

The diachrony of the constructional networks of 'wonder' nouns



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1. Introduction

- Topic: constructions with semiotic/shell nouns that denote something (un)expected or astonishing
 - **Wonder** (OE *Wundor*): 1. Sth that causes astonishment; 2. a miracle involving supernatural powers; Phrases: *it (or t that) BE wonder; no wonder; It is (t great), little, small wonder; It is (a) wonder; No wonder that/if/though: (and) no wonder!; The wonder is* (OED)
 - **Surprise** (< Anglo-Norman, Old French *surprise* 1457): attacking unexpectedly or without warning (military); sth that takes by surprise, anything unexpected; Phrases: *surprise, surprise* (ironic) (OED)
 - **Marvel** (< Anglo-Norman *merveille* c1050): 1. miracle (obsolete); 2. A wonderful or astonishing thing, a cause of surprise, admiration or wonder; a wonder. Phrases: *It is (great) marvel; Is it any marvel?; It is no marvel; no marvel; what marvel* (obsolete) (OED)
- **Mirativity**: qualifying a proposition in terms of mirativity, i.e. as “unexpected” (DeLancey 2001: 369) or “the opposite meaning, ... lack of surprise” (Simon-Vandenberg & Aijmer 2007: 37)

1. Introduction

- Topic: constructions with semiotic/shell nouns that denote something (un)expected or astonishing
 - *Marvel, wonder and surprise*
 - Focus on constructions in which the **content of these nouns is specified**:
 - **Entities**, realized by a noun phrase
 - (1) *Simon Easterby is probably the biggest **surprise**.* (WB)
 - **Propositional content**, realized by clausal complement, action nominal, main clause
 - (2) *It's no **wonder** Norwegians hunt whale. There's nothing else left to catch.* (WB)
 - (3) *Goya's mark-making throughout the canvas is a **marvel**.* (WB)
 - (4) *Apparently, the insurance industry suddenly has woken up to the fact that the over-50s are – **surprise, surprise** - less likely to prang their cars, and more likely to look after their possessions and be at home to deter burglars.* (WB)

1. Introduction

- Distinguish between lexical, untypical lexical and grammatical uses of these nouns (Gentens et al. 2016; Van linden et al. 2016)
 - **Lexical**: (un)expectedness is discourse-primary; can be ‘addressed’ by ‘how much of a surprise was it?’ and thus shows lexical use (cf. Boye & Harder 2012; Davidse & Van linden Forthcoming)
 - (1) *The Grotta Azzurra is a **marvel**.* (WB)
 - **Untypical lexical**: “the new meaning, which may be grammaticalized in the further development, arises as a conversational implicature” (Diewald 2006: 4); rhetorical scheme somehow present, but (un)expectedness still discourse-primary
 - (2) *Tyson soon integrated into that environment and the authorities misquidely believed he was being rehabilitated thanks to boxing. And it was no **surprise** when Tyson was released early to go to live with D'Amato permanently.* (WB)
 - **Grammatical**: a mirative qualifier, commenting on the complement proposition in terms of its (un)expectedness (cf. DeLancey 2001); paraphrase by an expectation adverb such as *of course* (Simon-Vandenberg & Aijmer 2007: 172); discourse schema (proposition, mirative qualifier and justification → anti-concessive relationship; paraphrase with *of course*)
 - (3) *After all the scaremongering since September 11 regarding good versus evil, with us or with the terrorists, it is no **wonder** Arab-phobia has hit new heights.* (WB)
- Get a fine-grained view of the **mirative paradigm** in present-day English: functional (lexical versus grammatical) and formal variation (different construction types) and their correlation
- Take a look at the **diachrony** of two members of the paradigm: *wonder* & *marvel*

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Methodology
3. Present-day English
4. Diachrony
5. Conclusion

Fits in with earlier joint work on 'no' + semiotic noun *doubt/question/way/wonder/need/fear/chance* + complement clause/relative clause as a locus of change (Van linden, Davidse & Brems 2011; Saad et al. 2011; Davidse & De Wolf 2012; Davidse et al. 2014; Davidse, De Wolf & Van linden 2015; Brems 2015; Gentens et al. 2016; Van linden et al. 2016; Van linden & Brems 2017; Van linden & Brems 2018)

