, position or movement in space" (*MED*).

Table 2. Spatial sense

Sense	Semantic fields	Tokens	Rate % (within spatial sense)	Rate % (with regard to all *in*-phs)	Fields
Spatial	Inside a solid object or immersed in a fluid substance. Enclosed in (fire, air) or into (a solid, liquid). Within a building, slip, bed, bag.	89	13.86	6.26	S-1
	In a book, document, poem, etc.	10	1.55	0.70	S-2
	In or into somebody, in one's body, in one's heart, mind, memory, thought	146	22.74	10.28	S-3
	In the hand(s), arm(s). Also fig. in someone's hand (=in someone's possession). In chains, ropes, fetters, tied with, bound in.	58	9.03	4.08	S-4
	On or onto the surface of something and surrounded by its parts: in or into a city, town, wood, forest. Also on the surface of something which extends in all directions: heaven, hell, earth, world, sea, field, island, country	240	37.38	16.90	S-5
	At a place or position; at, beside	93	14.48	6.54	S-6
	With regard to	5	0.77	0.35	S-7

	quantity, dimension, number				
Spatial (idiomatic phrases)	Idiomatic phrases denoting position. "in the middle of"	1	0.15	0.07	S-8
	Total	642			

Table 2 shows that the total number of *in*-phs with a spatial or locative reference amounts to 642 (45.21% with regard to all *in*-phs). Thus, it is the second largest group within the total number of *in*-phs in the corpus. The table also presents the different subtypes within the spatial sense, the number of tokens with their respective rates (both with regard to all *in*-phs with a spatial meaning and with regard to the whole number of instances in the corpus) and the abbreviation of the fields which makes reference to the subtype of the spatial meaning each field expresses.

S-1)   This group contains instances which refer to something inside a solid object or immersed in a fluid substance or something enclosed in fire, air or into a solid, liquid. Also, within a ship, bed, bag, etc., e.g.: *in Jacob house*, *in castellis grete*, *in clay*, *in bedde*, *in baptyme-watir*, *in fyre*.
        Within this category, I have found 89 tokens which represent 13.86% of all *in*-phs with a spatial meaning and only 6.26% of the total examples.
        No word functioning as complement of the preposition stands out, but I will mention *array*, *graue*, and *wede* with 5 occurrences, and *courte* and *prisoune* with 4. Although nouns such as *array*, *garmente*, *clothe*(*s*), are not specified by the *MED* for this subtype, I have included them here because of the sense of 'enclosure' they may convey.
        As the text deals with Biblical episodes, I have checked both quite a good number of words related to the semantic field of religion and some words and expressions in Latin throughout the whole text and particularly in the corpus. Within this first group, I have found the following instances: *in nubibus* and *in aqua*.

S-2)   The second subtype accounts for just 10 tokens. The rate within the spatial meaning is one of the lowest (1.55%), and it is even lower when compared with the total number of all *in*-phs (0.70%). This semantic field includes nouns referring to something which can be found in a book, document, poem, etc., e.g.: *in his gospell*, *in his x comaundementis*, *inþer ij biddings*, *in message*.

S-3)   Subtype S-3 includes 146 samples which denote that something is in or into somebody, in one's body, in one's heart, mind, memory, thought. I have also added life, soul or person. The rate, 22.74%, renders this group

as the second in importance within the spatial sense although it only amounts to 10.28% of all *in*-phs. Some examples are: *in me*, *in thoughte*, *in mynde*, *in herte*, *inþis erthely lyffe*, *in a mayden*, *in hir*, *inþe face*. It is worth mentioning the abundance of pronouns, which substitute for the feature 'in or into somebody', as complement of the preposition. In fact, I have found 14 instances with pronoun *me*, 9 with *hym*, 7 with *þe*, 5 with *yow/yowe/yogou/you* and 2 with *hir*. Besides these personal pronouns, it is also important to highlight the presence of *þought/þoyogt /thought/thoght/thoghte* with 8 instances, *mynd/mynde* with 29 and *harte/hartis/hart/herte/hertis/hertes* with 21.

S-4) This semantic category includes 58 examples accounting for 9.03% within the spatial sense and 4.08% of the corpus. Within this field, I have found tokens referring to something in the hand(s), arm(s). It also includes a certain figurative meaning of 'in someone's hands' as expressing 'in someone's possesion' and finally it also applies to something in chains, ropes, fetters, tied with or bound in. Some instances are: *in hand*, *in my narmes*, *inþi hende*, *in bandis*, *in thy handes*, *in ropes*, *in cheynes*, *all in cordis*. The most common noun is *hende/handes/hande/hand* with 20 instances followed by *bandis/bande* with 14.

