Politeness in British Correspondence: 1650-1920

by

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DEDICATION

As those who have been encouraging and supporting me during the process of researching and writing this thesis will know, it has not been an easy path to follow. The Covid-19 pandemic hit my family hard and I suffered other personal setbacks too. Many times I came close to giving up altogether, so I would like to say many thanks to the following people especially:

Firstly, my supervisory team, Dr Daniel Bürkle and Dr Dominik Vayn, who talked me through the intricacies of corpus linguistics, academic etiquette and held my hand (virtually via Zoom) when I was really struggling and doubting myself.

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Thirdly, my daughters Michelle and Stephanie, who provided me with amazing moral support throughout this time – I am forever in their debt.

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Overall, I dedicate this thesis to my late father, who never got the opportunity to attempt anything like this himself.

Politeness in British Correspondence: 1650 – 1920: Abstract

This work has been undertaken as an attempt to examine changes in aspects of polite language between 1650 and 1920. Part of the research, discussed in Chapter 7: The Dative Alternation, was also carried out as a furthering of the hypothesis put forward in Flack (2018). This work looked at the dative alternation between 1410 and 1680 and posited that the prepositional dative construction was used to signify distance between correspondents who were socially or politically removed from one another. Other aspects of politeness investigated include honorific language, modal verbs, terms of deference and the lemmas *pleas** and *pray*.*

Three research questions were selected to help evaluate the results of the analysis:

RQ1: Has the usage and/or frequency of deferential language changed during the time period of the study?

RQ2: Have markers of social deixis changed and/or declined during the time period of the study?

RQ3: Is the use of the Dative Alternation as a politeness marker evident from the 17th to early 20th centuries?

The data set from which language was analysed was created by searching the Archer and CLMET corpora for relevant search terms. Parameters of the search were 'British' 'Letters' and the date ranges of interest. The data was subdivided into 50-year sections so as to enable a picture of changing language to be created. Data was then analysed both qualitatively and

quantitively to extract both numerical and social trends. Correspondents were also separated into four social groupings in order to investigate markers of social deixis.

Results showed that deferential language had partly changed during the time-period selected. Lemmas used for analysis of RQ1 were *humbl*, beg*, troubl*,* and *worth*.* Some of these lemmas showed a marked decrease during the 270 years, whereas others remained in fairly constant use. Markers of social deixis (RQ2) were found to have reduced greatly between 1650 and 1920, and the usage of the dative alternation (RQ3) was found to have changed; it was still being used to show respect but not necessarily social or political distance.

Overall, the findings show many changes in both the formality and language of British correspondence, and suggestions for further research are included within the relevant chapters.

Contents

List of Abbreviations

CLMET – Corpus of Late Modern English Texts

DO – Double Object

EHL – English Historical Linguistics

EMMA – Early Modern Multiloquent Authors

H-L – Higher to Lower

IFID – Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices

L-H – Lower to Higher

MP – Model Person

OED – Oxford English Dictionary

PDE – Present Day English

P-P – Peer to Peer

PP – Prepositional

RM – Request Marker

RQ - Research Question

sg – Social Group

WPM – Words Per Million

WW1 – World War 1

Chapter 1: Introduction

> ***The British are renowned for their reserve and, at times excessive, politeness. Specificities such as apologising whilst complaining, their stiff upper lip and extreme social awkwardness, have led to the development of a kind of self-depreciating and sarcastic humour, cornerstone of the British society.***
>
> (European Parliament: Terminology Coordination 2016)

This statement from the European Union's website informs its readers that the British are a polite nation; further websites advising international visitors of this aspect of our society are also to be found in abundance on the internet. For example, Heinemann (2019) has written a guide to politeness in the British workplace for overseas students, and a page detailing the intricacies of British Etiquette can be found on the Study Links website (Study Links International 2015).

Headlines in the UK press, however, suggest this is not so. In 2007, The Independent was wondering 'Who is to blame for Britain's bad manners?' (Leith, 2007). A while later, the Mail on Sunday announced that 'Manners are in decline' (Bridge, 2014), seemingly blaming this increased rudeness partly on mobile technology. Two stories in 2018 also pursued this point of view. The Daily Express asked 'Is Britain becoming LESS civilised? Manners 'increasingly disappearing'.' (O'Grady, 2018), and later the same year The Guardian announced, 'Terribly sorry – but Britain's famed politeness may be a myth.' (Murphy, 2018).

These are merely a few examples of articles in British newspapers which would indicate that there is a perception in modern society that politeness is declining in this country. Whilst this study does not attempt to draw any conclusions as to the veracity of these statements, nor to answer the questions raised, it does seek to study if, and how, expressions of politeness have changed during the period from 1650 to 1920. This is with the intention of showing whether usage of polite expressions has, indeed, decreased over time or if this is merely a nostalgic yearning for a supposedly golden age of good manners. As a result of the aim of this thesis, three research questions (RQs) have been identified:

RQ1: Has the usage and/or frequency of deferential language changed during the time period of the study?

RQ2: Have markers of social deixis changed and/or declined during the time period?

RQ3: Is the use of the Dative Alternation as a politeness marker evident from the 17th to early 20th centuries?

This study will attempt to answer these RQs by analysing British correspondence between 1650 and 1920. The reasons for choice of these dates will be discussed in the next sections of this chapter.

1.1: Date range selected for study

Baugh & Cable (2002) consider that the period from 1500 – 1650 was an era when Modern English was being formed. For instance, they state that

> Spelling was one of the problems that the English language began consciously to face in the sixteenth century. During the period from 1500 to 1650 it was fairly settled.
>
> (2002:214)

They also discuss 'self-consciousness about language' which they define as being both individual and public. On an individual level, this self-consciousness manifested itself especially within groups of people who were beginning to mix with those of a higher social class. Baugh & Cable note that

> (...) as people lift themselves into a different economic or intellectual or social level, they are likely to make an effort to adopt the standards of grammar and pronunciation of the people with whom they have identified (…) Awareness that there are standards of language is a part of their social consciousness.
>
> (2002:202)

They entitle this episode in the history of the English Language 'The Renaissance'. Indeed, in just the way they explain people try to adapt their language to that of the group or class they are trying to emulate, standard English was becoming modified to reflect that used in royal court circles. Although the language was, and still is, constantly evolving, they state that

> (…) subject to the variability characteristic of a language not yet completely settled, the written language in the latter part of the sixteenth century is fully entitled to be called Standard English
>
> (2002:250)

As discussed in the previous section, the effects of both the end of the First World War (hereinafter WW1) and the introduction of mass radio broadcasts had another profound change on the language. For further discussion of linguistic changes effected by WW1 see *Languages and the First World War: Representation and Memory* (Declerq & Walker (eds), 2016). Among the topics discussed are the influx of loan words and neologisms, linguistic contact between different classes and nationalities in the trenches and the language used to both record and remember the events of the war.

Next, Section 1.2 will discuss why the particular date range, 1650 – 1920, has been selected for linguistic study of politeness.

1.2: Effects of mass-media on the English language

The first public radio stations began broadcasting in 1919/20 (Sterling 2018) and heralded 'an entire generation of mass culture' hitherto unknown. Mayor (2014) posits that

the advent of radio, specifically through the BBC, 'has had a big influence, not just on me but on the English language as a whole.' Mugglestone (2006) also considers that the First World War was a turning point in the history of the English Language. Stuart-Smith *et al.* (2013) discuss the various ways in which broadcast transmission of language, by radio and television, has affected both the pronunciation and the phraseology of different English dialects. This early 20th century phenomenon, combined with the wide-reaching linguistic effects of WW1, help to explain Mugglestone's assertion.

Other innovations also helped shape English usage. In 1814, advances in printing technology, the steam-driven "double-press" meant that newspaper production was revolutionised, contributing to "[…] the rise of The Times' circulation from 5,000 to 50,000 by the middle of the century." (britannica.com). Crystal (2004) attributes the spread of newspapers to "[…] a growing presence of nonstandard English outside the domain of creative literature." (2004:515). This led to the phenomenon of nonstandard English, for example phrases such as "ain't misbehavin'", becoming an acceptable "[…]part of our everyday consciousness." (Crystal, 2004:514). Although mass circulation of newspapers certainly helped spread awareness of, and familiarity with, trends in phraseology, etc, this had no real effect on politeness.

A genre of publication that did affect awareness of polite forms of language, however, was the letter-writing manual. These, according to Cerquiero (2011) began to appear in the 16th century but reached their zenith during the 18th and 19th centuries. They satisfied the need for guidance as to "[…] social awareness about etiquette and good manners […]" (Cerquiero, 2011:301). Cerquiero goes on the state that "[…] we may immediately regard

them as highly influential in the actual writing of letters and by extension in linguistic development." (2011:302).

While these manuals, and the spread of newspapers, clearly affected trends in language, they did not have as great an effect as, for instance, the Renaissance's introduction of Latin and Greek terms, or the grammatical changes brought about by the loss of the inflected verbal system. For the reasons discussed previously, therefore, the era from 1650 – 1920, can be considered a fairly stable period of the English Language and, thus, has been selected as the date range for this study. Spelling and grammar were quite standardised by the beginning of the period and the influx of new broadcast technology and its related language, idioms and neologisms had not yet appeared. A study of the changes (if any) in uses of politeness strategies during this time should, therefore, yield comparable diachronic data.

1.3: Sources of data

Although there is a plethora of recorded data available to modern researchers wishing to investigate whether politeness is declining in modern British society, historically this is not as easily accessible.

Scholars of politeness in recent times have access to archives of recorded broadcast transmissions, for instance the BBC Archive Services. In 2018 there were approximately 5 billion videos on YouTube with a further 500 hours' worth being uploaded every hour (Omnicore, 2020). Additionally, there are many files uploaded to other Social Media platforms such as Facebook and TikTok. There are also many, many hours of content on easily accessible

platforms such as NetFlix, BritBox and Sky which can be used for linguistic research purposes, as well as specialised corpora such as the UCL Speaker Database and the International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA). Before the advent of television and radio, however, along with their associated recording technology, similar databases did not exist. Page *et al.'s* (2014) student guide to conducting such research on social media gives many useful guidelines and methodologies on this subject.

Considering the lack of similar sources wherein spoken English can be found before the advent of recording technology, the use of personal correspondence gives a valuable insight into the way language was being used in an everyday way. Of course, written language is rarely the same as the idiomatic spoken version, complete with hesitation, sudden changes of subject, interruptions and similar events, but, as Professor Nathan Wise writes,

> Historical correspondence, often thought of as letters, telegrams and postcards, are among the most useful types of source material for historians. Not only do they describe events and provide personal insights, but they also reveal much about the styles and conventions of the time in which they were written, as well as social and cultural context.
>
> (Wise:2020)

Arguably, the most direct records of speech should be those contained in court, parliamentary and other legal transcripts. However, in a study of Hansard, the UK Parliamentary record of proceedings, Mollin (2007) found that the transcribers and editors, in preparing documents for publication, will often change words and grammatical structures

to make them appear more formal or conservative than they originally were. She, therefore, states that

> Linguists ought, therefore, to be cautious in their use of the Hansard transcripts and, generally, in the use of transcriptions that have not been made for linguistic purposes.
>
> (Mollin, 2007:187)

Specialist collections of documents, for instance those held by libraries, museums and universities, can be a valuable source of personal correspondence, although it is usually a very time-consuming task to go through their contents, obtain any necessary permissions to photocopy items and then transcribe them into a format suitable for digital comparison. Thankfully there are many online websites such as Project Gutenberg and the British Library Online which have vast quantities of historical documents already digitised and freely available to researchers. Furthermore, there are corpora dedicated to specialised areas of interest, such as the Archer Corpus, the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (CLMET) and the Early Modern Multiloquent Authors (EMMA) corpus which are, again, usually freely accessible to researchers of historical linguistics. Some of these are dedicated to correspondence, others carry a range of genres, such as drama, court transcripts and official records, as well as correspondence. However, by use of features such as 'advanced search' they can often be filtered by date range, genre and other factors in order to extract that which is of interest to this research. From these corpora, it was decided to use the Archer Corpus beta version 2 [July 2019], being the most up-to-date version available at the time of commencing data collection, together with the CLMET, because of the range of correspondence contained therein. During the researcher's previous work on correspondence between 1410 and 1680

(Flack, 2018), the CEEC had been used. Although an extension to this (CEEC-400) had been produced, it only contained letters up to 1800 and, due to some initial problems gaining access to the corpus, it was not used for this work.

Even with digitised material such as this, however, it must be remembered that the transcriber themselves may have, perhaps unintentionally, adopted strategies whilst preparing the documents which could have a bearing on the final data. Small changes, such as whether or not the use of capitalisation is faithfully recorded, or spellings standardised to the modern equivalent, may erase nuances of the original author's intent. Brownlees (2017) studies differences in reporting identical events by two sources during the English Civil War. One source is the Parliamentarian pamphlet, Britanicus, the other is a Royalist publication, Aulicus. One example given by Brownlees, illustrating these differences, is reproduced below:

> The large Expresse from Prince Ruperts owne hand is (wee doubt not) before this with His Majestie
>
> (Aulicus, 6th July 1644)
>
> But says he, *the large Expresse from* P.Ruperts *own hand, is by this with his Majestie.*
>
> (Britanicus, 22nd July 1644)

The usage of capitalisation of the word *his* in the phrase *H/his Majestie* and the diminution of the word *Prince* to merely a *P* give discernible clues as to which side each newssheet supports. If, for the purposes of digitisation, the decision was taken to standardise these features then subtle meaning could be lost.

Bearing this in mind, if the original documents are not easily available, then a decision must be taken as to whether comparisons of spelling, punctuation, shortening of names and similar features are to be taken into consideration. For the purposes of this particular study, where the actual number of terms of politeness are the main source of interest, it has been possible to disregard such written features.

1.4: Features of interest in the data

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, a choice has had to be made as to which aspects of the correspondence studied are to be considered of interest to this research. Data collected will attempt, firstly, to record the correspondents' social status and gender. For a full discussion of how social status was delineated for the purposes of analysis, see Section 2.1.2.

1.4.1: Gender

Many researchers in the field of sociolinguistics have noted that women use language in different ways to men. For example, Holmes (1999:85) finds that '(…) women use tag questions more often than men in their facilitative positive politeness function'. Lakoff (2004: p43ff) discusses how women tend to use 'weaker' expletives than men (e.g., 'Oh dear' rather than 'shit'), different adjectives (e.g., adorable, sweet, divine, rather than great, terrific, cool) and, again, she confirms that women use tag questions much more than men, a strategy

Lakoff associates with politeness. Coates (2013) sums up many of these features of women's speech thus:

> The evidence at present suggests that women and men do pursue different interactive styles: women use more hedges and pay more compliments to other speakers, while men talk more, swear more and use aggravated directives to get things done. Women also use more linguistic forms associated with politeness. These clusters of linguistic characteristics are sometimes termed 'men's style' and 'women's style'.
>
> (Coates, 2013:110)

The authors mentioned above, despite having researched deeply into gender differences in language use, are all concerned with present day usage. Whether or not these traits have also altered over the period of interest to this particular study is beyond the remit of this work, but further investigation and comparison of women's linguistic traits over the centuries would be a possible basis for further research. Furthermore, although tag questions, gendered language and expletives may all have a bearing on perceptions of politeness, these features are beyond the remit of this study.

As will be discussed in Section 1.5, although face is also considered central to many theories of politeness, it is very difficult to ascertain from historical correspondence. The main focus of investigation, therefore, will be identifiable linguistic strategies such as honorifics, deferential language, use of modal verbs, etc

1.4.2: Third person

Another indicator of politeness given by Brown & Levinson (1978) is use of the third person. They cite an example of such usage in a letter from India dated 1824:

> ***1.3.*** If his Highness wishes to show that he is on our side, he ought to place guards (…)[1]
>
> (Cox 1824)

In a general search, however, it would be nearly impossible to identify if the author of a letter were addressing the addressee in the third person or simply writing about a mutual acquaintance, for example. In order ascertain to whom a sentence such as that in Extract 1.3 is referring, it would be necessary for the full text of all such examples to be carefully read through and analysed. Due to time restrictions on this research, it was not possible to conduct a search for this linguistic feature, although two relevant examples were found within the data. See Chapter 7, Extracts 7.57 and 7.61 for further discussion.

1.5: Face

One major aspect of many scholarly writings on the subject of politeness is face. This concept was originally discussed by Goffman (1967) and expanded in the foundational work of Brown & Levinson (1978).

Goffman describes face as 'the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact.' (1967:5) In other

[1] See also Section 3.3 for further discussion of this aspect of politeness

words, the underlying implications of a verbal interaction (be it written or spoken) can be interpreted by the parties involved as threatening, or belittling their status, (negative face) or confirming their social position or value (positive face). Negative face-threatening acts, which cause the recipient to 'lose face' can involve language designed to humiliate or embarrass them. Positive face, or 'saving face', on the other hand, involves language designed to express approval, be complimentary or generally respectful, thus maintaining the recipient's dignity.

The work of Brown & Levinson centres on the notion of face and assumes that the participants in a conversation are based on a Model Person (MP) whom Brown & Levinson assume to be '(…) a wilful fluent speaker of a natural language, further endowed with two special properties – rationality and face.' (1978:58). They further assume that their MP is a rational, reasonable person who shares an assumed universal desire to be '(…) unimpeded and (has) the want to be approved of in certain respects.' (1978:58).

Over the last 40 or so years, the field of politeness research has expanded Since Brown & Levinson's study was undertaken, numerous other writers have challenged and expanded on their original work. These include Terkourafi, Culpepper, Haugh and Bousfield to name but a few. These authors will be discussed in greater detail within the Literature Review section (Chapter 2). Broadly speaking, however, they consider how other aspects, such as the speakers' age, gender, relationship and the overall context of the discourse need to be considered in order to gain a better understanding of how a particular im/polite phrase may be received by the addressee.

1.6: Conclusion

The aim of this research project, therefore, is to investigate if, and how, linguistic markers of politeness in correspondence have changed over the period from the late 17th to early 20th centuries. This will be done partly by collecting data using searches of various relevant corpora, and partly by qualitative analysis of the results so found. Social status will form the main focus of the analysis, with other interesting points, such as use of circumlocution and the third person to be discussed where found within the data.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1: Overview

The aim of this research project is to investigate if, and how, linguistic markers of politeness in correspondence have changed over the period from the late 17th to early 20th centuries. This will be done partly by collecting data using searches of various relevant corpora, and partly by qualitative analysis of the results so found. Due to the scope of this investigation, the literature reviewed can be broadly categorised within three sections: Politeness, Social Status and Corpus Linguistics. These will be discussed in Sections 2, 3 and 4 of this chapter. Firstly, though, a broad look at the range of literature within the field of English historical linguistics (EHL) will be undertaken.

2.1.1: General studies of English historical linguistics

There are many aspects to the study of EHL. These range from discussions of how the language developed from its earliest stages in the 5th century (see, for example, Baugh & Cable (2002) and Crystal (2004)). These two works are among many of the genre which trace the birth and development of the English language through its many changes due to events such as the arrival of Norman French in the 11th century, the Inkhorn debate in the mid-16th century and the ways English has changed through contact and trade with various parts of the globe.

One of the many books which cover a specific topic is Mitchell & Robinson's (2001) Guide to Old English. This is an example of the range of available literature which covers topics back to the very earliest forms of the English Language. The book contains a comprehensive

guide to the grammar of Old English, together with a selection of prose and verse from the period. Another work on the development of EHL is by Burnley (2000). This book provides examples of the language from 700 up to the present day, although this time the focus of this book is on literature of the various periods rather than grammar. Samples of texts from the different periods of English, Old, Early Middle, Later Middle, Early Modern and Modern are given, along with introductions and notes to help the reader understand and compare the different works included. Wilson (1968) also wrote about historical literature, but his book concentrates on a discussion of various Early Middle English texts.

Other scholars have also focused on specific eras within EHL. Jucker (2016), for example, has written about politeness in 18th-century drama. Although this particular thesis is concerned with politeness, for reasons explained in Section 1:3, the focus of the research is on British correspondence so works of this type are only of passing interest to the present study. What is of interest in Jucker's work is his discussion of how, when people are in a socially distanced relationship (i.e., where one is socially of higher status than the other), the person in the superior position should feel the need to employ fewer politeness strategies than the other person (Jucker, 2016:98/99). This is a general observation which can be tested in correspondence as well as in other genres of literature and, thus, relevant to this study. For a fuller discussion of Jucker's work, see Section 3 of this chapter. However, due to the texts preserved in the corpora used for data collection, almost no examples of reciprocal correspondence have been found. Therefore, it has not been possible to examine different writing strategies used by correspondents in their letters to each other.

2.1.1.1 Features of Historical Corpora

Kytö & Rissanen's 1995 chapter entitled *Tracing the Trail of Time* discusses the compilation of historic corpora, both diachronic and synchronic within, for instance, a particular century. Among those mentioned by the authors are *The Dictionary of Old English Corpus, The Archer Corpus, The Helsinki Corpus,* and *The Century of English Prose Corpus*. Kytö & Rissanen explain that key features of interest to corpus compilers include giving 'a many-sided picture of the language with due attention paid, for example, to such extralinguistic variables as dialect, genre (or text type) and various socio-linguistic factors' (1995:13).

The authors carry on to explain how the compilers of the Helsinki Corpus grouped texts by criteria such as 'communicative situations, purpose and subject matter' (1995:14). They go on to state that 'Private letters can, indeed, be regarded as one of the most interesting individual genres, with their interactive and fairly colloquial character.' (1995:14).

Kytö & Rissanen have also written in more detail about the compilation of the Helsinki Corpus. In their 1992 article in the ICAME Journal, they talk about how the aim of the Helsinki Corpus is 'to serve as a database for the study of the development of English morphology, syntax and vocabulary' (1992:7). When compiling the corpus, it was the compliers' intention to select texts 'in the spirit of sociohistorical variation analysis' to give 'extensive evidence of varies types, modes and levels of linguistic expression' (1992:7).

2.1.2: Studies of historical correspondence

Much has been written on the subject of correspondence throughout British history. One such book is Whyman's 2009 work The Pen and the People. This work is an in-depth study of letter-writing between 1660 and 1800. Albeit the book only looks at English letters and their writers, the time-frame covers the early part of the current thesis's focus and is, thus, extremely pertinent to this study. Whyman does not discuss politeness *per se* but does write about 'confronting problems of business, religion, gender and class' in Chapter 4 of her book. She discusses the 'middling sort' of letter-writers who, in this thesis's classification system, broadly equate with s.g. C:

> Historians have struggled to define the middling sort, notably by wealth, status, occupation, and local associations. Others have classified middling-sort people by their cultural values and lifestyles— their education, careers, leisure pursuits, and consumption.
>
> (2009:112)

Whyman goes on to state

> This chapter is based on a different philosophy. It questions the benefit of placing such a variegated group of people into fixed categories. Instead, it uses letter-writing to show how middling-sort individuals negotiated their own identities on a daily basis.
>
> (2009:112)

As explained elsewhere within this study, authors have been categorised into four social groups within this work for the purposes of analysis (see Chapter 3). Whyman has selected three categories of people for her 'middling-sort' discussion: '(…) merchants, writing

clerks, and Dissenters.' (2009:113). This particular group, Whyman finds, were becoming less formal when writing to other family members (2009:113). This is backed up from the findings within this research of how forenames were rarely used in the earlier 18th century but became more commonplace towards the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries (see Section 5.2 For a discussion of this topic). Overall, however, Whyman concentrates on the subject matter of the letters; politeness does not fall under the remit of her book and, thus, it is of only limited interest to this study.

Fitzmaurice (2012) also discusses the background of social classifications, and discusses the inclusion of 'tradesmen and shopkeepers as the so-called 'middling sorts' ' (2012:298). She describes them as suffering from 'relative poverty and low levels of literacy' (2012:298) and states that, due to these factors, they were not able to be 'primary cultural actors' (2012:298). She continues by discussing how the socio-economic groupings in the 18th century were often reflected in the language used to describe these classifications, including 'lower class' 'lower orders' and 'lower sort'. Terms such as 'upper class' were common by the 1770s (Fitzmaurice, 2012:299), although 'middle class' was not a term in common usage.

Fitzmaurice further mentions linguistic factors which identified the 'north-south divide' (2012:301). Scholars, she states, were concerned with producing 'dictionaries and grammars that were designed to prescribe and disseminate 'proper' English, which was free of provincialisms and vulgarisms.' (2012:301). Although factors such as the lexical structure of different pieces of correspondence produced within the different s.g's delineated by this thesis would make an interesting study, they are beyond the remit of this work's parameters.

Nevala (2018) has written about the use of *thou* in the 18th century. The study looks at the word's usage in correspondence and, thus, is fundamental to this overall study of politeness in EHL. She discusses how it changed in usage, from a part of everyday speech to a more niche area of communication:

> By the middle of the century, the distinction between thou and you started to be increasingly related to the elevated style of writing and literary genre: the use of thou was more and more connected with the language of poetry and religious prose and prayer.
>
> (Nevala, 2018:91)

This usage of *thou* is also discussed by Cerquiero (2011) who also finds from her study of correspondence that the second person singular pronoun had, by the 18th century, become used mainly within poetic circles. See Chapter 5 for more discussion of this particular aspect of politeness.

Shvanyukova (2019) has written on the subject of the letter-writing manuals which were popular in 19th- century England. These arose through a realisation by the emergent middle classes that they were unsure as to the etiquette of writing to recipients of differing status, age and even gender. Dossena (2019) also writes on this topic, stating that these guides

> (…) commented on language etiquette, providing guidance on how to address specific recipients according to their rank, age, and gender (…) and how to convey mutual status relying exclusively on language.
>
> (2019: 197)

She does, however, state that these guides were not necessarily 'representative of how language was actually used' and, therefore, can only provide an idea of some ideal literary standard to which the readers of these manuals aspired (2019:197). She also concentrates on business letters and, thus, her findings are not of direct relevance to this study of personal letters. Dossena does claim that a formulaic marker of politeness within requests was the use of *beg:* 'I beg to do X' (2019:210). However, as discussed in Section 2.4.1, no such formulae were discovered when searching for patterns of politeness within the parameters of the corpus searches undertaken for this study.

Sönmez (2005) has investigated request markers (RMs) in English family letters and her results show that '(…) seniors writing to juniors use a more restricted range of RMs than age peers or juniors writing to seniors.' (2005:13). This is, perhaps, not to be expected; it could be posited that people addressing their age, or social, superiors would feel constrained to use particular phrases, especially when making requests. She also finds, as could be expected, that what she classes as the 'most deferential terms' are seldom or never used by 'seniors' whereas 'the most junior writers address their seniors with the full range of markers, but rarely with ZERO.' (2005:15). Although these findings are pertinent to the study of politeness in correspondence, the date range of the study, 1623 to 1660, means that it only overlaps with this thesis's period, 1650-1920, by a decade and cannot, therefore, be of any great relevance.

Thus, looking at the broad spectrum of literature which has been written on so many aspects of EHL, it becomes apparent that there are no works which cover the development

of, and changes in, politeness markers diachronically. Although this thesis only covers 270 years, it provides a snapshot of how these politeness strategies altered and may form a basis for other works concentrating on different time periods.

2.2: Politeness

There is much literature which has been devoted to the subject of politeness, some of which will be discussed in this section.

Leech (1993) posited that there are six maxims of polite communication: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy. The overall aim of each of these is 'minimizing the cost and maximizing the benefit' to whomsoever is being addressed. One way this can be observed is in the use of honorifics (see Chapter 5), wherein writers efface themselves and magnify the importance of their correspondent in order to avoid any perceived imposition.

Locher & Watts (2008) have written on the interpersonal relationships within communication. They find that how a communication is received by the recipient is subject to judgements made by the addressee during the course of hearing or reading the message conveyed. These judgements are made in accordance with socially accepted norms of behaviour in any given situation. For example, an utterance which is perceived to be over-polite may be considered to be rude or sarcastic, yet language acceptable between friends of

long standing which may be considered impolite in formal situations could be perfectly acceptable in an informal setting.

2.2.1: Brown & Levinson

One of the foundational works on aspects of politeness in linguistics is the study undertaken by Brown & Levinson (1978, reissued 1987). The main focus of their work is the examination of speech acts; within this framework they investigate modes of politeness in many different language groups, e.g., Tamil and Japanese, as well as English. One problem with their premise is the construct of a 'Model Person' (MP) (1978:58). Rather than taking into account all the nuances of individuals' education, locality, peer group and idiolect, they simply assume their MP is: '(…) a wilful fluent speaker of a natural language, further endowed with two special properties – rationality and face.' (1978:58). They assume their MP is a rational, reasonable person who shares an assumed universal desire to be '(…) unimpeded and (has) the want to be approved of in certain respects.' (1978:58). Of course, to study politeness in its broadest sense, these assumptions are a good baseline, but, for the study of individuals' correspondence, each correspondent's writing style, motivation and other such considerations need to be noted.

One good example of the need for understanding of the wider context of a section of written, or spoken, correspondence is described in work by Terkourafi (2005). Terkourafi, in a discussion of Cypriot Greek-speakers' politeness strategies, argues that '(…) traditional theories do not focus on individual speakers.' She discusses how, when classifying speech acts, they are traditionally classified by criteria such as the speaker's age and gender, requests and responses. To illustrate how speech acts cannot always be taken *per se*, she cites an

example from Bakakou-Orfanou & Aikaterini (1989) which may, at face-value, seem extremely polite: 'Will you allow us to go to the cinema?' (1989:205). When the rest of the discourse is examined, however, it becomes clear that the actual question is posed in an ironic, even sarcastic, way and is, thus, quite impolite. The correspondence studied for this thesis, however, did not appear to contain any examples of irony or sarcasm. Nevertheless, when reading written work between now-deceased correspondents, the apparently polite wording of a statement, as read by a third party, may have been understood quite differently by the original recipient. This is where the study of historical documents can only ever be a 'best guess' scenario. The modern-day researcher must use their own judgement to ascertain as best they can what the writer's meaning may have been. Another aspect of the particular statement cited by Terkourafi is that, in its original Greek, the second person plural is used. This, in an informal family conversation, underlines the covert sarcasm. As discussed later in this chapter, the singular and plural second person had disappeared in general usage in English by 1650. Thus, this indicator of politeness and formality used in earlier centuries is no longer available to researchers.

With reference to the aspect of formality when studying politeness, Schmidt (1980) discusses Brown & Levinson's 1978 work on universals in politeness, and states, '(…) politeness (is) broadly defined to include both polite friendliness and polite formality (...)'. Thus, within this work, levels of formality in language will also be deemed to be indicators of politeness (Schmidt, 1980: pp100-114).

The aspect of 'face' is central to Brown & Levinson's work. They define this as 'the public self-image that every member [of society] wants to claim for himself' (1978:66). In

other words, politeness, in their view, is centred upon not belittling someone or implying that they are inferior in any way. This can take the form of not making the other person seem incompetent, unintelligent or unworthy of one's notice or consideration, for example, through the choice of language used in any given interaction. As discussed elsewhere in this work, use of deference, honorifics and humility are some of the key linguistic strategies which can be employed in this regard.

Without a real understanding of how correspondents perceived each other's language, however, it is not often possible to judge face in a historical context. In the rare cases[2] of a series of letters between two correspondents having been preserved, some inference may be possible but, on the whole, this aspect will not be taken into account for the purposes of the current study. This decision to discount 'face' within the study is further supported by Al-Hindawi and Alkhazaali (2016). They deem that face cannot always be assessed correctly: '(…) face theory in general implies problem of how to correctly define the notion of face (…)' (2016:1543).

Brown & Levinson do discuss deference, which they summarise as being one of two models: either the writer abases themselves to the recipient, or the writer exaggerates the recipient's status to stress their superiority (1978:178). Within the category of deference, Brown & Levinson include the use of honorifics. Titles such as *Sir, My Lady, Madam* etc. are widely used to demonstrate politeness:

[2] Correspondence from the earlier years of interest tend to have been preserved somewhat 'piecemeal'. There are, however, some sets of [almost] complete correspondence. Examples include The Paston Letters, The Clift Family Correspondence and The Satterthwaite Letters. These tend to be between a limited groups of people and are generally Peer-Peer, thus not of interest to this work.

> Probably all languages encode deference in generalized forms of address for strangers, unfamiliars, etc. (…) In English, they originally had aristocratic connotations: Sir, Madam, Lady.' Authors say that it had been assumed that these titles assumed social standing/class of referents, but they find these terms can be used to soften FTAs[3] (1978:182)

Instances of such linguistic usage are found throughout the data collected for this study, for example:

> ***2.1:*** If my lady —— could have any notion of the fatigues that I have suffered these two last days, I am sure she would own it a great proof of regard, that I now sit down to write to her.
>
> (Lady Mary Wortley Montague to The Lady[4] - 16.8.1716) [5]

Honorifics are, of course, still part of PDE (Present Day English), although not as markedly as during the 17th and 18th centuries. For more discussion of this aspect of polite language, see Chapter 5.

Another form of politeness, which Brown & Levinson state has a 'world-wide distribution' (1978:179), is the use of plural pronouns when addressing an individual. This particular phenomenon is harder to identify; usage of 'thou' and 'you' had become less

[3] Face Threatening Acts

[4] Lady Montague's correspondence does not record the recipients' names. Titles such as 'To Mrs. S.C.' and 'To the Countess of -' are used throughout. The use of 'To The Lady -' implies a member of the aristocracy.

[5] This example also demonstrates usage of the third person as a linguistic marker of politeness.

common by the 17th century (Nevala 2018) and, even before then, it was used as a marker of formality as well as singularity/plurality. In languages which retain equivalents of the English 'thou/thee' and 'you/ye', e.g., French, Greek and German to name a few, this is still an overt marker of politeness and/or deference, but as discussed elsewhere, is no longer easily expressed in PDE. For a more detailed discussion, see Section 2.3.4: Social Status. Should any instances of clearly plural pronouns be found within the data they will be discussed, but this will not form a major point of investigation.

One other politeness strategy, again which has been observed from the historical data, is the use of the third person. Brown & Levinson give the following example:

2.2: Would His Highness prefer tea in the pink or the lavender room?

(1978:201)

The Extract 2.1, from Lady Mary Wortley Montague's letter, also demonstrates usage of the third person. Only one other example of this politeness strategy has been found within the data examined (see Extract 7.57). Thus, it does not form part of this study.

2.3: Social deixis

Social deixis, according to Levinson (1983) is the encoding of social distinctions within language. This is the means by which the participants in communication encode the boundaries between them (for instance husband/wife, employer/employee, subject/monarch) by the use of particular words, phrases or modes of speech (be it written or spoken). In an earlier paper, Levinson explains that this includes ' honorifics, titles of

address, second person pronominal alternates and associated verb agreements, and the like.' (Levinson 1979:206).

Jucker (2016), from a different perspective, discusses politeness in dramatic work. He examines a study by Brown & Gilman (1989) which was based on Brown & Levinson's work and applies their theories to Shakespearean dialogue. Jucker concludes, from his analysis, that the extant power relationship between the interlocutors determines the level of politeness required from each party:

> If speaker A has power over speaker B, A should need fewer politeness strategies to carry out a particular face-threatening act than speaker B uses for a similar face-threatening act against A. If A and B are socially distant, they should both use more politeness strategies than a similar pair which is less distant. And the speaker should use more politeness strategies for a more serious face-threatening act than for a less serious act.
>
> (2016: 98, 99)

As previously discussed, however, no examples of reciprocal correspondence were to be found within the corpora used for data collection and, thus, it has not proved possible to analyse these power relationships.

As will be discussed in the section on perceptions of social status during the time span of this investigation, the notions of *Royalty, Aristocracy, Gentlefolk* and *Lower Classes*[6] were

[6] In his 'Description of England' (1577) William Harrison reported…. "We in England devide our people commonly into four sorts, gentlemen, citizens or burgesses, yeoman, and articifers or labourers." These ranks were still evident during the time span of this study. For a fuller discussion of British society between 1688 – 1832 see O'Gorman (2016)

quite distinct in the earlier periods but had slightly blurred by the early 20th century. Tomida (ND) writes about the British class system from his experience as a Japanese resident in the UK. Although the work is undated, topical references such as the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton in 2011, clearly indicate it was written recently and is, thus, an up-to-date account of British society. He explains many of the ways in which people have perceived class visibly, from clothes worn, newspapers read, and accents used, but states, in his conclusion that 'the barriers between classes, especially the gap between the middle and the working classes, are getting narrower, and also (…) the influence of class is diminishing' (Tomida, ND:286). Nevertheless, social rankings were still fairly marked throughout the time span of interest to this study and the discussion will, therefore, broadly use this terminology when discussing correspondence between people of different social classes. The findings of this study should help to ascertain whether or not Tomida's assertion is correct regarding the narrowing of the class gaps.

2.3.1: Al-Hindawi and Alkhazaali

A comprehensive critique of politeness theories was undertaken by Al-Hindawi & Alkhazaali (2016). Their discussion examines how politeness is seen by some to be a strategy to avoid conflict and smooth communication (for example Lakoff (1975:64) Leech (1983:19) and Ide (1989:22)). Other scholars, including Eelen (2001) and Terkourafi (2001), assert that politeness is not so much in the actions of the communicator but rather in the perceptions of the recipient:

> This approach, as Watts (2003, p. 97, 119), invokes that the addressee's evaluation of the speaker's behaviour, rather than the speaker's behaviour or intention itself, is what determines whether or not politeness arises. This 'reception-based' or 'discursive' approach,

> thus, differs in its perspective from other traditional conceptualizations of politeness in linguistic and social pragmatics, which are 'production-based' approaches. (2016:1538)

Due to the fact that this work can only analyse the written record of communications between authors, and has no way of discerning underlying emotions, intentions or attitudes, the 'production-based' approach is, nevertheless, the only one which this research can take.

The authors criticise Brown & Levinson's MP for being too Anglo-Centric and challenge their assertion that the face-saving model applies universally. However, as this study is only an examination of British correspondence, this argument can be disregarded. Brown & Levinson, however, only look at politeness in PDE. Although this is, of course, the main topic of their work it does not necessarily follow that these methods apply equally to earlier versions of English. In Chapter 5, where the usage of honorifics is discussed, it is shown that the majority of expressions such as *Madam, Your Grace* and *My Lord* fell out of usage over the time span of this study. We still, of course, have honorific prefixes, such as Dr., Rev., HRH., and so on, but the actual language used surrounding them has altered greatly between 1650 and modern day usage.

2.3.2: Politeness strategies

As has already been discussed, although face is considered central to many theories of politeness, it is very difficult to ascertain from historical correspondence. The main focus of investigation, therefore, will be terms of address and other such identifiable linguistic strategies.

One of the politeness markers identified by, among others, Brown & Levinson is circumlocution. They, along with Marquez (2000), also use the term ambiguity for this feature of speech. As the correspondents using such linguistic tactics to show politeness needed to be very clear as to what they were saying, albeit in an indirect way, the term ambiguity will not be used in this study when discussing circumlocution. The following example, from a letter written by Laetitia Pilkington to Samuel Richardson in 1746, although expressed in an extremely roundabout way, leaves the recipient in no doubt as to its intention.

> ***2.3:*** I So truly wish you health and happiness, that I hope you will pardon me the liberty I take in enquiring how you and your dear family are.
>
> 1746pil2_x3b

Similarly, in this extract from a letter written by Richard Sheridan to Mrs Wilson in 1816:

> ***2.4:*** Mrs. Sheridan who has been obliged to make a rule to write to no one, not even to her Sisters desires me to convey to you her sincere thanks for your kind and obliging note.
>
> 1816she2_x5b

The two examples cited above are both extremely verbose in nature. Despite the hedging strategies employed by the authors, there can be no doubt as to the meanings they wish to convey. For example, the extract from Laetitia Pilkington's letter could easily have been phrased more concisely: 'I hope your family are all well.' Likewise, Sheridan could have worded his message: 'Mrs Sheridan asks me to pass on her thanks for your kind note'. Neither of these abridged versions are, on the face of it, impolite. However, by couching the

communicated messages with terms such as 'I hope you will pardon me the liberty' demonstrates that extra politeness strategies, in these cases circumlocution, were deemed necessary.

