

We attempted to analyze not only the diachronic development of pseudo-compound verbs (or rather tendencies in the historical development because we excluded the Early Modern English period from our research), but also the synchronic problems in the Old and Middle English periods. But a fully consistent and balanced analysis proved impossible due to a variety of objective reasons. First, even though a fairly large number of Old English texts (i.e. 3037) survived into Modern English, we have no evidence as to how much texts were actually compiled in that period. The number of Middle English texts in CME is extremely low (i.e. 146). (What might seem puzzling is that Old English records surpass the Middle English ones. But it is due to the fact that CME has not been finished yet.) This unbalance of available texts makes any comparison between pseudo-compound verbs in Old and Middle English highly inaccurate. Second, Old English literature is to a very large extent homogeneous, consisting almost entirely of religious texts. Middle English writers compiled also other types of texts (e.g. secular prose and secular poetry). Nevertheless, it is impossible to draw a definite conclusion about the use of pseudo-compound verbs in various kinds of literature unless all Middle English texts are incorporated into CME. Third, because of the homogeneous nature of Old English literature, we cannot determine whether pseudocompound verbs were restricted to a higher stylistic layer or not. This is connected with the question as to which compound verbs were actually established in the Old English word-stock and which can be labelled as mere “inventions“ or “innovations“ (i.e. nonce formations) of scribes. Middle English records, on the other hand, were definitely not restricted to a single stylistic level.