S-5) The 240 tokens included in this subtype make this category stand out with a rate of 37.38% within the spatial sense and 16.90% with regard to all the samples. Within this semantic field, the *MED* includes the preposition *in* expressing that something is on or onto the surface of something and surrounded by its parts: in or into a city, town, wood, forest. Also something or someone that is on the surface of something which extends in all directions: heaven, hell, earth, world, sea, field, island, or country. In this group, I have found the following examples: *in ilke a londe*, *in erthe*, *in pardise*, *in heuyn*, *in Jessen*, *inþis feylde*, *in worlde*, *in mountaynes*, *in medio terre*, *in Bedlem*, *inþis forest*, *in this temple*, *in this hall*, *in thy kyngdome*, *in Egypte*, *inþat cité*, *inþis contré*, etc. The most frequent nouns functioning as complements of the preposition within this group are: *lede/londe/lande/landes* with 37 tokens, *worlde/worldis* with 34, *erth/erthe/erþe* with 27, *heuyn/hewuen/heuen/heven/heuene/heuenryke* with 21, *contrees/contré/cuntré* with 14, *temple/tempill* with 12, *hell/helle* with 11 and *paradyse/pardise/parradyse/paradise* with 9. Consequently and in accordance with the religious topic that pervades *The York Cycle*, I may conclude that there exists a predominance of examples referring to typical Biblical places with a great doctrinal significance for Catholics,[4] e.g.: heaven, hell, paradise, temple, etc.

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[4] Before the breaking up with the Church of Rome in 1534, England had been a most fervent

Some other nouns refer to names of Biblical cities and countries like Bethlehem or Egypt rather than to English cities due to the fact that *The York Cycle*, as I have just mentioned, deals with Biblical matters. This includes 5 instances of *Jessen* and 4 of *Galalé* and *Bedlem/Bedleme*.

S-6) *In*-phs denoting that something or someone is at a place or position; at, beside cover 93 tokens which represent 14.48% of the total instances with a spatial meaning and 6.54% of the whole corpus. Together with S-1, it stands as one of the most significant groups within the spatial sense. Here are some instances found in the corpus: *in ilke a stede*, *inþis place*, *in nokyn side*, *in som othir place*, *in pres*, *in this wone*, *inþat space*, *inþis rowte*, *in leede*, etc. I have found 28 examples with the noun *stede/steede/steedis/stedde* and 24 with its synonym *place/playce*.

S-7) This subtype contains only 5 instances of *in*-phs expressing quantity, dimension or number. Therefore, the rate is extremely low: 0.77% within the spatial sense and a 0.35% with regard to the total number of samples. The examples are: *in nomber*, *in mesure*, *in weight*, *in a sowme thre hundereth*, *in present*.

S-8) Just one instance expressing an idiomatic spatial meaning has been found. Subtypes S-7 and S-8 represent the lowest rates within the spatial sense. As shown in Table 2, the semantic field S-8 only amounts to 0.15% within the spatial meaning and 0.07% with regard to all *in*-phs. Idiomatic phrases such as *in the middle of* also occur in the corpus. The one present in *The York Cycle* is *in mydis*.

The analysis of *in*-phs with a spatial meaning shows four main uses of *in*-phs in *The York Cycle*: firstly, they usually denote something that is on or onto the surface of something surrounded by its parts or on the surface of something which extends in all directions (subtype S-5). Secondly, they refer to something or someone that is in the hands or arms (subtype S-3). In the third place, I have instances referring to something at a place or position (subtype S-6), and finally, the samples expressing that something is inside a solid object or in a fluid substance, building, bag, etc. (subtype S-1). Thus, I agree with Iglesias-Rábade (2003a: 60) that the absence of idiomatic meaning (subtype S-8) seems to be the main characteristic of the samples in the corpus. Moreover, fields S-2 and S-7, i.e. instances which denote something in a book or document and *in*-phs regarding number or dimension, are scarcely significant.

Catholic country and doctrinal concerns pervaded everyday life. Feasts and celebrations were intimately connected with religion. In the year 1534, King Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy stated that the king was the Supreme Head of the Church of England and the Pope was officially designated merely as the Bishop of Rome (Mourón-Figueroa 2005b: 257).