Bousfield (2010) discusses circumlocution as part of the politeness strategies of British society. He illustrates this with the following example:

> (…) out of context, on an absolute scale of politeness, we can judge that *Can you help me?* is more polite, as a request, than *Help me*, and is less polite than *Could you possibly help me?.*
>
> (2010: p110)

However, to make an informed judgement on an individual's use of circumlocutionary language as a politeness strategy, their overall writing style needs to be taken into account. Some writers naturally use extremely 'flowery' language most of the time, whereas others may tend to have a more direct manner. Context is, therefore, impossible to ignore if politeness is to be implied from circumlocution. Bousfield does, in fact, cite Leech (2007) on this aspect:

> – Pragmatic (or relative) (im)politeness scale: This is (im)politeness relative to norms in a given society, group, or situation. Unlike the absolute scale, it is sensitive to context (…). Hence it is possible that a form considered more (im)polite on the absolute (im)politeness scale is judged less (im)polite relative to the norms for the situation.
>
> (Leech 2007: 174)

Taking all these discussions and arguments into account, it becomes clear that a simple quantitative study seeking to count instances of the various politeness strategies would not give a clear indication of the overall patterns of usage: qualitative study of context and background must also be undertaken in order to see the picture in more detail. Instances of countable items, for instance modal verbs and honorifics, will be useful to indicate changing trends in style. These cannot, however, be taken as definite proof of differences in politeness markers unless the overall context, as discussed, is considered.

2.3.4: Social status

Lyons (1977), in his book on deixis, states that a person's deictic role is separate from his/her social status. However, as is quite marked in earlier English, the use of certain pronouns is often directly linked to their status. Although someone in a position of high status or power may speak to a subordinate using *thee* or *thou*, for the person of lower standing to reciprocate in the same way would have been taken to be extremely impolite, if not insolent. As Nevala (2018) explains:

> The role of *thou* changed in the course of the Early Modern English period. It was first used as a status marker, in that it was mostly used to address either a social inferior (e.g., a servant or a member of a lower rank), or an inferior in power within a family (e.g., wife and children). Members of the lower ranks also used reciprocal *thou.* (…) On the other hand, *thou* also became marked by distance, so that by using it, the speaker could signal either emotional distance (e.g., contempt, anger) or proximity (e.g., love, liking) to the addressee.
>
> (2018: pp78-79)

From this, it can be seen that the less formal 2nd person pronoun was used between social equals, family members and such to signify the closeness of their relationship. Conversely, *you* and *ye* could be used to communicate social or emotional distance. Nevala goes on to state that the usage of *thou* and *thee* had begun to decline in the 17th century and was becoming quite rare by the 18th century. She goes so far as to state that ''Thou' was already considered as 'vulgar', 'ungenteel' and 'rude' by the late 17th century.' By the 18th century, it was mostly reserved for certain genres of writing, poetry and religious prose being amongst them (2018: pp81-82).

Archer (2017) discusses the context and pragmatics of historical documents. She discusses how there is a problem with 'whether it is possible to tap into the linguistic intuitions of speakers of times past' (2017:317). She considers that a 'behaviour record' for the era and the actual interlocutors is needed, which should be 'optimally complete'. This, she states, helps the modern reader to 'get inside people's heads' in order to ascertain 'motivations and perceptions'. The social, cultural and historical context must be examined and understood as well as can be done from a PDE speaker's position so as to discern the social rules which governed the communications of the time. Within the data examined for qualitative analysis in this study, where there are cases of individual authors writing to people of different social classes it has been possible to note these, sometimes subtle, changes of language. In other cases, though, where we only have correspondence written by one writer to a small group of people it is not always as easy to pinpoint what words or phrases are being used to show deference to those of a higher social group. Ideally, it would be desirable to have a selection of writing from each author studied to his or her own peer group from which to draw a 'baseline' for comparison with different classes of people. Sadly, the researcher

nowadays only has what other people have chosen to preserve to work from, so it is not always possible to form an 'optimal behaviour record'.

Haugh (2010) compares deference and respect. He states that, although these two areas have often been linked together in studies, they are actually different topics. He cites discusses how deference is usually defined as:

> (…) the expression of respect for and social distance from people of higher status, where status is assumed to be fixed prior to the relationship.
>
> (2010: Introduction)

By way of contrast, he states that respect has 'remained relatively undefined in the literature' although both come under 'the umbrella of either studies of politeness or social deixis' (2010:1). In his work, Haugh cites Huang who defines social deixis as:

> (…) the codification of the social status of the speaker, the addressee, or a third person or entity referred to, as well as the social relationship holding them together.
>
> (Huang 2007:163)

For the purposes of this study, as discussed in Chapter 3, the social group of each correspondent analysed has been allocated according to a broad set of criteria. Whether or not the people concerned would have agreed with the researcher's view is something we can never know. However, social deixis has been shown to be an important factor in analysing the politeness terms used within correspondence. Hence, the implications from the literature reviewed in the area of social deixis are that for correspondence up to the mid/late 17th

century, choice of second person pronouns could reveal much about social distance. For later letters, however, as studied within this work, other indicators must be sought. Amongst these, usage of titles (e.g. *My Lady, Your Grace*), especially between people of similar social ranks, may give an indication of the levels of politeness being indicated. As discussed elsewhere within this work (see Chapter 5), the use of forenames was extremely rare, especially in the late 17th and the 18th centuries. Even when people were referring to close family members, they would often use terms such as *My Wife* or *Mrs* -- (see Extract 2.4 for one such instance). In Chapter 5, where the usage of honorifics is discussed, it can be seen how, when addressing peers, terms such as *my brother,* or simply, *Sir,* were often used, (see Extracts 5.3 and 5.4, for instance) but when addressing those of a higher social group, more deferential language is used. Instances of this include *your Lordship* and *your Ladyship* and can be seen in Extracts 3.8 and 3.9

2.4: Corpus Linguistics

2:4.1: Data selection

Much discussion centres around methods, and results, of corpus linguistic usage. The main ways of using corpora to study aspects of language are quantitative, where the numbers of returns for particular search terms are an end in themselves, or data-mining, where the corpora are searched for terms of interest in order to bring up examples of suitable texts for further quantitative and/or qualitative analysis. The data-mining method has been used in this work, as discussed more fully in Chapter 3: Methodology.

For the purposes of some research, the gathering and analysis of numerical data is the answer to the study's RQ. Works of this type may, for example, be investigating how and when certain words or phrases appeared or fell out of use. However, Meyer (2002) cites Aarts (2001:7) who states,

> Corpus-based research of this nature, Aarts (2001: 7) notes, invariably elicits a "so what" response: so what if we know that there are 435 instances of the conjunction "because" in a particular category of written language, whereas there are only 21 instances in conversations?
>
> (Meyer, 2002:102)

Meyer continues this discussion by explaining the importance of defining the research question(s) before gathering the data from the corpus or corpora. By doing so, the search parameters and results obtained will be more accurately selected to fulfil the research criteria:

> To move beyond simply counting features in a corpus, it is imperative before undertaking a corpus analysis to have a particular research question in mind, and to regard the analysis of a corpus as both "qualitative" and "quantitative" research – research that uses statistical counts or linguistic examples to test a clearly defined linguistic hypothesis.
>
> (2002:102)

Thus, when collecting the data set of results originally obtained from searching the Archer and CLMET corpora, not all the search returns found were selected for further analysis. Each result was examined within its greater context to ascertain whether or not it met the criteria

of this work. For example, there were 11 matches returned for the search term *worth** with the parameters 'Genre: Letters; Period: 1750–99; Variety: British'. On further examination, however, only two of these proved to be examples of deferential or honorific language and, therefore, appropriate for fuller analysis. Within the 11 matches found for this particular search term, for instance, was the following:

> ***2.5:*** There is a very amiable, modest, brave, worthy young Gentleman (…)
>
> 1767smi2_x4b

Although *worthy* can be used as an adjective of deference to the addressee, as seen elsewhere in this study (see, for example, Extracts 5.46 and 5.48), in the extract above it is used as a descriptive adjective regarding a third person and, thus, is not of relevance to the qualitative or quantitative analyses.

Landert (2019) discusses pragmatics in historical corpora. The importance of understanding the context of a particular word is vital when analysing the original list retrieved from the search. She discusses Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFID):

> '(…) the search for *sorry* retrieves apologies and the search for *please* retrieves requests.' However, this is not precise, as expressions containing *please* might not be requests, and many instances of both types of speech act may omit the relevant word.
>
> (2019:173)

Thus, any corpus search for an element such as 'politeness' cannot be programmed in any way which will bring up all examples contained within the data set. Landert does discuss how,

sometimes, it is possible to identify patterns through data tagging which can then be applied to the search. She cites Manes & Wolfson (1981), who were investigating compliments in US English:

> (…) the most frequent way of paying compliments in American English takes the form of "NP is/looks (really) ADJ"' Once a suitable pattern has been identified it can be used to search corpora.
>
> Landert (2019:174)

It had been hoped that, from the sampling stage of the work (see Chapter 3 – Methodology) that some identifiable patterns might emerge, for example 'May I beg NP for (…)' or 'Your ADJ servant V NP (…)'. However, no such patterns were identified and, so, this method of tagged searches was not used in the data gathering.

2.4.2: Breakdown of data results

Work by Cerquiero (2008) has tracked the change in usage of *pray* as a marker of request to *please* between 1860 – 1919. Although quantitative results of work such as this can tell us something *per se,* Cerquiero breaks down her findings by the age of the writers, addressees and other criteria, thus giving a fuller overview of how this change took place. Breaking corpus results down in similar ways gives much more insight into patterns of change, as well as highlighting any unexpected discrepancies.

Flack (2018), for example, in a corpus-based study of the dative alternation from 1410 – 1680, showed some unexpected results during the late 16th century which would not have been identified by collating numerical results alone. Merely counting the findings from the corpus search, without deciding how best to break the analysis down, will give some idea of changes in lemma frequencies but it is necessary, beforehand, to decide what parameters need to be set in order to bring about underlying patterns which numbers, alone, may not reveal. One such example in the current study was the finding that, in line with Cerquiero's (2008) work on requests, the usage of *thou* and *thee* was, by the 19th century, restricted to members of poetic circles. It was, certainly, of interest that these lemmas were found long after they had fallen out of regular use (Nevala, 2018). Without the qualitative analysis, however, the underlying discovery of who was using these pronouns would have been missed.

2.4.3 Corpus size and design

Corpora vary enormously in size. Rütten (2019) discusses the drawbacks and benefits of differently-sized corpora, for example the Helsinki Corpus (c1.5 million words) and the CLMET3[7] (c34 million words). Rütten claims that bigger corpora can make contextualisation of results difficult, especially if a rare occurrence of a linguistic phenomenon is identified. He states,

> Small data can be patchy and inconclusive and leave the impression of imprecise scientific description and ignorance of further evidence. For these reasons, small data often seem

[7] Corpus of Late Modern English Texts version 3.0

unconvincing and in need of more reliable proof–bigger data, that is. However, small data can also be highly regular and coherent, and for these reasons imply a lucid profile of a specific minority genre (...)

(2019:165)

BRITISH		a	d	f	h	j	l	m	n	p	s	x	y	total
1600-49	files	0	10	0	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	0	30
	words	0	32,342	0	0	0	21,026	0	0	32,741	0	0	0	86,109
1650-99	files	0	10	11	10	10	10	21	10	0	10	75	10	177
	words	0	30,328	41,667	21,818	21,186	20,466	23,811	22,304	0	21,427	38,767	20,488	262,262
1700-49	files	0	10	11	10	11	10	14	10	0	10	77	10	173
	words	0	27,862	44,057	21,511	23,265	21,315	22,066	21,612	0	20,812	33,896	20,495	256,891
1750-99	files	10	10	10	10	10	10	20	10	0	10	70	11	181
	words	25,386	27,484	45,198	21,752	21,284	20,367	21,002	23,172	0	20,599	29,589	23,043	278,876
1800-49	files	10	10	10	10	11	10	10	10	0	10	25	10	126
	words	30,804	31,211	45,107	21,777	23,249	20,531	20,286	22,951	0	21,015	12,671	20,883	270,485
1850-99	files	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	10	26	10	126
	words	30,684	34,856	43,427	21,322	21,243	20,757	22,265	23,072	0	21,810	10,819	21,789	272,044
1900-49	files	10	11	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	10	29	10	130
	words	26,717	31,391	45,408	21,123	22,208	21,160	20,213	21,977	0	21,664	12,529	22,424	266,814
1950-99	files	10	11	10	10	10	10	13	10	0	10	28	10	132
	words	23,437	32,200	45,109	21,093	22,723	20,721	20,994	22,935	0	21,385	11,361	22,060	264,018
Total	**files**	50	82	72	70	72	80	98	70	10	70	330	71	1,075
	words	137,028	247,674	309,973	150,396	155,158	166,343	150,637	158,023	32,741	148,712	149,632	151,182	1,957,499

Table 1: Compilation of the Archer Corpus by genre.

Table 1, above, taken from the appendix to the Archer Corpus V3, shows the breakdown of the content by genre. The tag 'x' is that allocated to correspondence, allowing extrapolation of the figures for the time-period approximately relevant to this study. Taking data from 1700 – 1899, which broadly covers the period of study, there is an overall word count of 1,078,296. The total amount classified as genre 'x', however, is only 86,975, meaning that only about 8% of the corpus is relevant to this work.

Besides corpus size, Davis (2019) explains how corpus design can have a bearing on the results obtained. With regard to smaller corpora, such as the Helsinki corpus, there is a drawback in that they '(…) are often adequate for the study of high-frequency syntactic

constructions, but they are typically inadequate for the study of lexical and semantic phenomena, especially for medium and lower-frequency words' (2019:66). Despite this, the Archer Corpus was deemed to be the best available for this particular study as it looks at historical correspondence which is, by its very nature, a relatively small collection of documents. The ability to set parameters such as 'British, Correspondence, and Genre' means its design is ideally suited to work of this nature. Although the CLMET was also used for extra material, the main analysis of features such as wpm was only possible in Archer dues to the different designs of the two corpora.

Davis continues by stating that, apart from the very highest-frequency lemmas, collocates are difficult to identify in any meaningful detail in smaller corpora. Although exact collocates did not constitute part of the data analysis, due to the relatively small number of extant documents available, patterns of context are of great interest and so this aspect will be taken into consideration when compiling the final collection of texts to be examined. Interestingly, a collocation between *humbl** and *present** was noted, see Chapter 6, Figure 6.6 and surrounding discussion of this finding.

2.5: Conclusion

As has been demonstrated from this selection of the available literature, there are many facets which need to be taken into account when attempting to draw any meaningful conclusions during the course of this study. The writing style of the individual correspondents; the changing pattern of English usage; societal norms; together with size, and design, of corpora are just some of the considerations necessary. The findings of this research will, clearly, be open to interpretation. However, by investigating markers of politeness in correspondence it is hoped that some idea of how politeness was signalled linguistically, and any changes of patterns or societal norms, between the late 17th and early 20th centuries will be obtained.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1: Overview

The overall method of examining data for this study is through qualitative analysis of texts extracted by searching in various corpora. Although quantitative data are used to show any trends of change in politeness markers over the time-period under investigation, this is not relied upon to explain such figures as a whole. Numerical data presented on charts can be helpful in illustrating trends and highlighting any potential anomalies which may require deeper investigation, but they only give part of the picture. Therefore, although such quantitative data will be given within the chapters of this work which discuss specific aspects of politeness (Chapters 4,5,6 and 7) where pertinent, qualitative data analysis will be used to try to understand the story of the people who were driving and/or following these trends.

The data within this study has been collected mainly from the Archer and CLMET corpora. Other, additional, material was sourced from collections of letters available at Project Gutenberg (gutenberg.org). Data selected from the two corpora were letters from British writers dating between the beginning and end parameters were selected. All genders and levels of society were included so as to gather as wide a range of correspondence as possible. Additional material from Project Gutenberg was selected from authors who had been identified in the initial data collection. See Appendix B for details of authors included in the final data set analysed.

Both of these corpora have their benefits and limitations. Whereas the Archer corpus can be examined as a whole, giving combined results for all authors included, the CLMET is separated into sub-corpora for each individual author and, thus, it can be harder to compare lemmas across the whole corpus. Being a combined corpus, Archer already includes a referencing system for each entry: period, genre and author being part of the encoded information within these reference numbers. CLMET, which was accessed through Sketch Engine, needed a referencing system creating so as to reference data extracted. These details will be discussed further in the next section.

3.2: Referencing of corpora entries

Within the Archer Corpus, all entries have been assigned their own referencing number which encodes the date, author and genre. (See Table 3.1) Thus, no matter what search terms are entered, each result retains its own, unique, reference. For example, an extract of a letter written by Daniel Defoe in 1704 is encoded 1704dfoe_x3b. This gives the date (1704), the author (dfoe), the genre (x being 'letters'), the subdivision of the corpus in which this extract is found (3 being 1700-1749) and, finally, 'b' indicates it is of British origin.

Text metadata and word-level annotation	
The database stores the following information for each text in the corpus:	Genre
	Period
	Sex of author
	Variety
The **primary** classification of texts is based on:	Period
Words in this corpus are annotated with:	POS-tag (C7)
	Lemma
	Semantic tag (USAS)
	Simple tag
	Lemma-simple tag combination
	Full semantic tag (USAS)
	Original spelling
The **primary** word-level annotation scheme is:	POS-tag

Table 3.1: Information encoded within the Archer Corpus

The CLMET corpus, however, does not assign reference numbers to its contents. Instead, each author's works are included as a sub-corpus of the main one. The corpora marked as 'letters' were extracted as individual files. See Table 3.2

CLMET3_1_1_8	Text Document	151 KB
CLMET3_1_1_16	Text Document	31 KB
CLMET3_1_1_37	Text Document	51 KB
CLMET3_1_1_44	Text Document	1,785 KB
CLMET3_1_2_110	Text Document	237 KB
CLMET3_1_2_135	Text Document	275 KB
CLMET3_1_2_145	Text Document	236 KB
CLMET3_1_2_154	Text Document	259 KB
CLMET3_1_2_185	Text Document	387 KB
CLMET3_1_3_192	Text Document	245 KB
CLMET3_1_3_230	Text Document	132 KB
CLMET3_1_3_252	Text Document	432 KB
CLMET3_1_3_290	Text Document	143 KB

Table 3.2: Files extracted from the CLMET Corpus

After rejecting certain corpora (See Section 3.4.2 for more details) the ones selected for analysis were assigned their own reference numbers (see Appendix A for full details). Then, when each search term was run, results found were encoded with the individual corpus' reference number, the search term used and the number of the resulting entry from Sketch Engine. For example, CLM9pls12 indicates that the extract was obtained by running the search term *please* using the Lucie D. Gordon sub-corpus and that it was the 12th such result listed in the resulting concordance.

One drawback of this method was that the same extract could come up under different searches. The following extract, written by Robert Louis Stevenson to Sidney Colvin, contains the words *would* and *please:*

3.1: please make it known it ***would*** be an acceptable gift to send scraps for doll dressmaking to the Reverend Sister Maryanne

Because two search terms of interest were contained within this sentence, it was returned during both searches but with different reference numbers: CLM10pls126 and CLM10wd352. Careful cross-checking was required in order not to include the same extract twice, as this would have resulted in these, and similar, examples of *please* and *worth* (or other duplicated results) both being counted twice within the quantitative analysis. Thankfully, similar instances were quite infrequent.

3.3: Aspects of politeness

Politeness, although having been widely studied over recent decades (as discussed in Chapter 2 - Literature Review) is still an abstract concept when it comes to searching corpora. Although many authors (including Brown & Levinson, 1978; Jucker, 2016; Bousfield, 2010) have considered it in terms of 'face', it is not a searchable term, *per se*, when extracting data from corpora. Thus, a definition of politeness, for the purposes of this work, was required. Within personal correspondence, it was decided that such a definition needed to consist of requests or thanks for gifts, favours and the like. Although this does not begin to cover the whole gamut of polite communication, it was considered to be a sufficient criterion for the analysis of data with reference to answering the research questions.

Following Brown & Levinson, the main means of expressing politeness include circumlocution, the use of modal verbs, the use of the third person, and certain words such as 'please'. They argue that ambiguity and disambiguation (hedging, circumlocution) are part of a cognitive process, citing the following example:

> I'm awfully sorry to bother you, and I wouldn't but I'm in an awful fix, so I wondered if by any chance (…)
>
> (Brown & Levinson: 1987:81)

They explain that the hesitation in reaching the point of the request sets the listener/recipient up to be apprehensive of whatever may be forthcoming. Delaying the actual request is also, on the part of the supplicant, a means of abasement and mitigation intended to gain favour with the potential grantee. To attempt to identify circumlocution, sampling of initial data was attempted following Landert (2019) See Section 3.2.1 for how this was undertaken.

Searching was also attempted for use of the third person as a marker of politeness. Brown & Levinson state that

> Deference phenomena represent perhaps the most conspicuous intrusions of social factors into language structure, in the form of honorifics. One kind of honorific, the use of plural pronouns to singular addressees, has a world-wide distribution (…)

They continue,

> Thus plurality signifies respect throughout the pronominal paradigm of reference.
>
> (Brown & Levinson: 1987:179, 180)

An example cited by Brown & Levinson is contained within a document from India dated 1824:

> ***3.2:*** If his Highness wishes to show that he is on our side, he ought to place guards (…)
>
> (Cox 1824)

Again, however, usage of the third person is not a searchable term. Furthermore, if one were to read the above extract in a different light, it could be that the author, Cox, is writing to an acquaintance discussing how 'His Highness', a third party, ought to act. Thus, full examination of the entire letters containing potential third-party usage would be required. However, only one other example of an author referring to his recipient in the third person has been found (see Chapter 7, Extract 7.57) within the data extracts and, thus, it has not formed part of the study.

> Modal verbs, as stated by Boicu (2007, abstract),
>
> attenuate the illocutionary force of the directive speech acts in both ways. Due to context, their pragmatic meaning either mitigates this force through positive or negative politeness (Brown & Levinson 1987) or aggravates it using the same resources.

The modal verb *would* was chosen as a representative of such expressions – phrases such as the following were found throughout the corpora:

3.3: Would be very willing to do you any service

1623more_2xb

3.4: would be very glad tow se you

1666alfo _2xb

3.5: My Other Request is that he ***would*** be pleased to let me have

1706dfo2_x3b

3.6: please make it known it ***would*** be an acceptable gift

CLM10wd352

3.7: It ***would*** be kind if you ***would*** do the like

CLM10wd399

All other modal verbs found in the data extracts were also recorded for further analysis.

Usage of honorifics was also noted. As stated by Brown & Levinson:

> Probably all languages encode deference in generalized forms of address for strangers, unfamiliars, etc. (…) In English, they originally had aristocratic connotations: Sir, Madam, Lady. Authors say that it had been assumed that these titles assumed social standing/class of referents, but they find these terms can be used to soften FTAs.
>
> (Brown & Levinson: 1987:182)

As honorifics are almost always included within opening salutations in correspondence, only those occurring in other parts of the body of the letters examined were included for further examination. From these occurrences it was hoped that instances of deference and/or self-

abasement could be detected. See Section 3.4 for further discussion of data selected and rejected.

3.3.1: Categorisation of social groups

In line with RQ 2 (Have markers of social deixis changed during the time period?), social class was of great importance in data analysis. To make this categorisation manageable, four arbitrary classifications were created:

Group A - royalty and titled aristocracy.

Group B - landed gentry.

Group C - professional people such as doctors, clergy and similar learned occupations.

Group D - working class people.

Naturally, it was not always possible to ascertain social status definitively. An attempt was made to identify all correspondents and correspondees online. Many of the works included in the corpora were also available on sources such as Project Gutenberg or via Google Books – these often included biographical details which were an enormous help with checking people's backgrounds, but many times the only or main source of information was Wikipedia. As Wikipedia entries normally have hyperlinks to related documents, these were also checked for verification. For further details of how correspondents were assigned to their different groupings, see Section 3.5.

This work will allocate people's social groups in accordance with, as far as can be ascertained, their background at birth. Bourdieu posits that an individual's background is

'cultivated from a person's early years' and is 'gained mainly through an individual's initial learning, and is unconsciously influenced by the surroundings' (Bourdieu, 2000).

Webb *et al*. discuss how, even should two people gain the same educational level, their family background 'plays a crucial role that has powerful impact on one's behaviour' They explain that:

> [A] PhD holder who comes from a poor family, his understandings of the world and value could be much different from someone who is also a PhD holder but raised in a rich family.
>
> (Webb et al., 2002, p.24)

They continue by explaining that the different early experiences each person was exposed to may instil in the one from a lower-class family a sense of inferiority or expectations of failure, whereas the one from a higher social background would not have these inhibitions. Thus, authors' social groups at birth will be considered to have formed their social instincts and outlook.

The clearest example of this premise of Webb *et al*. can be seen in the writings of Robert Burns. He was born the son of a very poor farmer and received little formal schooling in his early years. However, by 1786 his renown as a poet had begun to spread and he was accepted into the literary circles of Edinburgh (Britannica.com).

Comparing letters written by Burns before and after 1786 show that his respect for those in s.g's C and above did not apparently change, despite his own elevation in society. All the following extracts are taken from Gutenberg.org.

1781: Letter to his father, William. (s.g. D)

> I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which I hope have been remembered ere it is yet too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother,

In this extract, Burns shows filial respect to his father, gratefully thanking him for the lessons he was taught as a boy and following by offering 'dutiful respects' to his mother.

1783: Letter to Mr John Murdoch (s.g. C), his schoolteacher, sporadically. (robertburns.org)

> As I have an opportunity of sending you a letter without putting you to that expense which any production of mine would but ill repay, I embrace it with pleasure, to tell you that I have not forgotten, nor ever will forget, the many obligations I lie under to your kindness and friendship. […]
>
> But I dare say I have by this time tired your patience; so I shall conclude with begging you to give Mrs. Murdoch—not my compliments, for that is a mere common-place story; but my warmest, kindest wishes for her welfare; and accept of the same for yourself […]

This letter, again written before Burns had achieved literary fame, shows many deferential phrases, for example 'without putting you to that expense which any production of mine

would but ill repay'. He also begs Mr Murdoch to give his 'warmest, kindest wishes' to Mrs Murdoch, again using deferential language.

In November 1786, after he had become a nationally feted poet, Burns writes to Dr Archibald Laurie (s.g. C) and, again, uses deferential language:

> My most respectful compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Laurie

In another letter, dated July 1796, Burns writes to an old friend, Mr Allan Cunningham, who was practising in law (robertburns.org). Although the two men enjoyed a 'warm and frank' relationship (robertburns.org), he still uses deferential language in his letter:

> I mention this, because I had intended to beg your utmost interest, and that of all the friends you can muster, to move our commissioners of excise to grant me the full salary […]

Although these are only a few extracts from the copious amount of letters which Robert Burns left, they illustrate how, despite becoming famous and accepted into the top literary circles of Edinburgh, he still retained his deferential language in his correspondence throughout his lifetime.

Once social groupings had been determined, as far as possible, for both correspondents and recipients, extracts analysed were then grouped into three overall directions of communication: Higher to Lower (H-L), Lower to Higher (L-H) and Peer to Peer

(P-P). It was found that P-P letters formed the highest amount of the data set, with 292 extracts, followed by L-H (180 extracts) and then H-L (124 extracts).

From the data sampled for circumlocution (see Section 3.3.1) the lemmas *beg, worth* (mainly *worthy*, frequently used as an honorific) and *trouble* proved to be employed often within expressions of politeness, along with *please* and *pray.* Because of this, these five were chosen for the full data extraction, each one being run as a search term to include all their likely variants.

3.3.2: Sampling for circumlocution

To try to identify parts of speech, such as circumlocution, which cannot be tagged or searched for *per se.*, sampling was carried out in an attempt to identify pertinent lemmas during the main data searches. Landert's 2019 chapter entitled Function-to-Form Mapping gives a detailed account of similar work using corpus searches. To identify a varied sample of texts, the correspondence was separated into 50-year sub-divisions, and three authors from each sub-division were chosen. A minimum word-count of 2500 was obtained from each period to ensure there were sufficient texts to make a comparison. Letters written by each of these people to different recipients were then examined and instances of circumlocution were recorded in a file for further analysis. These were categorised into nouns (including proper nouns and titles), non-modal verbs, modal verbs and adjectives. Instances of the word 'if' were also recorded, being part of phrases such as 'if it is no trouble' 'if you please' and similar. Table 3.3 shows which authors were sampled for each half-century between 1650 and 1799.

Time Period	Authors Sampled	Total per Author	Total per Half-Century
1650-1699	Balthasar St Michel	416	
	Thomas Browne Snr	458	
	Dorothy Browne	280	
	John Strype	986	
	Winefrid Thimelby	522	
			2662
1700-1749	Lady Montague	782	
	Horace Walpole	1283	
	Daniel Defoe	2108	
			4173
1750-1799	Sarah Fielding	437	
	James Boswell	1181	
	Adam Smith	596	
	Edward Gibbon	777	
			2991

Table 3.3: Authors' Letters Selected for Sampling. Taken from Flack 2018.

Although words such as *beg, trouble,* and modal verbs appeared frequently within these extracts, they were also found throughout the rest of the texts, albeit in different

proportions. The following tables illustrate the frequencies found within the Sampling selection and within the same date range (1650 – 1799) in the whole Archer corpus for comparison. It should be noted that the data extracted from the Archer corpus was only filtered for 'letters', 'British', and the same date range as the sampled selection. Occurrences of these lemmas could fall within reported speech, for example, which could account for the difference in the results. See Section 3.4 for discussion of data excluded from the extracts analysed.

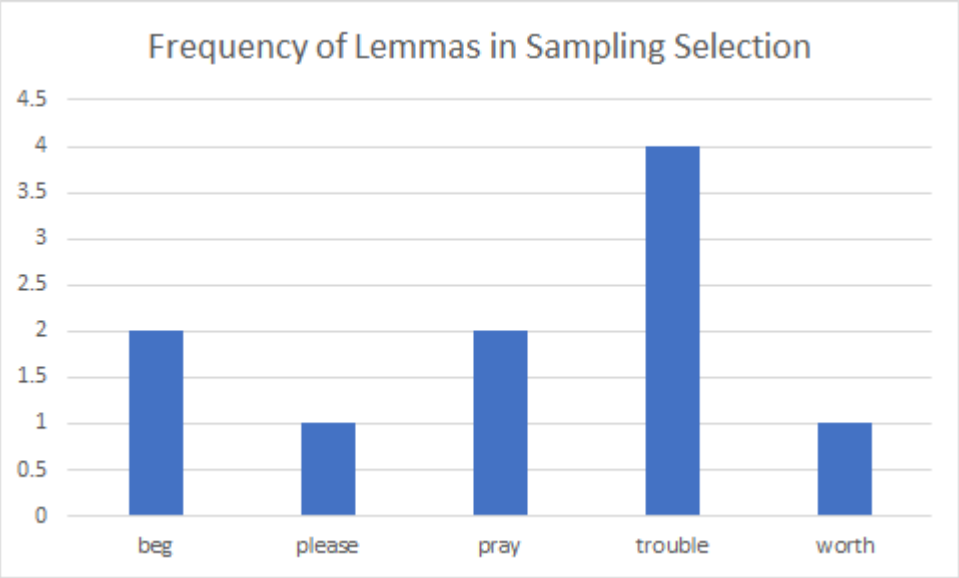

Figure 3.1: Frequencies of Selected Lemmas in Sampling Selection

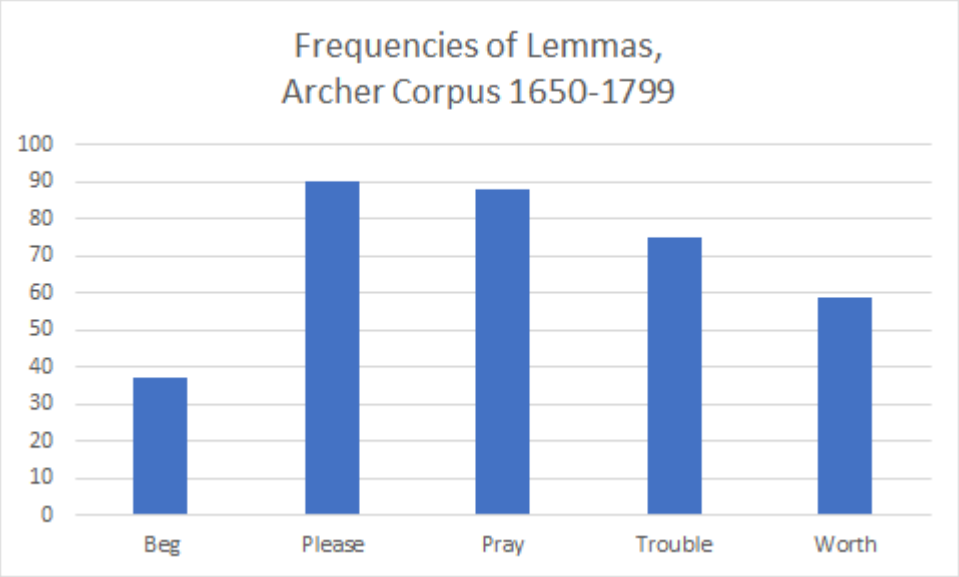

Figure 3.2: Frequency of Selected Lemmas in Archer Corpus 1650-1799

A similar comparison of data was then carried out with modal verbs found in the sampling selection compared against the same date-range in all data extracts analysed. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show the results obtained.

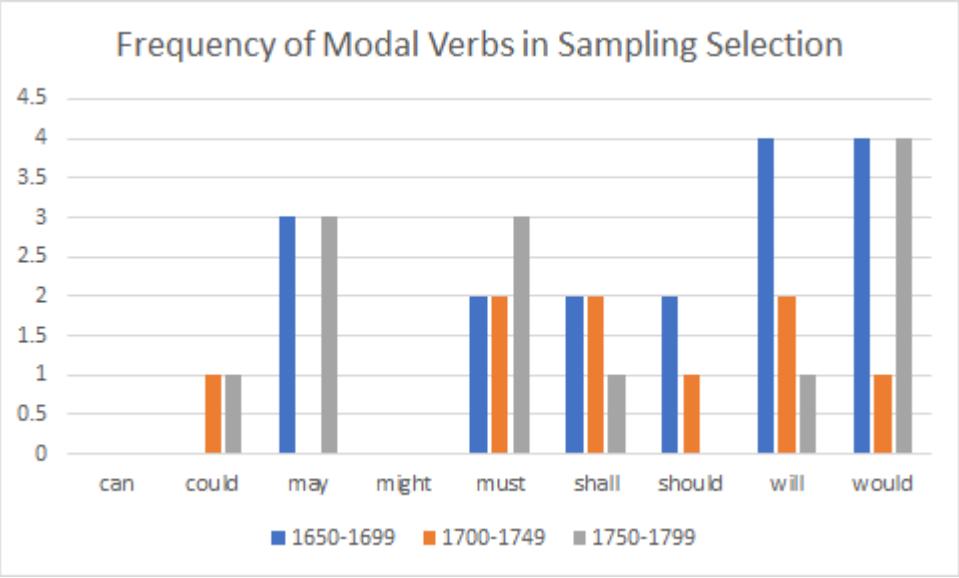

Figure 3.3: Frequency of Modal Verbs in Sampling Selection

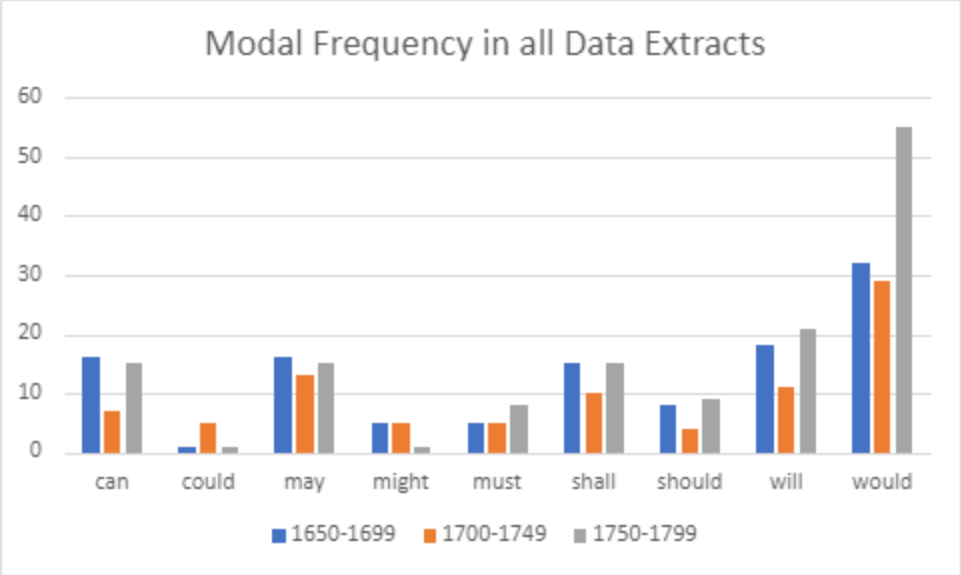

Figure 3.4: Frequency of Occurrence of Modal Verbs in all data analysed

After sampling for these three half-century periods, it became clear that no pattern was emerging and so, due to constraints of time, no further sampling for circumlocution was undertaken.

3.4: Data Selected and rejected for analysis

3.4.1: Lemmas rejected

After running corpus searches for the lemmas discussed above, during analysis there were certain extracts which it was decided to eliminate for various reasons. One such type of extract was reported speech. For example, in a letter written by Lord Byron to Thomas Moore in October 1813, the verb *pray* is found in an extract of reported speech:

3.8: Curran sent for him and said, the moment he entered the room, ' Mr. Mathews, you are a first-rate artist, and, since you are to do my picture, ***pray*** allow me to give you a sitting.'

CLM6py54

Although this example of the verb does fall within an expression of politeness, it cannot be ascertained that Lord Byron accurately remembered and quoted this particular request verbatim. Mollin (2007) writes regarding the problems which can occur when transcribing speech. Her work examines the transcriptions in the British parliamentary record: Hansard. Mollin states that, although it may seem to be a wonderful opportunity to have a record of people's spoken utterance in a database, when comparing written records with recorded data, many linguistic inaccuracies were found. Apart from information such as tones of voice, turn-taking and hesitations,

> (…) the transcribers and editors also alter speakers' lexical and grammatical choices towards more conservative and formal variants, Linguists ought, therefore, to be cautious in (…) the use of transcriptions that have not been made for linguistic purposes.
>
> Mollin (2007: Abstract)

Thus, examples of reported speech were omitted from the final data extracts analysed.

Another element of some correspondence was lines of poetry and quotations from other works of literature. The following extract, again from a letter of Lord Byron in 1813, to John Murray, an Edinburgh bookseller (National Library of Scotland) alludes to Byron's poem 'The Giaour', although, from searching the words of the digitised poem (Biblioteka Literatury Polskiej W Internecie), does not appear to be a direct quotation from it:

3.9: A Turkish tale I shall unfold,

A sweeter tale was never told;

But then the facts, I must allow,

Are in the east not common now;

Tho ' in the ' olden time, ' the scene

My Goaour (sic) describes had often been.

What is the cause! Perhaps the fair

Are now more cautious than they were;

Perhaps the Christians not so bold,

So enterprising as of old.

No matter what the cause may be,

It is a subject fit for me.''

Take my disjointed fragments then,

The offspring of a willing pen.

And give them to the public, ***pray***,

On or before the month of May.

Yes, my disjointed fragments take,

But do not ask how much they'll make.

CLM6py59

Although this extract was certainly written by Lord Byron, usage of *pray* to rhyme with *May* could suggest this is not his 'natural' prose but rather that the words have been modified for poetic effect. Thus, this cannot be taken as usage of a word in Byron's idiolect.

A further area of interest, regarding RQ1, (Has the usage and/or frequency of deferential language changed during the time period of the study?) was the usage of honorifics. These were originally noted during the sampling stage of the analysis to investigate

whether they might be an indicator of circumlocution. However, it was noted that opening and closing salutations followed fairly stereotypical formulae, almost always containing honorifics, the most common being *Sir, Madam, Your Lordship* and *Your Ladyship.* Examples include:

> ***3.10.:*** MY LORD I presume to Acquaint ***Your Lordship*** that Mr Burchet informed me he had Orders from the Prince.
>
> 1707ste2_x3b

> ***3.11.: Madam***! MY not weighting upon ***your Ladyship*** again before left London, according to my intention at least if not promise, your brother John has promised to excuse to you.
>
> 1650more_x2b

> ***3.12:*** Worthy ***Sir*** At the receipt of your letter I was so weak as not able tow wright tow you
>
> 1665alf2_x2b

The honorific *Esquire* was expected to occur quite frequently within addresses and salutations and, thus, possibly within the main text as well. However, within the whole time-frame of interest in the Archer corpus, only 18 instances were found, five of these being in letters written by Daniel Defoe. A similar search of CLMET returned five results, three in the letters of Robert Burns and two from Lord Byron's correspondence. Furthermore, the word was not found at all as an honorific within the body of letters examined, only as an opening salutation.

