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A Historical Sociolinguistic Approach to the Development of Adjective Comparison in English: Synthetic and Analytic Patterns from 1418 to 1800

Aportaciones desde la Sociolingüística Histórica al Desarrollo del Adjetivo Comparativo en Inglés: Patrones Sintéticos y Analíticos desde el 1418 al 1800

Dª Tamara García Vidal

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University of Murcia

Tamara García Vidal

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Doctoral Thesis

Supervisors: Dr. Juan Manuel Hernández-Campoy and
Dr. Juan Camilo Conde-Silvestre

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Faculty of Arts

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To my parents

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Abstract

In Old English, the comparative system for adjectives was almost wholly inflectional (*-ra/-ost* from the Germanic suffixes **/iz/* and **/oz/*). As a result of the Viking wars and the subsequent settlement of native speakers of Old Norse, the introduction of new words and a simplification of the grammar started to take place. Due to the influence of French and Latin, some changes occur in Middle English. In the twentieth century, some controversies arose regarding the origins of the periphrastic forms. The number of aspects in the evolution of the English adjective comparison has either been considered controversial or uncompleted; since some authors consider that they come from an already existing native resource (Emerson, 1894; Mitchell, 1985; González-Díaz, 2008: 16) while others state that they entered into the synthetic English language by external influences (Pound, 1901; Mustanoja, 1960/2016: 280; Danchev, 1989). Thanks to the flourishing of computerised corpora, the interest in this phenomenon re-emerged in a number of studies on adjective comparison (Kytö, 1996; Kytö & Romaine, 1997, 2000; Lindquist, 2000). Therefore, scholarly interest in the English adjective comparative system has grown recently, paying particular attention to phonological and morphological factors as the reasons for the difference in distribution and use between inflectional and periphrastic comparative forms mostly from a synchronic perspective. In the diachronic practice, none of the morpho-syntactic studies have focused on the mechanisms of adjective comparative formation from a historical sociolinguistic perspective – with the exception on the distribution of comparative linguistic forms in different American and British English text types

by Kytö and Romaine (2000) and the socio-stylistic analysis of double comparatives by González-Díaz (2004, 2006b, 2008: 159–172).

The current study explores developmental processes of synthetic and analytic mechanisms in English for the construction of the adjective comparison from a historical-sociolinguistic perspective. The main aim is to account for the evolution of adjective comparison in English from 1418 to 1800 in private letters collected from the *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (PCEEC) and the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extension* (CEECE) according to socio-extralinguistic factors such as social status of the informant and recipient, gender and age in order to trace the development of the use between the inflected, periphrastic and double forms from this historical-sociolinguistic perspective. Therefore, my main interest is in the detection of evidence of socio-linguistic variation between these comparative forms in English by undertaking a variationist investigation. Moreover, a further analysis has been also carried out to explore intra-speaker variation by applying current sociolinguistic theories such as Bell's models of Audience Design (1984, 2001) so as to find out possible addressee-based patterns and motivations for style-shifting in the communicative interaction of our informants, regarding the social status of the addresser and the addressee during Early/Late Middle English.

Results suggest that there is gender and social-status variation in the use of the periphrastic form along the centuries, showing higher rates in letters by members from upper social orders, which indicates a generational change from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Furthermore, the observation of intra-speaker variation to our data from historical written correspondence has allowed us to detect addressee-based patterns of style-shifting in the communicative interaction of our informants. This reflects language choice for the transmission of social meaning in epistolary communication, exhibiting upward accommodation in letters by members from lower ranks when addressed to upper-rank recipients by showing higher rates of the periphrastic comparative form.

Keywords: adjective comparison; inflected/periphrastic comparatives; language contact; historical sociolinguistics; inter-/intra-speaker variation; corpus linguistics.

Introduction

The English language has two main resources for the expression of comparison to a higher degree in adjectives: by the inflected suffix *-er* (*taller*) or with the periphrastic form *more* (*more productive*). Moreover, a third mode of comparison is also found in some non-standard dialects: these are double comparatives (*more better*), which are ignored in most grammars of English for being considered as grammatical mistakes and avoided in the standard variety. Thus far, most of the research concerning the analysis of the English adjective comparison has either focused on the history of the inflectional form and the gradual development of the periphrastic one, or on the motivations for comparative alternation between synthetic and analytic mechanisms. However, most of these studies are synchronically-oriented, which focus mainly on linguistic processes (word-length, phonotactics, frequency, cognitive, semantic, pragmatic, phonetic or syntactic factors) conditioning the user's choice of the alternative comparative forms *more/-er*. Thanks to the flourishing of digitalised corpora and the development of corpus linguistics, scholarly interest in the English adjective comparative system has grown recently, paying particular attention to the comparative strategy choice from a diachronic perspective, relying on historical data compiled for the research on the evolution of the English language. The origins and motivations for the application of the new analytic formation have given rise to debate. The Norman Conquest not only brought the Anglo-Saxon lineage to an end, but also led to a sociolinguistic situation of multilingualism in medieval England with high contact among English, French and Latin. Thus, some authors consider that periphrastic formation of

comparison entered into English by means of external influences, mainly Latin and French (Kytö, 1996; Kytö & Romaine, 2000), while others state that they stemmed from an already existing native resource (Mitchell, 1985; González-Díaz, 2008). However, in this diachronic practice, none of the morpho-syntactic studies have paid attention to the mechanisms of adjective comparative formation from a historical sociolinguistic perspective, with the exception on the distribution of comparative linguistic forms in different American and British English text types by Kytö and Romaine (2000) and the socio-stylistic analysis of double comparatives by González-Díaz (2004, 2006b, 2008: 159–172).

The present work intends to contribute to a fuller understanding of the evolution of adjective comparison in English from a historical-sociolinguistic perspective, which has not been accounted yet in previous literature. It mainly deals with the whole range of comparative structures (inflected, periphrastic and double forms), thus providing a complete historical-sociolinguistic analysis on adjective comparison. With this purpose, the analyses carried out investigate the development of the inflected, periphrastic and double comparative patterns according to extra-sociolinguistic factors to detect evidence of socio-linguistic variation between the forms of the comparative morpho-syntactic variable for English adjectives in private letters extracted from the tagged version of the *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (henceforth PCEEC) (Nurmi *et al*. 2006) and the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extension* (henceforth CEECE) (Nevalainen *et al*. 2000–). The historical correspondence used for this study covers the periods from 1418 to 1800 and they have proved to be particularly useful since they yield information on events of a particular period as well as personal information on the informants and addressees, providing us with the possibility of tracing socio-linguistic variation and studying language change from a historical sociolinguistic perspective. In exploring the sociolinguistic behaviour of informants over prolonged periods of time, private letters, written by members of several generations from the same community of practice, social rank or family, have been considered as one of the closest genres to oral registers (Romaine, 1998: 18). Furthermore, private letters are enormously useful as a linguistic resource for tracing linguistic variation and reconstructing socio-linguistic behaviour of speakers at the macro-level to explore how changes in progress spread cross-sectionally and longitudinally (paying attention to macro-sociological aspects such as social rank, age, gender, etc.) and at the micro-level by studying the linguistic behaviour of individual speakers (see Eckert & McConnel-Ginet, 1992; Kopaczyk & Jucker, 2013). Therefore, the analysis of English adjective comparative forms across extralinguistic factors have proved to be crucial to give an accurate picture of the sociolinguistic development of these linguistic variants across centuries.

In consonance with these claims, the present study examines the comparative linguistic variants in English according to extra-linguistic factors such as gender, social rank and age correlated with the syllable-length and etymology of the adjective in order to investigate to what extent these socio-demographic parameters could have had an influence in the use of the inflected, periphrastic and double forms. Moreover, a further analysis has also been carried out to explore intra-speaker variation by applying current sociolinguistic theories such as Bell's models of Audience Design (1984, 2001) so as to find out possible addressee-based patterns and motivations for style-shifting in the communicative interaction of our informants, regarding the social status of the addresser and the addressee during Early/Late Middle English. The present work consists of seven chapters:

Chapter 1 (*The adjective comparative system: historical background*) gives an overview of the adjective comparative system from a historical perspective, focusing on the main theories attested for the comparative alternation between inflected and periphrastic forms. Moreover, the chapter also explores the different hypotheses about the origin and development of the periphrastic comparative variant and double forms along with the theories attested so far about the factors conditioning comparative alternation from a synchronic and diachronic perspective.

Chapter 2 (*Sociolinguistics and historical sociolinguistics*) presents an all-encompassing review on the development of sociolinguistics and historical sociolinguistics as the disciples within this study is framed, describing the main methodological problems arose in historical sociolinguistics due to the fragmentation of the data and lack of representativeness. However, to sort out these methodological problems and to ensure a good use of this *bad data* (Labov, 1994: 11), the main solutions that have been provided for an accurate analysis of historical material are also analysed and described, such as the *uniformitarian principle* or *the historical and gender paradoxes*. Mainly, these solutions allude also to the discipline of social history for the reconstruction of the historical context of the data analysed along with the discipline of corpus linguistics, which provides the researcher with a great deal of historical material that have been preserved to date. This digitalised historical data has permitted the researcher to study language change in earlier periods and it even gives the opportunity to map and contrast several linguistic variants correlated with extra-linguistic factors in different diachronic stages. Moreover, thanks to the use of digitalised archival records, the researcher can show the reconstruction of a linguistic change quantitatively or qualitatively, which also leads to the possibility of reanalysing changes considering modern sociolinguistic approaches (Conde-Silvestre, 2012a: 182–183).

Chapter 3 (*Language variation and change*) is devoted to the review of the major principles attested in language variation and change derived from sociolinguistic and historical sociolinguistic studies. It also deals with the main sociolinguistic universals that the discipline of synchronic sociolinguistics has reached, such as the *curvilinear hypothesis*, *changes from above and changes from below* and *over-covert prestige patterns* as well as other sociolinguistic patterns considered as linguistic changes associated with age and time, such as *lifespan change*, *generational change* or *age-grading*.

Chapter 4 (*Objectives*) outlines and justifies the main goals of the present study which have been advanced before, related to the correlation between the development of the linguistic comparative forms in English and the main extra-linguistic factors such as gender, social rank and age.

With regard to Chapter 5 (*Methodology*), it mainly describes the methodological procedure carried out in this study for the historical sociolinguistic analysis of the comparative variants, providing an account on the dependent and independent variables used along with a thorough description of the historical corpora used (PCEEC and CEECE). Moreover, the data selection procedure and instruments employed are also described as well as the methodological considerations for the data analysis and the correlations carried out among gender, social rank, age and social ranked Audience Design.

Results and interpretation of data are presented in Chapter 6 (*Analysis and interpretation of data*) which is divided into four main sections. The periods covered in the analyses were divided into ninety-nine-year cohort with the exception of the first one (eighty-two-year period) since it is the starting point of the first letter including comparative adjectives in the PCEEC. First, the results from the analysis of the comparative forms with gender are presented. Second, results from the distribution of the data into social ranks are provided. The data have been further analysed in accordance with gender to find out differences in linguistic usage when analysing the evolution of the inflected and periphrastic comparative variants, and particular attention has also been paid to the etymological origin and number of syllables of the adjectives used for comparison in each gender-based social rank. Within this section, a distribution and analysis of double comparatives is provided according to social ranks. Another subsection is also included to show results from the analysis of social ranked Audience Design, which explores intra-speaker variation to seek for possible addressee-based patterns of style-shifting in the communicative interaction of informants from different social orders. Third, results from the analysis of both inflected and periphrastic comparative forms from the sociolinguistic perspective of age are presented. This is carried out by applying real-time and apparent-time

analyses to see any possible differences in linguistic behaviour generation after generation. The last section of this chapter offers a micro-level examination of the periphrastic form according to gender and social rank during the eighteenth century (CEECE) with a division of 20-year sub-periods.

Finally, Chapter 7 (*Conclusion*) presents the main theoretical and methodological conclusions drawn from the analyses previously carried out in Chapter 6. This chapter attempts to summarise the main ideas and interpretations in this study which can help understand the development of the English comparative system from a historical-sociolinguistic perspective. Last but not least, follow up-research is also provided for future avenues of research within this field.

Chapter 1
The Adjective Comparative System: Historical Background

[...] and againe finding me more submissive then formerly makes him more severar then usuall he hath been, but I am resolved to endure whatever come with patience till Chrismas, if it be your pleasure to let me continue so long [...].

(CEECE, from Roger Fleming to Sir Daniel Fleming, 1692)

1.1. Historical perspective of English adjective comparison: from synthetic to analytic comparison in English

The English language offers two different means of forming the degree of comparison in adjectives: the use of the synthetic/inflectional form *-er* ('stronger') or the use of an analytic/periphrastic form *more* ('more beautiful'). The issue of adjective comparison in English has been studied in many grammars of contemporary English (see e.g. Quirk *et al*. 1985) and also in books about the history of English (Blake, 1992; Lass, 1999; Kytö, Rydén & Smitterberg, 2006; and Barber, Beal & Shaw, 1993/2009). Thus far, great amount of the research dealing with the English adjective comparison has either focused on the history of inflectional comparison and the gradual introduction of English periphrastic constructions or on the motivations for variation between synthetic and analytic mechanisms to construct the comparative adjective in English. Given that diachronic studies rely on historical data, much of the information compiled for the research on the evolution of the English adjective comparison comes from historical written corpora due to the lack of oral corpora from the past. Accordingly, as Hernández-Campoy and Schilling point out:

> The most important disadvantage of datasets of historical documents is that they very often lack representativeness and possibly also validity, since, [...] the historical record is incomplete, and written materials may or may not be reflective of the spoken language of the time period under study.
>
> (Hernández-Campoy & Schilling, 2012: 66)

Consequently, in this type of research, the historical linguist has to be able "to make the best of this bad data, 'bad' in the sense thats it may be fragmentary, corrupted, or many times removed from the actual productions of native speakers" (Labov, 1972: 98).

During the Old English period (450–1150) (henceforth OE), the adjective comparative system was roughly inflectional: generally, the comparative had an -(*o*)*ra* ending suffix which derived from the Germanic suffixes */*oza*/ and */*iza*/, showing the procecess of umlaut, as it comes from the West Germanic group of languages, inheriting their highly inflected language system. With regard to the adjective system, one of the main important features in Germanic languages is the development of a twofold declension of the adjective: the strong (inherited from Proto-Indo-European) and weak declension (Germanic innovation). The former one is used when the noun is not accompanied by a modifier (such as demonstrative, numeral, definite article, and possessive adjective) and the latter declension is used when the noun is preceded by such a word (Baugh & Cable, 1951/2002: 51–52). To show degree, adjectives are also inflected in OE (and in Modern English). While the positive degree is unmarked, the comparative and the superlative degrees for comparison do show inflected forms: -*ra* generally for the comparative and -*ost* for the superlative. These forms have survived as -*er* and -*est*. As noticed by Hogg (1992: 141), the normal method to compare adjectives was through suffixation with the periphrastic form being quite rare and more restricted to later texts. Furthermore, some OE grammars do not deal with the analytic form of adjectives for the comparative; such is the case of Quirk and Wrenn (1955: 34), who only mention the existence of the synthetic form of adjective comparison in OE: "[t]he comparative ends in -*ra* and is declined on the definite pattern; the superlative ends in -*ost*(*a*), -(*e*)*st*(*a*) and is also declined on the definite pattern except often for the n. sg. masc. and fem. and n. a. sg. neut.".

From the beginning of the Middle English period onward (1150–1500)[1] (henceforth

[1] Since the nineteenth century, the history of English has traditionally been divided into four historical periods (Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English and Modern English), each of them spanning several centuries. However, the issue of periodisation in the history of the English language has brought into debate some of the most prominent historical linguists (such as Norman Blake, Manfred Görlach or Roger Lass), dating back to Jacob Grimm (early nineteenth century). According to Curzan (2017: 11), "[p]eriodization relies on similar idealizations about the coherence of a particular chronological period, as well as the ability to categorize

ME),[2] the synthetic variant for adjective comparison in English (*-er*) has been competing with the innovative analytic form (*more*). As Lass stated (1999: 156–157), it is during the last part of the ME period when a noticeable rise in the use of periphrastic forms arose in the English language, resulting in complementary distribution with suffixation. Moreover, he continues asserting that during the ME period "textual evidence and grammarians' comments suggest that analytic and synthetic comparison were simple alternatives, with little if any conditioning" (1999: 157). Despite struggling for many centuries towards a more analytical syntax, the majority of the comparative forms in Modern English are inflected (Kytö & Romaine, 1997: 331–335). During the Early Modern English period (1500–1700) (henceforth EModE), these two variants for the construction of the English comparative adjective competed quite consistently, although, by late Modern English (1700–1900), inflectional forms outnumbered the periphrastic ones.

Among all the parts of speech, adjectives have been attested to show the greatest changes from OE to ME in their fully inflectional system. The adjective system in ME shows the effect of vowel reduction and the change to a more analytic grammar in both the strong and weak declension. Regarding the comparative and superlative systems, the OE inflected suffixes *-ra* and *-ost* changed to -(*e*)*re* (and later to *-er*) and *-est* respectively, but from the 1300 onwards, the forms *more* and *most*/*mest* started to be more frequent in written records and more common with one- or two- syllable adjectives (Brinton & Arnovick, 2006/2011: 284–285).

The distinction between *connatural* and *abnatural* changes established by Bailey (1982) was intended to highlight the endogenous/exogenous nature of linguistic processes affecting the development of languages and their possible teleological dimension (see also Trudgill, 1978, 1983a, 1989a, 1989b; and Lass, 1997: 104–267). As a result, some forms of

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linguistic features/change into binary categories that correspond to a chronological boundary". However, language implies variation and the imposition of artificial schemas or the idealisation of the division of the history of a language may involve some limitations. The majority of the critiques of periodisation have mainly focused on "how historical periods are represented in histories of English and the potential misleading implications of named historical periods" (Curzan, 2017: 11). Among the main outstanding critiques, we find that of Fisiak (1994: 47), who claimed that periods in the history of English are justified by "such vague notions as 'convenience' […] 'clarity of presentation', 'pedagogical' or other unspecified 'advantages'". In short, many of these scholars claimed that the division of the history of English into periods may create the impression that the language was stable during those periods and changes were not so dramatic, since language change occurs continually and gradually.

[2] Some of the first developments that distinguish ME date back to the tenth century, but a proper consideration on the matter evinces that 1150 is the date that demarcates the boundary.

linguistic change may be relatively *natural* in the sense that they are likely to take place autochthonously in linguistic systems, at all times, and without external stimulus because of their inherent complexion itself. However, other types of linguistic changes may be relatively *unnatural* as a result of language contact, since they are not due to the inherent character of language systems, but rather to processes that occur in particular sociolinguistic situations (see Weinreich, 1953; Trudgill, 1983b, 1986, 1999; Wright & Kelly, 1995; Thomason, 2001; Holm, 2004; Miestamo, Sinnemäki & Karlsson, 2008; Hickey, 2010; or Askedal *et al*. 2015). As the history of languages suggests, contact between different language varieties has a crucially important effect on development (route and rate) of linguistic change and diffusion. For instance, Danish and Faroese are paradigmatic examples of high-contact and low-contact languages respectively. Although both languages descended from a common ancestor (Old Norse), they have undergone a different linguistic evolution through time and now differ quite remarkably (Trudgill, 1989a, 1989b).

Due to the spread of Christianity and the Norman Conquest there was a sociolinguistic situation of multilingualism in the Middle Ages with high-contact among English, French and Latin. Latin acquired a prominent position, being the language of religion, education and culture, used mainly as a high language (H). French was the official language, the language of the king, his court and the nobility. As for English, it was considered a low language (L), socially stigmatised and spoken principally by peasants or labourers. Thus, the linguistic ecology (Haugen, 1972) of medieval England showed the coexistence of several languages in a speech community (Machan, 2003: 1–20). Consequently, the linguistic picture of the English language resulted in some variation and change due to language transfer and language contact. The *abnatural* changes undergone in high-contact situations with long-term accommodation are mainly based on *simplification*: change from synthetic to analytic structure, decrease in redundancy, proliferation in regularity, and an increase of hybrid forms – as interlanguage in Selinker's sense (1972), and usually found in pidgins, creoles, creoloids and koinés. Contrarily, in low language contact situations, with short-term accommodation and *connatural* changes, the processes taking place are based on *complication*: movement from analytic to synthetic structure, general increase in redundancy and irregularity, as in decreolisations.

During the twelfth century, the linguistic situation in English describes three main social groups (see Figure 1.1). Among the upper social orders, we could find cases of individual bilingualism in native Englishmen and in situations of contact between the ruling elite and English traders who belonged to the middle social rank. However, English was still

the language of the greater part of the population so speakers of French may have shown at least a passive command of English just contrary to what happened to members from lower classes: they could understand French but they could not speak it properly. Therefore, this reflected a situation of social subordinate bilingualism of a diglossic character: social, because a large part of the population could have been bilingual; subordinate, because not everybody could have possessed the ability to speak in English and French so it was possibly unequal; and diglossic, because any of the languages spoken was associated to a specific social class and the shift between them could have depended on the social factors and context of the speaker (Iglesias Rábade, 1992: 88–90; Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 1998: 5).

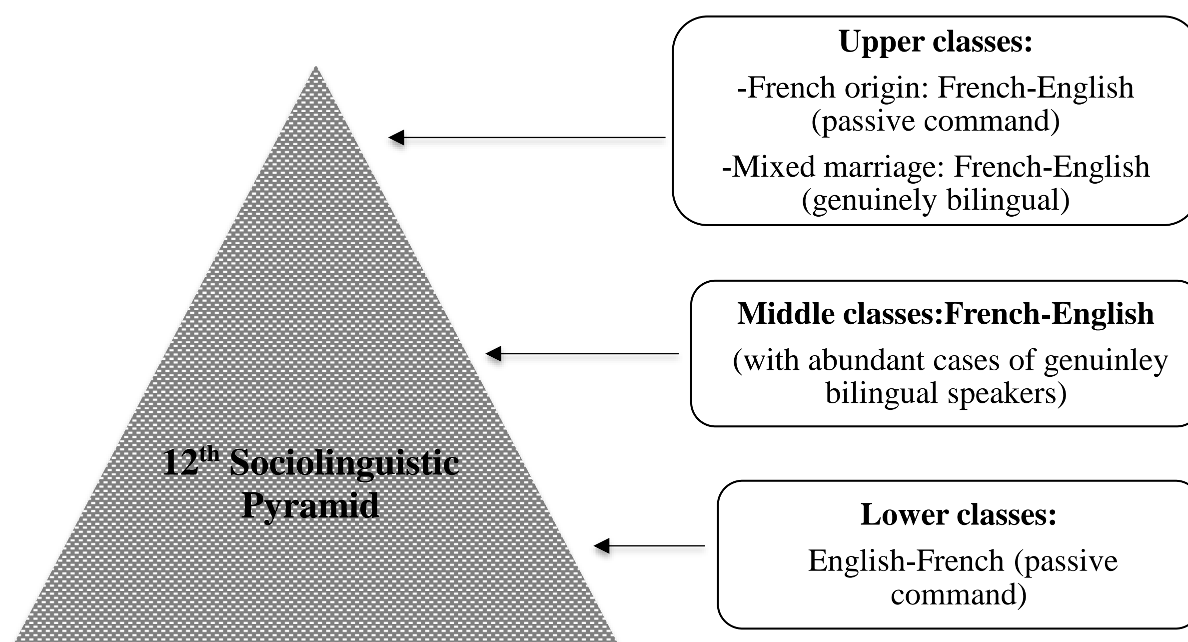

Figure 1.1. Sociolinguistic situation in England during the twelfth century (adapted from Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 1998: 5)

During this period, far-reaching consequences that followed the Norman Conquest (1066) would have affected the vocabulary and grammar of the English language, mainly due to the influence of French and Latin, being the most notorious the change from a highly inflected language to a remarkably analytic one.[3]

The Medieval period in England left its mark in the history of the English language because of the greatest cultural and linguistic changes that took place. This assumption has been attested in many available records which corroborate the exact dates when the influence

[3] By showing convincing statistics, Fries (1940: 201, 204–205) asserted that the change was complete by 1500.

of French on English was at its highest. A statistical study carried out by Baugh (1935) shows the amount of French loanwords that were introduced in English during this period. It illustrates that after the Conquest, the amount of French words was very low. However, it was during the middle of the twelfth century when a slight increase in French loanwords can be observed, which becomes much more significant from 1200 to 1250, and greater after 1250, culminating at the end of the fourteenth century. Quite noticeable is the sharp drop of the amount of French words introduced into English during the fifteenth century. Therefore, this conclusive study mirrors the gradual adoption of romance-based words into English from 1251 to 1550.

During EModE, following the study of Wermser (1976: 45), Görlach (1991: 166–167) stated that the greatest introduction of Romance loanwords into the English language took place from 1510 to 1674, although more significantly from 1560 to 1574. Among them, the most notable ones are illustrated in Table 1.1. The most noteworthy number of loanwords introduced during this period was from Latin (54.4%) and French (31.8%). This evidence clearly emphasises the shaping of the English language mainly from ME to EModE due to this great amount of influence from languages such as Latin and French. As mentioned before, this is clearly attested in the English comparative system as well, with no clear-cut discrimination whatsoever in the use of synthetic or analytic comparative patterns at the time. As Barber, Beal & Shaw (1993/2009: 60) stated, this situation could have reflected the "confused situation" which developed after the introduction of the new analytical system for comparing adjectives. In consonance with this assumption, Hickey (2012: 387–407) aptly reasons that some internal or external factors must take place for linguist change to occur in a language, suggesting that the new linguistic patterns are more salient and marked during this process of change. Thus, the great upsurge of periphrastic forms in English may represent the influence of French acting as an external factor which fosters the spread of this form in so far as it was considered more salient than the native English inflectional counterparts. The influence of French *plus/le plus* and Latin *magis* may have favoured the rise and development of the periphrastic construction (Pound, 1901; Kytö, 1996; Kytö & Romaine, 1997; Terasawa, 2003; González-Díaz, 2008: 51–73; Mustanoja, 1960/2016: 279–281). The use of the periphrastic form for the construction of the comparative degree in English has been attested to become available in the fourteenth century.

Table 1.1. The Sources of EModE Borrowings (adapted from Görlach, 1991: 167, based on Wermser, 1976: 45)

Periods	**Latin**	**Greek**	**French**	**Italian**	**Spanish**	**Dutch**	**Other**	
							European	**Overseas**
1510-1524	47.8%	0.6%	40.7%	0.9%	0.9%	3.4%	5.3%	0.3%
1560-1574	54.4%	3.8%	31.8%	2.4%	1.4%	1.8%	2.8%	1.7%
1610-1624	60.7%	5.2%	19.3%	2.3%	2.6%	1.3%	1.7%	6.9%
1660-1674	57.7%	5.9%	22.5%	3.1%	1.4%	1.4%	3.4%	4.6%
1710-1724	37.9%	6.9%	25.7%	14.2%	1.7%	1.7%	6.6%	5.2%

During that time, short and long adjectives were indistinctively compared with the synthetic or the periphrastic forms, so they were free to adopt any form. During the EModE period, the development from a synthetic to an analytic grammar is reinforced, and particularly the periphrastic form widespread, resulting in the appearance of *double forms* or *double comparatives*, a combination of both synthetic and analytic forms together to express comparative or superlative degree: *the most fairest*, *more bigger* (see section 1.2). During the end of the EModE period, prescriptive tendencies tended to wipe out variation from the imposition of a standard language, establishing and disapproving certain grammatical patterns. In the realm of the morphology of adjective comparison, both mechanisms for the formation of comparative and superlative degrees were used indistinctively: *more beautiful*/*beautifuller*. Moreover, as Jonson (1640/1928) stated in *The English Grammar*, the use of both forms together would appear for the sake of emphasis, as it is noticed in his own reflection on the matter in the following quotation (*the most ancientest*):

> [T]hese adverbs, *more* and *most* are added to the comparative and superlative degrees themselves, which should be before the positive […] And this is a certain kind of English Atticisme or eloquent phrase of speech, imitating the manner of the ***most ancientest*** and finest Grecians, who, for more emphasis and vehemencies sake used so to speak.

