

Acceptable or not?
Split Infinitives in American English

Bachelor's Thesis
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tutkielmani tarkoitus on selvittää, kuinka usein englannin infinitiivirakenne jaetaan kahteen osaan laittamalla osien väliin adverbi (engl. split infinitive). Lisäksi tarkastelen, minkälaisia adverbeja esiintyy jaettujen infinitiivien kanssa ja onko adverbien laadussa tapahtunut muutoksia menneisyydestä nykypäivään. Tutkielman tavoitteena on siis vastata kysymyksiin: miten jaetun infinitiivin käyttö on vaihdellut vuosien 1810 ja 2009 välillä ja millaiset adverbit yleisimmin jakavat infinitiivejä.</p> <p>Datana tutkimuksessani käytän korpusta, koska korpuksat tarjoavat suuren määrän dataa, joka on kerätty kielen luonnollisissa käyttötilanteissa. Tutkin kvantitatiivisesti jaettujen infinitiivien yleisyyttä vertailemalla esiintymien määrää eri vuosikymmeninä korpuksesta the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA). Tutkin myös kvalitatiivisesti kahden vuosikymmenen jaettujen infinitiivien kanssa esiintyviä adverbeja jakamalla adverbit eri luokkiin.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittavat, että adverbien sijoittaminen infinitiivirakenteen väliin on yleistynyt huomattavasti lähempänä nykyaikaa. Tuloksista voidaan päätellä, että ennen suurin osa adverbeista, jotka jakoivat infinitiivejä, olivat tapaa ilmaisevia mutta nykyään käytetään myös enemmän adverbeja, jotka painottavat verbin merkitystä. Nykyään mikään adverbiluokka ei ole niin selkeässä johdossa kuin tapaa ilmaisevat adverbit ovat ennen olleet, ja kaksi suurinta adverbiluokkaa jaettujen infinitiivien kanssa ovat tapaa ilmaisevat ja painottavat adverbit (engl. focusing adverbs).</p>	
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1 Introduction

In a split infinitive there is a word, typically an adverb or sometimes a pronoun, splitting the infinitive form of the verb, which is *to* + verb. For instance, *to safely keep* or *to never love* are examples of split infinitives. Split infinitives have been a topic of heated discussion for centuries although it is not as heated today as it has been in the past. This discussion has not been limited to concern only grammarians but also the general public has actively taken part in the discussion by, for instance, complaining about split infinitives in newspapers and radio shows (Crystal 1995).

According to Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009:347) the first split infinitives appeared already in the 13th century and have been gradually gaining more ground ever since. Prescriptive grammarians did not approve of the splitting construction and according to various language usage manuals prescriptive rule against split infinitives was introduced in the 19th century to decrease the use of split infinitives. In the past, some have always resisted the use of split infinitives but some have favored their use as well. The case is similar today even though split infinitives have become more acceptable according to general public's opinion. In other words, the issue of split infinitives has always divided opinions through centuries.

According to Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009:348) the origin of split infinitives is not clear based on earlier literature on the subject. They explain that according to some sources split infinitives have come from French after the Norman Conquest whereas other sources state that split infinitives have developed within the English language without influence from outside. However, the prescriptive rule against the split infinitives has its origin in Latin, which was considered having the highest prestige and, therefore, worthy to be the model for other languages and their grammar.

Those who do not accept split infinitives have suggested ways to avoid them. Various language usage manuals on correct language use state that authors are willing to remodel their sentence structures in order to show that they remember the rule of not to split an infinitive and, in that way, preserve their reputation as a good writer. Prescriptive rules are used as a standard to judge how language is used and, therefore, language that follows those rules is

considered higher in value. Also the ability to avoid split infinitives has been a method of producing language that has a higher prestige.

In this thesis, I first present background issues related to split infinitives starting from language change in general and ending with studying split infinitives with corpora. Then I explain my research methods and corpus data and continue from there by presenting my analysis and findings of the frequency and acceptability of split infinitives in American English. I also investigate the types of adverbs that occur with split infinitives in my analysis. Lastly, I make some conclusions of the results and suggest further ideas for research.

2 Background

2.1 Language change

Language change is a natural phenomenon because all languages are constantly evolving. According to Algeo (2010:10) language change is natural because languages are transmitted in a culture and as other aspects of culture such as fashion, entertainment or art are constantly changing so are languages as well. Cultures change and so do languages because the need to describe and discuss matters changes.

Some changes in languages can be detected in a short time frame but some aspects of languages require a longer time to evolve. As Leech et al. (2009:7–8) note, changes in words or phonology can be seen in a relatively short time whereas grammatical changes need a longer time to become visible. They state that this might have led to the fact that recent studies of language change emphasize lexical and phonological changes over grammatical changes even though English has changed the most in grammatical terms over the history. Leech et al. (2009:7–8) also suspect that one reason for emphasizing lexical and phonological changes is that those changes are more visible than grammatical changes. They illustrate this by saying that it is easier to see changes, for instance, in words or hear differences in pronunciation but grammatical changes are more abstract such as the order of the elements in a clause and, therefore, harder to detect. They also add that since grammatical changes evolve slower, more data and time is needed to study grammatical changes.