2.2. Temporal meaning

Table 3 shows the classification of *in*-phs with a temporal sense, together with the total number of samples of each field and the rates with regard both to temporal sense and to the whole number of instances in the corpus:

Table 3. Temporal sense

Sense	Semantic Fields	Tokens	Rate % (within temporal sense)	Rate % (with regard to all *in*-phs)	Fields
Temporal	During a period of time; for the space of a period of time. At a point in time, upon a time, day, etc.; at the end, at the beginning, in the first place	27	96.42	1.90	T-1
Temporal (Phrases)		1	3.57	0.07	T-2
Total		28			

Temporal *in*-phs account for a total number of only 28 tokens which represent just 1.97% of the whole corpus. Therefore, in *The York Cycle*, *in*-phs denoting time are of little relevance. According to the *MED*, *in*-phs can be classified into two groups: T-1: expressions referring to events that happened during a period of time; for the space of a period of time; at a point in time, upon a time, day, etc.; at the end, at the beginning, in the first place, and T-2: idiomatic phrases which denote a temporal relationship such as *in mean time*, *sumer tyme*, etc. Except for one example, all the tokens in our corpus are ascribed to T-1:

T-1)   27 tokens belong to this semantic field, which means 96.42% with regard to all temporal *in*-phs but only 1.90% with regard to the whole corpus. Within this category, I will mention the following examples: *in tender hower*, *in ay*, *in grete eelde*, *inþis sessoune*, *in ylke tyde*, *inþis tyme*, *in ther daies*, *inþe same feste*, etc. Again, there is not a type of noun that clearly predominates. However, I have found *tyde* 4 times, *daies/dayes* 4 times and *tyme* 2 times.

T-2)   In the single example within this subtype: *inþe fyrste*, meaning 'in the beginning', the idiomatic sense of temporal *in*-phs is thus conveyed by God speaking about the creation of the world: *And inþe fyrste*, *faythely*,

my thoghte to fullfyll. This subtype, according to Iglesias-Rábade (2003a: 66), would include temporal phrases such as *inþe mene tyme*, *inþeende*, *in the begynnyng*, etc.

2.3. Figurative and abstract meaning

The classification of the samples with a figurative or abstract sense is shown in Table 4:

Table 4. Figurative and abstract sense

Sense	Semantic fields	Tokens	Rate % (within spatial sense)	Rate % (with regard to all *in*-phs)	Fields
In the course of an action	In an action or in a course of action, engaged in something, during an action or process. With a noun implying an action: arms, battle, war, quarrel, works, things.	43	5.73	3.02	F-1
Manner	In two parts, divisions, pieces; in a form, shape or manner; in the presence, sight, or hearing of somebody; in a language.	123	16.4	8.66	F-2
State or condition	With a noun implying a state: faith, truth, haste, right; purpose, will, hope, point. Subject to something or somebody (under God, law, vow) e.g.: in god, grace, mercy, pain, accordance.	443	59.06	31.19	F-3
As something	As something or in the shape of something e.g.: conclusion, example. As sign, token, cause, witness.	9	1.2	0.63	F-4

Benefit	On behalf of: half (behalf), name, honour, worship.	12	1.6	0.84	F-5
Idiomatic	In general, in vain, in special.	120	16	8.45	F-6
Total		750			

I will now undertake a more detailed analysis of the different subtypes, bearing in mind that I am dealing with the most numerous group of tokens within the corpus (750 examples, 52.81%). F-1 together with F-4 and F-5 represent lower rates within the figurative meaning, while F-3 becomes the most important subtype with a great number of occurrences, followed by subtypes F-2 and F-6:

F-1)   This subtype includes those instances that refer to someone or something engaged in an action or in a course of action, an event that happened during an action or process; or nouns implying an action: arms, battle, ear, quarrel, works, or things. The tokens of this semantic field amount to 43, which means 5.73% within the figurative sense and 3.02% within all *in*-phs. Some examples are: *in my fyrste making*, *in all-kyn thinge*, *in allþi werke*, *in fighte*, *in redy way*, *in my slepe*, *inþis dede*, *in batayll*, *inþis stoure*, *in sauing of thyselffe*, *inþis matere*, *in hande* ('in process'), *in oure fayre* ('matter'), etc. The noun *dede/dedis* stands out with 7 tokens followed by *werke/wirkyng* with 4 and *haste/hast*, *fighte/fight*, *stoure* and *batayll* with 2.

