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Language Regularization in Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century Private Correspondence

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初期近代英語期の個人書簡文におけることばの規範化について

大 津 智 彦

　筆者は大津（1988）において18世紀後半から現れだした規範文法の規則は必ずしもラテン文法や論理学だけに従っていたのではなく，当時の語法を反映していた可能性があることを指摘した。これはまた規範文法が出る前にことばの規範化が始まっていたことを示唆するが，本稿ではその文法書以前の規範化がいつ頃から，どの程度進んでいたか，またそれが規範文法の規則とはどのような関係にあったかを探るため，1630年から1760年までの個人書簡の言語を2種類の構文について調査した。その結果，男女間や同じ構文でも別々のタイプの間で語法に開きがあるなかで，対象期間を通じてどちらの構文においても大部分の男性によって指示される優勢な語法があり，これが後に規範文法の規則として取り上げられていたことがわかった。とすると規範文法の規則はただ現実語法に従っていたというのではなく，女性のことばやタイプの異なる小数派の語法を否定した上に成り立っていたわけで，その意味で規範文法は規範的であったと言えよう。

1.　I pointed out in Ohtsu (1988) that traditional studies of historical English syntax tended to lump the whole Modern English period together without giving due consideration to changes which must have taken place during the period of over four hundred years. As a way of correcting such tendencies I went on to draw attention to the regularization of English often alleged to have occurred through the emergence of prescriptive grammars in the eighteenth century and carried out an investigation to look at the relationship between prescriptivism and actual usage as it was reflected in syntactic change.

　　The investigation dealt with problems of number concord and pronominal case and it was found

in either case that prescriptive rules of eighteenth-century grammarians very faithfully reflected or had considerable support in contemporary usage, overthrowing the common view that they were products of Latin grammar or logic alone.

These results can be interpreted as an indication that language regularization was under way before prescriptive grammars began to come out in large numbers in the late eighteenth century. In fact the Royal Society is known to have set up a committee in the mid seventeenth century with the aim of "improving the English Language"[1] and in 1712 Swift published a proposal for the establishment of an academy aimed at regulating English. Such movements support the interpretation mentioned above and suggest that the process of language regularization was consciously pursued prior to the advent of prescriptive grammars.

Then when did this process of regularization begin? How and to what extent was it reflected in actual usage? And what kind of relationship did it have with prescriptive grammars? In this study we would like to attempt to answer these questions. It is founded on a statistical method as in Ohtsu (1988) but focuses on a period only partially covered there and thus aims at a more in-depth analysis.

2.　Before starting our study we have to decide on which syntactic constructions to investigate. Of the nearly ninety items picked out as contentious points by my inquiry into eighteenth-century grammars[2], items concerning number concord and case of pronouns each occupy about fifteen percent of the total and constitute the two largest groups. Apart from the fact that number concord and pronominal case presented the largest number of problems in the process of language regularization, it is revealed in the appendix to Leonard (1962) that they were also among the most hotly discussed issues, with more grammarians referring to them than to other items[3].

Besides the importance of constructions to be investigated, we also have to consider the practicability of an investigation. Since a descriptive study of historical syntax such as this one must depend on a corpus for data, the corpus scale is a significant factor in determining what to investigate. This is because every construction has a different frequency of occurrence, and it is necessary to vary the scale of a corpus to suit each investigation. As far as Present-day English is concerned, it is possible to build a corpus large enough to deal with almost any kind of problem as long as sufficient time and energy is spent. In addition, development of computer corpora is progressing steadily nowadays, opening a lot of research possibilities. In contrast, when it comes to a historical study, there is a limit to the number of extant texts and their accessibility can also be a problem. There are some computer corpora of historical texts but apart from the Toronto Corpus of Old English which covers all the O.E. material, they are relatively small in scale and of limited use. Furthermore, lack of grammatical tagging severely restricts the scope of possible investigations.

For these reasons, the best policy to pursue in the present investigation seemed to select out of the most contentious constructions those which yielded the largest number of instances in a corpus I was able to assemble. I picked up six constructions as candidates for investigation, three from each of the two controversial areas of number concord and pronominal case[4], and collected every instance of each construction in my corpus of about 860, 000 words. Of the six the following two constructios had the most numerous instances.

(1)   Ignorance and negligence has/have produced the effect.

(2)   This is the gentleman who/whom I saw yesterday.