2.2 Prescriptivism

Language change usually causes different attitudes and public discussions on the correct way of expressing something (Beard 2004:71–72). Everyone has their own eccentric way of speaking and they have opinions and attitudes towards different ways of using language correctly (Beard 2004:71–72). Traditionally, correctness has been measured by rules on how language should be used, which is called prescriptivism. According to Crystal (1995:194) prescriptivism is "the view that one variety of a language has an inherently higher value than others and ought to be the norm for the whole of the speech community". Prescriptive rules have, at least, partly their history in the grammar of Latin, which was considered having the highest prestige. However, prescriptive rules are not just a part of history but they are applied even today and there are grammarians that advocate prescriptive approach to languages (Leech et al. 2009:4). According to prescriptivism only those who know all the rules and are following them are speaking good and correct English (Crystal 1995:193).

Prescriptivism also raises the questions of correctness and acceptability. As Algeo (2010:12) states, those believing that there is one correct way of viewing language are the ones passionately defending their case, for instance, against splitting infinitives. Splitting an infinitive means that usually an adverb is placed between particle *to* and the infinitive form of the verb as explained in the introduction. Algeo (2010:12) explains that according to correctness language can be judged by a standard either correct or incorrect whereas acceptability focuses on investigating if language users regard an expression as natural or if they notice any awkwardness in an expression. Thus, acceptability is not as absolute as correctness but rather some expressions can be more acceptable than others (Algeo 2010:12).

2.3 Split infinitives according to language usage manuals

Language usage manuals give guidelines for language users how to use language according to the rules and customs to use language at a certain time. In other words, they present the factors that affect language use in their time including grammatical rules as well as social norms of using language.

In the case of split infinitives, some usage manuals state that there is no logical reason for not to split infinitives in English. For instance, Bernstein (1965, s.v. *split infinitives*) notes that the natural position for adverbs is before the infinitive it modifies and after the *to*. However, he

also mentions that reason rarely has an effect on the actual usage. In a similar vein, Johnson (1991, s.v. *split infinitives*) explains that the rule that prohibits splitting infinitives is arbitrary and it dates back to the 19th century to the time when grammarians tried to make English and Latin grammar similar. He also mentions that there actually is not a rule against splitting infinitives in Latin but it is just not possible because infinitives contain only one word in Latin. That most likely is also the reason why some grammarians, mainly those who are in favor of prescriptivism, think that the two parts of English infinitives should be considered one unit and should not be separated (Crystal 1995:195).

After acknowledging this effect of prescriptivism in the use of split infinitives, usage manuals state that infinitives are sometimes split and give examples of those situations. For instance, Davidson (2001, s.v. *splitting infinitives: a needless fear*) advises to split infinitives in order to preserve clarity and natural rhythm. He also encourages to split infinitives when the adverb needs to be emphasized or when there is a risk to otherwise produce awkward or inaccurate language. Thus guidelines to splitting an infinitive are based on stylistic features rather than grammatical rules. Usage manuals also give advice when not to split an infinitive. For example, Morris and Morris (1975, s.v. *infinitive, split*) state that infinitives should not be split when there are many adverbs modifying the infinitive. They give an example “The chief undertook to forcefully, fully, firmly, and systematically advise the laymen of their rights” to illustrate that too many adverbs splitting the infinitive make the sentence complex. They suggest that in this sort of case it is wiser to place all the adverbs at the end of the sentence.

Usage manuals also introduce the aspect of general public’s attitude towards split infinitives. Even though there is no rule against splitting infinitives, the reality is that writers feel it is wrong to split an infinitive (Burchfield 1996, s.v. *split infinitive*). As Crystal (1995:193) states, split infinitives were one sign of linguistic inadequacy. He also notes that since many prescriptive grammar rules are arbitrary, students learning grammar had to memorize them by rote and Johnson (1991, s.v. *split infinitive*) remarks that for some reason everyone remembers the rule about split infinitives. Since, according to Howard (1993, s.v. *split infinitive*), everyone knows this rule, the usage of split infinitives has become a matter of reputation. He explains that splitting infinitives might upset readers and ruin the writer’s reputation. However, he also adds that infinitives should be split when needed in order to write good and clear English. In other words, either reputation or clarity has to be sacrificed but usually usage manuals give advice not to avoid splitting or unsplitting infinitives

intentionally because both produce awkward language (Peters 2004, s.v. *split infinitive*). According to Crystal (1991, s.v. *to*) today split infinitives are not such a great issue of reputation as they were before. He remarks that since prescriptive grammar rules are not taught at schools anymore, the awareness of split infinitives has also decreased, at least, among the younger generations.

2.4 Studying split infinitives with corpora

According to Bauer (2008:98) a corpus is defined as “a body of language data which can serve as basis for linguistic analysis and description”. D’Arcy (2011:69) notes that the data in corpora represents the actual usage of language because it consists of samples from speakers and writers of the language. He also explains that corpora are free from prescriptivism and language intuition because the data has been collected from speakers and writers. In other words, corpora represent the descriptive approach to language describing how language is used without imposing rules on how language should be used. D’Arcy (2011:58) remarks that corpora also offer great amounts of data for analysis which is required when analyzing, for instance, frequency effects or grammatical variation. Nevertheless, he also notes that no corpus can capture all aspects of language but the aspects that can be studied in a corpus depend on how the corpus has been constructed, that is, what kind of elements it has been programmed to detect.

Corpora have been used to study different aspects of language, for example, to study some aspects of lexical or grammatical variation but split infinitives have not been studied almost at all by using corpora. However, Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009) have investigated the usage of split infinitives from a historical perspective and also the more recent usage by using corpora as their data. They studied the adverbs that were creating the split from different aspects and the stress patterns that affected the splitting. They used four corpora in their study and they covered the years 1640–1920 in the historical section of their study. The corpora used were The Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts, The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts, The Corpus of English Novels and The British National Corpus from which The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts and The Corpus of English Novels were used in the qualitative section in the analysis of adverbs. This section of their study covered the years 1710–1920. The British National Corpus was used to study the split infinitives in the second

half of the 20th century. Based on the corpora they used in their study, they mainly concentrated on British English.

Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009:347) offer an overview of the usage of split infinitives in history by referring to several different sources. They state that split infinitives started to appear in usage first in the 13th century and splitting started to gradually become more common in the 14th century even though generally split infinitives were still considered stylistic errors. They note that in the 16th and 17th centuries the amount of split infinitives declined severely but started to increase again in the 18th century. They also mention that today split infinitives are common in speech and writing and according to the data in corpora prejudice against split infinitives is declining. In their quantitative approach section they show statistics of the usage of split infinitives from 1640 to 2000 and compare splitting and non-splitting constructions between 1640 and 1920. Their first statistic shows that the use of split infinitives has increased over the years but started to rise drastically from 1850 onwards. The second statistic shows that the non-splitting construction has gradually declined whereas splitting has increased.

In their qualitative approach section Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009) analyze adverbs and stress patterns in split infinitives. They show two statistics, classifying adverbs into different categories and giving percentages of their usage. The first statistic covers the years 1710–1850 and categorizes the adverbs into manner, negation, quantity and time and the second statistic covers the years 1850–1920 and has two new categories, which are frequency and degree. They conclude from their statistics that the adverbs of manner in split infinitives are clearly the most preferred in both statistics. To be exact, they counted that 74% of all the adverbs are adverbs of manner, 12% of time, 5% of frequency, 4% of degree, 4% quantity and 1% of negation in 1850–1920. In 1710–1850 the corresponding percentages are 41.6% of adverbs of manner, 41.6% of time, 8.3% of negation and 8.3% of quantity. In addition, they present statistics showing the function of adverbs. Those statistics present the amounts of adjuncts and subjuncts and compare how often gradable and non-gradable verbs are used with them. They also give statistics of the use of mono-, di-, three- and four-syllable adverbs with split infinitives when studying how stress patterns affect split infinitives. Lastly, they made a statistic showing how the use of the structure *to actually* + verb varies between different age groups in the British National Corpus.

3 Data and methods

I will use the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) as data in my study because I will focus on American English. As mentioned earlier in the background section, split infinitives have been studied through corpora before by Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009) but they focus mainly on British English and, therefore, I will investigate split infinitives in American English. However, their data have also some examples of American English, North American English in particular. I chose COHA because it is available to all users and it covers a fairly long time span, years 1810–2009.

My study includes a quantitative and a qualitative section. In the quantitative section I search split infinitives in COHA and study how their usage has varied in 1810–2009. I will compare the results to the usage of non-splitting constructions in the same time span. As mentioned earlier, Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009) have made a similar study concentrating mainly on British English and I will compare my results to theirs as far as it is possible. After that in the qualitative section of my study, I will make a closer analysis of two decades. I will examine the decades 1850–59 and 2000–09 because there is 150 years between those two decades and, for that reason, it is interesting to investigate how the use of split infinitives has changed during that time. In addition, the major introduction of prescriptive rule against split infinitives was put forward between those two decades in the 19th century, which might have changed the use of split infinitives.

In the qualitative section I concentrate on analyzing the adverbs with split infinitives. I will analyze and categorize 100 first instances of split infinitives from both decades to seven categories: manner, time/frequency, negation, degree, focusing adverbs, quantity and place. As mentioned in the background, Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009) also analyzed adverbs in their study but because of the ambiguity in their categorization system, I will use a slightly different basis for classifying the adverbs. I will compare the results of the two decades to investigate whether any changes have occurred in the use of adverbs during 150 years. Lastly, I will compare the results to Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) findings as far as the results can be compared because of the slightly different categorization criteria. In other words, this study will try to provide answers to questions how the use of split infinitives have changed in history and what types of adverbs are used with split infinitives.

4 Analysis

4.1 Split infinitives from the 1810s to the 2000s

Table 1. Split infinitives with all types of adverbs

SECTION	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	13	41	62	119	217	284	616	676	583	618	464	376	331	260	419	566	833	1076	2114	2872
PER MIL	11.01	5.92	4.50	7.42	13.17	16.65	33.19	33.27	28.30	27.97	20.44	14.66	13.45	10.68	17.07	23.61	34.98	42.50	75.66	97.13

First, I searched split infinitives in COHA so that I included all types of adverbs into the search. For this search I used a search command “to [r*] [v?i*]” in which [r*] stands for adverbs and [v?i*] the infinitive form of the verb. Because COHA is a grammatically tagged corpus, it is possible to search for patterns according to word classes and inflectional forms. I did not limit the search to e.g. only adverbs ending with *-ly* such as *properly* or *willingly* but I also searched for adverbs such as *often*, *rather*, *ever* and *just*. However, this type of search also includes some other types of constructions than just split infinitives. For instance, the constructions *from time to time* + verb, *to both mind and body*, *to so brave a captain* and *to either house or bed* appear in the search results for split infinitives with this search method.

However, most of the instances in this type of search were correct and the results show that the use of split infinitives have increased over the years as can be seen in table 1, in which the column height corresponds to the normalized frequencies of split infinitives in the data decade by decade. The amount of split infinitives first declined between the 1810s and 1830s. From the 1830s onwards split infinitives started to gradually increase until the 1880s. The use of split infinitives began to then decrease from the 1880s onwards until the 1940s, which is after the prescriptive rule against split infinitives was introduced in the 19th century. From the 1940s until the 1980s split infinitives steadily increased and from the 1980s onwards their amount grew rapidly. Between the 1980s and the 1990s their amount almost doubled. In other words, there are two time periods when the amount of split infinitives decreased and two time

periods when their amount increased. The increase, however, has always been more radical than the decrease.

