



“AND NEW MEANINGS TURNED UP:” THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MEANINGS OF ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS WITH UP: EVIDENCE FROM THE HELSINKI CORPUS AND ARCHER I

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AACL 2009
University of Edmonton, Canada
8-11 October

INTRODUCTION

- PV= multi-word verb consisting of the combination of a verb and a post-verbal adverb (or intransitive preposition) which function semantically and syntactically as a single unit, but to varying degrees (Rodríguez-Puente, forthcoming).
- *Up* is one of the commonest particles for the formation of PVs
- **AIM:** description of how phrasal verbs with *up* have acquired new semantic values through time, considering that the original meaning of the particle is that of ‘upward movement.’

CORPORA

Table 1: Diachronic corpora

DIACHRONIC CORPORA	Dates	Texts	Words
<i>Helsinki Corpus (HC)</i>	750-1710	multi-genre	1,752,129
<i>ARCHER1</i>	1650-1990	multi-genre	2,818,747
			4,570,876

Synchronic corpus: *British National Corpus (BNC)*

CORPORA

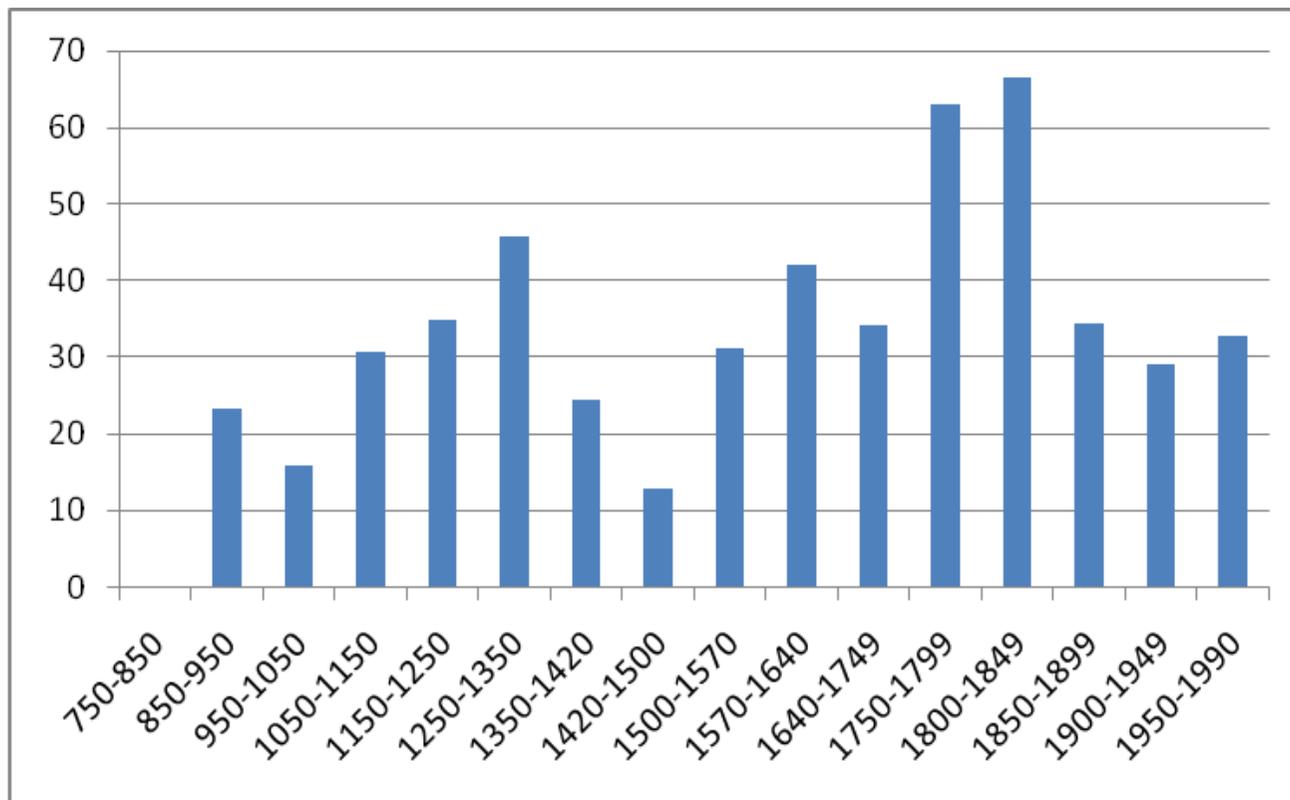
Table 2: Period arrangement and years covered

Old English (OE)	OE1 750-850
	OE2 850-950
	OE3 950-1050
	OE4 1050-1150
Middle English (ME)	ME1 1150-1250
	ME2 1250-1350
	ME3 1350-1420
	ME4 1420-1500
Early Modern English (eModE)	eModE1 1500-1570
	eModE2 1570-1640
Late Modern English (lModE)	lModE1 1640-1749
	lModE2 1750-1799
	lModE3 1800-1849
	lModE4 1850-1899
Present-day English (PDE)	PDE1 1900-1949
	PDE2 1950-1990

THE DATA

- Total examples found: 4,075

Figure 1: Distribution of examples of PVs with *up* in the *HC* and *ARCHER1* (normalized frequencies per 100,000 words).



PDE SITUATION

Five different semantic categories of PVs (Thim 2006a: 221-225):

□ **LITERAL:** “the meaning of a simple verb combines with the meaning of a simple local adverb homonymous with the particle” (Thim 2006a: 222).

(1) *And he **went up** and examined the wife and he come down stairs.* BNC FY1 S_interview_oral_history

(2) *[They] went straight upstairs without even taking a candle in case he **came up** and saw the light under their door.* BNC EFJ W_fic_prose

□ **FIGURATIVE:** although their meaning is still quite transparent, it has somehow been removed from the literal connotation.

