



# THE CORPUS OF EARLY ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE EXTENSION (CEECE)

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## THE CORPUS

The Corpora of Early English Correspondence (CEEC) are **diachronic corpora of personal letters designed for historical sociolinguistics**, compiled at the University of Helsinki (see CoRD entry). CEEC consists of three separate corpora, which together span the years c. 1400–1800 and contain over 5 million words (Nevala & Nurmi forthcoming). This poster introduces the Late Modern English part: CEEC *Extension* (CEECE). **CEECE covers the long eighteenth century**, starting from 1680 (where the original CEEC cuts off) and ending in 1800 (Table 1 and Fig. 1; see Laitinen 2002).

Table 1. CEECE in numbers by gender.

	Men	Women	Total
Informants	214	94	31%
Letters	3,681	1,242	25%
Words	1.62m	0.6m	27%

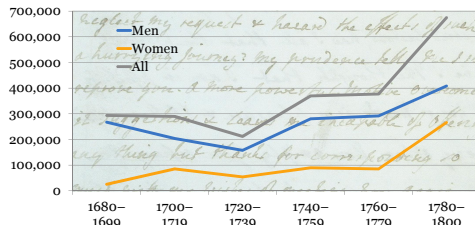


Figure 1. CEECE words over time.

## SOCIAL RANKS

CEECE is a self-contained corpus that aims at **socio-regional representativeness**. All (literate) social ranks are represented, and effort has been made to include as many letters by women as possible. The CEECE division into social ranks (Table 2) is inherited from CEEC. While not optimal for 18th-century England, it allows comparison with CEEC data.

Table 2. Social ranks of informants.

	Men	Women	Total
Royalty	10 (5%)	6 (6%)	16 (5%)
Nobility	18 (8%)	27 (29%)	45 (15%)
Gentry	55 (26%)	26 (28%)	81 (26%)
Clergy	46 (21%)	9 (10%)	55 (18%)
Professionals	41 (19%)	12 (13%)	53 (17%)
Merchants	16 (7%)	2 (2%)	18 (6%)
Other non-gentry	28 (13%)	12 (13%)	40 (13%)

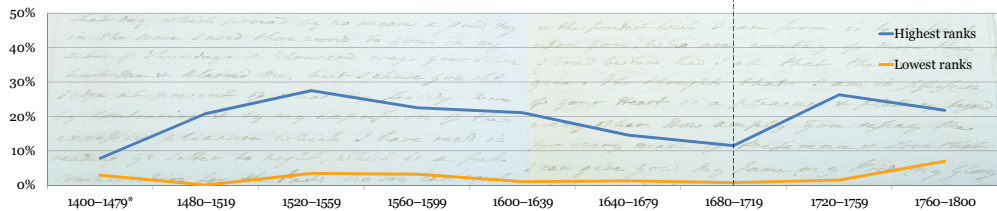


Figure 2. Proportion of words from the highest (Royalty & Nobility) and lowest (Other non-gentry) social ranks in CEEC and CEECE. \*First two periods in CEEC combined

18th-century England saw rapid growth in literacy. However, as CEECE is **compiled from printed** (original-spelling) editions, it reflects “the edited truth”: gentry remain well represented, but there are sorely few editions of Late Modern English letters by writers from the lower social ranks (Table 2, Fig. 2).

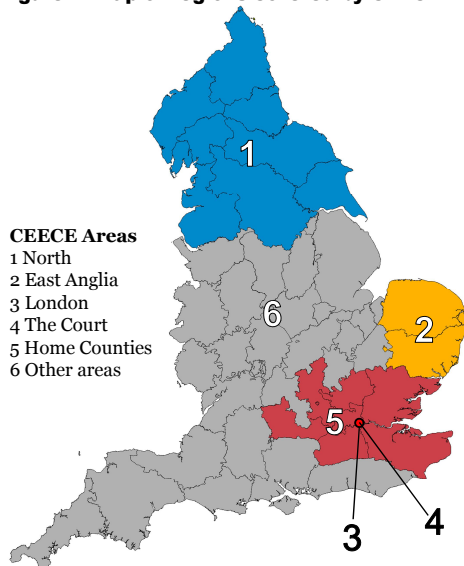
## REGIONS

The scarcity of East Anglian informants in CEECE is another reflection of our sources. Yet changes in English society are visible in the geographical coverage of CEECE. **Increased regional mobility** can make establishing domiciles difficult. But many lived in the capital: **London tripled in size 1650–1800**, and the proportion of the population living in London doubled from 6% to 12%.