(1) is concerned with number concord of a verb with a compound subject and (2) represents a problem regarding the case of the relative pronoun *who* as the object of a verb or preposition. These two constructions were chosen for our investigation for reasons just mentioned.

3.   As stated in section 1, the overall aims of this study are to document the process of regularization of English up to the emergence of prescriptive grammars in the latter half of the eighteenth century and to determine how it related to rules laid down by those grammars. The procedures we are going to follow are to i) identify in advance the positions which eighteenth-century grammarians took concerning the two constructions chosen above, ii) find out facts of actual usage about the same constructions and iii) compare the results of i) and ii) in order to see how actual usage got through the regulating process to shift toward or away from rules of grammars in the eighteenth century.

3. 1.   For the investigation into rules of eighteenth-century grammarians, I have examined eleven grammars listed in Appendix I. Leonard (1962) has also been consulted to get access to grammars not otherwise available. The examination does not consist merely of assembling rules for the constructions at issue but efforts have been made, where possible, to clarify how each grammarian tried to settle contentious points of grammar. As will become clear later, this attention to the bases upon which rules of grammar were built is especially important when we analyze the relationship between rules and actual usage.

3. 2.   As regards the corpus used in order to extract facts of usage, we have to note that this study differs from Ohtsu (1988) in two respects. Firstly, in accordance with our objective of capturing the state of English prior to the advent of prescriptive grammars, I have decided to focus on a period of 130 years between 1630 and 1760[5].

Secondly, our corpus is made up of personal correspondence instead of literature this time. This decision has been made for several important reasons;

i)   Literary works are usually produced with publication in mind, which leads a writer to consciously seek grammatical correctness. Moreover, they often go through a further process of grammatical scrutiny at the hands of editors and are subject to arbitrary corrections. On the other hand, personal correspondence, especially among people familiar with each other, can be considered as embodying naturally occurring, everyday language use.

ii) Most published works of any genre in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are written by men, whereas in personal correspondence we can often come across female writers and study their language.

iii) Personal correspondence not only tells us about how people wrote but, in the absence of tape-recorders, provides an important insight into how people spoke[6].

3.3.   Twelve collections of personal correspondence amounting to approximately 860,000 words have been chosen as a corpus. The items comprising the corpus are listed in appendix II.

Special care has been taken to ensure that they constitute homogeneous material. Firstly, writers of these collections are lawyers, doctors, members of Parliament, men of other professions or their wives, and make up a certain group of people usually referred to as an upper class. Secondly, the letters in most cases deal with everyday topics such as are commonly talked about among family members or intimate friends. The corpus, in short, is intended to represent the language of an upper class in familiar circumstances.

4.   In this section we are going to address problems of number concord of verbs in the following types of construction.

(1)   Mr. Verney and his Lady does us the honour tomorrow morning to breakfast with us. (1714. M. V6)[7]

(2)   Their malice & spite was such yt they would have carried him to Tiburne, & have hanged him there. (1670. M. V4)

(3)   Youth and plenty and Jollyty hinders you from casting A Letter on your old and Afflicted Relation. (1703. F. V5)

The subjects consist of two or more singular nouns constituting what is called the compound subject in all three types but there are differences in the way its constituents are combined. In (1) members

of the compound subject denote concrete objects, whether animate or inanimate, whereas in (2) and (3
) they signify abstract ideas. The difference between (2) and (3) lies in the fact that the former has a pro-
noun or an article modifying the members of the compound subject while the latter has no such modi-
fying element. These three types can be said to cover all those instances in which the compound subject
precedes the verb in English[8].

4. 1.   Now our task is to see how eighteenth-century grammarians judged these constructions. Eight
of the eleven grammarians investigated for this study participate in the debate over this issue, reflec-
ting the importance it held in linguistic matters in the eighteenth century. Interestingly, views expressed
in their grammars can be divided into two different positions according to the chronological order of
their publication. While grammarians up to Priestley sanction the use of a singular verb with a com-
pound subject, those publishing later than he definitely condemn it[9]. This shift in attitudes, which
took place over a period of time, contains an important clue to understanding the relationship between
prescriptive grammars and actual usage and forms the basis of discussion in this section.

Regardless of the position which the grammarians take, either form or meaning of the construc-
tion is resorted to as a basis of their arguments.