It was not until the eighteenth century when prescriptive tendencies codified the use of one and another: synthetic forms were restricted to monosyllabic and disyllabic adjectives ending in *-er*, *-y* or syllabic consonant, whereas analytic forms were used with adjectives of more than two syllables and with disyllabic ones ending in *-d*, *-ed*, *-ent*, *-ful*, *-ing*.

Present-day English (1900 up to the present) still presents variation between both synthetic and analytic mechanism for the formation of the comparative degree but to a lesser

extent. By and large, among the main rules for the formation of comparatives in English are the following (Quirk *et al*. 1985: 458, 461–463; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 533–534):

a) The choice between the inflectional or analytic mechanism to form the comparison degree in English depends mainly on the length of the adjective: monosyllabic adjectives tend to take *-er* (*stronger*) although many disyllabic adjectives can also take inflections (*easier*), and some others can take both inflectional and periphrastic forms (*clever*/*more clever*). As for longer adjectives (three syllables or more) the periphrastic form is the only option (*more beautiful*, but not **beautifuller*).

b) Participle forms used as adjectives take also the periphrastic form (*more interesting*/ *more bored*).

c) Most inflected adjectives in comparison can also take the periphrastic form when we are comparing two qualities or in predicative position when they are followed by a -than clause (see example 1):

(1) "Don't you think Carl was brave to go bungee jumping?" "Personally, I thought he was ***more mad*** than ***brave***" (Hewings, 2005: 144)

Similar descriptive accounts on the formation of the comparative system were presented in the grammars of the early twentieth century (e.g. Jespersen, 1909/1956; Poutsma, 1914; Curme, 1931). While precise, these accounts seem perhaps too general when studying the English comparative in depth. A further problem associated with these grammars is that they are based on the perceptions or textual choice of the linguist. However, several recent grammars of English address some of these issues. For instance, Biber *et al*. (1999) acknowledge the existence of double comparative forms. During the second half of the twentieth century, scholarly interest in the English comparative system grew considerably. As González-Díaz reasons (2008: 2), these studies attempted to ascertain whether comparative adjectives are the result of one or two base strings, analysing the syntactic status of the *than*-phrase in adjective comparative structures or the general meaning of the comparative constructions (Huddleston, 1967; Campbell & Wales, 1969; Hankamer, 1973; Klein, 1980, 1982; Hellan, 1981; Von Stechow, 1984).

1.2. The historical development of double comparatives

This competition between the inflected and the periphrastic forms to construct the comparative in English resulted in a hybrid form based on the combination of the two variants together, that is, using the particles *more* and *most* together with the inflectional adjective endings -*er* and -*est*. Thus, multiple or double comparatives[4] (*more stronger*) emanate from the result of a process of language change in which two variants of a single variable coexisted together at the same time. Thus, English allows double comparison in which both the suffix and the adverb are used together for a single predicate. Consequently, there were three forms of adjective comparison during the ME and EModE periods: inflected, periphrastic and double forms. According to Kytö and Romaine (1997: 330–331), simple periphrastic forms appeared in the thirteenth century, and these, together with the old inflectional forms, foster one more option in the system. It is worth noting at this point that despite the fact that double comparison is considered non-standard in Modern English, it was primarily used by the upper ranks of society and educated people (González-Díaz, 2008). Some years later, Kytö and Romaine (2000) also analysed how the development of new periphrastic forms triggered the introduction of another option in the system: multiple and double comparatives and superlatives: *more faster*, *most fastest*. They point out that most of them are periphrastic in nature, hence the name *double periphrastic comparison*. These can be found in a limited number of words such as *lesser*, *worser*, *more better,* etc. (2000: 192). However, these double forms have always been marginal: "[a]lthough once used in the literary language, they gradually disappeared from the written language under the influence of standardisation" (Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 173). Therefore, due to the influence of standardisation and modern grammarians, they gradually disappeared from standard written English, and today, these forms are most likely to be found in colloquial registers of spoken English.

González-Díaz's study on double comparatives is considered the most detailed and profound to date, accounting for the evolution of double forms and socio-stylistic distribution in EModE. In her analysis of data from the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (Cameron *et al*. 1981), González-Díaz's (2008: 137–158) reveals that double comparatives could have already appeared in OE (in texts from the second half of the ninth century), which may have been formed by the combination of the adverbial intensifiers *ma*, *bet* and *swiþor*, along with participles adjectives in positive degree*: ma wyrse* (more worse), *mare heare* (more higher), *swiðor bettra* (more better). As she stated (2008: 137): "[o]ne may argue that […] the use of a

[4] This phenomenon has received different names, such as *double*, *pleonastic* and *hybrid forms* (Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 192).

double comparative in the OE rendering is the result of the translator's intention to create a perfect structural correlation between the English translation and the Latin original" although "these examples are too limited to draw any definitive conclusions, yet one may suggest that the coming into the language of the double periphrastic forms may have been a native process". However, the scarcity of double comparatives in OE contrasts with its larger distribution in ME (Pound, 1901: 53). Along with periphrastic comparison, it has been claimed that double comparatives peaked during the Late ME period (Mossé, 1952: 92). Following this line of reasoning, González-Díaz (2008: 138–142), also noticed that these hybrid forms were not very common in the language until Late ME. Moreover, she has found that they were used according to a number of linguistic factors. She also came across that double forms of comparison were more frequent with a second term of comparison (2008: 142). Furthermore, double comparatives in Middle and Late Modern English combined with amplifiers of the subtype of *boosters* (such as *much*, *slightly* or *a bit*), which denoted a high degree or a high point in a scale, e.g. *much more sharper/ a bit more meatier*. A different view on the rise of double comparatives in ME and their development is given by Wlodarczyk (2007). Following Dresssler, Dziubalska-Koaczyk and Spina's notions of *hypercharacterisation* (2001),[5] Wlodarczyk attributes the appearence and continous use of double comparatives to this general morphological rule, viewed as an example of regularisation. In this view, an original marker is conceived as exceptional and unproductive and productivity is constrained to the new marker. Thus, she identifies that:

> [T]he functional load of a given category is shifted from the latter to the former marker (as it could have happened if *-er* had shifted to *more*). It is clear, nevertheless, that hypercharacterisation in D[ouble] C[omparatives] is and has been of a different kind as at any point following the periphrastic innovation, both morphological comparative markers have been productive and none of them may be viewed as exceptional or more marked. Also, diachronically, the more plausible

[5] The concept of *hypercharacterisation* is understood as a phenomenon of regularisation in language. Thus, Wlodarczyk (2007: 200–201) applies the concept of hypercharacterisation to double comparatives by suggesting that "one morphological marker is reinforced by a second marker". She continues adding that "Lehmann proposes that double comparatives may be viewed as being "hypercharacterized by the adverb *more* combining with a morphological comparative form" (2005: 135). In order to account for the "double exponency" of DC, it is accepted here, after Lehmann (2005), that hypercharacterisation is a specific type of pleonasm. Pleonasm is a semantic notion with diverse structural manifestations defined by its redundancy and the semantic similarity of its constituents. If it occurs at the level of grammar, as in DC, it may be viewed as a grammaticalised manifestation of hypercharacterisation (Lehmann 2005: 134)".

> outcome of the proposed derivation would be similar to the development of forms such as *children* and *brethren* in English (cf. Lehmann, 2005), following the loss of productivity or the exceptional nature of the original marker. As none of developments typical for hypercharacterisation as described by Dressler, Dziubalska and Spina (2001) is observed in the diachrony of English adjective comparison, González-Díaz's proposal has to be rejected as invalid also for the origins of D[ouble] C[omparatives].
>
> (Wlodarczyk, 2007: 200)

Therefore, she alludes to externally-oriented explanations for the appearance and use of double comparatives as another option in adjective gradation, which has been "prevented from becoming an obligatory part of standard grammar as a consequence of the particularly strong influence of economy as a 'hard' constraint, the preference for uniform coding and the arguments against pleonasm and tautology" (2007: 214).

As mentioned above, the decrease of this type of adjective comparison started in EModE due to the influence of standardisation and prescriptive tendencies. Furthermore, Kytö and Romaine (1997) have been able to show that the low evidences of double forms in their study was probably caused by the influence of standardisation around the eighteenth century, as it was the period of the proliferation of English grammars, attempting to codify a standard English and hence treating double comparatives as a non-standard construction. Since the phenomenon of double comparison was neither mentioned nor described in Latin grammars, it is not surprising that the English grammars also started to neglect double forms of comparison, such is the case of Bullokar's first *English Grammar* (1586). However, it was mentioned and described in subsequent English grammars like Jonson's (1640/1928) as a feature of high style.

Additionally, in her study González-Díaz (2008: 158) also found that these double forms were mostly used in contexts in which a more emphatic meaning is portrayed during ME and EModE. Furthermore, she has also remarked that in ME, the appearance of *even* in phrases may have had an influence on the loss of double forms (as in '*her incomes shall be even higher next month*'), since the combination of this phrase with simple periphrastic comparatives shows an accurate paraphrase of the meaning of double forms. An important factor as far as double forms are concerned, is that, in OE, writers tried to resort to their native language when translating Latin religious texts. Therefore, double forms were restricted only to religious texts. Hence, double forms were not colloquial (2008: 161). Taking into consideration this issue, González-Díaz carried out a socio-stylistic analysis of these double forms in the *The Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* and in the *Helsinki Corpus of*

English Texts (Rissanen *et al*. 1991) and she found that double forms appeared to be a current feature of upper-ranked speech in ME and EModE. By the Restoration period, the attitude to English started to change and some scholars believed in the communicative possibilities of the English language and, consequently, Latin was gradually replaced by English.

González-Díaz (2004, 2006b, 2007, 2008) also looked for double forms in drama texts and she found that in EModE they were also associated to upper-ranked speech. Consider, for example, Shakespeare's lines in example (2), an extract from *King Lear* (1605) (González-Díaz, 2004: 190):

(2) Cordelia: "Then poore Cordelia, and yet not so, since I am sure. My loue's ***more richer*** then my tongue".

González-Díaz (2007: 242) asserts that double comparison might be employed for rhythm or metrical constraints since the clause includes one more syllable than its simple counterpart. However, she reckons that this could not have been the only reason for using double comparatives since double forms occurred in relation to other linguistic features associated with elevated style. González-Díaz (2006b: 629–30) states that "previous scholarship has suggested that reduplication is a means of word formation that manifests a measure of iconicity", suggesting that double forms are "more suitable than either of its simple counterparts for conveying a high intensity of comparison". However, in the works of younger EModE dramatists we could start noticing that double forms were clearly used in non-elevated styles. Particularly well known is the evident use of double forms in Shakespeare's plays (Blake, 2002: 46–47, 154), associated to high styles (González-Díaz, 2004: 192) which contrasts with claims made by early modern grammarians (Greaves, 1594/1969; Butler, 1633), suggesting its avoidance since they were not grammatically accepted, and hence, preventing them from becoming standard. During the end of the sixteenth century, people from the upper social ranks started to neglect the use of an *artificial style* in speech, that is Euphuism, and by the 1590s double comparative forms had completely disappeared. Nevertheless, these forms spread amongst lower social ranks. Therefore, members from upper social orders started to see them as unappealing and related them to an illiterate style. Hence, double forms for comparison became stigmatised amongst the upper social ranks (González-Díaz, 2004: 197). González-Díaz explains the situation by resorting to the *invisible-hand theory*:

> Those speakers using double forms would be considered "insiders" (i.e. belonging to the (upper class) group) whereas those who did not use them would be branded as "outsiders". It is at this point that the invisible-hand process operates: the positive social value attributed to the double comparatives led to its imitation and subsequent propagation down the social strata.
>
> (González-Díaz, 2004: 201–202)

Thus, double forms underwent a change in their socio-stylistic distribution during the EModE and hence, they spread amongst the lower social ranks fostering the rejection by the upper ones. In line with this, Kytö (1996) points that no instances of double forms can be found from the seventeenth century onwards in the *Helsinki Corpus*. Hence, they started to disappear from the educated spheres around the 1620s and the process of standardisation reinforced the social downgrading of these forms. The reason why the upper social ranks and the educated people started to use the double periphrastic comparison is unclear by now. González-Díaz (2004: 201, 2006b: 649, 2008: 157) states that, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), "more and more of the same form implies more of the same meaning", that is, double comparison should be considered to be more emphatic, more explicit than the simple counterparts. However, it only applies to some examples from the Middle and Late Modern English periods, since from Late Modern English onwards the comparative force is similar to the simple comparison. However, Kytö and Romaine (2000: 173) state, that the double comparison has been outnumbered by the simple inflectional and periphrastic at all times. To conclude her study, González-Díaz (2008: 212–3) states that since double comparison can be seen as redundant or as an accidental combination of the simple inflectional and periphrastic forms, the first instances of double comparison may have not been given any distinctive functional load. However, she points out that they seem to have been suitable for environments where particular emphasis was needed. Yet, there have always been issues of register and style linked to double comparison.

All in all, these changes may reflect the state of the English language at the time and probably the result of a reorganisation of the comparative system, which gradually disappeared from standard written English. However, despite the effects of the standardisation process and their absence from historical data after the second half of the seventeenth century (Kytö & Romaine, 1997), double comparatives are present today in many English varieties of English, including some creoles (Romaine, 2005). Moreover, it has also been identified that double comparatives are used frequently in many English dialects of Britain as described in non-standard grammars (Edwards & Weltens, 1985: 117) as well as in other varieties of English spoken in the whole world, whose distribution may also be associated in some cases

with differences in social status (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 1998: 337). Today, although ungrammatical in standard English and not considered in many standard English grammars (such as Quirk *et al*. 1985) double forms are most likely to be found in more colloquial registers of spoken English and in many dialects, for example in the Yorkshire's dialect (Wakelin, 1977: 117), and even used with some mockery connotations or as intensifiers (Nissinen, 2010: 58–65).[6] Consider the following example taken from the famous American sitcom *How I met your mother* (season 2, episode 2: *The scorpion and the toad*), in which the character Barney Stintson is laughing at his friend Marshall's studies:

(3) "I'll figure in a younger crowd you'll seem more mature, more wordly and as a third year law student, ***more smarter***". (Radnor *et al*. 2006)

In these cases, double comparatives are used as a kind of conscious language play to show a humorous effect. In tune with this, González-Díaz (2006b: 651–652) about shows that double comparison in Modern English seems to be accepted in leisure domains (radio programmes, TV news scripts).

1.3. Main theories about the origin and development of English periphrastic comparison

English adjective comparison has received a great deal of scholarly interest in corpus-based research, considering the competing forms of adjective comparison: the synthetic and periphrastic variants, although without consensus yet about the origin and development of the periphrastic alternative to compare adjectives in English (Kytö, 1996; Kytö & Romaine, 1997, 2000; Leech & Culpeper, 1997; Lindquist, 2000; Mondorf, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2009; Suematsu, 2004; González-Díaz, 2008; Hilpert, 2008; Breban, 2010). So far, two possible and opposing theories are that it either arose from an already existing OE native resource, following a language-internal development (being reinforced and spread during ME), or that it was introduced into the English language via external influences (primarily Romance languages, such as Latin and French) during the beginning of ME. Therefore, during the tweentieth century, some controversies emerged as for the origins of the periphrastic forms; a *chronological* and a *philological* controversy, dealing with the origin of the periphrastic form for adjective comparison and questioning whether this construction was the result of internal changes or language contact (González-Díaz, 2008: 15). According to some studies and

[6] Other contemporary grammars, such as Greenbaum's (1996: 140) only mention double forms to state that they are still present in non-standard usage of English.

handbooks on the history of the English language (Curme, 1931: 502; Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 172; Brinton & Arnovick, 2006/2011: 198) the inflectional form for seventh to twelfth centuries. Wright (1913) found that during Late Modern English, inflected forms in adjective comparison were preferred in almost all English dialects. In trying to get an accurate analysis on this assumption, Mustanoja (1960/2016: 280) proved that the reluctant attitudes towards the use of the analytic variant for comparison in English dialects may indicate that this linguistic form was not available in the original repertoire of English linguistic structures and hence they could have gained ground due to the influence of French during medieval times by analogy with French periphrastic constructions such as *plus miser sim*, i.e. *I am more miserable* (Danchev, 1989: 170, 172–173). In the same vein, other scholars, such as Pound (1901), considered that the influence of Latin on English may be the most plausible reason for the rise of the periphrastic form during ME, a period in which Latin was the language of culture and religion, confined to the upper and most educated classes. The reason behind this assumption is that Pound found a similar construction for analytic forms by comparing both Latin and English structures, such as the use of superlatives, e.g. *most brave man*, which she identified as a calque on Latin absolute constructions *vir fortissimus*. Thus, she stated that this could have been the result of language contact whose consequence was the rise and use of the English periphrastic mode of comparison.

On the other side of the matter, other authors considered that the English periphrastic form for comparing adjectives emanates from a native development – Emerson (1894), Mitchell (1985), quoted from González-Díaz (2008: 16). Despite these assumptions, some OE grammars do not mention the periphrastic form of comparative adjectives, but only the synthetic form:

> The comparative ends in *-ra* and is declined on the definite pattern; the superlative ends in *-st(a)*, -*(e)st(a)* and is also declined on the definite pattern except often for the n.sg.masc and fem. and n.a.sg. neut.
>
> (Quirk & Wrenn, 1955: 34)

At the end of the nineteenth century, Emerson (1894: 313) stated that the particles *more* and *most* come from an original adverb *ma* in OE, which would become an adjective in ME, remaining in EModE as *moe*. However, he argues that there is no evidence of a periphrastic mode of comparison in OE but that it occurs firstly in the first part of the thirteenth century and that it probably "arose from an extension of the use of these common adverbs with participle and with adjectives not strictly allowing comparison". Furthermore, he continues

arguing that at the time this type of comparison arose, it was used indiscriminately with the inflected form. Following this line of reasoning, Knüpfer (1921), Curme (1931: 503) and Brunner (1951: 64) pointed out that a possible source for the origin of periphrastic forms could have been the collocation of degree intensifiers with participles in OE. In keeping with this idea, Mitchell (1985, 84–85) attempted to trace the origin of the periphrastic form back to OE, alluding to the combination of *swiðor*, *ma* and *bet* with participles, however, without offering contextual information or instances of the periphrastic participal forms.

Thanks to the flourishing of digitised corpora, the interest in this topic re-appeared in a great amount of studies on the competing forms for adjective comparison in English (Kytö, 1996; Kytö & Romaine, 1997, 2000; Lindquist, 2000; Suematsu, 2004). However, the dichotomic approach to this matter was still present in some of these studies. Those by Kytö (1996), Kytö and Romaine (1997, 2000) are crucial for the study of periphrastic forms as a native resource. Furthermore, as González-Díaz (2008: 17) identified, some ambiguous comments reflect the controversial nature of this issue:

> The periphrastic construction first appeared in the thirteenth century, more probably under Latin than French influence. At the same time, the construction seems to have been of native origin and arisen from the need for emphasis and clarity felt by the speakers.
>
> (Kytö, 1996: 123)

> According to Mitchell (1985: 84–5), who lists the few attested possible examples in Old English, the periphrastic forms first appeared in the thirteenth century, possibly under the influence of Latin (and to a lesser extent French). Their use increased steadily after the fourteenth century until the beginning of the sixteenth century […] As with other syntactic innovations in the history of English, historians appealed to foreign influence as an explanatory factor. Some have also mentioned stylistic factors such as speakers' needs for emphasis and clarity.
>
> (Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 172)

The dubious origin of periphrastic forms is addressed in these studies without reaching a clear conclusion. Recently, corpus-based studies still fall back on the same assumptions underlined by previous scholars. Thus, as a consequence of the lack of consensus on this issue and a need for further research, González-Díaz (2006a, 2008: 20–34) examined the establishment of *more + adj* as the standard form for the periphrastic form for comparison to explore its origin in the *Toronto Corpus of Old English* (Healey *et al*. 2009) (primary source for the *Dictionary of Old English* by Cameron *et al*. 1981) and the *Helsinki Corpus.* As a conclusion, she asserts that English periphrastic comparison was already in use during the ninth century, after

analysing the collocation of the adverbs *swiðor*, *ma* and *bet* with participial constructions. According to González-Díaz (2008: 30): "*Bet* seemed to be the least used particle (with 11% of the total number of examples) in Old English. *Swiðor* was attested in 39% of the cases, while *ma* was the most frequent marker, with 50% of the total number of forms analysed". Therefore, the adverb *ma* was the preferred comparative marker combining freely with both adjectives and participles: *ma gode* (more good), *bet wyrðe* (more worthy).

Additionally, González-Díaz also examined that the development from participles to adjectives had already started in the second part of OE (750–1100). In spite of the fact that she identified these analytic forms as native constructions, doubt may be cast on the beginnings of the periphrastic form as twenty-four out of thirty-nine examples were attested to be translations from Latin texts. Not only did they occur in vernacular texts, but also in OE translations from Latin original texts. In a further analysis, comparing OE periphrastic comparative structures with the Latin original, she also finds that six out of twenty-four of the examples were calques from Latin and the rest were OE additions and the result of "non-literal translations of Latin structures which are not comparatives of superiority" (González-Díaz, 2006a: 731). Moreover, following Mustanoja's line of reasoning as for the influence of rhythm on the rise of periphrastic forms, González-Díaz (2006a: 732) argues that the speakers felt that the inflectional forms were not good enough to express the degree of comparison and therefore a new construction was developed, by using the OE adverbs *swiðor*, *ma* and *bet* since they are independent morphemes that can be more easily stressed than the *-er* suffix.

In addition to the origin, it is uncertain why this periphrastic form for comparing adjectives developed, since there was already a native-inflected mechanism for it. Kytö and Romaine (1997: 347) asserted that the use of periphrastic comparison might have first occurred in written registers, other means to express explicitness and emphasis may have been used in the oral language.

Having said this so far, it is important to bring to the fore that the increase of English periphrastic comparatives does not arise until the Late ME period, when the influence of French was quite remarkable and restricted to the written language. Heine and Kuteva (2005: 170) employed the concept of *contact-induced change* to explain that this could have been the reason for the replacement of inflectional by analytic forms of expressing the comparative. Taking this assumption into account, González-Díaz (2008: 48) assumed that the rise of the periphrastic comparative form might be explained as a process of *grammaticalisation* (in the sense of a process of *fixation* in language) in so far as the collocation of *intensifier + participle/adjective* became standard for creating comparative adjectives which could also

explain the decline of OE inflectional forms at the expense of the new analytic ones. Kytö and Romaine (1997: 336), attested a gradual increase in inflectional forms for both comparatives and superlatives which prevailed from the 1420s onwards, but from the end of EModE both forms of the comparative started to proceed along *divergent tracks* (see Figure 1.2).

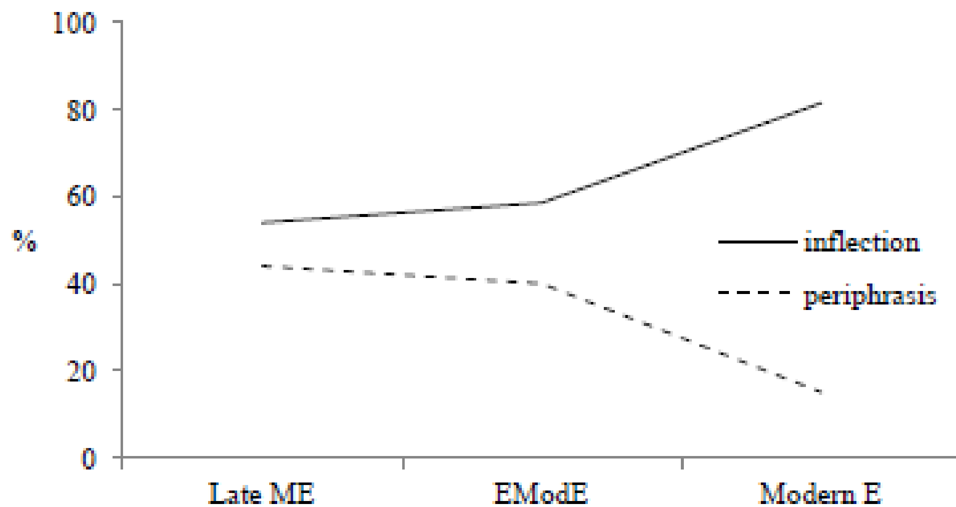

Figure 1.2. Historical trajectories of inflectional and periphrastic forms for the comparative (from Kytö & Romaine, 1997: 336)

Therefore, it is during 1570–1640 when the inflectional forms increased at the expense of the periphrastic forms, reaching their present-day distribution. As a result, one may assume that the periphrastic patterns in adjective comparison increased during the second half of ME. The increase in number of periphrastic forms for adjective comparison was at its peak during the last part of ME, which coincides with the period in which the influence of French borrowings was quite notable, making French the possible external factor fostering the spread of the periphrastic form. Thus, the periphrastic construction would have been more salient and marked than the native English inflectional (*-er*, *-est*) counterparts, and it was not until the last part of the ME period that periphrastic constructions became consolidated as a standard comparative option (Kytö & Romaine, 1997). Consequently, from a historical perspective, one may assume that the periphrastic constructions are innovations and many scholars appealed to external influence as an explanatory factor (Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 172).

After reviewing previous literature on this issue, Kytö and Romaine (2000: 172) convincingly stated that the new periphrastic forms eventually ousted the deep-rooted inflectional forms from OE, although not in all environments, resorting to the influence of Latin and French as the main precursors for the spread of the periphrastic forms, during the

fourteenth century and until the beginning of the sixteenth. Hence, the influence of Romance languages may have reinforced the rise of *more* in the English system of comparison which increased in the second half of ME. Nevertheless, the diachronic picture of both forms of adjective comparison seems atypical, without exhibiting a normal trajectory of replacement:

X → X-Y →Y

This suggests that the periphrastic form diffused rather slowly until the fifteenth century, which was the time when it increased steadily (Mitchell, 1985: 84–85). However, although its initial trajectory showed the typical behaviour of linguistic innovations i.e. the typical S-curve of linguistic change (Weinreich, Labov & Herzog, 1968; Bailey, 1973; Altman *et al*. 1983; Kroch, 1989; Labov, 1994; Denison, 2003), the innovative periphrastic form did not oust the old inflectional one and did not spread gradually. Instead, as we mentioned before, it seems that this new form had peaked during the last part of the ME period (Pound, 1901), and since that time onwards, the inflectional form for adjective comparison has been "reasserting itself" (Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 172).