Table 3. Regional distribution of informants.

	Men	Women	Total
The Court	5%	4%	5%
London	23%	27%	24%
East Anglia	2%	0%	1%
Home Counties	16%	24%	19%
North England	17%	3%	13%
Other areas	37%	41%	38%

Figure 2. Map of regions covered by CEECE.



## CEECE VS. CEEC

In terms of socio-regional representativeness, CEECE is not quite as well balanced as CEEC. But CEECE is ‘thicker’ than the original CEEC: it contains **over twice as much material** measured over time or per informant. CEECE also contains proportionately **more letters from women** and from the middle and lower social ranks than CEEC (Tables 1, 4).

Table 4. Comparison of informants in CEEC and CEECE: social ranks.

	CEEC			CEECE		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Upper	65%	91%	71%	60%	72%	64%
Middle	24%	6%	19%	27%	15%	23%
Lower	11%	3%	10%	13%	13%	13%

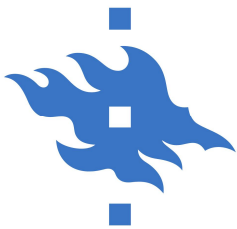
## CURRENT STATE

Since the publication of PCEEC in 2006 (see CoRD), publishers have become increasingly reluctant to grant permissions, or demand inordinate fees while insisting on unrealistic restrictions on the use of texts. We are looking for an ARCHER-like solution for making CEECE publicly available; at present access is only on-site.

Studies using CEEC continue to come out at a steady pace (see bibliography in CoRD entry). These four posters are the first presentations of new work done on the CEECE to be published in Nevalainen et al. (forthcoming).

## COMPILERS

The CEEC corpora were compiled at the Research Unit for Variation, Contacts and Change in English (VARIENG), Department of Modern Languages, University of Helsinki. The compilers of CEECE are Terttu Nevalainen (leader), Helena Raumolin-Brunberg, Samuli Kaislaniemi, Mikko Laitinen, Minna Nevala, Arja Nurmi, Minna Palander-Collin, Tanja Säily, and Anni Sairio.



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# NEW METHODS FOR HISTORICAL SOCIOLINGUISTICS

## CHANGES WITH NO VARIABLE

**Nominal suffix -ity:** no perfect synonyms; e.g. -ness also attaches to native bases.

- *real* → *realness* ≠ *reality* (Riddle 1985)
- *kind* → *kindness*, \**kindity*

**Periphrastic DO:** should the variable include

- all finite verb forms: *I have been thinking about this* (Frank 1985)
- all finite verb forms that do not have another auxiliary: *I am uncertain*
- cases with a bare main verb that could be used with DO: *I think so* (Ellegård 1953)?

If we choose the last option, how can we be sure which verbs to include? How do we count verbs for any of these in an untagged corpus?

**Solution:** abandon variable and simply count normalised frequencies (Nurmi 1996).

- How to establish statistical significance?

## PRODUCTIVITY OF THE SUFFIX -ITY

Productivity can be measured in **type frequency**, or the number of different words containing the suffix in a corpus. Type frequency does not grow linearly with corpus size → **cannot be normalised**.

- How to compare figures from subcorpora?

Säily & Suomela (2009): Divide corpus into samples, combine them randomly to form a million subcorpora for each corpus size, **compare actual subcorpora with random subcorpora of the same size**.

- Also yields confidence intervals!