We are going to deal with arguments founded on formal grounds first. Among the grammarians
in our study, Greenwood is the first to comment at all on the constructions in question. Defending the
use of the singular verb, he says that "sometimes the Verb may be put in the Singular Number, when
there are two Substantives; as, His Justice and Goodness was great." Justifying this expression on
grounds of ellipsis, he argues that the words "was great" are left out between "His Justice" and "and"
so that the complete sentence would read "His Justice was great and his Goodness was great."[10]

Similar, though not quite identical, position is taken by Lowth and Coote. They give the follow-
ing examples in explanation of their view.

(4)   All joy, tranquillity, and peace, even for ever and ever doth dwell[11].

(5)   By whose power all good and evil is distributed[12].

They reason that in such expressions the verb applies to each of the several nouns or pronouns con-
stituting a compound subject, resulting in its being placed in the singular.

It must be noted that reasonings of these grammarians are highly unsatisfactory in that they
specify no conditions under which parts of a sentence can be left out or the verb can be understood as
applying to each of the constituents of a compound subject. In particular, they do not explain why the
use of the singular verb is justifiable in (4) and (5) but not in, for instance, "Socrates and Plato were

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wise," although this and similar sentences are dealt with in the same place by these grammarians.

Earlier grammarians' tolerance of the use of a compound subject with a singular verb cannot be seen in Murray. Publishing in 1795, he maintains that such tolerance introduces too much confusion and latitude of application. Criticizing the idea that the verb can be intended to apply to each member of the compound subject, he recommends substituting "or" for "and" in the following sentence, in opposition to the sanction by Lowth of the same sentence.

(6)   Sand, and salt, and a mass of iron, is easier to bear than a man without understanding[13].

Cobbett also requires that the verb always agree with the compound subject in the plural number. He does not state his reasons for giving this rule, but it is clear that he is turning to the form of the construction when he attacks the use of the singular verb. Introducing a notion of what is today called "attraction" he holds that the number of the verb can be mistakenly attracted to the singular noun that comes between the compound subject and the verb, as in his examples below.

(7)   The *quantity and quality* of the land *is* the same as *it was* before. (italics mine.)

(8)   The very *scheme and model* of the administration of common justice between party and party, *was* entirely settled by this king. (Italics mine)[14]

His appeal to attraction, however, is not very convincing, particularly in the former sentence, for there is a strong likelihood that the speaker or writer of these examples used the singular subject fully conscious of its subject. I have looked up Jespersen, Fowler, Poutsma, Kruisinga, Visser and other writers in search of similar cases of attraction, but have not been able to find a single instance in which the number of a verb governed by a compound subject is affected by an intervening singular noun. Cobbett's appeal to attraction here can therefore be looked upon as a strained effort to justify his rules by distorting facts of usage which clearly point to the use of the singular verb after a compound subject.

Whether for or against the use of the singular verb with the compound subject, these grammarians can offer only inadequate or irrelevant solutions to questions outside of their strict rules. As we will see later, what they do not realize is that the usage of the constructions they are trying to deal with is more varied than their simple rules could handle.

Let us now turn to the grammarians who base their arguments on semantic grounds. Priestley, regarded as the only grammarian who took actual usage into consideration, allows a verb to agree with a compound subject in the singular. He resorts to a concept of notional concord when he says; "if the

subjects of the affirmation be nearly related, the verb is rather better in the singular number."[15] The following is one of the examples given by him.

(9)   He sent his angles to fight for his people, and the discomfiture and slaughter of great hosts, is attributed to their assistance[16].

His reasoning may sound more plausible and serve as a better criterion than that of the grammarians cited above, but it is not without a problem of its own, for meaning is a slippery entity which is easily influenced by subjectivity. For instance, Priestley may consider the compound subject in (9) as constituting a single idea but there is no reason to deny that it is capable of a plural interpretation by other writers. Thus, although notional concord can be used as a convenient excuse to defend expressions which suit one's taste, it is not always a reliable criterion in judging of those which do not. Priestley's argument should be noted not so much for its validity as for its defense of the use of the singular verb with the compound subject.

Murray, whose arguments on formal grounds have already been cited, addresses the present issue in terms of notional concord too. But his reasoning is diagonally opposed to Priestley's. Refuting the idea that the verb may be put in the singular if components of the compound subject are synonymous, he states;

...it is evidently contrary to the first principles of grammar, to consider two distinct ideas as one, however nice may be their shades of difference...If there be no difference, one of them must be superfluous, and ought to be rejected[17].

