The development of and factors influencing double object construction preference of the ditransitive verbs *envy* and *forgive*

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the double object constructions, viz. SVO_iO_d and $SVOO_{prep}$ clause patterns, of the ditransitive verbs *envy* and *forgive*. The syntactic and semantic specificity of the two verbs in question may indicate a possible future extinction of their ditransitive use. The present study aims to provide an extensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of the double object construction preference from both the diachronic and synchronic perspectives. Using a corpus sample of American English (COHA), the data reveal a complex situation. While the double object constructions with *envy* prefer the indirect object clause pattern, there is a notable tendency of such constructions to gradually decline in frequency and give rise to the prepositional pattern. *Forgive* shows preference for the $SVOO_{prep}$ pattern. Nevertheless, it is the form of the objects that seems to play a significant role in the double object construction preference.

1 INTRODUCTION

The present paper explores the development of object complementation of the ditransitive verbs *envy* and *forgive.* The verbs *envy* and *forgive* represent a very specific group of ditransitive verbs, displaying considerable differences from the prototypical ditransitive verbs. It is both the syntactic and semantic characteristics that differentiate the verbs *envy* and *forgive* from the ditransitive verbs such as *give, send* or *offer*, where the indirect object alternates with the prepositional object, and where the two objects exchange their position (exx 1 a and b).

(1) a. *She sent Paul* $[O_i]$ *a present* $[O_d]$.
    b. *She sent a present* $[O_d]$ *to Paul* $[O_{prep}]$. (Quirk et al. 1985: 1211)

The verbs *envy* and *forgive* also occur in two different clause patterns, viz. SVO_iO_d (exx 2 a, 3 a) and $SVOO_{prep}$ (exx 2 b, 3 b)[1]. However, the alternation of the two avail-

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1   Although the term "double object construction" is introduced by Barss and Lasnik (1986) as referring strictly to the indirect object ditransitive pattern, for the purpose of the pres-

able clause structures does not involve re-ordering of the objects, and their semantics substantially differs from the central sense of prototypical ditransitive verbs.

(2) a. *I envied him his freedom.*
b. *I envied him for his freedom.* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 297)
(3) a. *I can't forgive him his lies.*
b. *I can't forgive him for his lies.* (ibid.: 312)

The specific nature of *envy* and *forgive* attracted the attention of several linguists, e.g. Goldberg (1995), Hunston and Francis (2000) or Colleman and De Clerck (2008, 2011), on whose 2008 study the present article is based. Consequently, the aim of this paper is to examine the postverbal preference in the double object constructions with *envy* and *forgive*, both from the diachronic and synchronic perspectives. The investigation concerns the development of the postverbal preference, and at the same time, it attempts to identify and elucidate other factors that might influence the preference of one or the other pattern, regardless of their time of origin.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 SYNTACTIC VIEWPOINT: THE TREATMENT OF THE SVO_iO_d AND $SVOO_{prep}$ CLAUSE PATTERNS IN MAJOR ENGLISH GRAMMARS

The present chapter summarises different approaches to ditransitive verbs in English major grammar books from the syntactic point of view in order to show the problematic classification of the verbs *envy* and *forgive* in terms of double object constructions, i.e. SVO_iO_d and $SVOO_{prep}$. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Quirk et al. (1985) "is most liberal in that it subsumes various types of formal realizations under this category and various verbs, even if they occur only in the prepositional construction" (Brůhová 2010: 19). Using the label "ditransitive complementation" for both structures, Quirk et al. (1985) further divide the class into two subcategories — clause patterns including either indirect object and direct object, or direct/indirect object and prepositional object (ibid.: 726–727). Ditransitive verbs are consequently categorised with respect to their possible complementation configurations (see Quirk et al. 1985: 1209–1210). Contrary to Quirk et al. (1985), Dušková et al. (2012) provide each sentence type with its own separate category and distinguish verbs that enter the SVO_iO_d pattern from those that do not, and therefore require the presence of a preposition (ibid.: 12.22.3, 12.22.4). Biber et al. (2021) include the verbs that allow at least one of the two double object sentence structures in one category, specifically calling them three-place verbs. Regarding ditransitivity, the authors note that "most ditransitive verbs also have ditransitive prepositional uses" (ibid.: 154).

ent study, the label "double object construction" serves as an umbrella term that captures both types of verbal complementation involving two objects, viz. the SVO_iO_d and $SVOO_{prep}$ patterns.

In their opinion, for a verb to be considered ditransitive, it must be attested in the
SVO_iO_d pattern, while verbs which occur only in the SVO_dO_{prep} pattern (e.g. *remind sb
of sth*) are not considered ditransitive (ibid.). Huddleston and Pullum (2002), on the
other hand, adopt a considerably different approach, as "[they] are the most strict
and their group of verbs is the most limited" (Brůhová 2010: 19). Only those construc-
tions are treated as ditransitive in which both objects are realized by noun phrases,
i.e. core elements (see Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 216). As a result, verbs occurring
in the SVO_dO_{prep} pattern are considered monotransitive[2] (ex 4).