After running these searches, it was decided that only honorifics forming part of the main body of the letter would be noted, these typically being suggestive of the social closeness, or distance, perceived by the writer. Usage of such terms was expected to be greater in an example of lower-higher communication than in correspondence of higher-

lower social groups. The results of this particular part of the analysis are discussed in Chapter 5.

In a similar vein, it was noted that, while searching for *please,* this word often formed part of a standard ending to a letter. This was most notable in the letters of Robert Louis Stevenson, for example:

3.13: Please write to me, although I deserve it so little, and show a Christian spirit. Ever your faithful friend

CLM10pls15

3.14: Please write to me soon as to this

CLM10pls100

3.15: So please remember us all most kindly to Mrs. Low, and believe me ever yours

CLM10pls170

Similar constructions, however, were also found within the corpora in letters by other writers:

3.16: I 'll write again soon, send this to Alick, please

CLM9pls5

3.17: So soon as you please to send it, or impart your mind in any thing else, I am ready to serve you

1651eliz_x2b

3.18: Please write me by first post, and direct to me at Ellisland, near Dumfries

CLM4pls46

3.19: Please send this to Alick, to whom I will write again from Cairo

CLMET9pls4

As *please* was often used in these semi-formulaic expressions, it was decided, as with honorifics, to only include the lemma when it appeared within the body of the text.

3.4.2 Sub-corpora rejected

Whilst selecting individual corpora from the collection contained within the CLMET (see Appendix A), despite there being 13 marked as 'letters', several of these also had to be eliminated for certain reasons. The corpus named Richardson, dated 1741, proved to actually be an epistolary novel. Therefore, the writings it contained were all by the same author, not the wide range of correspondents originally suggested. The Browning corpus was likewise rejected as it comprised solely of letters between Robert Browning and his wife, Elizabeth, thus providing no variety of letters between people of different statuses. Other corpora, too, such as the letters of John Acton and Arthur Benson were also exclusively between the authors and one other individual.

3.5: Classification of authors' social groupings

Politeness can be discussed under many guises: deference, face, rudeness and request acts are a few examples (see, *inter alia* Brown & Levinson, (1987); Fraser & Nolen, (1981) and Terkourafi, (2008)). Within this, social deixis is an important consideration when considering any perceived positions of power, superiority etc. Bousfield (2010:118) discusses how various communities of practice, with their differing social conventions and ranks, usually have

agreed conventions which determine politeness within the group. The social standing of correspondents is, therefore, another factor which needs to be noted from the texts and categorised. As explained in Section 3.3, four social groupings were created for purposes of classification, from which it would be possible to investigate the effects of social deixis on usage of politeness terms. Wherever information is available, people were classified in accordance with their status at birth.

Group A:

Only persons with an aristocratic title were assigned to this category, for example Elizabeth of Bohemia (1596-1662), daughter of King James VI and I of Scotland and England, sister to King Charles I. Others categorised as 'A' included John Boyle (1707-1762), 5th Earl of Cork and Orrery; Lady Sarah Lennox (1745-1826), daughter of Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond; and Lord Byron (1788-1824), son of William, the 5th Baron Byron.

Group B:

Within this group, people with landed estates and private incomes were placed. Examples include Sir Edward Wortley Montagu (1678-1761), son of a wealthy coal owner, Sidney Wortley Montagu (1650 – 1727); Tobias Smollett (1721-1771), son of Archibald Smollett (d 1766) a landowner; and Henry More (1614-1687) whose father, Alexander, was 'financially well off and able to give his son a top class education' (O'Connor & Robertson, 2022).

Group C:

This grouping was used for members of professions such as the clergy, medical and legal practitioners and people with educational or scholarly backgrounds. Occasionally, such people may also have been titled or landowners. In such, cases the closest applicable grouping at their time of birth was assigned. Included within this grouping were Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) who, before being awarded his doctorate was a teacher (Stories of London.org); Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), who was born into a family of lighthouse engineers (Robert-louis-stevenson.org); and Daniel Defoe (1660?-1731), who was a successful trading merchant and bought a country estate and ship (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography).

Group D:

Initially, it was not expected that many letters written by people in this category would be found. Initial work, in the earlier half-centuries, tended to return mainly class A and B correspondents[8]. However, due to the decision made to categorise writers, as far as possible, by their status at birth, more people from humble, working-class backgrounds were identified. These notably include Robert Burns (1759-1796), who was born 'in a two roomed thatched cottage at Alloway, near Ayr, where his father, William Burnes, ran a small market garden.' (RobertBurns.org) and John Keats (1795-1821) who was believed to have been born in a stable his grandfather ran as an ostler (poetryfoundation.org).

[8] See https://websites.umich.edu/~ece/student_projects/print_culture/literacy.html for a discussion of literacy rates in 18th-Century England.

Occasionally, it was not possible to identify the recipients of some letters. In such cases it was sometimes possible to postulate on a person's social status from the subject matter, but occasionally they had to be classified as unknown. One such instance is the identity of Thomas Sloan, who received a letter from Robert Burns which remarked:

> ***3.20:*** You blame me for not writing you sooner, but you will please to recollect that you omitted one little necessary piece of information; -- your address.
>
> CLM4pls70

The Robert Burns Online Encyclopaedia (RobertBurns.org) was consulted, being an exhaustive resource giving details of all his friends, acquaintances and other contacts, but all that is listed under Thomas Sloan is as follows:

> According to Chambers, Sloan was 'understood' to have been a native of Wanlockhead. Burns is supposed to have made his acquaintance when travelling between Ellisland and Ayrshire, during the first year of his occupation of Ellisland.
>
> From a note, conjecturally dated by Ferguson May 1789, it appears that Sloan and Burns intended to pay a joint call on Captain Riddell at Friars' Carse. Sloan was one of those listed by Burns to subscribe to Dr Anderson's magazine The Bee. He may have been the recipient of an unaddressed invitation to spend New Year Day, 1791, with Burns.
>
> The last two letters of Burns to Sloan are to a Manchester address. From a note of 1st September 1791, it would seem that Sloan was in some kind of business embarrassment and had asked Burns to try to enlist the assistance of 'Mr Ballantine'. Burns regretted: 'that Mr Ballantine does not chuse to interfere more in the business. I am truly sorry for it, but cannot help it'.
>
> (RobertBurns.org)

As there was no other information seemingly available regarding Thomas Sloan, he simply had to be classified as: ?M and excluded from resultant data extraction.

In other cases, there proved to be more than one possible candidate for a correspondent's identity. One such instance was a letter written by Robert Burns, in June 1791, to a Mr Cunningham. From the contents of the letter itself, no other clues to this person's identity were forthcoming; no forename, address or reference to the name of a wife or children were included. Again, the Robert Burns Online Encyclopaedia was consulted. Under Burns' contacts named *Cunningham* there were entries for James Cunningham, John Cunningham, Alexander Cunningham and Allan Cunningham. Examining James Cunningham, 14th Earl of Glencairn, it was noted that he died c.March 1791. As the letter was dated June 1791, this candidate could be safely discounted. Next, John Cunningham, 15th Earl of Glencairn was considered. It was discovered that he was the brother of James, succeeding to the title on the latter's death. However, although he had been an officer in the 14th Dragoon regiment during his early life, he later took orders in the Church of England. From reading Burns' correspondence, it had been noted that he was in the habit of using relevant honorifics, but no usage of *Reverend* or *My Lord/Your Lordship* were found within the letter. Furthermore, it was addressed to Mr Cunningham. This would seem to indicate that John was not the recipient either. Allan Cunningham's dates were given as 1784-1842. From this information, he would only have been aged around seven at the time of the letter, so it was fairly safe to assume that Alexander Cunningham (d 1812) was the actual recipient.

3.6: Considerations arising with certain search terms

Whilst running searches for various lemmas of interest within the two main corpora, certain difficulties and questions arose regarding how to find all variations of interest and whether or not every result warranted qualitative analysis.

3.6.1: Please

Please can be mainly used in two different ways, as a verb or as an adverbial marker of politeness. The following two examples illustrate this:

Verbal:

3.21: Though you should reject one half of what I give you, I shall be ***pleased*** with your adopting the other half, and shall continue to serve you with the same assiduity.

CLM4pls78

Adverbial:

3.22: I have, as yet, gone no farther than the following fragment, of which ***please*** let me have your opinion. CLM4pls68

One further nuance of the verbal lemma *please* appears in the following extract:

Verbal:

3.23: If Mr. A. should see this Letter tell him that he still must if he ***pleases*** forward the Post Bill to Perth. CLM7pls14

In Extract 3.21 the word *pleased* is not being used as a form of politeness, rather it simply states what the author (Burns) would find acceptable in a certain instance. The way Extract 3.22 is worded, however, would still be grammatical and comprehensible if *please* were omitted. It is not verbal, but has been inserted as a form of softening the request and, thus, is an example of politeness. The verbal *pleases* in Extract 3.23, however, is another form of politeness. Here, Keats is conveying to the recipient (his sister, Fanny) that the request to forward the item should only be undertaken if it is of no inconvenience to Mr A. It is an attempt to ensure no imposition is placed on Mr A, and, thus, is again a form of politeness. After analysis of *please* it was classified as either Verbal or Adverbial. However, only usages such as in 3.21 were recorded as Verbal, similar examples to the verbal *pleased* were not counted within the results.

3.6.2: Worth

The lemma *worth* showed up many times during examination of the texts chosen for sampling, and so was selected for full data searches in both the Archer and CLMET corpora. Examples of phrases such as *Worthy Sir* (See extract 13) were found within honorifics both within salutations and the main texts. *Worth* was also found used as a term of flattery, for instance in the following extract:

3.24: Madam, if I do not carry my complaisance so far as humbly to acquiesce in the name of "Villain" merely out of compliment to your opinion, much as I esteem your judgement and warmly as I regard your ***worth*** (…)

CLM4wth23

Other usages of *worth* were also found where, although not used as a direct honorific or term of politeness, it was used in referring to third parties politely:

3.25: (…) the other is one of the ***worthiest*** men in the world (…)

CLM4wth62

Due to the above considerations, the lemma was counted when used as an honorific within the text and also in instances such as that shown in extract 3.25. *Worthiest*, however, was considered to be more of an adjectival usage; it could not be ascertained whether or not the author would directly address the party mentioned in a polite way. One such example which illustrates this potential ambivalence comes, again, from CLM4, the Burns sub-corpus:

3.26: Though he is one of the ***worthiest***, as well as one of the ablest of the whole priesthood (…) yet the poor Doctor and his numerous family are in imminent danger of being thrown out to the mercy of the winter-winds.

CLM4wth64

Despite Burns' apparent high regard for the Doctor when discussing him with his correspondent, we have no way of knowing if this would have translated into polite terms of address during any direct interaction.

3.6.3: Anomalies in search results

3.6.3.1: Worth

When initial searches were run in Sketch Engine for the lemma *worth,* it was noticed that only this exact lemma was returned (See Figure 3.5)

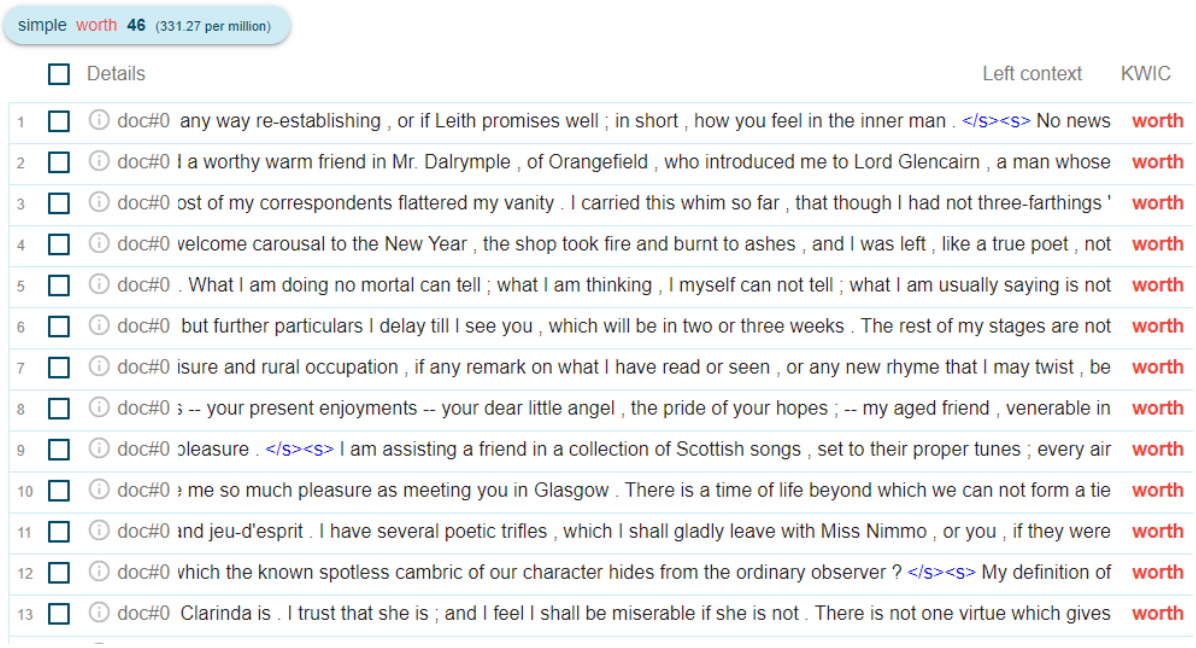

Figure 3.5: Results obtained from search term worth.

Other expected variations, for instance *worthy* and *worthiness* did not appear. Previous searches, including for the lemma *please,* returned all expected results: *please, pleases* and *pleased.* (See Figure 3.6)

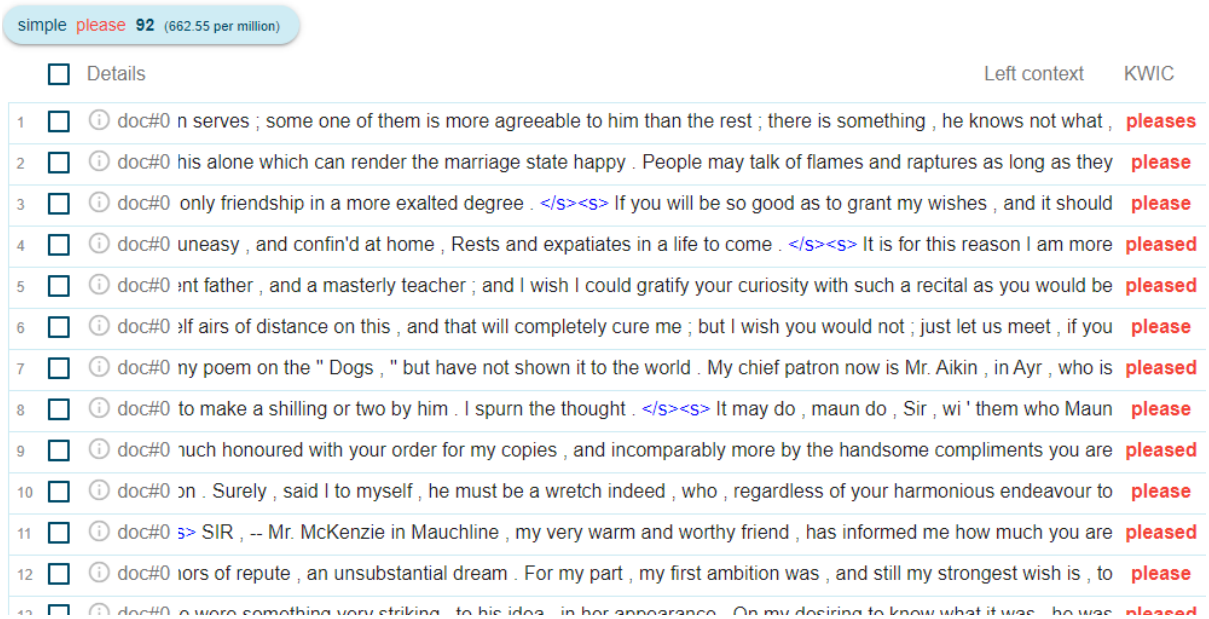

Figure 3.6: Results obtained from search term please

The search term *worth** was then entered, and the results were notably different (See Figure 3.7)

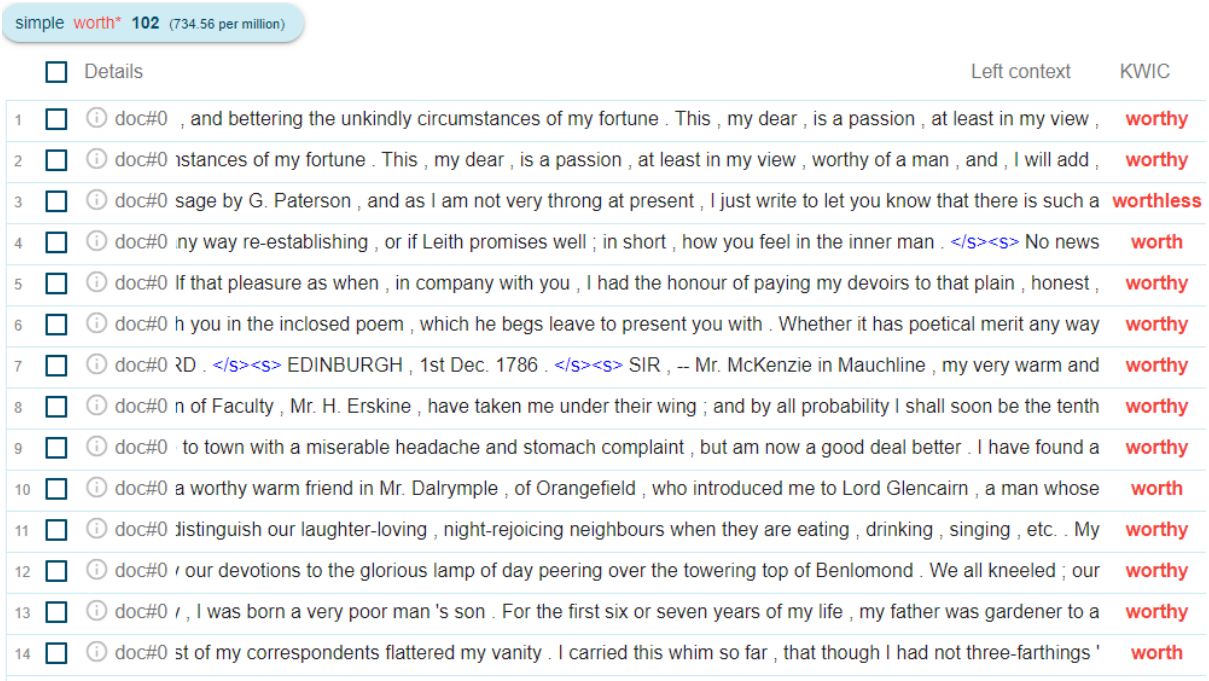

Figure 3.7: Results obtained from search term worth*

No logical reason could be deduced for this anomaly, and other searches within Sketch Engine returned the range of expected results on other lemmas of interest without a wild card marker (*) being needed.

3.6.3.2: Would

Searches for the lemma *would* in Sketch Engine also returned the word *wouldst*, (CLM7wd436) No instances of this form of the word had been noted in the Archer corpus, so another check was made within the contents using *wouldst* as a discrete search term. No results were returned at all. Furthermore, within the CLMET corpora of interest, only 3 instances were found: one in the letters of Lucie Gordon, one within the Keats corpus and one

in the letters of Burns. These checks ensured that no relevant data had been missed from the search term *would*.

Another anomaly found when searching Sketch Engine for *would* was that it also returned words such as *storm'd* (CLM7wd443) and *vex'd* (CLM4wd7) where the verb had been written with an elided 'e'. (See Figure 3.8). Again, a check of the Archer corpus was run but this anomaly did not appear within results obtained there. As no way of filtering out these data returns could be found in Sketch Engine, the totals for *would* were checked manually and instances of elided 'e' counted and subtracted from the total amount of returns given for this lemma.

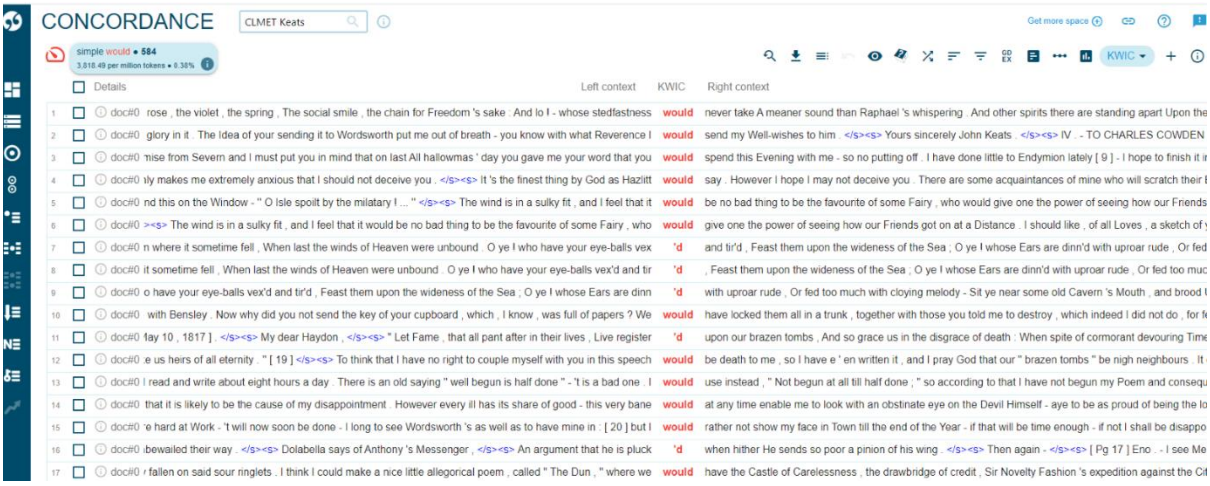

Figure 3.8: example of elided 'e' being returned within search for the lemma would

3.7 Dative verbs

In an attempt to answer RQ3 (Is the use of the dative alternation as a politeness marker evident from the 17th to early 20th centuries?) all such verbs appearing in data extracts were noted for further analysis. The most common of these were *send* and *give.* For a background discussion of this theory, see Flack 2018. Analysis was made of whether these verbs were used more often with a preposition in lower – higher class correspondence, which could suggest that this form marked perceived social distance and deference.

Although *write* is not a verb which takes a double object (DO) in British English unless accompanied by an object clause (e.g. I will write you a letter.), it was noticed that Robert Louis Stevenson does, in fact, use write in this way. For example:

3.27: Pray tell Mrs Jenkin, DIE SILBERNIE FRAU, as I only learned it since I ***wrote*** her.

CLM10pry28

A check was made manually; no other authors within the data selected for analysis use the lemma with a DO and therefore it was not counted as a dative verb of interest for this part of the research. For a more in-depth investigation of the dative alternation as a marker of politeness, and/or social deixis, see Chapter 7.

3.8: Conclusion

As has been discussed in the preceding sections, although a corpus-based method was used for data-mining (see Section 2.4.1), both qualitative and quantitative analysis have been used to highlight changes observed within the data selected for analysis**.** Quantitative data can show the overall picture of differences in language usage, however it cannot answer the questions 'How?' or 'Why?'. Where quantitative analysis does prove helpful is in identifying patterns which suggest there may be unexpected changes and, thus, point to particular areas for deeper analysis. One such instance is the analysis of the patterns of usage of *please* and *pray* which will be discussed fully in the next chapter, Chapter 4.

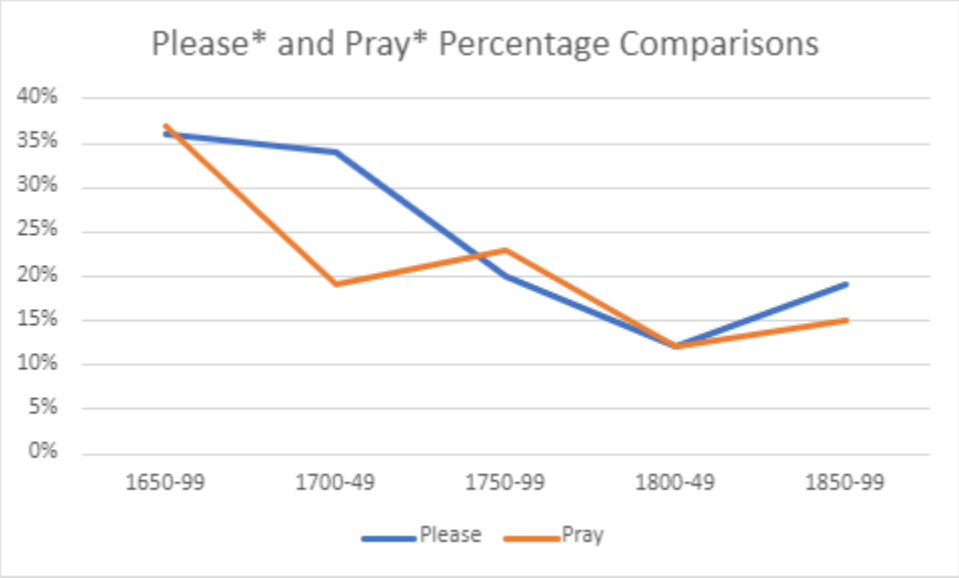

Figure 3.9: Changes in the occurrence of please and pray in British correspondence.

As can be seen from Figure 3.9, usage of both lemmas declined overall quite significantly between 1650 and 1800. However, at this point *pray** increased slightly in usage.

Please,* on the other hand, then continued to increase at a greater rate, whereas only three instances of *pray** were found between 1900-1920 when checking the Archer corpus. Furthermore, a noticeable increase in the use of *pray** can be seen during the 18th century before its decline continues towards the end of the time span of this study. Quantitative analysis gives an overview of this data at a glance where qualitative data analysis might overlook this information.

Qualitative data, however, shows the intricacies of social interaction. It can analyse details of gender, social status, instances of circumlocution and how these, and other, factors affect each other. Only by manual noting of relevant details and cross-checking can questions such as who was driving the increase in *pray*,* for example, be investigated and answers given. For further discussion of this particular question, see Section 4.4.2 in the following chapter, in which changing usages of *please** and *pray** are discussed.

Chapter 4 – Please and Pray: Their Changing Usage over the Period of this Study

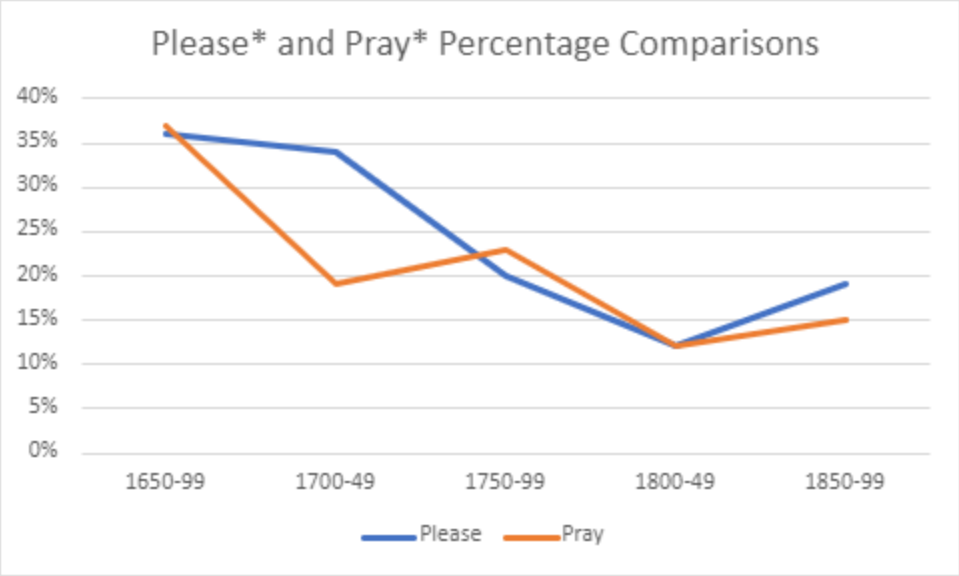

Fig 4.1: Comparison of percentages of letters which include the lemmas please* and/or pray* per half century of the time period examined. (Reproduced from Chapter 3 for ease of comparison)

4.1: Overview

In an attempt to answer RQ1 of this thesis, (Has the usage and/or frequency of deferential language changed during the time period of the study?) the lemmas *please** and *pray** were of especial interest. It could, perhaps, be argued that adverbial *please** is simply a shortening of phrases such as *if it pleases you* but, for purposes of this study, the two usages will be considered separately.

Saying the word 'please' is one of the earliest ways in which children are taught polite behaviour and is, thus, fundamentally part of ingrained societal norms (Axia 1993: 39). Figure 4.1, above, shows how the percentages of letters containing *please** and *pray** has declined

between 1650 and 1899. These percentage figures were obtained by taking the number of overall texts within each half century which met the required search parameters (Letters; British; Date Range) then counting how many different texts contained these lemmas of interest. For example, one document might contain four usages of *please** but this would only be counted as one for purposes of the calculations. By this method, it has been demonstrated how many letters overall contained these politeness markers.

Due to the way the Archer corpus is separated into 50-year periods, the final decades of interest, 1900-1920, could not be included in the chart, but had only five results for the entire period 1900-1949. For 1900-1920, only one instance of *please** used as a politeness marker was found within three texts results for the lemma, and no usage of *pray** whatsoever*:*

4.1: Criticise them and please let me see the Lit. Sup.

1919mans_x7b

It is notable that the extract above uses *please* as an adverb; its omission, whilst rendering the sentence's tone less polite, would not alter the overall meaning. Instances such as the extract below were excluded from the results analysed, being a verbal remark about a third party with no element of politeness encoded:

4.2: (…) this scheme seemed to please them. I doubt if they will adopt it.

1915bent_x7b

The total results obtained from the period 1800-1899 were also quite low, being seven results for *please** and eight results for *pray**. Furthermore, due to the composition of the CLMET corpus, as discussed in Chapter 3, it was not possible to calculate these percentages from the findings within that corpus, thus, these figures are from the Archer corpus only. General trends from CLMET searches also show a similar decline, although it must be remembered that this corpus only covers the period between 1750 and 1899.

The lemmas *please* and *pray* can, in many contexts, be synonymous with one another, as the two extracts from the data set below demonstrate:

***4.3*:** Pray my dearest, write to me as often as you can.

1759john_x4b

4.4: Please write me by first post, and direct to me at Ellisland , near Dumfries

CLM4pls46

In the two examples above, *please* and *pray* could be interchanged with no apparent alteration to the meaning or level of politeness the writer wished to convey. Both are taken from the half-century 1750-1799, and both are requesting that the recipient write to the author soon or often. Extract 4.3 was written by Samuel Johnson (s.g. C) to Lucy Porter (s.g. B) whilst Extract 4.4 was written by Robert Burns (s.g. D) to John Tennant (s.g. C). Thus, both are written L-H with only one social group separating writer and recipient. Given the seemingly identical social distances between both sets of correspondents, social deixis does not immediately appear to be a factor in the choice of politeness term. It must, however, be

remembered that the social groupings are only a broad indication of writers' backgrounds; people may have considered themselves to be equal to others who did not fall into these socio-economic classifications delineated in this work. Nevertheless, according to the social categorisations allocated to correspondents within this study, both examples are written L-H and, therefore, are to be considered directly comparable. It could well prove that the choice of lemma is simply a matter of the authors' personal styles, as the above extracts would, on first examination, seem to imply. Further investigation into possible aspects of social deixis in the choice of *please* or *pray* will be carried out elsewhere within this chapter in an attempt to throw light on this particular area.

4.2: Qualitative examination of changing usage of please and pray

4.2.1: Extracts included and discounted from the final analyses

Once the searches for *please** and *pray** had been conducted, it was necessary to decide which were suitable for further analysis and which could be discounted. As demonstrated in Extract 4.2, not all usages of these lemmas were in the context of expressing politeness. Similarly, occurrences of *pray** used lexically, as in the examples given below, were not included:

4.5: I pray God keep him from sickness (…)

1653finc_x2b

4.6: Do not forget to pray for me.

1768john_x4b

Further verbal instances of *please** were also discounted from the results of the searches; the examples below illustrate some more of the usages which were excluded:

4.7: Now the treaty is finished you do what you please with us, (…)

1707dfo2_x3b

4.8: I am pleased with the good news (…)

1707wych_x3b

4.9: I want her to please the Misses, (…)

1784pioz_x4b

When deciding which extracts from the corpora constituted expressions of politeness, it was often necessary for the author to use her own judgement. When researching topics such as this, no definitive criteria can ever be created due to the widely varied written styles which can often be looked at in different ways. For example, the extract below was considered, at first, to be an instance of politeness but, on second reading, it was decided to exclude it from the data for analysis:

4.10: These things I take upon me to counsel you out of a greater measure of affection then skill, which if you please to take in good part, you shall abundantly oblige.

1653mor2_x2b

The phrase *if you please* was frequently found to be used as a way of ameliorating a request, and was, therefore, considered to be an expression of deferential politeness. In this particular extract, however, the overall tone was considered to be more of an advisory one and, thus, it was discounted in the final analysis.

4.2.2: Frequencies of usage of please* and pray*

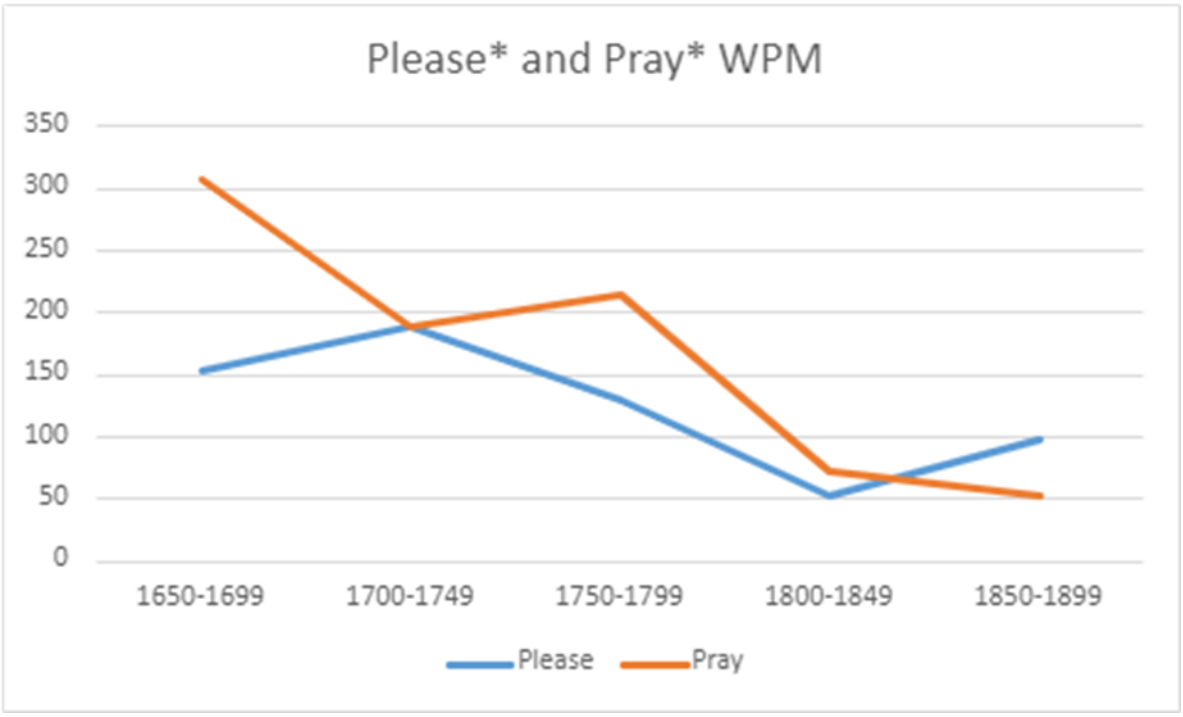

Fig 4.2: Figures for please* and pray* over the time period of the study in WPM. Results from Archer Corpus with parameters 'British' 'Letters' and relevant date ranges.

Figure 4.2 gives totals in wpm for *please** and *pray** as found in the Archer Corpus. When compared to Figure 4.1, which shows the percentages of texts including these lemmas, there is a noticeable difference. Whilst the percentages of texts from 1650-1699 show very similar frequencies for both *please** and *pray**, there is a wide difference in the wpm count for this half-century. *Please** is, by wpm, used only around half the times that *pray** is, which would indicate that although both lemmas were used in a similar number of texts, *pray** was, by far, more frequently used. Of course, it must be born in mind that it was not possible to

separate the different types of usage of *please** and *pray** when obtaining these figures, but the overall pattern is still striking.

*Pray** dropped sharply in both wpm and percentage of texts used by 1700-1749, before experiencing a rise in frequency by 1750-1799. This could, perhaps, be explained by the fact that many writers from this era include sentences such as the following in their correspondence:

4.11: (…) he is one of the Saints who pray them out of Purgatory.

1757hume_x4b

4.12: I pray God they may live to be a Comfort to you both,

1763smlt_x4b

4.13: Do not forget to pray for me.

1768john_x4b

Whether this reflects an increase in piety, or other matters of religious awareness is beyond the scope of this study but could form a basis for further research.

*Pray** then continues to decline in wpm figures until the end of the 19th century, although it increases in percentages of texts used during this time. This can mainly be attributed to the frequent usage of this lemma in Lord Byron's prolific correspondence from this era. His usage of *pray** is evident throughout his correspondence, although the fact that there is still a decline in wpm indicates that, although he used it in many separate letters, the actual word itself was, nevertheless, declining in usage. See also Section 4.4.1 for further discussion of Cerquiero's work relating to this.

The data then show an increase in *please** by the end of the time-period of study with a corresponding, albeit less steep, decline for *pray**. Were these changes due to changing fashions of speech and writing, do they represent different usages between the various social groups regarding social deixis, or is there some other cause? In-depth analysis of the data extracts will be undertaken in an attempt to answer this question. The results will also help answer RQ 2: Have markers of social deixis changed during the time period?

4:3 Differing usages of please

During examination of the data extracts which include the lemma *please*, it became apparent that there were two main ways in which the word was used. These are illustrated by the examples below:

> ***4.14:*** When your Ladyship hears of Mr Finch his safe passage over sea, I hope you will be pleased to send me word
>
> 1651mor2_x2b
>
> ***4.15:*** Please, as soon as you have noted the changes, forward the same to Cassell and Co
>
> CLM10pls168

The first extract, 4.14, is an example of the use of *please** in its verbal form. The second extract, in contrast, shows how the lemma could also be used adverbially as a marker of politeness. Hereinafter, the first type of usage will be referred to as Verbal and the second as Adverbial.

Until the period 1750-1799 *please* was not found in use at all as an adverbial within the data set, and it was also not found, in either form, during the half-century 1800-1849. From 1850, however, *please* as an adverbial was found to increase steeply in frequency, whereas the verbal form remained at a similar rate of usage throughout the time period of this study. It is also interesting to note that this sudden increase in the adverbial usage of *please* corresponds with a drop in the usage of *pray**. Whether this is related or simply a coincidence is a question to be investigated within this chapter.

The first example of *please* used adverbially was discovered in the sub-corpus of the CLMET pertaining to the correspondence of Robert Burns (s.g. D):

4.16: Please write me by first post, and direct to me at Ellisland , near Dumfries

CLM4pls46

This particular usage was in a letter written to a member of s.g. C and most of his usage of adverbial *please* is in letters written to people in s.g's B and A. Further analysis of adverbial *please* reveals that all such usage during this period originated from Burns' writing and, after his death in 1796 (Britannica.com), no further instances were discovered until the half-century 1850-1899. The fact that no usage of adverbial *please* was found during 1800-1849 suggests that this was either a style particular to Burns, or perhaps even one which originated in Scotland. As this study's range does not take regional differences into account, this could provide a basis for further research.