2. Methodology

Present-day English

- Corpus query: lemma search in the British subcorpora of the WordbanksOnline corpus (written and spoken): manually sorted
- *Marvel(s)*: exhaustive sample of 430 hits; 110 relevant hits
- *Surprise(s)*: random sample of 250 relevant hits
- *Wonder(s)*: random sample of 250 relevant hits

2. Methodology

Diachrony: Queries targeting different spelling/inflectional forms of the lemmas:

Subperiod of English	Time span	Corpus	Number of tokens (millions)
Old English (OE)	750–1150	<i>York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE)</i>	1.45
Middle English (ME)	1150–1500	<i>Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English, Second Edition (PPCME)</i>	1.16
Early Modern English (EModE)	1500–1710	<i>Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English (PPCEME)</i>	1.79
		Corpus of Early Modern English texts (CEMET: 1570-1710)	3.03
Late Modern English (LModE)	1710–1920	<i>Corpus of Late Modern English texts (Extended version) (CLMETEV) (De Smet 2005, 2008)</i>	15.01

3. Present-day English

3.1 *Wonder*

Lexical:

- (1) She kept looking at him in a way. He sipped his cup of tea. She was looking at him in that way again ... he finished his cup of tea ... Dear reader, **it's a wonder** how one bed can take so much punishment . The springs groaned under the combined assault of two activated bodies . (WB)

Untypical:

- (2) The first of those [goals] yesterday came after just two minutes and such was their explosive beginning **the wonder was** that it took that long for New Zealand to open their account. (WB)

Grammatical:

- (3) His wife was an alcoholic, **and no wonder**, if she knew what kind of man he was. (WB)

3. Present-day English

3.1 *Wonder*

Uses	Complementation	Juxtaposition	Adverbial	Total
Lexical	7 POS	—	—	7
Untypical	15 POS	—	—	15
Grammatical	99 NEG: 85; POS: 14	4 NEG	125 NEG	228
Total	121	4	125	250

3. Present-day English

3.1 *Wonder*: complementation patterns

Clausal complementation	Lexical	Untypical	Grammatical	Total
It BE (det) <i>wonder</i>	5	11	74	90
There BE (det) <i>wonder</i>	—	—	2	2
(det) <i>wonder</i> BE	1	4	0	5
<i>No/little/small wonder that</i>	—	—	23	23
<i>What a wonder that</i>	1	—	—	1
TOTAL	7	14	100	121

3. Present-day English

3.2 *Surprise*

Lexical:

- (1) Currently, only four carriers, BA, American, United and Virgin Atlantic, are allowed to fly transatlantic flights from the airport. The high price demanded by the DoT **came as a surprise** to BA and will have dashed any hopes that the financial squeeze on airlines since September 11 would speed the conclusion of a profitable deal. (WB)
- (2) She glanced up sharply and Chavasse smiled. “**surprise, surprise**” Jean Frazer removed her spectacles. “You look like hell. How was Albania?” (WB)

Untypical:

- (3) Given that costs of production are more obvious than hours of labor expended in the determination of prices, **it should be no surprise** that such an emphasis would be found at this level of intellectual development. (WB)

3. Present-day English

3.2 *Surprise*

Grammatical:

- (4) THE odd couple of Kate Moss and Pete Doherty looks like a good publicity stunt to me. Doherty is promoting his new band and, **what a surprise**, Kate Moss is launching her own perfume. (WB)
- (5) Such as the recent discovery that the death of a parent can scar a child for life, or that alcoholics have an unusually high depression rate. **Surprise, surprise**. (WB)
- (6) Rovers never lost their composure. With Friedel standing firm and imperious, **it came as no real surprise** to see Rovers catch Tottenham on the break (WB)
 - *to*-inf (knowledge or acquisition of knowledge CTP), in turn complemented by *that*-clause/bare infinitival/present participial
 - content of surprise: coded by secondary complement
(cf. Van linden 2010, 2012: *it is good to hear that ...*)