In their pilot study, Kytö and Romaine (2000) analysed competing forms of adjective comparison drawn from the pilot version of *The Corpus of Early American English* (Davies, 2010) and *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* (ARCHER) (Biber & Finegan, 1990–2016) to address the phenomenon of standardisation during the seventeenth century. Results about the distribution of inflectional and periphrastic adjective comparison reveal in both American and English corpora that the inflectional form is more frequent overall than the periphrastic one, although being equal in distribution until the 1950s. However, British English seems to be "slightly ahead of American English at each sub-period in terms of implementing the change towards the inflectional type" (2000: 176). Therefore, in British English data, there is a trend for the inflectional type to be more frequent over the course of time as it is illustrated in the increase of inflectional forms from one period to another (see Figures 1.3 and 1.4):

Figure 1.3. Percentage of inflectional and periphrastic forms in ARCHER subcorpus British English, (from Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 178)

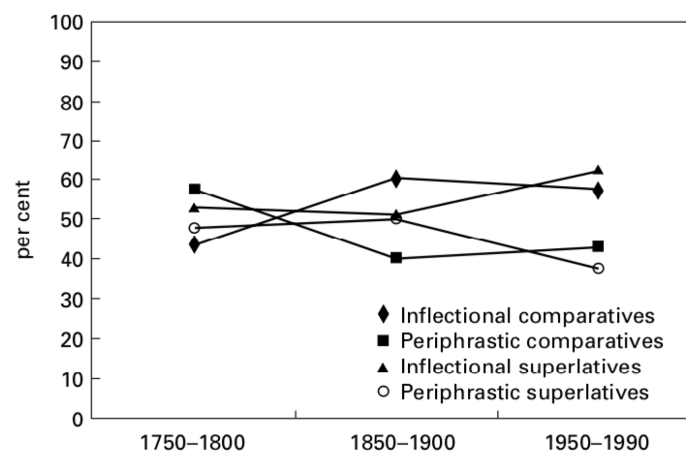

Figure 1.4. Percentage of inflectional and periphrastic forms in ARCHER subcorpus American English, (from Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 178)

More recently, Terasawa (2003) traced the evolution of the analytic form of comparatives in ME and EModE texts from the *Helsinki Corpus.* Results suggest that the rates for the innovative periphrastic form are higher in translations from Latin and French (Terasawa, 2003: 194). Moreover, they seem to have firstly appeared in more formal texts (philosophical, religious, educational, etc.) to later expand to more informal ones, such as letters or travelogues (Terasawa, 2003: 197). In this same study, the author assumes the likelihood of periphrastic comparatives undergoing a geographical spread which would initially be more common in texts coming from the South of England (where the influence of French was quite noticeable). Therefore, the author convincingly assumes that periphrastic forms gradually expanded from more formal registers to less formal ones, suggesting a change from above towards the end of EModE. In this same vein, Kytö and Romaine (2000: 185) also suggested that inflectional forms were more frequent in matter-of-fact-texts (informal).

In the same line as Terasawa's study (2003), García-Vidal (2020) studied the periphrastic and inflectional forms in translations from Latin. In particular, she focused on the translation of periphrastic forms in both Wycliffe's (1385) and King James Bible (1611) to explore multilingual influences in the comparative formation for both corpora. Both Bibles had a great influence on the English language (see Aston, 1987; Lampe, 1969: 261–262; McArthur, 1992: 117–122; McGrath, 2001: 24–36; and Crystal, 2010). In the fifteenth century, John Wycliffe's Bible was considered the first Bible translated into English from the Latin version, *The Vulgate*, aimed at being read aloud so as to offer ordinary people access to the word of God in a language they could understand. Some centuries later, there was a need to update the language used in previous Bibles by spreading a new official one, and King James Bible arose during the seventeenth century (García-Vidal, 2020: 43). In her study, she provides a quantitative analysis of the amount of inflected and analytic comparative adjectives used in both Bibles. As Figure 1.5 illustrates, King James Bible shows a slight decline in the use of inflectional forms (77.1%) in contrast with Wycliffe's Bible (89,1%). As for periphrastic adjectives, the opposite is displayed: the number of analytic forms is higher in King James Bible (22.9%) than in Wycliffe's (10.9%).

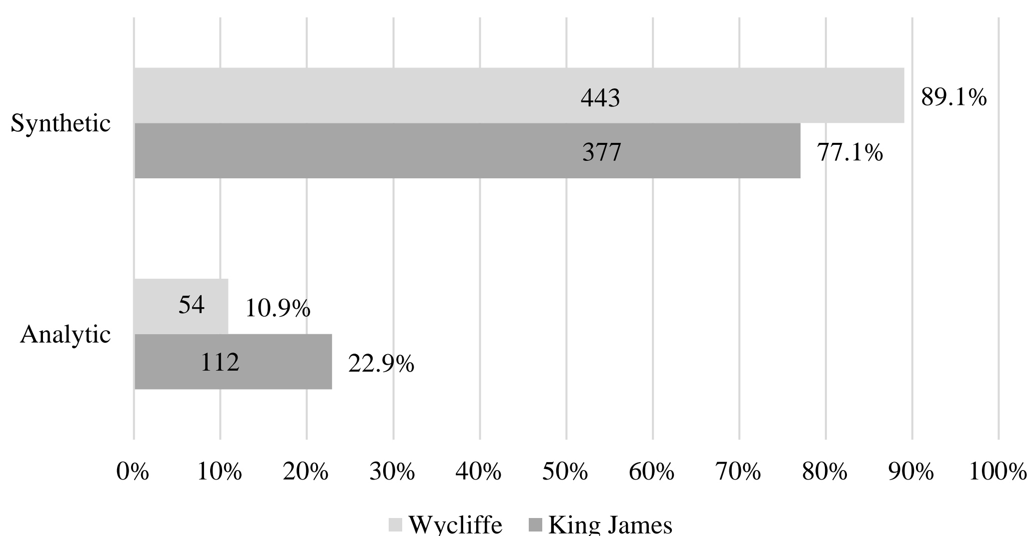

Figure 1.5. Distribution of the synthetic and analytic comparative in Wycliffe's and King James Bible (percentages and raw figures) (from García-Vidal, 2020: 45)

In contemporary English, most grammars such as Quirk *et al*. (1985) deal with the topic of adjective comparison in general terms. As for the preference of one variant versus the other, Nist (1963: 345), for example states that American folk speech normally prefers the synthetic variant for both the comparative and superlative. In a similar fashion, Fries (1940: 200) also

asserted that *vulgar* English in the US was more conservative because of the fact that the inflectional form was more persistent than the periphrastic, while Standard English was more innovative since it made greater use of periphrasis. Some corpus-based studies have revealed that the majority of both comparative and superlative adjectives are inflectional (see Kyto, 1996; and Kyto & Romaine, 1997). While some adjectives tend to fluctuate between both ways of comparison, other adjectives show a preference either for the periphrastic or the inflectional form. Bauer (1994: 60) reasons that this represents a case of "regularisation of a confused situation", resulting in comparison becoming more predictable, suggesting the need to take into account the effect of standardisation tendencies.

1.4. Theories on the factors conditioning comparative alternation

The phenomenon of comparative alternation occurs commonly in English comparative adjectives, namely by inflecting synthetically or analytically. A number of internal and external factors have conditioned the choice between both mechanisms, and it has recently been the focus of attention in corpus linguistic research, attesting the strategies for comparison in more synchronic and linguistic terms (see Boyd, 2007; Hilpert, 2008; D'Arcy, 2012, 2014; Adams, 2014; D'Arcy & Tagliamonte, 2015; amongst others). For example, if we carry out a simple and rapid search on comparative alternation from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century by using the online search engine *Google N-gram Viewer Corpus* (see Lin *et al*. 2012) that charts the frequencies of any set of words in Google's text corpora (available at http://books.google.com/ngrams), it quickly reveals comparative alternation that shows pathways of change over the course of time. In this specific case, three different adjectives (*able*, *happy* and *worthy*) that are prone to show vacillation between synthetic and analytic forms for comparison were retrieved for the sake of showing language trends in the development between the selected adjectives over time in a written corpus.[7] As Figures 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8 show, alternation between the selected adjectives has been present all along the eighteenth century onwards, although due to standardisation, it has become more regular in Present-day English. Today, *able* is the adjective that shows more variation between both forms of comparison (see Figure 1.6), and no instances of *abler* or *more able* are found in this corpus from the sixteenth century to the second part of eighteenth century. More interesting is the case of *happy* and *worthy* and their behaviour in medieval times; in the case of *happy* (see Figure 1.7), the use of the periphrastic form appears to be higher than the inflectional one in the second half of the sixteenth century and shows competition between the inflected and

[7] *Google N-gram* corpus is based on a large book collection extracted from Google's text corpora.

periphrastic forms from 1650s and 1700s. From 1750s onwards, frequencies of *happier* and *more happy* follow divergent tracks in that the inflected counterpart presents a higher use until the 2000s which contrasts with a decline in the use of the periphrastic form that starts around 1750s. Finally, in the case of *worthy*, a similar pattern is illustrated (see Figure 1.8): although it seems that the periphrastic form has never ousted the inflected one, competition is evident between 1500s and 1650s. While *happy*, *more worthy* and *worthier* show clear distinctions in use from 1650s, *more worthy* gains the competition over *worthier* with more periphrastic forms than inflected ones, but curiously, at the end of the twentieth century both forms seem to have similar percentages of use. These examples show a plethora of variation in English comparative forms from a diachronic perspective which, although to a lesser extent, continues occurring in Present-day English. According to D'Arcy (2012: 73): "[a]lthough linguistically (i.e. referentially) equivalent, however, inflection and periphrasis are not in all instances socially (i.e. ideologically) equivalent".

Figure 1.6. Frequencies of *abler* and *more able* from 1500s to 2000s in Google N-gram Viewer Corpus

Figure 1.7. Frequencies of *happier* and *more happy* from 1500s to 2000s in Google N-gram Viewer Corpus

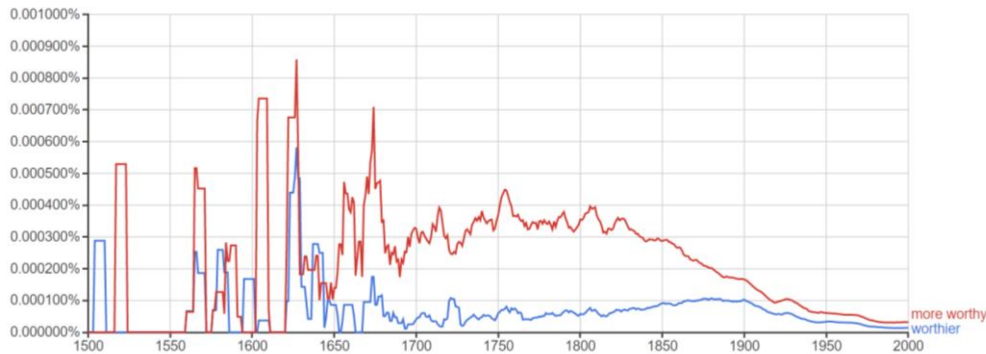

Figure 1.8. Frequencies of *worthier* and *more worthy* from 1500s to 2000s in Google N-gram Viewer Corpus

Thus, there is a great deal of variation on the choice of both alternatives for adjective comparison, which includes creativity and intentional manipulation as in examples 4 and 5:

(4) "The first step to becoming *more happy* is to realize you don't know how to make yourself *happier*. (Happy Deviant; Positive psychology: How to construct a happier life-Part 1; May 15 2011)"

(from D'Arcy, 2012: 74)

(5) "When asked if they'd like to be *more happy* the majority of people shout 'yes' because 'who wouldn't want to be *happier*? (Happy Deviant; Positive psychology: How to construct a happier life-Part 1; November 5 2010)"

(from D'Arcy, 2012: 74)

By all accounts, comparative alternation between both synthetic and analytic choices seems to be constrained in all levels of linguistic analysis involved: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantic, pragmatics, etc.

During the twentieth century, there has been a rise of linguistic studies acknowledging that the choice between analytic and synthetic comparative forms is subject to different forces that shape this field of study continually and methodologically. Thanks to the spread of electronic corpora, different scholars have carried out variationist approaches to study the factors that have conditioned the choice between both linguistic variants to form the comparative in English. Nevertheless, this topic has been mainly approached synchronically and little has been argued about the factors that have historically conditioned the choice of both forms. Among these main multifarious forces that have been considered we find: (a) the length and origin of the adjective; (b) phonological, prosodic, semantic, pragmatic or syntactic factors; (c) the appearance of complex environments where the periphrastic form

occurs; and even (d) the implementation of a psycholinguistic approach of morphological optionality to explain variation between both variables. The Early/Late Modern and Present-day English periods are the ones which have been mostly studied (see Sweet, 1891; Pound, 1901; Jespersen, 1909/1956; Poutsma, 1914; Kruisinga, 1932; Bolinger, 1968; Quirk *et al*. 1985; Rusiecki, 1985; Fries, 1993; Bauer, 1994; Kytö, 1996; Kytö & Romaine, 1997, 2000; Leech & Culpeper, 1997; Lindquist, 1998, 2000; Graziano-King, 1999, 2003; Mondorf, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2009; Suematsu, 2004; Boyd, 2007; González-Díaz, 2008; Hilpert, 2008; D'Arcy, 2012, 2014; Adams, 2014; D'Arcy & Tagliamonte, 2015; and García-Vidal, 2020).

Most of these studies treat this issue by focusing on the following factors as the main precursors for variation in adjective comparison: word length, stress of the syllable, addition of affixes, syntactic factors, phonological properties, and final segment. As mentioned in the previous section, it was during the last part of ME when the analytic variant for comparison became a standard comparative option in English (Kytö & Romaine, 1997). By the end of the nineteenth century, Sweet (1891: 326) pointed out that at the beginning of the Modern English period both constructions for comparing adjectives were used indistinctively, although with some sort of restrictions: suffixation was more frequent with short adjectives and periphrasis with longer ones. In line with this assumption, Jespersen (1909/1956: 350–351) identified that the choice of one form of comparison over the other depended mainly on length (see also Pound, 1901: 9–10; Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 180; Suematsu, 2004: 37). Therefore, Quirk *et al*. (1985: 461–462), remarked that the choice between methods for comparison is conditioned by the length of the adjective, as in current standard English: monosyllabic adjectives normally take the inflectional form except for *real*, *right* and *wrong*. Poutsma (1914) states the same assumption and considers the importance of word length in the use of synthetic vs. analytic forms of comparison (see also Bauer, 1994: 51). Moreover, he adds that word ending is another crucial factor for this choice of comparatives, claiming that it is "chiefly a matter of euphony, convenience and rhythm and partly one of meaning" (1914: 474). He also states that periphrastic forms seem to be more artificial since they tend to appear in more literary registers, with longer words which contrasts with the use of inflectional forms that are mainly preferred in "the vulgar (i.e. spoken or colloquial) language" (1914: 478). By alluding to external influences that could have determined the choice between the synthetic and analytic comparative, Sweet (1891: 327) and Bolinger (1968: 120) found that adjectives that were very frequent in the English language (normally the shorter ones and of native origin) took the inflectional form for comparison (see also Graziano-King, 2003). Against the traditional view about the length of the adjective as a

determinant factor in the choice of the synthetic or the analytic form of adjective comparison, Kruisinga (1932: 62) resorts to the position that highlights the role of primary stress as the most important factor that can have an influence on this issue: if the main stress falls on the last syllable, the adjective will take the inflected form. In contrast, if it falls on the penultimate syllable or further, it will take the periphrastic form.[8] Leech and Culpeper (1997: 361–362) questioned this previous assumption on stress by showing twenty-two types of disyllabic adjectives stressed on the final syllable (such as, *acute*, *complete* or *remote*) which tend to take more frequently the periphrastic form for comparison (see also Suematsu, 2004: 45).

The focus of variability falls on disyllabic adjectives. As stated in Sweet (1891: 326–327), disyllabic adjectives take suffixation when the stress falls on the first or last syllable, when they end in *-ly* and in adjectives such as *able*, *simple*, *wholesome* and *cruel*. In contrast, adjectives that take the periphrastic comparison usually end in a "heavy consonant-group", such as *-st*, or in *-ish*, *-s*, *-ful*, *-ed* or *-ing*. He betokens some exceptions to this claim, such as the case of the adjective *pleasant*, which takes the suffix *-er* because it is very common in English. As for longer adjectives, these prefer periphrastic forms as well as some monosyllabic participle adjectives, since they have features which are considered alike to prototypical adjectives (González-Díaz, 2006b). Recent studies suggest that syntactic factors are also key in the choice of comparative strategies. Rusiecki (1985: 89) identifies that predicative positions are preferred with periphrastic forms. Leech and Culpeper (1997: 367–368) found that coordination is another factor that may influence the choice of comparative strategy. Whenever two comparatives appear together in a sentence (see example 6 and 7), they tend to "imitate neighbouring comparative adjectives" (Leech & Culpeper, 1997: 367):

(6) "*thirstier* and *hungrier* and *wearier* and *unhappier"*

(7) "proved to be *more interesting* and certainly *more lively"*

Other scholars assert that adverbial pre-modifiers (Leech & Culpeper, 1997: 367; Lindquist, 2000: 127) of a second term of comparison (Quirk *et al*. 1985: 462) or of an infinitival/prepositional complement placed after the comparative adjective favour the analytic form (Mondorf, 2002, 2003). The use of degree modifiers with comparative structures has also been associated to the choice of comparative strategies (Leech & Culpeper,

[8] For a further development of this idea see Kuryłowicz (1964: 15) and Cygan (1975: 56).

1997: 367; Lindquist, 2000: 127). For example, Leech and Culpeper (1997: 367) observe that "degree modifiers such as *a bit*, *even* or *far* tend to occur more frequently with periphrastic than inflectional forms". González-Díaz (2008: 99–107) also investigated the use of intensifiers with comparative forms in Early and Late Modern English. Contrary to previous research, her results show that the presence of adverbial intensifiers is not a factor that may condition the choice of comparative strategies. Instead, she remarks that "adverbial intensifiers […] have a homogenising effect on comparatives, in the sense that they trigger similar readings from both inflectional and periphrastic comparatives" (2008: 103).

Most of the studies mentioned above follow a synchronic approach, concentrating on the distribution of both comparative methods in Present-day English – with the exception of Pound (1901), Kytö and Romaine (1997, 2000) and Suematsu (2004). In addition to the given factors that could have had an influence on the choice of the available comparative strategies (such as length, ending or stress), Pound (1901: 18) also identified "individual preference" as a reason influencing the choice of comparison in EModE. Kytö and Romaine's (1997, 2000) and Suematsu's (2004) studies considered that morpho-phonological issues also conditioned the choice of comparison in Late Modern English.

Following a diachronic approach, González-Díaz (2008: 78–82) also analysed syntactic factors that determine the choice of both forms of adjective comparison by using *The Helsinki Corpus, The Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (Nevalainen *et al*. 1998), *Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts* (Schmied *et al*. 1999), *The Corpus of English Dialogues* (Kytö & Culpeper, 2006), a self-compiled corpus of EModE drama for the analysis of the EModE period and the ARCHER for the Late Modern one. As for the results, there seems to be a preference for inflectional forms in all positions:

> This is not surprising if one takes into consideration that inflectional comparison was the first strategy attested in the language and that, after an initial increase in the use of periphrastic forms, it has "been reasserting itself since the Early Modern period" (Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 172). It should nevertheless be pointed out that the preference for inflectional forms is less marked in predicative (and postpositive) slots, especially once one moves closer to the Present-day (i.e. in the LModE period).
>
> (González-Díaz, 2008: 82)

As mentioned above, the origin of the word has been also considered as another relevant factor historically associated with the preference of periphrastic vs. synthetic adjectival comparison. During the first part of the twentieth century, Pound (1901: 18) alluded to the

origin of the adjective as an external influence that could have conditioned the choice of any of these forms for comparing adjectives during the fifteenth century, advocating that the use of the periphrastic form is mostly used with adjectives of Romance origin. In consonance with this, Sweet (1891: 327), Bolinger (1968: 120) and Quirk *et al*. (1985: 463) analysed the regular frequency of native origin adjectives to take the -*er* suffix at the expense of the *more* periphrasis. Hence, the inflectional comparative is not a choice with low-frequency adjectives. As for disyllabic adjectives they are prone to show different behaviour in comparison. In the same line, Kytö and Romaine (1997: 346) asserted that the choice between both alternatives is not only made according to the length of the adjective but also to its origin, aptly affirming that native adjectives tend to take inflectional forms whereas foreign ones tend to be compared with periphrasis. As mentioned earlier, the influence of French may have reinforced, or even provoked, the use of the analytic comparative, as it is attested that these forms increased in the second half of the ME period. In tune with this, González-Díaz (2008: 61–71) has investigated the connection of Romance adjectives with periphrastic comparatives in the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English* (Kroch, Santorini & Delfs, 2004) *Ancrene Wisse* (written during the early thirteenth century), Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* (1485) and Dan Michell's *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (mid-fourteenth century). In general terms, the author reveals that the use of periphrastic forms with Romance adjectives is higher throughout the corpora used but that there is a substantial increase in the last part of the ME period. Results show that the analytic variant was more frequently associated with Romance adjectives during ME. Conversely, native adjectives were more usually compared with the inflectional form. This assumption suggests that the development of the periphrastic construction may have been associated with Romance adjectives by analogy with French and Latin periphrastic comparative structures.

> […] the nature of the (compared) adjective could have had an influence on the selection of comparative strategy, in such a way that those comparative constructions wherein the adjective was of foreign (i.e. Latin and French) origin would more likely be of the periphrastic type; native adjectives being the ones that most easily selected inflectional forms.
>
> (González-Díaz, 2008: 60)

By analysing Wycliffe's and King James Bible, García-Vidal (2020: 47) carried out an empirical analysis of the distribution of inflected and periphrastic comparison for native and Romance adjectives with the aim of observing whether the origin of the adjective could have

had an influence on the choice of comparative forms in ME. As Table 1.2 illustrates, while inflectional forms were preferred more with native (i.e. Germanic) adjectives, periphrastic forms appeared more frequently with Romance adjectives in both corpora: King James Bible shows a higher use of periphrastic comparison with Romance adjectives (81.4%) than those found in Wycliffe's (51.7%). Therefore, it seems that those adjectives that were introduced into the English word-stock during the fourteenth century were more prone to be compared by means of the entrenched *-er* suffix rather than those which were introduced in later centuries. This could have probably indicated that during the seventeenth century, the time in which King James Bible was published, incipient stages of standardisation could have influenced the choice of both forms along with "accommodation to the Romance, analytic system of comparing adjectives" (García-Vidal, 2020: 47).

Table 1.2. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) comparative adjectives for native and Romance adjectives in Wycliffe's and the King James Bible (from García-Vidal, 2020: 47)

	Native English origin		**Romance origin**	
	Inflected	**Periphrastic**	**Inflected**	**Periphrastic**
Wycliffe	414 (94.7%)	23 (5.3%)	29 (48.3%)	31 (51.7%)
King James	359 (91.6%)	33 (8.4%)	18 (18.6%)	79 (81.4%)

In this same study, García-Vidal (2020: 47–51) presents an analysis of individual adjectives showing variation in both Bibles, contrasting the comparative adjectives rendered with the original Latin text. Seven out of twelve adjectives that show vacillation between the inflectional and periphrastic comparison were loanwords. Results show that Wycliffe's translation of the Bible was more faithful to the original Latin Bible, *The Vulgate*, whereas in King James Bible, the choice of the comparative mechanism shows more adaption to prescriptive rules (see Table 1.3). Therefore, this may shed more light on the issue of comparative alternation. Among other factors, the choice between the synthetic or analytic comparative forms during medieval times could have been subject to the origin of the word and the existence of literal translations from Latin-based texts (2020: 51).

Table 1.3. Samples of synthetic and analytic comparative alternation in Wycliffe's and King James Bible (from García-Vidal, 2020: 48)

Source	**Latin**	**Wycliffe**	**KJ**
Wisdom 8:7	*utilius*	*nothing is **profitablere** than*	*nothing **more profitable** in*
Isaiah 13:12	*Pretiosior*	*man of full age schal be **preciousere** than gold*	*make a man **more precious** than fine gold*
Ecclesiastes 5:7	*eminentiores*	*and also othere men ben **more hiye** aboue these men*	*there be **higher** than they.*
Philippians 1:23	*Magis melius*	*it is myche **more betere***	*which is far **better***

In more recent studies, based on Present-day English, other scholars have carried out a semantic interpretation of the choice of comparative strategies. Givón's idea of markedness from an iconic perpective (cognitive complexity criterion) and his three main criteria "to distinguish the marked from the unmarked category in a binary contrast" have helped to study comparative alternation from a semantic perspective (1990: 947). By marked structures, he refers to those structures that are larger and consequently more complex than the unmarked ones, less frequent, more salient and more cognitively complex. As Kytö and Romaine (1997: 334–335) stated, periphrastic forms were considered to have historically been less frequent than inflectional forms which meets the conditions mentioned by Givón to consider that periphrastic forms are *marked constructions*.[9] Another semantic interpretation of comparison strategy has to do with differences in attributive and predicative positions: temporary properties seem to be associated with new information (Fischer, 2001, 2006) what might imply that new information requires further explanatory effort. This has also been observed and found in Givóns *Quantity Principle*: a) "a larger chunk of information will be given a larger chunk of code"; b) "less predictable information will be given more coding material"; and c) "more important information will be given more coding material (Givón, 1990: 969).

Periphrastic comparatives are by nature longer than their inflectional counterparts, and more likely, according to Givón's principle, to carry new information. In the same fashion, Krug (2003: 15) identifies that high frequency entails mental entrenchment. Following this line of reasoning, Graziano-King and Cairn (2005) observe that inflectional comparison is the first strategy that English children acquired. Therefore, the higher the frequency of an adjective is, the more likely it is to take inflectional forms. Mondorf (2009: 41) found that disyllabic adjectives ending in -*y* show different patterns of behaviour according to frequency. For instance, when compared, the highly frequent adjective *likely* normally takes the periphrastic variant *more*. In conclusion, she remarks that "the less entrenched an adjective […], the more likely it is to require *more*-support" (2009: 41). The concept of *more-* support was developed by Mondorf (2003, 2009), based on Rohdenburg's *Complexity Principle* (1996), so as to support her view that the periphrastic variant of comparative alternation favours contexts of cognitive complexity over the inflected variant: "[s]imply by choosing the analytic variant as a signal, a language user can alert the addressee to the fact that a cognitively complex adjective phrase follows, so that some extra processing capacity can be

[9] Issues of cognitive complexity influencing the choice of comparative structures have also been studied in recent corpus-based work by Mondorf (2003, 2007).

allotted to that phrase" (Mondorf, 2003: 245). This theory operates in different domains such as phonology, lexicon, morphology, syntax, pragmatics and semantics. Regarding phonology, the complex contexts arise with "marked consonant clusters, minimally distinct phoneme sequences, or if its stress pattern is likely to cause a stress clash with a following lexeme" (Mondorf, 2003: 296). In the realm of morphology, complexity tends to be measured according to the number of morphemes found in a lexeme, determining if they are considered morphologically simple or complex, such as the bimorphemic lexemes ending in *-l* or *-le* which display variation (Mondorf, 2009: 35–36). In Mondorf's words (2009: 35): "[…] those adjectives that are morphologically complex exclusively require the analytic comparative […]. By contrast, those adjectives which are monomorphemic allow variation". Among the adjectives that are morphologically complex and hence require analytic comparison are: *awful*, *brutal*, *careful* or *hostile*. In the case of lexicon, complex environments, and hence complex comparative structures, come mostly with compounds, the length of the adjective or frequency. Regarding semantics, semantical complexity is measured by figurative or abstract meanings (Mondorf, 2003: 297). As for pragmatics, complex environment arises when new information is presented. Finally, syntactically complex comparative structures may also foster periphrastic comparison with the presence of infinitival complements, prepositional complements or the position of the comparative adjective in a sentence. In a sense, Mondorf affirms that the concept of *more*-support appearing in cognitively complex environments is a general tendency, a universal principle:

> In cognitively more demanding environments which require an increased processing load, language users when faced with the option between a synthetic and analytic variant tend to compensate for the additional effort by resorting to the analytic form.
>
> (Mondorf, 2003: 252)

Hilpert (2008) studies three domains – phonology, frequency and syntactic context – by using a "multiple linear regression model". His results show that, when measured in syllabes, not in morphemes, word length does affect alternation. As for frequency, it is the ratio of the frequency of the positive form and the comparatives that also affects alternation. Finally, as for phonological factors, he concludes that both phonological and structural factors do affect alternation too.