    (4) *Kim gave the key to Pat.* (ibid.)

It is noteworthy that while the presence of two objects would be sufficient for Quirk
et al. (1985) to call the use of the verb ditransitive, it is the existence of its corre-
sponding indirect object construction, i.e. *Kim gave Pat the key* (Huddleston and Pul-
lum 2002: 216) that enables Biber et al. (2021) to regard ex 4 as ditransitive.

    Therefore, as far as the verbs *envy* and *forgive* are concerned, Quirk et al. (1985)
and Biber et al. (2021) view their prepositional use as ditransitive, while Huddleston
and Pullum (2002) regard the cases of *envy* and *forgive* with the preposition *for* as
instances of monotransitive use. In the present study, we adhere to the interpreta-
tion of the $SVOO_{prep}$ pattern as proposed by Quirk et al. (1985), and thus consider the
prepositional pattern ditransitive.

2.2 SEMANTIC VIEWPOINT: SEMANTIC CLASSIFICATION
OF DITRANSITIVE VERBS

Pinker (1989) establishes the thematic core that defines the ditransitive construc-
tion as "X causes Y to have Z" (ibid.: 110) and briefly comments on several verb
classes that occur in the SVO_iO_d pattern. Naturally, the central position is occupied
by "verbs of giving" (e.g. *give*, *pay*) and "verbs of sending" (e.g. *send* (ex 1 a), *ship*)
that, except for the thematic core, also imply the means of transfer. Other verbal
subdivisions are called "verbs of instantaneous causation of motion" (e.g. *throw*,
toss), "illocutionary verbs of communication" (e.g. *tell*, *write*), including those that
"[specify] an instrument of communication" (e.g. *radio*, *telephone*), "verbs of cre-
ation" (e.g. *bake*, *sew*), "verbs of obtaining" (e.g. *get*, *steal*), "verbs of future having"
(e.g. *offer*, *promise*), and last, but in this case certainly not least, "verbs of future not
having" (e.g. *cost*, *refuse*). The last-mentioned category is a considerably heteroge-
neous group in which one may also find the verbs *envy* and *forgive* (ibid.: 110–119)[3].
Hunston and Francis (2000: 89), on the other hand, subsume *envy* and *forgive* into

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2   For a more detailed description of "core" and "non-core" elements see Huddleston and Pul-
    lum (2002: 216).

3   The thematic core defining the ditransitive construction does not necessarily imply the oc-
    currence of a respective verb in the SVO_iO_d structure. Pinker emphasises the existence of
    verbs, such as *donate, transport, release, admit, create, obtain, shout, entrust* or *select*, whose
    meaning corresponds to the "X causes Y to have Z" sense but such verbs fail to dativize
    (Pinker 1989: 119).

a class of ditransitive verbs which they label "verbs concerned with feelings and attitudes"[4].

It should be pointed out that the inclusion of *envy* and *forgive* into ditransitive verbs is not generally agreed upon. Several linguists consider the ditransitive use of *envy* and *forgive* idiosyncratic[5]. Goldberg (1995), as one of the most prominent figures of the Construction Grammar, introduces the so-called "constructional polysemy". Based on this terminology, constructions are associated with a central meaning and other extended, related meanings. The central meaning of the ditransitive construction is defined by "agent [that] successfully causes recipient to receive patient" (ibid.: 32, 38). Nevertheless, none of the related meanings (see Goldberg 1995: 38) include *envy* or *forgive*. In Goldberg's account, the two verbs in question are regarded as "positive exceptions to the semantic generalization" (ibid.: 133)[6].

(5) *He forgave her her sins*. (ibid.: 132)
(6) *He envied the prince his fortune*. (ibid.)

In exx 5 and 6 the transfer interpretation is not applicable, as "the subjects in these cases are not causal, and no reception is involved" (ibid.: 131–2). Citing their respective entries in the OED, Goldberg suggests that their syntactic association to prototypical ditransitive verbs relates to their former subsenses whose meaning was that of the central sense of the ditransitive verbs. Thus, it seems that the data suggest a ditransitive use that has remained "frozen" even after the respective semantic changes (ibid.).

In addition, Goldberg notes that the presence of a preposition in the $SVOO_{prep}$ structure serves as a clearer marker of the syntactic function and semantic role of the object. Goldberg claims that "it seems reasonable that syntactic change should tend toward patterns that are more transparent to the speaker" (ibid.: 132). As a result, "it would be natural for odd cases of ditransitives involving *forgive* and *envy* to drop out of use" (ibid.). She argues that the degree to which she and her students accept the ditransitive use of *envy* and *forgive* is rather low. She finds archaic-sounding sentences with *forgive* and *envy* (exx 7 a and 8 a) much more acceptable than modern-sounding sentences (exx 7 b and 8 b), while none of the sentences appear to be acceptable for her students.