3. Present-day English

3.2 *Surprise*

Uses	Total
Complex predicate	2 NEG
Lexical (68%)	170 98 POS; 72 NEG
Untypical	30 6 POS; 24 NEG
Grammatical: clausal	34 NEG
Grammatical: adverbial	14 14 POS: irony!
Total	250

Before long, though, I was prepared for anything, and **it caused me no particular surprise** to see an aged and infirm man squatting on the ground and offering for sale a single, shrivelled lemon. (WB)

3. Present-day English

3.2 *Surprise*: uses per formal type

Formal type	Lexical	Untypical	GR: clausal	GR: adv	TOTAL
It BE (det) <i>surprise</i>	41	17	27	—	85
There BE (det) <i>surprise</i>	16	3	—	—	19
(det) <i>surprise</i> BE	15	1	—	—	16
It COME as (det) <i>surprise</i>	8	7	3	—	18
<i>No/little surprise</i>	1	2	4	—	7
<i>What a surprise</i>	2	—	—	1	3
<i>surprise</i>		—	—	1	1
<i>Surprise, surprise</i>	2	—	—	12	14
TOTAL	85	30	34	14	162

3. Present-day English

3.3 *Marvel*

Lexical:

- (1) The Grotta Azzurra is **a marvel**. (WB)
- (2) The director, cameraman and crew (if there were any) are completely absent. You can chew over the implications of this for weeks -even 40 years. That Kiarostami stitched this intimate film together from 23 hours of tape without once setting foot inside Akbari's cab is **a marvel**. (WB)

Untypical:

- (3) “Thank goodness I did not realize the horrible danger!” said Frodo faintly. “I was mortally afraid, of course; but if I had known more, I should not have dared even to move. **It is a marvel** that I escaped!” “Yes, fortune or fate have helped you,” said Gandalf (WB)

Grammatical:

- (4) A state created out of some 17,000 islands, a mix of races and religions, based on an artificially created philosophy - the five principles of “Pancasila” - **it is a marvel** that Indonesia has been kept together at all. (WB) (concessive)

3. Present-day English

3.3 *Marvel*

Uses	Total
Lexical	104 POS
Untypical	2 POS
Grammatical: clausal	4 3 POS; 1 NEG
Total	110

3. Present-day English

3.3 *Marvel*: uses per formal type

Formal type	Lexical	Untypical	GR: clausal	TOTAL
It BE (det) <i>marvel</i>	7	2	4	13
There/here BE (det) <i>marvel</i>	3	—	—	3
(det) <i>marvel</i> BE	8	—	—	8
NP BE (det) <i>marvel</i>	84	—	—	84
<i>That ...</i> BE (det) <i>marvel</i>	2	—	—	2
TOTAL	104	2	4	110

3. Present-day English

Semiotic nouns, types of use & formal types

Table can be read as availability of nodes in constructional network with 'wonder' nouns

	wonder		surprise		marvel	
	LEX	GR	LEX	GR	LEX	GR
It BE (det) <i>N</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
There BE (det) <i>N</i>	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
(det) <i>N</i> BE	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
<i>No/little/small N</i>	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
<i>What a N that</i>	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
It COME as (det) <i>N</i>	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
<i>N</i>	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
<i>N N</i>	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
<i>X BE N</i>	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗

4. Diachrony

4.1 *Wonder*

Lexical:

- (1) Forðon þæt is *læsse wundor*, þæt man hwylcne man in lichaman of deaðe awæcce, buton hit gelimpe, þæt se man þurh þæs lichaman gecwicinge sy gelæded to þæs modes life, ...
'Therefore that is less wonder, that one resurrects whatever person in the body of a dead human, except it happen, that this person through this body's revival be led to the spiritual life, ...' (YCOE 1050-1099 GDPref and 3 (C) 17.218.15, cited in Van linden et al. 2016: 392)

Grammatical:

- (2) Nu cwæð se halga Beda þe ðas boc gedihte, þæt hit *nan wundor* nys, þæt se halga cynincg untrumnyse gehæle nu he on heofonum leofað
'Now said Bede the Holy, who wrote the book, that it is no wonder that the holy king heals weaknesses now that he lives in heaven.' (YCOE 1000-1010 ÆLS [Oswald] 272, cited in Gentens et al. 2016: 132) → COMPLEMENTATION
- (3) þanon he welt þam gewealdleðerum ealle gesceaftu. Nis *nan wundor*, forþam ðe he is cyning & dryhten & æwelm & fruma & æ & wisdom & rihtwis dema
'Henceforth he rules all creation with reins. It is no wonder, for he is the king, the lord, the beginning, the origin, the law, wisdom, and the righteous judge.' (YCOE 940-960 Bo 39.136.23, cited in Van linden et al. 2016: 401) → JUXTAPOSITION (anaphoric)

4. Diachrony

4.1 *Wonder*

Old English:

- Predicative structures only (copular verbs)
- lexical uses (53%): positive polarity
- grammatical uses (47%): negative polarity

Old English subperiods	Lexical use: Positive polarity						Grammaticalized/mirative use: 'no' wonder (<i>nan, hwilc</i>)						Total	
	extraposition + compl		other		Total		extraposition + compl		juxta-position		Total			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
850-950	8	27.59	5	17.24	13	44.83	7	24.14	9	31.03	16	55.17	29	100
950-1150	28	33.73	18	21.69	46	55.42	31	37.35	6	7.23	37	44.58	83	100
Total	36	32.14	23	20.54	59	52.68	38	33.93	15	13.39	53	47.32	112	100

Table 3: Distribution of Old English lexical and grammatical uses of *(no) wonder* (cf. Van linden et al. 2016: 390, 404)

4. Diachrony

4.1 *Wonder*

Middle English:

- Emergence of elliptical matrices and adverbials
- Two types of adverbials: inherit basic structural properties from extraposition (DISJUNCT) and juxtaposition pattern (ANAPORIC adv)

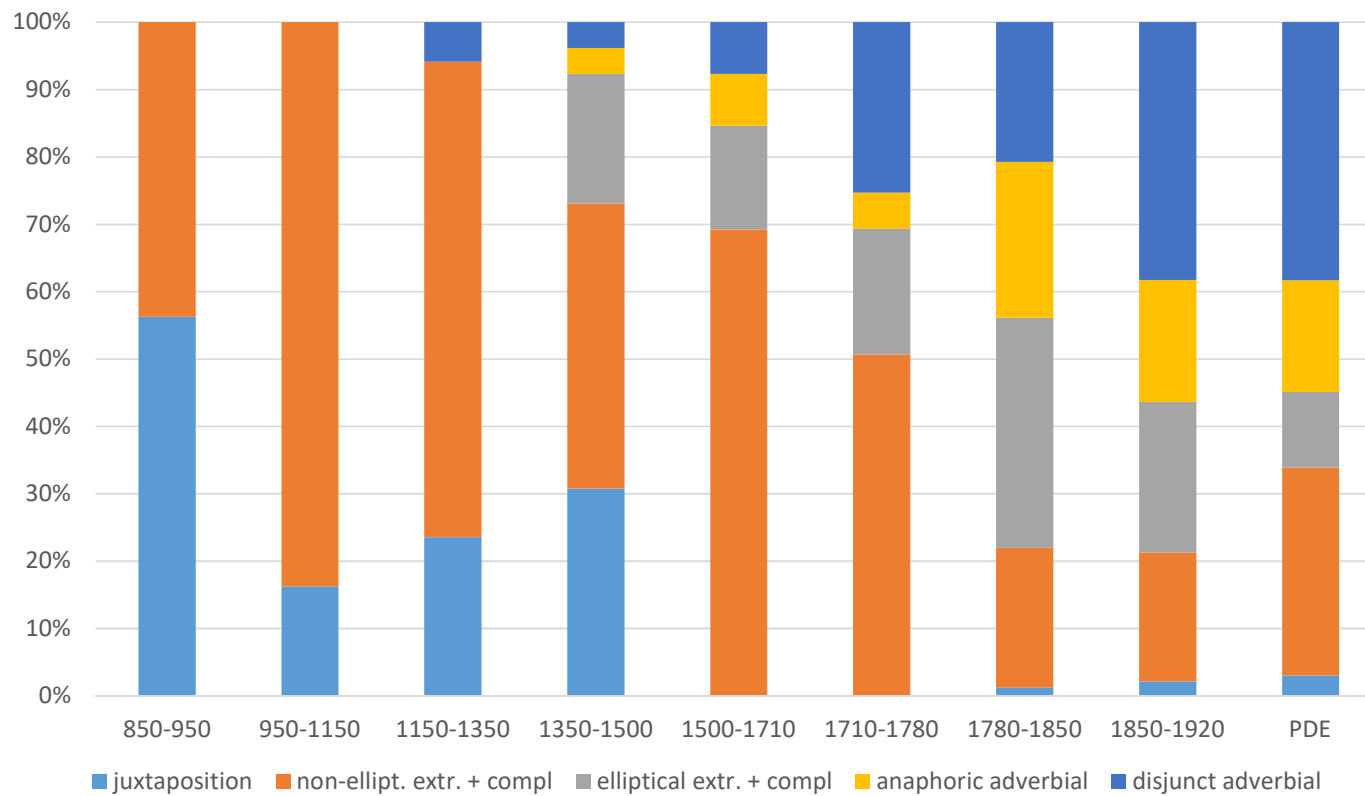
- 1) Ay, said the ideot, she is main good company, madam, *no wonder* you miss her. (CLMETEV 1710-1780) (DISJUNCT)
- 2) the Master of the House ... came running up Stairs as fast as his legs would carry him, but being about to enter the door, he could not, *and no wonder*, since the oldest Man living never saw a larger pair of Horns than he had on his Head. (PPCEME, 1640-1710) (ANAPORIC adv)