F-2)   This field is second in importance with 16.4% within the figurative sense and 8.66% with regard to all *in*-phs. I have found 123 instances indicating manner, i.e. that something or somebody is divided into two parts, divisions, pieces; in a form, shape or manner; in the presence, sight or hearing of somebody or in a language. The following examples belong to this group: *in dyueres kynde*, *in sere maner*, *in a worme liknes*, *in sight*, *in thy presence*, *in his steuen*, *in worde*, *in hayre and hewe*, *in youre sawes*, *inþis way*, *in two*, *in parties seere*, etc. The noun *sight/syghte /sightes/sightis/siyogtte* stands out with 41 instances. In fact, there is quite a large number of complements which appear just once or twice at the most: *processe*, *liknes*, *wise*, *sondir*, *parties*, *figoure*, etc. However, I have found 11 instances with the noun *manere/maner/maneres*, 10 with *presence*, *present*, *presens*, 7 with *worde* and 4 with *way, sawes/sawe* and *two/twoo*.

F-3)   443 tokens represent the highest rate of occurrences both within the figurative sense and with regard to the whole corpus (59.06% and 31.19% respectively). Within this semantic field, I have included instances expressing a state or condition, i.e. phrases with a noun implying a state: faith,

truth, haste, right; purpose, will, hope, point; subject to something or somebody (under God, law, vow), e.g.: *in God*, *grace*, *mercy*, *pain*, *accordance*. I illustrate this field with the following examples: *in blisse*, *in dispaire*, *in perellis*, *in haste*, *in care*, *in feere*, *in hele*, *in bayle*, *in all my mysselyking*, *in faithe*, *in his nede*, *in youre list*, *in sondre*, *in his folie*, *inþe wilde vengeance*, *in sadnesse*, *in wrathe*, *in pese*, *in wo*, *in welthe*, *in vayne-glorie*, *in sothfastnesse*, *in the lawez of God*, *in myght*, *in pynyng payne*, *in plight*, *in were*, *in gaudium*, etc. As for nouns functioning as complements of the preposition, I may point out the predominance of *fere/feare/feere/feer/fere* ('company', 'together') with 57 tokens followed by *blys/blyssyng/blis/blysse/blissing/blis/blisse* with 48, *haste/hye/hast/hy* with 43, *faythe/faithe/fay/faith/faitht/feyth/faie* with 38 and *bale/baill /bayle/* with 20. Again, the massive appearance of *blys* and *faith* is in consonance with the predominance of religious vocabulary related to the Biblical topics of the corpus. Some nouns present less than 10 examples each, such as, for example, *welth/wele/welthe* (4), *waste* (6), *pees/peace /pese/pesse* (6), *nede* (9), or *sothfastnesse/sothfastnes/soth* (4). But there are also 87 different nouns with just one single instance: *charité*, *wedlak*, *hevynes*, *mirke*, *companye*, *synne*, *state*, *vayne-glorie*, *vengeaunce*, *strenghe*, *striffe*, *hele*, etc.

F-4)   With the lowest rate within the figurative meaning (1.2% and 0.63% with regard to the total number of occurrences), this subtype covers just 9 *in*-phs referring to something or somebody as something or in the shape of something, e.g.: conclusion, example; as sign, token, cause, witness. Here are some examples: *in a knotte* ('as a bargain'), *in wittnesse-bering*, *in aungellis liknesse*, *in drynesch* ('as dry land'), etc.

F-5)   This subtype resembles the preceding one in its low rates: just 12 examples (1.6% within the figurative meaning and 0.84% with regard to all the samples) of *in*-phs expressing on behalf of: half (behalf), name, honour, worship. In this group, I have found the following examples: *in the name of the*, *inþe name*, *in the high haly gast*, *inþe name of my fadir*, *inþe honnoure of my modir dere*, etc. There seems to be a predominance of the noun *name*.