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4   For additional verb classes see Hunston and Francis (2000: 88–89).
5   The treatment of *envy* and *forgive* in the SVO_iO_d clause pattern is considerably heterogeneous. In some cases, the two verbs in question are not mentioned at all (see Wierzbicka 1988). In the canonical work of lexicalists, the semantic load of the indirect object pattern is disregarded in favour of an exhaustive outline that encapsulates all possible clause pattern configurations of each respective verb (see Levin 1993).
6   Croft (2003: 58) also argues for the idiosyncratic reading of the ditransitive use of the verbs *envy* and *forgive*, recognising such constructions as verb-specific constructions rather than verb-class-specific constructions that comprise prototypical verbs associated with the sense of giving.

(7) a. *She forgave him his sins.*
    b. *?*She forgave him his goof.* (ibid.)
(8) a. *She envied him his vast fortune.*
    b. *?*She envied him his extensive stock portfolio.* (ibid.)

Although Goldberg admits that the current ditransitive use of *envy* and *forgive* suggests the possibility of speakers learning the idiosyncratic construction "on an instance-by-instance basis as idioms", she expects the verbs *envy* and *forgive* to cease to appear in the SVO_iO_d clause pattern.

2.3 LAYERING, THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOUBLE OBJECT CONSTRUCTION PREFERENCE AND THE DITRANSITIVE STATUS OF *ENVY* AND *FORGIVE*

When two constructions of similar meaning co-exist, such a situation can be described as *layering*, a term which may also be applied to double object constructions (Hopper 1991: 22). Since the indirect object ditransitive construction was a well-established pattern in the period of Old English, while the more recent $SVOO_{prep}$ clause structure was not as frequent at the time, the subsequent loss of endings, which English underwent, has put the prepositional pattern into the foreground (Bybee 2015: 173–4). Colleman and De Clerck (2011) explore the later stages of this development, specifically the indirect object ditransitive construction that seems to gradually limit its use to fewer verbs. Colleman and De Clerck note that although the range of verbs operating as ditransitives has been recently enriched by verbs of communication that specify the necessary instrument, such as *radio* or *fax*, the set of verbs allowing the ditransitive complementation has been considerably narrowed down during the last 300 years. Verbs which no longer enter the SVO_iO_d clause pattern include the following verb classes: "verbs of banishment" (e.g. *banish*, *discharge*), "verbs of 'pure benefaction'" (e.g. *open*) and several "communication verbs" whose semantic load involves the manner of communication (e.g. *shout*, *mumble*). Additionally, special attention is given to "verbs concerned with feelings and attitudes" (e.g. *begrudge, excuse, envy, forgive*), which, although not as frequently as they used to do, still show signs of grammatical acceptability in the ditransitive use (ibid.: 190–199).

The continuous decline of the verbs *envy* and *forgive* occurring in the indirect object ditransitive structure is explored in the study by Colleman and De Clerck (2008), analysing the data from the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* and the *British National Corpus*. Establishing four distinct periods, Colleman and De Clerck find a significant drop in the SVO_iO_d use of the verb *forgive* over all four periods, while such a tendency with *envy* is found only in the first three periods. Nevertheless, "their occurrence cannot (yet) be labelled as near-obsolete: at least in written British English, they still occur with a respectable frequency" (ibid.: 210). What is also necessary to emphasise is the fact that Colleman and De Clerck's findings have revealed that the frequency of verbs such as *refuse* and *order*, which are traditionally included in the accounts of ditransitive verbs, is lower than that of *envy* or *forgive*.

(9)   *Further back, Judie had envied Anne her college boyfriend.* (ibid.: 197)
(10) *'Oh, shut up, Jay, forgive a mother her blind spots.'* (ibid.: 198)

Furthermore, the authors note that there seems to be no indication that the ditransitive use is restricted to only archaic-sounding direct objects (see exx 9 and 10), thus disputing Goldberg's prediction of near extinction as well as the assertion of lexical limitations regarding *envy* and *forgive* (ibid.: 190–210).

Goldberg's etymological elucidation regarding the 'frozen' ditransitive use of *envy* and *forgive* is also challenged. Croft (2012: 389) argues against such interpretation, claiming that the loss of the ditransitive meaning should have hindered the ongoing existence of the construction and made the ditransitive use grammatically unacceptable. A further argument against the 'frozen' interpretation lies in cross-linguistic evidence that confirms the possibility of *envy* and *forgive* occurring in the SVO_iO_d clause pattern with no trace of a former subsense related to the act of giving (Colleman and De Clerck 2008: 199–200). To exemplify, Czech ditransitive construction accepts not only verbs denoting the transfer of possession but also verbs that "express an action that is directed towards someone, whether the recipient is aware of such action or not" (Hlaváčková 2021[7]: 31), such as *věřit* ('believe'), *ukrást* ('steal') and Czech equivalents of *envy* and *forgive* (Dvořák 2017). The postverbal complementation of *envy* and *forgive*, which refer to mental actions, is comprised of obligatory arguments: the addressee and the patient (Lopatková et al. 2020).