Correspondence Direction	Verbal	Adverbial
A-A	1	10
A-B		4
B-C		3
C-B	2	8
C-C	7	48
C-D	1	5
D-D	1	

Fig 4.3: Usage of verbal and adverbial please* between different social groups, 1850-1920.

From Figure 4.3, it can be seen that the adverbial usage of *please* becomes far more widespread over a range of social groups during the period 1850-1920. This would suggest that it had become a more commonly used marker of politeness. This adverbial form of *please* is found from A-A to C-D correspondence, although apart from a few C-B examples, all instances are written in the direction H-L or P-P. Does this imply some link to social deixis, perhaps? It had been expected that more usages of lemmas such as *please** would be found in L-H correspondence as a marker of deference; from Figure 4.3 it is clear that adverbial *please* actually occurs most frequently in P-P correspondence. Perhaps members of peer social groups felt it necessary to be careful not to give any cause for offence in their communications. In-depth analysis of some of these extracts will, therefore, be carried out in order to investigate this possibility further. These analyses will be discussed in the following section.

4.3: Analysis of verbal and adverbial please

4.3.1: 1750-1799

As explained in the previous section, adverbial *please** was first observed during the half-century 1750-1799, but only within letters written by Robert Burns. Examples of Burns using both verbal and adverbial *please** in letters to most s.g.'s can be found; notably, adverbial *please** is not found within his P-P writing. Several extracts are given below to illustrate usage of *please** in his letters to different s.g.'s:

D-A Adverbial:

4.17: When you have honoured this letter with a perusal, please to commit it to the flames.

CLM4pls73

D-A Verbal:

4.18: Mr. McKenzie in Mauchline, my very warm and worthy friend, has informed me how much you are pleased to interest yourself in my fate as a man.

CLM4pls11

In these two examples, it can be seen that Burns uses terms of deference to the recipients. The word *honoured* in Extract 4.17 is a marker of deferential language, as will be discussed in Chapter 6. The adverbial use of *please* adds an extra marker of politeness to the

tone of the request he makes, but is not, in itself, deferential. In the second extract, however, it could be argued that the phrase *you are pleased* is, in itself, a deferential utterance. The inference could be drawn that Burns ought to be considered below the recipient's notice, who is doing Burns a great favour by showing interest in his *fate as a man*. No other terms of deference, or honorific phrases, are contained within this sentence, yet the usage of verbal *please* gives a definite tone of politeness, even perhaps humility, to the wording therein. Unfortunately, any reply to this letter does not seem to have been preserved and so any examination of reciprocal politeness markers cannot be examined.

D-B Adverbial:

> ***4.19:*** If you have an opportunity, please remember me in the solemn league and covenant of friendship to Mrs. Lewis Hay.
>
> CLM4pls61

D-B Verbal

> ***4.20:*** (…) and now I am on that subject, allow me to give you two stanzas of another old simple ballad, which I am sure will please you (…)
>
> CLM4pls57

The two extracts, above, written by Burns to members of s.g. B are clearly polite in their wording, yet noticeably less overtly so than the examples written to s.g. A. The phrase *if you have an opportunity* in Extract 4.19 shows that the request is mitigated by stating that it is only to be carried out at the recipient's convenience. No urgency or tone of insistence is to

be assumed. The adverbial *please* adds to the overall polite tone of the request, yet its omission would not have made much difference to the general manner in which this is being made. Extract 4.20, an example of Burns' usage of verbal *please* to a member of s.g. B, is also a polite request, although this time he is requesting that the recipient accept something rather than carrying out a task on his behalf. The use of the word *allow* implies deference towards the recipient as it asks their permission to offer the item, the addition of the phrase *which I am sure will please you* would seem to be mitigation of his reason for wishing to present the stanzas, but is not, in itself, an expression of politeness as shown in Extract 4.19.

D-C Adverbial

> ***4.21:*** Please give him, and urge him to take it, the first time you see him, ten shillings worth of anything you have to sell, and place it to my account.

CLM4pls53

D-C Verbal

> ***4.22:*** Would it please you, my love, to get every week, or every fortnight at least, a packet of two or three sheets of remarks, nonsense, news, rhymes and old songs?

CLM4pls35

From the above, D-C, extracts, the letters' tones appear to be more business-like and informal; no deferential or honorific language is used whatsoever. Extract 4.21 is only given a semblance of politeness by the opening, adverbial, *please*. Without this, the sentence is simply a command from Burns to the recipient concerning an apparent business transaction.

No phraseology similar to those found in D-A and D-B is employed to imply this should be done at the recipient's convenience or pleasure. In Extract 4.22, where verbal *please* is used, the clause *would it please you* would appear to be asking permission for Burns to give the recipient regular gifts of written articles. This is comparable to Extract 4.20 in which, again, he is offering written material to the recipient. The main difference between the two extracts is the use of the deferential phrase *allow me* within the D-B example. The offer is, however, preceded by the modal *would* in the D-C letter, so no presumption of acceptance is being made here, either. In both letters, Burns uses verbal *please* as a mitigation of the offers, one asking if it would be pleasing, the other hoping it will please. In itself, therefore, in both of these examples, verbal *please* is used not as a term of politeness but as a mitigator.

As mentioned previously in this section, no examples of adverbial *please* for D-D correspondence were found within the data extracted for analysis. Discussion of the extracts from letters written to members of s.g.'s A, B and C comparing verbal and adverbial usage of *please** has indicated that only the adverbial usage was employed by Burns as a direct marker of politeness. Letters to s.g's A and B also employed other deferential and/or honorific language alongside adverbial *please**, however, which would suggest that, in itself, adverbial *please** was not a term used to show the differences between Burns and other social strata.

4.3.2: 1800-1849

As discussed previously, no instances of adverbial *please** were found within this half-century. It can also be seen from Figures 4.1 and 4.2 that usage of both lemmas, *please** and *pray*,* was quite infrequent during this period.

4.3.3: 1850-1920

In Figure 4.3 it has been shown how adverbial *please** was used by members of a range of social groups during this period. Interestingly, verbal *please** was much less frequently used according to the findings in the Archer Corpus.

Despite a slight increase in usage towards the end of the time period of this study, the overall trend in usage of the lemma, as well as *pray*,* is markedly downwards. Could this suggest that people were writing letters which were either less polite or, even, of an impolite nature? In an attempt to investigate this possibility, a search was run for *the*, being a neutral word likely to occur in almost every letter included in the Archer Corpus. The parameters of 'British' and 'Letters' were maintained. Searches were undertaken for 1800-1849 and 1850-1899 and the results listed in a random order. The first 100 extracts thus returned within each half-century were examined, but no instances of impoliteness were noted. It can, therefore, be surmised that the overall tone of correspondence, whilst remaining polite, had become much less formal by the last years of this study, indicating that the partial answers to both RQ1 and RQ2 are 'yes', markers of social deixis and deference had declined greatly.

4.4: The usage of pray

In PDE the lemma *pray** is more often confined to usage in relation to religious acts of supplication or thanksgiving rather than being used as a mark of politeness when asking a favour of someone (OED). The OED further states that "In later use" it has been used "also in

weakened sense: to wish for fervently, to hope". This usage, however, was not encountered during data collection.

4.4.1: Cerquiero's study of please and pray

Work by Cerquiero (2011) has tracked the change in usage of *pray** as a polite marker of request to *please** between 1860 – 1919. In the conclusion to her paper, she notes:

> *Please* was in the late nineteenth century the most common courtesy marker in requests, although the use of *pray* was still considerably high by the older generations. (…) the consolidation of *please* as the default marker took place more than one century later.
>
> (Cerquiero, 2011:277)

Although quantitative results of work such as this can tell us something *per se*, Cerquiero breaks down her findings by the age and gender of the writers, addressees and other criteria, thus giving a fuller overview of how this change took place. As age and gender are not part of the analysis undertaken in this study, Cerquiero's work, although useful in showing the overall changes, cannot help to answer whether this usage changed within certain social groups first, perhaps leading a fashion of using *please** rather than *pray**. Indeed, she states that 'all the informants belong to high society backgrounds' (Cerquiero 2011:270). Furthermore, it has already been discussed that *please** as an adverbial (or, as Cerquiero calls these lemmas, a 'request marker') had been found in the correspondence of Burns during the period 1750-1799. Cerquiero's study, however, only investigates the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the aim of this study is to examine correspondence from as wide a range of authors as possible from all social backgrounds,

Cerquiero's results are of interest, but not directly comparable, to this study. They will be discussed further within the following section of this chapter.

One interesting suggestion which Cerquiero does posit within her study, when tracking the usage of *prithee (I pray thee)* is that *pray* and *prithee* were used by certain writers, including Wilde and Dowson, as a 'deliberately archaic use of the marker (…) a sign of irony or even pedantry' to a correspondent with whom there was a high level of intimacy. She continues,

> Therefore this use of *prithee* in the late nineteenth century could even be related to the author's membership to a particular literary movement, as was the case of Wilde's archaic use of *I pray thee*.
>
> (Cerquiero 2011:276)

Although no examples of *prithee* were found during the data analysis, in an attempt to confirm or refute this hypothesis, examination of extracts featuring the lemma *pray** will also try to ascertain if the writer was, indeed, a member of any particular literary group. See Section 4.4.2 for further discussion of this topic.

4.4.2: Social trends in the usage of pray

Figure 4.4, below, gives the distribution of *pray** as a request marker over the period of this study. As mentioned in the previous section, Cerquiero claims that *pray** was not replaced as the standard request marker until well into the 20th century. However, within the data extracted from the Archer Corpus, during the half-century 1900-1949 only one example

of *pray** was found, dating from 1943. This would appear to refute Cerquiero's claim that it continued in common usage until a much later date. However, as the age of the correspondents was not part of the data collected for this research, no comment can be made upon her statement that *pray** remained popular among the older generations. Another factor which must be taken into account when discussing Cerquiero's work is that she only looked at letters written by people of high social status. Thus, whilst it may have remained in usage amongst these social groups, it could be that it had fallen out of use among those of lower social status. This thesis looks at correspondence between people in all ranks of society which means that Cerquiero's findings are not necessarily representative of the whole social spectrum.

Half-Century	Total Examples of Usage	P-P	L-H	H-L
1650-1699	27	19	1	7
1700-1749	15	7	4	4
1750-1799	26	20	6	0
1800-1849	58	5	5	48*
1850-1899**	42	36	4	2

* All but 4 instances occur in the letters of Lord Byron. **No examples of *pray* were found for the period 1900-1920.

Fig.4.4: Distribution of pray as a marker of politeness by social direction and half-centuries.

From the above table, it would appear that, rather than *pray** being perhaps a term used deferentially in L-H correspondence as had been posited, it was frequently found within P-P communications. The notable exception is, clearly, the period 1800-1849, although this is

due to the fact that Lord Byron uses the word frequently in his many letters. If Byron's results are disregarded, then the usage of *pray** within L-H correspondence is slightly higher than for that of H-L during the period from 1750-1899, although the differences are small and, in most periods, much lower than those for P-P letters. Qualitative analysis of the period 1800-1849 does, in fact, reveal that all the writers who used *pray** were people within poetic and literary circles, including Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charlotte Bronte, John Keats and Matthew Arnold. This finding reinforces Cerquiero's assertion that the lemma was, indeed, almost totally restricted to this particular group of people.

Further evidence taken from the data for 1750-1799 also shows that *pray** occurred mostly, although not exclusively, within the letters of the authors Austen, Johnson and Boswell. This would suggest that the pattern seen in 1800-1849 may have begun during this earlier period.

4.4.2.1: Different usages of pray*

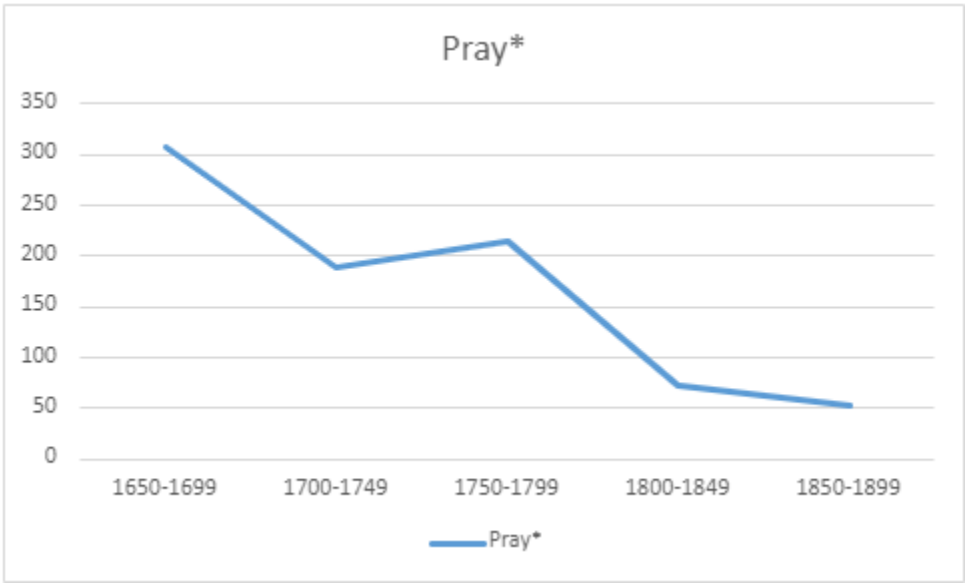

Fig. 4.5: Occurrences of pray in WPM (Archer Corpus Only)

Figure 4.5, above, shows the frequencies of *pray** in words per million (wpm). These figures, however, are only for occurrences found within the Archer Corpus; comparable information across half-centuries is not available from the CLMET (see Chapter 1 for a discussion of the properties of the two corpora used in this study). Surprisingly, although the usage of *pray** is, as expected, highest during the period 1659-1699, the rate increases in 1750-1799, albeit to a lesser frequency than at the beginning of the time span. However, the Archer Corpus gives all results for each lemma unfiltered for markers of politeness, thus instances of lexical *pray**, such as the example below, are also included within the wpm figures:

4.23: I pray God send him home to you in safety (…)

1653fin2_x2b

This clause, although including *pray,* is stating the author's pleading to God rather than being a polite utterance, thus similar returns from the corpus search were not included in the data set used as the basis for this study. Figure 4.6, below, shows the results when lexical uses of *pray** were filtered out of the Corpora results manually:

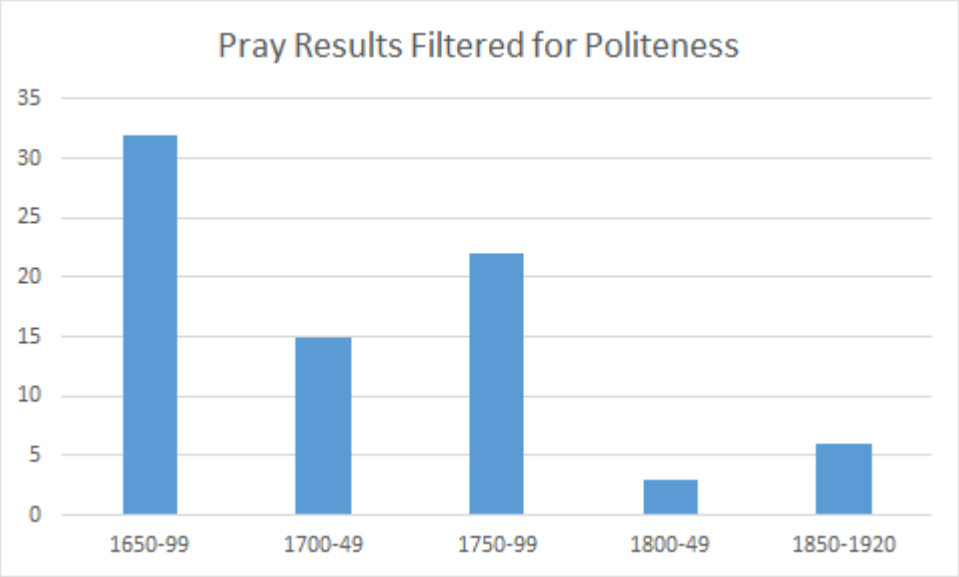

Fig. 4.6: Instances of pray* from the Archer and CLMET corpora, filtered for non-polite occurrences of the lemma.

The illustration above, gives the number of times *pray** was found in the data selected for analysis, including the CLMET. These figures, therefore, are for usage of the lemma in expressions of politeness only. Two further examples of the type of extracts removed from the final totals are given below:

4.24: (…) Neither could I let you Pray in Quiet (…)

1666cavn_x2b

4.25: (…) he is one of the Saints who pray them out of Purgatory.

1757hume_x4b

The usage of *pray** in instances such as these will, hereinafter, be referred to as lexical, as opposed to *pray** as a marker of politeness. The usage of *pray** in expressions of politeness is found in two types, as the extracts below illustrate:

4.26: (…) but pray Sir what you term courtship in my former letter,

1651acon_x2b

4.27: I pray see what you can doe.

1651eli2_x2b

In Extract 4.26, *pray* could be considered to be an adverb, as with adverbial *please*.* In the second example, however, it is clearly used in its verbal form although it is also conveying politeness, unlike as seen in Extracts 4.24 and 4.25. For the sake of simplicity, to avoid discussing verbal, non-polite; verbal, polite; and adverbial *pray** it was decided to simply categorise them as two types: lexical and non-lexical.

4:4:2:2: Usage of pray within different social groups

The data set was next examined and non-lexical *pray** was categorised by correspondence between social groups. The following illustration, Fig 4.7, shows the number of instances wherein the lemma was found for each time period of this study:

	A-A	A-B	A-C	A-D	B-A	B-B	B-C	B-D	C-A	C-B	C-C	C-D	D-A	D-B	D-C	D-D
1650-1699	5	1	3		1	12	2				2					
1700-1749			1			1	3			4	6					
1750-1799	7					1				5	11				1	
1800-1849	2	6	36			1				1	1			1	3	1
1850-1920	9	2								4	24					

Fig. 4.7: Distribution of non-lexical pray* in correspondence between different social groups. Figures taken from both Archer and CLMET corpora.

Comparison of the time periods from the above charts shows a mostly consistent usage within correspondence written A-A, A-B, C-B and C-C with the notable exception of the period 1700-1749, where no A-A or A-B usages were found. No C-B results were obtained from the period 1650-1699 either, although as little correspondence from lower social groups was present in the data set, this is not altogether unexpected. For the period 1800-1849, although all the four previously mentioned s.g's are represented in the totals, they are much lower in frequency than correspondence between s.g's A-C.

As discussed in Section 4.1.2, this increased usage in A-C correspondence is almost exclusively due to Lord Byron's correspondence with various people from s.g. C, rather than a sudden fashion in literary style emerging. Being a noted poet, this usage of *pray** may reinforce Cerquiero's findings, also mentioned in Section 4.1.2, of it being a 'deliberately

archaic' form of address, even an affectation among members of certain literary movements (Cerquiero, 2011:276). Other writers who use *pray** during this era include John Keats, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold and Charlotte Bronte. The only example of someone who is not a noted poet is Augusta Leigh who, being the half-sister of Lord Byron, may well have been influenced by his literary style. Other authors whose correspondence appears within the half-century 1800-49 include Benjamin Disraeli, John Murray (Lord Byron's publisher) and Charles Clarke (a noted Shakespearian scholar). Their absence from the group of writers who used *pray** as a polite request form is, again, further evidence that the lemma's usage was some form of poetic affectation.

4.5: Conclusion

The analysis of the usages of *please** and *pray** during the time span of interest to this study show, undoubtedly, that both lemmas declined in usage between 1650 and 1920. Although *please** has, as discussed in Section 4.1, become the default marker of polite requests in PDE, the lemma *pray** only really dropped out of usage in the 20th century. Archaic, poetic usage of *pray** within literary circles in the late 19th century may have prolonged its 'life-span' until a later date than otherwise may have occurred, but this can only be conjecture. Does this suggest that people, in general, became less polite in their language? Other deferential lemmas and honorific terms must also be included in the discussion to gain a better picture of polite language, but, as mentioned in Section 4.3.3, a search for *the* did not throw up any actual impolite correspondence. Further discussion of other expressions of politeness are discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 but, from this particular investigation of

*please** and *pray**, it would indeed appear that the language of correspondence became, if not less polite, then perhaps simply less formal over time.

Chapter 5: Usage of Honorifics – Discussion

5.1: Overview

With reference to Research Question 2 (Have markers of social deixis changed during the time period?), the usage of honorifics will be analysed to see what changes, if any, occurred during the period 1650-1920. According to Brown & Levinson (1978:179) 'Deference phenomena represent perhaps the most conspicuous intrusions of social factors into language structure, in the form of honorifics.' Whilst this chapter is concerned simply with honorific language, Chapter 6 will discuss deferential language in detail. Honorifics, in English, include titles used in addressing others, for example My Lord, Madam or Your Highness. As Brown & Levinson further explain:

> Probably all languages encode deference in generalized forms of address for strangers, unfamiliars, etc. (…) In English, they originally had aristocratic connotations: Sir, Madam, Lady.'
>
> (Brown & Levinson 1987:182)

The usage of honorifics is, according to Mills (2011), a politeness strategy which signals that both/all parties in any form of intercourse are aware of their own position in the social hierarchy and giving the honour due to others within that situation:

> (…) if an individual uses a particular honorific, they can be seen to be recognising that the particular context and other participants require them to use a certain

> deferential form; in so doing they are acknowledging their own position and others' positions in relation to them within the social system.
>
> (Mills 2011:24)

By doing this, the writer abases themself and forestalls any chance that unintentional impoliteness could be inferred from their choice of words. Within royal and aristocratic circles, the form of address used, such as Your Majesty, Your Grace and Your Ladyship, were very strictly circumscribed by rank, and the hierarchy within these ranks was understood by all people in these social strata. However, within lower social groups, Brown & Levinson (1987) explain:

> Within lower classes, however, such honorifics were less formally delineated even though most people would have instinctively understood how to address each other with a suitable level of politeness.

In order to investigate if, or how, formality was expressed by honorifics, data were examined for all such terms, including both terms of rank as previously mentioned, together with less specific salutations such as Sir and Madam. Each half-century was examined individually, and patterns of usage were then compared over the time frame of interest. These were further coded, in the order of writer-recipient, as Lower-Higher (L-H) Peer–Peer (P-P) or Higher–Lower (H-L) to enable direct comparisons both between authors and between half-centuries. The results of this analysis will also help to answer RQ1 regarding deferential language as well as RQ 2 regarding markers of social deixis.

5.2: 1650-1699

Within this period, honorifics are used extensively, both to recipients and when referring to third parties. Unfortunately, examples from each author are almost all written within the same social direction (for instance, all Sir Isaac Newton's letters are H-L, whereas all Henry More's are P-P). Thus, comparison of how individuals addressed people within different social groups is not possible.

Lady Anne Conway was born into social group B (see Section 3.3.2) but married into aristocracy. Within her letters we find both B-B and B-A examples. Within her B-A correspondence she refers to third parties with their titles preceded by the possessive pronoun *my*. This would indicate that she is implying a level of deference to the person which the simple use of a title, such as Lady, would not convey. For example:

5.1: My Lady is very importunate (…)

1664acon_x2b

5.2: (…) my Lady Mary Sheldon (…)

1664acon_x2b

When writing to a peer, however, she appears not to use such particular formality:

5.3: (…) my brother took the first opportunity (…)

1651acon_x2b

5.4: (…) pray Sir what you term courtship (…)

1651acon_x2b

Henry More, one of Lady Conway's chief correspondents, uses a mixture of honorifics when addressing her. Although he, too, is from s.g. B the usage of honorifics is frequent throughout the texts examined. He frequently addresses her as *Your Ladyship*, also using the term *Madam*, often accompanied by an exclamation mark. The level of politeness intended by this usage is difficult to ascertain. In some instances, usage of *Madam* could appear to be exclamatory rather than deferential; comparison of the following extracts illustrates these differences in address:

5.5: When your Ladyship hears of Mr Finch (…)

1651mor2_x2b

5.6: Your Ladyship's most humble servant (…)

1650more_x2b

5.7: Now to your Ladyship 's long and learned letter (…)

1653mor2_x2b

5.8: Madam! had it not been for this (…)

1651more_x2b

5.9: But verily Madam (…)

1651mor2_x2b

5.10: Madam I THANK you (…)

1653more_x2b

Within the letters of Isaac Newton, all of which are categorised H-L, the practice of using titles and other honorifics can also be seen. Third parties, again, are referred to by both their titles and the addition of *my:*

> ***5.11:*** I am very glad my Lord Monmouth is still my friend but intend not to give his Lordship and you any further trouble.
>
> 1692newt_x2b
>
> **5.12:** Pray present my most humble service and thanks to my Lord and Lady Monmouth.
>
> 1690new2_x2b
>
> **5.13:** (…) hearty thanks to my Lady Masham for her Ladyship's kind invitation (…)
>
> 1691new3_x2b

In contrast to Henry More's style of writing, however, wherein very few pronouns are used, Newton, even though writing H-L, uses pronouns much more often. The following extract is taken from a letter of Henry More:

> **5.14:** But if their be any thing in my book that may invite your Ladyship 's curiosity to read (…)
>
> 1664more_x2b

When compared with a typical sample of Isaac Newton's writing, the difference can be clearly seen:

5.15: I fear the length of what I say on both texts may occasion you too much trouble, and therefore if at present you get only what concerns the first done (…)

1690new2_x2b

The fact that Newton uses mainly pronouns when writing to recipients of a lower social class is in sharp contrast to More's almost exclusive use, in L-H communication, of titles where pronouns would be sufficient. One further point to be noted is that, even when More is writing to a peer, he seems to feel obliged to use honorifics. This suggests that there was a level of formality expected when addressing one's peers, though the paucity of comparable texts means this is difficult to ascertain. The fact that writers, naturally, each also have their own inherent levels of social position, together with their idiolects, must be taken into account. However, purely from the evidence of the data it is not possible to draw any conclusions as to this aspect of individuals' styles.

The letters in the database for Lady Anne Alford are all written H-L. Lady Alford is within category A so no L-H letters are found, but there are no P-P examples either. From the data available, however, it is noticeable that there are no honorifics used within the body of the text. Pronouns are used almost exclusively, as the following extracts demonstrate:

5.16: I doe acknowledge my grant thankfulness for your civilities tow me and the grant care you have of my son your letter was a very good cordial.

1665alfo_x2b

5.17: I have received your civil letter (…)

1666alf2_x2b

5.18: I desire you tow take out of that monies (…)

1666alf0_x2b

When third parties are referenced by Lady Alford, their basic titles are used but without any further embellishment, which contrasts with Lady Conway's inclusion of honorific possessive pronouns:

5.19: I should bee glad the waters of Bourbon might benefit Sr Samuel: & those of Vic[1], Mr Trumbull.

1665brwn_x2b

This is in contrast to Isaac Newton's H-L style wherein he uses *My Lord/ Lady* frequently, as seen in Extracts 5.11 - 5.13.

One further point which should be mentioned is that very few instances of the use of forenames were found within the correspondence examined from this period. Even when mentioning her own child, Lady Alford refers to him as *my son:*

5.20: (…) hearing so good a Character of my son which I hop he will deserve from you (…)

1665alf2_x2b

Another letter, from John Finch to his sister, Anne Conway, refers to his brother-in-law only by surname:

5.21: I HAVE the last week wrote you a long letter concerning Helmont, and the week before to my Brother Conway (…)

1653fin_x2b

Two of the rare examples found of the use of forenames are in letters written by Elisabeth, Queen of Bohemia to her son, Charles, Elector Palatine[9].

5.22: (…) as for Rupert you need not trouble yourself about it (…)

1650eliz_x2b

5.23: (…) as for the monies that were Louysa's (…)

1650eliz_x2b

Rupert and Louysa (Louise) were Elisabeth's children, although at the date this letter was written, 1650, they were adults, aged about 31 and 28 respectively (Englishmonarchs.co.uk). From similar letters examined from this period, it might have been expected that wording such as *your brother/sister* would have been employed; whether or not this was a style used mainly by royalty cannot be ascertained, yet the usage of surnames, even in P-P family letters could perhaps suggest this is the case.

One possibility which may account for this is the disappearance of the pronouns *thou* and *thee.* David Crystal notes that 'The *thou/you* distinction was quite well preserved until about 1590 (…)' and '(…) disappeared from Standard English completely during the first half of the seventeenth century.' (Crystal, 2004:310). Before then, Crystal explains how the more honorific, plural forms *you/ye* were used to address people of a high social status, even when they were family. Discussing a passage in the Morte D'Arthur, Crystal states that:

> The king asks Gareth what he wants, addressing him with *ye*, which would be the expected polite form to an apparently upper-class visitor.
>
> (Crystal 2004:307)

[9] Personal correspondence by the author with N Akkerman at the University of Leiden confirms that these letters were originally written in English, thus, no issues regarding mistranslation have occurred.

When it is believed by the king that Gareth (his unrecognised nephew) is only a beggar 'this makes the king immediately change his tone, shown by a switch to *thou/thee'.* Once the family relationship has been revealed, however, '*ye* return(s) as Arthur's normal mode of address'. (Crystal, 2004:308). This indicates that between people of high status, even those of similar social status, levels of formality were used to show honour to each other.

If this means of addressing correspondents by usage of either *thou* or *ye* had recently dropped out of the language, it could be that the writers of the texts examined were using terms such as 'your brother' to show the deference which earlier options within the 2nd person pronouns had offered. Although *thou/thee* would not usually have been possible substitutes for forenames, it could represent an attempt to continue maintaining a level of politeness as shown in Crystal's example from the Morte D'Arthur. Unfortunately, within the data examined for this half-century, there were no extracts from H-L correspondence, thus no further comparisons can be made which may prove or disprove this possibility.

5.3: The pragmatics of politeness in the eighteenth century.

According to a paper by Fitzmaurice (2010), the pragmatics of politeness underwent a change in the eighteenth century. She discusses how, in the earlier years, politeness went from being a form of civility aimed at smoothing interactions between people, to a formulaic set of linguistic phrases designed to give others a good impression of oneself. Fitzmaurice states:

> The meanings of politeness shift further in the course of the century as it comes to be associated more with appearance and form worn by individuals in interaction than with the performance of sociable conversation in interaction.
>
> (Fitzmaurice 2010 :4)

A periodical of the era, The Spectator, discussing social discourse, explains to its readers that 'the excess of formality and decorum conveys the impression of the absence of sincerity or honesty.' In order to examine these claims, comparisons will be made, not only of letters from each half century, but also between extracts from the whole eighteenth century in an attempt to identify the changes suggested by Fitzmaurice.

5.4: 1700-1749

As with the previous half-century, the usage of honorifics is prevalent within the correspondence dated between 1700-1749. Again, forenames are rarely used, as this example written by Martha Whiteway (a cousin of Jonathan Swift) shows:

> ***5.24:*** Do you think the Letters to and from Doctor Swift are genuine?
>
> 1740wway_x3b

Mrs Whiteway (social group C) is here writing L-H to a member of social group A; the fact she refers to her cousin as *Dr Swift*, rather than using his forename or even calling him 'my cousin' or similar does seem to indicate a great level of formality is still used in correspondence. A

letter by Jonathan Swift, however, does contain the first usage found in the data of a forename being used:

5.25: Pray let me know when Joe gets his money (…)

1710swft_x3b

This appears in a letter written H-L; Swift is categorised as social group B and he is writing to a person of social group C. However, no other examples of the usage of forenames were found within this time period. When writing L-H, Swift uses honorifics with possessive pronouns, as was seen in examples from the period 1650-1699:

5.26: I ow your Ladyship the acknowledgement of a Let r I have long received, relating to a Request I made my Lord Duke, I now dismiss you Madam for ever from your office of being a Go-between upon any affair I might have with His Grace.

1737swft_x3b

Although it is impossible to say for certain, the usage of *Madam* within this extract would seem to be deferential due to the overall tone of the sentence. Overall, the general usage of honorifics would seem to be in line with those observed in later seventeenth century writing; changes towards the politic language as described by Fitzmaurice (2010) would not appear to be employed.

The correspondence examined written by Daniel Defoe also employs many honorifics. Unfortunately, there are only L-H examples available, so comparison with his style in other circumstances is not possible. The following extract is written by Defoe (social group C) to a member of social group A:

5.27: I need say no More, but begging your Lordship 's Pardon I Venture the Enclosed, and laying my Self at your Lordship's Feet, Recommend me Only for So Much Tenderness in this Case, as your Lordship shall Think I Merit: I have but One humble Petition to Close This Matter with, that if it be Acceptable to your Lordship that I should Continue to Represent the affairs of this Country to your Lordship, in the best Manner I Can, your Lordship will be pleased, Either by a Servant, if Not doing me the Honour of a Line from your Lordship (…)

1708dfoe_x3b

Defoe's style when writing to a member of social group B does employ fewer honorifics and more pronouns, indicating perhaps the smaller perceived social distance between author and recipient:

5.28**:** In this Sir you will particularly Oblige me and I shall at large Inform you of Particulars as to the Manufacture when I see you.

1706dfoe_x3b

In a letter written to his daughter, P-P, an even greater level of informality is noticeable, as could be expected:

***5.29*:** From Hence I Forbear to Enter upon the Subject of this irruption, & shall Only hint, That you mistake it; and be it That you mistake it, yet as on that Mistake you Are So Generous as to make this Reparation, I will believe you Would with the Same filial goodness have made The like (…)

1729dfoe_x3b

Extracts from letters written by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, are all in the direction H-L and, once more, the lack of usage of forenames is noticeable. This would seem to indicate that she is preserving the social distance between herself and her correspondent, although the lack of P-P examples means it is not possible to compare her H-L style with how she would refer to family members and friends in this context.

5.30: My Services to your dear Wife; the Duke of Marl. presents his humble Services to you.

1713marl_x3b

This letter was written to a Mr Jennens, the Duke of Marlborough's aide-de-camp. Another extract, from a letter to Mrs Jennens has a warm, friendly tone yet, once more, the Duchess does not use Mrs Jennens' forename:

***5.31*:** As soon as you were gon, dear Mrs. Jennens, I set down to thank you for your kind Nettin (…)

1722marl_x3b

All of the Duchess's correspondence within the database is written to people in social group B, thus no comparisons of levels of formality with other groupings can be drawn.

One point of interest, as seen in extract 5.30, arises from the usage of *humbl** in H-L correspondence. According to Camiciotti (2014), the phrase *your humble servant* or similar was a formulaic way of ending a letter during most of the period of interest to this study. As explained elsewhere, opening and closing salutations have been disregarded when gathering data for this work because these tended not to be personal to the writer. However, finding *humbl** used from someone of high rank to a member of a lower sg is unexpected and must, therefore, be considered to be part of the writer's idiolect.

Within the correspondence examined are several letters written P-P by Laetitia Pilkington to Samuel Richardson. Few honorifics are to be found in these extracts, apart from *Sir,* yet the usage of adverbs such as *humbly* and *mercifully* suggests a level of self-abasement by Laetitia Pilkington to her addressee:

> ***5.32:*** TO your numberless instances of charity, I must humbly implore you, or rather your lady, to add one more: (…) you will be pleased mercifully to bestow it on this unhappy wretch, my daughter.
>
> 1745pil2_x3b

Another extract, enquiring about the health of Mr Richardson's family, also employs language which would appear to suggest a high level of deference:

5.33: I So truly wish you health and happiness, that I hope you will pardon me the liberty I take in enquiring how you and your dear family are.

1746pil2_x3b

Considering their personal backgrounds, Mrs Pilkington was born the daughter of a doctor and married a clergyman, whereas Mr Richardson's origins are doubtful. Although he ran a print shop in his adult years and was acquainted with literary figures such as Samuel Johnson and Sarah Fielding, it has been suggested he grew up in poverty, the son of a joiner. This could even indicate he was born in social group D, but the lack of evidence meant he was classified in social group C. Whatever their respective origins, the reason why Mrs Pilkington felt it necessary to show such deference to Mr Richardson is hard to understand. It can only be surmised that, although a poet herself, Mrs Pilkington was showing respect to Mr Richardson's success with his own writing and printing career.

Of course, as has been discussed elsewhere in this work, writers' personal styles, even within the social requirements and expectations of the eighteenth century, do vary considerably. The differences between the following extracts by two different authors, both written L-H, illustrate this. The first extracts are taken from the correspondence of Richard Steele (Social Group B) and are written to the Earl of Oxford (Social Group A):

5.34: Your Lordship will please to pardon my taking this liberty of acquainting you with the matter before the Gentleman comes to you from His Royal Highness, though I believe the Offence is taken much Lower.

1707ste2_x3b

5.35: I trouble your Lordship with this (…) with all Humility I entreat your Lordship

1713ste2_x3b

The second were written by Joseph Addison (Social Group C) and are, again, addressed to a member of Social Group A – Sir Edward Wortley Montagu:

5.36: Besides, as it would have been for your honour to have acted as sole mediator in such a negotiation, perhaps it would not have been so agreeable to you to act only in commission (…)

1717adds_x3b

5.37: I find by his Majesty 's way of speaking of you, that you are much in his favour and esteem, and I fancy you would find your ease and advantage more in being nearer his person than at the distance you are from him at present.

1717adds_x3b

Although the social distance between Addison and Sir Edward (Group C - Group A) could be said to be greater than that between Steele and the Earl of Oxford (Group B – Group A), the language used by Steele is much more deferential. Besides the repeated use of *Your Lordship*, phrases of mitigation such as *I trouble your Lordship* and *Your Lordship will please to pardon* seem to be employed to ensure no affront would be perceived by the recipient. Addison, on the other hand, apart from the use of the phrase *your honour* in the first extract, employs pronouns throughout to Sir Edward, and writes in an altogether less deferential tone.

Although Fitzmaurice (2010) states that overtly formulaic modes of politeness only emerged in the later eighteenth century, could the almost exaggerated usage of honorifics by Steele hint at the changes to come in social interactions? Comparing these extracts with those of Jonathan Swift (Extracts 5.25 and 5.26) the lesser social distance between Steele and the Earl of Oxford may, indeed, suggest a level of formulaic language is being used.

5.5: 1750-1799

Instances of the usage of honorifics within these years are only found in L-H and P-P correspondence. Clearly, there most likely would have been H-L communications employing honorifics apart from within formulaic opening and closing greetings. However, within the corpora analysed, none of these were found.

From the texts that were examined, a few more examples of forenames were found, suggesting that this was becoming more acceptable in society. Two authors who use forenames are Samuel Johnson and James Boswell. Boswell's usage is in letters written P-P, though Johnson's usages are, interestingly, within L-H correspondence:

5.38: Davy would have given you my address

1764bswl_x4b

5.39: Pray be kind to Davy

1764bswl_x4b

5.40: Be pleased to give my love to Kitty

1763joh2x4b

5.41: Be pleased to make my Compliments to Mr Thrale, and Mrs Salisbury, and Miss Hetty (…)

1768joh4_x4b

In Extract 5.41, above, Johnson is writing to his friend, Mrs Hester Thrale, yet he calls her husband *Mr Thrale.* Hetty is the Thrales' daughter, also called Hester. She would only have been around the age of four at the time of writing which could explain the usage of her forename. Whilst the title *Miss* does hint at a modicum of awareness of social position, nevertheless, other phrases such as *your daughter* or simply *Miss Thrale* were not used, suggesting a relaxation of formality. From the researcher's personal correspondence, the identity of *Davy*, in Boswell's letters, has been ascertained as Boswell's younger brother, whilst *Kitty,* in Johnson's letter to Lucy Porter, has been identified as a family servant, Catherine Chambers. The close familial status of *Davy* and the lower social status of *Kitty*, therefore, would seem to explain the lack of any honorifics in these instances.

When writing to a member of social group A, the Margrave of Baden-Durlach, Boswell (social group C) addresses him as *Your Highness*, also employing language suggesting self-abasement:

5.42: Permit me to assure your Highness of my gratitude (…) But to be honoured with your Highness's correspondence is a favour so great (…) I assure you, Sir, that

this honour appeared so to me (…) it would have given me pain to have quitted your Highness forever

1764bsw4_x4b

Comparing this with another P – P letter, this time to his close friend John Johnston, emphasises the much-reduced formality Boswell employs when writing to those in his intimate circle.

5.42: I pray you, Johnston, give me consolation against the hour of antiquity.

1764bswl_x4b

However, from the texts available for analysis, there is not enough comparable material to make any conclusive claims on whether this supports Fitzmaurice's assertations or not. Further examination of phrases such as *to be honoured* will be examined in Chapter 6 in an attempt to analyse this further.