As discussed in Leonard (1962), he may have copied from Withers, who in 1788 says; "if Ideas are synonymous one of them is unnecessary; if they are distinct, Reason and Analogy demand a plural."[18] Anyway, these grammarians' idea of notional concord, rather than Priestley's, seems to have prevailed toward the end of the eighteenth century.

To sum up, we have seen that eighteenth-century grammarians shifted their positions as the century advanced. Whether arguing on formal or notional grounds, earlier grammarians are tolerant of the use of a singular verb whereas later ones strictly forbid it. Also to be noted is the fact that in either sanctioning or censuring the constructions at issue the grammarians pay little attention to the variety of forms the constructions display. They do not care whether members of the compound subject denote concrete objects or abstract notions, or whether they precede or follow the verb.

4.2.   Our next task is to reveal facts of usage in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a

Table 1　Number Concord of a compound subject

Period	Singular (a)	Plural (b)	(b)/Total (%)
Type A: Subject consisting of concrete objects			
1630–1659	3/25	45/12	94/32
1660–1709	7/18	84/ 7	92/28
1710–1759	7/ 8	59/19	89/70
Type B: Subject (abstract) preceded by modifier			
1630–1659	15/ 7	4/ 0	21/ 0
1660–1709	2/ 1	2/ 0	50/ 0
1710–1759	4/ 5	4/ 0	50/ 0
Type C: Subject (abstract) not preceded by modifier			
1630–1659	5/ 2	4/ 2	44/50
1660–1709	4/ 1	3/ 1	43/50
1710–1759	0/ 0	3/ 0	100/—

Note: Figures to the left of the slash indicate the number of examples of male usage
and those to the right indicate the number of examples of female usage.

period of 130 years leading up to the appearance of the prescriptive rules reviewed above. Was the choice of number for the compound subject in such confusion before the advent of the rules of prescriptive grammars that their introduction was absolutely necessary? Were the rules solely based on logic and Latin grammar? Or did they reflect usage at all? If they did, to what extent did they mirror it? To help answer these questions, facts of actual usage, obtained from the corpus in Appendix II, are tabulated in table 1. Let's briefly look at the way it is compiled before turning to the figures in the table.

Firstly, we have followed the three types of construction set up in section 4. An example of each type, already given in 4, is repeated here with the name of the relevant type attached.

(A)　(＝(1))　Mr. Verney and his Lady does us the honour tomorrow morning to breakfast with us. (1714. M. V4)

(b)　(＝(2))　Their mallice & spite was such yt they would have carried him to Tiburne, & have hanged him there. (1670. M. V4)

(C)　(＝(3))　Youth and plenty and Jollyty hinders you from casting A Letter on your old and Afflicted Relation. (1730. F. V5)

Types (A)–(C) are intended to cover all those instances in which the subject precedes the verb. We leave out of consideration those instances in which the verb precedes the subject in this study. Secondly, the

length of the 130 years prior to the advent of prescriptive grammars has been divided into three con-tinuous periods, i.e., 1630–1659, 1660–1709, and 1710–1759. This is meant to reveal a shift, if any, in actual usage over time. The points at which the partitions are made are necessarily arbitrary. Thirdly, examples from male and female writers have been calculated separately in order to bring out dif-ferences in language use between the two sexes.

We now proceed to the figures for Type A in table 1. Of the three types of construction type A sup-plies by far the most numerous instances and can be considered as representative of what eighteenth-century grammarians had in mind when they were talking about compound subjects. What strikes us first of all with regard to this type is that there are great differences between male and female cor-respondents. About 90% of men make the verb agree in the plural throughout the entire period while women adopt the plural number in only about 30% of the cases for the first eighty years and increase it to 70% in the last fifty years. These figures indicate that at least as far as men were concerned plural verbs had always been the norm with the most characteristic type of compound subjects for 130 years before the appearance of prescriptive grammars and was so powerful that it finally influenced the usage of women in its direction. This is a very important point and we will come back to it later on.