The concept of gramatical optionality has also been investigated in comparative alternation in English. Boyd (2007: xiv) considers comparative alternation as the "ability to

realize the same meaning using more than one grammatical expression". By carrying out two experiments, Boyd uncovers listeners' preference for the morphological variant in contexts that are cognitively complex and adds that the analytic variant for comparing adjectives may be constructed in the lexicon but not in the syntax. More recently, research based on adjective comparison has paid attention to only adjectives that show vacilliation between both comparative strategies (Hilpert, 2008; Scrivner, 2010; D'Arcy, 2012) and draws on speech data. D'Arcy (2012: 84) observed that the written language may have always been more prone to variation, and as for speech the options available have specialised, clearly conditioned by individual adjectives:

> The fall-out from this change from above remains visible in writing, where variation abound for mono- and bisyllabic adjectives in particular, but it is much less of a factor for these same forms in speech […] In writing it is possible to be more happy, but in speech, it is generally the case that happier is the way to be.
>
> (D'Arcy, 2012: 85)

The role of prosody has also been addressed as a factor affecting the production of both morphological and periphrastic structures. Adams captured this systematic variation by "invoking the general concept of comparative grammaticality" (2014: 285). Results show that some inflected adjectives are better than others "on a set of grammatical dimensions, and this is predicted to correlate with their relative percentages in naturalistic language settings". In other words, there are suffixed adjectives like *prouder* which are prosodically more well-formed than for example *inepter* which is reflected in the fact that *prouder* is more common than *inepter*, which is rarer. Following the prosodic approach, another contribution to the issue of frequency as a factor conditioning the choice of comparative mechanisms is to consider that prosodic structure may be assigned to more frequent adjectives which provokes the use of inflected comparison with them.

Thus far, I have dealt with the main studies that have investigated the development of the adjective comparative system from a diachronic and synchronic perspective, the comparative alternation between the inflected and the periphrastic forms along with the theories that have emaneted from them. However, the application of a historical sociolinguistic approach to this issue is scarce. Hence, the following chapter is devoted to the examination and study of the sociolinguistic and historical sociolinguistic fields in which this study is framed, by dealing with the origin and development of both disciplines and the main

methodological problems and solutions that have been proposed for accurate historical sociolinguistic analyses.

Chapter 2
Sociolinguistics and Historical Sociolinguistics

2.1. Origins and developments of sociolinguistics

It was not until the late twentieth century when sociolinguistics was conceived as a discipline (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2012: 22) after considering the social nature of languages. In this way, sociolinguistics has been shaping itself to finally end up offering us a better vision of language change and variation thanks to the use of quantitative methodologies. It mainly establishes the relationship that exists between language and society, that is, it studies language in its social context (see Figure 2.1) and it is included within the field of social sciences (Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, Geography, Psychology, etc.).

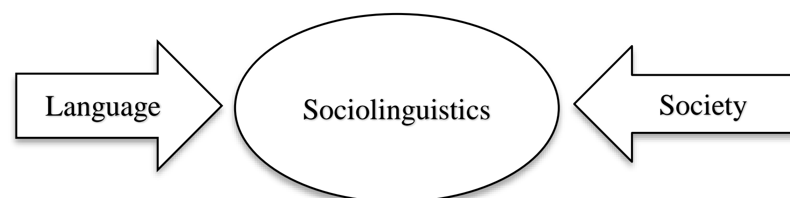

Figure 2.1. Scope of Sociolinguistics

It specifically deals with social interaction between speakers, that is, how people use language in different contexts. It is also concerned with the mechanisms that cause linguistic change, the different linguistic variables that take part in language variation and the structure of

linguistic systems. As Hernández-Campoy and Almeida (2005: 1) pointed out, its main features are: a) it is a discipline; b) it is a branch of linguistics; c) it deals with language from a socio-cultural perspective; d) it studies language in its social context, in everyday life following an empirical approach; and e) it is related with the methodology and subject matters of the social sciences.

Sociolinguistics has its origins mainly in the context of *idiolect*, in the stucturalists concepts of *langue*/*parole* and *diachrony* vs. *synchrony* distinguished by Ferdinand de Saussure, the notions of *competence* and *performance* proposed by Noam Chomsky in the field of generative grammar, and in the methodologies and theories from the area of *traditional dialectology* (Hernández-Campoy, 1993: 15; Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 9–27). Closely related to this, the idea of homogeneity and heterogeneity in languages is also key to the development of the linguistic theory and sociolinguistics, which is centred on the concepts of *langue*/*parole* and *competence*/*performance*. According to Saussure (1916/1983: 54–59), *langue* is the linguistic code that a speech community uses, and it is also conceived as the social and/or cultural component of languages, whereas *parole* represents the real use of the language which is considered as more of an individual language act which is normally momentary and produced with an intention in mind. The concepts of *langue*/*parole* proposed by Saussure are used to describe what is homogenous or heterogeneous in language. Some decades later, Chomsky (1965: 5–13) tackles this issue from another perspective suggesting that a linguistic theory should explain the *competence* of a speaker-hearer in a homogenous linguistic community. Therefore, Chomsky (1965: 6–13) distinguishes between the terms *competence* and *performance* and introduces a more in-depth description so as to offer a different view of homogeneity and heterogeneity in language. The term *competence* (innate capacity to organise the elements of language in the mind) refers to the knowledge that an ideal *speaker*/*hearer* would have of his/her own native tongue whereas *performance* indicates the actual realisation of the language in specific contexts.

Langue is related to *internal linguistics* or what is also known as *microlinguistics* (see section 2.2) and it only focuses on the structure of linguistic systems. Its main fields of study are morphology, phonology, semantics and syntax. On the contrary, *parole* is involved within *external linguistics* or *macrolinguistics* that deals with language through a wider perspective: acquisition and use of language and the mechanism involved together with the interdependence of culture, language and society (Hernández-Campoy & Almeida, 2005: 12). In the past, linguists were obsessed with the study of microlinguistics and the homogeneity of *langue* and *competence* disregarding in this way the macrolinguistic level and, consequently,

the study of a more heterogeneous perspective on languages in which *parole* and *performance* are involved (see Figure 2.2).

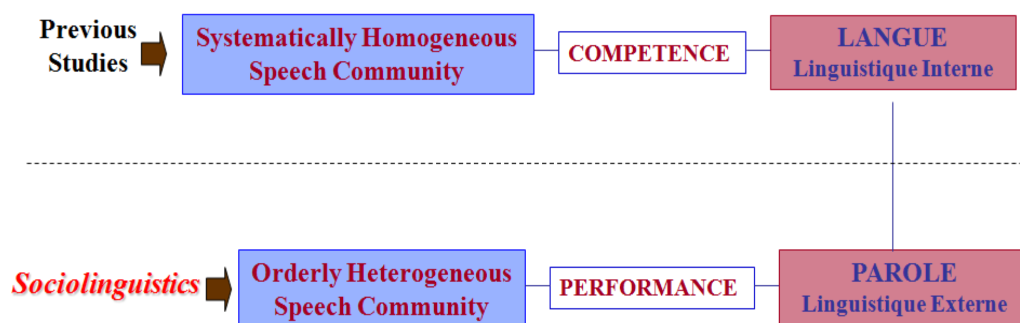

Figure 2.2. Approaches to language production (adapted from Hernández-Campoy, 1993: 19)

The development of this discipline during the sixties and seventies arises from the many objections to Chomsky's and Saussure's theories, but also because of the need to reformulate *traditional dialectology* and the increasing interest in *sociology*. The interest in analysing the social aspects in a language lead to a change in the main theoretical paradigms that used to govern the linguistic field, primarily the structural and generative ones. Hence, the dichotomy of *synchrony* vs. *diachrony* was born as a reaction against previous paradigms which only paid attention to the diachronic perspective of linguistics. This distinction resulted from the *langue-parole* dichotomy but were motivated by the need of getting rid of the historical perspective of nineteenth-century linguistics. As a result, linguistic description is explained within a synchronic framework defining different "states of language at a specified point in time, rather than the diachronic description of the mechanism of language change" (Bell, 1977: 19).

Apart from this, after the Second World War, other important historical events contributed to the development of this discipline: one is the so-called "quantitative revolution", which emerged as a reaction to the previous paradigms and methodologies employed mainly in the field of geography, seeking then to develop more accurate methods to use in scientific fields and especially in the social sciences. The principal objection led to a mismatch between qualitative and quantitative research, from more descriptive analyses to more empirical ones which is what the neopositivism movement advocated (Hernández-Campoy & Almeida, 2005: 10–11). Only verifiable knowledge is meaningful when it comes from direct observation, based on empirism and it is not valid knowledge when this emanates from subjective thoughts or pure reason. This new perspective entailed a rapid change in the

way social science was conceived and it supposed a reaction against structuralist and generative conceptions in the field of linguistics.

Another factor that favoured the flourishing of this discipline was the modernisation of cities and societies after the Second World War. The Western model of society was undergoing different changes due to this event, so a new process of global modernisation took place around the sixties, which also affected social mobility and migration from rural areas to cities (Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 25). This was mainly linked to economic growth, technological development, better communication systems and the most important for sociolinguistics was also the fact that cities were being developed, expanded and evolving also as the focus of multilingualism and language change because of migration and the aforementioned mobility of society which led to the study of *urban dialectology* as we can see in works of William Labov (1966/2006) or Peter Trudgill (1974). There have been ongoing debates about if sociolinguistics could be the best way to do proper linguistics (Labov, 1972; Bergs, 2005: 10; Bell, 2014: 11). One of the main founders of this branch of linguistics was William Labov with his major contribution in the three volumes of *Principles of Linguistic Change* (1994, 2001, 2010) and the seminal study *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (1966/2006). He was one of the first sociolinguists interested in language variation across individual speakers and groups of society and in how language can place barriers among them from a synchronic perspective. In the past, linguists used to ignore the variability of languages suggesting that this phenomenon was unmanageable and not suitable for analysis. (Chambers & Trudgill, 1980: 145). But the truth was that the majority of the speech communities were heterogeneous from the social and linguistic perspectives, what makes obvious that the social context and the social dimension of languages should not be ignored. In this way, linguists used to focus only on the *idiolect* of rural informants with the aim of seeking the purest homogenous dialects. Then, during the first part of the century, linguists started to pay attention to internal factors of change in language rather than focusing on external ones. However, according to Trudgill (1983a: 32–37), dialectologists were not being conscious about the social dimension and the heterogeneous nature of languages and they were omitting the fact that language change should be also associated with social function. Restricting the analysis of dialects just to rural areas was inaccurate and imprecise for the results obtained since the majority of the dialects from urban areas were being ignored. Therefore, during the sixties, some linguistic theories started to pay attention to the macrolinguistic level of languages by using also a microlinguistic approach when analysing linguistic variables such

as phonology or morphology, attending to contextual factors capable of explaining the speaker's sociolinguistic behaviour within a speech community.

So, in a sense, sociolinguistics pays attention to the level of *performance* and it intends to prove that at this level there are also certain rules that govern the use of language in different contexts and that this is acquired by the speaker/hearer mainly through his/her experience in social life (Almeida, 1999: 16).

Thanks to all these advancements, scholars started to investigate the speakers' sociolinguistic behaviour having a look at social and cultural factors by adopting a quantitative and empirical perspective. These aims make sociolinguistics capable to explain the relationship that exists between extralinguistic factors (like the socio-demographic context of linguistic variables) and linguistic ones (see Figure 2.3). In this way, sociolinguistics seeks to describe the correlation between social variation and linguistic variation.

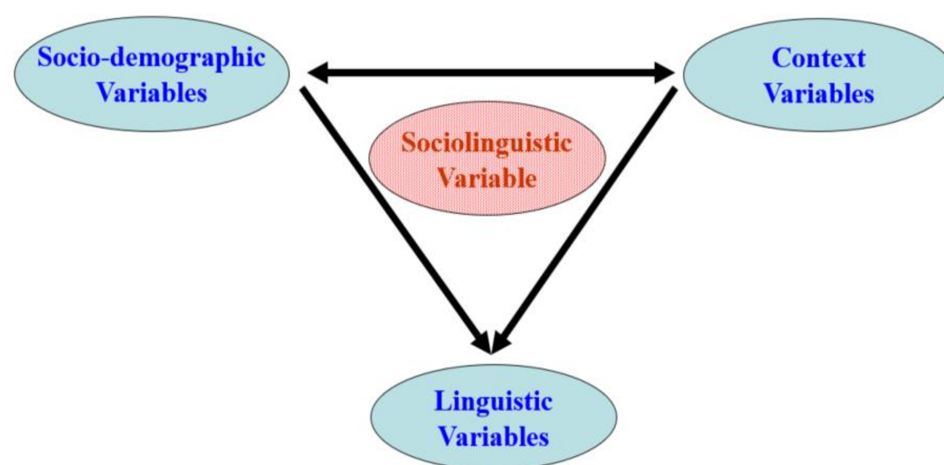

Figure 2.3. Causal relationships in the correlation of linguistic and extralinguistic factors in sociolinguistics (adapted from Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 30)

During the late twentieth century, Romaine specifies (1982: 1) that, in its incipient stages, sociolinguistics was primarily concerned with the study of "synchronic variable speech data". However, she proposes that sociolinguistics should consider also other variables apart from synchronic phonetic and phonological ones. As regards this, one may ask him/herself: What is then a sociolinguistic variable? What does it make a variable sociolinguistic? Lavandera broaches this issue arguing that phonological variables were the best candidates for a

sociolinguistic and variationist analysis because of "equivalence or referential meaning"[1] (1978: 176; see also Romaine, 1982: 32–35). In this sense, her assumption states quite convincingly that phonological variables are better to analyse because they are used to refer to the same thing and that they should not be extended to other levels of syntactic variation. For example, *laughing* and *laughin* are more convincingly used to say the same thing than "the liquor closet was broken into" vs. "they broke into the liquor closet" (Lavandera, 1978: 175). Therefore, what Lavandera plainly assumes here is the fact that non-phonological variables face methodological difficulties. The difficulty here is that the "referential meaning" must be the same for all the variants of a variable. However, according to Labov, those variables that also show social and stylistic variation are considered to refer to the same thing, that is: "the variants of the variable have the same referential meaning but are somehow different with respect to their social or stylistic significance" (Romaine, 1982: 32).

2.2. Directions in sociolinguistics

As it has been advanced in section 2.1, in order to understand the scope and directions of sociolinguistics it is necessary to go back to the 1950s when the foundations of linguistics was established. Linguistics was categorised into micro- and macro-linguistics, two different branches of this field that are concerned with internal linguistics and external linguistics. Micro-linguistics focuses on a more in-depth perspective of languages, in the structure of linguistic systems and it mainly deals with phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Macro-linguistics looks at wider aspects in a language, examining the acquisition and use of a language. Therefore, it principally focuses on disciplines like stylistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics and sociolinguistics (see Figure 2.4). At the beginning of the 1970s, Fishman (1972) developed another paradigm referring to the main studies of Language and Society in correlation with macro and micro levels. Hence, Fishman would distinguish two supplementary branches for sociolinguistics studies: *macro-sociolinguistics* and *micro-sociolinguistics*. The first one is concerned with sociolinguistic studies on a larger scale by dealing with the use of a language in a speech community. It has to do with the study of the social organisation of the linguistic behaviour that some speech communities represent. Its principal areas of study are the sociology of language, secular linguistics, dialectology and geolinguistics.

[1] Other scholars refer to this issue as "cognitive", "conceptual" or "descriptive" meaning (Lyons, 1977; Romaine, 1982: 32).

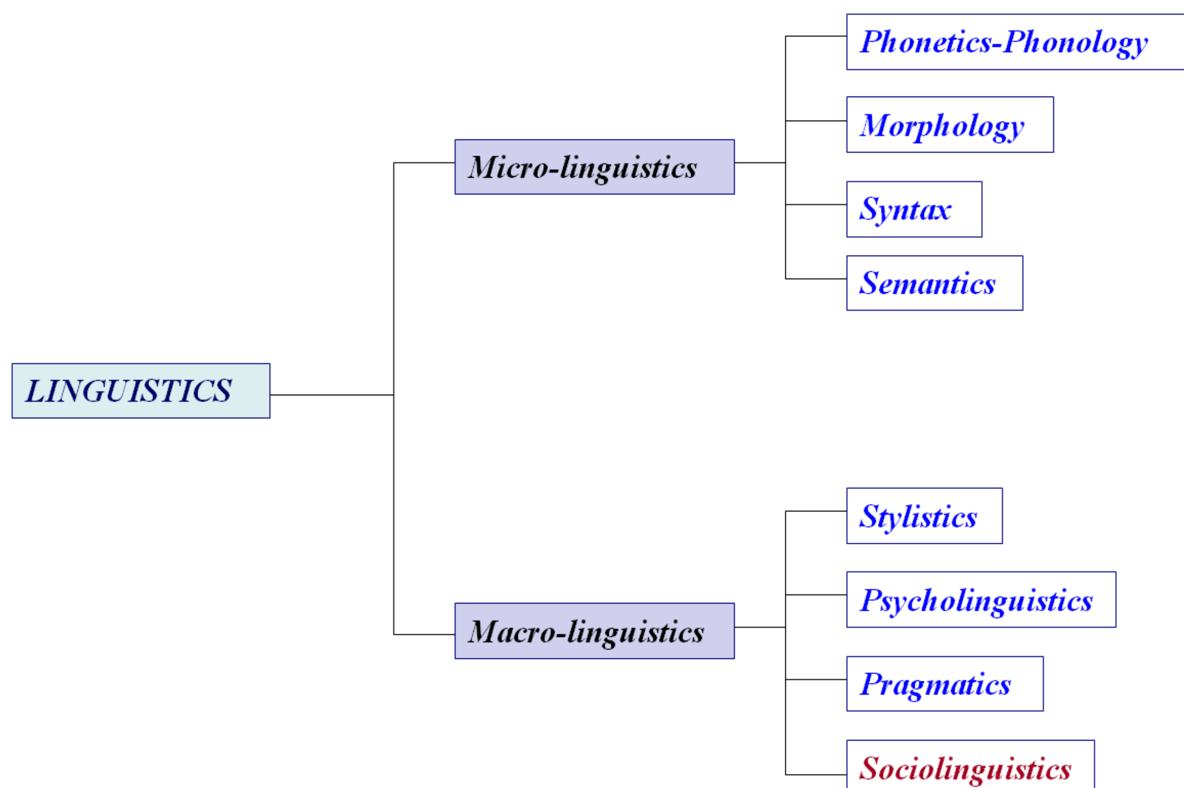

Figure 2.4. Location of sociolinguistics within linguistic science (adapted from Hernández-Campoy & Almeida, 2005: 2)

The second one deals with more specific descriptions and analyses of language regarding the study of the linguistic organisation of social behaviour in smaller groups of informants. Its main areas of study are discourse analysis, social psychology of language, anthropology linguistics and the ethnography of communication (Hernández-Campoy & Almeida, 2005: 3). After these main classifications, sociolinguistics has been conceived as the discipline that studies languages and their relationship with society and culture. However, once the term sociolinguistics is defined, Trudgill clarifies that, due to its interdisciplinary and polysemic nature, some problems of interpretation have arisen among scholars since not all of them have come to understand the same as for what sociolinguistics implies:

> The difficulty with *sociolinguistics*, then, is that it is a term which means many different things to many different people. This multiciplicity of interpretations is probably due to the fact that, while everybody would agree that sociolinguistics has *something* to do with language and society, it is clearly also not concerned with everything that could be considered 'language and society'. The problem, therefore, lies in the drawing of the line between *language and society* and *sociolinguistics*. Obviously, different scholars draw the line in different places.
>
> (Trudgill, 1978: 1; emphasis in the original)

Therefore, according to Trudgill, the relationship between *Sociolinguistics* as a discipline and *Language and Society* as spectrum is no bidirectional since all sociolinguistic studies are based on language and society, but not every single language and society study is sociolinguistic. That is, we can use the same data and methodology but with different approaches: one thing is to investigate the relationship between language and society to understand better the structure and nature of languages and their main function in society and another thing is to study those relationships with the purpose of understanding society in a much better way. As Figure 2.5 displays, the studies that deal with Language and Society can be divided into three main groups: disciplines with a) sociological objectives; b) sociological and linguistic objectives; and c) linguistic objectives. The main aims of the first group are not linguistic but rather sociological and they are based on the practical knowledge and common sense that people have of their own society and the way it works (Trudgill, 1978: 2). Ethnomethodology is the discipline that covers this scope of analysis since it deals with the way in which language is used in social interaction to shed light on social knowledge rather than linguistic knowledge. Therefore, according to Trudgill (1983b: 4–5), this discipline could not be considered as a proper sociolinguistic study since language is only used as data and it is mainly used to interpret social knowledge/meaning. As for the second group, it pays attention to those studies whose objectives are both sociological and linguistic. For Trudgill (1983b: 3), this is the most controversial area since "[…] some workers would include the whole of this category within sociolinguistics; others would exclude it totally; yet others would include some areas but not all". The following disciplines are included: the sociology of language, the social psychology of language, anthropological linguistics, discourse analysis, the ethnography of communication and language and gender. Finally, the third group deals with pure linguistic objectives. The following disciplines fall into this category: traditional dialectology, variationist sociolinguistics, geolinguistics, historical sociolinguistics and creole sociolinguistics. Then, this contribution allows us to differentiate those studies considered sociolinguistic in nature from those which are not. In this way, this classification seems to be flexible enough to leave also space for future areas of study.

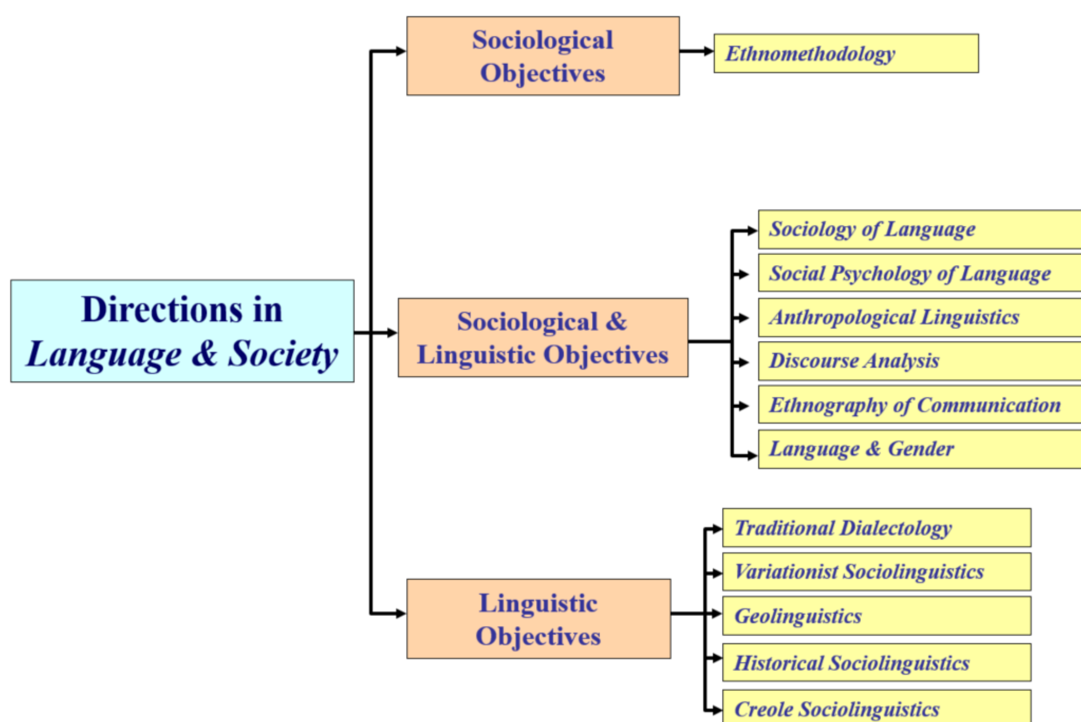

Figure 2.5: Directions in Language and Society (adapted from Hernández-Campoy & Almeida, 2005: 3)

As for the sociolinguistics of variation and change, it has been approached in three different *waves* or approaches: a first wave of quantitative studies focusing on the analysis of variability and demographic categories such as age, gender, social class or ethnic background; the second wave follows a more micro-context approach of social networks, drawing mainly on participant-designed categories and following a social-based approach so as to study individual linguistic variation and identity; and finally a third wave approach, based on anthropological oriented studies, aims at studying and reconstructing the social meaning of certain linguistic variables in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Kopaczyk & Jucker, 2013; Conde-Silvestre, 2016a) which may share similar backgrounds, social aspirations, mentalities, etc. (Eckert, 2012).

2.3. Historical Sociolinguistics

Historical Sociolinguistics (J. Milroy, 1992) or *Socio-historical Linguistics* (Romaine, 1982) is a discipline that developed between the 1960s and 1970s, conceived as an "area of linguistics which is concerned with relationships between language and society and with studies that are made of languages in their social context (rather than in offices and laboratories)" (Trudgill, 1975: 28). The main difference between the two terms to refer to this discipline is that the former pays attention to the "sociolinguistic nature of language change"

whereas the latter concentrates on the achievement of both sociolinguistic and historical linguistic analyses when working together (McColl Millar, 2012: 2). As the label suggests, historical sociolinguistics deals with *history, society* and *language,* studying the evolution of languages in these contexts. Since its origins, the work of a number of scholars interpreting historical data has made this subfield of great interest and reach maturity as well (see Romaine, 1988; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 1989, 1996, 1998, 2003, 2012; Ammon, Mattheier & Nelde, 1999; Jahr, 1999; Kastovsky & Mettinger, 2000; Bergs, 2005; Conde-Silvestre, 2007; Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre, 2012a; amongst others). It is a new field of important interest although it has suffered from lack of representativeness and empirical validity (see Hernández-Campoy & Schilling, 2012). It mainly describes the relationship that exists between languages and their socio-cultural context in a historical dimension and it deals with the linguistic reconstruction of the past in order to explain the present, and vice versa (Labov, 1972: 274, 1994: 21–23). Therefore, it is socially-motivated, concerned with extralinguistic forces which are the cause of linguistic change. As it is socially-embedded, it studies the relationship that exists between a society and the language used in a particular past time.

As Figure 2.6 shows, it is a relatively new field of study that establishes a merger of two significant sub-disciplines of linguistics: historical linguistics and sociolinguistics. In theoretical terms, it should seek "to investigate and provide an account of the forms and uses in which variation may manifest itself in a given speech community over time, and of how particular functions, uses and kinds of variation develop within particular languages, speech communities, social groups, networks and individuals" (Romaine, 1988: x). Accordingly, some linguists and researchers supported and carried out the study of language in its sociocultural context.

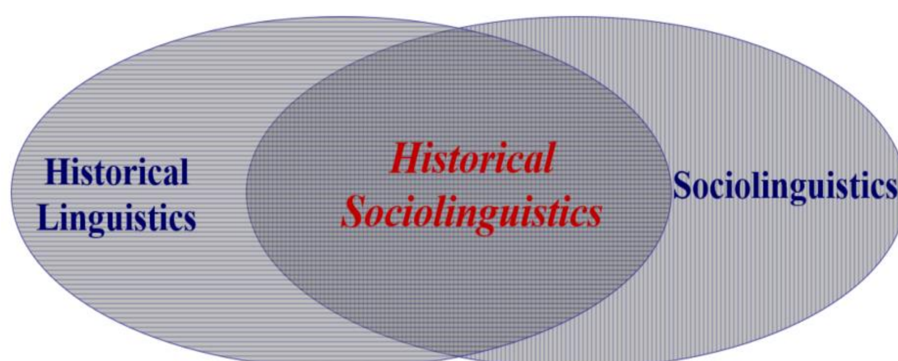

Figure 2.6. Scope of historical sociolinguistics (adapted from Hernández-Campoy, 2013: 11)

The new historical sociolinguistic approach has allowed linguists to observe how language varies according to the social/cultural environment, so its greatest challenge is to reconstruct the language of social communities in the past and study how languages diffused socially and/or temporarily. This is mainly the tracing of language change. In view of this, it should seek to create a framework where the investigator must make the best use of the available written records through some empirical study to acquire validity. This is what makes the discipline so complex due to the lack of spoken material and the limitations of the data available for research (Conde-Silvestre, 2016b: 6). Thus, the main difference between contemporary sociolinguistics and historical sociolinguistics is the data analysed. In the former, the data used is mainly oral and for that reason, it is mostly based on phonology, whereas in the latter, the scholar has to make do with what has been preserved (Bergs, 2005: 13). Accordingly, the researcher on historical sociolinguistics depends only on past data that varies from one period to another in terms of quantity and diversity and which is "restricted to the formal styles and registers, that have been preserved by mere chance" (Conde-Silvestre, 2016b: 6). These circumstances have led Labov to state that historical-socio linguistics is basically "the art of making the best use of bad data" (1994: 11).