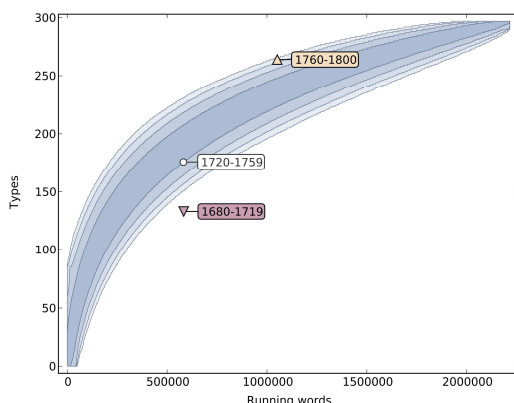


Figure 1. Increase in the productivity of -ity in the CEEC+CEECE, 1680-1800.

As in the 17th century (Säily & Suomela 2009), **the productivity of -ity continues to increase throughout the 18th century**.

- The first subcorpus (1680-1719) uses significantly fewer -ity types than randomly composed subcorpora of the same size
- The last subcorpus (1760-1800) uses significantly more -ity types than its random counterparts (see Figure 1)

The change seems to be led by the **professional class** and by **men writing to close friends** (Säily forthcoming).

## FROM PERIPHRASTIC DO TO DO-SUPPORT

During the eighteenth century the process of regulation for periphrastic DO was in its final stages. As far as negation and inversion are concerned, the use of DO was mostly in the final stage of the s-curve while **DO in affirmative statements declined steadily in frequency** (Figure 2) and appeared more and more with a specific group of verbs (expressing emotions, mental processes and speech acts). This would seem to have been the pre-final stage of development towards polarity emphasis that appears in Present-day English.

- 1) He knows I **do** love him, & being certain of that he laughs at every objection that is started (Sarah Lennox, 1781)

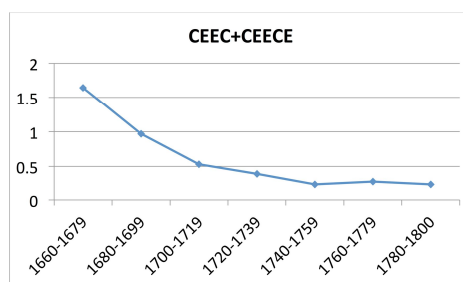


Figure 2. Development of affirmative DO in the CEEC+CEECE, 1660-1800 (the results for 1660-1679 are from Nurmi 1999).

- Is the decline in the frequency of affirmative DO in 1680-1800 statistically significant?

We can **apply Säily & Suomela's (2009) method** to DO tokens just as well as -ity types!

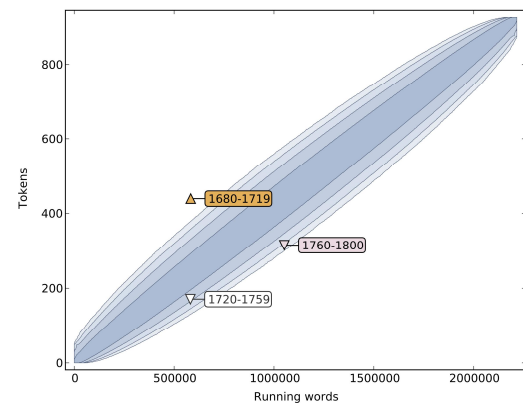


Figure 3. Development of affirmative DO in the CEEC+CEECE, 1680-1800, using Säily & Suomela's (2009) method.

**Significant decline over time** (Figure 3):

- The period 1680-1719 uses DO significantly more frequently, while 1760-1800 uses DO significantly less frequently, than randomly composed subcorpora of the same size

There are linguistic variables (such as the above-mentioned verbs) that go together with DO in affirmative statements, but **social embedding** of the final stage of change seems to be **entirely lacking** (Nurmi forthcoming).

## CONCLUSION

- Statistical significance for changes lacking a variable: Säily & Suomela's (2009) non-parametric method of permutation testing
- Implementation available: Suomela (2012), [www.cs.helsinki.fi/jukka.suomela/types2/](http://www.cs.helsinki.fi/jukka.suomela/types2/)

Figure 4 shows another example, the **progressive** (Sairio forthcoming).