With regard to the use of *singular* verbs with compound subjects in type A, we have to amend my suggestion in Ohtsu (1988) that it represents the speech of vulgar people. It is true that the instances given there are collected out of the speech of a vulgar person but as shown in table 1, it was quite com-mon until the beginning of the eighteenth century for women in the upper social classes to make a com-pound subject agree with a singular verb. So this is indicative of sex, not class, differences. It will not be amiss to quote examples illustrating the use of a singular verb;

(10)   The good lady at Ditchley & Sir Harry & his Lady was with me. (1655. F. V3)

(11)   Mr Fall & Mr Rutherford of Roxton was here at Mrs Verney's buriall. (1686. M. V4)

(12)   Cozen Vickers and Cousin Lloyd as her nearest relations comes in for what is left. (1736. F. V4)

In all these instances there seems to be nothing either in form or meaning that recommends the use of a singular verb.

We have a completely different picture in types B and C. The number of instances is in none of these types large enough to guarantee precise statistical significance, but it is possible to talk in terms of broad tendencies[19].

Let us begin with type B. In this type we can nowhere detect a predominance of plural verbs in sharp contrast to what we saw in type A where men used them most of the time and women shifted

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their usage in their favor in the last period. In type B, both men and women show an unmistakable readiness to adopt singular verbs throughout the entire period. This readiness is especially strong in women, who do not provide a single instance of a plural verb, and also in men in the earliest period. Men appear to be drawn towards plural verbs in later period. Here are some examples of the use of singular verbs in type B;

(13)   Your charitie and brotherly affection hath soe amply appeared to me that I have not knowne what hath belonged to want. (1653. M. V3)

(14)   The violence and rashness of the King's party disorders and distempers all. (1660. M.V3)

(15)   Through sickness etc, his time and pleasure was near expired. (1715. F. V5)

These disparities in usage between types A and B suggest that the two types, though members of the same construction, are totally different in nature and are not to be lumped together under a single rule. Although the verbs of (10)–(12) and (13)–(15) all agree in the singular, they seem to do so for different reasons. We do not intend here to determine what distinguishes one type from the other, but wish to stress the fact that a separate rule would have been needed to deal with examples like (13)–(15).

Type C differs from type B in having no modifier preceding the first element of a compound subject and has been shown to exhibit a different pattern of concord from the latter type in Ohtsu (1988). It is difficult to identify the differences here due to lack of instances but it would at least be possible to say that type C, though more inclined to take plural verbs than type B, does not display a predominance of either number. It does seem to favor plural verbs in 1710–1759, but the scarcity of instances prevents us from saying anything definite. In any case, facts of usage indicate that type C has its own rule of concord and should be treated in its own right. Some examples of type C follow;

(16)   Poverty and imprisonment hath made me almost impudent. (1640. M. V2)

(17)   I suppose that tyme and ye nature of yt place has wrought off much of that sweetness. (1673. M. Ht)

(18)   Freindeship and naturall affection have seemed to strive for mastery. (1645. M. V2)

(19)   I am now arrived at the worst place in England, where sinne and vice abound to an infinite. (1676. M. V4)

(20)   Inaction and Quitness are the injoyments of Old Age. (1718. M. V6)

4.3.   We are now in a position to consider the relationship between actual usage and eighteenth-cen-

tury grammarians with regard to the construction in question. Most significantly, it has been found that type A, which commands by far the most numerous instances and is representative of the whole construction, had always employed plural verbs in nine times out of ten in men's usage. That does not amount to a total correspondence between actual usage and the grammarians' rules, but it implies that the eighteenth-century grammarians, when they stipulated that compound subjects must agree with plural verbs, simply based their rules on the predominant usage of the predominant type of construction and tried to apply them to the other types which obeyed separate patterns of usage. We noted in 4.1 that some of the grammarians, especially the earlier ones, were aware of the use of singular verbs with compound subjects. Examples they gave in support of their observation suggest that they were referring to these separate types which as we have seen often had their verbs agree in the singular. But since they only treated them as exceptions and did not go as far as clearly recognizing them as distinct from type A, their arguments did not carry much conviction and allowed the rules for the main type to completely take over in later grammars. They should therefore be accused not of cooking up fictious rules removed from reality but of being linguistically naive in that they failed to respect the subtle distinctions that had to be made between the different types of construction.

There is another point on which we have to remark with reference to the relationship between actual usage and prescriptive grammars. It is concerned with the fact that women's use of plural verbs in type A increased to 70% in 1710–1759, showing a dramatic rise of 40% in a relatively short period of time. This suggests not only that language regularization was well at work prior to the appearance of prescriptive grammars, a point we suspected at the beginning of this study, but also that it accelerated during the first half of the eighteenth century. This point, combined with the observation made above that the rules for number concord of the compound subject simply followed the usage of the predominant type, provides an important clue to the nature of the role which eighteenth-century prescriptive grammars played in regulating language. The issue will be discussed in the conclusion.