This discipline was born because of the need to fill some gaps that historical linguistics did not cover since it did not deal with questions about the use and function of language in historical social contexts. It all started after the distinction of synchrony vs. diachrony made by Saussure. He contended that synchrony focuses on language at a particular point in time, paying attention to a particular linguistic phenomenon, whereas diachrony approaches the development of a linguistic phenomenon throughout time (1916/1959: 100–101). However, Saussure was more in favour of approaching linguistics from a more synchronic structural analysis in order to underline the rules governing language structure.

Thanks to this distinction, different sub-disciplines arose within the field during the twentieth century: *descriptive linguistics* and *historical linguistics* (Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 22). Descriptive linguistics studies how a language works within a contemporary community. On the other hand, historical linguistics analyses how languages develop through time by paying attention to textual data written in different periods. In this sense, it deals with variation since it focuses on how a language has evolved and shaped and which are the factors involved in linguistic changes.

During the twentieth century, many linguists were only providing synchronic descriptions of language. However, most of them were inaccurate because they "were lacking in coverage in ways that impoverished both synchronic and diachronic studies" (Aitchison,

2012: 12). First, some synchronic linguists seem to have ignored stylistic variation, despite the fact that it is obvious that a single speaker could vary the formality of his/her linguistic production; and second, the vast majority of linguists concentrated on clear-cut cases, disregarding any linguistic variation that they could encounter.

In this sense, the bulk of investigation carried out during that period failed to furnish their linguistic analysis with variation. Then, this approach to language change challenged some of Saussure's theories: on the one hand, the development of a language was considered as an essential factor to understand how a language works as a dynamic system. On the other hand, language was not seen as a homogenous entity but as a heterogeneous one, which implies variation through time in different directions. Martinet had stated in this sense the need of approaching language change from a more homogeneous point of view:

> By making investigators blind to a large number of actual complexities, it has enabled scholars, from the founding fathers down to the functionalists and structuralists of today, to abstract a number of fundamental problems, to present for them solutions perfectly valid in the frame of the hypothesis and generally to achieve, perhaps for the first time, some rigor in a research involving man's psyche […] Linguists will always have to revert at times to this pragmatic assumption. But we shall have to stress the fact that a linguistic community is *never* homogenous and hardly ever self-contained.
>
> (Martinet, 1963: vii quoted from Romaine, 1982: 10)

If a language were considered homogenous, it would imply ignoring the transition periods through which a language develops. And this is actually how a language comes to be. In this line, Eugenio Coseriu, one of the linguists who defended the relevance of diachrony for linguistic study, questioned Saussure's attention to the homogeneity and static nature of language. Coseriu's statement proposed a new approach to language, which broke with the traditional theories that defended the static and homogenous nature of languages. According to Conde-Silvestre (2007: 29), Coserius's new slant on the conception of languages sheds some light on linguistic research. Firstly, he assumes that boundaries between synchronic and diachronic views of languages are just left to investigation and that this does not affect the essence of a language and, secondly he takes history on board when he recognises the inherent evolutionary nature of languages and that this contributes to its constant process of change and renewal. Among other scholars who questioned Saussure's view of language are the American linguists Uriel Weinreich, William Labov and Marvin I. Herzog who made their

own contributions to this issue during the late 1960s with their seminal publication of "Empirical Foundations for a Theory of Language Change" (1968), which may be considered as the starting point of historical sociolinguistics. In the same way, they also questioned those static and homogenous theories about language change, opting for a more heterogeneous approach. In order to understand language change it is important to observe and describe structured heterogeneity, which seems to be innate in any living language (Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 31). This new assertion implied the opening of the study of language variation and change. They emphasise the need of the discipline of social history for the reconstruction of historical contexts in which language variation and change take place. Weinreich, Labov and Herzog pointed out that linguistic variation is initiated when a certain social group uses an alternative or innovative linguistic variable, which diffuses throughout other communities, and thus it contributes to the structured heterogeneity of language change (Weinreich, Labov & Herzog, 1968: 187). However, in Weinreich, Labov and Herzog's words: "not all variability and heterogeneity in language structure involves change; but all change involves variability and heterogeneity" (1968: 188). According to their empirical foundations for language change, one may assume that social factors are also involved in the process of linguistic change which opens up the possibility of language variation and, hence, a new field of study:

> Linguistic and social factors are closely interrelated in the development of language change. Explanations which are confined to one or the other aspect, no matter how well constructed, will fail to account for the rich body of regularities that can be observed in empirical studies of language behaviour.
>
> (Weinreich, Labov & Herzog, 1968: 188)

James Milroy (1998) also stated that intralinguistic factors are not only the cause of language change since these are spread socially. Consequently, the field of linguistics should be expanded in order to include social factors too. Therefore, historical sociolinguistics should seek to study language variation and linguistic change from a diachronic point of view.

Suzanne Romaine was the first scholar who focused on methodological principles, which helped to the development of historical sociolinguistics as a discipline in her book *Socio Historical Linguistics. Its Status and Methodology* (1982). She applied methodologies from the field of sociolinguistics to historical data to examine variation when analysing relative markers in Middle Scots texts (ranging from literary genres to religious or even comedies) between 1530s and 1550s. Sociolinguistic methods began to be employed by

researchers in this field in order to explain historical change. After the 1980s, this approach was used when language-internal data was not efficient to explain language changes and a search for extra-linguistic evidence was needed. According to Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2012: 22), it was around the beginning of the twentieth century when dialectologists and historical and anthropological linguists admitted the social nature of languages, although sociolinguistics was not established as a field until the middle of the twentieth century. It was not until the end of the twentieth century when some books started to deal with this issue (see Romaine, 1982). They treated external history and regional variation as being a fundamental part of the history of languages. Later on, a proliferation of books about this topic flourished (Kytö & Rissanen, 1983; Machan & Scott, 1992; Jahr, 1999; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 1989, 1996). According to Romaine, when analysing linguistic variables from any written or oral sample, it is important to notice that they both can contain differences. If we follow a sociolinguistic analysis to show these differences, it is important to “observe the conditions or factors that may influence them; and it is here that sociolinguistic methodology is applicable” (1982: 13). Romaine’s proposal was to apply those sociolinguistic methods of analysis to the realm of historical sociolinguistic research. She suggests that “historical linguistics and sociolinguistics have a similar close relationship, i.e. that in some respects the descriptive tasks of one coincide with those of the other” (1982: 13). In this way, she is proposing to cross-fertilise historical linguistics with sociolinguistics under a same framework which explains variationist linguistics in a community through time, in other words, to reconstruct language with the need of a social context. Conde-Silvestre renders Romaine’s words (1998: 1452–1453) as follows:

> En tanto que la sociolingüística observa las relaciones de producción en sociedad con el objetivo de comprender las conexiones entre ésta y el lenguaje, esta disciplina es histórica. A la inversa, desde el momento en que el lenguaje es en esencia un producto social situado en un contexto también social, su propia historia debe reflejar estas características y, por consiguiente, la lingüística histórica debe ocuparse de cuestiones sociales.
>
> (Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 30)

In line with Romaine’s formulation, Bergs also pointed out that historical sociolinguistics should consider the social side of languages. Therefore, historical sociolinguistics is concerned not only with linguistic change in the past but also with “socially motivated linguistic variation at one particular point in the past” (2005: 12). This assumption squarely falls into the realm of language variation too. It also entails that this discipline is interested in

tracing back language change from a diachronic perspective, being this something intrinsic to the natural development of languages. Following this line of knowledge, as languages are social, and they are shaped through time under contact between different social communities (Hickey, 2012), historical sociolinguistics mostly focuses on reconstructing those extralinguistic factors that are the forces that may have caused variation and change in past stages of a language.

2.3.1. Methodological problems of historical sociolinguistics: bad-data problem

At the beginning, the procedure to study language variation was to observe the speech of speakers from different communities in order to provide an explanation of why there are different ways of saying the same thing, in Labov's words: "the need to understand why anyone says anything" (Labov, 1972: 207). Within the sociolinguistic field, the central problem in collecting data has been explained as "The Observer's Paradox" by Labov (1972: 61): "[o]ur goal is to oberve the way people use language when they are not being observed". However, when this issue was approached from a diachronic point of view, many problems arose since the language was not spoken but written. At first glance, this matter should not limit the possibility of research since, as Romaine stated, "spoken and written languages are instances of the same language embodied in different media" (Romaine, 1982: 14). Nevertheless, as Bergs points out, "the projection of present-day sociolinguistics into the past is only one part of historical sociolinguistics" (Bergs, 2005: 12). Methodologically, the main task of historical sociolinguistics is "to develop a set of procedures for the reconstruction of language in its social context, and to use the findings of sociolinguistics as controls on the process of reconstruction and as a means of informing theories of change" (Romaine, 1988: 1453, quoted from Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre, 2012: 66). Therefore, historical sociolinguistics is a pure linguistic reconstruction, but sociolinguistically speaking, it is concerned with the impact of social interaction on language across time.

Doing historical sociolinguistics does not only entail extrapolating methods and procedures from synchronic sociolinguistics, but data must be interpreted in a different way. While sociolinguists can "manipulate" the way they obtain data, "historical sociolinguists have to make do with what is there" (Bergs, 2005: 13). Informants cannot be interviewed in order to elicit some pieces of information that would be crucial for our research. Therefore, the methodological problems that arise in this subfield are mainly due to the fact that interpretation of historical data has to inevitably rely on the written records from previous periods (which are incomplete, fragmented and in some cases non-representative) (Schneider,

2013: 81–87; Milroy & Gordon, 2003: 177). "Ego documents" have been a great source of research on historical sociolinguistics since they can take the form of private letters, testimonies, diaries, journals, travel accounts, etc. They inform the reader about culture, society, religion or even medicine of the time as well as their author's profiles and socio-demographic backgrounds. Thus, as stated above, researchers have to be capable of analysing language change by reconstructing the fragmentary data that have been preserved to date as well as the socio-cultural situations of the periods under study:

> Texts are produced by a series of historical accidents; amateurs may complain about this predicament, but the sophisticated historian is grateful that anything has survived at all. The great art of the historical linguist is to make the best of this bad data, 'bad' in the sense that it may be fragmentary, corrupted, or many times removed from the actual productions of native speakers.
>
> (Labov, 1972: 98)

Indeed, as Conde-Silvestre aptly states (2007: 35–40), the historical data may be deficient since a) they are isolated from the original contexts in which they took place; b) it is difficult to reconstruct the range of written registers, dialects or styles as they are subject to time depth; c) texts produced by males from upper social layers are more abundant than from lower social ranks, females having had limited educational opportunities to access literacy; and d) the extralinguistic factors that could have exerted some influenced on the linguistic behaviour of the informants may be unknown and sometimes difficult to reconstruct. Therefore, it is not possible for the researcher to improve material, personal details about the authors, dates and other relevant information from the social context that can directly affect the language. Sometimes we just have to be satisfied with fragmented pieces of letters without any kind of reference that allows researchers to trace back the origins of speakers. Therefore, reconstructing the historical context would be a great labour, sometimes without any conclusive results since we are dealing with an area of knowledge which is considered a field of conjecture and hypotheses due to the lack of data and the difficulties to have access to real native speakers of the period being studied. However, historical sociolinguistics has devised some tools to sort out these flaws or inconsistencies.

One of the main methodologies that historical sociolinguistics follows is the so-called *Uniformitarian Principle*, whose fundamental assumption relies on the fact that the same mechanisms that promoted variation and language change in the past are not so unlike the ones used today, since the influence of social interaction upon grammar and phonology in the past continues today in the same way. Succinctly, the linguistic forces of the past, together

with those which operate in the present, do not utterly seem to be poles apart (see Hernández-Campoy & Schilling, 2012). Charles Lyell was the one who firstly conceived this idea within the field of Geology. What he supported in his work *Principles of Geology* (1833) was the fact that it is possible to infer knowledge about certain geological processes that operated in the past by observing the present ones (Christy, 1983: ix).

Suzanne Romaine, one of the most influential researchers in the field, claimed in her book *Socio-Historical Linguistics. Its Status and Methodology* (1982) that the same forces which operate in language today are similar to those that operated in the past, after Labov's study (1972: 275). Following Romaine (1982), one of the most important findings of Labovian sociolinguistics in which the *principle of uniformity* is based was the relationship between the social class continuum and the stylistic continuum. Labov cut the social-class continuum into social classes in such a way that it best reflects the regularities in linguistic data (Downes, 1984/1998: 110). Thus, if a linguistic pattern is "more common in the lower than in the upper class, it will also be more common in less formal than in more formal styles for all speakers" (Romaine, 1982: 123). From this assumption, Romaine concludes that:

> If linguistic variants are assumed to be embedded in both social and stylistic continua in a predictable way, then a framework which explicates this imbrication represents a means of uncovering social context in historical records; assuming, of course, that we can reconstruct a fully elaborated stylistic continuum, then we can speculate about its likely connections with the social continuum, and thus "reconstruct social context" by a process of extrapolation.
>
> (Romaine, 1982: 123–124)

Hence, what can be concluded from the contributions of the *principle of uniformity* to historical sociolinguistics is that "the analytical paradigm used by variation sociolinguistics in synchronic studies of oral language is entirely applicable to historical sociolinguistics studies" (Miralles, 2003: 4). Taking into account that the factors that affect language changes are always the same, it helps sociolinguists to reconstruct the social context where variation was embedded in the past.

The main problems that arise in this discipline stem from the data sources since, typically they are incomplete and defective (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2012: 53). To put it differently, Hernández-Campoy and Schilling state that historical sociolinguistics suffers from a lack of *validity* and *representativeness* because the historical data is incomplete and they may or not reflect the spoken language of the time. Moreover, they affirm that there are seven main problems that a historical sociolinguist researcher may encounter: "a)

representativeness, b) empirical validity, c) invariation, d) authenticity, e) authorship, f) social and historical validity, and g) standard ideology" (2012: 63–66).

Studies of language change need access data so as to create a fruitful body of research. Thanks to the development of electronic corpora, the possibility of reconstructing and comparing registers was facilitated and, hence the topic of language variation and change became one of the most researched topics in English historical sociolinguistics. The discipline of historical sociolinguistics deals with different paradigms and areas of research that fall back on variables such as gender, socio-economic status, education or mobility.

Regarding some limitations of the field, we find that data is preserved accidentally, without any kind of selection or representativeness of all past stages of language. However, in contemporary research, sociolinguists are able to select the informants, context, regional background, genre, etc., for a specific purpose of study. Historical sociolinguists can only work on the available material in order to get their results. This can lead to certain problems; for instance, insufficient social representativeness can bias the results of a study since illiterate people were not able to write. Therefore, it is possible to have a social group under-represented. Raumolin-Brunberg adds a further problem whenever written material is dealt with: "there is an inevitable temporal gap between the introduction of new forms of speech and their first recordings in written texts" (1996a: 17). The definition that Wyld gives to this problem is particularly accurate: "the drama of linguistic change is enacted not in manuscripts nor inscriptions, but in the mouths and minds of men" (1927: 21). As regards this last problem, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg have proposed a way to deal with this material by arguing that it is necessary to analyse a written text in much the same way as spoken language.

Nevertheless, Romaine reacted against all these limitations pointing out that from the beginning of sociolinguistics, researchers have focused only on spoken language. For instance, contemporary studies mainly focus on the spoken language of a particular group of people in a social context. However, researchers have not taken into account other forms of producing language such as correspondence. The latter is another means of communication in which linguistic choices are revealed and sociolinguistic studies can be developed. Hence, considering the sociolinguistic tradition of study, Romaine arrived at the conclusion that there is a general postulate that predominates in sociolinguistic theory; that is, the primacy of spoken forms over written forms. Sociolinguistics has always emphasised the spoken language in its use of actual speech data avoiding other forms of language such as written material. Romaine stated that if the sociolinguistic field only considers spoken material as

"adequate for research" the whole of sociolinguistic research would be "very restricted in scope and application" (1982: 122). Moreover, she clarified that not all written material is a product of the speakers' reflection of spoken data since legal language, for instance, is essentially written in nature. She accepted that historical data could be fragmentary and 'bad', in the sense of incomplete, and that sometimes this lack of data would be essential to contribute important information to the reconstruction of the social context in order to arrive at the origin of linguistic change. However, she maintained that written and spoken material should not be compared. Written data is the only source of material available in order to trace back in time linguistic changes:

> It seems best to regard speech and writing as types of linguistic behaviours or events which may be realized in different channels … spoken and written language are instances of the same language embodied in different media.
>
> (Romaine, 1982: 14)

Therefore, the kind of data provided by written texts should not be considered a mirror of spoken material; researchers have to understand the written data in itself, analysing it with the help of other disciplines and backed by sociolinguistic methods, but avoiding the comparison with the spoken synchronic material. In addition, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) have pointed that there are some advantages of historical data, that is, it should not be considered inferior to present-day material. Firstly, they focus on the time depth, which offers the option to carry out research in real-time. Secondly, historical sociolinguistics has overcome the problem of the "Observer's Paradox", proposed by Labov (1972: 209). That is, when carrying out an interview, the presence of the researcher could alter the linguistic behaviour of the speaker with the general tendency to use less spontaneous speech. Finally, written data would not be biased or affected by the following tenet of accommodation theory, that is, "in linguistic interaction the interlocutors often try to reduce their dissimilarities through speech convergence" (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 28).

From the uniformitarian principle, it follows that the same linguistic mechanisms of change that operate in the present can be used to explain the past and vice versa (Labov, 1972: 161). As it is well known, Romaine promoted this uniformitarian principle as basic to sociolinguistic reconstruction:

> The linguistic forces which operate today and are observable around us are not unlike those which have operated in the past. This principle is of course basic to purely linguistic reconstruction as

> well, but sociolinguistically speaking, it means that there is no reason for believing that language did not vary in the same patterned ways in the past as it has been observed to do today.
>
> (Romaine, 1988: 1454)

This implies that those linguistic theories that operate in the present are worth bearing in mind when analysing past societies as well. Labov drew attention to the main problems when reconstructing past models of society. He coined the term *historical paradox* (1994: 11) to emphasise that we do not know how different the past was from the present and thus "[t]he task of historical linguists is to explain the differences between the past and the present; but […] there is no way of knowing how different it was" (1994: 21). This quote derives mainly from the existing differences between the past and the present and from the fact that socio-historical linguists have to deal with the bad-data problem, since the data may be incomplete and/or defective, in contrast with the possibility of accessing primary data of contemporary sociolinguists. As Schneider (2013) remarked, despite inevitably having to rely on written sources and the limitations that this entails, historical sociolinguistics shoud not be considered as a second-best solution, but instead as the only best solution to study the language change and its development when oral records are not available. In Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg's (2003: 26) words: "[t]rue, historical data can be characterized as 'bad' in many ways, but we would rather place the emphasis on making the best use of the data available".

In reconstructing the past for historical sociolinguistic studies, it is important to pursue concepts that adequately portrait historical realities. They should describe the relationship between society and language without assuming that they can be compared exactly the same to those of the present day. Therefore, present-day observations of and approaches to social variables should not be readily considered as valid when describing past social variables since they have to be recovered from the historical context they emanate from. Social variables such as age or gender are commonly reported in the study of language change as factors that reflect the speaker's features. Historical practices of male and female language use have long been studied in sociolinguistic research. Sex has been regarded as a demographic category in early studies in which male and female linguistic patterns have been compared (Fischer, 1958; Wolfram, 1969; Trudgil, 1974: 90–132). Some scholars use the term *sex* to refer to a biological feature, which can serve as a social variable (Coates, 1986/1993; Eckert, 1989a; Labov, 1990). Others prefer the term *gender* (Milroy & Milroy, 1993; Labov, 2001) to focus on the social role the different genders exhibit in society. Therefore, sex is associated more with individual features of a single speaker and gender with social group features.

Gender differences seem to have also played a significant role in sociolinguistics. Eckert (1989a: 246): claims that the speakers' social practices are key to language variation: "[l]ike age, sex is a biological category that serves as a fundamental basis for the differentiation of roles, norms, and expectations in all societies. It is these roles, norms and expectations that constitute gender, the social construction of sex." However, as Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak (2012: 307–313) aptly described, there are some problems regarding the historical reconstruction of gender identities for historical sociolinguistic study. Among these problems, the researcher should ensure gender identities without falsely assuming their condition by only their biological sex or compare them to those of the present day. Therefore, to overcome these obstacles, it is important to bear in mind that present-day descriptions of linguistic social variables may differ from those used in different historical periods. As trying to find some solutions for this, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 113): resort to models that have been developed for cross-cultural comparison, such as the one proposed by Allardt (1989). He developed a social model based on human needs that should be taken into account when assessing the living conditions in a particular society at a macro level. He uses the terms *Having*, *Loving* and *Being* to refer to these conditions. *Having* refers to material conditions; *Loving* deals with basic human needs used to relate to other people in order to create social identities and *Being* stands for that human need used to get involved into society.

Labov (2001: 293) used the term *gender paradox* to refer to women's tendency to "[c]onform more closely than men to sociolinguistic norms that are overtly prescribed, but conform less than men when they are not". He observed that women are the ones who lead a change as they respond to the social status of linguistic variables faster than men. However, when dealing with historical gender roles, the main gender difference that has been investigated is men's and women's use of the standard language through education. Nevalainen (2000b: 53) draws the following conclusion when analysing gender differences in the evolution of standard English: "[w]omen were not in the forefront of the professionally led change away from multiple negation in Early Modern English. This gender difference may be best explained in terms of the two sexes' differential access to education in general and to professional specializations in particular". Historically, it has been considered that women were in charge of the education of children and it was the responsibility of the mother to teach her children at home. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) studied the gender pattern in English language change during Tudor and Stuart times. According to them (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 110), in late medieval and early modern times, one gender depended on the other since "[i]t was the roles in society they were destined for that

determined, for instance, the kind of education given to boys and girls in the past". They also claimed that in the case of females there seems to be a clear "[f]emale advantage in language change regardless of the social embedding of the process" (2003: 131). This clearly confirms that gender differences could be regarded as more decisive variables than social status in the period investigated. Furthermore, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 116) declared that men from the gentry and the nobility social ranks were the ones who spent a lot of time studying classical education and women from upper ranks being proficient in their mother tongue against Labov's assumption which describes that "for women to use norms that differ from everyday speech, they must have access to these norms" (1990: 213).

Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 116–118) reviewed various analyses regarding sex as a variable of significance to language variation. In a study carried out by Romaine (1982: 167–170), she identified that women seemed to use relative markers' strategies closer to vernacular norms than men by analysing a corpus of Middle Scots. Some years later, Rydén and Brorström (1987: 206) and Kytö (1997: 50–51) found that women were also closer to conservative forms when using the form *have* more than the older *be* in constructions like ("they are come" vs. "they have come") in the course of 1700 to 1800. However, this pattern of change had been more accurately associated with the speaker's social mobility or geographical origins during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in later works (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 38–40; Nevalainen, 2006: 184–193). Moreover, Kytö (1993b) also identified that women used more the *-s* ending for the third-person singular simple present-tense than men from 1500 to 1640 in the *Helsinki Corpus.* In synchronic studies, Trudgill (1974) examined the pronunciation of *-ing* among female and male informants in Norwich. He found that [ɪn] was pronounced more frequently among men than women. This indicates that women pronounced the standard variable [ɪŋ] more frequently. This is supported by another study carried out by Trudgill in which he found that women tended to use the most prestigious and standard linguistic variables more frequently than men because they have a higher awareness of the social role of language (1972: 187–188). However, regarding diachronic studies as for differences in sex variables, little amount of data written by women is available, and thus, the vast majority of them were from upper social ranks.

In overcoming these difficulties and to minimise the effects of these paradoxes, historical sociolinguistics has luckily been assisted by other complementary disciplines: *Social History*, to study the social conditions of past societies and contribute to a social reconstruction, and *Corpus Linguistics* (as mentioned in section 2.3.2). The associations

between these two disciplines have enriched this hybrid subfield, conferring both “empirical ease” and “historical confidence” (see Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 1–15; and Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre, 2012: 3).

2.3.2. Social History

The discipline of social history deals with the study of societies from a diachronic perspective and it has contributed to the field of historical sociolinguistics in the explanation of human societies, their structure and development in the past as important bases for the reconstruction of the social context accompanying linguistic variation and change (Burke, 1992: 2). In this way, it has become an auxiliary/ancillary discipline of historical sociolinguistics that offers meaningful information when reconstructing important aspects such as social roles, social mobility and structure and connections between genders or power, among other important aspects in human relationships. Therefore, its main goal is to provide a sociological framework to the analysis of language change by reconstructing the social context for any linguistic variable under study. The key is then to reflect the impact of society upon language change, which caused members of different social groups to use linguistic variables in a particular way. Thus, it is difficult to talk intelligently about linguistic change without the knowledge of this discipline since social historical factors can be applied to explain the linguistic change phenomenon.

An important aspect to take into account is to avoid anachronism when reconstructing social models from the past since transference from current models of society to the past can be mistakenly applied when analysing the historical sociolinguistic aspects of the linguistic variable being studied (Burke, 1992: 3; Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 64). Thus, the goal is to reconstruct the past from the information we obtained when studying historical documents and data. Another important aspect to take into account is the fact that the reconstruction of past social models changes according to the period under study:

> As each specific measure of social differentiation has proved unreliable, historians have come to view social identity as an amalgam of factors –strongest when a number of different measures work together, but often less clearcut. The complete correlation of such indicators as occupation, wealth, birth, life-style and political power is only found at the very top and bottom of society.
>
> (Barry, 1994: 17)

Nevalainen and Raumonlin-Brunberg (2003: 32–38) offer a reconstruction of the social and economic conditions during Tudor and Stuart England (1485–1603), which could have had an influence on language change in the English language. They pay attention in their proposal to demography, political life, economy, social order, family and kinship, and culture. They also describe the social ranks and status in Tudor and Stuart England as represented in Figure 2.7. During early medieval times, society is traditionally arranged into main states: clergy, nobility and labourers. This classification gave way to a more complex social division in which hierarchical terms were also considered:

> The nobility and upper reaches of the gentry proper formed the absolute elite, comprising only a couple of per cent of the population. The upper clergy, the archbishops and bishops, have been placed among the nobility on the basis of their influential position, signaled, for instance, by the title 'Lord'. At the other end, there is no difficulty in placing labourers, cottagers and pauper at the lowest rungs of the social ladder.
>
> (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 33)

In this model of social structure the main dividing line is drawn between the gentry and the non-gentry with a subdivision in the first group for the nobility, in which we can find royalty, dukes, etc., and gentry proper, which includes from baronets to gentlemen. The rank of title is also included such as the use of *Sir*, *Dame* for the upper gentry and *Mr*, *Mrs* for the lower gentry. With time, the titles of *Master* and *Mistress*, from the lower gentry, spread also among the professionals and wealthy merchants (2003: 33). In a similar way, a further subdivision is established according to title under the category of non-gentry: *Goodman* and *Goodwife* for yeomen and merchants and the name of the craft is used for the rest of the non-gentry such as carpenter, tradesman, etc. Finally, they also classify society according to professional levels like captains, secretaries, doctors, teachers, etc. Thus, the main objective is to try to picture the linguistic behaviour that members from different social ranks used to exhibit in order to study language variation.