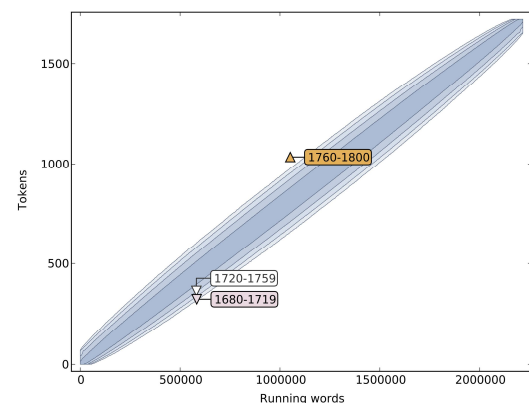


Figure 4. Rise of the progressive in the CEEC+CEECE, 1680-1800 (see Poster 3).





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# ONGOING CHANGE

## INTRODUCTION

We explore three ongoing changes. The paradigm shifts in indefinite pronouns started in the 16th century, whereas *its* and the progressive were first introduced in the 17th century. **What was the role of gender variation in these changes?**

## INDEFINITE PRON. IN *-BODY* / *-ONE*

The variable consists of four paradigmatic variants, two of which are discussed here: the compounds in *-body* and *-one* (Ex. 1 and 2):

- 1) According to promise I send you Mr. Frankland's further account of what I proposed. You see how it is, and so can judge of the matter as well as **any body**. I'll say nothing anyway. (William Steer, 1710)
- 2) and though he may have used some freedom that way formerly, yet I hear of late that his conduct has been such that **no one** need be uneasy on that score. (William Steer, 1711)

The variable excludes partitive structures, and the results only include semantically generic references.

**Previous studies** by Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 124) show that the change towards the indefinites in *-body/-one* is "most of the time" led by women, and there is no correlation with regional or social factors.

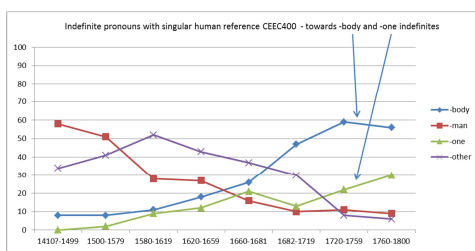


Figure 1. Diachronic development (1410–1800) of the variable and the increase of the *-body* and *-one* forms.

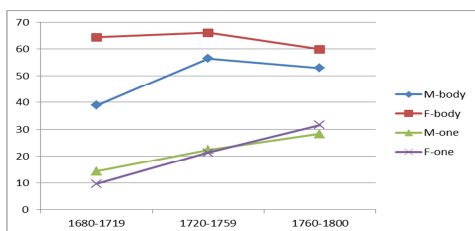


Figure 2. 18th-century results of *-body* and *-one* forms correlated with author's gender

**Conclusions:** the change is not completed during the 18th century. The change towards the forms in *-body* is linguistically motivated, replacing the old *-man* forms, and it is led by women. In the spread of *-one*, men lead in the

incipient stages ( $p < .01$ ), but the differences are leveled in the early/mid-18th century, and women gradually take the lead when the change nears the mid-range.

## ITS VS. OF IT

*Its* has been available as the **3rd person neuter possessive pronoun** from the beginning of the 17th century, and by the 1650s, *its* had gained the dominant position (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 1994: 176).

The use of *its* increased rapidly in the 18th century, reaching nearly 80% towards the end of the century (Fig. 3). *Of it* is the other main variant during the time period (Ex. 3), and it is still used today:

- 3) I promis'd you an account of Sherborne, before I had seen it, or knew what I undertook. I imagin'd it to be one of those fine old Seats of which there are Numbers scatter'd over England. But this is so peculiar and **its Situation** of so uncommon a kind, that it merits a more particular description. The House is in the form of an H. **The body of it**, which was built by Sir Walter Rawleigh, consists of four Stories, with four six-angled Towers at the ends. (Alexander Pope, 1717?)