Additionally, Colleman and De Clerck (2008) provide an exhaustive outline of available semantic extensions based on the multidimensional approach that tie the semantic load of *envy* and *forgive* together with other ditransitive verbs.

> "[W]e shall argue that ditransitive clauses involving *envy* and *forgive* instantiate such a combination of extensions from several dimensions, too. They can be described as combining (i) a metaphorical extension from material to abstract transfers with (ii) a shift in direction from a transfer towards the indirect object to a transfer away from the indirect object and/or (iii) an extension from the actual causation of a possessional transfer to an attitude towards such a transfer."
> (Colleman and De Clerck 2008: 202)

Regarding the first point, i.e. "the metaphorical extension from material to abstract transfers", the data have revealed that although both abstract and concrete entities may occur in the position of direct object in the valency frame of *envy*, the verb *forgive* is associated with abstract direct objects only (ibid.: 202–203).

The second point concerning the reversal of transfer direction, in which "the indirect object referent [acts] as its source rather as its target" (ibid.) can be already inferred from Pinker's "verbs of future not having" or Goldberg's later introduction of a verb class that expresses a related ditransitive meaning "X causes Y to lose Z" and contains, for instance, the verb *cost* (Goldberg 2002: 333). Colleman and De Clerck find that the meaning of *envy* also includes the subject's wish to become the possessor of the affected object; thus, the subject becomes the presupposed target of the transfer. *Forgive* exhibits bidirectionality; "the indirect object refer-

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7   The main source for the present paper is the unpublished diploma thesis *Complementation of the ditransitive verbs* envy *and* forgive (Hlaváčková 2021).

ent 'receives' forgiveness and thereby 'loses' its burden" (Colleman and De Clerck 2008: 205–206).

Finally, the last point elaborates on the established verb categories allowing the ditransitive use (specifically those listed by Goldberg), claiming that the attitudinal aspect of the verbs *envy* and *forgive*, i.e. a "feeling or attitude towards an (actual or potential) possessive relationship between indirect and direct object" (Colleman and De Clerck 2008: 206), should not be a hindrance for their ditransitive interpretation. *Envy*, on the one hand, demonstrates a negative attitude, since the subject referent wishes either for the possessor to lose the patient referent or to become the possessor themself, whereas *forgive* can be considered positive in terms of its attitudinal aspect (ibid.). The present paper also treats the verb *envy* and *forgive* as ditransitive due to their occurrence in the SVO_iO_d pattern and the fact that even when one of the objects is omitted, it is always recoverable from the context. Additionally, the historical development discussed above is in accordance with such interpretation.

3 MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

The material for the present analysis was drawn from the *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA). With its size nearing 500 million tokens, the corpus provides an extensive selection of more than 100 000 texts of four distinct genres — fiction and TV/movies, magazine, newspaper and non-fiction — that demonstrates the use of language from the 1820s-2010s period (Davies 2010). For the purpose of this study, the 200-year-long span is further divided into four distinct 50-year-long periods to enable mapping of ongoing diachronic processes. The retrieved sample thus contains 400 instances of *envy* and *forgive* used in one of the double object construction patterns, i.e. 200 instances of each verb from which 50 instances represent one of the established periods. Due to query limitations of the COHA interface, it was necessary to collect all instances of the lemmas *envy* and *forgive*, randomise the sample in R Studio[8] and select relevant data, viz. the SVO_iO_d or $SVOO_{prep}$ clause structures with *envy* and *forgive* (see exx 2 and 3), manually. The in-depth analysis is partially based on Colleman and De Clerck's (2008) study, as it focuses on the diachronic development of the two investigated verbs, but synchronic aspects are also taken into account. Not only does the present study investigate the ratio between the two available clause patterns and how it changes over time but also identifies various factors that may play a crucial role for the speaker to opt for one of the double object constructions, specifically the formal aspect of objects complementing the verbal event. Therefore, the analysis is both quantitative and qualitative.

Since the present analysis investigates the two competing patterns, i.e. SVO_iO_d and $SVOO_{prep,}$ of the verbs *envy* and *forgive*, we focus only on those sentences where both objects are overtly expressed and which allow the alternation with the other type of the double object construction. In other words, we excluded those instances which do not permit either the insertion or deletion of the preposition *for*. Thus, SVO_iO_d

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8   With the seed set to '42'.

clause structures that involve *that*-clauses in the position of direct object have been removed from the analysis, as they cannot be transformed into the SVOO$_{prep}$ pattern (ex 11). Similarly, instances of objects in the preverbal positions are also excluded to offer a more cohesive and restricted study that is liberated from the possibility of other operating factors as much as possible (ex 12).