(3) *Gas Prices are **going up** in March by 7.5%.* BNC KRT S_broadcast_news

(4) *I’m most delighted to have it, having been **brought up** in a house in the Isle of Man.* BNC GXL W_letters_personal

(5) *Always here to **keep up** our spirits, weren’t you, my dear?* BNC AC5 W_fict_prose [“happy is up” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 15)]

PDE SITUATION

❑ **IDIOMATIC:** those PVs whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of their parts in isolation

(6) *I used to ask myself that one but I **gave up** trying to find an answer long ago.* BNC ASN W_fict_prose

(7) *We had **put up** at a hotel in the centre of the city.* BNC GV6 W_fict_prose

❑ **ASPECTUAL/AKTIONSART:** combinations formed by a verb plus a particle indicating either continuative aspect or telic aktionsart (Brinton 1988).

(8) *And of course we **broke up**, we **broke up** on the first of August.* BNC FY1 S_interview_oral_history

(9) *Even though we **ended up** winning the FA Cup I feel we never really got started last season.* BNC CH7 W_newsp_tabloid

(10) *If you keep getting it on your fingers just **eat it up** and I'll wash you when you've finished.* BNC KB8 S_conv

❑ **REDUNDANT:** combinations of a verb and a particle which expresses and somehow repeats a semantic element of the verb.

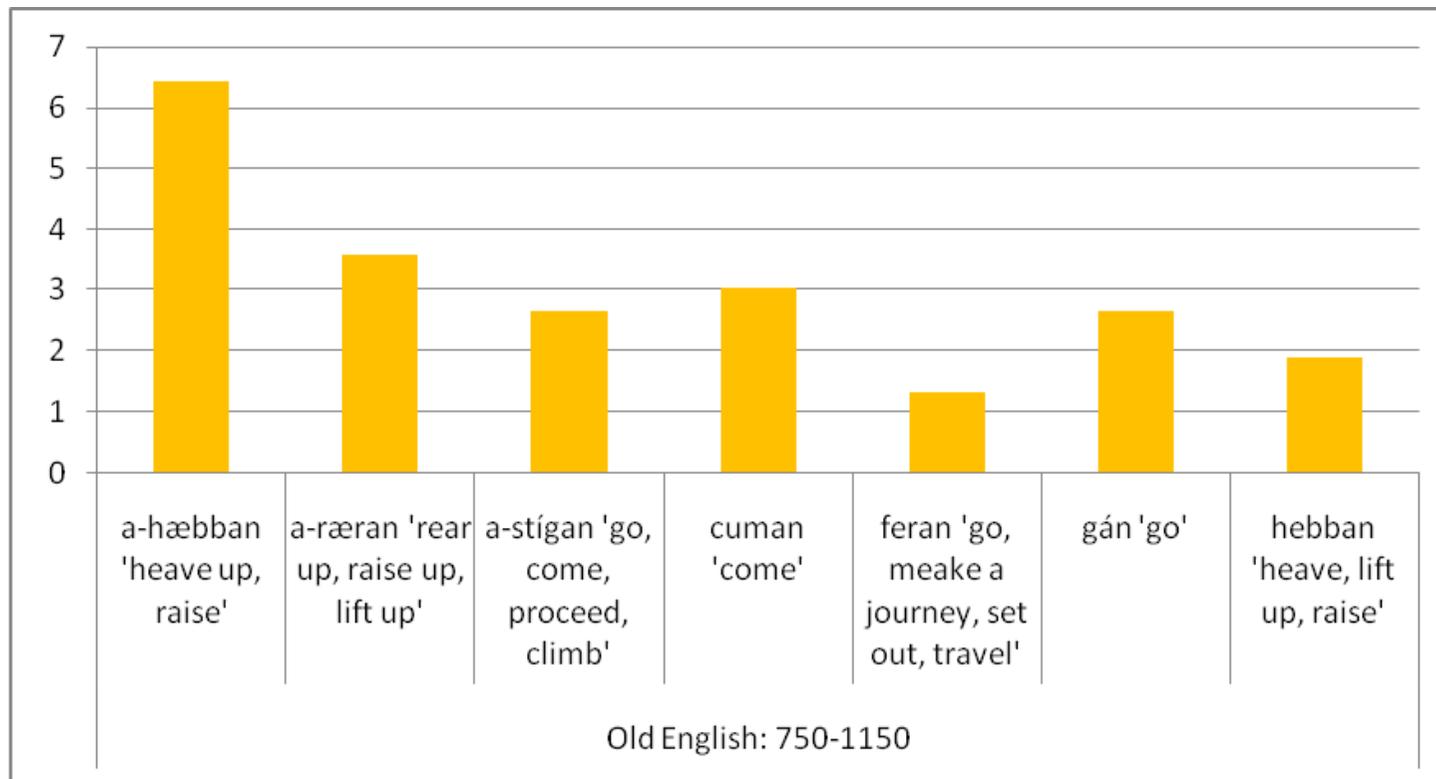
(11) *She shouted, Mary, and two of us **rose up**.* BNC H4E S_consult

(12) *I **lift up** my feet so he can sweep under them.* BNC A74 W_fict_prose

OE SITUATION

- *Up* combines mainly with verbs indicating movement in general or movement upwards.

Figure 2: Most frequent verbs used for the formation of phrasal verbs with *up* in OE.



- The majority of examples found in the OE period include **literal** or **redundant** combinations which apparently will become the source of further semantic developments.

OE SITUATION

□ Literal:

(13) *Her for se here up þurh þa brycge æt Paris. HC|QO2_NN_HIST_CHRONA2, 80.*

‘Here (in this year) went the army up through the bridge at Paris.’

(14) *þa sume dæge rad se cyng up be þære eæ. HC|QO2_NN_HIST_CHRONA2, 89.*

‘The same day rode the king up by the river.’

□ Redundant:

(15) *Ða wæron up astigende. HC |QO2_NN_HIST_BEDEHE, 426.*

‘They were rising up.’

(16) *Ða ahof ic mine eagan upp & locade hider & geond. HC|QO2_NN_HIST_BEDEHE, 428.*

‘Then I lifted my eyes up and looked hither and yonder.’

□ Figurative:

(17) *sume he bereafað hiora welan swiðe hraðe, þæs þe hi ærest gesælige weorðað, þy læs hi for longum gesældum hi to up ahæbben. HC|QO2_IR_RELT_CP, 133.*

‘He [God] deprives some [people] of their riches very quickly, those [riches] that they first happily obtain, so that they do not lift them up [‘exalt’] too much.’