When comparing the amount of instances in the 1810s and the 2000s, one can notice that the split infinitives have become increasingly more common because in the 1810s there are only 11.01 instances of split infinitives per million words and in the 2000s there are 97.13 instances per million words. Also when the use of split infinitives reached its peak in the 19th century, there are 33.27 instances per million words in the 1880s. On the other hand, when the curve in table 1 reaches its two lowest points in the 19th and 20th century, there are only 4.50 instances per million words in the 1830s and 10.68 instances per million words in the 1940s. The increase in the number of split infinitives is rather similar after the two lowest points during the following five decades in table 1. The five decades of increase are from the 1830s to the 1870s and from the 1940s to the 1980s. To show the figures, in the 1830s and 1870s there are 4.50 and 33.19 instances per million words and in the 1940s and in the 1980s there are 10.68 and 42.50 instances per million words. From that one can calculate that the development is 28.69 more instances in the 1870s than in the 1830s and 31.82 instances more in the 1980s than in the 1940s. After the 1980s the increase of split infinitives is rapid because already in the 1990s the amount of split infinitives has almost doubled resulting in 75.69 instances per million words.

Secondly, I compared how the usage of non-splitting constructions differed from the use of split infinitives. In these other type of constructions the adverb is placed either before or after the infinitive, for example constructions such as *only to protect* and *to die rapidly*. However, to search for these types of constructions I had to limit the search to cover only adverbs ending with *-ly* because the search with all types of adverbs results in many unacceptable results. The search for all types of adverbs after the infinitive presents several instances of phrasal verbs such as *to put up* or *to find out* and the similar search for all types of adverbs before the infinitive results in constructions such as *how to use*, *about to retire* and *in to read* to demonstrate a few examples. In order to be able to compare the usage of split infinitives with the use of non-splitting constructions, I had to limit the search for split infinitives also to include only adverbs ending with *-ly*, which I did by performing search “to *ly [v?i*]” where *ly stands for words ending with *-ly* and [v?i*] the infinitive form of the verb. The results of this search can be seen in table 2. The development of the use of split infinitives is similar in tables 1 and 2 but, naturally, the amount of instances is fewer in table 2 because all other

types of adverbs than the ones ending with *-ly* have been excluded from the results. For example, in table 1 there are 11.01 instances per million words in the 1810s whereas in table 2 there are only 5.93 instances per million words. To present another example, there are 97.13 instances per million words in the 2000s in table 1 whereas only 64.87 instances per million words in table 2.

Table 2. Split infinitives with adverbs ending with *-ly*

SECTION	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	7	19	25	66	117	176	417	438	353	377	262	203	167	115	203	323	532	678	1367	1918
PER MIL	5.93	2.74	1.81	4.11	7.10	10.32	22.46	21.56	17.14	17.06	11.54	7.91	6.79	4.72	8.27	13.47	22.34	26.78	48.92	64.87

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However, the search for adverbs ending with *-ly* before and after the infinitive did not give entirely errorless results either. The search included some other kinds of words that ended with *-ly* as well. To give a few examples, there were expressions such as *to miss Emily*, *to be family* and *fly to get* and *Italy to emulate*. However, the majority of words ending with *-ly* which were before or after the infinitive were adverbs.

Table 3. Non-splitting constructions where the adverb is after the infinitive

SECTION	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	167	1335	2373	2696	3079	2970	3533	3689	3774	4099	4465	4803	4466	4270	4334	4292	4059	4185	4168	4004
PER MIL	141.38	192.72	172.27	167.99	186.93	174.14	190.33	181.58	183.20	185.50	196.69	187.22	181.53	175.37	176.57	179.00	170.44	165.31	149.17	135.42

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Table 4. Non-splitting constructions where the adverb is before the infinitive

SECTION	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	381	2171	3909	4438	4745	4200	4882	5173	5188	5564	5683	6193	5754	5470	5462	5245	5098	5194	5387	5210
PER MIL	322.55	313.40	283.78	276.54	288.07	246.26	263.01	254.63	251.83	251.79	250.35	241.41	233.88	224.66	222.53	218.75	214.07	205.17	192.80	176.21

SEE ALL YEARS AT ONCE

The use of non-splitting constructions is presented in tables 3 and 4. Table 3 presents the numbers of instances where the adverb is after the infinitive and these results were obtained by performing search “to [v?i*] *ly”, where [v?i*] stands for any infinitive form of the verb. In table 4 are presented the constructions where the adverb is before the infinitive. To get the results I performed search “*ly to [v?i*]”. The overall development in non-splitting constructions is that they have been slightly decreasing over the years. However, placing the adverb before the infinitive has always been a more preferred option than placing the adverb after the infinitive even though the amount of adverbs before the infinitive has declined more than the amount of adverbs after the infinitive. The end result is, nevertheless, that adverbs before and after the infinitive are almost equally used today.