The correspondence of Robert Burns (social group D) is addressed to other members of group D, and also to people who fall within groups A, B and C as well. This affords an opportunity to investigate differences in forms of address in Burns' letters to all strata of society. When writing to a friend, whose father had been a neighbour of Burns' own father, the phrase *my dear friend* is used:

5.43: You cannot imagine, my dear friend, how much you would oblige me (…)

CLM4wd245

In another P – P letter, Burns writes to another friend, Richard Brown:

5.44: (…) wishing you would write to me before you sail again, wishing that you would always set me down as your bosom friend (…)

CLM4wd203/4

No in-text honorifics appear in the extracts analysed, unlike within P - P examples such as those of Laetitia Pilkington (Extracts 5.32 and 5.33), Henry More (Extracts 5.5 - 5.10) and John Finch (Extract 5.21). Within correspondence addressed to those in social group C, there are, again, few examples of honorifics being found. He addresses a lady, Agnes M'Lehose (with whom he had a brief romantic dalliance) (robertburns.org) as *Madam:*

5.45: Madam, if I do not carry my complaisance so far as to humbly acquiesce (…)

CLM4wth53

However, Burns calls another friend from social group C My worthy friend:

5.46: These, my worthy friend, are my ideas;

CLM4wth26

When writing to members of social group B, changes can be noticed in Burns' more formal language:

5.47: Do you think it possible, my dear and honoured friend, that I could be so lost to gratitude for many favours;

CLM4wth83

5.48: That acquaintance, worthy Sir, with which you were pleased to honour me,

CLM4wth51

5.49: You will then, I hope, Sir, forgive my troubling you (…)

CLM4tbl4

Finally, when writing to the Earl of Eglington (social group A), Burns' linguistic manner is clearly deferential:

5.50: I am not master enough of the etiquette of life to know, whether there be not some impropriety in troubling your lordship with my thanks

CLM4tbl6

As discussed in Chapter 3, the lemma *troubl** was one of the search terms of interest discovered during the sampling part of the linguistic analysis. Although it is not mentioned as part of the formulaic politeness strategies of the later eighteenth century in Fitzmaurice (2010), phrases such as *I do not wish to trouble you* and *I shall not trouble you* do occur in the writings of several correspondents. This lemma is not an honorific and, thus, will be investigated in greater depth in Chapter 6 (Deferential Language).

5.6: 1800-1849

From the extracts analysed originating in this time period, fewer usages of honorifics were noted. The playwright, Richard Sheridan[10] is observed to use surnames where

[10] Although Sheridan was born in Dublin, his family moved to London in 1758 when he was only 7. The fact that he was mostly raised, educated and worked in England is the reason he has been included as a British writer. (Britannica.com)

forenames would be appropriate to modern writers; Lord Byron (social group A) uses *her Ladyship* in a letter to a member of social group B but also addresses one of his peers as *your Lordship*; and a few more examples of omissions of titles such as *Mr* are also evident. All in all, the lack of many examples of honorifics, together with this rather mixed pattern of usage, could indicate that societal conventions were, by now, becoming more relaxed.

From the following two extracts taken from the correspondence of Richard Sheridan (social group B) his usage of surnames, even when referring to his own wife, can be seen. Both examples are from the same letter, written H-L to a member of social group C, Richard Wilson:

> ***5.51:*** She would with the greatest Pleasure have forwarded your recommendation to Mrs. J. Ogle but that they have for some weeks been provided with a Governess with whom Mrs. Ogle is entirely satisfied.
>
> 1816she2_x5b

> ***5.52:*** Mrs. Sheridan who has been obliged to make a rule to write to no one, not even to her Sisters desires me to convey to you her sincere thanks for your kind and obliging note.
>
> 1816she2_x5b

In a P-P letter to Lord Holland, Byron addresses him as *your Lordship:*

5.53: But your Lordship, I am sorry to observe to-day, is troubled with the gout; if my book can produce a laugh against itself or the author, it will be of some service.

CLM6tbl10

The overall tone of this extract seems to be deferential. Indeed, even though opening honorifics are not part of the remit of this study, Byron's opening line of this same letter does appear to reinforce the respectful nature:

5.54: MY LORD, -- May I request your Lordship to accept a copy of the thing which accompanies this note

(Same Letter)

Another letter, this time written to a close friend, James Wedderburn Webster (social group B) refers to Webster's wife as *her Ladyship.* In another part of the same letter, Byron also calls his sister *Mrs L:*

5.55: Pray make my best respects acceptable to her Ladyship.

CLM6py44

5.56: My sister, Mrs. L. goes with me

CLM6py44

In a different letter, however, Byron calls Webster *my dear W:*

5.57: You must write another pamphlet, my dear W., before; but pray do not waste your time and eloquence in expostulation

CLM6py1

In two other letters to Webster, Byron mentions several people but uses different means of referring to them. He writes about *my friend Hodgson*, *Mr Hare, your Brother-in-law* and *Hobhouse.*

5.58: My friend Hodgson is not much honoured (…)

CLM6py5

5.59: When Mr Hare prattles about the "Economy" (…)

CLM6py5

5.60: Your Brother-in-law means to stand for Wexford (…)

CM6py14

5.61: You will find Hobhouse at Enniscorthy (…)

CLM6py14

These differing references to other people are interesting, but again seem to suggest a reticence about using forenames. Hobhouse (John Hobhouse, 1st Baron Broughton) was a long-standing friend of Byron's (Britannica.com), yet he does not use any terms of closeness as he does with *my friend Hodgson*. It can only be surmised that, perhaps, Webster was better acquainted with Hobhouse and so did not need the extra information that Byron deems necessary when mentioning Hodgson. The *Mr Hare* referred to as 'prattling' would seem to be someone who had criticised his friend, Hodgson's, literary work (Marchand, 1973: 87). If so, the usage of *Mr* would appear to indicate a personal distance between Hare and Byron.

The words he chooses when mentioning *your Brother-in-law* may suggest that Byron was socially distanced, or possibly even estranged, from this man but this can only be conjecture.

In one final observation on the subject of how terms of address appear to undergo a change in the early nineteenth century, it is interesting that, in a letter written P-P by Charles Dickens to an actor friend of his, he calls him *my dear Macready,* whilst the poet John Keats calls his younger brother simply *Keats.*

5.62: And now, my dear Macready, I have one request to make to you (…)

1843dick_x5b

5.63: My dear Keats - I send enclosed a letter (…)

CLM7tbl14

Without an in-depth comparison of two or three authors' complete collections of personal letters, observations can only ever be made on the extracts selected from the corpora used. It can, therefore, only be surmised that, apart from an apparent reduction in the usage of honorifics compared to the earliest eras of this study, personal styles of writing also greatly affect the correspondence examined. Perhaps this indicates a shift from the formulaic language discussed by Fitzmaurice (2010). Developments in language during the final seven decades covered by this work will be discussed in the next section, and this tendency towards freer usage of terms of address will be investigated with a view to answering this question.

5.7: 1850-1920

The apparent relaxation of forms of address observed in the period 1800-1849 does seem to continue during this final era of study. However, personal styles of writing are still

evident, and we cannot truly know from the written evidence how personally close the writers were to the people they refer to within their letters. Feelings of affection or antagonism may well have been known to the recipients and understood as such, but looking simply at the surviving documents means that any such undercurrents cannot be known to the modern reader. Alfred Lord Tennyson (social group C) [11]writes to his friend, Francis Turner Palgrave (social group B):

5.64: Pray give my kindest regards to your wife (…)

1868tenn_x6b

Elsewhere in this letter, Tennyson also refers to *me and my wife*, yet mentions other people by surname and forename:

5.65: Congratulate Gifford from me and my wife (…)

1868tenn_x6b

5.66: You may tell him that Coggie Ferrier was here the other day (…)

1868tenn_x6b

5.67: How could Ivor Guest have come across it?

1868tenn_x6b

[11] Alfred Lord Tennyson was born the son of a rector and was only ennobled in 1884 (Britannica.com). Thus, despite having a peerage, he has been classified as s.g. C.

He also refers to his son, Lionel, simply by his forename, but at the time of writing he would only have been 14 years old, which could explain this informal reference:

5.68: I have to take Lionel to Eton (…)

1868tenn_x6b

When writing to another friend, Robert Mann, (social group uncertain) (Royal College of the Surgeons of England: 2012) Tennyson writes:

5.69: (…) begging you to present my kind remembrances to Mrs. Mann (…)

1858tenn_x6b

In another letter to his cousin Louis, he simply calls his cousin by his forename yet, again, refers to *my wife:*

5.70: My dear Louis Many thanks from myself and my wife (…)

1862tenn_x6b

From the above extracts, it would seem that although the usage of forenames was becoming more common in correspondence, perhaps there was still some feeling of maintaining social distance from one another's wives. This could be to uphold propriety and not appear too familiar, though this is only conjecture. This pattern is also notable in the letters of Robert Louis Stevenson (social group C). This level of formality can be seen in the following extracts; both these letters were addressed to the respective ladies' husbands.

5.71: Pray remember me to Mrs. Hamerton and your son.

CLM10pry6

5.72: Remember me, please, to Mrs. Gosse

CLM10pls24

However, in another letter to his cousin, Maud Churchill Babington, he uses similar formality when referring to her husband:

5.73: Please tell Mr. Babington that I have never forgotten one of his drawings (…)

CLM10pls1

When writing about a (presumed) mutual acquaintance in another letter to Edmund Gosse, Stevenson uses the man's fore- and surname:

5.74: If you see, as you likely will, Frank R. Stockton, pray greet him from me in words to this effect (…)

CLM10pry15

Furthermore, in other correspondence, Stevenson employs a mixture of surnames, with and without titles, so it is difficult to make any firm deductions as to whether or not standardised modes of address were commonplace during this period. Once more, it can only be posited that these people's closeness, or otherwise, to Stevenson personally may have some bearing on the linguistic style used.

5.75: Please remember me very kindly to Professor Swan.

CLM10pls5

5.76: Please tell Campbell I got his letter

CLM10pls70

5.77: Please remember me to Sir Alexander and Lady Grant.

CLM10pls58

5.78: Herewith verses for Dr. Hake, which please communicate.

CLM10pls97

5.79: If Mr. Scribner shall have said nothing to you in the matter (…)

CLM10pls101

Usage of titles such as *Sir, Lady, Professor* and *Doctor* are understandable and probably in line with modern usage. However, the reason for referring to *Mr Scribner* but simply *Campbell* would not seem to have any other explanation than that of personal closeness, as discussed previously.

Although Stevenson was a prolific letter writer, the majority of his correspondence was written P-P. In a L-H letter, he calls his correspondent *my dear Brown* (CLM10pls29), and in another he asks:

5.80: If you see Gosse, please mention it.

CLM10pls143

Overall, however, there are too few examples of his style when writing L-H to draw any firm conclusions. What is clear, however, from the letters of both Tennyson and Stevenson, although honorific titles are used, is the almost complete lack of any deferential phrases as were found in the earlier half centuries of this investigation. Pronouns and more direct language are used extensively; this would seem to be a continuation of the loosening of social deixis in general.

One point of interest comes in a letter of Tennyson's when mentioning royalty. In earlier eras the usage of terms such as *his Royal Highness, Her Ladyship* and *My Lord* were commonly used in references to members of the aristocracy, but Tennyson's style is very matter of fact in its directness:

> ***5.81:*** It is quite true that Princess Alice wrote to me, and the Princess Royal some weeks after (…)
>
> 1862tenn_x6b

When this is compared to a letter written in 1707 by Richard Steele (social group B) referring to royalty, the difference in honorific language is clear:

> ***5.82:*** (…) in General acknowledged it a Great Misfortune to offend His Royal Highness (…)
>
> 1707ste2_x3b

Another example of this reduction in honorific language comes elsewhere in Tennyson's aforementioned letter to his cousin, Louis:

5.83:I am bound by more than one promise to spend some days with the Duchess of Sutherland (…)

1862tenn_x6b

Once more, no extra deferential language, such as *Her Ladyship* or *my Lady* is used, in contrast to the frequency of these types of reference in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Unfortunately, the majority of the letters in the corpora examined were written by men. From this, any valid gendered linguistic comparison is not possible to any great extent. However, within the period 1800-1920 there are the letters written by Lucie Duff-Gordon (social group A). Although mostly to her husband and mother, they may hint that an even less formal written style was used by women. Examples include:

5.84: Please send this to Alick (...)

CLM9pls4

5.85: Don't think please of sending Maurice out again (…)

CLM9pls50

5.86: Don't forget it, please, for Mustapha is a really kind friend to me at all times.

CLM9pls13

Maurice was, in fact, her son so the use of his forename is to be expected even though he would have been aged around 20 when this letter was written. Alick was her husband, Alexander Duff-Gordon and, from what she says elsewhere in her letters, Mustapha Aga was the consular agent at Thebes. The fact that, in this letter to her mother, Duff-Gordon does not refer to *my husband* or *Mr Aga* is more evidence of how language was becoming more informal.

5.8: Conclusion

From this overview of the use of honorifics and other titles over the 270 years of this study, changes, although gradual, are very much in evidence. In the earliest pieces of correspondence available, usage of titles was commonplace. Possessive pronouns were used extensively when referring to other people, for instance *my Lady Mary Sheldon, my Lord and Lady Monmouth,* and *my Lady Viscountess your Lordshippes mother.* Apart from these possessives, pronouns were often replaced with honorific words such as *Sir, Madam* and *your Lordship.* These styles gradually decreased during the time covered by this study to the point where Tennyson felt comfortable simply referring to *Princess Alice*.

Forenames were almost never used during the earlier decades, even for one's children, as was seen in Lady Alford's reference to *my son.* One of the rare examples was when Elisabeth of Bohemia wrote about *Rupert* and *Louysa* in her letter (Extract 5.23) to another of her children, Charles. The first example of a forename within extracts analysed, as previously discussed, was in Swift's letter (Extract 5.25) dated 1710, although by the late nineteenth century this was becoming more common (see Extracts 5.84 - 5.86 regarding Lucie Duff-Gordon's correspondence).

Deferential language, such as *humble, beg, trouble*, is also much more in evidence during the earlier decades of this analysis, up to the late 18th century, but had almost completely fallen out of usage during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This, however, is not the main focus of this particular chapter; deferential words and phrases will be examined more closely in the next chapter, Chapter 6.

Overall, however, from this investigation of honorifics, it has been demonstrated that linguistic styles and usage of people's titles underwent an enormous change during the 270 years examined in this work. Although only a part of the focus of the investigation, these changes will be compared alongside other aspects in order to attempt to answer RQs 1 and 2 and gain an overall picture of the changes which polite language underwent during this period.

Chapter 6: Deference

6.1: Overview

This chapter will examine what has been categorised, for the purposes of this study, as deferential language. By analysing deferential language, it is hoped to answer RQ1: Has the usage and/or frequency of deferential language changed during the time period of the study?

Fraser & Nolen (1981) have undertaken a study of deference within linguistic form and remark:

> Deference is not the same as politeness, since deference is the conveying of relative status, but the inappropriate use of deference can result in an impolite utterance, just in case the level of status conveyed falls above or below that understood by the two parties.
>
> (Fraser & Nolen 1981: 98)

They further note that deference 'reflects a giving of personal value to the hearer, the giving of status, and by doing so creating relative symbolic distance between the speaker and the hearer.' (Fraser & Nolen 1981:97). Within their work, albeit on Present Day English speakers, it was found that more deferential sentences were likely to have a conditional form (e.g. 'could you') than an indicative one (e.g. 'can you'). From Figure 6.1 below, however, it is clear that *can* occurred much more frequently than *could* within the data examined. This might indicate that *can* has lost its polite connotations and acquired, in modern times, a more direct

and less circumlocutory meaning. This would, indeed, suggest that deferential language usage has changed over the 270 years of this study, albeit through the usage of *can* and *could.*

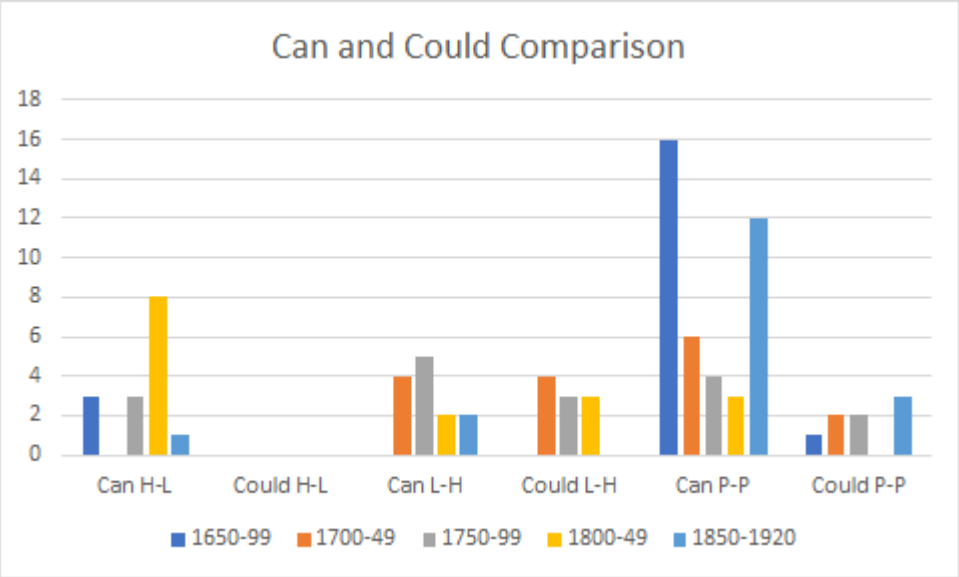

Fig 6.1: Comparison of Occurrences of can and could within the data examined

See Section 6.6 for further discussion of modal verbs as terms of deference.

6.2: Beg*

Within this category of deferential language, usages of the lemmas *humbl*, troubl*, beg** and *worth** have been placed. Originally, it was thought that *beg** would be mainly used as a lemma indicating a direct request. Analysis of *beg*,* however, showed that it was more often used in ways similar to this extract from Lady Anne Alford when writing to John Locke in 1666:

6.1: Therefore I shall beg your faver tow receive his caution money

1666alfo_x2b

Here, Lady Alford is, in fact, sending money to Locke. The phrase *beg your faver* is, therefore, a form of deferential language indicating that she would be honoured by Locke's acceptance. Although *beg your favour* could be expected to be found frequently as an example of a standardised polite phrase, the lemmas *beg** and *favour* only collocate six times in the whole dataset, twice between 1650-99, once between 1700-49 and three times between 1750-99. Furthermore, on only one occasion, in the extract quoted above, does the exact phrase *beg* your favour* (or faver) appear.

Another example of how *beg** was used is shown in a letter written by Robert Louis Stevenson to Edmund Gosse:

6.2: Pray write soon and beg Gilder your prettiest for a poor gentleman.

CLM10pry12

In this letter, Stevenson is actually asking Gosse to try to persuade Gilder to accept a work he has sent him, albeit for possible publication. Thus, although Gilder's acceptance would be beneficial to Stevenson, the word *beg* is used rather than a more direct one, for instance *ask* or *request*. The element of humility and deference is, therefore, encoded in Stevenson's choice of words.

One further illustration of a usage of *beg** can be found in a letter from Robert Burns to a Mr William Cruikshank:

6.3: So I shall only beg my best, kindest, kindest compliments to my worthy hostess.

CLM4wth24

Burns' use of *beg* in this sentence is similar to that of Lady Alford's in Extract 6.1. He is actually offering his compliments and would, seemingly, deem it a great honour if the hostess in question were to accept them.

Extracts 6.1 to 6.3 all involve indirect requests, albeit the writers are asking for a person to receive something from them. The overall sense is that the writers are placing the recipients in a higher social position by expressing that they themselves are unworthy of offering the money, written work and compliments proffered. The language used is more that of self-abasement, proffering compliments to the recipients or third parties. For this reason, it was not deemed to be used in the same way that *please** and *pray** are (see Chapter 4): adding an extra level of politeness to requests for physical items, preferment, consideration or similar. No instances of *beg** being used as a direct request form, along the lines of 'I beg you to send/forgive/permit...', were found in any of the data examined.

As can be seen from Figure 6.2 below, however, only 23 instances of *beg** were found in the data extracts analysed. The illustration shows usages found categorised into direction of correspondence (H-L, L-H and P-P) and further separated into half-century periods. No instances of the lemma were found for the period 1900-1920, and apart from the slightly higher number of occasions *beg** was noted during 1750-99, this still remains a fairly small amount, with only 11 occurrences. Therefore, it is not possible to draw any conclusive findings regarding this lemma.

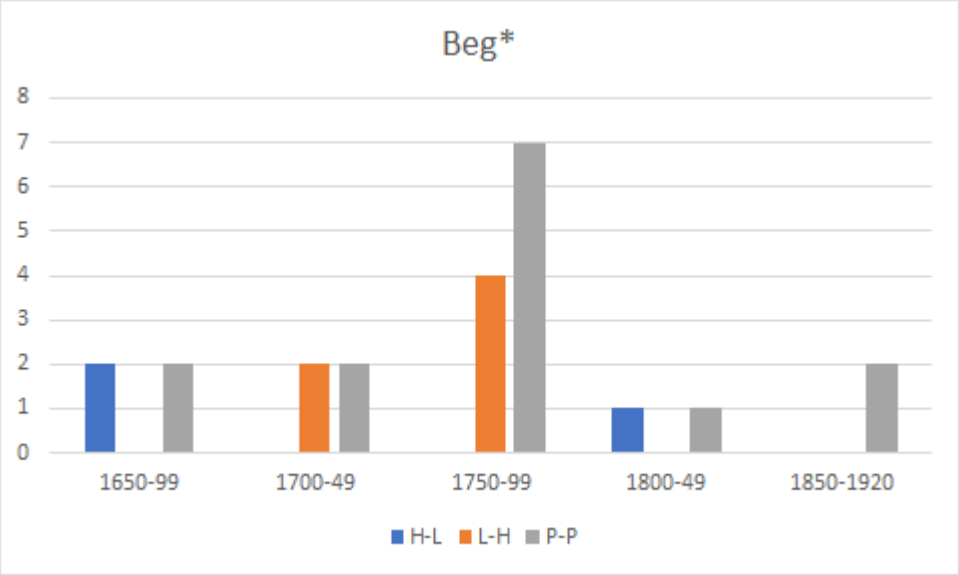

Fig 6.2: Usage of Beg* over time period of study

6.3: Troubl*

*Troubl** was also analysed for possible usage within direct requests, for example phrases along the lines of 'May I trouble you to...' but, again, no such extracts were found during analysis. This lemma, however, posed different considerations during examination of the data. Usage as a verb, a noun and an adjective were all found, and it was also used in both deferential and non-deferential (hereinafter called conversational) modes. The following examples illustrate some of these different uses of the lemma:

6.4: (...) I made the more bold to give you this trouble.

1678more_x2b

(Nominal; Deferential)

6.5: I am sorry to find that the young Gentleman you recommended (…) had the trouble of calling at my house without seeing me.

1756smlt_x4b

(Nominal; Conversational)

6.6: I'm awfully sorry to trouble you so –really.

1912lawr_x7b

(Verbal; Deferential)

6.7: (…) those doubts and fears which are most able to trouble me here sensibly.

1658lock_x2b

(Verbal; Conversational)

6.8: (…) though, as you see, it furnishes me with means of being farther troublesome to you (..)

1746pilk_x3b

(Adjectival; Deferential)

6.9: (…) a Copy of the Account I send my Lord Chancellor of a troublesome affair here (…)

1667finc_x2b

(Adjectival; Conversational)

From the different usages of the lemma *troubl** demonstrated in Extracts 6.4 - 6.9, it can be seen that conversational usage does not have any inference of deference or politeness and, thus, these can be disregarded from the discussion. The nominal, verbal and adjectival usages of *troubl** used to convey deference will, for the purposes of this study, all be

considered together as they are all different means of expressing similar attitudes of humility or self-abasement by the writers.

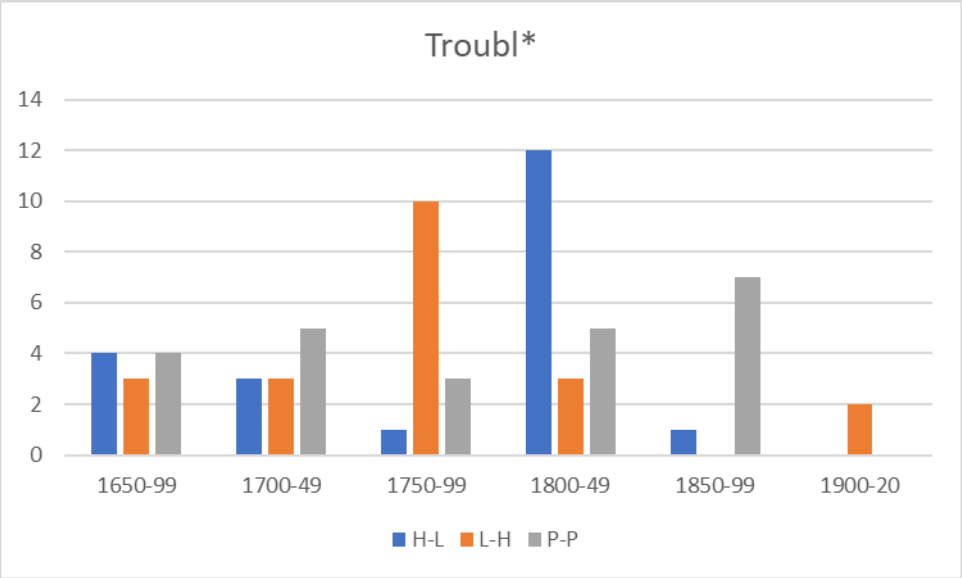

Fig. 6.3: Usage of Troubl* over time period of study.

Figure 6.3 shows usages of *troubl** found categorised into direction of correspondence (H-L, L-H and P-P) and further separated into half-century periods. The usage during 1650-1699 and 1700-1749 is fairly similar, each having a total of 11 results spread fairly evenly between the three directions of correspondence. The higher amounts for 1750-1799, 1800-1849 and 1850-1899 give, at first glance, the impression that the use of the lemma increased during these periods. However, from the 14 instances found between 1750-1799, all but three are from letters by Robert Burns and could, therefore, be taken as being symptomatic of his personal idiolect. Likewise, during 1800-1849, although the initial total is even higher, being 20, 14 of the instances were from letters written by Lord Byron. Although the overall total for 1850-1899 is lower than for the previous two half-centuries, again all but one of the eight

usages of *troubl** were from letters written by R L Stevenson. If these large numbers of examples from Burns, Byron and Stevenson are discounted, the overall figures show a great decrease in usage of the lemma, as shown in Figure 6.4, below.

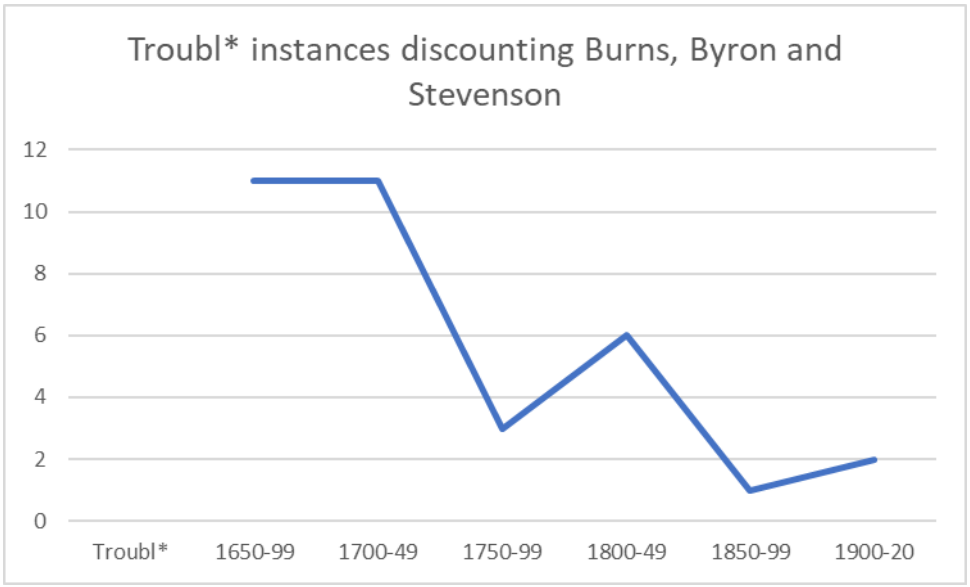

Fig 6.4: Chart showing overall decrease in the use of the lemma troubl* when usage by Burns, Byron and Stevenson are omitted from the totals.

The fact that *troubl** would appear to mainly have been retained in usage by three literary figures, albeit not all in the period examined by Cerquiero (2008) (see Chapter 2) could suggest that this was another instance of a lemma being retained as a poetic affectation within those circles. Further development of Cerquiero's hypothesis could be a basis for future research but is beyond the scope of this study.

6.4: Humbl*

The lemma *humbl** was found to always be a means of self-abasement within the texts analysed. Usage as both an adjective and an adverb were found. These instances occurred frequently within L-H correspondence, as was expected, although, unexpectedly, some instances of *humbl** within H-L correspondence were also found. A few examples of H-L usage are given below:

6.10: I return you humble thanks for your courteous letter (…)

(A-C) 1658brwn_x2b

6.11: My Services to your dear Wife ; the Duke of Marl. presents his humble Services to you.[12]

(A-B) 1713marl_x3b

6.12: Pray return my most humble service and hearty thanks to my Lady Masham [13]

(B-C) 1691new3_x2b

P-P letters also often contained this lemma, which could seem to suggest that, during certain eras at least, the lemma formed part of a formulaic means of politeness rather than one purely of deference to a perceived superior correspondent. Sample extracts of P-P and L-H usage of *humbl** include:

[12] Although not directly an expression of deference from the Duchess of Marlborough, the fact that she sends her husband's humble services to someone of a lower social group (Mr Jennens, *s.g* B) shows deferential language in a H-L letter.

[13] This usage of an honorific title refers to a third party, Lady Masham, who may well be of a higher class.

6.13: When you shall be pleased to write your will and pleasure to your Ladyship's most humble servant.

P-P (B-B)

1650more_x2b

6.14: Allow me Sir, to add one wish for my Self, that I may be an Humble Attendant on You both.

P-P(B-B)

1739wway_x3b

6.15: The emolument would be agreeable to your humble servant.

P-P (C-C)

CLM10wd367

6.16: I would humbly propose (…)

L-H(D-C)

CLM4wd317

6.17: I am your Most Humble Petitioner

L-H(C-A)

1704dfoe_x3b

Figure 6.5 shows the instances of *humbl** over the period of study, and it can be seen that the lemma, whilst used quite often from 1650-1749, is rarely used after this time, thus, again answering RQ1 as to the way deferential language changed and/or reduced during this time-period.

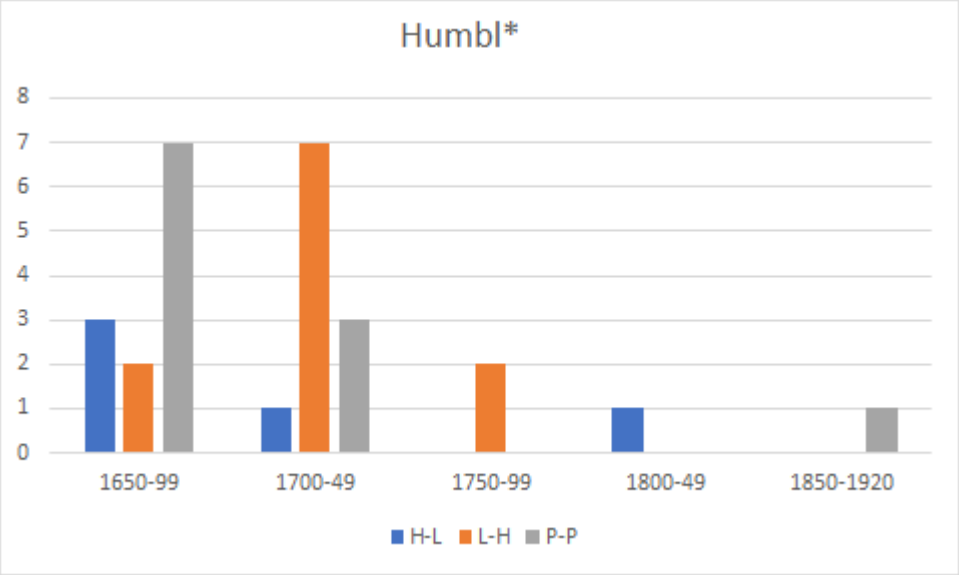

Fig 6.5: Usage of Humbl* over time period of study

One further observation, when examining the lemma *humbl*,* is that it was found to collocate quite often with the verb *present** during the first two half-centuries of this study. Nine instances of this usage were noted, out of 14 overall totals for *present*.* Two such instances are shown in Extracts 6.18 and 6.19, below.

6.18: Mr Finch presents your Lordship and my Lady with his most humble service

1667bain_x2b

6.19: My Services to your dear Wife; the Duke of Marl. presents his humble Services to you

1713marl_x3b

This could suggest that *present*,* itself, was considered a deferential verb adding to the overall need to convey the writer's position of humility towards the recipient. A lesser collocation with *pray** was also noted, as Figure 6.6, below, shows:

Time Period	Direction	Usage of humbl*	Collocation with present*	Collocation with pray*
1650-99	H-L	3	2	2
	P-P	6	1	1
	L-H	3	2	
1700-1749	H-L	1	1	
	P-P	3	1	1
	L-H	6		

Fig 6.6: Correlation of the lemma humbl* with the verbs present* and pray*, 1650-1749.

Surprisingly, the collocation is strongest within correspondence written in the direction H-L, although two out of three instances from 1650-99 written L-H also collocate with *present*.* For a deferential phrase, as in Extracts 6.18 and 6.19, it had been expected that L-H correspondence would have shown the highest number of instances, but it would seem to indicate that polite language and expressions of deference were used between all writers of differing social groups in order to avert any unintentional or perceived rudeness. The overall totals for all directions are not very high, however, so although interesting it can only be a hypothesis at present. P-P collocation is not strongly evident for either half-century, as may have been expected for a form of deference, and from 1750-1799 the link between the three lemmas is non-existent. This fact, again, would suggest that RQ1, (Has the usage and/or frequency of deferential language changed during the time period of the study?) is to be answered 'Yes'.

6.5: Worth*

Worth,* again, is used in several ways within the texts analysed. *Worth* is used as a noun, and the adjectives *worthy, worthiest* and adverb *worthily* are also found, albeit the latter two lemmas only occur once each within the data extracted. As with *humbl*,* this lemma is used to show respect, although possibly not always a degree of self-abasement, to the recipient. It is also sometimes used to refer to third parties, too, as shown in these extracts below:

> ***6.20:*** (…) I beseech god tow blese him that he may prove well and as honest a man as his most worthy father (…)
>
> H-L(A-C) 1665alfo_x2b

> ***6.21:*** I desired him to recommend Mr. M'Aulay to your favour and protection, as a most worthy, honest, and deserving gentleman (…)
>
> L-H(B-A) 1739swf2_x3b

Two contrasting ways in which *worth* and *worthy* were found to be used were in directly referring to a person as worthy, or in offering wishes that something might be found worthy of a person's interest, receipt or similar. Although the sentiments expressed both indicate the recipient's (or third party's) esteem in the writer's eyes, the different strategies used do indicate a semantic difference, which will be discussed further in Section 6.5.2 of this chapter. The figure below shows that the period from 1750-1799 was when *worth* occurred most often, although it must be remembered that this could have been due to the linguistic style of Robert Burns who wrote extensively to many people during this time. See Section 6.5.1, for further discussion of Burns' writing.

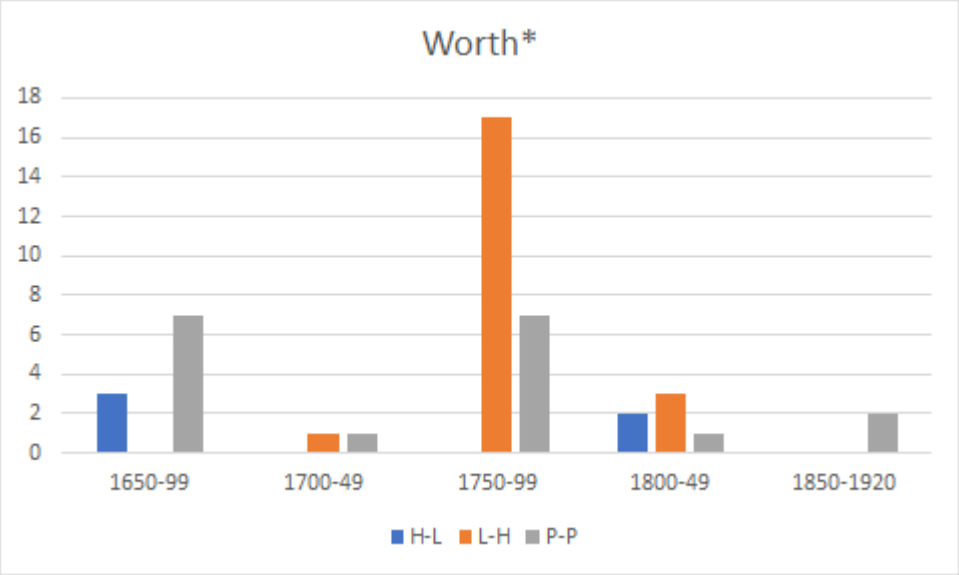

Fig 6.7: Usage of worth* over time period of study.

6.5.1: Robert Burns' writing

From Figure 6.7 it can be seen that most occurrences of *worth** are in P-P correspondence. Although not widely used during most periods of the study, an increase in L-H instances is noticeable during 1750-1799. This, however, is almost completely due to the prolific letter-writing of Robert Burns. Having been born into social group D, all his correspondence is, by default, either P-P or L-H in direction. His frequent usage of deferential lemmas would suggest that his lowly origins made a lasting, life-time impression. Despite becoming a feted figure in literary circles and achieving great success in his career as a writer, his correspondence is marked by its humility, even to his peers. Within the same time-frame, there are only a few other authors' texts within the corpora examined, which highlights the

difficulties of studying historical writings – the researcher is at the mercy of those who chose to preserve or discard documents as they saw fit.

6.5.2: Connotations of worth*

As mentioned in the overview to this chapter, *worth** was used as a noun, adjective and adverb to show respect to the recipient or to third parties. Unlike *humbl** though, it does not carry the same connotations of self-abasement. Whereas one can address a correspondent as *worthy*, this does not detract from the writer's own dignity or status whilst *humbl** does imply the writer is on a lower social level. Compare the following extracts for illustration:

> ***6.22:*** Such worthy minds as yours reclaim the fallen sinner, smoothing the thorny paths of virtue, and making them appear all beauty, peace, and pleasure (…)
>
> P-P (C-C)
>
> 1743pilk_x3b

> ***6.23:*** I shall be Glad to hear of your welfare humbly begging your excuse (…)
>
> P-P (C-C)
>
> 1697str4_x2b

Both pieces of writing flatter the dignity of the recipient. In the first text, however, despite acknowledging the worth of the recipient, the writer does not place themselves in a position of perceived inferiority. The second, however, in its phrase *humbly begging* places the writer in a subservient position despite both letters being written P-P by people within social group C.

It was commented on in the opening paragraphs of this section that *worth** was notably used in two slightly different ways in the correspondence analysed. These are illustrated by the following extracts:

6.24: (…) nor certainly would any such writing be worthy of your reading.

P-P (B-B)

1653fin2_2xb

6.25: These, my worthy friend, are my ideas; and I know they are not far different from yours.

L-H (D-C)

CLM4wth26

In Extract 6.24 the writer, John Finch, addressing his sister, implies she is of an elevated status by suggesting his writing would be beneath her attention. Although not directly placing himself in an inferior position, he elevates her by this suggestion regarding his own efforts. Extract 6.25 addresses the recipient directly as being worthy. It does not, however, abase either the writer, Robert Burns, or the ideas he mentions. Thus, by comparing these two samples, it is posited that writing similar to Extract 6.22 does suggest a degree of humility on the part of the writer, at least in regard to their work, offering, etc, whereas the wording of Extract 6.23 maintains both parties' dignity and status.