OE SITUATION

- **Aktionsart:** 5 examples of what seem to be aktionsart phrasal verbs with *up* were found between the years 950 and 1050, rather earlier than Denison's (1985) instances (in 1155).

(18) *Oð þæt seo ea eft up abrece. HC | QO3_EX_SCIA_TEMP, 40.*

'Until the river again **broke up**.'

(19) *Leort ða tacen forð [...] ðurh fyres bleo up eðigean. HC QOX/3_XX_XX_ELENE, 96.*

'He let a token forth **breathe up** through colour of fire' (translation from *BT s.v. eðian*)

(20) *þæt is þonne ærest, þæt ic wylle, þæt man rihte laga upp arære. HC | QO3_STA_LAW_LAW11C, 308.*

'That is then first, that I want that one right law is **created**.'

(21) *swa þæt hy asettan him upp on æenne sið. HC | QO3_NN_HIST_CHRONA3, 132.*

'So that they **set him up** on a journey.'

(22) *swa þæt hy upp asetton on æenne sip. HC | QO3_NN_HIST_CHRONA3, 132.*

'So that they **set up** on a journey.'

OE SITUATION

- Three further examples of what seems to be aktionsart *up* were found in OE4:

(23) *ða het se gerefā [...] hi up ahon bi þan fotum. HC*
|QO3/4_NN_BIL_MARGOE, 178.

‘Then the officer ordered him to be hung by the feet’

(24) *ða het se gerefā hi niman and het hi be þam fotan upp*
ahon. |QO3/4_NN_BIL_MARGOE , 173.

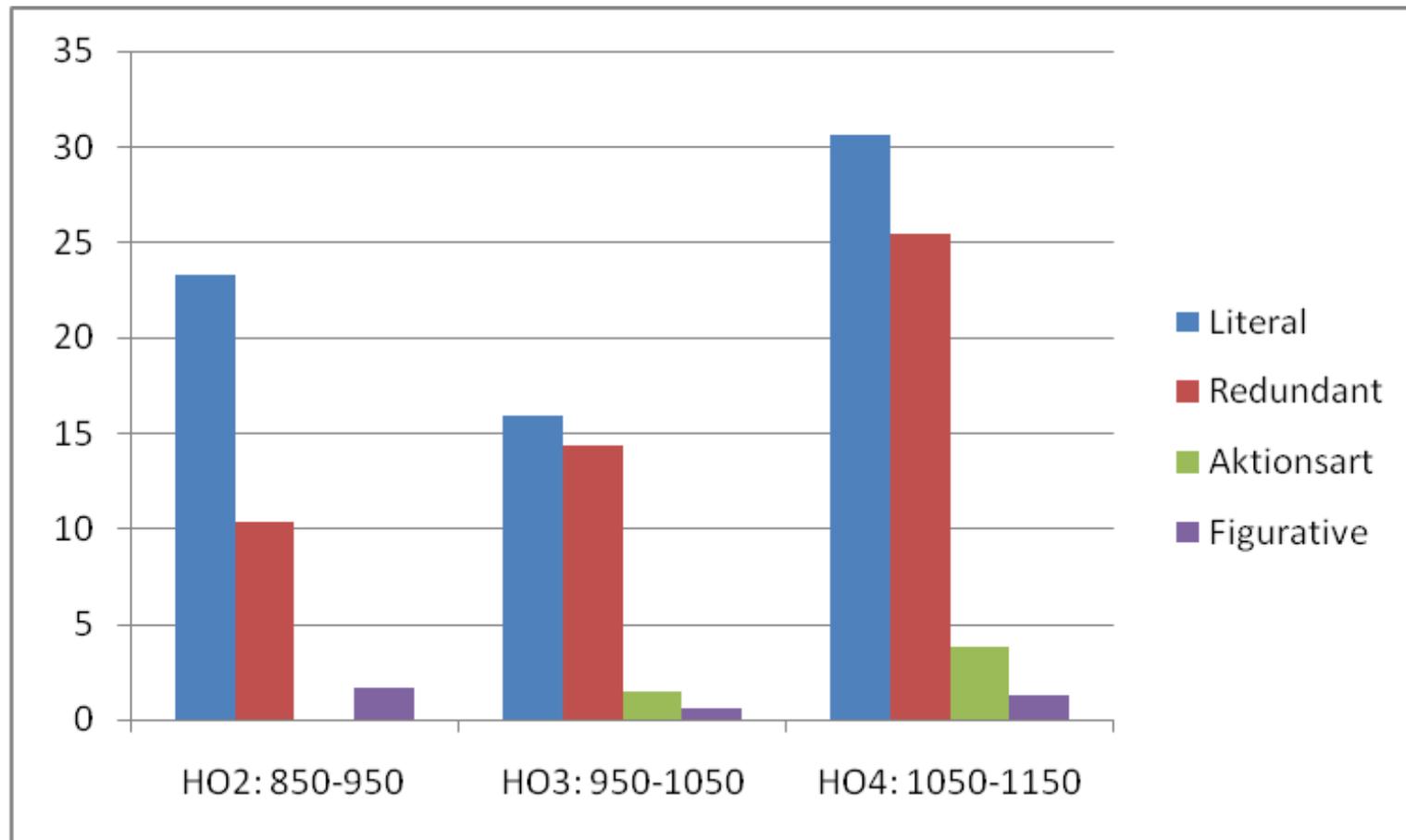
‘Then the officer ordered him to be taken and to be hung by the feet.’

(25) *ða het se gerefā hio nimon and be þan fexe up ahon.*
|QO3/4_NN_BIL_MARGOE , 174.

‘Then the officer ordered him to be taken and to be hung by the hair.’