(Gentens et al. 2016)

4. Diachrony

4.1 *Wonder*

Distribution of types of formal realization of grammatical uses of
(it is) 'no' wonder across time



4. Diachrony

4.2 *Marvel (Middle English)*

Lexical:

- (1) Then haden men furst *gret mervayle*, whad come bytwene þe kyng and Thomas 'Then men first had great marvel what had come between the king and Thomas.' (PPCME 1420-1500) → HAVE MARVEL + indirect question
- (2) men maken hem dauncen and syngen clappyng here wenges to gydere & maken gret noyse & wheper it be by craft or be nygromancye I wot nere, but it is a gode sight to beholde & a fair, And it is *gret meruayle* how it may be. (PPCME 1350-1420)

Grammatical:

- (3) But ye knowen wel that this dede that is to seyn, my grief and my disese - toucheth me right ny. And therfore, though I be wrooth and inpatient, it is *no merveille*.
'But you know well that this deed, that is to say, my grief and my disease, affects me very deeply. And therefore, that I am angry and impatient, it is no marvel.' (PPCME 1350-1420) → COMPLEMENTATION

4. Diachrony

4.2 *Marvel*

Middle English: possessive, predicative and existential cxns

USE	Formal type	1350-1420	1420-1500	TOTAL
Lexical (88%)	have marvel	7	27	34
	it BE marvel	4	3	7
	here/there BE marvel	2	1	3
	X BE marvel	3	2	5
	X BE marvel to SEE		1	1
	X BE marvel to SPEAK of	1	0	1
untypical	it BE marvel		1	1
Grammatical (10%)	it BE <i>no</i> marvel	2	3	5
	<i>what</i> marvel	1		1
TOTAL in PPCME		20	38	58

4. Diachrony

4.2 *Marvel*

Early Modern English

- Emergence of elliptical matrices and adverbials
 - Same two types of adverbials: DISJUNCT (1) and ANAPORIC adverbs (2), which inherit basic structural properties from extraposition and juxtaposition pattern respectively
- 1) Loe, quoth the Londoner in derision of the yeomans felt, thus can we wer a felt in London and after trym yt up and send yt to you in the cuntrey. The yeoman lawghing in his sleeve and looking on the haberdashers wyfe which was born ther and for a poynt of false doctrine had byn sent away to London, *no marvel* sir, quoth he, *the world is false for even so do wee by our mayds hear whom when we have somewhat overworne we send them to London for newe and you take them and make wyfes on them.* (PPCEME 1570-1640)
 - 2) *All this whyl I was seasike,* and *no mervel* having changed at once both ayr, exercyse and diet. (PPCEME 1570-1640)