F-6)   Last but not least, the 120 instances belonging to subtype F-6 include *in*-phs with an idiomatic meaning. This semantic field amounts to 16% within the figurative sense and 8.45% with regard to all *in*-phs. It is the third group in importance after F-2. Two further subgroups could be considered within this semantic field. On the one hand, I have found 67 tokens with *in*-phs conveying a certain idiomatic sense such as *in that case*, *in sere degré*, *in sertis*, *in ilke degré*, *in certayne*, *in wede*, *in especiall*, *in vayne*, *in waste*, *in all degré*, *in more or lesse*, etc. The most common

noun functioning as complement of the preposition is *degré/degree* with 21 instances, followed by *casse/case* with 14, *certayne* with 9 and *vayne/wane* with 5. On the other hand, the remaining 53 tokens could be included in another subgroup due to their special idiomatic meaning. Within this second subgroup, I include double idiomatic expressions or in Kinneavy's (1986: xv) words "parallel collocations" such as *in gode or ille*, *in myghte and mayne*, *in hede and hert*, *in more and myne*, *in doute and drede*, *in worde ne dede*, *in towne and felde*, *in bone and bloode*, *in drye and wete*, *in hyde and in hane*, *in wille and in witte*, *in lenghe and brede*, *in wayling and weping*, *in site and in sorowe*, etc. Swearing expressions such as *inþe deueles dispite*, *inþe deuyl way*, *inþe deulys name*, *in otill moy*,[5] and other *in*-phs like *in Mahoundis blissing*, *inþe wanyand* ('in an evil hour'– *in the waning of the moon*) would also be included in this second subgroup. The relatively high number of parallel collocations is justified by the fact that *The York Cycle* is a literary text, written in verse. Nevertheless, Kinneavy (1986: xv) suggests that their overwhelming presence may be due to other than metrical reasons. For example, many of them concentrate on temporality which, in consonance with the religious topic of the cycle, seems to refer to temporal concerns of this life and the next. In the same way, swear words account for the realistic way in which the characters and the register they use were close to common people. *Deuil* is the word most often used in swear words, which are normally uttered by characters such as Herod or Pilate who are regarded as the truest villains in the History of Redemption. Therefore, it is more likely that Herod and Pilate use these swear words as they are usually associated with the devil and Pagan beliefs (Mourón-Figueroa 2005a: 37). Thus, I have found, for example, Herod swearing by *Mahound*.

Unlike Iglesias-Rábade (2003a: 69) who has concluded that, in ME, *in*-phs with an idiomatic meaning usually presented a very low rate within the figurative sense, I may affirm that the presence of this subtype in *The York Cycle* is quite relevant, mainly due to the literary characteristics of the corpus. It is also quite logical that the samples with a figurative sense should include a higher number of idiomatic *in*-phs (mainly due to their figurative meaning) than the samples with a spatial meaning which, as seen before, do not normally allow for tokens with an idiomatic sense.

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[5]   According to Beadle – King (1999: 185), these words are unintelligible although they could be regarded as similar to corrupt French.

2.4. Verb/Adjective dependent

In order to account for all the *in*-phs of the corpus, I have also analysed those
tokens in which the prepositional phrase depends either on a verb or an adjec-
tive. This group accounts for 46 tokens.

Table 5 shows the classification, the number of tokens and their rates:

Table 5. Verb/Adjective dependent

Verb/Adjective dependent	Semantic fields	Tokens	Rate % (within all verb/adjective dependent)
Verb dependent (mental actions and attitudes)	Indicating the object to which mental action is directed: in regard to, concerning (after verbs such as *ileuven*, *biliven*, *trouen*, *hopen*, *delite*, etc.)	38	82.60
Adjective dependent	After adjectives such as *clowted*, *clapped*, *trewest*, etc.	8	17.39
Total		46	

Thirty eight instances show the structure V(erb)-in-C(omplement), i.e. the
preposition *in* together with its complement depends on a verb. With 82.60% of
samples, it is the most important group within the verb/adjective dependent
type. I agree with Iglesias-Rábade (2003: 70) when he states that the structure
V(erb)-in-C(omplement) is very rare in Middle English. Some examples are: *in
fantasyes fell*, *tristis in trayne*, *in hym trowe or triste*, *in forges any felouné*, *in
his baptyme John*, *take tente*; *lerned lelly in youre lay*, *my maisterþat neuere
lakke in lay*, *in oghtat euere vs may availe*. On a semantic level, the complement
indicates the object to which the action, normally of a mental nature, is directed.
In the corpus, the order of the elements belonging to this structure is usually
altered. Thus, instead of having the structure as V(erb)-in-C(omplement), for
metrical reasons, it is usual to find the *in*-ph first and then the verb on which it
depends as in some of the examples just mentioned (e.g.: *in hym trowe or
triste*). No verb really stands out, although I will mention *tristis/triste/trowis*
with 5 examples and *fell/falle* with 4.
    The prepositional phrase can also depend on an adjective. In my corpus, this