5. We are now going to deal with the following types of construction, in which the relative pronoun *who* or *whom* is the object of a transitive verb or a preposition.

(1) There are a great many others whome I have at the same advantage. (1653. F. Ob)

(2) I had this day with me one of Vickers' patients of a year's standing, whom he says he has done good to in her body. (1713. M. V5)

(3) My br Nando, who I expect heere to night, is like to have most of his troope at York with him. (1671. M. Ht)

(4) Our poor Swinford had sixty who they gave free quarters to. (1716. F. V6)

The four examples suggest that there was fluctuation as to the choice of the two forms of the relative pronoun in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As in the previous sections, our task is to look into how eighteenth-century grammarians responded to this variability and how actual usage changed to merge with or diverge from their rules.

5. 1.   The grammarians I examined show a striking degree of agreement, all of the eight who comment on the construction stipulating unequivocally that a relative pronoun governed by a verb or a preposition should be in the objective case. They even adopt more or less the same wording;

> The Relative is the Nominative Case to the Verb, when no other Nominative comes between it and the Verb: But when another Nominative comes between it and the Verb, the Relative is governed by some word in its own member of the sentence[20].
> When the relative is separated from a verb by some nominative case, it is either governed by that verb, or by a preposition depending on the verb[21].
> If a nominative comes between the relative and the verb, the relative is governed by the following verb or some other word[22].

Each of the preceding rules is followed by examples using *whom*.

We noted in the previous section that the earlier grammarians made allowances for variability with regard to number concord of the compound subject, apparently reflecting facts of actual usage to some extent. But no such concessions are made by any of the eight grammarians in relation to the construction in question. It is interesting to observe, however, that Webster says of an analogous construction with the interrogative *who*;

> The relative *who*, in this and similar phrases, *who do you speak to*, must perhaps be admitted as an anomaly. It is the invariable practice to use *who*, except among people who are fettered by grammatical rules[23].

He does not distinguish between two uses of the pronoun *who* (relative and interrogative *who*) and subsumes both under the relative pronoun but his examples come from the interrogative use alone. Priestley, who is know to be a defender of usage, unfortunately does not specifically discuss the grammatical case of the relative *who* and cannot shed light on this point. Like Webster, he seems to have the interrogative pronoun in mind when he says;

> When the pronoun precedes the verb, or the particle by which its case is determined, it is very common, especially in conversation, to use the nominative case where the rules of grammar require the oblique. As Who *is this* for? Who *should I* meet *the other day but my old friend*? Spectator, No 32. This form of speaking is so familiar, that I question whether grammarians should not admit it as an exception to the general rule[24].

While these testimonies of contemporary grammarians imply that it was the norm in the eighteenth cen-

tury to use the interrogative *who* as the object of a verb or preposition, it seems curious that they keep silent on the actual usage of the relative counterpart. Does it signify something? And if it does, what does it signify? We attempt to find an answer to such questions in the next section.

5.2. Table 2 exhibits the statistics of occurrences of *whom* and *who* in our corpus. It has been compiled according to the same procedures as followed in table 1, except that we don't distinguish between different types this time. Also, calculations have been made regardless of whether the relative pronoun is the object of a verb or a pronoun.

Although Jespersen says that "the tendency to replace [the relative] *whom* by the [relative] *who* is strong, though not quite so strong as with the interrogative pronoun" and cites instances of the relative *who* as object from writers as early as Shakespeare[25], the figures in table 2 suggest that his description is not entirely accurate. What table 2 tells us is that while female correspondents did have a tendency to replace *whom* by *who*, male correspondents used *whom* eight or nine times out of ten throughout the period under examination. We know for a fact that *whom* was historically the form used as the object of a verb or preposition when it first made its appearance as a relative pronoun in the Middle English period[26]. It follows that the use of the relative *whom* had been kept almost intact in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as far as men's usage was concerned.