4. Diachrony

4.2 *Marvel*

Early Modern English: possessive cxn on the decline

USE	Formal type	1500-1570	1570-1640	1640-1710	TOTAL
Lexical (55%)	have marvel	2			2
	it BE marvel	5	2		7
	it BE marvel to SEE X	4			4
	X BE marvel	1			1
	X BE marvel to SEE	4			4
Grammatical (45%)	it BE 'no' marvel	5	3	0	8
	no marvel (elliptic/adv)	2	4	1	7
TOTAL in PPCEME		23	9	1	33

4. Diachrony

4.2 *Marvel*

Early Modern English: possessive cxn on the decline

USE	Formal type	1500-1570	1570-1640	1640-1710	TOTAL
Lexical (55%)	have marvel	2			2
	it BE marvel	5	6/15 more from CEMET	10/11 more from CEMET	7
	it BE marvel to SEE	4			4
	X BE marvel	1			1
	X BE marvel to SEE	4			4
Grammatical (45%)	it BE <i>'no'</i> marvel	5			8
	<i>no</i> marvel (elliptic/adv)	2	4	1	7
TOTAL in PPCEME		23	9	1	33

4. Diachrony

4.2 *Marvel*

Late Modern English:

few data in CLMETEV, but not yet fully analysed

5. Conclusion

- Mirative paradigm in PDE:
 - *marvel*, *wonder* and *surprise* show different relative frequencies of lexical versus grammatical uses:
 - *Wonder*: predominantly grammatical (91%)
 - *Marvel* (96%) & *surprise* (81%): predominantly lexical
 - Formal variation:
 - Complement types: *surprise* (*that, if, when, to-inf + compl*)
 - > *wonder* (*that, if, how*)
 - > *marvel* (*that, if*)
 - Structural type containing N: *surprise*
 - > *wonder*
 - > *marvel*
- Specialization of *wonder* string as mirative qualifier

5. Conclusion

- Mirative paradigm in diachrony:
 - *wonder* leads the way; *marvel* follows suit but cannot beat its exemplar
 - *Wonder*: lexical and grammatical uses 50-50 in Old English; adverbial uses in Middle English and increasing share of grammatical uses
 - *Marvel*: predominantly lexical in Middle English (88%); predominantly in possessive structures (60%); adverbial uses in Early Modern English and increasing share of grammatical uses (45%), but these do not persist into PDE
 - Negative polarity triggers development of grammatical (mirative) meaning
 - Parallel development may be put down to similar source semantics ('miracle'), different from than of *surprise* → future research

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- <https://wordbanks.harpercollins.co.uk/>

EXTRA

Wonder (data for graph on slide 22)

	disjunct adverbial		anaphoric adverbial		elliptical extr. + compl		non-ellipt. extr. + compl		juxtapositio n		total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
850-950	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	43.8	9	56.3	16	100
950-1150	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	31	83.8	6	16.2	37	100
1150-1350	1	5.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	70.6	4	23.5	17	100
1350-1500	1	3.8	1	3.8	5	19.2	11	42.3	8	30.8	26	100
1500-1710	1	7.7	1	7.7	2	15.4	9	69.2	0	0.0	13	100
1710-1780	19	25.3	4	5.3	14	18.7	38	50.7	0	0.0	75	100
1780-1850	17	20.7	19	23.2	28	34.1	17	20.7	1	1.2	82	100
1850-1920	36	38.3	17	18.1	21	22.3	18	19.1	2	2.1	94	100
PDE	164	38.3	71	16.6	48	11.2	132	30.8	13	3.0	428	100

Table 4: Distribution of types of formal realization of grammatical uses of *(it is) 'no' wonder* across time (Gentens et al. 2016: 136)