In the 1810s in table 3 and 4 the amount of instances per million words are 141.38 and 322.55, which illustrates a clear preference for placing the adverb before the infinitive. From there on, the constructions where the adverb is placed before the infinitive start a steady and gradual decline, which can be seen in table 4, whereas the constructions where the adverb is after the infinitive gradually increase until the 1910s and then start a gradual decline, which can be seen in table 3. In the 2000s in table 3 there are 135.42 instances per million words and in table 4 there are 176.21 instances per million words, which shows a slight preference for placing the adverb before the infinitive also today but the gap between the usage of those two constructions is not as wide as it has been in the history. It is also interesting to notice that in table 3 the amount of instances is almost the same in the 1810s and in the 2000s, which is 141.38 instances per million words and 135.42 whereas in table 4 the amount has decreased immensely. In the 1810s there are 322.55 instances per million words and in the 2000s there are 176.21 instances in table 4. From these results it can be concluded that even though placing the adverb before the infinitive has declined more than placing the adverb after the infinitive, adverbs before the infinitive are still a slightly more favored option.

When comparing tables 2, 3 and 4, it is apparent that the non-splitting constructions have been and still are overwhelmingly more used than split infinitives. When comparing the instances in the 1810s, in table 2 there are 5.93 instances per million words, in table 3 the same number is 141.38 instances per million words and in table 4 there are 322.55 instances per million words. This demonstrates how much more common the non-splitting constructions have been in the history. Just to illustrate the overwhelming preference for non-

splitting constructions throughout the history there are a few more examples. In the 1880s the amount of instances per million words in table 2, 3 and 4 are 21.56, 181.58 and 254.63 and in the 2000s the numbers are 64.87, 135.42 and 176.21 instances per million words. Even though the non-splitting constructions, according to these examples, have decreased and the amount of split infinitives has increased, non-splitting constructions have always been and are still more preferred than split infinitives, which Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009) also found in their study. However, the use of split infinitives is not that far behind anymore today.

4.2 Adverbs with split infinitives in the 1850s and in the 2000s

In this section I analyze qualitatively the adverbs that appear with split infinitives in two decades. I compare the 1850s and the 2000s to see whether there are differences in the types of adverbs used with split infinitives earlier in the history and today. I analyze 100 first examples from each decade, categorize them and calculate the percentage of instances in each category. All the examples are instances from fiction. Lastly, I compare the results from those two decades with each other and also to the results in Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) study, in which the examples were also mainly from fiction.

I categorized the adverbs into different categories than Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009) in their similar study because they did not fully explain their categorizing method, which I mentioned in the background section, and the meaning of some categories was unclear. They did not present many examples of the adverbs that the categories include either. I categorized the adverbs into manner, negation, quantity, time/frequency, place, degree and focusing adverbs. An exhaustive categorizing method for adverbs has not been proposed and, therefore, I used these categories, which seem rather common. For example, multiple internet sources, mainly grammar teaching webpages, mention these categories and offer examples on them. However, other categories exist as well. This lack of definite categorization causes difficulties in analyzing the adverbs. There are also cases in which the adverb can be placed in more than one category and, for that reason, sometimes the choices for placing certain adverbs into particular categories could be argued. For example, categories of degree and focusing adverbs are so close to each other that it is often difficult to differentiate adverbs in those categories. Sometimes one adverb can also have multiple meanings and the meaning has to be determined by the context. For example, *actually* could be categorized into manner but

sometimes it has an emphasizing task in the sentence and, therefore, should be categorized into focusing adverbs. The question where to place *actually* is also an issue in my analysis. Some grammars do not even have a category for focusing adverbs but the adverbs in this category are included in the category of degree. The functions of the categories are briefly explained in table 5 mainly based on different grammar teaching webpages with some examples to illustrate the different categories.

Table 5. Adverb categories

Category	Function	Examples
manner	How is an action performed?	slowly, well, suddenly
time/frequency	When? How long? How often? How soon?	now, already, yesterday
degree	How much? How little? The idea of more or less.	slightly, almost, completely
focusing adverbs	Focuses on a particular part of the sentence.	even, merely, only
negation	To negate something.	neither
place	To show position, direction or distance.	here, there
quantity	How many?	all, both, many

Most of the categories for adverbs in my analysis are most likely familiar except degree and focusing adverbs. To further clear those more unfamiliar categories, according to webpages that teach grammar, focusing adverbs give emphasis on a certain part of the sentence which, in this case, is the verb. According to *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (1999) adverbs of degree describe the extent or degree of the utterance, which can be greater or weaker than usually. My analysis of the adverbs based on these categories can be seen in appendix 1 and 2.

As appendices 1 and 2 illustrate, the use of adverbs with split infinitives has changed during the last 150 years. In the 1850s, there were 54% of adverbs of manner from which *thus* and *so* were clearly the most common with 8% and 6% from all the instances. The second largest category was adverbs of time/frequency which made 19% of the all instances and the most common adverbs in this category were *forthwith* and *again*, which each made 4% of all the

instances. The adverbs of degree were almost equally large category with 18% of all the instances. The most common adverb in this category was *fully* making 3% of all the instances. The rest of the categories were rather minor. There was only 6% of focusing adverbs and *even* was the most common with 4% of all the instances. There were only 2% of adverbs indicating place, e.g. *hither* and *here*, 1% of adverbs of negation, e.g. *neither*, and no adverbs of quantity.