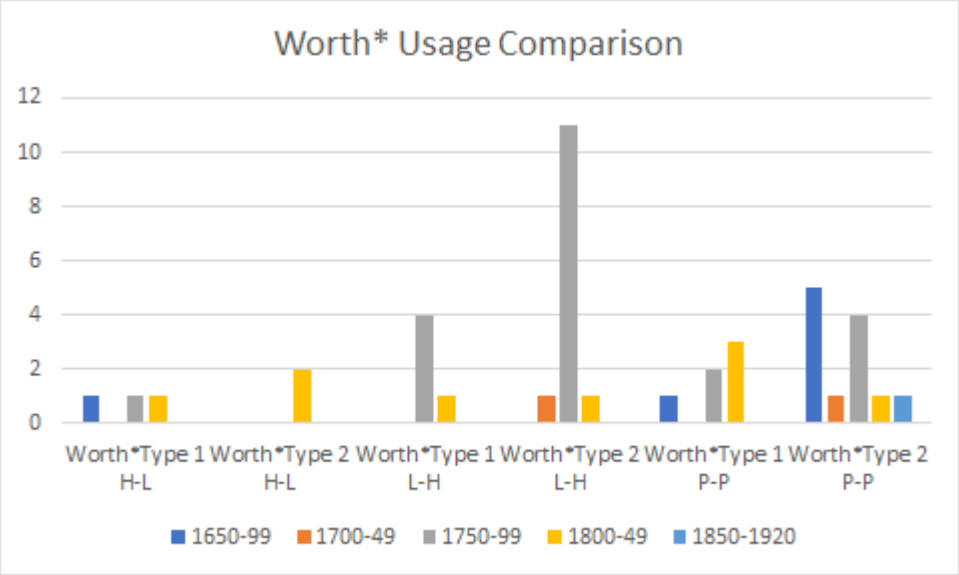

Fig 6.8: Differing usages of worth* over time period of study

Type 1 = Addressing of recipient or mention of other people.

Type 2 = Reference to objects, work and similar.

The figure above shows a breakdown between the two main differing usages of *worth** during the period of this study. Type 1 includes the lemma's use in ways similar to Extract 6.25 in the previous paragraph, directly calling the recipient or a third party *worthy*; Type 2 refers to usages as in Extract 6.24 where the writer flatters the recipient by suggesting something is beneath their attention. It can be seen that, apart from one example of Type 2 in a P-P letter from 1850-1920, all instances of *worth** in any context were declining in usage from the beginning of the nineteenth century. A few instances of phrases such as 'a pennyworth' or 'not worth (a sum of money)' did continue in usage, but these are not of interest to this study.

Apart from the previously mentioned anomaly arising from the correspondence of Robert Burns, it can be seen from Figure 6.8 that *worth** is used frequently in all the separate

time-periods of this study within P-P correspondence. Surprisingly, it occurred only four times (excluding Robert Burns' usage) within L-H writing, even though it had been posited that this would be a form of address used to flatter those in a higher social grouping. This suggests that its use was intended to maintain the status and dignity of both parties, rather than as a form of humility. The comparative scarcity of the lemma (44 occurrences within the entire data set) means, nevertheless, that this interpretation is open to further investigation.

6.6: Modal verbs

Modal verbs, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, are often strong indicators of levels of politeness. As Fraser & Nolen (1981) found in their study of Present Day English, *could* was considered to be more polite than *can* by the participants in their survey. Fitzmaurice has also carried out extensive analysis of modal verbs as markers of politeness in literature from earlier periods of history. In her 2000 work, Fitzmaurice looks at the writings of Margaret Cavendish in the mid seventeenth century and explores how the author used modal verbs to express 'multiple and fluctuating implied meanings' which enables her to 'appear singularly opinionated at the same time as being properly deferential and considerate of her addressee's point of view' (Fitzmaurice 2000:8). She further informs us that *can/could* had an epistemic function in the Early Middle English period, only acquiring a deontic meaning of permission during the sixteenth century. (Fitzmaurice 2000:12).

Can, according to Fitzmaurice (2000:17) was used less often than *may* within the work she examined. When examining the data set for the period 1650-1699 (the period of Margaret

Cavendish's book), however, 16 incidences of *can* were found, compared to just 12 for *may*. Whilst the numbers are quite close, the fact that *can* occurred slightly more often could be indicative of its preferred usage amongst other writers of the time. The work by Margaret Campbell is an epistolary essay, whereas the data examined for this work are taken from genuine correspondence of the period. Another interesting finding from analysis of this particular period is that whilst *could* was found around 25 times within the book, only one incidence was discovered in the data from the period 1650-99. This shows that the decision taken to not include letters written as part of works of fiction allows a more authentic picture of language usage to emerge.

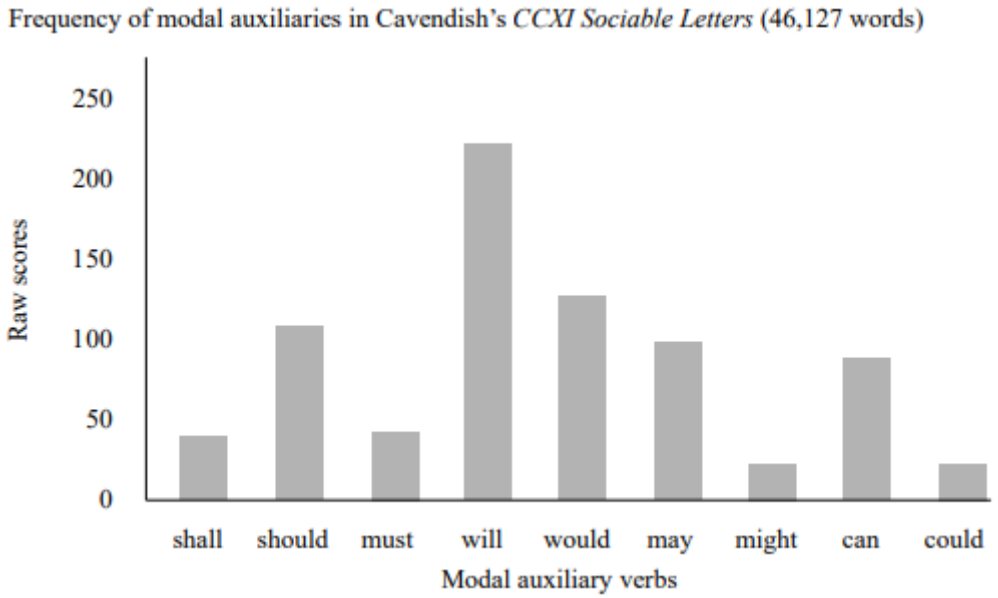

Fig 6.9: Modal verb frequencies in the work of Margaret Cavendish. Taken from: Fitzmaurice (2000:24).

Referring back to the work of Fraser and Nolen (1981), as has been mentioned previously, *can* was discovered to have been used more often than *could* despite their findings that *could* was considered more polite by speakers of PDE. One example of where PDE might be expected to use *could* as a form of polite request is found in a letter written by Robert Louis Stevenson to his parents:

6.26: Please say if you can afford to let us have money for this trip, and if so, how much.

CLM10pls93

(P-P)

Stevenson, here, is asking for money which would, arguably, merit the usage of a high level of politeness, coupled with a degree of deference towards his parents (see Sönmez (2005)) . The usage of *can* in this context, therefore, is surprising to modern readers. It has no connotation of the writer being unsure of the outcome of his request, simply seeming to ask if they are able to accede; almost an epistemic usage rather than a deontic one.

Another example of a request where *could* may be considered to be appropriate, rather than *can*, is found in another extract from P-P correspondence in 1745. Here, the writer is Laetitia Pilkington addressing Samuel Richardson:

6.27: TO your numberless instances of charity, I must humbly implore you, or rather your lady, to add one more: It is, that if you can spare a little old linen of any kind, you will be pleased mercifully to bestow it on this unhappy wretch, my daughter.

1745pil2_x3b

(P-P)

This request begins with deferential language. Not only is the phrase *humbly implore* used, but the acknowledgement that Pilkington has received charity from Richardson places her in the position of supplicant. However, the usage of the modal auxiliaries *can* and *will* again have an overtone of expectation that the petition will be granted. This is, perhaps, another example of *can* having a less direct semantic role than it has in PDE.

6.28: (…) if you can send me a sufficient sum by return to satisfy my landlord please do so

1899dows_x6b

(H-L)

Although Extract 6.27 was written in the eighteenth century, Extract 6.28, above, comes from 1899, well within the era of Late Modern English. This letter, was, however, written H-L, from Ernest Dowson (s.g B) to Leonard Smithers (s.g. C). The use of *can* might, therefore, infer that the recipient has some form of obligation to the writer, although the word *please* does add a polite overtone.

Only one example of the unexpected usage of *can* within an L-H letter was found. This was in correspondence written by Robert Burns (s.g. D) to 'Clarinda' (Agnes Craig M'Lehose) (s.g. C):

6.29: (…) if all these can make anything like a compensation for the evil I have occasioned you, if they be worth your acceptance, or can in the least add to your enjoyment (…)

CLM4wth38/39

(L-H)

Burns and 'Clarinda' had conducted a long, somewhat passionate correspondence interspersed with a few meetings in person, although the attraction seems to have been mainly on Burns' side (RobertBurns.org). That background to their relationship, together with the fact that, despite being from one of a lower social group to someone of a higher group, the closeness between their statuses could be considered to be negligible. Nevertheless, the

admission that Burns had 'occasioned' her 'evil' might mean a less direct deferential modal, such as *could* or *might* may be expected to be used here.

6.6.1: Modality and Social Deixis

Discussing modality in the period 1700-1749, Fitzmaurice (2002) states,

> (…) the modals in this period provided a linguistic resource for the rhetorical expression of negative and positive politeness, encapsulating a writer's acknowledgment of social distance as well as difference in status or rank from his or her addressee (…)
>
> (Fitzmaurice, 2002:249)

Extracts 6.26 - 6.29, in the previous section, were all found within P-P or quite close social groups, e.g. A-B, B-A, B-C etc. Burns' (s.g. D) letter is addressed to Agnes Craig M'Lehose (s.g. C) and the H-L letter between Dowson and Smithers is from a person in s.g. B to someone in s.g. C. The next question to address, therefore, is whether more modality was used as a form of deference between correspondents from social groupings of a greater distance.

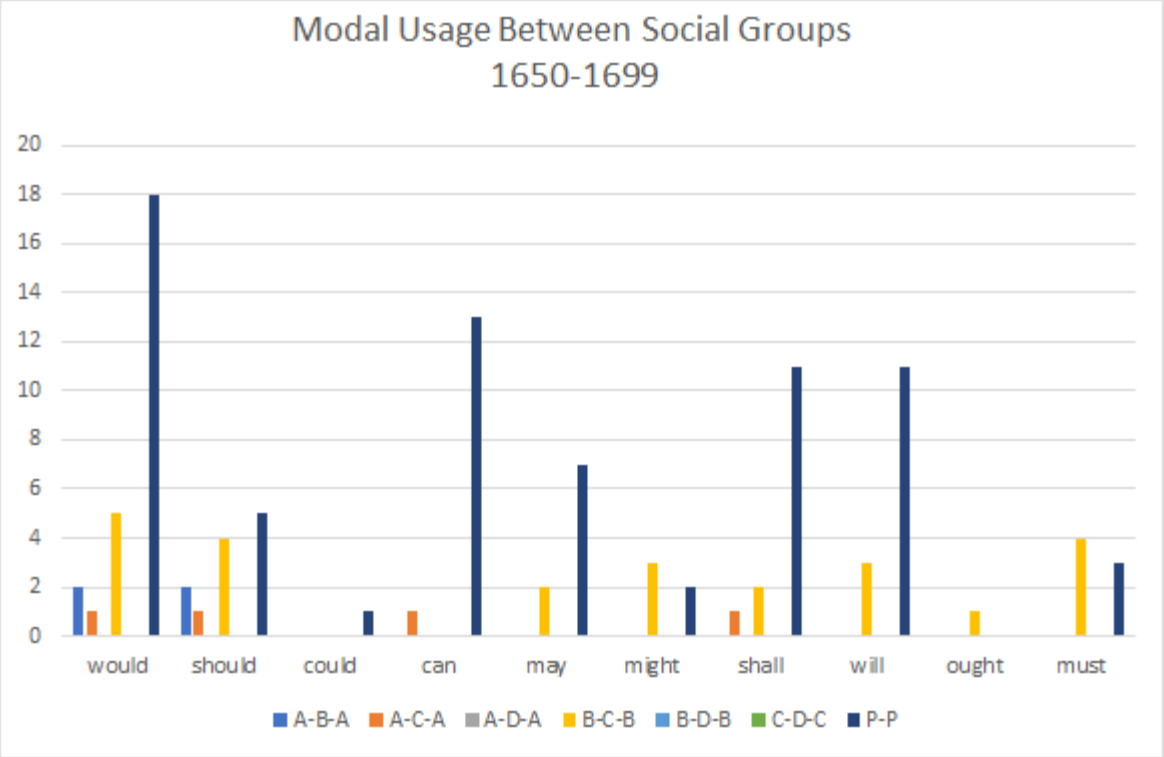

Fig 6.10: Modal usage within social groupings: 1650-1699

Figure 6.10, above, shows how often the different modal auxiliaries occur within each of the social groupings, for example A<B>A, A<C>A, B<C>B, B<C>D and P-P. Within the time frame 1650-99 85 different text extracts were analysed. The results show that, apart from *must*, every modal was found most often within P-P correspondence. B-C and C-B showed the next most frequent usage of modal verbs, with A-C and C-A producing very few instances. The lack of s.g. D correspondence within this period, however, does mean that the findings are limited – within spoken communication the usage of modals may well have been very different between the higher and lower social groups. Furthermore, it can be seen that only one instance of *could* was found during this entire era, with *can* occurring 14 times. Although the language of the texts examined here is from around 250-300 years before the study carried out by Fraser and Nolen (1981), the difference in linguistic expression is notable.

Figures 6.11 - 6.13 show the data from the other four time-periods of interest to this study for comparison.

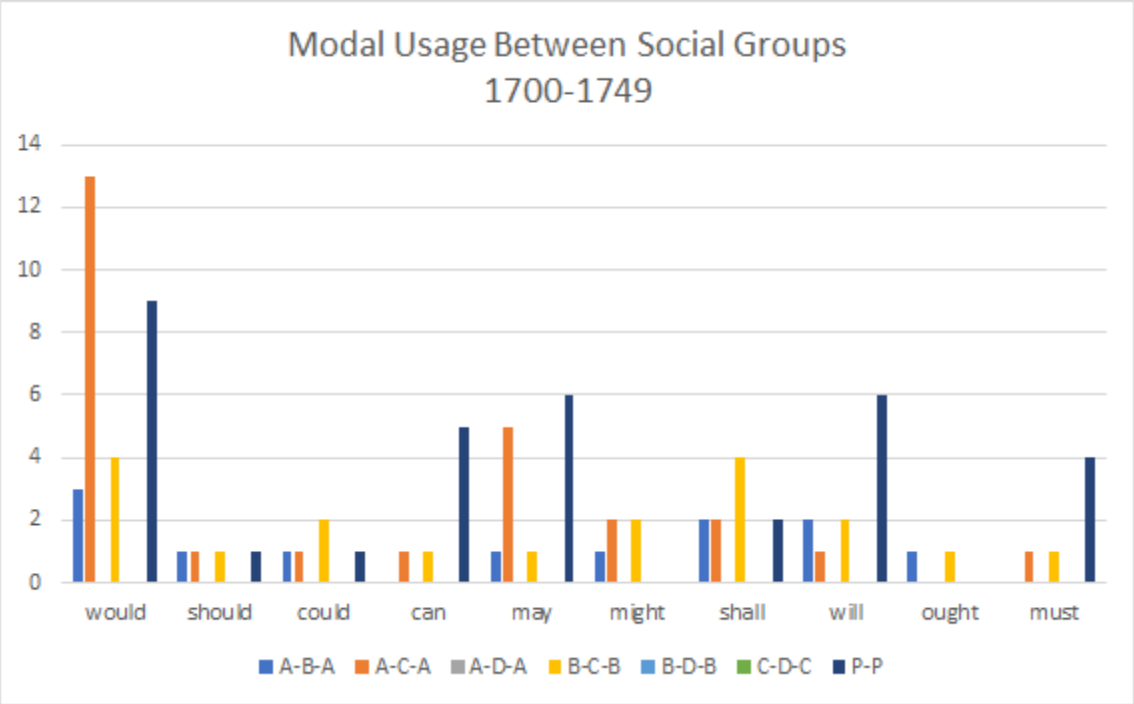

Fig 6.11: Modal usage within social groupings: 1700-1749

Within the period 1700-1749, apart from the use of *would* within A-C-A correspondence, the P-P texts analysed still tend to show the most usage of modal verbs. Within *could* and *shall,* there are slightly more instances found within B-C and C-B letters, although the difference is not great. Apart from *might* and *ought,* all modals were found in P-P, A-C-A and B-C-B extracts. There are still no s.g .D writings to examine, wherein it may be surmised that modals as a form of deference could be most likely to occur.

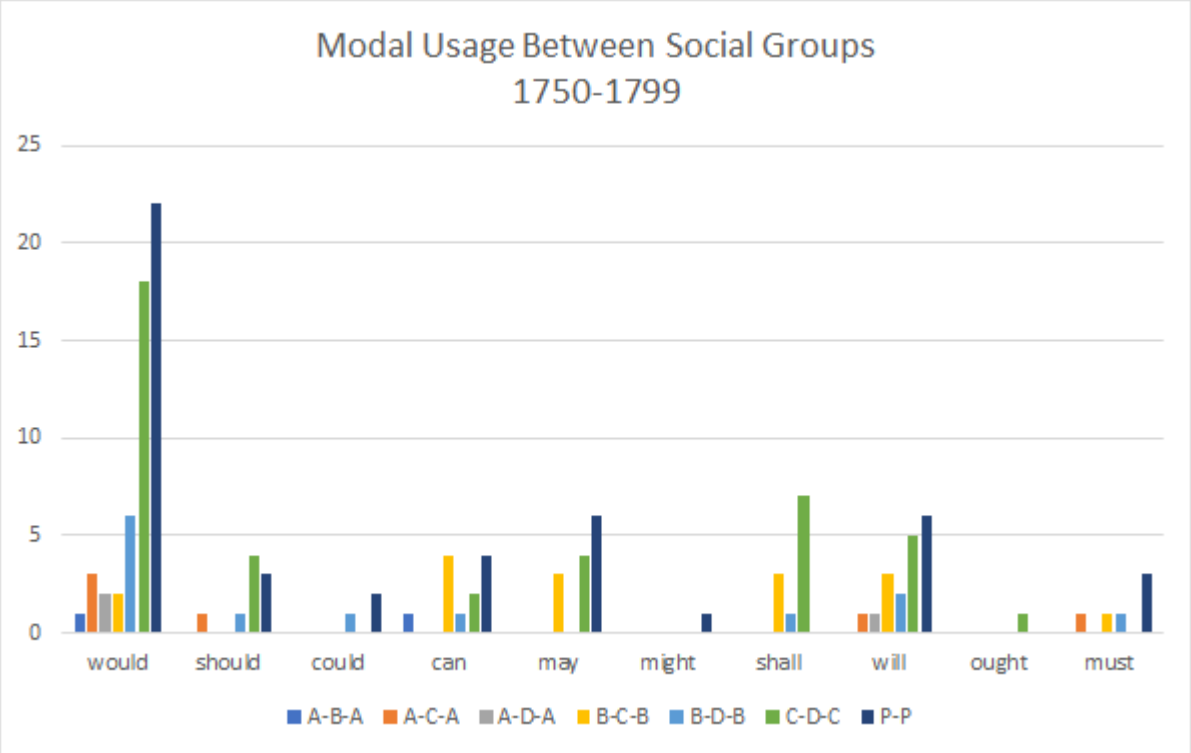

Fig 6.12: Modal usage within social groupings: 1750-1799

6.6.2: Burns' usage of modal verbs

The period from 1750-1799 is where the first instances of s.g D correspondence is found within the data analysed. However, it should be remembered that this is entirely due to the vast amounts of Robert Burns' letters which have been preserved (See Section 6.5 *Worth**). We do find many instances of modal auxiliaries being used but although this could well be symptomatic of deferential language, could it actually be due to Burns' own literary style? The following extracts give examples from a letter Burns wrote to a member of s.g. C, s.g. B and s.g. A, which will be examined for modal verbs and other deferential language.

6.30: I know not how to apologise for the impertinent length of this epistle; but one small request I must ask of you farther -- When you have honoured this letter with a perusal,

please to commit it to the flames.

CLM4pls73 (D-A)

Extract 6.30 is taken from a letter written to John Francis Erskine, (Earl of Mar and 12th Lord Erskine) (s.g. A). Deferential language is implicit from the use of the words *impertinent* and *honoured,* yet the only modal verb is the somewhat obligatory *must.* Burns does use this verb as part of the phrase *I must ask* so it is not giving any sort of command to Lord Erskine, yet it may have been expected that this could have been framed in a more deferential tone by the use of *I would ask* or even *may I ask.* Although this is only sample of Burns' correspondence to a member of s.g A, it would appear that modals might not have been his preferred manner of expressing deference.

6.31: Old Scottish songs are, you know, a favourite study and pursuit of mine, and now I am on that subject, allow me to give you two stanzas of another old simple ballad, which I am sure will please you.

CLM4pls57 (D-B)

From the above extract of a letter Burns wrote to a member of s.g. B, Mrs Frances Dunlop[14], despite her being above him in social status, little evidence of deferential language is found. The lemmas *allow* and *please* give the writing polite overtones, albeit with only the usage of the modal *will.* Again, this may suggest that Burns' usage of modals was not overtly used for deferential language.

[14] Mrs Dunlop was an elderly admirer of Burns' work and they wrote frequently to each other. She sought to be an advisor, mentor and critic to him. (Robertburns.org)

6.32: I was determined, before I got your letter, to write you, begging that you would let me know where the editions of these pieces may be found as you would wish them to continue in future times, and if you would be so kind to this undertaking as send any songs, of your own or others, that you would think proper to publish, your name will be inserted among the other authors

CLM4wd66-69 (D-C)

Although Extract 6.32 is from a letter to someone only one social group above that of Robert Burns, it shows the most frequent usage of modal verbs within the examples analysed. The four uses of *would*, together with one instance of *may* and the lemma *beg*,* all seem to suggest very deferential language. The addressee was the Rev John Skinner, who had written some songs which Burns admired greatly. He actually said that one of Skinner's songs, Tullochgorum, was 'the best Scotch Song ever Scotland saw' (robertburns.org: ND). Although their respective social backgrounds may not have been an obvious reason for Burns to use so much deferential language in this letter, it could be that his admiration of Skinner's writing led to him writing in these terms. From the analysis of these three texts it might be posited that social status was not the only reason for people to express themselves in deferential terms. Whether, and how, admiration, obligation or other factors were equally a reason for politeness and deference are, however, beyond the scope of this particular study.

6.6.3: Modal usage 1800-1920

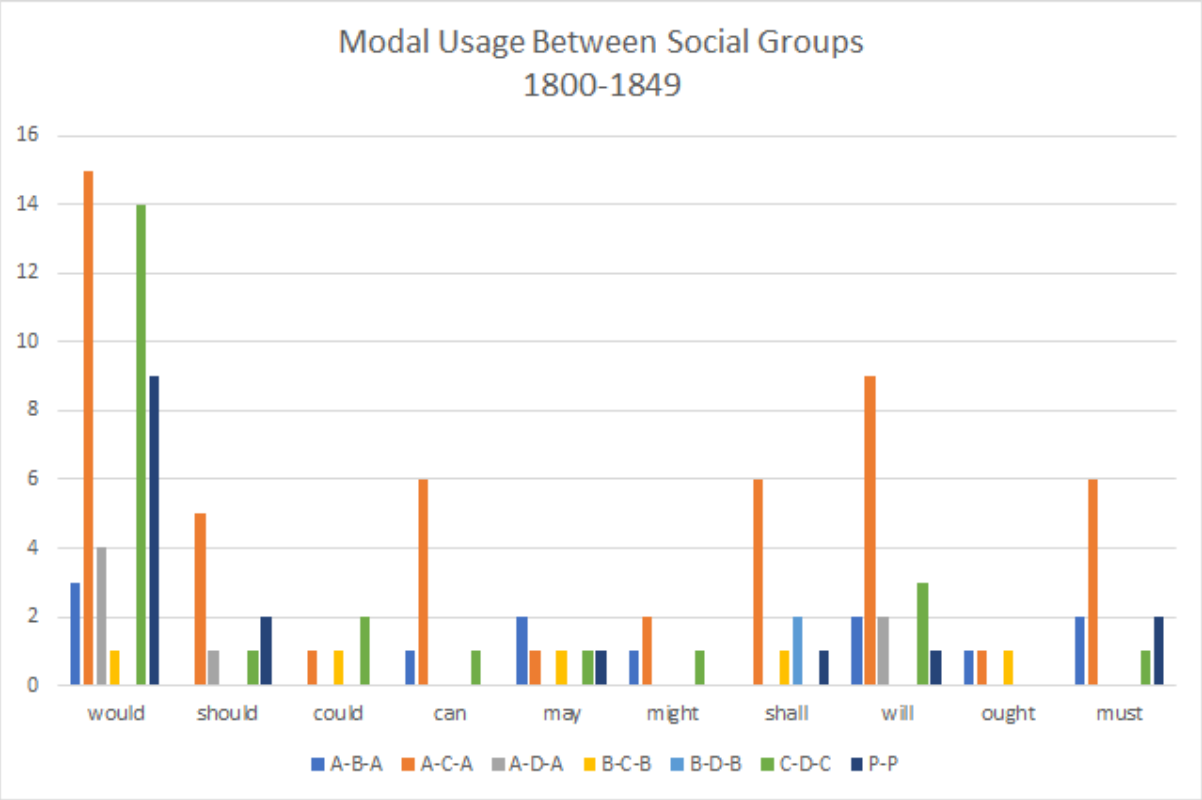

Fig 6.13: Modal usage within social groupings: 1800-1849

Modal usage in the early 19th century shows, for the first time, a majority of A-C-A instances, rather than the P-P examples found in earlier time-periods. Once more there are instances of s.g. D correspondence, most notably in the usage of *would* although they can be found across all the modal lemmas apart from *ought* which is, as in the other half-centuries analysed, very rarely to be found.

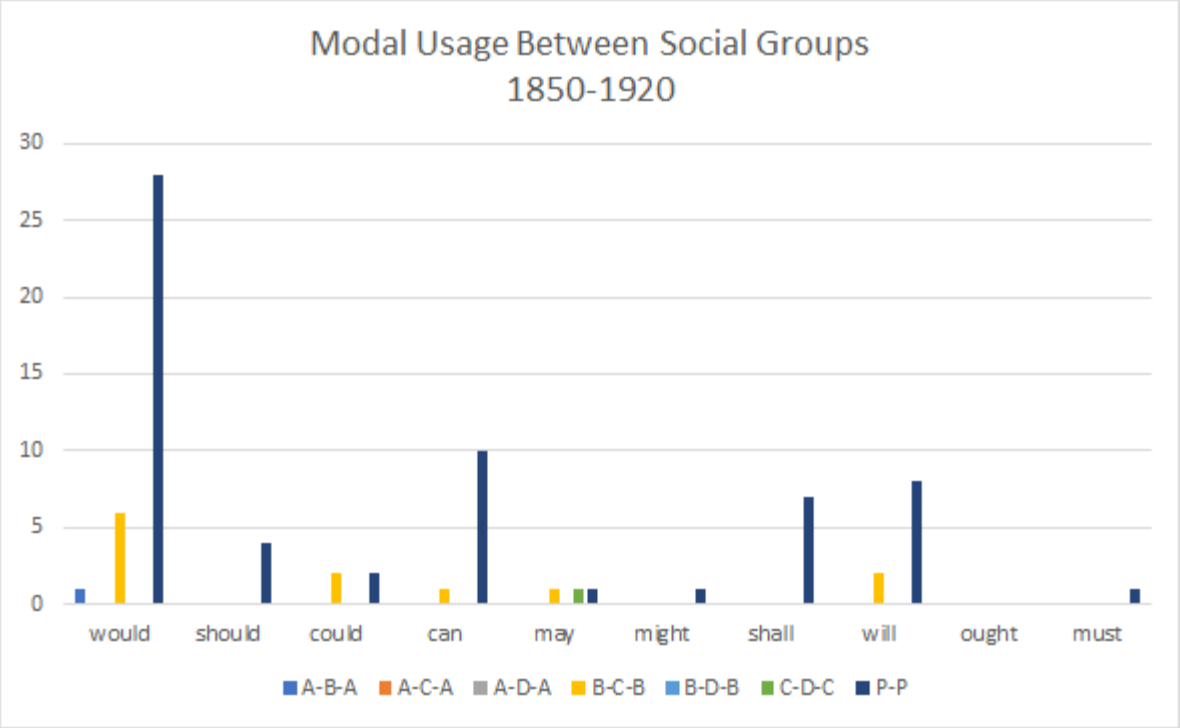

Fig 6.14: Modal usage within social groupings: 1850-1920

Between 1850 and 1920, very few modals were found at all – the most common being *would*. The majority of all instances are within P-P letters, with B-C-B being, apart from two occurrences, the only other category where modal usage was found. To illustrate how the usage of modal verbs changed over the time span of this work, Figure 6.15, below, shows how, despite an increase in the number of extracts available for analysis, modal usage declines from the middle of the eighteenth century.

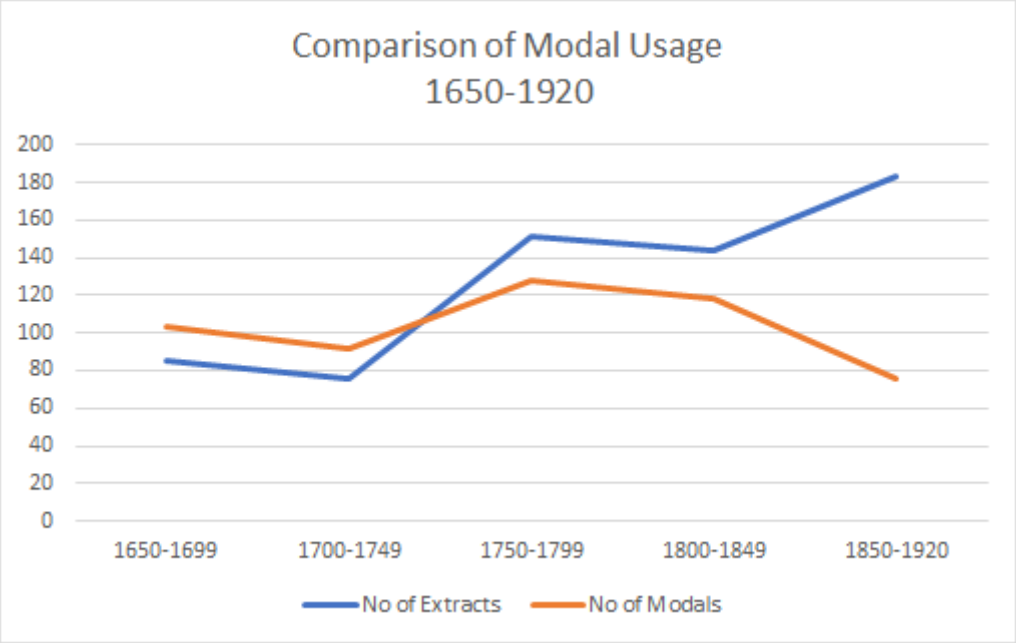

Fig 6.15: Rates of modal verbs in comparison with number of texts analysed.

6.7: Conclusion

This chapter has examined usage of different forms of deferential language in an attempt to answer RQ1: Has the usage and/or frequency of deferential language changed during the time period of the study?

Modal verbs have been discussed, together with the lemmas *troubl*, beg*, worth** and *humbl*.* Figure 6.16, below, shows the combined totals for these four lemmas and does, indeed, show that all these markers of deference had greatly reduced in frequency by 1920.

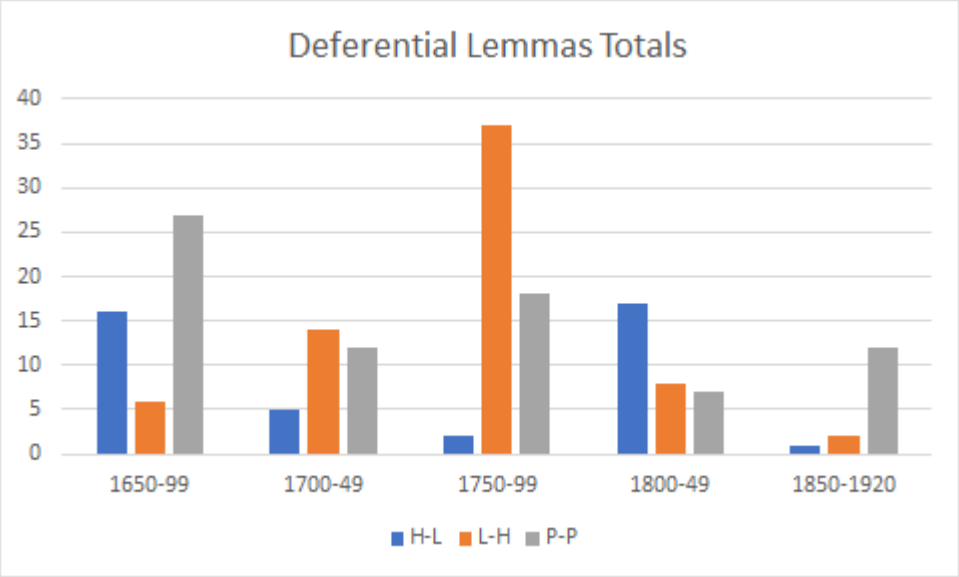

Fig 6.16: Totals of usage of all deferential lemmas over time period of study

There is a marked increase in L-H usage of deferential language during 1750-1799, but, again, this is mainly due to the fact that Robert Burns was of s.g. D and, therefore, all his letters were, by default, P-P or L-H.

From the data in Figures 6.15 and 6.16 above, it is shown that both modal verbs and deferential lemmas had greatly reduced in frequency by the end of the time-period of this study, despite more texts being available to analyse. Therefore, RQ1 is deemed to have been answered: Yes, usage of all forms of deferential language examined in this study had reduced greatly by the end of the dates of this study, with a change in the usage of honorific titles and, to a certain extent, modal verbs.

Chapter 7: The Dative Alternation and Social Deixis

7.1: Overview

This chapter is an attempt to further the work undertaken in Flack's (2018) study of the English dative alternation from 1410 – 1650, which gave rise to R.Q.3: Is the use of the Dative Alternation as a politeness marker evident from the 17th to early 20th centuries?

In this work, the hypothesis was put forward that the prepositional (hereinafter PP) dative form was used to signify respect or deference from those who were in a lower social position to their correspondent. It was also noted that the PP dative was used between people who were socially distant, for instance because of political affiliations. The double object (hereinafter DO) dative form was, in comparison, seen to be employed between those of familial or other social closeness, and by those who were deemed to be in a superior social group to their correspondents.

In order to confirm or refute this theory of dative forms indicating social closeness or distance, all extracts analysed were examined for verbs which could take both the DO and PP forms noted. Those identified were then further investigated to ascertain which direction (H-L, P-P or L-H) the letter was written in, so as to track any correlation between social deixis and usage of the prepositional dative.

All in all, six different verbs were found for analysis: *give, send, show, offer, bring* and *forward.* Two instances of the verb *convey* were also found within the data set, but both these

were prepositional so they were unsuitable for comparative analysis. One instance of *beg,* used in an apparently prepositional dative form by Robert Burns, was also discovered in the data:

> ***7.1:*** I would send my compliments to Mr. Nicol, but he would be hurt if he knew I wrote to anybody and not to him; so I shall only **beg** my best, kindest, kindest compliments **to my worthy hostess.** **CLM4wth24**

This usage of *beg*, however, was not discovered anywhere else within the data analysed, and so it was decided not to include this lemma in the analysis of dative verbs.

7.2: Discussion of verbs analysed

As mentioned in the previous section, six different verbs were identified from the data set which could be used both with a double object or a preposition. In total, 102 extracts for correspondence were analysed which contained such verbs. *Give** and *send*,* however, were the two dative verbs used most often, in both the DO and PP forms; 52 instances of *give** and 37 of *send** were examined in total. All other verbs examined were used much less frequently, with only 13 instances across all the extracts. Thus, this chapter will only discuss the other verbs of interest briefly, whilst concentrating on *give** and *send*.*

7.2.1: Show

Although *show** can be used both prepositionally (e.g. show N to NP) and with a double object, (e.g. Show NP N) only one prepositional instance was found within the data

examined, together with two DO extracts, over the whole time span of this study. These are:

DOUBLE OBJECT:

7.2: (…) the compliance I was desirous to show you in all things would not suffer me to deny it you in this.

H-L 1668tem_x2b

7.3: Show Stephen what you please; if you could show him how to give me money, you would oblige.

L-H CLM10wd40

PREPOSITIONAL:

7.4: I beg you won't show this to anybody, so pray burn it,

P-P 1761lenn_x4b

Of the above extracts, one is written P-P whilst one each are from H-L and L-H correspondence. From the hypothesis in Flack (2018) it would have been expected that any prepositional constructions would have been found within L-H writing as a mark of respect, and possibly H-L if the writer wished to maintain their social distance from the recipient. However, as can be seen from the extracts, the only L-H instance used the DO dative form, whilst the only prepositional example was written P-P. Nevertheless, from such a small sample size, no clear patterns can be observed and, thus, no way of refuting or confirming the hypothesis.

7.2.2: Offer

The verb *offer** was only found three times within the data set, two of these examples were double object whilst one was prepositional. As with *show**, it would have been expected that any L-H instances would have been where the PP form was found but, again, this was not the case. Instead, the prepositional usage was, again, found in a letter written P-P (as with Extract 7.7):

> ***7.5:*** Pray offer my kind regards to Miss Blagden when you see her, and tell her that I hope to shake hands with her in London this spring.
>
> P-P 1869elio_x6b

Of the other two DO instances found, two were written P-P and the other L-H. Thus, again, no conclusions can safely be drawn from the data. The three DO instances are given below:

> ***7.6:*** I did hope I should have seen you hear last summer and then you would have done this business with much less trouble you know I did offer you that whoever did undertake your business might have the sight of my Husbands book or papers. (…)
>
> P-P 1697stra_x2b

> ***7.7:*** All I can offer in return for the favour which I ask is many, many thanks; or if Monsieur de Voltaire 's delicate French ear would not be offended, I might perhaps offer him a few good rough English verses.
>
> P-P 1764bsw2_x4b

Therefore, once again, due to the small sample size, no clear patterns can be observed or conclusions drawn.

7.2.3: Bring

When analysing the verb *bring**, although 10 instances were found within the extracts analysed, not all were potentially dative usages. The two formulae which it was hoped to find were:

A) I will bring X to you

B) I will bring you X

However, no instances of sentences along these broad lines were discovered during analysis. There were, however, sentences such as:

> ***7.8:*** It would indeed be a very great satisfaction to me if darling little William could be sent to England and to Osborne, and I would be quite ready to bring him back with me to Germany.
>
> P-P 1863qvic_x6b

In cases such as this, clearly, it would not be possible to write **bring him back Germany with me,* or any similar construction without the preposition *to*. Thus, instances such as this could not be included in the analysis of the dative alternation with regard to *bring**. For a fuller discussion of this aspect of using dative verbs with place names, see *inter alia* Levinson, 2005:155.

7.9: If your meaning be, that the very things you ask, and wish, become Odious to you, when it is I that comply with them, or bring them about (…)

L-H 1718pope_x3c

In Extract 7.9, the verb *bring* is actually part of a phrasal verb, *bring about,* with the meaning 'To cause to happen, bring to pass, occasion, accomplish, effect.' (OED). Thus, it can only be used in this particular format; no prepositions can be inserted. Therefore, extracts such as this also had to be disregarded when analysing *bring**.