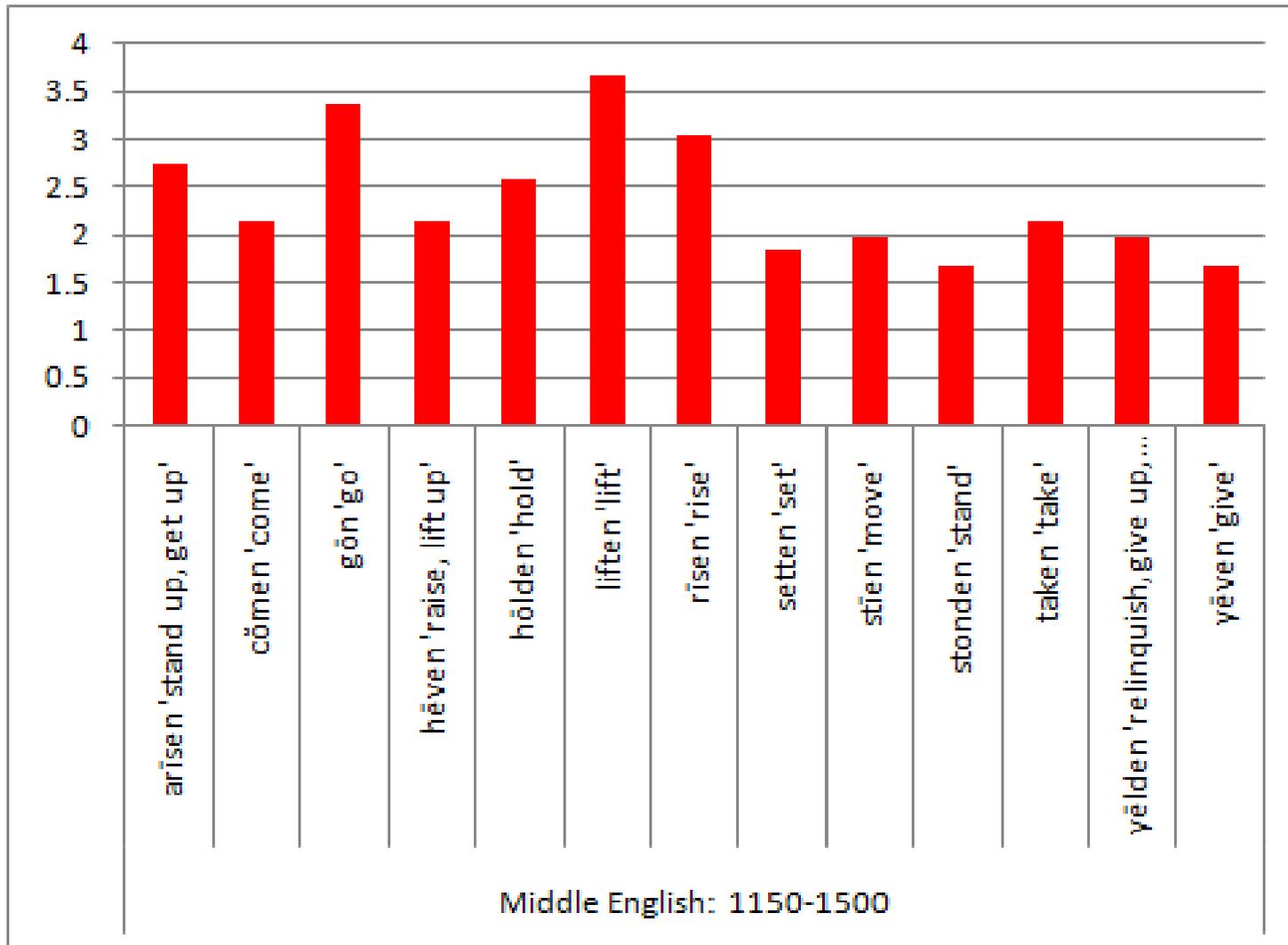
OE SITUATION

Figure 3: Semantic types of phrasal verbs with *up* in OE (normalized frequencies per 100,000 words).