Estate		Grade	Title*
		Royalty	
GENTRY	Nobility	Duke	Lord, Lady
		Archbishop	
		Marquess	
		Earl	
		Viscount	
		Baron	
		Bishop	
	Gentry proper	Baronet 1611–	Sir, Dame
		Knight	
		Esquire	Mr, Mrs
		Gentleman	
	Professions	Army Officer (Captain, etc.), Government Official (Secretary of State, etc.), Lawyer, Medical Doctor (Doctor), Merchant, Clergyman, Teacher, etc.	
NON-GENTRY		Yeoman	Goodman, Goodwife
		Merchant	
		Husbandman	
		Craftsman	(Name of Craft: Carpenter, etc.)
		Tradesman	
		Artificer	
		Labourer	
		Cottager	
		Pauper	

Figure 2.7. Social order and status in Tudor and Stuart England (from Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 36)

2.3.3. Corpus linguistics

The discipline of corpus linguistics deals with the treatment of language through digitised corpora and it relies on collections of different texts types which represent "a sample of a particular variety or use of language(s) and presented in machine readable form so that this language variety and/or use of language(s) can be studied on the computer" (Cantos, 2012: 99). In this way, corpus linguistics makes easier the study of socio-historical linguistics due to the quick access to the data. In this way, it permits the extraction and extrapolation of linguistic variables considered to be quite useful for the analysis of linguistic variation and change based on quantitative data and empirical evidence. Linguistic corpora permit the researcher to extract and extrapolate linguistic variables based on quantitative data. Hence large-scale digital corpora offer new avenues for quantitative and qualitative studies of language change and variation supported with empirical evidence.

The rise of machine-readable text corpora has broken new grounds in linguistic research (see Sebba & Fligelstone, 2001; Schneider, 2013; Bauer 2002; and Cantos, 2012, 2013). Over the years, linguistic variation and change have been a problem in the domain of

linguistics, since researchers have tended to arrive at small-scale hypothetical models for their descriptions of language, hence restricting their goals to limited insights in the field of language variation. To a certain degree, this situation is related to the fact that linguists have not been well equipped when it comes to carrying out these empirical analyses. Cantos (2012: 101) states that "corpus-based research has produced some expected results and others that have been unexpected but revealing in the areas of variation regarding the use of grammatical and lexical devices; methodologically these studies offer a prospect for discovering general principles of linguistic change". Therefore, corpus linguistics has provided new insights into different fields of study related to language. Not only is this area of interest to modern linguists, but also historical linguists employ this ground-breaking branch for their linguistic research. The need to resort to diachronic corpora for historical sociolinguistic analysis has fostered the use of electronic corpora among scholars of the field. Therefore, the collection of electronic written corpora from the past has helped historical sociolinguistics to develop considerably since the use of computers has come to be a very useful tool to deal with real data and avoid knowledge based only on intuition. Thus, this offers a higher degree of reliability and potential benefits to the field because of the use of real texts, which are fruitful to testify (socio)linguistic changes through time in a particular language. In this way, the mere observation of processes of language variation and change that were only based on intuition are left behind to introduce a more precise and exact way of studying them. Then, linguistic corpora permit the reconstruction of dialects, sociolects and different registers together with the study in detail of variables by isolating them so as to study language variation in more detail (Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 48). Therefore, at this level, it is important to mention that corpus linguistics has come to be one of the best methods to do historical sociolinguistics by making the best use of bad data as Labov claimed, referring to 'bad' as the preserved data from the past that can be "fragmentary, corrupted or […] removed from the actual productions of native speakers" (1972: 100). Conde-Silvestre (2012a: 183) lists some advantages of research on historical sociolinguistics by utilising digitised corpora. Among the main advantages, he states that the analysis drawn from corpora is both qualitative and quantitative which means that the data extracted can be "quantified and subject to computational and statistical methodologies which, in a way, add up to this reliability dimension". Moreover, he also describes that scholars who do research on historical sociolinguistics can explore language variation and change in the past since the digitised data "allows comparisons to be made across extralinguistic variables […] that can be correlated with linguistic items traced in the corpus". Consequently, corpus linguistics can contribute to

overcome this problem by providing the researchers with all the texts that have been preserved from different periods. In this way, researchers can process, in a simultaneous way, all these texts for a more correct and precise analysis of the selection of variables under study.

Among the most relevant and pivotal corpora of the history of the English language we can find the *Helsinki Corpus* compiled by a group of linguists from the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Helsinki, lead by Matti Rissanen during the last part of the twentieth century. It contains a diachronic part, covering the period from c. 750 to 1710s. It also includes a dialectal part, which was compiled by postgraduate students who carried out transcripts of interviews to native speakers of rural villages from Great Britain in 1970s. Particularly useful in this connection is one of the major corpora in the history of the English language that has enabled the study and reconstruction of sociolinguistic information (age, sex, period, types of interaction, etc.): this is the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC) (Nevalainen *et al*. 1998) and its extension the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extended* (CEECE) (Nevalainen *et al*. 2000–). These are collections of personal letters ranging from 1410s to 1800s. It was compiled by the Research Unit for Variation and Change (Varieng) at the University of Helsinki and lead by Terttu Nevalainen. It was principally compiled to facilitate sociolinguistic research into the history of the English language and its validity has been attested in the study of "Social stratification in Tudor English" by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1996).

Among other historical corpora that have been of a great utility and that have supposed a significant achievement in the study of linguistic change in the history of English are the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*, compiled by scholars from the University of Michigan, or the *Innsbruck Computer Archive of Middle English Texts* (ICAME) (Markus *et al*. 1997) compiled by Manfred Markus from the University of Innsbruck with more than 5 million words.[2]

On the other hand, the current development of technology has also contributed to the accuracy and precision of the field by providing new electronic tools and software to study and analyse the behaviour of words and language patterns in different types of texts. Among the electronic software that is pivotal and popular in corpus linguistics are *Wordsmith* (Scott, 2016), *Antcom* (Anthony, 2008, 2019) or the cutting-edge online *Sketch Engine* (Kilgarriff *et al*. 2014). Thanks to them, we can explore how languages function by carrying out concordances, syntactic/semantic analysis or the study of collocations and word

[2] For more information about the different historical corpora available to date, visit http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/index.html.

combinations. Hence, these tools have facilitated the tough work that historical linguists have to go through for the study of diachronic linguistic analysis.

Chapter 2 has intended to offer a view on the development of sociolinguistics and historical sociolinguistics disciplines but paying special attention to the historical sociolinguistic field and its main methodological problems and solutions that have been suggested by different scholars to date. The next chapter explores the main theories on language variation and change along with current sociolinguistic models based on patterns of stylistic variation and their application to historical data.

Chapter 3
Language Variation and Change

"A principle is a generalization that is unrestricted in its application in time or space".

(Labov, 1994: 13)

3.1. Principles of language change

According to Labov (1994: 13), the main difference between a principle and a generalisation is the use of inductive or deductive approaches to linguistic theories. Inductive approaches focus on generalisations that are created as the data base grows whereas deductive approaches "move from one or two examples to the statement of an unrestricted (or "universal") principle, and then attempt to predict other facts or data from the logical implications of this and other principles" (1994: 13). Thus, the work of a sociolinguist is to try to create a balance between "inductive prudence" and "deductive presumption" (Labov, 1994: 13).

The process of language variation and change is intrinsic to the sociolinguistic study. Every single language is a living entity that changes or varies through time and in different context or situations. These types of changes are obvious when comparing, for example, biblical texts, since they have been translated in every age. In the following extracts, the four versions of the same passage of Matthew 13: 24–30, in OE, ME, EModE and Modern English are provided to observe the evolution of the English language:

Old English:

Heofona rice is geworden þæm men gelic þe seow god sæd on his æcere. Soþlice, þa þa men slepon, þa com his feonda sum, and oferseow hit mid coccele onmiddan þæm hwæte, and ferde þanon.

Middle English:

The kyngdom of heuenes is maad lijk to a man, that sewe good seed in his feld. And whanne men slepten, his enemy cam, and sewe aboue taris in the myddil of whete, and wente awei.

Early Modern English:

[T]he kingdom of heven is lijk a man that soweth good seed in his feld, and whilest the men weer asleep his enmie cam and sowed darnel among the middest of his corn and went his wais.

Modern English:

The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off.

(Brinton & Arnovick, 2006/2011: 11–12)

Regarding vocabulary, basic words such as *good*, *man* or *seed* remain nearly the same in all four passages. However, there are some differences from one period to another such as in the words *coccel*, *taris* or *darnel*. These differences may reflect changes in cultural practices or new words that were borrowed as old ones drop out. With respect to word order, we can notice how in the OE passage, *heaven* is placed before *kingdom* but in the rest, *kingdom* comes first. This reveals how the English language has been changing through time undergoing different types of changes whose explanations may be based on (socio)linguistic factors.

The main processes involved in the development of a language are biological and social. Therefore, the study of language change and variation follows an interdisciplinary approach with different methods to explain this phenomenon. Changes in languages are considered to have their first stage in the behaviour of the speakers towards a linguistic variable. Chambers and Trudgill (1980: 50) define a linguistic variable as a “linguistic unit

with two or more variants involved in covariation with other social and/or linguistic variables". From this assumption, we interpret that linguistic variables tend to vary in form but not in meaning. According to Winter (1999: 68), "[i]f there were no variation starting with competing, but coexisting, variants and the eventual survival of just one of the variants, it would be impossible to understand the phenomenon of linguistic change". Following from this quote, we consider, therefore, that the primary concern of sociolinguistics is then language as used in groups of speakers.

When there is any kind of variation in the speech of speakers, change is manifested also within the speech community through time. According to Hickey (2012: 390–391) language change is triggered by two main factors: awareness of change or/and salience and markedness. Speakers of a language may be more conscious of a change in language when social forces are involved. The attitudes towards a salient feature may be positive or negative and,[1] therefore, it is frequently associated with prestige. However, as Eckert showed (2000), prestige in a language is not always associated with upper social class since it can be also connected to local levels. She demonstrated that individuals' identities are shaped by their inmeditate context and their participation in different communities of practice. Moreover, individuals' interest in accessing different communities of practices is marked by their place in society, embodied in macro-level classifications such as gender, class or age. Not every single pattern of change achieves success in becoming established in a linguistic system but it is also true that there appears to be certain patterns of change which are preferable and more frequent in a speech community. Moreover, as Romaine claimed:

> [I]f a [linguistic] feature is found to be more common in the lower classes than in the upper classes, it will also be more common in the less formal than the most formal styles, with each social group occupying a similar position in each continuum.
>
> (Romaine, 1980: 228)

Labov (1990) firstly proposed two main principles of linguistic change: a) men use more non-standard linguistic forms than women in stable sociolinguistic stratification and b) women

[1] Meyerhoff (2006: 71) describes that in sociolinguistics a *salient feature* refers "to how readily a particular variant is perceived/heard […]. Sometimes refers to a non-linguistic factor that the context or participants appear to have foregrounded in discourse". Thus, we sometimes perceive a particular individual or group "to be most salient at a particular stage in an interaction" (which means that the identity of the subject(s) is activitated by the context of the interaction.

tend to use more incoming forms than men in most linguistic changes. Later, these were revised and extended to four ones (Labov, 1994, 2001):

- Principle 1 (change from below): They emerge from a central social group which tend to be located "in the interior of the socioeconomic hierarchy" (Labov, 2001: 188). This principle stems from those studies that exhibit the curvilinear pattern. Therefore, what follows from this principle is the fact that linguistic change is lead by people from lower middle and upper middle classes ("interior" social classes) (Labov, 2001: 188).

- Principle 2 (stability): Women exhibit an increase in the use of prestige variants and a decline in the use of stigmatised forms in constrast with men, in the studies of stable sociolinguistic variables (Labov, 2001: 266).

- Principle 3 (change from above): women tend to use more diffusing forms than men, who use local linguistic forms at a higher rate (Labov, 2001: 274).

- Principle 4 (change from below): women employ more use of innovative forms than men (Labov, 2001: 275, 292–293).

Labov is mainly paying attention here to the *gender paradox*, by which women ten to conform more frequently to linguistic variants overtly proscribed. However, in the study of variation and change, other factors should be considered, such as social factors and the nature of the linguistic change as well.

Based on the assumption of structured heterogeneity, Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (1968) established a research program to study language change in historical sociolinguistics. This is based on the assumption that the different forms of a variable are structured along contextual, demographic, interactional and linguistic dimensions. In traditional variationist studies, variation has been studied under the categories of register and style, and it may be influenced by aspects of the linguistic system, apart from contextual or social factors (Labov, 1972: 218). As it has been mentioned, these authors (1968), described language as having a structured heterogeneity with internal (dependent) and external (independent) language variables. As J. Milroy (1992: 4) asserted, the role of speakers is vital to study language change. Speakers are subject to social conditions and, therefore, language is conditioned by

these changes. This linguistic phenomenon may be motivated by external or internal factors. The actuation of change must be triggered by external factors (Hickey, 2012: 394) if change would be internal, determined by structural properties of a language system, then it would be complicated to clarify why internally-motivated changes occur when they do and not at other times.

Hernández-Campoy and Almeida (2005: 46) defined the dependent variable as a linguistic variable that shows variation depending on socio-demographic, stylistic or linguistic factors. Moreover, they also assert that those linguistic variables that show social or contextual significance are called sociolinguistic variables. Following from this, these authors describe the independent variable as extralinguistic variables which help the researcher attach social significance to the variable under study (2005: 56). Therefore, as Hickey stated (2012: 388–389), those changes in a language which are independent of any social factor and that are connected with structural considerations are called "*internally-motivated changes*". On the contrary, "*externally-motivated change*" refers to any kind of variation that is triggered by social considerations. As Labov (1966/2006) and Trudgill (1974) have described, these later changes are normally associated to different types of reactions to the speech of certain social groups exhibited by speakers. These reactions have been identified as accommodation (Trudgill, 1986: 1–38) towards a social group or dissociation (Hickey, 2013: 537–554) from a social group mostly on the level of pronunciation.

In order to study variation in a language, it is vital to carry out studies of language change from a diachronic perspective. The study of language variation and change has mainly focused on empirical analyses of naturalistic talk, gathered through a sociolinguistic interview (Labov, 1966/2006, 1972). This task is mainly carried out by listening to the informant. However, when studying language variation and change from a diachronic perspective, spoken records are not available. Therefore, the only material available to study the development of any kind of variable to assess language variation is written documents. This type of material provides the researcher with a representation of speech events, acting as a kind of filter. According to Schneider (2013: 58), when analysing these written documents, the work of variationist linguists is to observe what he calls a "*Principle of Filter Removal*: a written record of a speech event stands like a filter between the words as spoken and the analyst". In other words, what Schneider is proposing is that the task of the linguist is to identify this "filter" and remove it to assess the relationship between the recording process and the speech act so as to reconstruct the speech event as precisely as possible. As Schneider mentioned (2013: 59), one of the basic requirements for a text to be considered useful for

variationist analysis is that it should be as close to real speech as possible. Moreover, to facilitate correlations with extralinguistic factors, the written records should stem from authors from different social classes, age groups or genders to represent different stylistic-levels.

In general terms, the diffusion of a linguistic change could be the result of generational differences or interpersonal relations. In this sense, it seems that language change is conditioned by contextual, geographical, social and even temporal factors. The context in which linguistic variation occurs is key when it comes to studying language change. Thus, assuming that free variation is possible in linguistic change may be a vague or sketchy view on the matter, since it is always constrained by some external factors. Following Flydal's theories on the architecture and structure of languages (1952), Coseriu (1969: 149, 1970: 32) reviewed the theory and proposed a typology of linguistic variation to understand the levels at which language varies: diaphasic, diastractic, diatopic and diachronic. This typology was represented by Rona (1970) as a new approach to sociolinguistic studies by envisioning a multidimensional cube or set of four dimensions representing an ideal diasystem (language and its dialects as opposed to other languages), with diastratic (society), diatopic (geographical dimension) diachronic (temporal dimension) and diaphasis (style) axes (see Figure 3.1).

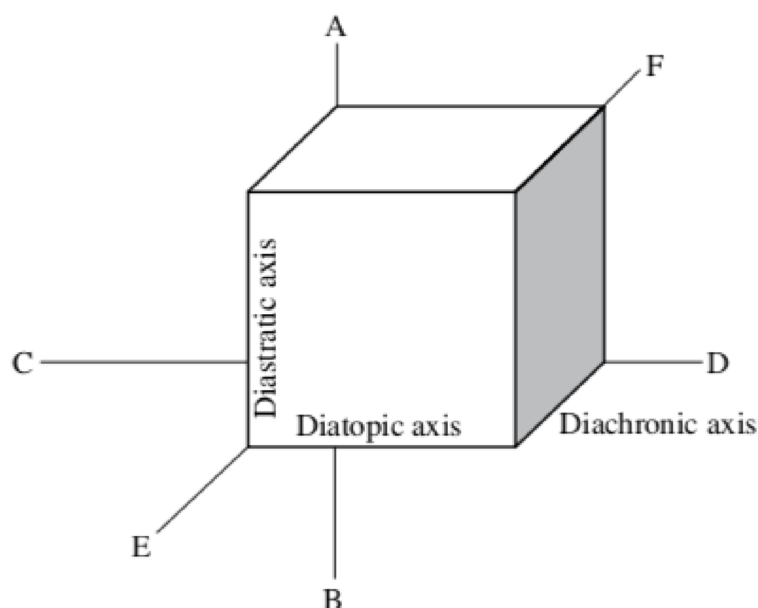

Figure 3.1. Sociolinguistic Axes Theory: A↔B (diastratic axis: society; and diaphasic axis: style), C↔D (diatopic axis: geographical space), and E↔F (diachronic axis: time) (Coseriu, 1970; Rona, 1970)

By means of the diatopic factor researchers may be able to identify the geographical location of the author. When dealing with historical data, the provenance of the author may be given by identifying the dialectal features of the documents, which lead us to discover the region, or place where it was written. The diastractic axis refers to the socio-cultural dimension which permits sociolinguistic researchers to analyse the language used by members from different social classes. Regarding the diaphasic axis, it should be included in the diastractic axis due to the correlation between the stylistic continuum and the social class continuum. Finally, the diachronic axis refers to the time dimension. This view on language change and variation permits the sociolinguistic researcher to take into account all the extralinguistic factors conditioning linguistic variation so as to draw accurate conclusions.

In historical investigations, most of the data provided is about vernacular speech used in ego documents (see section 2.3.1), which are found in the pioneering corpora for historical sociolinguistic research such as *The Helsinki Corpus*, the CEEC and the CEECE. However, social differences in the past would not be the same as in the present. These types of changes are considered to have been “community-internal” when they occurred within a social community or “community external”, that is traced to language or dialect contact (Britain, 1997).

However, there are some problems that arise when dealing with linguistic change. Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (1968: 184–187) list a series of problems that speakers face when dealing with linguistic change:

1. *The actuation problem*: this step is the most difficult to sort out since it poses the problem of why certain linguistic changes occur in a particular language and not in others at a certain point in history.

2. *The constraints problem*: referring to those linguistic factors that make linguistic change possible at the expense of others that seem impossible for change to take place.

3. *The transition problem*: changes exhibiting continuous distribution through age levels in a population.

4. *The embedding problem*: referring to how a certain pattern of change is adapted to the social and linguistic structure of a community.

5. *The evaluation problem*: it has to do with how speakers observe and react against a change in progress and how they find out the information that the linguistic variables carry.

As Conde-Silvestre asserts (2007: 79), in general terms, three main stages are recognizable in the development of any linguistic change. In the beginning stage, an incipient linguistic change can only be considered as a variant among the different types of variation in a speech community. During the second stage of spreading, there appear to be a higher number of members in the community who adopt one of those variants in their speech, which starts getting consolidated. The third and last stage is completion by which the given variable gets a prominent position within the community and the speakers become aware of it by which the speaker acquires social recognition. It is in this stage where the variable gets regularised and totally consolidated through the elimination of the other variants in competition. Therefore, the constraints and actuation problems appear in the first stage of development of a linguistic change whereas the rest can arise in the second and third stages. Milroy and Milroy (1985) combined these five problems into just two issues: actuation and diffusion. Actuation refers to a change in the system that has been successful and is adopted by the speech community. As for diffusion, it relates to the spread of the change in the linguistic system. According to Bergs (2005: 39), this process is linked to *innovation*, which is regarded as “an act of the speaker which is capable of influencing linguistic structure”. Among the solutions that have been suggested to face the actuation problem, Milroy and Milroy (1985) have proposed observing language norms in speech communities in order to grasp certain basic distinctions which were not taken into account in historical linguistics. Therefore, they argue that the study of the context in which linguistic forms are maintained invariable may contribute to the understanding of the circumstances in which changes take place (J. Milroy, 1992: 11–12). Another methodological principle that these authors propose is based on the distinction between linguistic change and innovation. As J. Milroy pointed out “it is speakers, and not language, that innovate” (1992: 169), therefore, innovation is regarded as an act which is spontaneously initiated by speakers to later disseminate among other speakers. When the diffusion of the innovated variant occurs, then it is the time to accurately talk about a change taking place. Furthermore, the diffusion of a linguistic change has also been related to

generational differences. In this way, we could assume that language change is constrained by social, geographical or even temporal and contextual factors.

3.2. Sociolinguistic universals

Not only has research on historical corpora confirmed the relevance of historical data to trace sociolinguistic patterns of language change in the past but it has also recognised the historical validity of some sort of sociolinguistic universals, such as the *curvilinear hypothesis*, *lifespan change*, *generational change*, *age-grading*, *overt-covert prestige patterns* and *changes from above and changes from below*, following the Uniformitarian principle. These models for sociolinguistic variation have been detected both cross-sectionally and longitudinally through the observation of some linguistic practices of writers from different social backgrounds (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre, 1999; Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 2004; Hernández-Campoy, 2008; Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 2013; Hernández-Campoy & Camilo-Conde Silvestre, 2015; Conde-Silvestre, 2016a). Consequently, the reconstruction of sociolinguistic context through changes in linguistic variables has successfully allowed us to trace the diffusion of attested changes from the past over the geographical, social and temporal dimensions, as well as their relationship with independent variables such as age, social mobility, gender, occupation or status. Thus, ego documents written by different members from the same family over several generations are worth studying to explore the sociolinguistic behaviour of the members of a community or individual speakers over prolonged periods of time. Moreover, this type of corpora become of paramount importance when detecting the directions of language change both at the macro-level (studying the linguistic behaviour of the community as a whole) and also at the micro-level (studying the linguistic behaviour of a particular individual) for a change in progress within a community of practice or individual speakers (Eckert & McConnel-Ginet, 1992; Kopaczyk & Jucker, 2013). In the research on linguistic change in progress there are two main approaches to the detection of language change and sociolinguistic universals within a speech community: real-time and apparent-time studies, two concepts that were introduced by William Labov (1994) in his New York City Study (see Figure 3.2):

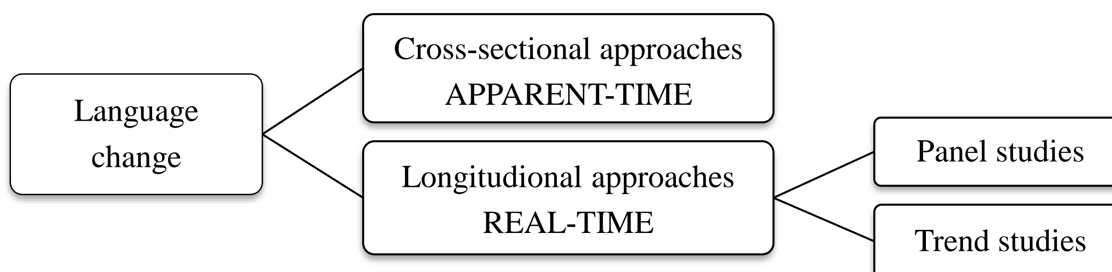

Figure 3.2. Methodological approaches to language change (adapted from Hernández-Campoy, 2019: 104)

Apparent-time studies focus on the comparison between the production of different age groups in the same speech community at a particular point in time. If the speech patterns of younger people are different from those of older speakers this may be interpreted as a hint of linguistic change in progress. In the course of such a distinction it is key to distinguish between linguistic patterns based on the age of the speaker and linguistic differences that truly show language change in progress. On the other hand, real-time studies consider language change through the speech of different age groups compared at different periods of time so as to track historical linguistic change in a community and find out about its progress through time. The limitations of apparent-time approaches to the study of language change and the difficulties of conducting real-time studies to do so has traditionally been addressed in different linguistic studies (Labov, 1966/2006, 1994: 73-112; Trudgill, 1988; Eckert, 1997; Nordberg & Sundgren, 1998; Tillery & Bailey, 2003; Sankoff, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2013; Wagner, 2012b; Gerstenberg & Voeste, 2015a; Bowie & Yaeger-Dror, 2016; Cukor-Avila & Bailey, 2018; Gregersen, Jensen & Pharao, 2018; or Wagner & Buchstaller, 2018, amongst others).

Based on the study of the distribution of linguistic variation across different age groups, apparent-time studies are the simplest ones to detect linguistic change. However, this distribution should not be confused with the stable linguistic behaviour of the community generation after generation (age-grading). According to Labov (1994: 63), the best way to solve the problems that apparent-time studies may pose is by carrying out studies of linguistic change in real-time so as to observe a speech community at different periods of time. Therefore, historical sociolinguistic corpora prove to be quite fruitful providing long timespan to trace language change. There are two main types of approaches to observations in real-time studies: trend and panel studies (Labov, 1994: 75–77). In trend studies, communities that had

been studied a decade or more previously are resampled following the same methodology employed and making use of the same population. For obtaining meaningful results, it is important that the community has remained stable in both studies. In the case of panel studies, the same individuals are followed across time in two different studies what means that the distribution of linguistic variables is studied across age levels within a short period of time. For Labov panel studies let the researcher trace the individual behaviour over time, obtaining data of generational change in the speech community or age-grading information of the speaker. However, trend surveying is considered to be more precise in that "it will both detect unstable behaviour of individuals and distinguish stable from unstable communities, differentiating all four of these patterns" (Labov, 1994: 84–85). The combination of both is essential for the interpretation of change, as regards the relationship of change to individual grammars. They both are crucial in building more informed models of the role of individual speakers over their lifetimes in language change. In historical sociolinguistics, more attention is paid to trend studies since the corpora available for linguistic analysis are normally socially representative and cover different periods of time. However, as noticed by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, the fact that the community should remain stable through time is not applicable to historical linguistics, as societies tend to change over time. In order to tackle this problem, qualitative interpretation is needed: "[s]ocial change has to be analysed and assessed at the same time as language change is reported" (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 55). Typically, in diachronic research, the basis is formed through real-time studies, but it is true that a combination of real-time and apparent-time studies provides more significant information about the spread of linguistic change among speech communities. Figure 3.3 shows how real and apparent-time studies function. As we can appreciate, it is during childhood/adulthood when each generation acquires its particular linguistic behaviour. In this way, 60-year old informants that were surveyed during 1950s would have acquired their linguistic repertoire around 1900, and those who were 60 and 50 years old would have shown the same linguistic variants in both surveys. As regards language change, it is expected that each younger generation would use the innovative variant more frequently than the previous one (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 83–84).