The aforementioned criterion led to the exclusion of sentences where one of the objects was omitted (exx 13 and 14), as they provide no elucidation on the double object construction preference. It is worth noting that instances with one of the objects omitted were found to be far more frequent than the double object constructions in which both objects are explicitly expressed. The omitted participant is usually derivable from the context.

(11) *They **envied** Dolly <u>that her husband loved her so fiercely after four years of married life</u>, and no children either.*[9]

(12) *I was once old in sin, <u>for which</u> God **forgive** me!*

(13) *You are wrong, you are unkind; but you love me, and I **forgive** you.*

(14) *[...] I regretted my lost youth when I only **envy** the delights of losing it.*

The greatest complication arose with instances that showed signs of syntactic ambiguity. Those involve a gerund taking the position of the patient (ex 15). In such cases, the object (*you* in ex 15) can be regarded either as "the agent of the gerund action (thus implying the S-V-O pattern) or as the recipient of the main clause verbal event" (Hlaváčková 2021: 50). To complicate the matter further, if the position of the indirect object is occupied by the 3rd person singular feminine *her* (ex 16), the pronoun "can be either considered a possessive personal pronoun or the dative case of the pronoun *she*" (ibid.). Nevertheless, both readings are possible, and it would seem ill-advised to disregard instances of this kind. Additionally, Dušková (1991: 66) introduces apo koinou constructions, in which "a coreferentially identical participant operates in two propositions in different semantic roles, e.g. *He saw Charles coming* (*He saw Charles + Charles was coming*)" (ibid.). Such interpretation is also taken into consideration. As a result, the verbal complementation of *envy* and *forgive* by a gerund is incorporated into the analysis.

(15) *I can not **forgive** <u>you</u> letting me carry all that water for a fainting fit — and there was no fainting fit!*

(16) *"First, Tom," he pursues, "be to yourself a friend; second, forget the error of your mother, and **forgive** <u>her</u> sending you here; [...]."*

The last point concerns isolated uses of double object constructions and fixed expressions, both of which were not included in the present study. The data have revealed a minor but notable existence of SVOO$_{prep}$ structures that exchange the position of the object and make use of prepositions such as *about* or *in* to introduce the recipient (ex 17). It is also fixed phrases that were not taken into consideration (specifically those

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9   Unless indicated otherwise, all following examples are taken from the COHA.

with direct object expressed by *sins/trespasses/debts*, ex 18), as their repetitive nature would impact the sample under investigation and provide little to no information on syntactic preference from the diachronic perspective.

(17) *What could a bigwig bishop, albeit his oldest friend, **envy** in a country parson?*
(18) ***Forgive** us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.*

Regarding methodology, each relevant instance was categorised based on the post-verbal complementation, i.e. SVO_iO_d or $SVOO_{prep}$. We assessed the double object construction preference and the way it changes over time with respect to the four individual periods; any shifts in frequency were considered markers of a possible syntactic change. The analysis took into account not only the diachronic aspect of the postverbal preference of *envy* and *forgive* but also possible syntactic factors affecting the choice of the two patterns. Therefore, we determined means of expressing the objects and identified semantic features associated with the respective object referents in attempt to find significant relations between the available variables. In the case of notable correlations, we conducted the chi-square test to determine the degree of significance.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 DIACHRONIC VIEWPOINT: DOUBLE OBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS WITH *ENVY* AND *FORGIVE* AND THE COMPLEMENTATION PREFERENCE

The instances of *envy* in the COHA have brought about several interesting findings. Overall, there is a notable preference for the indirect object ditransitive structure (91% of instances) over the prepositional one (9% of instances). Nevertheless, a more detailed investigation reveals that such preference is undergoing a change as time progresses.

	1820–1869		1870–1919		1920–1969		1970–2019		Total	
SVO_iO_d	49	24.5%	49	24.5%	45	22.5%	39	19.5%	182	91%
$SVOO_{prep}$	1	0.5%	1	0.5%	5	2.5%	11	5.5%	18	9%
Total	50	25%	50	25%	50	25%	50	25%	200	100%

TABLE 1: Number of occurrences of the SVO_iO_d or the $SVOO_{prep}$ patterns with *envy* attested in the four established periods

As is evident from Table 1, the first half of the inspected period is determined by an almost strictly exclusive inclination to the SVO_iO_d pattern. But it is the latter stages that show the gradual tendency towards of the $SVOO_{prep}$ clause structure. Therefore, the data suggest an ongoing syntactic change that is progressively altering the complementation preference of the verb *envy*.

The use of *forgive* in double object constructions reflects a rather contrary trend (see Table 2). First, the majority of instances involve the preposition *for* (72% of in-

stances) while clause structures with the indirect and direct objects comprise less than a third of the sample (28% of instances).