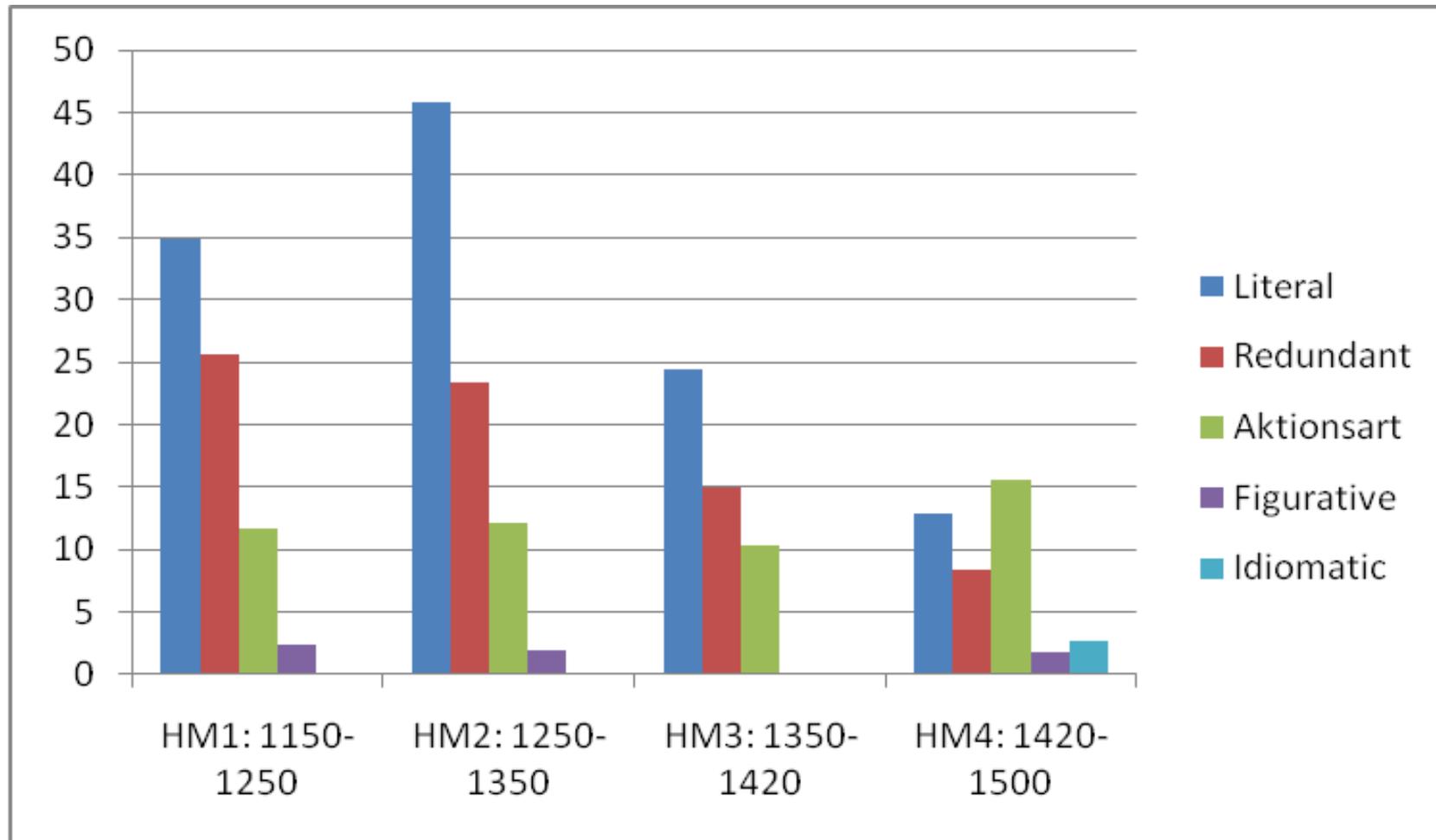
ME SITUATION

Figure 4: Most frequent verbs used for the formation of phrasal verbs with *up* in ME.



ME SITUATION

Figure 5: Semantic types of phrasal verbs with *up* in ME (normalized frequencies per 100,000 words).



ME SITUATION

- ◉ Decrease in the number of redundant combinations
- ◉ Significant increase of aktionsart types (in ME4 they outnumber literal combinations)
- ◉ Figures relate to the origin of completive *up* in a semantic development from combinations in which the spatial meaning of *up* combines with a goal meaning, e.g. *pull up* would be both ‘pull upwards’ and ‘pull to some final, high position’ (Denison 1985: 48-49).
- ◉ First cases of Latinate polysyllabic verbs combined with *up*.

(26) *ȝe schall certyfye vp his name. HC*
|QM4_IS_HANDO_REYNES, 155.

(27) *ȝe schal presente them vp onto þe mair. HC*
|QM4_IS_HANDO_REYNES, 319.

ME SITUATION

- ◉ First idiomatic combinations:

(28) *Syne tak it doune and drawe it thorowe a clathe & do it vp* [‘put in safekeeping’]. HC|QMX/4_IS_HANDM_THORN, 70.

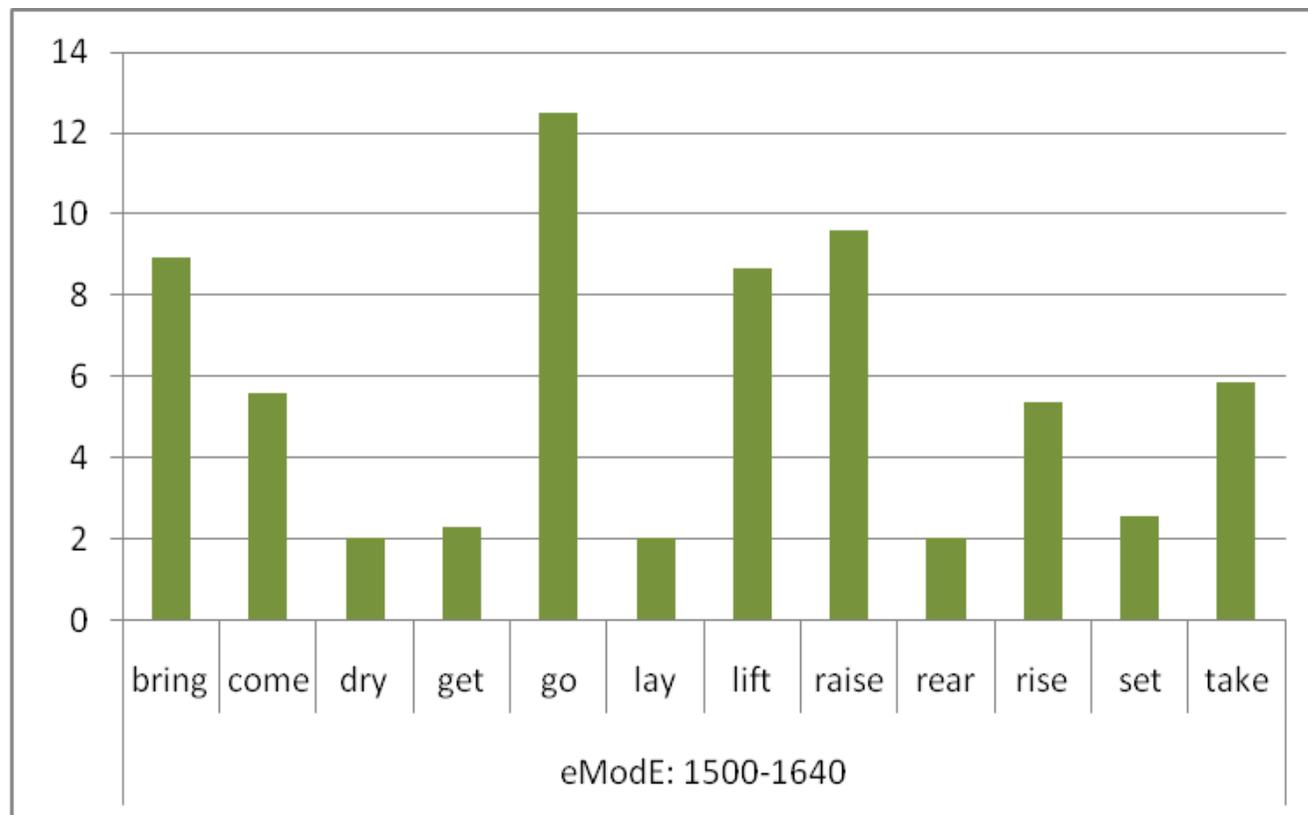
(29) *And then Seynt Thomas appierid to hym and bade hym holde vppe the right of Holy Churche* [‘take charge of’]. HC |QM4_NN_BIL_EDMUND, 172.