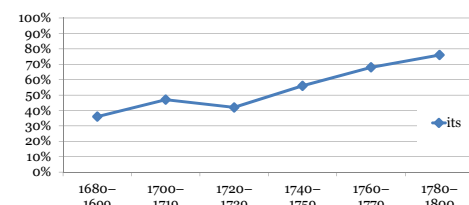


Figure 3. The spread of *its* in the 18th century.

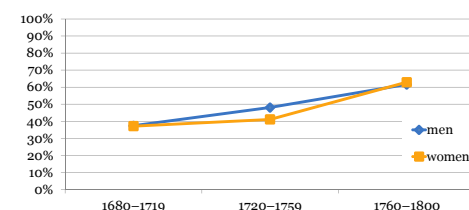


Figure 4. Gender variation in the use of *its*.

Men lead the use of *its*, except towards the end of the century when the form is already the majority choice (Fig. 4). Overall, women especially in the early 18th century use the 3rd person neuter possessives far less than men (Table 1).

To conclude, gender differences may reflect typical topic choices and contexts of writing that are likely to be somewhat different in men's and women's correspondence. The use of 3rd person neuter possessives may relate to abstract topics and professional contexts.

Table 1. The frequency of 3rd person neuter possessives (/10,000 words).

	1680–1699	1700–1719	1720–1739	1740–1759	1760–1779	1780–1800
Men	5.4 (145)	5.7 (117)	4.0 (63)	9.6 (274)	8.8 (256)	9.1 (372)
Women	1.5 (4)	3.6 (31)	3.8 (20)	10.2 (92)	9.3 (79)	7.4 (196)

## THE PROGRESSIVE

The *be+ing* construction has increased throughout the modern period (Kranich 2009), and by the end of the 18th century, it had developed in all tenses (Rissanen 1999). The progressive is associated with "typically more spontaneous, unmonitored, colloquial" language use (Kranich 2009: 102), illustrated in the aspectual usage in Ex. 4:

- 4) **Mr Fox is hurrying me** to death to get out of his chair **in which I am sitting and writing**. So adieu. (Sarah Lennox, 1762)

Fig. 5 shows the diachronic development of the progressive. The increase is particularly prominent in the present tense.

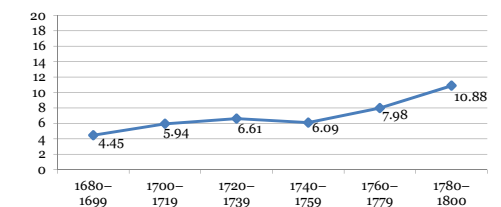


Figure 5. Development of the progressive (/10,000 words).

Women's lead towards the end of the century (Fig. 6) anticipates women's higher frequencies in the use of the progressive in the 19th century (Smutterberg 2005, Arnaud 1998), and coincides with the increase of the progressive in intimate family correspondence.

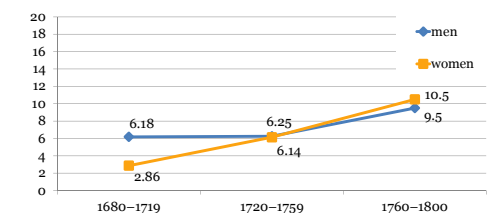


Figure 6. Gender variation (progressive).

Towards the end of century, women use the progressive more than men, and it increases particularly in the present tense. After mid-18th century, nuclear family correspondence becomes the most common register.



# CHANGE NEARING COMPLETION

## INTRODUCTION

We study the tail end of linguistic change in one verbal and two pronominal processes of change. All three were completed (i.e. passed the 85% mark in their respective S-curves) in the 18th century. **How similar were these three in social terms?**

## VERBAL -S

The generalization of *-s* as the 3rd-person present indicative suffix is one of **lexical diffusion**. It started in a few high-frequency verbs. But once it progressed to low-frequency verbs, these soon overtook the more frequent ones and completed the change earlier (Ogura & Wang 1996).