	1820–1869		1870–1919		1920–1969		1970–2019		Total	
SVO_iO_d	14	7%	17	8.5%	8	4%	17	8.5%	**56**	**28%**
$SVOO_{prep}$	36	18%	33	16.5%	42	21%	33	16.5%	**144**	**72%**
Total	**50**	**25%**	**50**	**25%**	**50**	**25%**	**50**	**25%**	200	100%

TABLE 2: Number of occurrences of the SVO_iO_d or the $SVOO_{prep}$ patterns with *forgive* attested in the four established periods

In contrast to the instances with *envy*, the verb *forgive* does not imply any major syntactic change, as the ratio between the two respective double object constructions fluctuates. Although the third period dating from 1920 to 1969 may signify a similar trend that is seen in the case of *envy*, the last stage reintroduces a significant amount of *forgive* occurring in the SVO_iO_d pattern.

Thus, there is a considerable discrepancy regarding the double object construction preference of the verbs *envy* and *forgive*. Nevertheless, what the data call into question is Goldberg's (1995) claims concerning near-extinction of the SVO_iO_d structure with *envy* and *forgive*. Similarly to Colleman and De Clerck's (2008) quantitative outline, the frequency of the indirect object ditransitive pattern is significantly high enough in the attested sample for both verbs and entails no indication of its disappearance in the not-so-distant future. Nevertheless, the analysed data do not necessarily correspond to those discussed in Colleman and De Clerck[10] (2008), whose records confirm the syntactic change in progress for both verbs. In this case, it is only the use of *envy* that advances in this direction. However, it is possible to attribute such divergence to different English varieties that the present study and Colleman and De Clerck's paper investigate.

4.2 THE SYNCHRONIC VIEWPOINT: THE REALIZATION AND SEMANTICS OF THE RECIPIENT AND THE AFFECTED OBJECT

The most notable variables in the instances of the double object constructions with *envy* and *forgive* are the objects that comprise the postverbal complementation. The analysis of the recipient object, i.e. the first-mentioned object, is rather straightforward. Apart from a few minor exceptions, the indirect object's referent is concrete and animate, expressed either by a noun phrase[11] or pronoun. Both verbs significantly favour pronouns (72% of instances with *envy*, 84% of instances with *forgive*).

The same unity of *envy* and *forgive* does not hold for the affected object, i.e. direct object in the SVO_iO_d pattern and prepositional object in the $SVOO_{prep}$ pattern. There are four types of formal realization of the affected object: the noun phrase, pronoun, gerund phrase and nominal relative clause (see Table 3).

10   Inter alia, due to the considerable differences in terms of the respective methodologies.
11   In the present study, the term 'noun phrase' is used to describe nominal realization excluding the pronominal realization, which is given its own label 'pronoun'.

O_d/O_{prep}	ENVY						FORGIVE					
	SVO_iO_d		$SVOO_{prep}$		Total		SVO_iO_d		$SVOO_{prep}$		Total	
NP	164	82%	7	3.5%	**171**	**85.5%**	40	20%	26	13%	**66**	**33%**
Pronoun	12	6%	1	0.5%	**13**	**6.5%**	13	6.5%	11	5.5%	**24**	**12%**
Gerund p.	5	2.5%	10	5%	**15**	**7.5%**	3	1.5%	100	50%	**103**	**51.5%**
Nom. r. cl.	1	0.5%	0	0%	**1**	**0.5%**	0	0%	7	3.5%	**7**	**3.5%**
Total	182	91%	18	9%	200	100%	56	28%	144	72%	200	100%

TABLE 3: Realization forms of O_d/O_{prep} in the double object constructions with *envy* and *forgive*

Overall, *envy* manifests a strong preference for the nominal realization, specifically the noun phrase, the other realization being much less frequent (13 instances of pronominal realization, 15 instances of gerundial realization and only one instance of O_d/O_{prep} realized by a nominal relative clause). By contrast, *forgive* clearly favours the realization of O_d/O_{prep} by the gerund phrase (51.5%).

When the position of the affected object is filled by a noun phrase (exx 19 a, b; 20 a, b), its referent is predominantly an abstract entity. Nevertheless, the analysis of *envy* revealed not only objects denoting abstract nouns, but also animate and inanimate nouns[12]. Such finding is in accordance with the data investigated by Colleman and De Clerck (2008).

(19) a. *She **envied** him the privilege*.
     b. *Sometimes Nashira almost **envied** the kid for his simple idealism*.
(20) a. *I freely **forgive** him every hour of sorrow he has caused me*.
     b. *I never thoroughly **forgave** Zenobia for her conduct on this occasion*.

The pronominal realization of O_d/O_{prep} (exx 21 a, b; 22 a, b) has proved to be significantly less common. As regards the types of pronouns occurring in the object position, the analysis revealed three types of pronouns, viz. personal (exx 21 a, b), indefinite (ex 22 a), and demonstrative (ex 22 b).

(21) a. *Just like they **envied** me you*.
     b. *I heard you play last? It was on your own harpsichord. How I **envied** you for it*.
(22) a. *I **forgave** dear Fanny everything*.
     b. *I hope you can **forgive** me for this*.