(30) *Afterward be þe oyle gadered fro the ouer egge of þe water with some spone, and sette it vp* [‘store up’]. HC |QMX/4_EX_SCIM_CHAUL, 578.

THE SITUATION FROM EMODE TO PDE

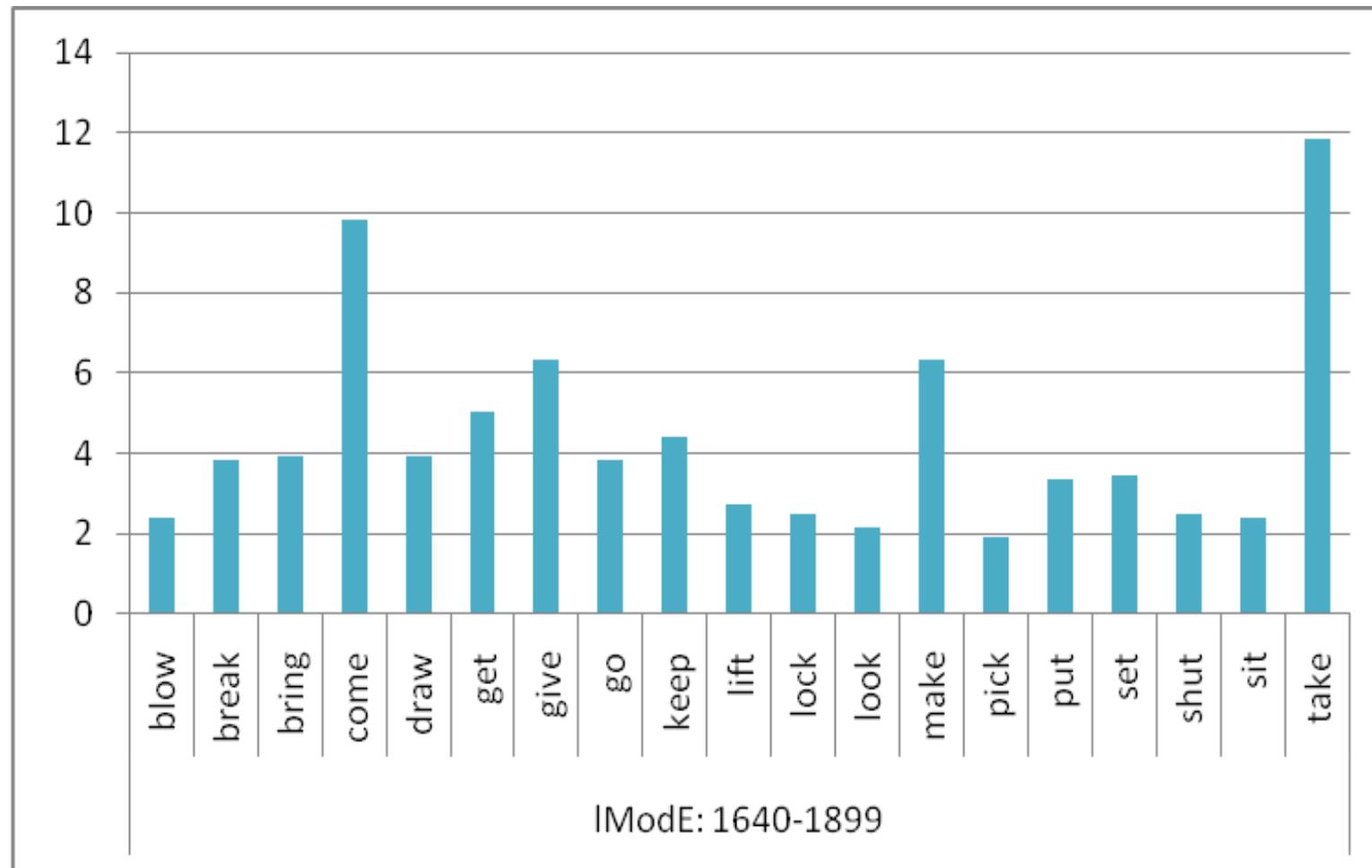
- ◉ Decrease in the number of movement verbs with *up*. Only *come*, *get* and *go* are kept among the most frequent (cf. Figures 6, 7 and 8).

Figure 6: Most frequent verbs used for the formation of phrasal verbs with *up* in eModE.