However, in the 2000s there are only 33% of adverbs of manner and no adverb is as clearly favored as there was in the 1850s. The most common adverb makes only 3% of all the instances and the adverb is *better*. In addition, the variation in the use of different types of adverbs of manner is not as great in the 2000s as it was in the 1850s since there were 37 different adverbs in the results in the 1850s but only 27 in the 2000s. In the 2000s the amount of adverbs of time/frequency is rather similar to the 1850s with 20% of all the instances but the most common adverbs are *never* and *ever* each making 4% of all the instances. Similarly, the amount of adverbs of degree has stayed almost the same. There are 16% of adverbs of degree but *really* has become the most common one with 8% of all the instances. However, the most overwhelming change has occurred in the category of focusing adverbs. In the 2000s they make 30% of all the instances and the majority of adverbs in this category are these three: *just*, *even* and *actually*. There are 13% of *just*, 8% of *even* and 8% of *actually*. The rest of the categories in the 2000s are not significant. There are only 1% of adverbs of quantity, e.g. *twice*, and no adverbs of negation or place, which was almost the opposite in the 1850s since then there were few instances of adverbs of negation and place but no adverbs of quantity.

As the results illustrate, the use of adverbs in the past 150 years has drastically changed from the use of adverbs of manner, and the use of *thus* and *so* in particular, into the use of focusing adverbs and into the use of *just*, *even* and *actually*. It also has to be mentioned that the use of an adverb of degree, *really*, has increased significantly with only 1% of all the instances in the 1850s but 8% in the 2000s. It is also interesting to find that no one adverb has dominated both decades but all the most common adverbs in each category have changed except *even* in focusing adverbs. In the 1850s there are 4% of *even* and in the 2000s the amount has increased to 8%. However, overall it seems that there is more variation in the use of adverbs in the 1850s than in the 2000s when there seem to be more fixed choices of adverbs to use with split infinitives, which can be seen in the greater amount of variation in the instances in

the 1850s. In other words, variation and perhaps expressiveness has been changed into emphasizing the meaning the verb already has rather than adding a different meaning to the verb with the adverb. Adverbs of manner often add more meaning to the verb whereas focusing adverbs do not add meaning but they emphasize the meaning that the verb already has.

According to the results, *thus* and *so* have basically disappeared from the adverbs used with split infinitives and the use of *just*, *even*, *actually* and *really* have rapidly increased in the latest decades. Also the searches of the overall numbers of split infinitives with these adverbs in COHA verify these results. The separate searches for split infinitives with *thus* and *so* show that they were more common in the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century and started to decrease from the beginning of the 20th century, which can be seen in the tables in appendix 3 and 4. It might be that *so* and *thus* are perceived as old-fashioned in today's language use and, for that reason, they are not used anymore. *So* has been slightly more common than *thus*. *Just* and *actually*, on the other hand, were not used almost at all until their use began to gradually increase from the 1940s onwards until the 1980s and in the 1990s their amount drastically increased, which is presented in the tables in appendix 5 and 6. Instances of *just* more than doubled between the 1980s and 1990s, and instances of *actually* also more than doubled in the 1980s and 1990s and almost doubled again between the 1990s and the 2000s. *Really* and *even* have been slightly more common from the 1850s onwards but their use also slowly increased from the 1940s onwards and stunningly rose in the 1980s and 1990s, which is shown in the tables in appendix 7 and 8. The use of *really* and *even* has rather similar development with the general change in the use of split infinitives presented in table 1. The instances of *really* doubled between the 1980s and the 1990s and instances of *even* also doubled between the 1970s and 1980s. According to these tables, during the 1980s and 1990s the amount of focusing adverbs has increased immensely.

In addition, the instances in all the categories seem rather different in both decades, especially in the category of manner, with the exception that in time and degree there are several similar instances. For example, in the category of time in both decades there are *ever*, *never* and *immediately* and in the category of degree there are *fully*, *really*, *completely* and *almost* in both decades. There does not seem to be many changes in the amounts of these adverbs except that in the category of time *never* and *ever* have become slightly more common. In the 1850s there was only 1% of *never* and 1% of *ever* whereas in the 2000s *never* makes 4% and

ever also makes 4% of all the instances. In the category of degree the only change has happened in the amount of *really*, which has increased to 8% in the 2000s whereas in the 1850s it was only 1%.

Comparing these results to the findings in Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) study is difficult because they have slightly different adverb categories, which were presented in the background section, and their study have a larger time span covering the years 1710–1850 and 1850–1920. However, when concerning my study only the later time period is relevant. In other words, the amount of their data is greater than in my study. In their study, adverbs of manner are clearly the largest category with 74% of all instances in 1850–1920. The second largest category is time with 12%, then frequency with 5%, degree and quantity with 4% each and negation with 1%. These results could be compared to my analysis of the adverbs in the 1850s. In my analysis also the adverbs of manner are in the majority but only with 54%. This difference in the category of manner could perhaps be explained by the different kind of corpus data used in my analysis and Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) study, e.g. the different kinds of texts included in the corpora and the difference between British and American English. In my analysis I counted time and frequency together so if one counts time and frequency together in Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) study, the percentage for this combined category would be 17%, which is close to the result in my analysis which is 19%. However, in the category of degree there are significant differences. First of all, Calle-Martín and Miranda-García do not have a category for focusing adverbs and, therefore, those adverbs are most likely included in the category of degree because the meaning of focusing adverbs is so close to the meaning of adverbs of degree as explained earlier. In other words, the combined category of degree and focusing adverbs makes 24% of the instances in my analysis whereas in their study it makes only 4%.