While gerund phrases in the position of O_d/O_{prep} comprise a relatively small portion of the *envy* subset (exx 23 a, b), in the case of *forgive* they represent the largest segment of the attested instances (exx 24 a, b). The relation between the gerundial realization and the $SVOO_{prep}$ pattern does not seem accidental, and one can argue that the gerund phrase triggers the prepositional pattern. As far as the SVO_iO_d clause structure is concerned, we consider those examples apo koinou constructions (see Chapter

12 For a more detailed description see Hlaváčková (2021).

3 above), in which the indirect object of the main clause also operates as the agent of the gerund action (exx 23 a, 24 a).

(23) a. *I **envy** you <u>having such a husband always about</u>.*
    b. *I think many rather **envy** us <u>for pulling through and for sticking to our position</u>.*[13]
(24) a. ***Forgive** me <u>saying so</u>, Holmes [...].*
    b. *Oh, I'll never **forgive** myself <u>for letting him fight in my place</u>!*

In contrast to the aforementioned types of realization, which appear in both groups of double object constructions, nominal relative clause in the position of the affected object occurs only in the SVO_iO_d pattern with the verb *envy* (ex 25) and the $SVOO_{prep}$ pattern with the verb *forgive* (ex 26).

(25) *There are those, I know, who will **envy** me <u>what they consider my good fortune</u> [...].*
(26) *May God in his mercy **forgive** me <u>for what I am about to do</u>.*

5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this last section, an attempt is made to elucidate the striking discrepancy in post-verbal complementation preference between the verbs *envy* and *forgive*. As the nominal realization, i.e. nouns and pronouns, represents the most frequent realization form in the analysed sample (all recipient objects and 68.5% of affected objects are expressed by nouns or pronouns), it deserves further exploration. The correlation between the choice of one or the other and object reordering is well-depicted in many treatises[14]. Although no such effect is present in the double object constructions with *envy* and *forgive*, other impacts, such as the preference for either the SVO_iO_d or $SVOO_{prep}$ argument structure, cannot be yet ruled out. Regarding the recipient object, the data under investigation have revealed no correlation between its form and the given double object construction (see Hlaváčková 2021: 70–71). Nevertheless, it is the affected object realization that may unveil one of the factors influencing the double object construction preference. The impact does not stem from the noun/pronoun opposition. What seems to play a crucial role in the argument structure alternation is the type of the respective pronoun. As noted in the previous subsection, the classes of pronouns mapped onto the affected object in our investigation are indefinite pronouns (*everything, anything* etc.), demonstrative pronouns (*this, that*) and personal pronouns. In the case of indefinite pronouns, there is a strong preference for the SVO_iO_d pattern (16 out of total 17 instances; ex 22 a). The distribution of demonstrative pronouns in the position of the affected object is relatively balanced across the

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13   It is interesting to note the use of the $SVOO_{prep}$ pattern in the instances with *envy*, as the prepositional object expressed by a gerund underlines an additional semantic aspect, i.e. the prepositional object can be also interpreted as the cause of envy. However, such "causal" reading is not applicable in the instances with *forgive*.

14   For further reference see Biber et al. 2021 and Brůhová 2010.

two respective argument structures[15]. In contrast to indefinite pronouns, the personal *it* is always preceded by the preposition *for*[16] (five out of total five instances; ex 21 b) while other personal pronouns (e.g. *you*, *herself*) occur in the preposition-less verbal complementation (ex 21 a)[17].

Apart from the nominal realization, the affected object can also be expressed by nominal relative clause or gerund phrase. Since our data revealed only a few cases with the subordinate clause in the position of O_d/O_{prep} (i.e. only one instance of *envy* in the SVO_iO_d construction and seven instances of *forgive* in the $SVOO_{prep}$ construction), it is impossible to draw any definite conclusions. Thus, it might be the overall preference of either *envy* or *forgive* that triggers one of the postverbal complementation, rather than the specific type of realization.

As can be seen from Table 3, there seems to be a correlation between the realization of O_d/O_{prep} and its corresponding double object construction. Noun phrases prevail in the SVO_iO_d pattern, while gerund phrases seem to favour the $SVOO_{prep}$ pattern. Consequently, we conducted the chi-square test of independence to ascertain the degree of significance to which the two variables are associated. The test has shown that there is a significant correlation between the O_d/O_{prep} realization and the type of double object construction, as noun phrases mapped onto the affected object seem to trigger the SVO_iO_d argument structure and gerund phrases tend to be introduced by the preposition *for* (see Table 4). "Perhaps the most important aspect of this observation is the fact that the significant relation is discernible in both the conflated samples of *envy*, x^2 (1, $N = 186$) = 65.02, $p < .001$, or *forgive*, x^2 (1, $N = 169$) = 70.58, $p < .001$, and in (almost)[18] every respective period" (Hlaváčková 2021: 71–72). Such a finding is of great importance, since the two datasets, i.e. datasets of *envy* and *forgive*, differ to great extent in terms of the O_d/O_{prep} realization and the overall preference for the individual double object construction.