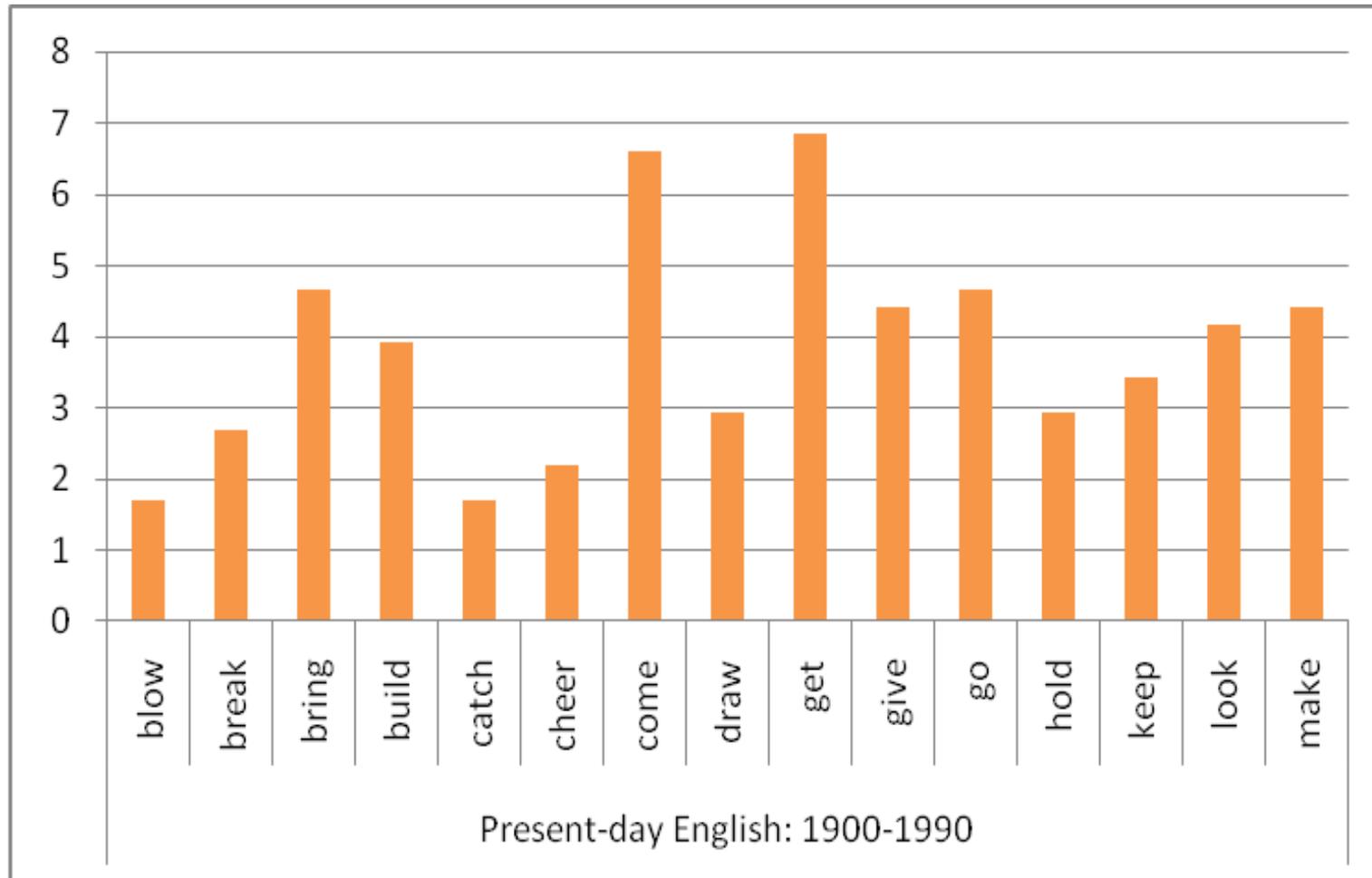
THE SITUATION FROM EMODE TO PDE

Figure 7: Most frequent verbs used for the formation of phrasal verbs with *up* in lModE.



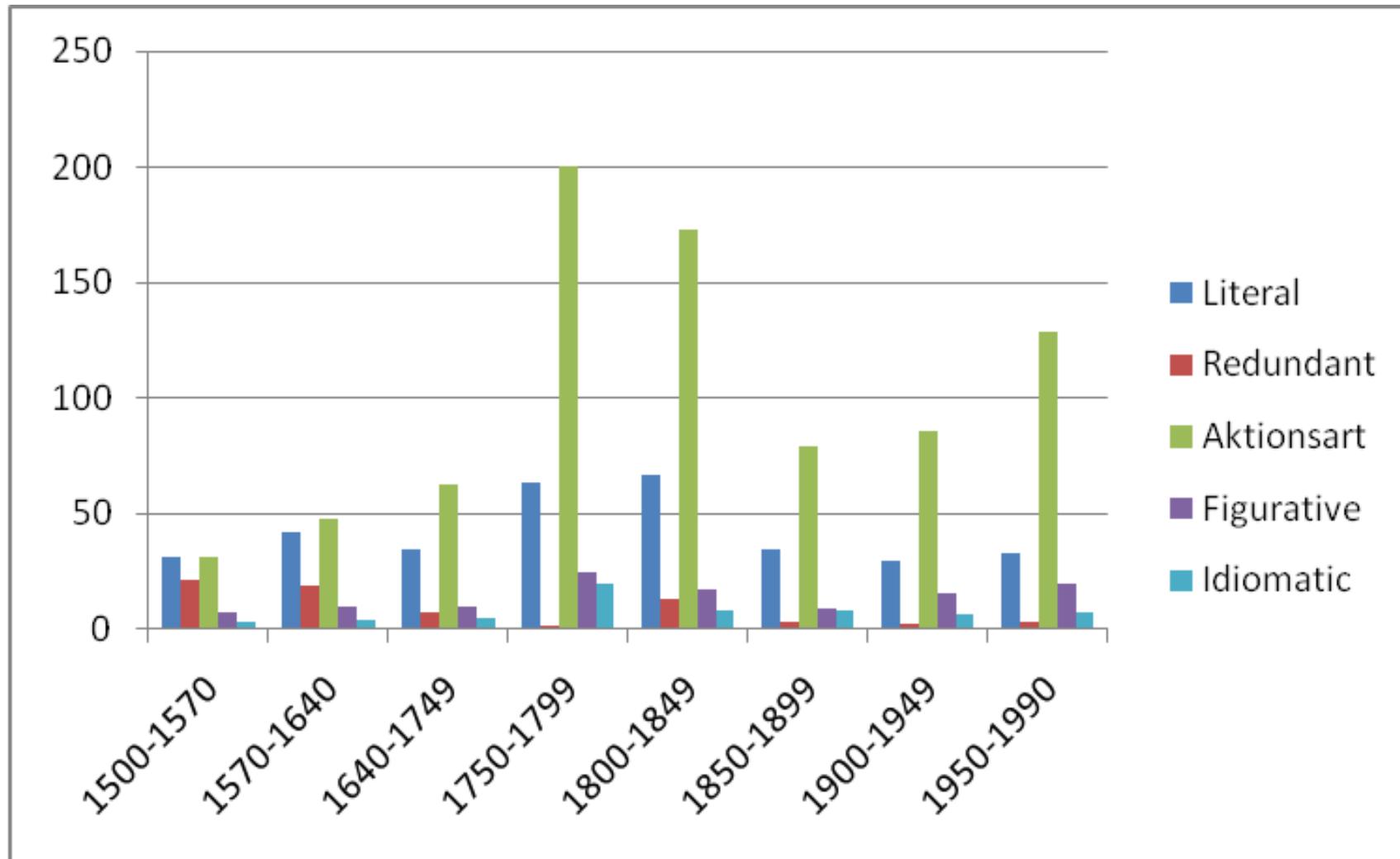
THE SITUATION FROM EMODE TO PDE

Figure 8: Most frequent verbs used for the formation of phrasal verbs with *up* in PDE.