When comparing Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) results to my analysis of the adverbs in the 2000s the differences are even greater. This type of comparison can provide information on how the use of adverbs has developed after Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) study since the time span in their study covers the years until the 1920s. The most significant change, which also showed in my comparison of the 1850s and the 2000s, is the crushing decrease of adverbs of manner and drastic increase of adverbs of degree and focusing adverbs. However, again the categories of degree and focusing adverbs have to be counted together for this comparison. The percentages in the category of manner are 74% in

Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) study and 33% in my analysis, which shows an overwhelming decrease. In addition, the percentages for the combined category of adverbs of degree and focusing adverbs are 4% and 46% which presents a radical increase towards today. However, in other aspects in which the results can be compared there does not seem to be other major differences.

5 Discussion

The first section of my analysis was not compared with the similar study by Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009) because they presented their results in the form of instances per 10.000 sentences whereas my results are in instances per million words. In other words, the results cannot be compared. However, the tables describing the development of splitting and non-splitting constructions in Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009:350–351) study illustrate similar tendencies in the development with my tables 1, 2, 3 and 4. Even though the tables in their study also present the results in instances per 10.000 sentences, the tables show that the use of split infinitives has increased and the use of non-splitting constructions has decreased. The non-splitting constructions have been and still are more common than splitting construction although split infinitives are more frequently used today than before, which is also the result in my analysis. It is interesting to notice, according to their and my study, that the development of splitting and non-splitting constructions follow similar patterns even though Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) mainly focused on British English and my study focused on American English.

As also mentioned in the first section of the analysis, creating a search command in COHA that would result in only correct instances was impossible. In all searches there were also some mistakes included in the results but in most cases the amount of errors was minor. However, I had to limit the search for non-splitting constructions to only adverbs ending with *-ly* because there were too many errors in the search for non-splitting constructions with all types of adverbs. Unfortunately, adverbs such as *ever*, *even*, *often* and *just* were excluded from the results which, at least in some decades, are rather common. Also the search ending with *-ly* presented some errors in the results such as *Emily* or *family*, which were interpreted as adverbs even though they clearly are not. However, again the amount of errors in this type of search was minor.

Although the findings in the second section of the analysis are interesting, it should be remembered that only 100 first instances of adverbs were selected for this analysis and they all were from fiction. If there would have been data from all text types, the results most likely would have been different. However, even with this amount of data the results showed some similarities with Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) study but there were also some major differences. As already mentioned in the analysis section, the differences in the amounts of adverbs in the different categories in my analysis and Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) study could perhaps be explained by the different kinds of corpora used as data. Again in this section it is questionable to what extent my analysis can be compared with their study. Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009) did not elaborate their basis for categorizing adverbs and did not include a comprehensible list of what adverbs they included in which category. In other words, comparing two adverb analyses which have different categorizing criteria has to be done with caution. It also has to be mentioned that Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2009) have a long time span in the study of adverbs and, therefore, more data than I have in my analysis.

It should be mentioned that the categorizing system that I used in my analysis is not an exhaustive version. Some other categorizing criteria would have operated as well. It needs to be remarked that, for instance, the meanings of categories degree and focusing adverbs are so similar that determining the difference and placing an adverb correctly is sometimes challenging. For example, adverbs *just* and *even* are occasionally placed in the category of degree and sometimes in the category of focusing adverbs. However, in my analysis I found it relevant that there is a different category for focusing adverbs since in the 2000s there are multiple instances of *even*, *just* and *actually*, which do not necessarily belong to the category of degree. Their meaning does not clearly indicate that they express the degree or intensity of something. Since there is no definite answer where to place these adverbs, I placed them into the category of focusing adverbs in order to place them in their own category and show how radically their usage has increased. These three adverbs alone cover 28% of the instances in the 2000s whereas in the 1850s they cover only 4%. Without these three adverbs the amount of adverbs of degree has stayed almost similar with 18% in the 1850s and 16% in the 2000s, which is another reason for placing these three adverbs into a separate category.

6 Conclusion

According to this study the use of split infinitives has become more common and perhaps more acceptable today. The prescriptive rules over language do not regulate language use to so great an extent than they have before and, perhaps for that reason, split infinitives have become more acceptable. However, there are still those who oppose split infinitives. As mentioned in the background section, acceptability is not definite but some constructions can be more acceptable than others. Even though some regard a construction as acceptable, some might not accept the same construction as good language use, which seems to be the case with split infinitives. The major findings concerning the adverbs used with split infinitives are that the use of adverbs of manner have decreased and perhaps simplified towards today and the use of focusing adverbs have increased radically.

There are not that many corpus-based studies of split infinitives in English, especially studies that cover more recent years. For instance, Calle-Martín and Miranda-García's (2009) study covered only the 20th century until the 1920s. The study of split infinitives has been focusing on the earlier history and the 20th century has not received much attention. In addition, the case of split infinitives has not been investigated with corpora almost at all. Most of the discussion about split infinitives is caused by different grammarians offering their opinions or observations but comprehensive studies of the actual usage of split infinitives with corpora are few. This study has provided information on split infinitives in the 20th century but more studies are still needed to clarify the issue further.

My analysis focused on split infinitives in fiction so it would be fruitful to expand this search to other text types as well. Comparison of split infinitives in different text types or a comprehensive study of split infinitives in all text types would most likely provide interesting results and reveal more about the use of split infinitives. Also further analysis of the types of adverbs with split infinitives could be a fruitful area of research. As mentioned earlier, I only analyzed 100 first instances of the two decades and the instances were only from fiction. In the aspect of adverbs analysis as well, my study could be expanded so that greater amounts of data from different text types would be analyzed. It would also be interesting to compare adverbs in different text types.