group represents just 17.39% within the verb/adjective dependent type. I would like to point out the following examples: *trewest in trastyn*, *in frasting we fonde hym full faithfull and free*, *in oure clukis to be clowted and clapped*, *in legyng of lawes ful lithre*. Again, for metrical purposes, there is a tendency for the *in*-ph to be placed in the first position, thus separate from the adjective on which it depends.

3. Conclusions

To conclude, *The York Cycle* shows a slight predominance of *in*-phs with a figurative sense (52.81%) over examples with a spatial sense (45.21%), thus complying with Iglesias-Rabade's (2003a: 75) conclusion that, in ME, there is a transition from a spatial referential meaning to a more abstract one from 1350 onwards. Firstly, our corpus belongs to the later medieval period. Secondly, this author characterizes the transition as massive because Middle English shows a surprisingly high number of *in*-phs with a figurative meaning. As I have already mentioned, this characterization could not be applied to our corpus as the rate of figurative tokens is only a little higher than that of spatial samples. However, our study obviously supports this transition. Finally, instances with a temporal meaning show a very low rate (1.97%) maybe because the meaning they express could be also covered by the preposition *at*. Likewise, it is curious to see that the verb/adjective dependent type is slightly more abundant than the temporal one (3.13%).

Within the spatial sense, tokens referring to something on or onto the surface of something and surrounded by its parts (S-5) stand out with 37.38% and 16.37% with regard to all *in*-phs. This subtype is followed by examples expressing that something is in or into somebody, in one's body, heart, mind, etc. (S-3) with 22.74% and instances denoting that something is at a place or position (S-6) with 14.48%. Strikingly enough, the most common meaning expressed by *in*-phs nowadays, i.e. inside a solid object, enclosed or within a building, etc., represents just 13.86% within the spatial sense. The most outstanding characteristic of *in*-phs with a spatial meaning relates to the absence of an idiomatic sense for which I have found just one single instance.

On the contrary, idiomatic meaning plays a relevant part within those tokens with figurative and abstract meaning, mainly due to the fact that *The York Cycle* is a literary corpus written in verse. Thus, subtype F-6 shows a rate of 16%, which places idiomatic examples in the third position within the figurative sense. In particular, I highlight the presence of parallel collocations (e.g.: *in more and myne*) and swear words (e.g. *ine deueles dispite*). In this respect, I have had a different result from the one achieved by Iglesias-Rábade (2003a: 69) whose corpus shows a very low frequency of occurrences with an idiomatic sense.

Instances with a noun implying a state or condition (F-3) are the most numerous within the figurative sense (59.06% and 31.19% with regard to all *in*-phs) followed by examples expressing manner (F-2), with 16.4% and, as mentioned before, by occurrences with an idiomatic sense (F-6, 16%).

As seen before, temporal phrases represent a very low rate with regard to the whole corpus (1.97%). All the samples contain nouns referring either to periods of time or to points in time. The most remarkable feature of this group seems to be the absence of temporal phrases such as *ine mene tyme*, *in the begynnyng*, etc.

Finally, I have analysed those examples of *in* dependent on a verb or an adjective. More than three fourths of the examples (82.60%) show *in*-phs depending on a verb which usually denotes a mental action or attitude. Less frequently, the phrase depends on an adjective (just 17.39%). In both cases, the structure shows a reversed order, i.e. the *in*-ph usually appears in the first position followed by the verb or the adjective it depends on (e.g. *in fantasyes fell*, *in oure clukis to be clowted and clapped*).

To conclude, I would like to make a remark about the nouns functioning as complements of the preposition *in*. Generally speaking, no noun clearly predominates in each semantic field, although I will mention the following ones as the most frequent prepositional complements: *fere*, *blys*, *haste*, *sight*, *faythe*, *lande* and *worlde*, all of them with more than 30 tokens each. Some nouns are in Latin and in some instances, especially in those belonging to subtype S-3, a pronoun functions as the complement of the preposition. Finally, it is worth noting that many nouns relate to Biblical or religious vocabulary due to the fact that *The York Cycle* deals with the story of Human Redemption.

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