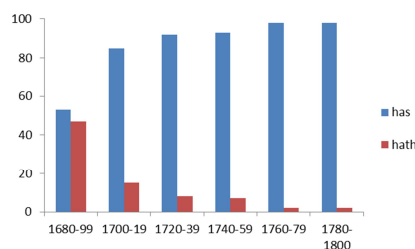


Figure 1. The spread of *-s* in HAVE.

The last verb to complete the process was HAVE (Fig. 1). As with the other verbs, **women** were ahead of men. The **upper ranks** completed the change earlier than the lower (Table 1).

Table 1. The diffusion of *has* by social status (> 85%, cells highlighted in grey).

SOCIAL RANK	1680–1719		1720–1759		1760–1800	
	-s (%)	N	-s (%)	N	-s (%)	N
Nobility	257 (87%)	295	678 (100%)	678	1096 (100%)	1096
Gentry	742 (79%)	943	662 (99%)	667	825 (99%)	832
Professionals	231 (62%)	372	269 (85%)	315	1430 (99%)	1147
Clergy	163 (48%)	337	361 (76%)	472	549 (98%)	559
Common people	37 (36%)	102	51 (86%)	59	319 (89%)	360

Twelve out of the 37 writers with 6 or more instances of the HAVE variable in 1680–99 used *hath* throughout, but only one out of the 52 writers in 1780–1800. One of the few who varied their usage was **Sir Thomas Browne**, writing to his daughter in 1682 (Ex. 1):

1) Our Tommy **has** had a grievous Cof and feavor ... These 3 days hee **hath** been in better temper and prettie chearly...

## THOU

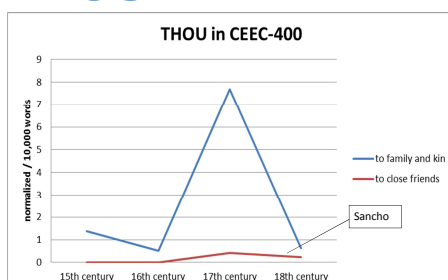


Figure 2. The use of *thou* in letters to family and friends.

The 2nd-person pronoun *thou* was already **marked** by the end of the 17th century. By the middle of the 18th century, the distinction between *thou* and *you* started to relate to **register variation**: the use of *thou* was connected with the language of poetry and religious prose and prayer.

All users of *thou* in the data mostly use it to their family and friends. In its 18th-century context, *thou* becomes a **status-marker** to women and younger family members and other relatives, as well as an **intimacy-marker** to close friends.



One of the most prolific users of *thou* is **Ignatius Sancho** (1729?–1780). Deeply religious, Sancho shows certain linguistic features that could be considered archaic already in the 18th century (Ex. 2).

2) Poor blundering M[eheux], I pity **thee** - **thou** art a bungler in every thing - ask the girls else. - **You** know nothing of figures - **you** write a wretched hand - **thou** hast a nonsensical style - almost as disagreeable as **thy** heart - **thy** heart, though better than **thy** head - and which I wish from my soul (as it now is) was the worst heart in the three kingdoms - **thy** heart is a silly one - a poor cowardly heart - that would shrink at mere trifles - though there were no danger of fine or imprisonment: (Ignatius Sancho to John Meheux, 1779?)

## INDEFINITES

The change in the indefinite pronouns with singular (generic) human reference consists of four paradigmatic variants. Two of them are on the increase in the 18th century, i.e. *-body* and *-one*, and the older variants, *-man* and the independent forms are lost (cf. also Poster 3). Figure 1 shows the diachronic development of the two outgoing indefinites in the CEEC400.

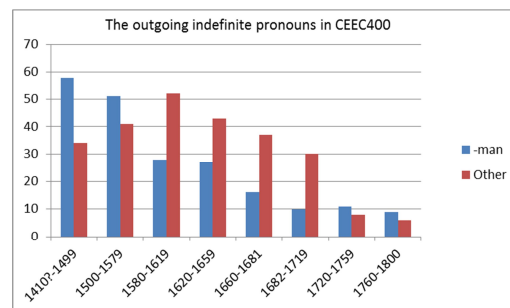


Figure 3. The outgoing variants in CEEC400.