In the end, only two extracts were discovered which had the potential to use *bring** with either a preposition or a double object:

7.10: Mr Milward, who came to the University to see his son, and bring him some necessaries (…)

P-P 1678more_x2b

7.11: I shall leave a small token with Mr Carter for sum of madling Collage tow bring you which I pray accept of as token of my thankfulness (…)

H-L 1666alfo_x2b

Extract 7.10 is taken from a letter written in the direction P-P by Henry More to Lady Conway which, in its greater context, includes honorific and deferential phrases such as *But such things as these I need not suggest to your Ladyship* and *I made the more bold to give you this trouble*. The usage of *bring**, however, is referring to a third party wherein no direct address is taking place. Extract 7.11, likewise, contains the phrase *pray accept* which is showing deference to the recipient, despite the writer, Lady Alford being in s.g. A and the recipient,

John Locke, being in s.g. C. It may have been expected, from the deferential tone of the letter (perhaps because Locke was Lady Alford's son's tutor at Oxford) that a prepositional dative would have been used, though the H-L direction may explain the less formal usage of the DO. All in all, however, as with *show** and *offer**, the data is far too scarce to make any conclusions or inferences possible.

7.2.4: Forward

When analysing occurrences of *forward** for the dative alternation, only three instances were found:

7.12: She would with the greatest Pleasure have forwarded your recommendation to Mrs. J. Ogle (…)

H-L 1816she2_x5b

7.13: I thought you would not perhaps be offended if Mr. Murray forwarded it to you (…)

H-L CLM6wd251

7.14: I shall be known at the Post Office, should you be in the mood for forwarding me a sweet letter

P-P 1887merd_x6b

Extracts 7.12 and 7.13 both show usage of *forward** with a preposition, and are both written in the direction H-L. They each include quite formal language, notably the use of honorific titles (Mrs J Ogilvie and Mr Murray). The tone of both these extracts is quite formal, and, although written H-L, the usage of the prepositional dative form of *forward** could, therefore, perhaps be adding to the formality. The third extract, however, is written in the direction P-P by the novelist and poet George Meredith to a woman, Hilda de Longueuil, with whom he had

a friendship after the death of his wife (Sencourt, 2012: 220). The overall tone of the letter is one of friendly intimacy and, thus, the usage of the DO construction could be a way of adding to the informal tone. Once again, however, as with *bring*, offer** and *show**, there are too few examples to draw any firm inferences as to social deixis from them.

7.3: Give and send

7.3.1: Quantitative data analysis of give and send

From the previous sections looking at other dative verbs, it has been demonstrated that the occurrences of these within the data set were far too infrequent to draw any conclusions as to whether or not the use of the dative alternation had any link to social deixis. However, there were 89 results extracted and analysed in total which included the verbs *give** or *send**. The data resulting from this breakdown is given in Figure 7.1 below:

		H-L	P-P	L-H	Total
1650-99	**Give DO**	3	5	3	**11**
	Send DO	3	7	0	**10**
	Give Prep	0	4	0	**4**
	Send Prep	1	1	0	**2**

1700-49	**Give DO**	1	3	1	**5**
	Send DO	0	0	3	**3**
	Give Prep	0	0	1	**1**
	Send Prep	0	1	1	**2**
1750-99	**Give DO**	0	4	5	**9**
	Send DO	0	0	1	**1**
	Give Prep	0	3	1	**4**
	Send Prep	0	1	0	**1**
1800-49	**Give DO**	2	1	2	**5**
	Send DO	0	0	2	**2**
	Give Prep	0	0	0	**0**
	Send Prep	3	0	2	**5**
1850-1920*	**Give DO**	0	4	2	**6**
	Send DO	2	7	0	**9**
	Give Prep	1	1	1	**3**
	Send Prep	1	4	2	**7**

**** Only one instance of *send* was found for the period 1900-1920, this being prepositional.***

Fig 7.1: Totals for the verbs give* and send* for prepositional and double object construction, separated into half-century and writing direction.

As can be seen, the majority of correspondence was written P-P, which reflects the general composition of the data set, L-H being the next most common direction and H-L having the least results. See Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1, for details of the composition of the data set. What is immediately clear, however, is that the DO construction is used far more often than the PP in every half-century throughout the time span of this study. Furthermore, when direction of writing is examined, the DO is more popular than the PP for most of the separate classifications. For 1750-1799, both constructions were used equally (four times each) for P-P directional correspondence, and for 1850-1920 the amounts are equal (two instances each) within H-L letters. There is also one more usage of the prepositional dative form within letters written L-H during 1850-1920 but as this is a longer time span, despite only one instance coming from the final 21 years of the era, the difference is negligible.

As has been discussed previously, for the usage of the prepositional dative to be linked to an indication of social distance between correspondents, it had been posited that more instances would have been found within L-H directional writing. From the quantitative analysis of the 89 examples found of *give** and *send**, it would appear that no such link existed during the time span of interest. This would appear to indicate that the social dimension linked to the usage of the dative alternation during 1410-1680 noticed in Flack (2018) did not carry over into this later period. Furthermore, from the finding that the DO variation was used much more often over all half-centuries examined, this could also suggest that the language of letters was becoming less formal, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 5 of this thesis. Having discussed the quantitative data results, however, the next section will look at some extracts qualitatively in order to draw a fuller picture.

7.3.2: Qualitative data analysis of give and send

Having looked at the quantitative data within the different directions of writing for each half-century in Section 7.3.1, this section will examine if any patterns of usage of the dative alternation can be drawn from each individual social group's correspondence. Writings from three authors will also be investigated later to examine their personal writing styles to different recipients. Due to the contents of the corpora used for data extraction, the majority of all correspondence, especially in the final time period (1850-1920), occurred between s.g. C-C correspondents. However, extracts from a range of social groups will be discussed within this section.

7.3.2.1: Correspondence between members of social group A

Prepositional *give** is the most common mode within A-A letters from 1650-1699, perhaps showing a degree of formality, with two instances of PP *send** found in A-A correspondence dating from later eras. The DO dative variant only occurs twice within A-A correspondence over the whole time span of the study, and the PP form is only found six times, thus a careful study of the actual correspondents and their relationships is necessary.

The two instances of PP *give** from 1650-1699 are both found in the following extract written by Elizabeth of Bohemia to her son, Charles I Louis, Elector Palatine:

> ***7.15:*** I pray, let me know what answer you **give to** the Prince of Transilvanias and his Brothers and Mothers letter, and what title you **give to** the Brother (…)
>
> 1651eliz_x2b

On the face of it, this is simply a letter written by a mother to her son and, thus, might be expected to have taken an informal tone. The person referenced in this letter, however, is another member of royalty, the Prince of Transylvania, which could explain the usage of the PP construction. Another possibility could be that this mode of writing was considered 'correct' within the highest social group; its overall preponderance over the DO form within A-A writings may suggest this.

> ***7.16:*** The tea-things which Sir Charles Williams has given you, I would have you make a present of to your Momma, and send them to her by Duval when he returns.
>
> 1748ches_x3b

Extract 7.16, above, is an extract from a letter written by Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, to his son. It forms part of a collection which have been collated by Leigh (1901) and entitled 'Letters to his son on the fine art of becoming a man of the world and a gentleman'. This extract, therefore, forms part of a piece of paternal advice which Stanhope is passing on to his son and heir and could be considered both intimate yet, at the same time, formal. The usage of the term *Momma* does imply that the overall tone of the correspondence was of a friendly nature. However, the preceding sentence, on the characteristics of a 'well-bred man' are written almost in the manner of a reference book:

> ***7.17:*** He talks to kings without concern; he trifles with women of the first condition with familiarity, gaiety, but respect; and converses with his equals, whether he is acquainted with them or not, upon general common topics, that are not, however, quite frivolous, without the

least concern of mind or awkwardness of body: neither of which can appear to advantage, but when they are perfectly easy.

This tone forms the main body of the letter, the sentence about the 'tea-things' being, perhaps, a last addition, perhaps an afterthought. From this, it can be surmised that Stanhope wished to maintain a formal tone in his letter which would explain the usage of the prepositional dative.

The example below demonstrates an instance of DO *give** in A-A correspondence. It was written by Sir John Finch to Lord Edward Conway.

7.18: (…) Lord let me be as I am or can be, I can and doe **give your** Lordship what is invaluable and what the Power and Riches of the World can not Purchase (…)

1667finc_x2b

Sir John was born into an aristocratic family but was only created Baron Finch in his own right in 1640 (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography), whereas Lord Conway was born heir to a title (3rd Viscount Conway) (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography). Conway was also given an earldom later, but at the time of this letter's writing this had not yet occurred. In terms of rank, a baron is below a viscount (encyclopaediabritannica.com), thus, perhaps, explaining Finch's use of the honorific *your Lordship*, but both men would have been of a similar social status, which may account for the DO form of *give**.

Another possible reason for the DO construction in this extract is the principle of end-weight. Bresnan *et al.* (2005) give the following examples and explanation to illustrate this principle:

> (9) a. *That movie gave the creeps to me.
>
> b. . . . Stories like these must give the creeps to people whose idea of heaven is a world without religion. . .
>
> (10) a.??Stories like these must give people whose idea of heaven is a world without religion the creeps. . .
>
> b. That movie gave me the creeps.
>
> The longer phrase is placed at the end by the principle of end weight (Behaghel 1909, Wasow 2002). The unnatural sounding constructed examples (9a) and (10a) violate the principle of end weight. We infer that idioms like give the creeps have a strong bias toward the double object construction, but the principle of end weight overrides it.
>
> (Bresnan *et al.,* 2005:7)

Thus, the choice of DO construction in Extract 7.23 is explained by both Flack's (2018) theory of social deixis and the theory of end-weighting. It is not, therefore, possible to say which, if either, is the predominant, albeit probably subconscious, reason for the wording of this sentence.

Although few examples of the dative alternation were found within letters between members of s.g. A, the usages discussed which were found in Extracts 7.15 and 7.16 suggest that people who were, perhaps, writing in a more formal tone tended to select the PP construction in their writing.

7.3.2.2: Correspondence between members of social group C

No examples of P-P correspondence were found between members of social group B which included dative verbs, and so letters between members of s.g. C will now be examined. By way of contrast, data taken from C-C correspondence shows 12 instances of DO *give** over the time-scale of the study, compared to only two PP usages. DO *send** for C-C correspondence shows six occurrences, with four PP results. Does this indicate less formality between lower social groups? Again, several of these examples will be examined in greater depth to attempt to draw inferences as to the relationship between correspondents, context of letters, etc.

When analysing the extracts from letters written between members of s.g. C, in line with Flack's (2018) theory that the PP dative construction signified social or personal distance, only five examples of this were found within the data set. This would suggest that the DO construction was used between those who were on equal and/or friendly terms.

> ***7.19*** I shall be Glad to hear of your welfare humbly begging your excuse, and will take leave when I have given you the Humble service of my brother and sister Chapman.
>
> 1697str4_x2b

The letter from which the above extract was taken was written by Elizabeth Stratton to John Locke. Although there is clearly deference shown, with the phrases *humbly begging your excuse* and *given you the Humble service*, the DO construction is, nevertheless, used. A similar

Expression is used in the following extract, also written by Stratton to Locke, again showing deference by the usage of *humble:*

> ***7.20:*** (…) my brother and Sister Chapman give you their humble service and so doe my two daughters
>
> 1697str_x2b

Unfortunately, there are no other dative extracts to be found within the letters of Elizabeth Stratton with which to compare her usage of the dative construction in different contexts, but the following instances from the correspondence of Robert Louis Stevenson and Jane Austen do give an idea of how the dative was used in other ways. Extracts 7.21 to 7.25 are written by Stevenson, Extracts 7.26 and 7.27 by Austen.

> ***7.21:*** I think I must really send you one, which I wish you would correct.
>
> CLM10wd317

> ***7.22:*** Please give my news to Scott, I trust he is better; give him my warm regards
>
> CLM10pls125

In these two extracts from Stevenson's letters, both written to Adelaide Boodle, the usage of both the PP and DO dative construction can be seen. Boodle was a neighbour and lifelong friend of Stevenson, who later wrote an account of their friendship (Hathi Trust, n.d.). It can be observed that Stevenson says *send you one* in the first extract but *give my news to Scott* in the second. This pattern of using the PP dative construction when referring to third parties, but DO when talking about himself and/or his recipient, can be seen, also, in the following examples:

7.23: I have made up my mind about the P. M. G, and send you a copy, which please keep or return (…)

CLM10pls73

7.24: Will you please send 20 pounds to - for a Christmas gift from -?

CLM10pls104

7.25: A PROPOS of whom, please send some advanced sheets to Cassell 's – (…)

CLM10pls138

Although there is no reason to believe Stevenson was on bad terms with *Cassell's* or the unknown person he refers to in Extract 7.24, this pattern of using the PP for third parties, could, perhaps, be a way of denoting their distance, whether physically or socially, from himself and his addressee. A similar pattern can be observed in extract 7.26 written by Jane Austen to her sister, Cassandra:

7.26: Pray give '' t ' other Miss Austen 's '' compliments to Edward Bridges when you see him again (…)

CLM5py4

In this example of Austen's writing, the PP dative construction is used in a similar way to that of Stevenson when referring to third parties. Edward Bridges was a relative by

marriage and also a ‘dear friend’ (Jane Austen.org), thus no social distance is being denoted in this request. The next extract, written about her niece and nephews (JaneAusten.org) is also written to Cassandra Austen:

> ***7.27:*** Pray give Fanny and Edward a kiss from me, and ask George if he has got a new song for me.
>
> CLM5py3

Here, Austen uses the DO dative construction, even though she is mentioning third parties again, as in Extract 7.26. The difference, however, is probably due to her extreme fondness for her family and the fact that the three children, Fanny, Edward and George, would only have been quite young. The letter is dated 27th October 1798, and the children were born in 1793, 1794 and 1795, respectively (Pemberley.com). Her usage of the PP for the adult Edward Bridges but the DO for her young nephews and niece suggest that an aspect of politeness may have been deemed proper when referring to other people, despite their friendship.

As mentioned earlier, very few instances of the PP dative construction were found within correspondence between members of s.g. C. The DO was used in most cases analysed, although the PP construction would appear to have been kept for mentioning third parties, signifying physical, if not social, distance from the writer and their addressee. The exception to the rule shown in Extract 7.27, referring to young children, would appear to signify close familial affection.

7.3.2.3: Correspondence between members of social group D

Within this particular category, only four examples of letters containing dative verbs were found. However, as has already been discussed, this category, s.g. D, was the least represented of all the social groups, with no correspondence at all from, or to, a member of this group being found before the half-century 1750-1799. Among the notable people who were deemed to have been born into s.g. D were Robert Burns, John Keats and George Bernard Shaw. Only letters from Keats and Burns were found which contained examples of dative verbs, totalling four extracts in all, three written by Burns and one by Keats.

7.28: It would oblige me much if you would send me a line or two when convenient.

CLM4wd6

The above example is from a letter written by Robert Burns to Allison (or Ellison) Begbie. According to the Burns Encyclopaedia (robertburns.org, n.d.) Begbie was an early friend of Burns' to whom he later proposed marriage, although she turned him down. The wording *it would oblige me* does sound rather formal for a letter between friends, yet the usage of the DO variant of *send* may be a sign of burgeoning intimacy.

7.29: If you like the air, (…) you can not imagine, my dear friend, how much you would oblige me, if, by the charms of your delightful voice, you would give my honest effusion, (…) to the few friends whom you indulge in that pleasure.

CLM4wd245

Extract 7.29 was written by Burns to Allan Cunningham, whose father had been a neighbour of Burns' (robertburns.org, n.d.). The overall tone of the letter is warm and friendly, and Burns' calling Cunningham *my dear friend* also reinforces this impression. Again, Burns uses the word *oblige*, as with the letter to Allison Begbie, so perhaps this is an example of his personal idiolect rather than an indication of formality. Although the phrase *give (…) to* uses the prepositional form of the verb, it would appear from the rest of the letter's tone that no formality or social deixis is indicated by this.

The final letter by Burns which is selected for analysis was written by him to James Johnson, a 'poorly educated man' (RobertBurns.org, n.d.) yet who set out to collect and publish all the Scots songs and music in a work called the 'Scots Musical Museum'. Burns became a collaborator in this undertaking and contributed a great many songs to The Museum.

> ***7.30:*** In the meantime, at your leisure, give a copy of the Museum to my worthy friend, Mr. Peter Hill, bookseller, to bind for me.
>
> CLM4wth93

Although Burns and Johnson had a close working relationship, the online Burns encyclopaedia notes that 'Throughout their association Johnson — (...) — always accepted Burns' superior taste, and never questioned his advice.' (robertburns.org, n.d.). This implies that Johnson considered himself to be Burns' inferior, although we have no way of knowing if this was reciprocated by Burns himself. If Burns did, in fact, consider himself intellectually, if not perhaps socially, superior to Johnson, then the usage of the prepositional *give* may be evidence of this, though this can only be conjecture.

Apart from Burns' writings, the only other example of correspondence between members of s.g. D which contain a dative verb is the following extract, written by John Keats to his brother and sister-in-law:

> ***7.31:*** My dear Keats - I send enclosed a Letter, which when read take the trouble to return to me.
>
> CLM7tbl14

This letter is a lengthy one, containing much affectionate advice and enquiries about the family's health and well-being; it can be obtained via the Project Gutenberg website (gutenberg.org, n.d.). Upon closer examination of the context of this actual extract, however, it transpires that Keats is quoting a letter he received from a mutual acquaintance and, thus, the wording is not Keats' own. Therefore, this cannot be taken into account when analysing usage of the DO construction of *send*.

From this brief analysis of the few P-P letters available for analysis in s.g. D, although some suppositions can be posited, there is not enough data to draw any firm conclusions.

7.3.2.4: Analysis of correspondence written in the direction higher – lower social group.

As previously discussed, if the hypothesis of Flack (2018) is correct, letters written from a person in a higher social group to one in a lower group could be expected to use the prepositional dative construction in order to stress the social distance between them. This

section, therefore, will attempt to qualitatively analyse a few examples of letters written in the direction H-L with regard to the dative forms of the verbs *give** and *send** which they employ.

> ***7.32:*** I have received the Favour of yours of the 31 July and that of the 6th of August, for which I give you a great many Thanks.
>
> 1714marl_x3b

The above extract is taken from a letter written by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough (s.g. A) to Mrs Jennens (s.g. B), whose husband was the Duke of Marlborough's aide-de-camp. Here, the DO construction of *give* is used, which could suggest a friendly relationship between the two women. The rest of the letter is fairly business like, containing phrases such as *I mentiond something to Mr. Guydott of hoping to see you at St. Alban's* and *I gave Mr. Rea Orders to employ Mr. Harris, your Coach Maker,*. No particularly personal matters are discussed, the majority of the letter concerning the Duke and Duchess's planned travels, so any close friendship between the correspondents is a matter of conjecture. A letter from the Duchess to Mrs Jennens, written eight years later, does call her *dear Mrs Jennens* although the amount of time between these two letters means that the friendship could have developed within that period:

> ***7.33:*** As soon as you were gon, dear Mrs. Jennens, I set down to thank you for your kind Nettin ,
>
> 1722marl_x3b

Extract 7.34, below, was written by Sir Thomas Browne (s.g. B) to Elias Ashmole (s.g. C), after whom the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford is named (Ashmolean.org, n.d.). The two men were both learned, with especial interest in the sciences, and corresponded upon the topic (Wood, 2018) but no evidence of any other relationship has been discovered by the author. The deferential tone of the letter, even though written in an H-L direction, suggests respect, though the phrase *send unto* actually refers to a third party so cannot be taken as a sign of social deixis between the writer and the recipient.

> ***7.34:*** I return you humble thanks for your courteous letter and the good news of the hopeful recovery of Mr Dugdale, unto whom I shall bee ready in any farther service, and shall god willing send unto him concerning the fish bone, which I have not forgot
>
> 1658brwn_x2b

The extract below was written by Isaac Newton (s.g. B) to John Locke (s.g. C):

> ***7.35:*** If the scheme you have laid of managing the Controulers place of the M. will not give you the trouble of too large a letter, you will oblige me by it.
>
> 1690new2_x2b

According to Rogers (1978), Locke, although older than Newton, '(…) was the indebted partner, learning much from his younger colleague' whilst Newton '(…) was not greatly influenced by Locke at all.' Despite Rogers' assertion, the tone of the letter would suggest that Newton was using formal, deferential language, at least in the opening sentences of the letter. His opening words are: *Sir Your deferring to answer my letter is what you needed not make an apology for because I use to be guilty of the same fault (…)*. This suggests that the

two men had a long, if sometimes infrequent, history of correspondence, the tone being very polite yet with a suggestion of camaraderie.

Newton continues a little later: *If you please to let me have your opinion on what I should send him I will send it with a letter by the Carrier (…)* Here, again, the tone is formal, with use of the phrase *if you please*, though the DO construction of *send him* gives, perhaps, a slightly familiar note. The next sentence, however, employs extremely honorific and deferential language: *My Lady Masham and you have done me much honour in looking into my Book and I am very glad to have the approbation of such judicious persons.* So, does the use of the Double Object dative variant mean that the writer and recipient were personally close? As has been discussed in other chapters, the overall style of letter-writing was much more formal in the 17th and 18th centuries. Possibly the DO was part of Newton's personal writing style. A letter written to Locke a year later does seem to reinforce this theory:

> ***7.36:*** I am very glad my Lord Monmouth is still my friend but intend not to give his Lordship and you any further trouble.
>
> 1692newt_x2b

A short while later in this same letter, Newton writes I *am to beg his Lordships pardon (…)*, thus making it quite evident that he was, again, writing in a deferential style. All the letters within the Archer corpus for Newton are written to John Locke, so no comparison with his style to other correspondents is available for comparison.

The next extract which will be considered was written by Lord Byron to R C Dallas, a distant relative by marriage[15].

> ***7.37:*** I will not apologise for the trouble I have given and do give you, though I ought to do so; but I have worn out my politest periods, and can only say that I am much obliged to you (…)
>
> CLM6tbl6

Byron wrote frequently to Dallas, as can be seen from the collection of his letters available at Project Gutenberg. This particular letter was written in 1811 regarding some alterations he had made to some of his verses. The tone of these letters is quite informal, many of them being an exchange of views regarding choice of wording alongside other observations. There is very little honorific or deferential language employed. For instance, in another letter written a few weeks before that from which Extract 7.37 is taken, Byron does not even use any opening salutation, beginning as follows:

> ***7.38:*** Lisboa is the Portuguese word, consequently the very best. Ulissipont is pedantic; and as I have Hellas and Eros not long before, there would be something like an affectation of Greek terms, (…)

He ends this same letter with the phrase *I am dull and drowsy, as usual. I do nothing, and even that nothing fatigues me. Adieu.*. Again, no closing salutation was deemed necessary by

[15] Dallas' sister was married to Byron's uncle (LordByron.org, n.d.)

Byron, thus emphasising the fact that the two men were on very informal terms. The use of the DO *give* in Extract 7.37, therefore, adds to this informal, friendly tone.

No extracts of letters with the verbs *give** or *send** written in the direction H-L were found for the period 1850-1920, unfortunately, so analysis of letters from this period cannot be undertaken. From this brief analysis of a selection of H-L correspondence it would appear that the DO dative construction was the most popular choice overall, as has already been seen in Figure 7.1. Qualitative analysis shows that most of the letters were quite formal in style, although this formality can be seen to reduce over the time span studied. It had been expected that H-L letters might have used the PP dative construction if the writers wished to emphasise their social distance from the recipients, but evidence of this has not been found within this category.

7.3.2.5: Analysis of correspondence written in the direction lower – higher social group

According to Flack's (2018) hypothesis, instances of usage of the prepositional dative form should be found in correspondence written from those of a lower social class to those of a higher group in order to reinforce any overtones of deference or social deixis. This section, therefore, will analyse *give** and *send** in a selection of L-H letters in order to try to establish if this is the case or not.

> ***7.39:*** To own the Truth, it was not without a design that I sent you the verses you are pleased to mention so kindly: I meant to give you an opportunity of returning good for evil in favouring me with a sight of some of yours,
>
> 1710pope_x3b

Extract 7.39 is taken from a letter written by Alexander Pope (s.g. C) to Robert Caryll (s.g. A), who was a lifelong friend of his (britannica.org). Deferential language is evident, for example in the phrase *pleased to mention so kindly* and *in favouring me*, which is to be expected in a letter written L-H. The letter dates from 1710, when, as has already been discussed, writing styles were much more formal than in the later years of this study, so the use of the double object form of *give* could be evidence of the close friendship between the two men. In comparison, the language in the Extract 7.40, below, also written C-A, shows much more formality:

7.40: Mr. Faulkner mistook me in telling your lordship that I sent you the letter that came from Bath. This I hope will plead my excuse for not sending it to you.

1740wway_x3b

This letter was written by Martha Whiteway (s.g. C) to the Earl of Orrey (s.g. A). Whiteway (or Whiteaway) was a cousin of the writer Jonathan Swift and wrote many letters to him, eventually 'from 1740 to the end, it was Mrs Whiteway who wrote for Swift' (Oxforddnb.org). Swift was on friendly terms with the Earl, hence Martha's own connection to him, but, nevertheless, the language she employs is carefully deferential. Evidence of this can be seen in the phrase *This I hope will plead my excuse,* as well as her addressing him as *your lordship.* The use of the prepositional *send** could, therefore, be another indication that she wishes to avoid showing any disrespect to him.

7.41: Be pleased to give my love to Kitty (..)

1763joh2_x4b

The above extract was written by Samuel Johnson (s.g. C) to Lucy Porter (s.g. B), his step-daughter. Johnson began courting Porter's mother shortly after she was widowed, despite opposition from her family (stories-of-london.org) - Lucy being the only family member who was not against their relationship. Even so, although Johnson could have written, more informally, *give Kitty my love,* he employs the prepositional dative form, perhaps a hint that he still felt that he needed to be careful of his position.

The next extract selected for analysis was written by John Keats (s.g. D) to the painter Benjamin Haydon (s.g. C):

> ***7.42:*** The Idea of your sending it to Wordsworth put me out of breath - you know with what Reverence I would send my Well-wishes to him.
>
> CLM7wd2

Keats and Haydon were 'close and devoted friends' (englishhistory.net), but in this letter Keats is referring to William Wordsworth, a poet whom Keats 'admired', one of his 'great heroes' (englishhistory.net). The *Reverence* he mentions regarding sending greetings to Wordsworth underlines the esteem in which Keats holds him, and the usage of the prepositional *send** twice with regard to his 'hero' indicates the respect in which he is held. This letter dates from 1816, which is an era when less formality has been noted in letter-writing, and, as can be seen from Figure 7.1, comprises the only two cases of prepositional *send** from this entire half-century.

7.43: Pray give my kindest regards to your wife, and let me hope that you will accept my invitation.

1868tenn_6xb

Extract 7.43 was written by Alfred Lord Tennyson (s.g. C) to Francis Palgrave (s.g. B). Palgrave was also a poet and critic and, although he consulted Tennyson when producing his anthology of poems (britannica.org, n.d.) no further evidence of any friendship has been discovered by the author. Thus, the formality of the phrase *Pray give my kindest regards and* the use of the prepositional *give* would appear to be evidence of this business-like relationship between the correspondents.

Analysis of this correspondence written in the direction L-H does provide possible reasons for choice of dative construction, but further in-depth analysis could be the subject of more research in future. Having examined correspondence written P-P, L-H and H-L, the next section will look at three writers' letters to analyse their writing styles in different contexts.

7.4 Analysis of three individual authors

In order to ascertain any pattern of dative style used between particular correspondents, three authors were selected for individual analysis, Daniel Defoe (s.g. C), Robert Burns (s.g. D) and Lord Byron (s.g. A). They were chosen because they had provided the majority of data within their time periods: 1700-1749, 1750-1799 and 1800-1849 respectively, and had written to people in various social groups. Ideally, other authors from 1650-1699 and 1850-1920 would also have been analysed to complete the picture, but none

were found who met the same criteria: numerous examples of letters written to different people who are members of differing social classes. For example, there are 132 extracts from Robert Louis Stevenson's letters within the database for this study. They fall into the period 1850-1899, but, apart from two correspondents, are all written C-C, making comparison of Stevenson's style in writing to different s.g's difficult to ascertain.

Five letters written by Daniel Defoe were discovered which contained dative verbs, written to members of s.g's A, B and C. Figure 7.2, below, gives a breakdown of the forms of *give** and *send** found within these.

S.G of Recipient	**Give DO**	**Give PP**	**Send DO**	**Send PP**
A	1			1
B	2	1		
C	1		1	

Fig. 7.2: Dative verbs found in the correspondence of Daniel Defoe.

As demonstrated in the above table, from the examples available in the Archer corpus, Defoe seemed to prefer the double object dative form, using it five times, compared to just two prepositional datives. Section 7.4.1 will give more details of the context of a selection of these letters.

Within the data set there were 81 extracts from the letters of Robert Burns. Despite there being examples of his correspondence to members of all four s.g's, however, only 10 usages of verbs of interest were found and all these were written D-C or D-D. After analysis of this data, the following results were obtained:

S.G of Recipient	Give DO	Give PP	Send DO	Send PP
C	3			1
D		2	1	

Figure 7.3: Dative verbs found in the correspondence of Robert Burns

The spread of DO and PP forms are distributed quite evenly between the two social groups, as can be seen. Also, although there are letters written by Burns to recipients in all four social groups, only examples of D-D and D-C letters were found to contain verbs of interest. Furthermore, despite 81 examples of Burns' writing within the corpus, only ten dative verbs were found. Section 7.4.2 will analyse a selection of these and discuss their context.

Lord Byron was another very prolific writer of letters, and 87 extracts penned by him were examined within the data set. There were also nine examples from letters written to Byron. These consist of five from Walter Scott, two from Byron's sister, Augusta and one each from John Murray and Professor Clarke. However, once again, the analysis for *give* and *send* produced few results. All examples of *give* were used with the DO variant; of these, one was written A-B and four A-C. One extract from a letter written by Walter Scott (s.g. B) was also found to contain the verb *give*, again the DO form was used. Looking at the verb *send,* five examples were also found within the data – all written A-C. Four of these, however, used the PP form with only one DO usage found. The table below gives the full results of this analysis:

S.G. of Recipient	Give DO	Give PP	Send DO	Send PP
A				
B	1			
C	4		1	4

Figure 7.4: Dative verbs found in the correspondence of Lord Byron.

Section 7.4.3 will look more closely into the wider context of these letters and attempt to analyse the reasons for Byron's choice of dative constructions.

7.4.1 Analysis of Defoe's usage of the dative alternation

Within the Archer corpus, 12 letters written by Daniel Defoe were found containing items of interest to this study, such as honorific and deferential language. He undoubtedly wrote a great many letters, but 'Only a small proportion of his undoubtedly vast correspondence has survived' (Secord, 1956). These letters were written to people in s.g's A, B and C, from which his style in addressing different social classes can be observed. As can be seen in Figure 7.2, however, there were only two examples of dative verbs found within correspondence to s.g. A, one of double object *give**, and one of prepositional *send**. No double object dative constructions were discovered in correspondence to s.g. B**,** and, as was expected, only double object verbs, one each of *give** and *send** were found in his writing to s.g. C.

7.44: I might do you much more Service Sir if I had but Now and then a letter of proper hints from your Self -- I know you are in a Hurry and I lament the Occasion, but Indeed Sir things here are of Consequence, and a little Disorder here Would give things a bad aspect and have too great an Influence on Credit, Trade, Funds and all those things: The Matter therefore Mourns to be settled.

1706dfoe_x3b

The extract above is from a letter written in 1706, by Defoe, to Robert Harley, 1st Earl of Oxford and Mortimer (s.g. A). Harley was, at the time this letter was written, the Secretary of State (Britannica.com) but also held other senior political positions during his career, including Speaker of the House and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Defoe was employed by Harley as 'a pamphleteer and intelligence agent' (Encyclopaedia Britannica.com) and it would appear that this letter was part of a report written by Defoe whilst carrying out his intelligence role. Deference is shown by the two usages of *Sir* whilst addressing Harley, together with the phrase *do you much more Service* but the context of the verb *give* does not form part of any deferential phrase. However, from the overall tone of the extract, it is evident that politeness and deference were intended towards Harley. The verb *give* is used to refer to *things*. If Defoe had been mentioning giving something directly to Harley, then, perhaps, the PP form could have been used, although this is only supposition due to lack of comparable data.

7.45: In the afternoon, our Admiral sent a letter to the Governor (…)

1704dfoe_x3b

Extract 7.45 was also written to Robert Harley and, again, deferential phrases, such as *I am your most humble petitioner* and *I am confident you will pardon the importunity* are used in the wider letter. The actual phrase *our Admiral sent a letter to the governor*, however, is not addressed directly to Harley but is a report of an action by *the Admiral*. Since *the Governor* would have been a person of great political importance and social status, the use of the prepositional form is, perhaps, the reason for Defoe's use of this dative variant.

Two examples of letters written by Defoe to John Bell (s.g. B) were found containing dative verbs:

7.46: When you Wait on Mr Secr[16]. Again, Giving My Humble Duty to him, be pleased to Move him in The following Cases (…)

1706dfoe_x3b

7.47: I presume it my Duty to give you the Sense of the Country (…)

1707dfoe_x3b

In the above two extracts, written in 1706 and 1707 respectively, usage of both DO and PP *give** can be observed. However, the phrase *giving my humble duty to him* is, as in Extract 7.45, referring to a third party. Defoe's phrase *humble duty* implies that this Secretary is someone of high status and, thus, could be the reason for the usage of the double object. Extract 7.47, by contrast, is addressing Bell directly and here the prepositional form of *give** is used. The lesser social distance between the two men could be the reason for this lessening of formality.

[16] Secretary

The example of a letter to a member of s.g. C is, in fact, written by Defoe to his daughter, Mrs Sophia Defoe Baker:

> ***7.48:*** This I can not do better, than in Sending you the Letter (…) All the Penance I shall Enjoin you on this whole affair, is that you Will give Mr Baker the Letter.
>
> 1729dfoe_x3b

This letter appears to have been written after some sort of offence caused by Mrs Baker to her father. One of the opening lines of the correspondence reads *Where Affections are strongest they are always most Sensible of a shock,* further mentions of an *irruption* and the phrase *you are So Generous as to make this Reparation* would appear to confirm this reason for the letter. Nevertheless, it is full of affectionate phrases:

> *I Loved you More Than Ever any lovd;*
>
> *I hope I may be allowed not to Love in a less Exalted and Sublime Manner;*
>
> *Rejoice That you Think your fathers Affection worth preserving.*

Therefore, despite whatever hurt or offence may have been caused by Mrs Baker, Defoe uses close, paternal language, and the two DO verbs are more evidence of this informal, loving style.

From this brief analysis of some of Defoe's letters, it would appear that the prepositional dative form was used to signal respect, as seen in Extracts 7.45 and 7.46, the double object being used in less formal situations.

7.4.2 Analysis of Robert Burns' usage of the dative alternation

As can be seen from Figure 7.3, Robert Burns' letters do not contain exactly comparable data for dative verbs. That is to say, give DO dative verbs only occur in letters to people in s.g. C, whilst give in the prepositional form is only found in letters to members of s.g. D. Therefore, one instance each of *give** and *send** in both the DO and PP forms have been selected for closer analysis. Each verb will be compared and discussed individually in an attempt to discover any patterns related to social deixis.

GIVE PP: Robert Burns to James Johnson (D-D)

> ***7.49:*** In the meantime, at your leisure, give a copy of the Museum to my worthy friend, Mr. Peter Hill, bookseller, to bind for me (…)
>
> CLM4wth93

GIVE DO: Robert Burns to Mr Thomson (D-C)

> ***7.50***: Though you should reject one half of what **I give you**, I shall be pleased with your adopting the other half, and shall continue to serve you with the same assiduity (…)
>
> CLM4pls78

The two instances of *give,* detailed above, once again reverse the expected findings from Flack (2018). However, although the example of the PP dative alternation is from a letter written to another member of s.g. D, the person mentioned, Peter Hill, was a bookseller classified by this author as s.g. C. The adjective *worthy* used in connection with this man's name also suggests a level of respect on Burns' part. Therefore, although this is, on the face

of it, a letter written in a P-P direction, the implicit deference could be related to the status of Mr Hill.

Further investigation into the relationship between Burns and George Thomson also provides a clue as to why the less formal DO form of *give* was used. Thomson had 'designed a more than usually elegant collection of the national music of Scotland' (Currie, 1838:93) and had requested that Burns use his talents 'for his aid in improving the songs' (Currie, 1838:93). From this background information, it becomes apparent that Thomson was beholden to Burns, needing his help. Despite the fact that Thomson was born into a higher s.g. than Burns (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of classification of correspondents), due to his need of Burns' talents and expertise, the basic social deixis would seem to have evolved to a point where Thomson saw Burns as the person of higher status. This could explain the use of the DO form by Burns in this example.

SEND PP: Robert Burns to Mr William Cruikshank (D-C)

7.51: I would send my compliments to Mr. Nicol, but he would be hurt if he knew I wrote to anybody and not to him;

CLM4wth24

SEND DO: Robert Burns to Ellison Begbie (-D)

7.52: It would oblige me much if you would send me a line or two when convenient (…)

CLM4wd6

Extract no 7.51 is written to William Cruikshank, a Latin master with whom Burns lodged for a while in Edinburgh (robertburns.org). The Mr Nicol referred to in the letter was Classics

master at the same school and, thus, became a mutual acquaintance (robertburns.org). Both of these men were, therefore, in s.g. C, thus Burns (s.g. D) could have felt deference was owed to them. Ellison (or Alison) Begbie, the recipient of the letter in Extract 7.52 was, by contrast, born in similar circumstances to Burns, the child of a small farming family who later worked as a servant (robertburns.org). Burns had courted Begbie at one point in his life, although they did not marry. This close relationship, together with their similar social backgrounds, means the DO usage of *send* is to be expected here, as opposed to the PP usage found in Extract 7.51.

From this examination of a few of the letters written by Robert Burns to several of his correspondents, we can discern some reasons behind the choice of dative form used, for instance social deixis; deference; closeness of relationship or otherwise, although more in-depth study would enable these posited patterns to be checked more carefully.

7.4.3: Analysis of Byron's usage of the dative alternation

Originally, as discussed in Chapter 3, Methodology, the Archer and CLMET corpora were searched for certain key words linked with politeness. However, although 87 extracts from the correspondence of Lord Byron were included in this data set, only two of these included dative verbs. Both of these recipients were in s.g. C, thus not much comparison could be made from these examples. Byron's letters within the data set include instances of his writing to members of all four social groups, which is why he was selected for this in-depth analysis. In order to gain further information as to his choices of dative construction in different contexts, Volumes 1 and 2 of his collected journals and letters, available online at

Project Gutenberg, were examined for the verbs *give*, send** and *show** within his letters to members of each s.g. Within these letters, 27 instances of the double object dative form, and 15 of the prepositional, were found. From this wider data set, several examples will be analysed and compared in order to ascertain reasons for the dative forms employed by Byron.

Lord Byron was born a member of the aristocracy and, thus, is classed as social group A. Because of this, no examples of L-H directional writing are available. The first examples to be analysed will be from his writing to his peers. Only three correspondents in this classification have been identified as including suitable extracts: his half-sister, Augusta Byron (later Leigh); his friend from his time at Cambridge, William Bankes; and Lord Holland, whose relationship with Byron has not been ascertained by the author (lordbyron.org). Within this category, almost all dative verbs are of the DO construction, as could be expected in writing to friends and peers.

The extracts discussed below, are all taken from the aforementioned volumes available at Project Gutenberg, unless marked with a reference CLM..., which indicates they are taken from the CLMET.

7.4.3.1: Social group A

> ***7.53:*** (…) perhaps your Lordship may give it a stronger and more appropriate appellation—to send you a quarto of the same scribbler.
>
> To Lord Holland, dated 5th March 1812.

7.54: In a day or two I will send you something which you will still have the liberty to reject if you dislike it (…)

To Lord Holland, dated 22nd September 1812

7.55: I will plead guilty to your charge, and accept your farewell, but not wittingly, till you give me some better reason than my silence; (…)

To William Bankes, dated 28th September 1812

7.56: (…) if I had my dragoman, or wrote Turkish, I could have given you letters of real service; (…)

To William Bankes, dated 26th December 1812.

Extracts 7.53 to 7.56 are examples of Byron's writing to William Bankes and Lord Holland, both in s.g. A. As can be seen, the tone of writing to his friend, Bankes, is quite informal, with no honorifics or other deferential language used. When writing to Lord Holland, however, the language is slightly more formal. The use of the honorific *your Lordship* and the phrase *you will still have the liberty to reject* seem to indicate that Byron's relationship with Lord Holland was not as friendly as that with Bankes. However, in all his correspondence to these two men, the DO dative variant is used throughout.