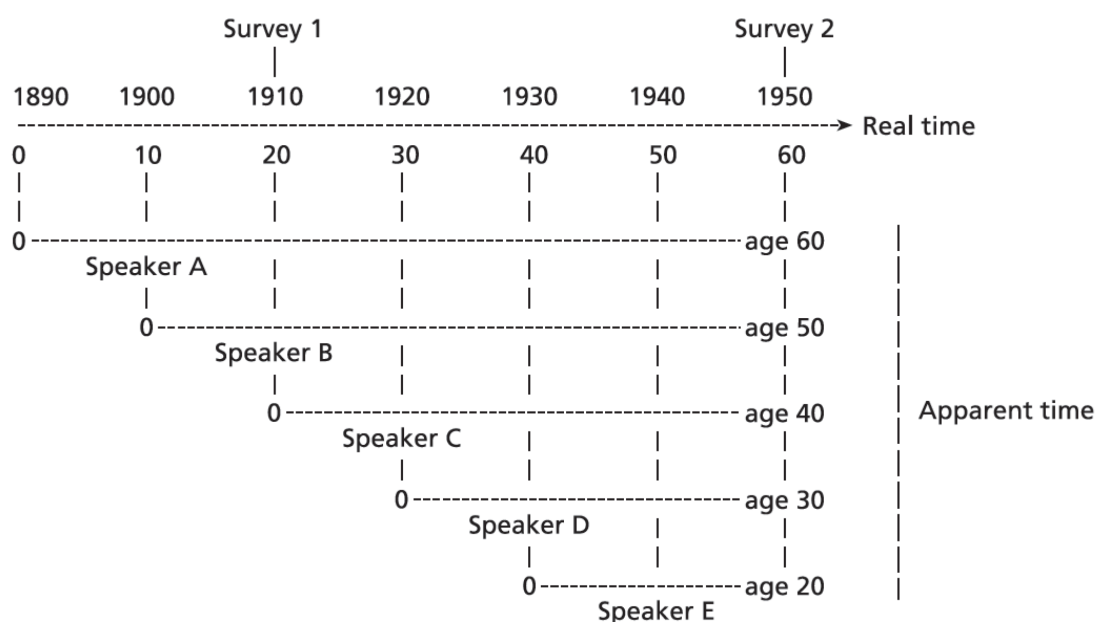

Figure 3.3. Real and apparent-time in language change (from Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 84, based on Downes, 1984/1998: 238)

Regarding historical data, the available material may often be too scarce to attest historical linguistic change in real-time studies. One way to tackle this problem is to employ an apparent-time approach to these data by contrasting the use of certain linguistic forms employed by different generations at a particular point in time. The application of the apparent-time[2] construct to historical data has been used in different studies such as the one by Bailey (1989). He investigated the development of *are* in the letters written by the Cely family (1472–1488). Results from the apparent-time analysis show that there are significant differences in the use of the linguistic variant among informants from different ages: the older generation of the family employed the *be* variant when using the plural, whereas younger informants used other variants, such as *ben*, *beth*, *is* or *are* at the same time. In order to illustrate the increase in the use of *are* as a plural variant, Bailey compared the use of this variant by William Cely (one of the youngest members of the family) in three different slots of time (see Figure 3.4). As Auer and Voeste noticed (2012: 263), this could clearly "speak for a communal change-but since […] the older generation of the Celys retained the *be* variant to the exclusion of all others, this cannot be the case". Thus, we would have to resort to other internal or external factors.

[2] For a more throrough revision of apparent-time studies applied to historical data see Raumolin-Brunberg (1996b).

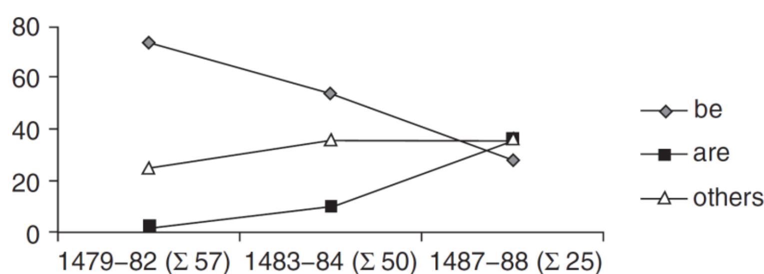

Figure 3.4. William Celys's use of plural forms (from Auer & Voete, 2012: 263, based on Bailey, 1989: 161)

However, if both real and apparent-time analyses are carried out and results are congruent, it may be assumed that no internal or external factors need to be taken into account.

3.2.1. The curvilinear hypothesis

One the main findings of research on language variation and change is that linguistic changes tend to originate in people from the middle classes rather than the higher or lower social classes. This type of sociolinguistic pattern has been called the *curvilinear hypothesis*. According to Labov (2001: xii), this particular pattern of diffusion would be difficult to identify by earlier theories of the causes of language change in so far as they tend to state that the innovators come from either the highest or lowest social groups. However, the first sociolinguistic studies about change in progress carried out in Martha's Vineyard (Labov, 1963), New York City (Labov, 1966/2006) or Panama City (Cedergren, 1973) did not come to the same conclusion. In his study on Martha's Vineyard, Labov proposed that the socioeconomic differences between the locals and the visitors to the island could have led the local people to strengthen their identity by changing their linguistic production. Particularly, it was noticed in the centralisation of the diphthongs /aɪ/ and /aʊ/, that is, the production of the centralised diphthongs /əɪ/ and /əʊ/. Labov also observed that the highest percentage of the group producing the centralised diphthongs was found among the fishermen from Chilmark, the most traditional group in the island. The diffusion of this linguistic variable was normally led by people from 30 to 45 years- old and young people who intended to continue living in Martha's Vineyard (Labov, 1972: 58–73). This investigation led Labov to formulate the curvilinear hypothesis. Thus, Labov (1965) suggested that linguistic changes could stem from any social group and spread uniformly to other neighbouring social groups. However, it is important to mention at this point that not all the linguistic variables that show situations of social stratification indicate that there is an ongoing change. The variables that Labov was

looking at in Martha's Vineyard passed unnoticed among the locals because they were associated to the local dialect (Meyerhoff, 2006: 23). Therefore, Labov (1972: 387) classified linguistic variables as *indicators* or *markers*: *indicators* refer to those variables which are stratified primarily between social groups in a community and that show no style-shifting at all (therefore they are normally associated with change) whereas *markers* exhibit style effects and are clearly stratified in that they are affected by social and stylistic attitudes and speakers may show some awareness of them.

Figure 3.5 displays the curvilinear pattern (Cedergren, 1973) shown by Varbrul weights for social constraints in the lenition (a process of weakening by which the stop articulation is lost to aspiration) of (ch) in Panama City. As it is illustrated, there is a "steady rise in the (ch) index with progressively younger speakers, and a curvilinear pattern in the social class domain" (Labov, 2001: 33). Stage 1 refers to the weakened affricate production of (ch) /ʧ/ and stage 2 to the fricative /ʃ/. In A we can see a monotonic function of age and in B a curvilinear function of social class.

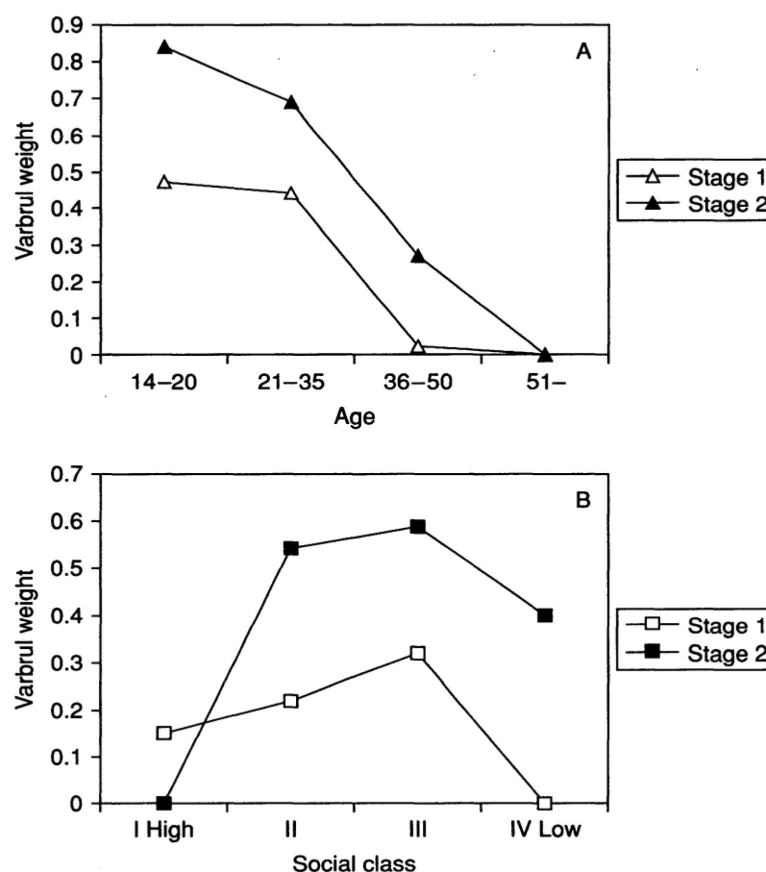

Figure 3.5. Curvilinear pattern showing the lenition of (ch) in Panama City (from Labov, 2001: 32)

In line with this, Krock (1978) proposed a dichotomous model showing that natural linguistic changes are not initiated by members from the upper classes but from the working classes. Therefore, it has been stipulated so far that the innovating group is not as a rule located among the higher social classes and, consequently, innovation in language change tends to spread from lower social groups to higher ones (Labov, 1972: 294–295). On the other hand, it has also been observed that speakers from upper or lower working classes are the real innovators and that these two groups were projecting similar patterns of change in progress in vernacular speech. In other words, the social groups responsible for language change tend to be led from centrally located groups in the socioeconomic hierarchy as opposed to peripherally located ones (Labov, 2001: 32). It is from these observations and evidences that the curvilinear theory was proposed by Labov (1966/2006) and Trudgill (1974). The major fact for this hypothesis is that "[w]hile stable sociolinguistic variables showed a monotonic social class distribution, a monotonic distribution in age groups was associated with a curvilinear pattern in the socioeconomic hierarchy" and this is a clue that a change is in progress in a given community (Labov, 2001: 32).

Research in historical sociolinguistics has also verified this pattern of social and stylistic stratification. Nevalainen (1996a) has identified the social curvilinear pattern in the process of social diffusion of the relative marker *who* which substituted progressively the relative *which* when used as subject for antecedent with human traits. Therefore, Nevalainen pointed out that the variant *who* was correlated with the socioeconomic status of the informants and that the linguistic innovation was mainly led by people from the lower gentry and by social climbers, followed by the upper gentry and merchants. The main conclusion drawn from this study was that people from intermediate socioeconomic classes wanted to get social promotion by reinforcing their connection with people from higher social groups and with this purpose they adopted and used the relative *who* instead of *which* more frequently than members of the higher social classes. Therefore, it is generally accepted that people who introduced linguistic innovations into a language normally belong to the middle classes of the social hierarchy. These types of linguistic innovations follow the curvilinear patterns (see Figure 3.6). Put differently, changes from below can be introduced by any social class, although no instances of a higher social group leading a change and, therefore, acting as the innovating group has been discovered.

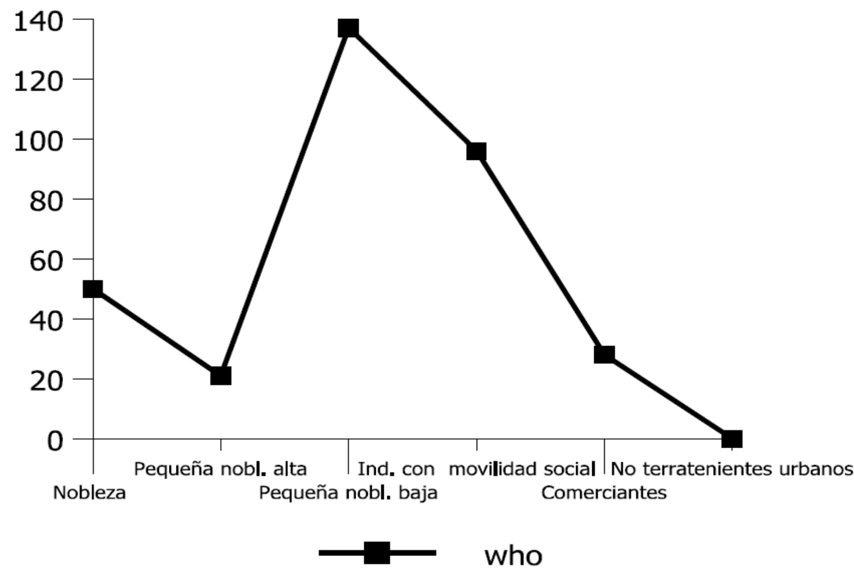

Figure 3.6. Social diffusion of *who* as a relative connector with subject function (from Nevalainen, 1996a: 72; adapted from Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 101)

3.2.2. Lifespan change

Language change on an individual's lifespan has been crucially significant in the study of language variation and more recently in sociolinguistics and historical sociolinguistics (see Labov, 1994: 45–54; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 86–99; Sankoff, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2013; Sankoff & Blondeau, 2007; Gerstenberg & Voeste, 2015a or Wagner & Buchstaller, 2018). The study of language change through the speech of an individual during his/her life and its impact on the local community have provided us with different theories and models in variationist sociolinguistics, such as lifespan, age-grading or generational change. Sankoff (2006a, 2006b) observed a clear distinction in the patterns of change of speakers when correlated with age. Traditionally, the term *age-grading* has been used for the explanation of a "[g]enerational pattern that is cyclic or repeats as a function of cultural dictates of what is appropriate to speakers of a given age" (Sankoff & Blondeau, 2007: 562). However, another possibility would be what has come to be known as *lifespan change,* a term used to refer to the linguistic change underwent by individual speakers throughout their lifespans, which would end up marking a change in progress in the community. (Sankoff, 2006a: 1011). This pattern would be more historical than contemporary in linguistic research. Therefore, the term *lifespan* is principally proposed to make a difference between two patterns that are involved in the process of speaker change when correlated with speaker age: "individual speakers change over their lifespans in the direction of a change in progress in the

rest of the community" (Sankoff, 2006a: 1011). This type of change has also been named as "longitudinal change" (Sankoff, 2006a: 1011).

Age, ageing and lifespan have been the focus of attention in the study of variation in human language and language acquisition (Penfield & Roberts, 1959; Lenneberg, 1967 or Harley, 1986) because of a growing interest in studying how the variable age influences the linguistic development and behaviour of individuals. It has been shown that pre-adolescence is the critical period when language acquisition seems to be difficult and less fruitful preventing patterns of change in linguistic habits (see Chomsky, 1964; Chambers, 1992; Kiparski, 1995; Lightfoot, 1999 or Herschensohn, 2007). However, it has also been assumed that during the post-adolescent period, individuals' sociolinguistic behaviour seems to show more variation due to maturing and life experience (Eckert, 1997; Birdsong, 1999; Flege & Liu, 2001; Hakuta, Bialystok & Wiley, 2003; Sankoff, 2004; Wahl & Kruse, 2005; Buchstaller, 2006; Hruschka *et al*. 2009; Wagner & Sankoff, 2011; Wagner, 2012a, 2012b; Maegaard, Jensen, Kristiansen, & Jørgensen, 2013; Gerstenberg & Voeste, 2015a, 2015b; Bowie & Yaeger-Dror, 2016 or Wagner & Buchstaller, 2018).

In the field of variationist sociolinguistics, language change through the lifespan of an individual's linguistic development and its reflection on the community has been one of the key factors for detecting traces of language change in progress. According to Labov (1994: 84–85), the best way to test lifespan changes is through a panel study in which the same informants are followed through an extended period of time. Although panel surveying provides us with information on the linguistic behaviour of a speaker across his/her lifespan with regard to differentiation of generations, it does not discriminate between age-grading, generational change, and communal change. Trend surveying is more precise in longitudinal approaches to language change, since "it will both detect the unstable behaviour of individuals and distinguish stable from unstable communities, differentiating all four of these patterns" (Labov, 1994: 84–85). According to Sankoff & Blondeau (2007: 561), trend studies "clearly constitute the best use of resources if the object is to track language change". Therefore, the differentiation between age-grading and generational change show difficulties (see Tillery & Bailey, 2003; Sankoff, 2006a, 2006b, 2013; Tagliamonte, 2012: 43–47; Wagner & Tagliamonte, 2018; and Wagner & Buchstaller, 2018), because of the cyclicity of age-grading in contrast to the historic character of the community in generational changes. Traditionally, synchronic studies plotting the distribution of a given sociolinguistic variable against speaker age show four different interpretations (Sankoff, 2006a: 1003): if there is no age differentiation, that is the *flat* pattern, it means that there is no change in progress and

both the individual and the community show stability. However, a flat pattern may also suggest that the whole community is changing together (both younger and older speakers), so, in this particular case, no age difference would appear. Another interesting pattern is a *monotonic slope with age* and two other options are possible: there could be a change in the linguistic behaviour of individuals, generation after generation (age-grading) or, alternatively, each age cohort of the individual may register an increase or decrease in the use of a variable on entering the community by retaining some childhood patterns (apparent-time interpretations). Given the synchronic nature of most of the apparent-time studies interpreting age-graded variability in sociolinguistic research, it has been impossible to trace change in terms of individual speakers. Thus, based on Labov's model of patterns of change in the individual and the speech community (1994: 83), Sankoff and Blondeau (2007: 563) proposed a new model by adding the new category of 'lifespan change component' to differentiate from the age-grading concept in that it does not need to imply cyclicity, but more historical in character (see Table 3.1). Thus, the lifespan change component would exhibit change in the individual and in the community.

Table 3.1. Addition of a pattern reflecting lifespan change that accompanies change at the community level (from Sankoff & Blondeau, 2007: 563)

Synchronic pattern	Interpretation	Individual	Community
Flat	1. Stability	Stability	Stability
Regular slope with age	2a. Age-grading	Change	Stability
Regular slope with age	2b. Lifespan change	Change	Change
Regular slope with age	3. Generational change (=apparent-time interpretation)	Stability	Change
Flat	4. Communal change	Change	Change

By using a trend and panel study, Sankoff and Blondeau (2007) study a change in progress from apical to dorsal /r/ in Montreal French as experienced by individual speakers. As a result, they state that the whole community advanced its use of dorsal /r/ whereas many individual speakers showed a stable pattern across time after the critical period.[3]

Regarding historical data, the lifespan construct is applied by using mostly letters or ego documents from the past over prolonged periods of time written by the same individual.

[3] The critical period hypothesis states that the human mind is capable of learning a language more readily during the first years of life and so, after this time, language acquisition is considered to be less successful and it cannot be acquired naturally. To know more about this, see Chomsky (1964), Chambers, (1992), Birdsong (1999), Lightfoot (1999), Hakuta, Bialystok & Wiley (2003), Sankoff (2004), Herschensohn (2007), or Anderson (2016).

Following apparent-time and real-time approaches, Hernández-Campoy (2020) studies the diffusion of the innovative spelling form <th> in the *Paston Letters* (1425-1503), as a change in progress. Unlike traditional macro-sociolinguistic approaches to variation and change focused on the speech community, he follows a more microscopic approach paying attention to the individual's linguistic behaviour which permits the observation of the sociolinguistic diffusion of changes across time, as well as the reconstruction of individuals' (microscopic) and communities' (macroscopic) linguistic behaviours. In general terms, he shows how the members of the Paston Family modified their linguistic behaviour during their lifespans by finally adopting the more prestige innovative form (th) at the expense of the old runic form <þ> expanding as a change from above. The apparent-time studied carried out, exhibits age-based differences when using the variant <th> mainly by speakers in their 20s. Although it may be understood as age-stratified variation reflecting individual change generation after generation, the community as a whole shows stability over time. Therefore, a real-time study through a longitudinal approach is carried out to confirm age-grading versus generational change. As displayed in Figure 3.7, results show how younger generations from the Paston family used successively the more innovative form <th> within the local community.

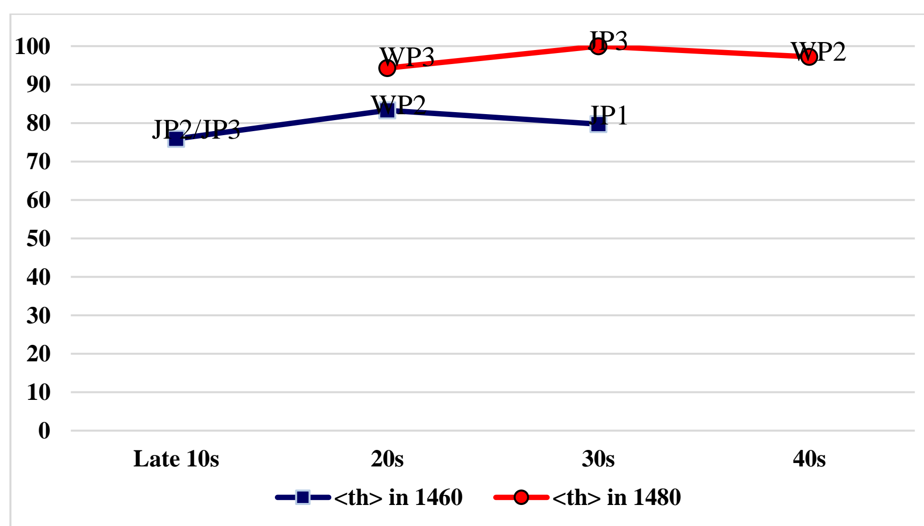

Figure 3.7. Real-time progress in the aged-based patterns of variation for <th> in the Pastons (trend design) through the comparison of two apparent-time observations (1460 and 1480) (from Hernández-Campoy, forthcoming)

Moreover, when individual frequencies are split up across the lifespan, as Figure 3.8 shows, we can appreciate different patterns of linguistic behaviour over every Paston member's lifespan according to the adoption of the variant <th>: "monotonic but nonlinear increase with age for William II, John III and William III, monotonic but nonlinear decrease with age in the

case of John I, and almost stable in John II (flat: no clear slope with age)." Thus, the sociolinguistic behaviour is clearly evident illustrating a characteristic pattern over their lifetimes, as found in Sankoff and Blondeau in Montreal (2007).

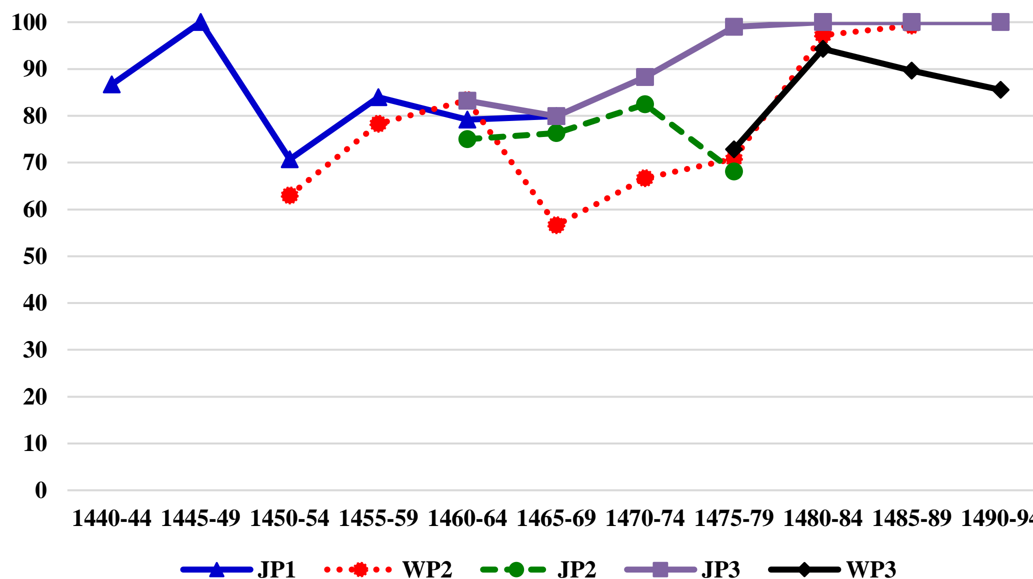

Figure 3.8. Individual frequencies of the innovative form <th> in the Paston informants' lifespan (from Hernández-Campoy, forthcoming)

3.2.3. Generational change

The sociolinguistic patterns of change in the course of time can be also inferred from collections of ego documents written by members of the same family over several generations, asserting in this way a chronological diffusion of change in progress. The concept of *generational change* refers to those linguistic changes that occur at the community level. As Labov asserted (1994: 84), "individual speakers enter the community with a characteristic frequency for a particular variable, maintained throughout their lifetimes; but regular increase in the values adopted by individuals often incremented by generation, lead to linguistic change for the community". In this respect, it is implicitly mentioned that it is during "the critical phase of language acquisition" when linguistic changes take place and since then onwards, the individual's linguistic forms tend to be more stable (Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 2013: 280). At this point, it is important to make a distinction between the terms *generational change* and *communal change*. Generational changes involve the use of a linguistic form that is in continuous use at the community level through the lifespan of its members individually. On the other hand, in communal changes, the whole community

together modifies their linguistic production either by acquiring new linguistic forms or by altering their frequencies of a linguistic variable (see Labov, 1994: 84; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 85). When it comes to comparing both of them, the former has been ascribed to the concept of "accumulated transmission" by which "successive cohorts and generations of children advance the change beyond the level of their caretakers and role models, and in the same direction over many generations" (Labov, 2007: 346–347). With respect to the latter, it would be seen as some sort of *linguistic diffusion* which may modify the linguistic production of the speakers of a community at any point in their lifespan and would imply less stability in their linguistic behaviour.

Over the course of sociolinguistic research, it has been shown that the emergence of change is correlated to different types of linguistic phenomena. For example, Labov (1994: 83–84) pointed out that changes related to sound and morphology tend to follow the pattern of generational change whereas lexical and syntactic changes denote a communal change. However, some other studies such as Chambers (1998) or Raumolin-Brunberg (2005) have proved that Labov's argument regarding the relationship between type of change and linguistic features cannot entirely hold as some morphological changes may follow both patterns.

In the field of historical sociolinguistics research, Raumolin-Brunberg (2005) has identified a generational change in progress by analysing the shift from *-th* to *-s* (marker of the third person singular in the present indicative tense) in the CEEC. Following an apparent-time approach, the author groups the informants' dates of birth into six cohorts of twenty years correlated with three generational ranks. Results shape a clear generational patterning with a higher use of *-s* in letters from younger writers showing a progressive increase generation after generation. However, this does not imply that speakers could not have increased their use of *-s* when growing older as a communal change: as Table 3.2 illustrates, those informants born in the period 1550–1569 show a different linguistic behaviour with 28% use of the innovative marker *-s* for the third person singular present during 1580–1599, raised to 59% in 1600–1619, and reaching 85% in 1620–1639. Hence, the study clearly exhibits generational and communal patterns of linguistic behaviour operating simultaneously, suggesting in this way that generational and communal changes can go hand in hand.

Table 3.2. Distribution of the use of third-person *-s* vs. *-th* in CEEC by generations (from Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 88)

Time of writing	1580–1599		1600–1619		1620–1639		Percentage by generation	
	N/Ntotal	%	N/Ntotal	%	N/Ntotal	%	N/Ntotal	%
Year of birth								
Before 1530	1/50	2					1/50	2
1530–1549	52/304	17	4/62	7			56/366	15
1550–1569	61/216	28	161/272	59	88/103	85	310/591	52
1570–1589	2/2		139/209	67	161/264	61	302/475	64
1590–1609			26/33	79	278/340	82	304/373	82
1610–1629					58/75	77	58/75	77
Total	116/572	20	330/576	57	585/782	75		

In another pilot study, Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy (2013) traced the diffusion of <th> at the expense of <þ> and <eth> in the *Paston Letters* analysing four generations of male members from the family over a period of seventy-eight years, specifically from 1425 to 1503. Results show how the members of the Paston family accommodated their linguistic practices towards a more innovative form <th> to the detriment of the <þ>. From generation to generation we can see a gradual adoption of <th> by which the older members exhibit a lower use of this spelling in comparison with the younger ones showing then a change in progress. Thus, the use of the innovating variant is clearly present generation after generation in a progressive way within the community (see Figures 3.9 and 3.10).