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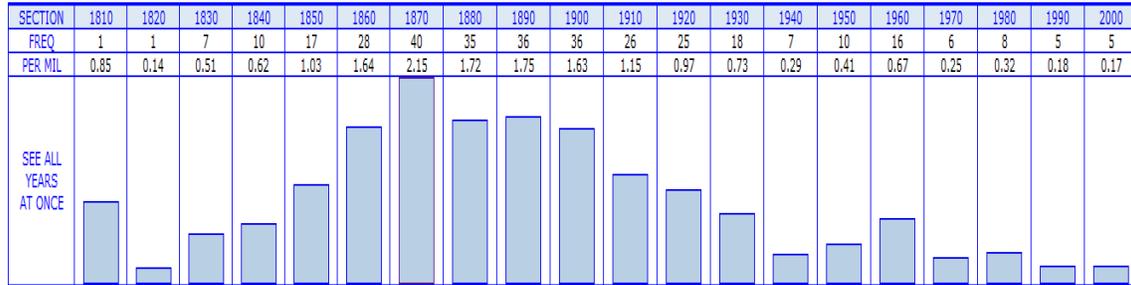
Appendix 1

Adverb analysis of the 1850s

manner	thus (8), so (6), legally (2), speedily (2), wildly (2), suddenly (2), critically, joyously, sharply, secretly, deliberately, calmly, properly, graphically, strenuously, sneeringly, kindly, sordidly, rudely, safely, signally, justly, thoroughly, rapidly, successfully, quietly, zealously, correctly, readily, patiently, charitably, seriously, scrupulously, stolidly, severely, rashly, personally, total 54
time/frequency	forthwith (4), again (4), forever (2), longer (2), ever, any, now, endlessly, never, immediately, frequently, total 19
degree	fully (3), completely (2), almost (2), further (2), exactly, nearly, wholly, really, little, half, partially, father, greatly, total 18
focusing adverb	even (4), merely, more, total 6
negation	neither, total 1
place	hither, here, total 2
quantity	0

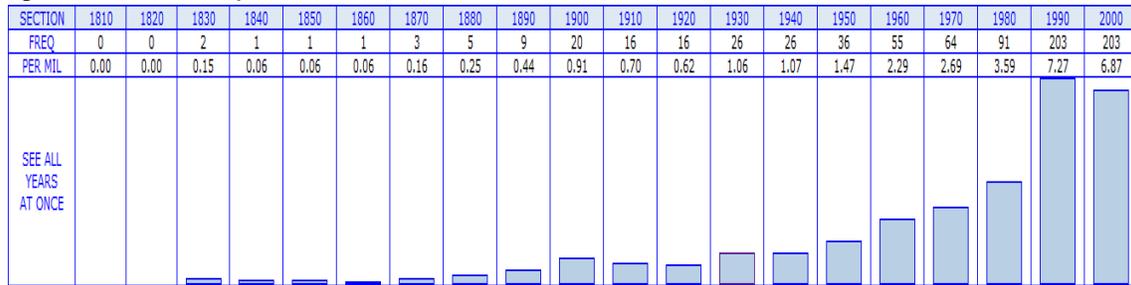
Appendix 4

Split infinitives with *so*



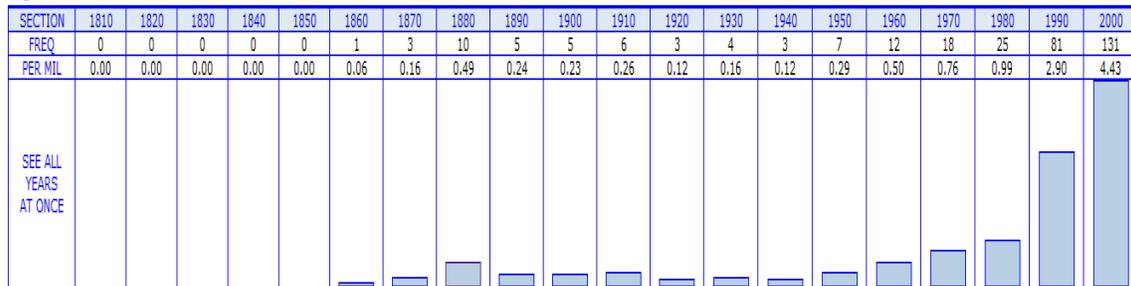
Appendix 5

Split infinitives with *just*



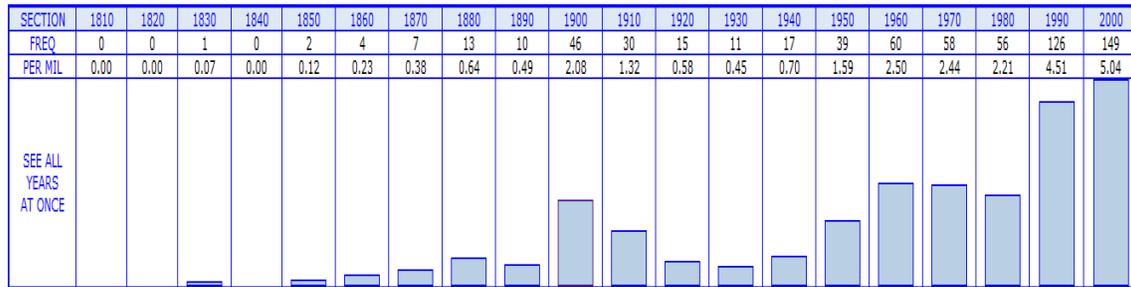
Appendix 6

Split infinitives with *actually*



Appendix 7

Split infinitives with *really*



Appendix 8

Split infinitives with *even*