The decrease of the forms in *-man* is coupled with an increase in the indefinites in *-body*, and in the chronologically later process, the loss of the independent forms coincides with the increase in the *one* indefinites. **Women** are roughly one generation ahead of men in both of these processes.

The loss of the independent forms is nearing completion in the second half of the 17th century and is completed by nearly all social ranks by the early/mid-18th century (Table 2).

Table 2. The loss of independent indefinites by social status (cells highlighted in grey < 15%).

SOCIAL RANK	1680–1719		1720–1759		1760–1800	
	Ind. (%)	N	Ind. (%)	N	Ind. (%)	N
Nobility	20 (19%)	105	13 (7%)	178	10 (4%)	239
Gentry	62 (32%)	191	6 (5%)	119	6 (4%)	146
Professionals	20 (25%)	79	11 (12%)	95	17 (8%)	220
Clergy	29 (43%)	67	6 (8%)	79	8 (7%)	119
Common people	6 (35%)	17	6 (25%)	24	6 (12%)	49

Conservative individuals (with total variant frequencies >10 and whose share of the outgoing variants is >30%) are male, representing various social groups. None of them are upwardly mobile. See Ex. 3:

3) You may depend on it, no more shall come into **any mans** hands but your own, (Francis Blomefield, 1736)

# Varieng

## LINGUISTIC CHANGE IN ITS SOCIAL CONTEXTS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH

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Poster presentation, ICAME 34, Santiago de Compostela, 22–26 May 2013

These posters present new results of ongoing sociolinguistic research by the C18 Research Group. The studies deal with the sociolinguistics of a dozen changes in eighteenth-century English based on data extracted from the Late Modern English part (1680–1800) of the socially stratified *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (see CoRD for details). The changes explored include linguistic features whose sociolinguistic trajectories are well known up to 1700 (e.g. Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003), but the later developments of which have not been fully explored. Their spread in the language community coincides with different stages of the S-curve, including changes progressing in mid-range and those nearing completion, but also stable variation and features difficult to conceptualize as sociolinguistic variables.

On the basis of earlier research, the impact of different social variables on the choice of linguistic variants may depend on the stage of the change: the most variation is observed when the process is in mid-range whereas the range of social variation narrows down when the change is nearing completion (e.g. Kurki 2004, Tagliamonte & D'Arcey 2009: 99). The main aim of the posters is thus to explore how social variables such as gender, age and social rank may co-vary with the linguistic features at different stages. In addition, the analysis accounts for individual variation by looking for outliers, who are either conservative or progressive with respect to a particular process of change (cf. Nevalainen, Raumolin-Brunberg & Mannila 2011). When interpreting the results, changes in eighteenth-century society need to be taken into account, including changes in societal structure and social climate, ongoing language standardization processes and the emerging normative influence as well as a newly developed consciousness of letter writing as a social accomplishment. These factors affect the nature of the available data and pose further methodological challenges that are tackled in new ways.

The four posters map the sociolinguistic questions and challenges in the eighteenth century context and present the results thematically as follows: 1) presentation of the 2-million-word corpus, 2) new quantitative methods for historical sociolinguistics, 3) the sociolinguistics of ongoing changes in mid-range, and 4) the sociolinguistics of changes nearing completion. The new methods to be discussed provide statistical solutions for cases that are difficult to model in terms of the S-curve including the productivity of the suffixes *-ness* and *-ity*, the development of the auxiliary *do* in affirmative statements, and the rise of the progressive. The ongoing changes focus on the development of the noun subject and object of the gerund, the variation of *its* vs. *of it*, and the indefinite pronouns ending in *-body* vs. *-one*. The changes nearing completion are represented by the variation of *has/does/says* vs. *hath/doth/saith*, the pronoun *thou*, and the indefinite pronoun *-man*. These multiple changes highlight the variety and complexity of sociolinguistic factors in the interpretation of language change.

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