When writing to his half-sister, Augusta, the DO is still used almost all of the time. The overall tone of these letters is extremely warm and friendly, with phrases such as *my ever Dear Sister, my Dear Girl* and *my beloved Augusta.* In keeping with Flack's (2018) theory, the DO dative is used throughout these letters, apart from one instance discovered:

7.57: I was informed, by my proficiency in the art of magic, that you sometimes send that number to Lady Gertrude[17].

To Augusta Byron, dated 30th January 1805

As can be seen in the above extract, Byron uses the prepositional dative construction when mentioning *Lady Gertrude.* It would appear that this person was a lady who was the daughter of a lord, who married an earl's son which could, therefore, mean her status was deemed to be even higher than that of Byron and his sister. It is a noticeable departure from Byron's usual style of using the DO in all his other P-P directional correspondence.

7.4.3.2: Social group B

Within this category, only letters to James Webster, his publisher and friend (lordbyron.org) were found to contain dative verbs suitable for analysis. All these verbs were in the DO form, although the relatively small selection of data does not allow for comparison.

7.4.3.3: Social group C

There is a wide range of data available within this category, containing many instances of both DO and PP dative constructions. The following extracts are from letters to R.C Dallas, with whom Byron maintained regular correspondence and whose nephew eventually inherited Byron's title[18] (LordByron.org).

[17] Although not certain, the *Lady Gertrude* was probably this lady listed in LordByron.org:
Bennet [née Russell], Gertrude Frances (1752-1841). The daughter of Lord William Russell, son of the Marquess of Tavistock; in 1816 she married Henry Grey Bennet, son of the fourth Earl of Tankerville.

[18] 'Dallas, Robert Charles (1754-1824). English poet, novelist, and translator who corresponded with Byron. His sister Charlotte Henrietta Dallas (d. 1793) married Captain George Anson Byron (1758-1793); their son George Anson Byron (1789-1868) inherited Byron's title in 1824.' (LordByron.org)

7.58: Ecce iterum Crispinus! — I send you some lines to be placed after "Gifford, Sotheby, M'Niel. "Pray call tomorrow any time before two, and Believe me, etc., (…)

Dated 16th February 1809

7.59: If you will point out the stanzas on Cintra1 which you wish recast, I will send you mine answer.

Dated 26th September 1811

7.60: The lines of the second sheet I fear must stand; I will give you reasons when we meet.

Dated 16th October 1811

As can be seen from the examples above, most of the letters written by Byron to Dallas are quite business like, with no honorifics or deferential language. When addressing Dallas directly, as in *I send you* and *I will give you,* the DO form of these verbs is used, in line with the theory of Flack (2018). However, Byron also used the PP construction when writing to Dallas, but only in a quite different context, namely when mentioning a third party:

7.61: If the little volume you mention has given pleasure to the author of Perceval and Aubrey, I am sufficiently repaid by his praise.

Dated 20th January 1808

7.62: Has Murray shown the work to any one?

Dated 21st August 1811

7.63: I also have written to Mr. Murray my objection to sending the MS. to Juvenal (…)

Dated 25th August 1811

When comparing these instances to Byron's employment of the DO dative in Extracts 7.53 to 7.56 and his usage of the PP dative form in Extract 7.57, there can be demonstrated a pattern in which third parties are written about in a different way to his immediate recipients. As discussed previously, *Lady Gertrude's* status may have been considered sufficiently high to warrant usage of a respectful PP dative verb. Extract 7.61, however, is written to R.C.Dallas who was, in fact, the author of *Perceval* and *Aubrey*[6]. Thus, it would appear that he is addressing Dallas in the third person (see Section 3.3 for further discussion of this aspect of politeness). The usage of the PP dative construction, therefore, is in line with the pattern noted of Byron's using it for third parties, even though, in this instance, that is not really the case. Byron's relationship with *the author of Perceval and Aubrey* or *Juvenal*, however, can only remain a matter of conjecture. Further evidence of this can be seen in his letters to John Murray, his publisher, and Francis Hodgson, a close friend (lordbyron.org). Extracts 7.64 to 7.67 were written to Murray, Extracts 7.68 to 7.70 to Hodgson:

> ***7.64:*** What will you give me or mine for a poem2 of six cantos, (…)
>
> Dated 5th September 1812

> ***7.65:*** The one of two remaining copies is at your service till I can give you a better;
>
> I give you too much Trouble to allow you to incur Expense also.
>
> Dated 23rd October 1812

> ***7.66:*** But he also informed me in London that you wished to send the MS. to Mr. Gifford
>
> Dated 23rd August 1811

7.67: Let the enclosed be the copy that is sent to the Devil (the printers) and burn the other.

Dated 13th May 1813

7.68: I have extended my letter further than I ought, and beg you will excuse it; on the opposite page I send you some stanzas

Dated 27th November 1808

7.69: Hobhouse hates everything of the kind, therefore I do not show them to him

Dated 27th November 1808

7.70: I have only to give discharges to the tenantry here, (…) and arrange the receipt of sums, and the liquidation of some debts, and I shall be ready to enter upon new subjects of vexation.

Dated 25th September 1811

Analysis of the extracts above again shows Byron's style of using the DO dative form when directly addressing his recipient, whereas the PP form is used for third parties. With Extract 7.66, no inference can be made as to his relationship with *Mr Gifford* although from information available at lordbyron.org he can be placed in s.g. D by birth and later became a publisher and editor[19]. In Extracts 7.67 and 7.69, however, there is evidence that Byron was not on good terms with *the printers* or *Hobhouse.* In all of these examples, the prepositional dative form is used, which could imply that his usage of this form was not only for third parties, but also, perhaps, people with whom his relationship was cool at best.

[19] 'Gifford, William (1756-1826). Poet, scholar, and editor who began as a shoemaker's apprentice; after Oxford he published The Baviad (1794), The Maeviad (1795), and The Satires of Juvenal translated (1802) before becoming the founding editor of the Quarterly Review (1809-24)'. (lordbyron.org)

7.4.3.4: Social group D

Extracts of letters written to two people classed as s.g. D are to be found within the CLMET. Again, however, as with s.g. B, no examples of dative verbs were discovered for analysis.

7.5: Conclusion

This discussion of the dative alternation within correspondence has attempted to answer R.Q. 3: Is the use of the Dative Alternation as a politeness marker evident from the 17th to early 20th centuries?

Instances of the individual verbs *show*, offer*, bring** and *forward** did not prove to be frequent enough to discern any real patterns of choice between usage of the DO and PP dative variants. More data was available for the verbs *give** and *send*,* however, and some analysis was possible. These verbs proved to have been used far more in their DO forms throughout all the different social groups. The PP dative form was evident, although rather than to show social deixis *per se* it seemed to be a marker of formality in the correspondence (see, for example Extracts 7.15 and 7.16).

Another pattern of usage appears from the extracts analysed: usage of the DO in direct addressing of the recipient and the PP for third parties. This can be seen in Extract 7.30 and the writings of Lord Byron particularly. Although implications that the prepositional dative

was also used when writing about people with whom Byron was not on good terms are evident, this can only be a theory from the data available. If further work were to prove this, however, it would confirm the hypothesis put forward by Flack (2018) that the prepositional was used to indicate not only social distance but also personal or political distance.

Finally, from Extracts 7.42, 7.45 and 7.46, the prepositional dative was, perhaps, also used to signal respect. In extract 7.42, written by John Keats, he uses the PP dative form when referring to William Wordsworth who, as explained in Section 7.3.2.5, was a 'hero' of Keats and a writer he held in great esteem. Extracts 7.45 and 7.46 were written by Daniel Defoe to Robert Harley, and John Bell, with whom he seemed to have a cordial relationship. When writing to Bell, Defoe can be observed using the DO dative form, again, when addressing him directly, although no example of a dative verb used in a similar context to Harley, personally, has been found. In these two instances, however, Defoe employs the prepositional dative when referring to *the Admiral* and *Mr Secr.;* apart from being third parties, these would also seem to be people of high status. See Section 7.4.1 for a fuller discussion of these extracts.

In conclusion, therefore, although the double object dative was becoming more common during the period 1650 to 1920, the prepositional still seems to have a special usage in people's writing. Although this was becoming less about addressing one's social superiors, it still is evident in situations where respect is considered to be merited and, also, when referring to third parties. Thus, R.Q 3 can be answered, 'No', the dative alternation is not used in the same way as a politeness marker, its usage was changing during this period.

Chapter 8: Discussion of Findings

This thesis set out to give an overview of if and how politeness has changed in British English between 1650 and 1920. The rationale for this choice of dates is given in Chapter 1. Data was examined from British correspondence available in the Archer and CLMET corpora, which were searched for key lemmas of interest to this study: please, pray, would, trouble and worth. These were chosen to help identify politeness features such as use of honorifics, deferential language and the usage of modal verbs. Any verbs which could take both the Double Object (DO) and Prepositional (PP) dative constructions were also noted. Four broad classifications of social groupings were also identified and allocated to writers and their recipients in order to understand if and how language used between peers, and to people of both lower and higher social status to the writer, differed.

In order to investigate the subject, three research questions were identified:

RQ1: Has the usage and/or frequency of deferential language changed during the time period of the study?

RQ2: Have markers of social deixis changed and/or declined during the time period?

RQ3: Is the use of the Dative Alternation as a politeness marker evident from the 17th to early 20th centuries?

The final RQ was selected in an attempt to further the hypothesis put forward in Flack (2018) that the DO construction was observed in correspondence between peers and those who had close personal or political relationships, whilst the PP construction was used when writing to

a superior or those who were politically or personally distant. This chapter will examine the findings from the study by discussing them as they pertain to the three RQs.

8.1: RQ 1: Has the usage and/or frequency of deferential language changed during the time period of the study?

8.1.1: Humbl*

Brown & Levinson (1987) discuss deferential language, which they link with the usage of honorifics. This study, however, separated these two aspects of politeness to investigate whether or not they changed broadly in line with each other, or at a separate rate. To highlight instances of deferential language being used in correspondence, the lemma *humbl** was run as a search term in the two corpora used. The figure below, reproduced from Chapter 6, shows the lemma's usage between 1650 and 1920.

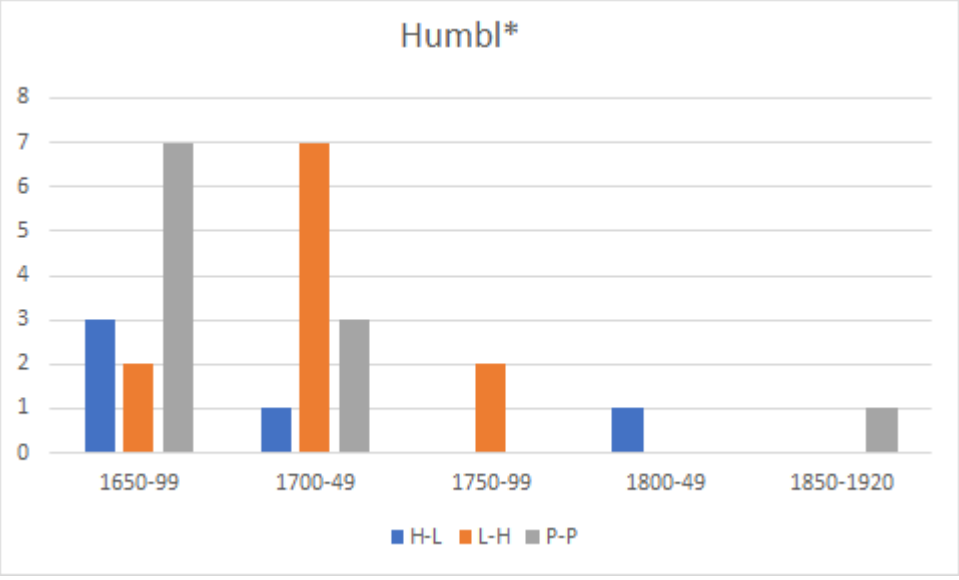

Fig 8.1: (Previously fig 6.5, reproduced) : Usage of Humbl* over time period of study.

It was observed that this lemma was in frequent usage between 1650 and 1749, but it fell out of use quite sharply after this date. Phrases such as *humbly begging your excuse* (1697str4_x2b), *my humble service* (1653more_x2b) and *I am your most humble petitioner* (1704dfoe_x3b) were used in all directions of correspondence (Peer-Peer, Lower-Higher, and Higher-Lower). It had been expected that this type of language would mostly be found within L-H directional writing, but several examples were also found to occur in the H-L direction too. This would suggest that, during the earlier half-centuries of the study, people were much more formal in their writing style, being careful to avoid any unintentional slights or impropriety within communications. Another finding was the way that *humbl** frequently correlated with the verbs *present** and *pray** during 1650 - 1749. The figure below is, again, reproduced from Chapter 6, and shows how these lemmas correlate during this period.

Time Period	**Direction**	**Usage of humbl***	**Correlation with present***	**Correlation with pray***
1650-99	H-L	3	2	2
	P-P	6	1	1
	L-H	3	2	
1700-1749	H-L	1	1	
	P-P	3	1	1
	L-H	6		

Fig. 8.2 (previously fig. 6.6, reproduced): Correlation of the lemma humbl* with the verbs present* and pray*. 1650-1749.

The correlation of *humbl** with these other two lemmas in phrases such as *Mr Finch presents your Lordship and my Lady with his most humble service* (1667bain_x2b); *the Duke of Marl. presents his humble Services to you* (1713marl_x3b); and *Pray present my most humble service and thanks to my Lord and Lady Monmouth* (1690new2_x2b) is not, as previously mentioned, evident after 1749. Thus, it would seem to help answer RQ1 'Yes, the use of deferential language declined during the time span of this study'. However, other deferential lemmas were also investigated in an attempt to gain a more rounded answer to this question. These will be discussed in the next sections of this chapter.

8.1.2: Beg*

As discussed in Chapter 6, other deferential key words searched for as indicative of deference were *troubl*, beg** and *worth**. Amongst phrases discovered including these lemmas were *being farther troublesome to you* (1746pilk_x3b), *I shall beg your faver* (1666alfo_x2b) and *Such worthy minds as yours* (1743pilk_x3b). It had been expected that *beg** would mainly be found as a marker of requests in a similar way to *please** and *pray**. However, no instances of formulaic phrases such as 'I beg you would send/forgive/permit' were discovered during the data searches. Instead, its connotation was that of the writer implying they were in a lower position to their recipient and unworthy of whatever request they were making. Burns was noted to *beg my best, kindest, kindest compliments to my worthy hostess* (CLM4wth24), and Lady Anne Alford, as noted earlier in this paragraph begged John Locke's faver (sic) that he would receive some money from herself. Thus, *beg** was deemed to be a verb of deference rather than a straightforward request marker. The usage of this lemma, however, remained quite low over the whole period of study apart from an

unexplained increase of examples during 1750-1799. These were not due to the idiolect of any one writer and cannot be explained from the analyses undertaken. It can, however, be stated that, broadly, the lemma remained at a similar frequency of usage during the entire time span of this study.

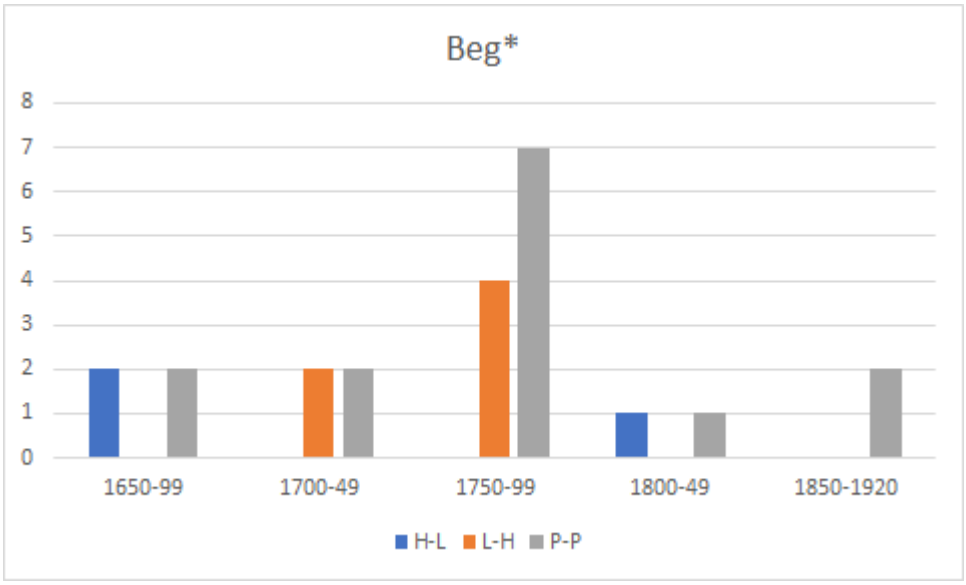

Fig 8.3 (Previously Fig. 6.2, reproduced): Usage of Beg* over time period of study.

Thus, taken as a marker of deference, evidence of the use of *beg** does not decline as is the case with *humbl**. Therefore, the lemma *troubl** will be discussed next as a marker of deference in order to provide an answer to RQ1.

8.1.3: Troubl*

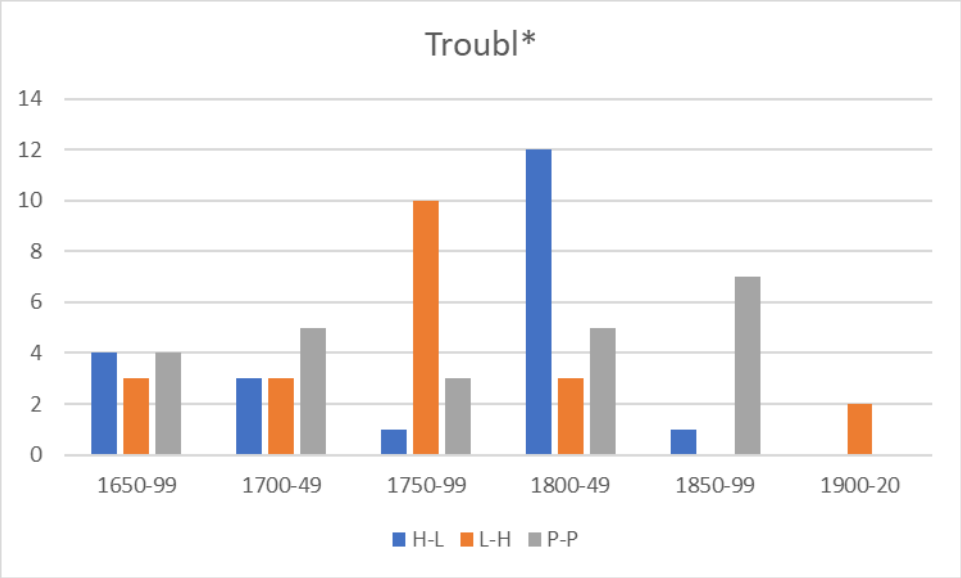

Fig 8.4 (Previously Fig 6.3, reproduced): Usage of Troubl* over time period of study.

The lemma *trouble** was, again, found to be used to denote deference in many of its occurrences. Examples include: *You will then, I hope, Sir, forgive my troubling you with the enclosed* (CLM4tbl4), *I will not trouble you for any written reply to this* (1809sher_x5b) and *You will excuse the eternal trouble I inflict upon you* (CLM6tbl24). In all these phrases the writers are implying that they are a cause of trouble to their recipients, suggesting that their recipients' time is far too valuable to be spent concerning themselves with the writers' affairs.

From Figure 8.4 above (reproduced from Chapter 6), it can be seen that the lemma *troubl** was found to be used most during 1750-1849. However, from the discussion in Section 6.3 it must be noted that the lemma was used in several ways: nominally, verbally and adjectivally. Also, within each of these categories were deferential and conversational

usage. It was also found that the majority of the usage during the late 18th and 19th centuries were attributable to Robert Burns, Lord Byron and Robert Louis Stevenson. When these instances were discounted, an overall decline was noted, as shown in Figure 8.5 (reproduced from Chapter 6), below.

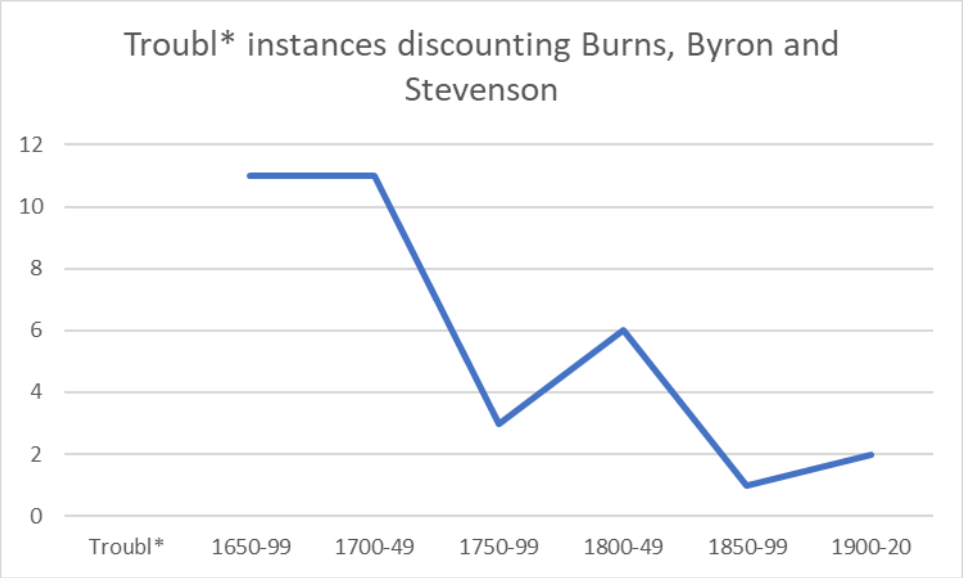

Fig 8.4 (Previously Fig 6.4, reproduced): Chart showing overall decrease in the use of the lemma troubl* when usage by Burns, Byron and Stevenson are omitted from the totals.

Thus far, it has been found that usage of both *humbl** and *troubl** declined during the time span of interest, whilst *beg** remained at a fairly steady rate throughout. The findings for the lemma *worth** will, therefore, be discussed next in an attempt to clearly answer RQ1.

8.1.4: Worth*

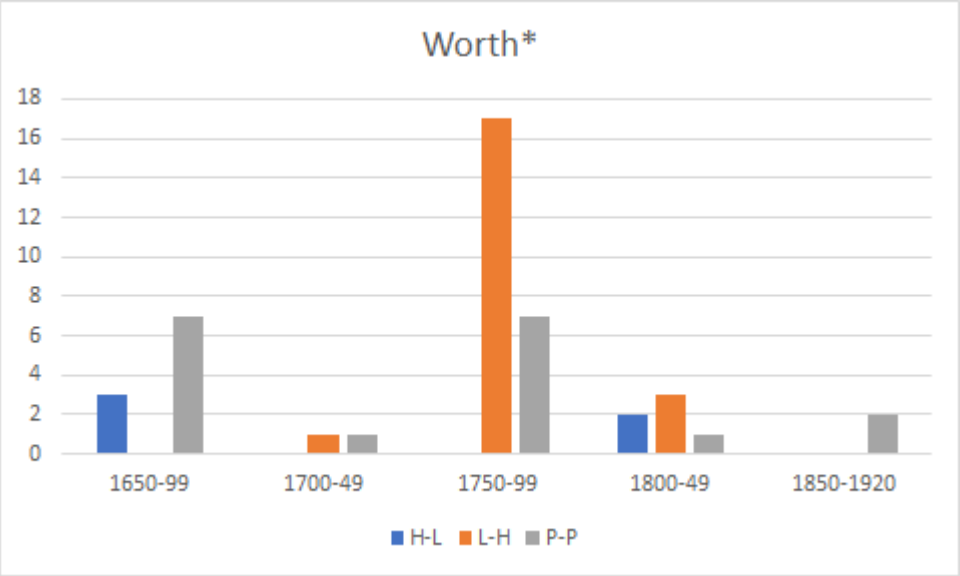

Fig. 8.4 (Previously Fig. 6.7, reproduced): Usage of worth* over time period of study.

From the figure above, reproduced from Chapter 6, it is noticeable that the usage of this lemma remained at a low frequency apart from during 1750-1799. This correlates with the rise in frequency of the lemma *beg** noted in the previous section. This time, however, the discrepancy can be attributed to the letters of Robert Burns, and, thus, is not linked to the increased usage of *beg** noted in the previous section. See Sections 6.5.1; 6.6.2; and 7.4.1 for discussions of Burns' individual writing style. His prolific letter-writing is reflected in this increased data for the period 1750-1799.

*Worth** was also found to be used in two slightly different ways. People were described as being *worthy*, as in *a most worthy, honest, and deserving gentleman* (1739swf2_x3b) which is a simple adjective of respect. However, it was also found to be used as a method of implying deference. John Finch writes to his sister thus: *(…) nor certainly would any such writing be worthy of your reading* (1653fin2_x2b). Here, Finch is effectively saying

that his words could be considered beneath his sister, Anne's, notice, so elevating her own status above his own.

Usage of *worth** is noticeably higher during the period 1650-1699. Apart from this, and the increased usage attributable to Robert Burns during 1750-1799, the lemma again shows similar rates of usage during the rest of the time period of the study. Taking all the evidence from these four lemmas, therefore, RQ1 could be answered 'Some aspects of deferential language reduced over the time span of this study, whereas others remained quite constant.'.

8.2 RQ2: Have markers of social deixis changed and/or declined during the time period of the study?

The four social classifications discussed in Section 3.3.1, social groups A, B, C and D, were created in order to attempt to answer this research question. Whyman (2009) discussed letter-writing between 1660 and 1800 and argues against classification of what she names the 'middling sort' of letter writer (2009:112). However, for the purposes of the current study, it was deemed necessary to understand if writers were addressing their own peer group or writing to those of a higher or lower social status. Usage of the lemmas *pleas** and *pray**, along with honorific titles, were analysed as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

8.2.1: Honorifics

Honorifics were found to form the basis of most opening and closing salutations, thus only honorifics appearing within the body of the letters were taken into account when

analysing them. It was found that titles such as *My Lady* (1664acon_x2b); *your Ladyship* (1651mor2_x2b) and *pray Sir* (1651acon_x2b) were used extensively during the periods 1650-1699 and 1700-1749. It was also noted that forenames, even of family members or close friends were rarely used during these periods. One such example was written in 1653 by John Finch to his sister, Anne, wherein he refers to his brother-in-law as *my Brother Conway* (1653fin_x2b). Forenames began to be noted within correspondence during the period 1750-1799, within the writings of Boswell and Johnson particularly, but see Section 5.5 for a discussion of the nuances of this form of address.

By the early 1800s, fewer instances of honorific titles were found within the data analysed, although forenames were still not greatly in evidence. More familiar terms were found to be in use, such as *my dear Macready* (1843dick_x5b) and *My friend Hodgson* (CLM6py5), showing a shift towards less formality of writing styles. This change was noted in all writing directions, thus suggesting that social deixis was less carefully observed towards the end of the period of this study.

8.3.2: Pleas* and pray*

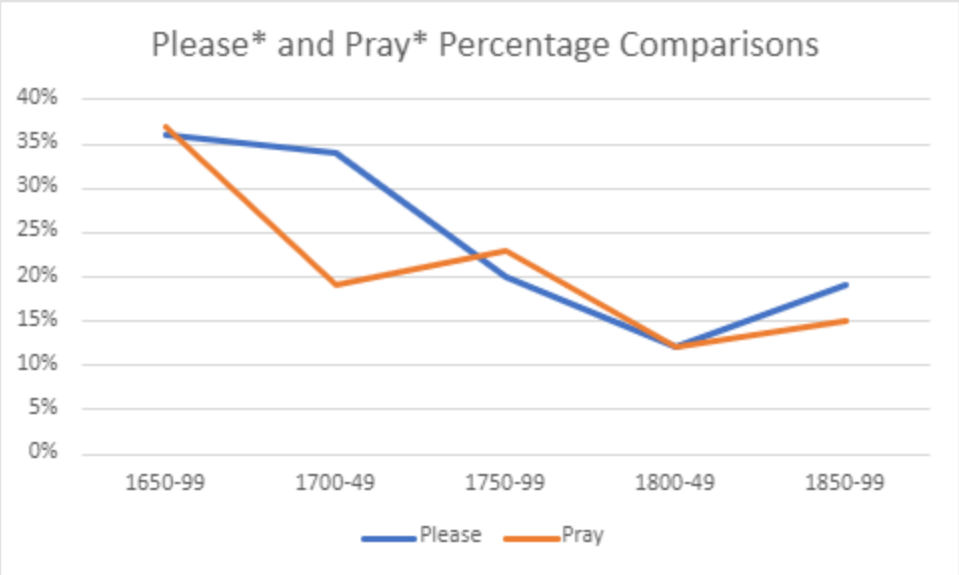

Fig 8.1 (Reproduced from Chapters 3 and 4): Comparison of percentages of letters which include the lemmas please* and/or pray* per half century of the time period examined.

Usage of the lemmas *pleas** and *pray** were analysed in Chapter 4 in an attempt to track whether or not their usage remained at a steady level, increased or declined between 1650 and 1920. As can be seen from Figure 8.1, above, apart from a slight increase in their occurrence between 1849 and 1899, the overall trend is significantly downwards. There is, however, an increase in *pray** in the mid-18th century, which is not matched by an increase in the occurrence of *pleas**. As discussed in Chapter 4, Cerquiero (2011) found that certain literary figures, such as Wilde and Dowson, used words such as *pray** and *prithee* as a 'deliberately archaic use of the marker (…) a sign of irony or even pedantry' (Cerquiero, 2011: 276). Further analysis of correspondence within the corpora examined backed this assumption, finding that only people associated with poetic or other literary work were using the lemma by the period 1800-1849. Furthermore, data from the period 1750-1799 found that most, although not all, usage of *pray** was also attributable to authors such as Johnson,

Boswell and Austen. This would suggest that this trend for preserving the lemma had its origins during this period.

The overall decline in both *please** and *pray** might suggest that letters were becoming less polite overall, or even that more impolite correspondence was now being written. A search for the lemma *the* was run in the Archer corpus so as to bring up the majority of letters from the periods 1800 – 1849 and 1850-1899 and then randomly sampled. However, no examples of impolite correspondence were discovered by this method, thus suggesting that all markers of polite request, within all writing directions, had simply decreased in usage. This would, however, indicate a change in linguistic style or fashion, rather than a decrease in politeness *per se.* See Section 4.3.3 for a fuller discussion of this subject.

Overall results for the analysis of social deixis, both through honorific language and the occurrences of *pleas** and *pray** show a marked decline during the period covered in this study with a tendency to less formal language within correspondence. Therefore, RQ2 can be answered 'Yes, the markers of social deixis chosen for analysis reduced greatly between 1650 and 1920, with changing usage of *pleas** and *pray**.'.

8.4: RQ3 - Is the use of the dative alternation as a politeness marker evident from the 17th to early 20th centuries?

This research question was prompted by the findings in Flack (2018) that usage of the double object (DO) dative construction was evident only between people who were close

socially or politically during the period 1410-1680, whereas the prepositional (PP) construction was reserved when showing deference to a superior or between those who were socially or politically distanced.

Although six dative verbs were found within the data set for analysis; *giv*, send*, show*, offer*, bring** and *forward**; only *giv** and *send** occurred in sufficient quantities to show possible patterns of usage. Further analysis showed that the DO construction was used, overall, more than the PP during each half-century examined in this study. From Flack's (2018) findings, it would have been expected that the PP construction would have been found most often within L-H directional correspondence. No such evidence was found during the quantitative analysis.

In Chapter 7, where the subject is discussed in detail, it was found that the DO dative construction became more widely used in the later half-centuries of the period of this study. Quantitative figures for *giv** and *send** are given below in Figure 8.2 (reproduced from Chapter 7)

		H-L	**P-P**	**L-H**	**Total**
1650-99	**Give DO**	3	5	3	**11**
	Send DO	3	7	0	**10**
	Give Prep	0	4	0	**4**
	Send Prep	1	1	0	**2**

1700-49	**Give DO**	1	3	1	**5**
	Send DO	0	0	3	**3**
	Give Prep	0	0	1	**1**
	Send Prep	0	1	1	**2**
1750-99	**Give DO**	0	4	5	**9**
	Send DO	0	0	1	**1**
	Give Prep	0	3	1	**4**
	Send Prep	0	1	0	**1**
1800-49	**Give DO**	2	1	2	**5**
	Send DO	0	0	2	**2**
	Give Prep	0	0	0	**0**
	Send Prep	3	0	2	**5**
1850-1920*	**Give DO**	0	4	2	**6**
	Send DO	2	7	0	**9**
	Give Prep	1	1	1	**3**
	Send Prep	1	4	2	**7**

*** Only one instance of *send* was found for the period 1900-1920, this being prepositional.***

Fig 8.2 (Previously Fig 7.1, reproduced): Totals for the verbs give* and send* for prepositional and double object construction, separated into half-century and writing direction.

When qualitative analysis was undertaken, however, the PP construction, still seemed to be reserved for use when showing respect, either to the recipient or when mentioning a third party. One particular example is found in the letters of Keats, when mentioning Wordsworth, a poet he 'admired' as 'one of his great heroes' (englishhistory.net). For fuller discussion of this, see Section 7.3.2.5. This usage, nevertheless, was found within all directional writing and, thus, did not appear to be linked directly to social deixis as had been found for the period 1410-1680.

From the findings in Chapter 7, therefore, RQ3 can be answered 'No, the dative alternation is not still evident as a politeness marker between correspondents, although it was still used to show respect'

8.5: Conclusion

This study was undertaken in an attempt to evaluate changes in British politeness strategies between 1650 and 1920. The author identified a gap in the area of knowledge, in that whilst many studies have been carried out into particular aspects of politeness, such as Cerquiero's (2011) work on *please* and *pray,* or have looked at certain periods in British history, such as Jucker's (2016) investigation of politeness in 18th-century drama, at the date of writing, no single work has tried to give an overall picture of changes in politeness over such a large time span.

Full or partial answers have been supplied for each of the three research questions during the study undertaken into aspects of politeness between 1650 and 1920. It has been shown that, over the 270 year period covered by this work, deferential language changed partially (RQ1), markers of social deixis reduced greatly (RQ2), and the dative alternation, whilst no longer evident as a politeness marker *per se* was used when showing respect (RQ3). Taken as a whole, it has been shown that language, at least in correspondence, became less formal over the course of the era studied, shown by the findings that there was a greatly reduced amount of markers of respect and politeness used, such as honorific language and the reduction in the frequencies of *pleas** and *pray**. This does not indicate that correspondence became less polite in tone, simply that fewer markers of politeness were being used by the end of the period of study. Due to the limitations of the study, however, other opportunities for research have been identified.

8.5.1: Limitations of this study

The data for analysis was extracted from the Archer and CLMET corpora and, thus, was limited to both the documents incorporated within each one, and the manner in which the corpora were constructed. For example, although a search for *pleas** could be run throughout the entire Archer corpus, delineated by parameters such as date range, genre and nationality of origin, direct comparison with the CLMET corpus was not possible due to it consisting of separate sub-corpora (see Chapter 3 for discussion of the composition of the two corpora). Thus, suitable data which may have been included within other sub-corpora

not listed as consisting of mainly letters may have shown up if the entire corpus had been searchable.

Originally, it had also been hoped to include gender-based findings within the results of the analysis. However, both corpora consisted mainly of letters written by males. This does not necessarily mean that women were not also prolific correspondents, only that their writings have not been kept as often as that of their male counterparts. This meant that direct comparison between male and female politeness strategies, and indeed between male-female and female-male correspondence was not possible.

With reference to the study's focus on social deixis, it would have been desirable to have had access to collections of reciprocal correspondence between people in different social groups. This would have enabled investigation into whether people's language and writing styles changed when corresponding with people in different, and the same, social groups as themselves. Unfortunately, no such collections were discovered during the data collection so this aspect of the research was unable to proceed.

8.5.2: Suggestions for further research

With regard to the question of if, and how, politeness strategies changed in female and male correspondence, and also inter-gender writing, it is suggested that a body of text consisting of equal amounts of female-female, male-male, female-male and male-female correspondence be collated in order that both quantitative and qualitative sampling might be

undertaken. This would enable the research to ascertain if the changes noted within this study occurred at different rates within these separate categories.

Should a suitable collection of reciprocal correspondence be identified, further research could be carried out into how aspects of politeness, such as deference, honorifics and modal verbs were used by a person to those in similar, and different, social groups and, also, if their correspondents used greater, lesser, or an equal amount of politeness strategies according to their own social status in relation to the author.

One more aspect of polite language raised a potential area for research during analysis of the letters of Robert Burns. During investigation into the usage of adverbial *please*, it was discovered that the first instance was by Burns in the period 1750-1799. No other instances were recorded until the period 1850-1899, so the possibility arises that this may have been a regional usage. However, the corpora used in this study are not tagged or divided in any ways which enable searching for various British regions. It could, therefore, prove interesting to examine a comparable amount of correspondence from various regions and examine if any of the trends noted within this thesis originated in any particular area.

Despite the limitations discussed, this work offers an overview of changes in various aspects of polite language between 1650 and 1920. It is hoped that this work will provide a basis for other researchers into historic politeness during this period, or even for further studies of earlier periods and, perhaps, the current, digital era.

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Appendix A: Referencing of CLMET sub-corpora

After eliminating corpora already discussed in Chapter 3 of this work, the following Corpora were selected as containing correspondence likely to be suitable for analysis:

CLMET Reference No	Author	Ref. No Allocated	Notes
CLMET 3_1_1_8	Samuel Richardson	1	Duplicated data from Archer corpus
CLMET 3_1_1_16	Philip Dormer Stanhope Chesterfield	2	Duplicated data from Archer corpus
CLMET 3_1_1_37	Rev Laurence Sterne	3	No data of interest found
CLMET 3_1_1_110	Robert Burns	4	
CLMET 3_1_1_135	Jane Austen	5	
CLMET 3_1_1_145	Lord George Byron	6	
CLMET 3_1_1_154	John Keats	7	
CLMET 3_1_1_192	Lucie Duff Gordon	9*	
CLMET 3_1_1_230	Lord John Acton	8*	No data of interest found
CLMET 3_1_1_252	Robert Louis Stevenson	10	
CLMET 3_1_1_290	Arthur Benson	11	No data of interest found

Sub corpus of Lucie Duff Gordon originally overlooked, thus allocated a number after Benson.

Appendix B: List of Authors Included in Data Set

1650-1699

Alford, Lady Anne

Baines, Sir Thomas

Browne, Sir Thomas

Conway, Lady Anne

Conway, Lord Edward

Elizabeth of Bohemia

Finch, Sir John

Greatrakes, Valentine

Locke, John

Lockhart, Martha

More, Henry

Newton, Isaac

Osborne, Dorothy

Stratton, Elizabeth

Temple, Sir William

1700-1749

Addison, Joseph

Blount, Martha

Congreve, William

Defoe, Daniel

Fielding, Sarah

Marlborough, Sarah Duchess of

Pilkington, Laetitia

Pope, Alexander

Reynolds, Samuel

Stanhope, Philip Dormer: Earl of Chesterfield

Steele, Richard

Swift, Jonathan

Whiteaway, Martha

Wortley Montagu, Lady Mary

Wycherley, William

1750-1799

Austen, Jane

Boswell, James

Burke, Edmund

Burns, Robert

Fielding, Sarah

Gibbon, Edward

Hume, David

Johnson, Samuel

Lennox, Lady Sarah

Piozzi, Hester Lynch

Richardson, Samuel

Smith, Adam

Smollet, Tobias

Walpole, Horace

1800-1849

Arnold, Matthew

Austen, Jane

Bronte, Charlotte

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett

Byron, Lord George

Clarke, Edward

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor

Dickens, Charles

Disraeli, Benjamin

Keats, John

Leigh, Augusta

Murray, John

Scott, Walter

Sheridan, Richard

1850-1899

Dowson, Ernest

Eliot, George (Mary Ann Evans)

Gordon, Lucie

Meredith, George

Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Victoria (Queen)

Shaw, George Bernard

Stevenson, Robert Louis

Tennyson, Alfred (Lord)

1900-1920

Hardy, Thomas

Joyce, James

Lawrence, David Herbert

Mansfield, Katherine

Yeats, William Butler