15 There are "6 instances of SVO_iO_d and 6 instances of $SVOO_{prep}$ with a demonstrative pronoun in the position of the [affected object]. However, in the case of *envy*, demonstrative pronouns tend to occur in the indirect pattern, whereas it is the prepositional pattern that is preferred with *forgive*. This observation might be attributed to the overall preference of one or the other pattern by the respective verbs" (Hlaváčková 2021: 71).

16 The necessity for the presence of the preposition *for* in instances with the pronoun *it* in the position of the affected object alludes to a possible effect caused by the functional sentence perspective. However, due to the technical aspects of the COHA and related difficulties with the retrieval of the sample, the present paper does not further investigate the role of the functional sentence perspective in respect of the verbal complementation of *envy* and *forgive*.

17 The preference for one or the other pattern may be, once again, related to the verbal preference for the respective argument structures, as *it* is found in 4 instances with *forgive* and 1 instance with *envy*. The remaining personal pronouns occur only in the *envy* dataset.

18 "Although the data in the 1870–1919 subset with *envy* do not seem to point to a significant correlation, the calculations are affected by low frequency of the prepositional pattern, as in the first subset, and as such are sensitive to deviation. Therefore, it is the later stages that provide a more accurate description of the relation" (Hlaváčková 2021: 72).

	ENVY				FORGIVE			
	1820–1869	1870–1919	1920–1969	1970–2019	1820–1869	1870–1919	1920–1969	1970–2019
x^2	48	0.04	8.9	21.5	10.4	19.8	24.6	18.4
N	48	48	44	46	42	42	46	39
p	<0.001	0.833	0.003	<0.001	0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

TABLE 4: Chi-square test of independence results regarding the relation between the affected object realization (noun phrase or gerund phrase) and the two alternating double object constructions[19]

Therefore, the likelihood of the specific verb itself governing the type of the argument structure is reduced, as the analysed data point to significant importance of the O_d/O_{prep} realization. Nevertheless, we may argue that the verbal meaning indirectly plays its part in the postverbal preference as well. As regards the semantic status of the affected object, the verb *envy* occurs with various types of nouns as object referents (abstract, animate, inanimate), while the use of *forgive* appears to be limited to abstract entities. Most importantly, what is being forgiven usually refers to an action or behaviour rather than to a specific object. In other words, *forgive* concerns a wrongdoing that the indirect object referent has committed. This action-oriented meaning of *forgive* is possibly the reason for such a high frequency of gerund phrases in the position of the affected object, consequently leading to the $SVOO_{prep}$ preference of *forgive*. The verb *envy* is most readily associated with the affected object referents that denote possession or quality, but from the diachronic viewpoint, the later stages reveal a rise of actions expressed by a gerund and as such may have consequently impacted the increasing frequency of the $SVOO_{prep}$ pattern. Additionally, we have already touched upon the apo koinou constructions and ambiguous readings associated with gerund phrases. This kind of ambiguity is avoided if the preposition *for* is present in the double object construction with affected object coded by an *-ing* form, which may serve as another factor influencing the postverbal preference.

Before we briefly mention other possible factors that may have influenced the double object construction preference of the verbs *envy* and *forgive*, we need to address another aspect of the nominal realization of the affected object. As discussed in 2.2 above, Goldberg postulates a connection between the time aspect of the respective affected object referent, i.e. whether the word in question sound archaic or modern, and the choice of the argument structure. According to Goldberg, the SVO_iO_d pattern and modern-sounding object should be regarded as grammatically unacceptable. Nevertheless, our data do not show such limitation, as the indirect object pattern seems to allow even modern-sounding objects (ex 27).

(27) *You have no idea how I **envy** you <u>your cubicle</u>.*

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19   x^2 = chi-square test value, N = sample size, p = p value; degrees of freedom = 1, chi-square test critical value = 3.84, α = .05

Although we found other notable dissimilarities between *envy* and *forgive*, such as preferred sentence types, stress placement, or etymological background, it is outside the scope of the present paper to discuss these phenomena in more detail.

6 CONCLUSION

As has been shown above, a significant number of double object constructions with *envy* and *forgive* are those of the indirect object ditransitive pattern; thus, the investigated data do not suggest a near-extinction of the SVO_iO_d argument structure with the verbs *envy* and *forgive*. Albeit frequently treated in the same vein, *envy* and *forgive* show signs of distinct syntactic behaviour. While *envy* prefers the SVO_iO_d pattern and the frequency of the prepositional object pattern is slowly but gradually increasing, *forgive* most frequently occurs in the $SVOO_{prep}$ pattern and, despite some minor fluctuations, its preference remains the same over the investigated period. Although there are possibly other intervening factors, we hope to have shown that it is mainly the realization of the affected object that has an influence on the postverbal complementation preference of the verbs *envy* and *forgive*.

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