So we detect large differences between men's and women's usage again here. It seems appropriate to call attention to some of the interesting questions they raise. For example, it would be meaningful to find out where such differences sprang from. Do our findings mean that men were more careful with their language than women, since the former kept the older distinction of case while the latter lost it to a considerable degree? This problem is significant because it is generally accepted in modern sociolinguistics that female usage tends to be more careful than male usage, which tends to be more casual[27]. The medium or channel is a factor we have to take into consideration in conjunction with the idea of carefulness. The results we have obtained in this study are based on written language alone and it would therefore be necessary to investigate spoken language as well in order to describe a whole, instead of a section, of language use. The possibility cannot be ruled out that it was only in written

Table 2 Case of the relative pronoun

Period	who (a)	whom (b)	(b)/Total (%)
1630–1659	4/ 5	33/10	89/67
1660–1709	4/10	14/ 8	78/44
1710–1759	0/ 4	19/ 3	100/43

Note: Figures to the left of the slash indicate the number of examples of male usage
and those to the right indicate the number of examples of female usage.

language that men used a different language from that of women, but then again there is a possibility that the sex differences extended to spoken language.

Examples of the female use of *whom* and the male use of *who* follow;

(5)   I was invited to dine at a rich widdow's (whome I think I once told you of). (1653. F. Os)

(6)   He had eight chaplains and wanted livings to bestow on them whom he must look to before strangers. (1679. F. V5)

(7)   I intreat your Lordship to give my most humble sarvices to my Lady, whom I desine to wat opon very sodinly. (1712. F. V5)

(8)   I have not lost time as opportunitie could fitt but to deale with my sonne, who I find very will-inge to obtaine your lady shippe's favor and love. (1631. M. Br)

(9)   Some were of opinion, who I talked with in the fleete, that Sr William may ere long get again into the ministry too. (1672. M. Ht)

5.3.   While all these questions have a bearing on the main issue of the present investigation, i.e., the relationship between actual usage and prescriptive grammars, it is possible to say on the basis of the present investigation that the grammarians' rules for the use of the relative *whom* were not imaginary ones made up on the analogy of Latin grammar or logic but were backed to a good extent by actual usage. They simply followed the usage which had been closely preserved since Middle English. This ex-plains why the grammarians in our study, some of whom questioned the validity of the rules for the in-terrogative *whom*, were unanimous in their support of the rules for the relative *whom*. The reason why there arose a difference in usage between the relative and the interrogative *whom* is a matter beyond the scope of this study, but the grammarians' attitude toward the difference furnishes a further proof that they were well aware of actual usage when they laid down their rules. Complete agreement bet-ween actual usage and the grammars was of course not achieved. Female usage was largely ignored in setting up the rules for the relative *whom* and it awaits a future investigation to determine how much they reflected spoken language. The eighteenth-century grammarians directed their eyes to actual usage but their field of view was restricted.

6.   We have started this study with the aim of investigating the regularization of English in the seven-teenth and early eighteenth centuries and looking at the relationship this process had with prescriptive grammars. Our investigations into problems of number concord of compound subject and case of relative pronoun have revealed that as far as these constructions were concerned English was in a

highly regularized state, with the majority of instances conforming to a single predominant usage in either construction. It has also been found that when prescriptive grammarians laid down their rules, they simply followed this predominant usage which had been current for many years. It is impossible to tell when the high degree of conformity shown by the constructions in question had been achieved—there was no significant shift in usage which clearly point to its beginning during the period under investigation—but these findings suggest a possibility that it was not prescriptive grammars that was actually instrumental in regularizing English. What we mean is that regularizing tendencies were well at work long before the advent of prescriptive grammarians and that their grammars were merely manifestations or codifications of such tendencies which culminated in the late eighteenth century.

This statement, however, requires some qualifications. We have to remark first of all that prescriptive grammarians' view about language were restricted in scope and still naive. It is true that prescriptive grammarians followed predominant usage of the time when they laid down their rules, but they did so at the expense of other varieties of usage which, from the standpoint of modern linguistics, would have every right to be taken into account. One such example in our study is number concord of compound subjects of types B and C in section 4. We saw that these types were treated by the same rules that applied to the predominant type (type A) although they were totally different in nature. Also to be noted in this connection is the fact that female usage was largely disregarded by the grammarians. Our investigations have shown that women's usage often deviated from that of men but that it was always the predominant usage of men that was adopted as a basis of the grammarians' rules. If most eighteenth-century grammars cannot escape being called prescriptive, it is because they tried to extend their rules where they didn't realize different laws obtained.

