

# Table of contents

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/cilt.299.toc>

Pages v–xii of

**English Adjective Comparison: A historical perspective**

**Victorina González-Díaz**

[*Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, 299]

2008. xix, 252 pp.

© John Benjamins Publishing Company

This electronic file may not be altered in any way. For any reuse of this material written permission should be obtained from the publishers or through the Copyright Clearance Center (for USA: [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)).

For further information, please contact [rights@benjamins.nl](mailto:rights@benjamins.nl) or consult our website at [benjamins.com/rights](http://benjamins.com/rights)



*Ángeles, Ramón, Jaime*  
*Va por ustedes*



# Table of contents

Acknowledgements	XIII
Abbreviations	XV
CHAPTER 1	
Introduction	1
1. Three 'strands' in the study of English adjective comparison	1
1.1 Standard grammars of English	1
1.2 Formal approaches to adjective comparison	2
1.3 Corpus linguistics and adjective comparison	3
2. Adjective comparison: A synchronic and diachronic account	6
2.1 Theoretical stance	7
2.2 Methodology	9
3. Organisation of the book	12
CHAPTER 2	
The origin of English periphrastic comparatives	15
1. Introduction	15
2. The origin of periphrastic comparatives: A corpus-based study	18
2.1 Analysis of the data	18
2.2 The ambiguity of past participles in Old English	22
2.2.1 Coordination	24
2.2.2 The use of modifiers	25
2.2.3 Latin passive constructions	27
2.2.4 Conclusion	27
2.3 The development of adjectival periphrastic comparison	28
3. The evolution of the periphrastic comparative marker(s)	30
3.1 Introduction	30
3.1.1 Bet	31
3.1.2 Swiþor	32
3.1.3 Ma	33
3.1.4 Conclusion	34

4.	Latin influence on OE periphrastic comparatives	35
4.1	English periphrastic comparatives: A Latin borrowing?	35
4.2	The Latin comparative system: Some introductory remarks	36
4.3	Analysis of the data	37
4.3.1	The Latin original examples and their English translation	37
4.3.2	Conclusion	41
5.	Periphrastic comparison and contact-induced grammatical change	42
6.	Motivation for the rise of English periphrastic comparatives	47
7.	Concluding remarks	49

### CHAPTER 3

	<b>French influence and the spread of periphrastic comparatives in English</b>	<b>51</b>
1.	Introduction: French vs. English in medieval times	51
2.	Middle English: A creole?	53
3.	Linguistic studies on the influence of French on English	56
4.	French influence on adjective comparison	58
5.	Analysis	61
5.1	Corpus analysis	61
5.2	Individual author's analysis	65
5.2.1	Ancrene Wisse	65
5.2.2	Malory's <i>Le Morte Darthur</i>	67
5.2.3	Conclusion	69
5.3	Comparison in a translated text: <i>Dan Michell's Ayenbite of Inwyt</i>	70
6.	Concluding remarks	71

### CHAPTER 4

	<b>Inflectional v. periphrastic comparison in EMode and LMode</b>	<b>75</b>
1.	Introduction	75
2.	Adjective comparison: Previous literature	76
3.	The data	78
4.	Syntactic factors conditioning the choice of comparison	80
4.1	The position of the adjective	80
4.2	Presence of a second term of comparison	83
4.3	Presence of adverbial premodifiers	85
4.4	Presence of complements	86
4.4.1	Infinitival and prepositional complements	87
4.5	Conclusion	88

5.	Inflectional vs. periphrastic comparatives: A semantic-pragmatic analysis	89
5.1	Previous literature on the topic	89
5.2	Frequency	90
5.3	Coordination	91
5.4	The position of the adjective: A semantic interpretation	93
5.4.1	Attribution and predication in positive adjectives	93
5.4.2	Attribution and predication in comparative adjectives: Some theoretical remarks	95
5.5	Establishment in discourse	97
6.	The influence of adverbial intensifiers on comparatives	99
6.1	<i>Much</i>	100
6.2	<i>Far</i>	101
6.3	Conclusion	102
7.	Determinants of adjective comparison: Variable rule analysis	103
8.	Concluding remarks	106

## CHAPTER 5

<b>Inflectional v. periphrastic comparison in Present-day English</b>		<b>109</b>
1.	Introduction	109
2.	The data	109
3.	Syntactic and semantic factors conditioning the choice of comparison	110
3.1	The position of the adjective	110
3.2	Presence of a second term of comparison	111
3.3	Presence of adverbial premodifiers	111
3.4	Presence of complements	112
3.5	Establishment in discourse	113
3.6	Determinants of comparative variation in PDE: Variable rule analysis	114
4.	Adjective comparison and semantic scales	116
4.1	Cruse's model of antonymy	116
4.2	Cruse's <i>true</i> - and <i>pseudo-comparative</i> constructions	119
4.3	Semantic-pragmatic differences between inflectional and periphrastic comparatives	123
4.3.1	The system	123
4.4	Analysis of the data	130
4.4.1	Conclusion	132
5.	Concluding remarks	133

# CHAPTER 6

## Double periphrastic comparatives in English: Linguistic development 135

1. Introduction 135
2. The origin of double periphrastic comparatives 137
3. Double periphrastic comparatives in cross-linguistic perspective 138
4. Double periphrastic comparatives: An analysis 141
  - 4.1 Second term of comparison 142
    - 4.1.1 Distribution across periods 144
  - 4.2 Establishment in discourse 146
    - 4.2.1 Distribution across periods 147
  - 4.3 Adverbial premodifiers 147
    - 4.3.1 Distribution across periods 148
  - 4.4 Linguistic distribution of double comparatives:  
Concluding remarks 151
5. The influence of *even* on the development of double  
periphrastic comparatives 154
  - 5.1 Analysis of the data 155
  - 5.2 Conclusion 157
6. Concluding remarks 157

# CHAPTER 7

## Double periphrastic comparatives: A socio-stylistic analysis 159

1. Introduction 159
2. Double comparatives in Old English 160
3. Double comparatives in Middle English 162
  - 3.1 Introduction 162
  - 3.2 Double comparatives in *Le Morte Darthur* 165
    - 3.2.1 Extant manuscripts: General background 165
    - 3.2.2 The Winchester Ms 165
    - 3.2.3 Caxton's *Le Morte Darthur* 169
  - 3.3 Concluding remarks 172
4. Double comparatives in Early Modern English 172
  - 4.1 General background 172
  - 4.2 Socio-stylistic distribution of double comparatives in EModE 175
    - 4.2.1 Analysis of the data 176
    - 4.2.2 Double comparatives in EModE grammars 189
    - 4.2.3 The social downgrading of double forms:  
Some suggestions 192
  - 4.3 Concluding remarks 195

5.	Double comparatives in Late Modern English	196
5.1	General background	196
5.2	Socio-stylistic distribution of double comparatives in LModE	197
5.2.1	1700–1800	197
5.2.2	1800–1900	200
5.3	Conclusion	205
6.	Double comparatives in Present-day English	205
6.1	General background	205
6.2	Social distribution of double comparatives in Present-day English	207
6.2.1	Written BNC	207
6.2.2	Spoken BNC	208
7.	Concluding remarks	210

## CHAPTER 8

### Comparatives and beyond 215

1.	Introduction	215
2.	Chapter 2: Internal v. external factors of change, gradience issues	216
3.	Chapter 3: Language contact, complexity issues	218
4.	Chapter 4 and Chapter 5: Iconicity issues	220
5.	Chapter 6 and Chapter 7: Double marking of degree, linguistic purism	221
6.	Further research	223

### References 227

### Index 249