THE SITUATION FROM EMODE TO PDE

Figure 9: Semantic types of phrasal verbs with *up* in from eModE to PDE (normalized frequencies per 100,000 words).



THE SITUATION FROM EMODE TO PDE

Outstanding changes during these periods:

- ◉ Increase in the number of idiomatic types and decrease in number in the redundant group.
- ◉ Great increase of aktionsart examples from eModE onwards.
- ◉ Sudden and massive increase in the number of phrasal verbs with *up* in general and of aktionsart combinations in particular between 1750 and 1849: fashion?
- ◉ Cases of already existing verbs to which the particle *up* is newly attached only during the period between 1750-1849.

(31) *This mystery I was to **preach up** in his church.* ARCHER1\1750-99.bre\1756amor.f3

(32) *It is strong having much **cannen** and being guarded with a exceeding thick wall on all sides onely yt which ye sea **defends up** which ye hills being so steep is no ascent.* ARCHER1\1650-99.bre\1687ferr.j1

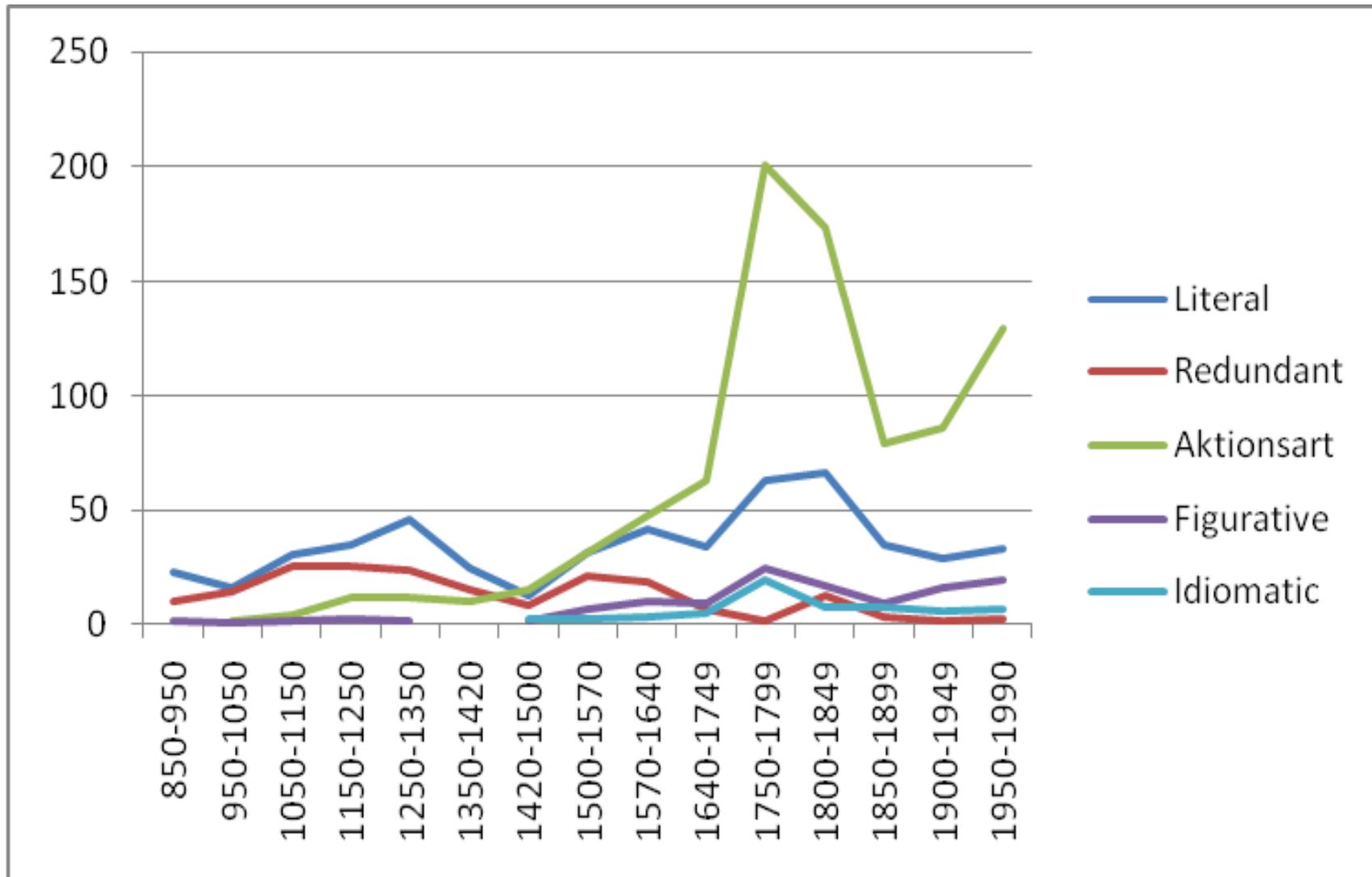
(33) *walke him with all gentlenesse home and there **cloath** him **vp**.* HC |QE2_IS_HANDO_MARKHAM, 76.

CONCLUSIONS

- ◉ At least five different semantic categories of phrasal verbs with *up* can be distinguished: literal, figurative, idiomatic, aktionsart and redundant.
- ◉ Aktionsart phrasal verbs with *up* are attested for the first time towards the end of the OE period (950-1050). Earlier studies on the development of phrasal verbs with *up* (Denison 1985) dated them around the mid 12th century.
- ◉ Once the number of aktionsart combinations starts to increase, literal and especially redundant combinations start to decrease. This tendency is observed from eModE onwards and may have to do with the origin of aktionsart *up* in expressions in which the spatial meaning combines with a goal meaning (Denison 1985: 48-49).
- ◉ A maximum peak in the number of phrasal verbs and especially of aktionsart combinations is observed between 1750 and 1849, as if the attachment of the particle *up* to all types of verbs had become some kind of fashion. In fact, many combinations attested during this period do not ever appear again in subsequent periods of the English language. Further research needed!

CONCLUSIONS

Figure 10: Overall distribution of semantic categories of phrasal verbs with *up* from OE to PDE.





THANK
YOU!

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