Another qualification we have to make is concerned with the scope of this study. Our corpus consists of private correspondence and although private letters are known to display characteristics of spoken language, what we have said in this study should ultimately be considered as applying only to written language. It is also necessary to note that there remain more constructions that are worthy of serious investigation in addition to those taken up here. The conclusion we have reached here is therefore by no means final. Further research making use of additional varieties of corpora and constructions is not only needed to confirm it but also promises to provide a fresh perspective on the way the history of Modern English is studied.

Notes

1) Baugh and Cable (1978), p. 263.
2) This inquiry has been conducted with the help of Leonard (1962). I refrain from giving a list of the contentious points due to lack of space.

3) Leonard (1962), pp. 251–307.

4) The six candidate constructions are of the following types.

   a) number concord of verb with compound subject

   b) number concord of verb with singular subjects connected by or

   c) number concord of verb with mass noun

   d) case of relative *who*

   e) case of personal pronoun after *as* and *than*

   d) case of personal pronoun after preposition (e.g. *between you and I*)

5) It would be interesting to trace the process of language regularization from the beginning of the Modern English period, say about 1500, but I would like to reserve it for future research.

6) Biber (1988), p. 45 says: "Although they [personal letters] are written, they show oral situational characteristic for shared personal knowledge, effort expended to maintain the relationship, and informational load, and intermediate situational characteristics with respect to most of the other differences."

7) Symbols in the parentheses denote a year, sex, and a source in this order concerning each quotation.

8) We do not inquire into cases in which the verb precedes the subject here.

9) Coote, however, is an exception. He in 1788 still allows a singular verb to agree with each member of a compound subject.

10) Greenwood (1711), p. 219.

11) Lowth (1769), p. 77.

12) Coote (1788), p. 197.

13) Murray (1806), p. 144.

14) Cobbett (1819), pp. 122–23.

15) Priestley (1769), p. 186.

16) *Ibid.*

17) Murray (1806), p. 144.

18) Leonard (1962), p. 216.

19) In Ohtsu (1988), where instances several times as large as in the present study are collected out of English literature, figures for 1700–1750 exhibit a similar pattern to those here.

20) Lowth (1769), p. 105.

21) Coote (1788), p. 219.

22) Webster (1787), p. 37.

23) *Ibid.*, p. 87.

24) Priestley (1769), p. 107.

25) Jespersen (1949), p. 243.

26) Nakao (1972), p. 140, pp. 194–97.

27) Milroy (1982), p. 86.

Appendix I Eighteenth-century grammars

Date	Author	Title
1711	J. Greenwood	*An Essay towards a Practical English Grammar*
1762	J. Buchanan	*The British Grammar*
1767	W. Ward	*A Grammar of the English Language*
1769	R. Lowth	*A Short Introduction to English Grammar*
1769	J. Priestley	*The Rudiments of English Grammar*
1783	T. Sheridan	*A Rhetorical Grammar of the English Language*
1787	N. Webster	*A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*
1788	C. Coote	*Elements of the Grammar of the English Language*
1806	L. Murray	*English Grammar*
1810	W. Hazlitt	*New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue*
1819	W. Cobbett	*A Grammar of the English Language*

Appendix II Corpus of personal correspondence

Date	Short Title	abbr.	No. of Words
1630–1659			
1628–1632	*Barrington Family Letters*	Br	88,000
1630–1649	*Memoirs of the Verney Family I*	V1	60,000
1642–1650	*Memoirs of the Verney Family II*	V2	80,000
1650–1659	*Memoirs of the Verney Family III*	V3	90,000
1652–1653	*The Letters of Dorothy Osborne to William Temple*	Ob	40,000
		Sub-total	358,000
1660–1709			
1660–1695	*Memoirs of the Verney Family IV*	V4	90,000
1660–1709	*Hatton Correspondence*	Ht	57,000
1660–1709	*Haddock Correspondence*	Hd	17,000
1679–1680	*Some Unpublished Letters of Burnet, the Historian*	Bn	18,000
1697–1709	*Verney Letters of the Eighteenth Century I* (to p. 270)	V5	80,000
		Sub-total	262,000
1710–1759			
1710–1717	*Verney Letters of the Eighteenth Century I* (from p. 271)	V5	80,000
1714–1752	*Verney Letters of the Eighteenth Century II*	V6	100,000
1744–1746	*Private Correspondence between Chesterfield and Newcastle*	CN	57,000
		Sub-total	237,000
		Total	857,000

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