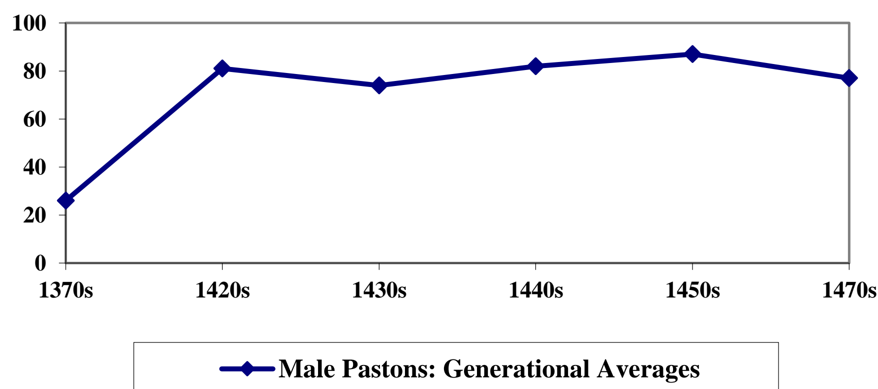

Figure 3.9. Generational average of the innovative form <th> per birthdate of the male members in the Paston family (from Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 2013: 291)

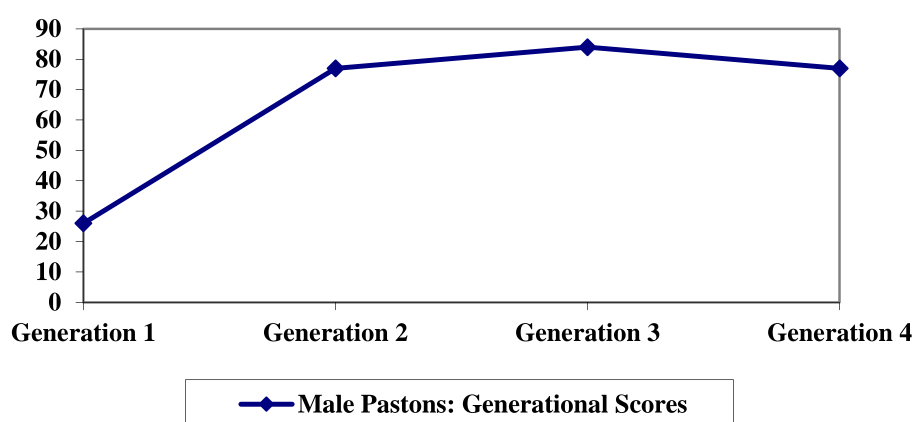

Figure 3.10. Generational scores of the innovative form <th> per generations of the male members in the Paston family (from Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 2013: 292)

3.2.4. Age-grading

The apparent-time approach to linguistic studies on language change has facilitated the way in which we analyse language variation in different speech communities. It makes use of special material including sampling from different age groups at particular times. However, in some occasions, linguistic differences among different age groups do not reveal a change in progress but rather they might reflect *age-grading*. According to Chambers (1995/2009: 203), they instead represent a "pattern that repeats itself in a community in generation after generation". For example, Macaulay's study (1977) about the use of the glottal stop /ʔ/ as a variant for (t) in Glasgow English shows that this was a linguistic feature typical of the working class, but ten-year-old informants from the middle-middle class (MMC) also shared a similar linguistic behaviour (see Figure 3.11). This pattern of variation has been interpreted as a change in progress (Chambers, 2002: 360–362) but more recently as age-grading since this variant is highly stigmatised in Glasgow and therefore ten-year-old informants of the MMC were hardly aware of linguistic norms until social pressure from adults rises (Abu Ain, 2018: 59). While males from the highest and lowest classes of society exhibit a more stable linguistic behaviour in apparent-time, results of the second-highest social group clearly reveal a peak in the use of the glottal stop by early adolescents, followed by a decrease in more adult males. Thus, this pattern of behaviour in apparent-time by which some social classes represent stability in their linguistic production over the rest is what has been interpreted as *age-grading* (Chambers, 1995/2009; Sankoff, 2004). However, to be entirely certain, real-time evidence might be necessary to observe the linguistic behaviour of pre-teenager

informants some years after in order to prove whether they have switched to the adult norms or not.

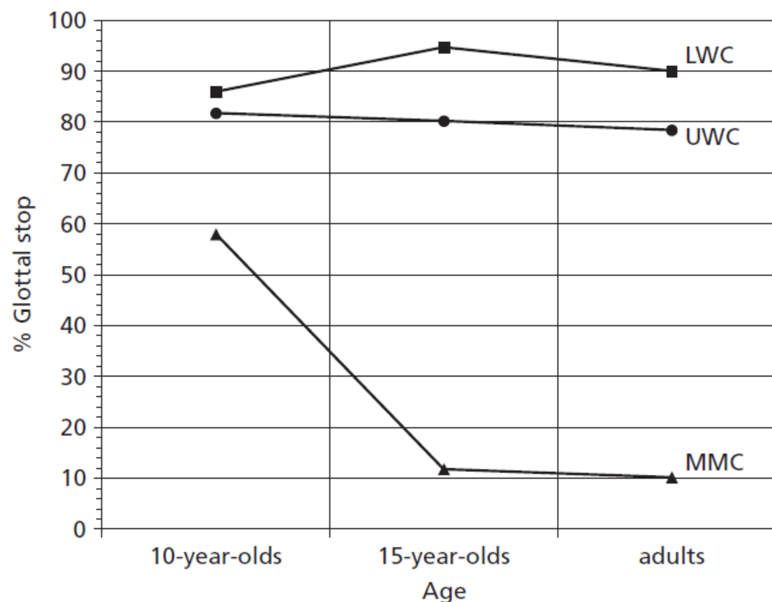

Figure 3.11. Percentage of the glottal stop variant for post-tonic /t/ in 10-year-olds, 15-year-olds and adults in three social classes in Glasgow (from Chambers, 2002: 359)

Hockett (1950: 453) defined *age-grading* from an anthropological perspective, reasoning that there exists a tendency by which individuals of a certain age interact more frequently with other individuals of their same age in their community. Nevertheless, he also stated that these age groups may not be "hermetically sealed" which might imply that linguistic change occurred both in the speech of older people and of young people or the other way round. In a sense, when individuals modify their linguistic production throughout their lifetime, but this modification is not present in the whole community, we are then talking about a change at an age-grading level (Labov, 1994: 84). When the linguistic behaviour of a speaker is analysed in apparent-time and shows age differences, it could be reflecting *age-grading*, although we cannot take for granted that speakers maintain their linguistic practices as such during all their lives. Labov describes the term as a linguistic change at the individual level, that is a regular change of linguistic behaviour with age which is repeated in each generation (1994: 46) and that the community as a whole does not change its linguistic practices. The concept of *age-grading* accounts for the fact that as people grow older their linguistic features may show differences with some being replaced or vanished and some other new. It has been discussed so far that when such features are not standard in a language, they tend to be more frequent

during the adolescence period, that is, "when peer group pressure not to conform to society's norms is greatest" (Holmes, 1992: 184). This contrasts with middle age speakers who tend to show more conservative patterns of linguistic behaviour since they "[a]re more likely to recognise the society's speech norms and use the fewest vernacular forms" (Holmes, 1992: 184). Thus, the more standard patterns of language tend to peak in the speech of speakers between thirty and fifty when they have to conform to the prescriptive norms of the standard language because of social pressure. Finally, during older stages social pressures are reduced as people enter into another phase of their lives, which is apparently more relaxed (Labov, 1994: 73; Downes, 1984/1998: 24; Cheshire, 2005: 1555).

According to Sankoff (2006a) the *age-grading* construct could be applied to those situations in which the linguistic stability of the community goes beyond it. She stated that those situations could refer to groups of speakers within the same community who find it appropriate to use a particular linguistic variant, generation after generation. Therefore, the concept of *age-grading* in this way is identified as the repetition of an age-related linguistic variant in each generation that can be stable or not in the community. The term has also been defined by Cheshire (2005: 1553) as a repetitive pattern: "change of behaviour with age that repeats itself in every generation". However, Sankoff contrasted this definition with hers as for the term lifespan change, which she associated with those situations in which individuals change their linguistic behaviour along with the community. Thus, in those cases of slow linguistic change, individiduals may change their linguistic practices together with the community in every generation. More recently, Wagner (2012a: 378) has reasoned that "the repeating pattern definition of age-grading seems insufficient at our present state of knowledge, due to the methodological difficulties associated with attesting a pattern". Consequently, she states that, in order to differentiate both concepts, the term "lifespan change" should be "reserved just for those cases in which individuals follow along with 'change from below' but differentiating changes from above and below social awareness requires solid information about the social evaluation of a variable" (2012a: 379). However, this is often lacking in longitudinal data which are drawn from non-sociolinguistic materials. Therefore, a more sociolinguistic approach to linguistic variables is intended to help researches resolve this issue in due course.

As far as linguistic features are concerned, age-graded change typically exhibits certain patterns of linguistic behaviour. *Age-grading* in the community is associated with variables that have a high degree of social awareness (Labov, 1994: 111–112) and a "rapid life-cycle" (Wolfram & Fasold, 1974: 90). In sociolinguistic research, the typical period

analysed to account for age-graded phenomena is the transition from adolescence to adulthood. For example, as Holmes stated (1992: 183), the typical linguistic feature we find in adolescents is the use of slang or swear words, but when they grow older the use of these words diminishes since they enter the workforce and they become more aware of the importance of using appropriate lexical items in this field. Therefore, *age-grading* may be more consciously controlled than other types of linguistic change.

In diachronic sociolinguistics, Kemp (1979) carried out an apparent-time approach to the study of headless relatives in Early Modern English by making use of the informants' years of birth. Results shape a clear correlation between age and a higher use of *what* in contrast with *that*, *that that* and *that which*. However, for historical sociolinguistics it is more interesting and fruitful to combine apparent-time and real-time approaches when studying language change. One methodological problem that arises in relation to this assumption is the fact that *age-grading* and *generational change* are indistinguishable when only following an apparent-time approach and therefore it is recommended to compare the data under study with evidence from the past (Wagner, 2012a: 374). However, not always are linguists able to count with historical evidence since it is usually fragmentary and therefore interpretation of apparent-time and real-time is the only thing we can rely on.

3.2.5. Changes from above and changes from below

In establishing the relationship between social class and language change or variation, there is a type of change proper to be considered. The nature of change has also been described in terms of *change from above* or *change from below* (Labov, 1994: 78). These terms are normally associated with socio-economic stratification in that it is an extralinguistic factor that contributes to change and variability in a language. Thus, the correlation between language and socio-economic stratification plays also a role in language variation. This dichotomy implies linguistic changes that occur in a speech community denoting the degree to which the speakers are consciously aware of ongoing changes affecting a particular linguistic variable. The term *change from above* refers to those linguistic changes of which speakers are aware, and thus it consists of some linguistic forms that are consciously introduced into a language. They are normally introduced by people from higher ranks of society and used in careful speech. These *changes from above* tend to follow the linguistic forms that are more standard and consequently more socially accepted in a speech community. They normally emerged from the higher socio-economic hierarchy and members from lower socio-economic ranks are considered to be the ones who adopt and diffuse them.

They are normally associated with words with higher prestige that are borrowed from other speech communities which tend to be frequently "inconsistent with the vernacular system and their use involves correlated changes in other features" (Labov, 1994: 78). In contrast, *changes from below* are normally associated with internal linguistic factors and operate at the level of vernacular languages. *Change from below* refers to linguistic changes that are below the level of speakers' conscious awareness, that is, people do not notice them and, therefore, they do not talk about them. They only become aware of them once these linguistic changes are nearly brought to completion. These linguistic forms are considered vernacular or non-standard because they do not follow the linguistic norm. However, members from lower social classes do not always initiate a *change from below,* although it is often the case, but rather a change that is operated below the level of public awareness.[4] Likewise, *changes from above* may not always be initiated by higher social ranks (Wardhaugh, 1986/2006: 209). If the linguistic change emanates from a lower social status group within a speech community, the linguistic variant could not be adopted by the community and become stigmatised. This may initiate a *change from above* the level of consciousness. It is in that precise moment when speakers tend to make a conscious use of those linguistic variants that are considered more prestigious and used in more formal stylistic contexts. Under extreme stigmatisation, speakers may become fully aware of the linguistic change in a particular variant which may be eventually turned into an overt topic of social comment (Labov, 1972: 180). It is at this point that the linguistic variant becomes a *stereotype*, which might disappear or get unchanged in due course. Nevertheless, if the change originates in a higher social layer, the variant does not get stigmatised but rather becomes a prestige model in the speech community. Moreover, according to Labov (1966/2006: 331), *changes from below* do not represent "important distinction between stigmatized and prestige forms: the speech form assumed by each group may be taken as an unconscious mark of self-identification". Therefore, according to this assumption, social stratification is not a crucial factor to detect linguistic change in progress.

This distinction between *changes from above* and *changes from below* was first established in the New York City study by Labov (1966/2006) and after conducting a series of investigations of sound changes in progress (1972: 178–180). Labov illustrated the social stratification of /r/ in New York City department stores. The variants of this variable are the

[4] Speakers tend to be less conscious of variables that are *indicators* than variables considered as *markers*. Pronunciation, spelling, linguistic changes and phonological opposition are pivotal when it comes to considering why speakers are more sensitive towards some variables and not others (see Chambers & Trudill, 1980: 84–86).

presence or absence of post-vocalic /r/. Labov found that the pronunciation of /r/ was stratified according to the speakers' socioeconomic status. In other words, those with a higher socio-economic status pronounced post-vocalic /r/ more frequently than the informants from lower socio-economic status. Historically, the speech of New York City had been characterised as /r/-less, but it seems that /r/ was reintroduced because of a negative attitude towards the phonological feature /r/-less, acquiring prestige after World War II. Figure 27 illustrates the social and stylistic stratification of variable /r/: people from New York City who used a non-standard dialect remained /r/-less. As we can see, in casual speech, almost all social classes, except for the upper middle class, exhibit use of constricted /r/ close to zero. However, in the case of upper middle classes, the use of /r/ rises to a 20% in casual speech. In more formal styles, the pronunciation of /r/ was more significant. Moreover, younger generations, regardless of their socio-economic status, pronounced [r] more often than adult generations, which also indicates a generational change in progress. Therefore, as Figure 3.12 indicates, the pronunciation of [r] was proportionally related to both stylistic features (casual speech, careful speech, reading style, word lists and minimal pairs) and to the socio-economic class of the informants showing both the curvilinear pattern a socially-motivated *change from above*.

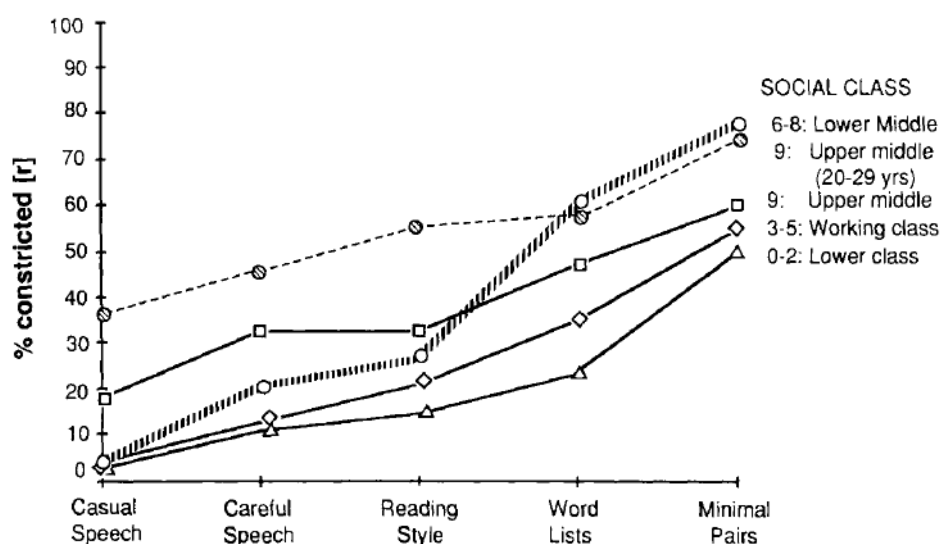

Figure 3.12. Socio-economic stratification for coda /r/ realisation in New York City speech (from Labov, 1994: 158)

Moreover, in contemporary sociolinguistic studies, women have been identified as the ones who tend to initiate *changes from above* since they conform to those who are more powerful with respect to social terms. By contrast, men were found to be predominant in *changes from*

below, leaders of changes that spread below the level of public awareness (Wardhaugh, 1986/2006: 209–210; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2013: 11). However, as more research on this topic became available, this hypothesis proved less precise because all social classes may promote changes or be innovative, and women's role cannot only be seen as the innovators alone when it comes to linguistic change. According to Labov, at the beginning gender differentiation is independent of social class but there exists a correlation once social awareness of the ongoing change develops. He formulates two principles associated with increased social awareness (Labov, 1990: 213–215, 2001: 274–292),

1- in linguistic change from above, women adopt prestige forms at a higher rate than men;
2- in linguistic change from below, women use higher frequencies of innovative forms than men do.

As it is suggested, women are the ones who lead ongoing prestige innovations as they adopt these linguistic forms more readily than men do. Therefore, they contribute to the diffusion of linguistic changes. An example of principle 2 is shown in Labov's study (1980) about ongoing sound changes in Philadelphia and more specifically about the raising of /aʊ/ and /əɪ/. He identified that upper-working class women who interacted more with the neighbourhood were the leaders of these changes. In this way, he is relating the process of linguistic change to social embedding, as proposed by Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (1968).

Research on historical sociolinguistics has let scholars detect the linguistic patterns of changes from above and below in several corpora of the English language. Hence, this typology has also been studied following a diachronic approach in the history of the English language. Nevalainen (1996a: 65–68) have studied the replacement of subject *ye* by *you* during the sixteenth century. They observed that this emerged from the vernacular language since both seemed to have suffered from phonological confusion in unstressed contexts where both *ye* and *you* were weakened to [ə]. Moreover, the similarity of *you* with the second person singular pronoun *thou* could also have worked at analogical levels. The change has been attested to diffuse from oral register to written texts and consequently from more informal registers to more formal ones. In this sense, Nevalainen observed that *you* was used more frequently as a subject in letters written to a member of a family than in other formal texts such as religious or legal (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 130). As we can see in Table 3.3, the lower gentry advanced towards the use of *you* (36% of the cases) followed by

the non-gentry (29%). Social climbers and merchants exhibit very similar distributions with 26% and 25% of the cases, respectively. It is the rank of nobility, which deviates from the rest with 8% use of the incoming form, indicating in this respect that this innovative variant was a *change from b*elow. Thus, the correlation of the variant *you* with the social status of the informants during 1520–1550 shows that this innovative variant was not motivated by members form the higher social ranks. In fact, the upper gentry, along with the nobility, exhibit lower percentages of the use of *you* (with 16% of the cases). As considered in section 3.2.1, Nevalainen (1996a) studied the social diffusion process of the relative w*ho* when used as a subject. The main conclusion drawn from this study was that the variant *who* was correlated with the socioeconomic status of the informants and that the linguistic innovation was mainly led by people from the lower gentry and social climbers, followed by the upper gentry and merchants.

Table 3.3. The breakdowns by social rank of *ye* and *you* as subject pronoun, 1520-1550 (adapted from Nevalainen, 1996a: 66)

Rank	***ye+you***	***you* (%)**
Nobility	238	8%
Lower gentry	84	36%
Upper gentry	25	16%
Merchants	963	25%
Social climbers	605	26%
Non-gentry	79	29%

As considered in section 3.2.1, Nevalainen (1996a) studied the social diffusion process of the relative *who* when used as a subject. The main conclusion drawn from this study was that the variant *who* was correlated with the socioeconomic status of the informants and that the linguistic innovation was mainly led by people from the lower gentry and social climbers, followed by the upper gentry and merchants. Moreover, the influence of Latin and French is recognised as having played a key role in the establishment of *who* as a subject, firstly with a formulaic function to refer to God in letters from the end of the fifteenth century and later as a relative in defining and non-defining relative clauses with reference to a personal antecedent (Rydén, 1983; Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 105). It would then represent a change that started taking place in more formal contexts (written texts) written predominantly by members from the upper gentry who were conscious of the change.

The first attested *changes from below* appeared in ego-documents (private writings), such as personal letters, considered as the closest type of texts to speech (Biber, 1995; Culpeper & Kytö, 2010). From a diachronic perspective, one of the linguistic variables that

have been considered as a *change from below* is the diffusion of *its* as possessive pronoun. After considering previous studies (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 1994; Raumolin-Brunberg, 1998; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 62–63, 120–121) exploring the spread of *its* as the third-person neuter possessive singular determiner, Palander-Collin (2018) provides a sociolinguistic approach to the diffusion of *its* from 1680s to 1800. During the first half of the seventeenth century, these studies testified to a rapid spread of this variable suggesting that linguistic factors may explain the change: its may have been used particularly as a linguistic form suitable to fill "an empty slot in the paradigm after the use of his as the neuter possessive declined" (Palander-Collin, 2018: 164). By contrast, social and economic conditions could have also contributed to the rapid spread of *its* due to the instability of the period because of the Civil War and the continuous geographical mobility of people. Thus, weak ties could have accelerated this process of linguistic change in social networks. Moreover, Raumolin-Brunberg's findings (1998) suggest that the rapid spread of *its* represented also both a generational change, subsequent generations increasing the use of *its*, and a communal change, all the members of the community adopted the form simultaneously. The first attested uses of the form *its* date back to the seventeenth century and it gained grounds during the eighteenth century as the dominant position. However, currently, the change is not fully completed yet since we still find the form *of it* being used. The variant *its* had been in competition with *it, thereof, his, the* and *of it* during the seventeenth century, although *his* and *it* disappeared during the firs part of the century. In her study, Palander-Collin (2018: 170), observed social rank differences in the use of *its*. Figure 3.13 illustrates the use of *its* according to social status for male writers. As it can be interpreted, principally, lower ranks of society were leading the change. During 1740–1759, professional people showed higher uses of *its* with the clergy in the second place, whereas the nobility and the gentry showed lower percentages of use. Therefore, results represent a change from below since professional ranks and males were leading the change. However, this contrasts with the results obtained during the eighteenth century when women's use of *its* exceeded that of the men (2018: 176).

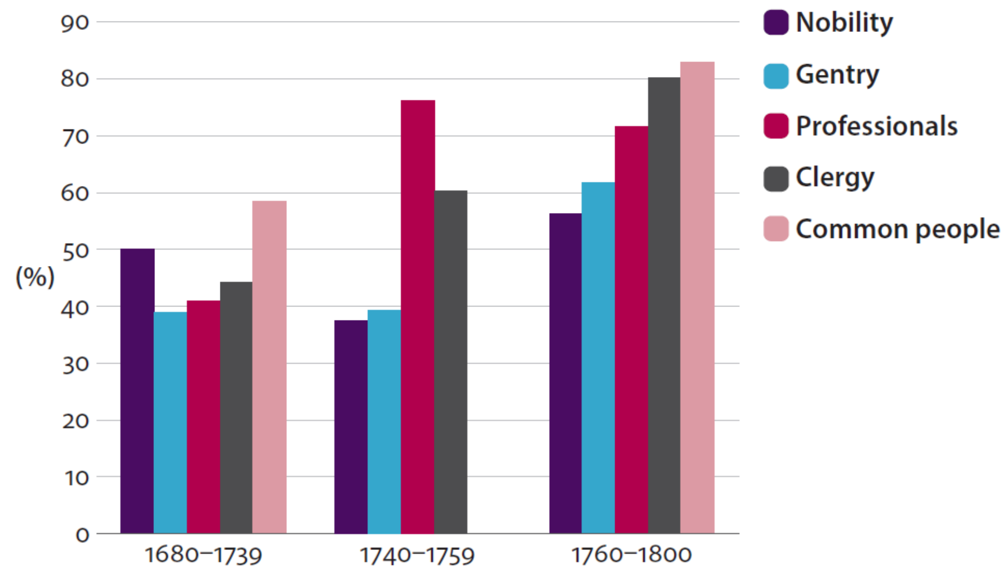

Figure 3.13. Percentages of *its* according to male writer's social status (from Palander-Collin, 2018: 170)

Laitinen (2018) presents evidence of the sociolinguistic variability of indefinite pronouns in compounds with -*one*, -*body*, -*man* and independent forms such as *some (other), any (other), every* and *each* up to the eighteenth century. Raumolin-Brunberg (1994) and Raumolin-Brunberg and Kahlas-Tarkka (1997) previously traced the diachronic development of these variants up to the seventeenth century. Specifically, Laitinen`s results for -*one* variants show a clear *change from above*. Figure 3.14 illustrates how the change was led by the clergy and common people in the begining whereas the nobility's usage of -*one* remained quite low with respect to the rest of the social groups until the second half of the century.

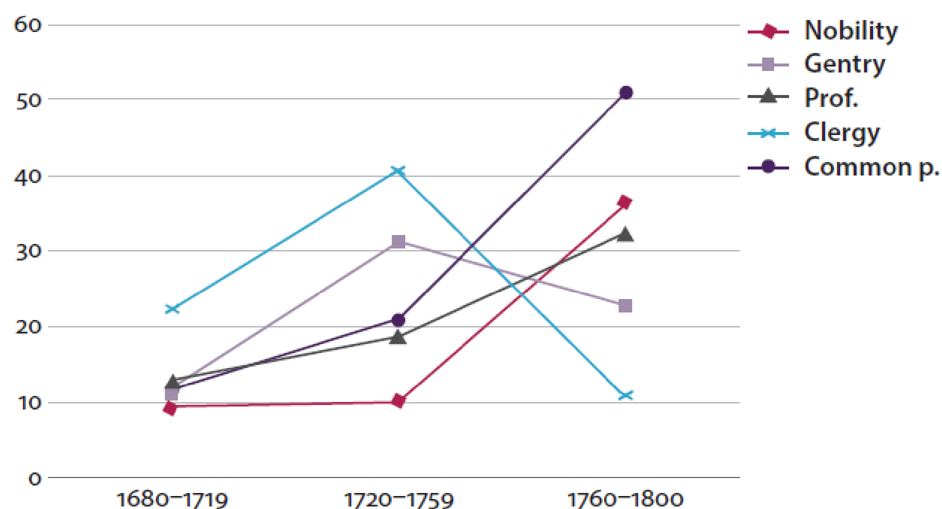

Figure 3.14. Percentages of -*one* according to social status (from Laitinen, 2018: 151)

One possible explanation for the clergy being the early adopters of the *-one* variant has to do with the *Authorised Version of the Bible* of 1611 since the main variants used in this Bible are *-man* and *-one*:

> […] the latter being the main variant with the universal *every* indefinites. The concept of *body* tends to be associated with the body of Christ in Biblical texts, which might partly explain why clergy are slow in adopting it and resort to *-one*. Their share for the forms in *-one* drops in the third period, and they finally adopt the forms in *-body* when the other social groups show incipient decreases.
>
> (Laitinen, 2018: 151)

Moreover, regardless of the clergy, the other social groups exhibit a consistent increase in the adoption of *-one* during the rest of the periods, being the nobility the later adopters. Because of the strong presence of the variable *-body*, the nobility became last in adopting the *-one* variant. Therefore, this suggests that the increase use of *-one* might have been a *change from above*, once it enters in the mid-century, as the driving force of the change is led by members of higher social classes.

As these studies show, these social patterns that determine changes from above and changes from below could have stemmed from the past uniformly. Thanks to historical and contemporary evidence we can readily ascertain that these two types of changes related to socio-economic and stylistic factors could have spread gradually throughout the history of the English language.

3.2.6. Overt-covert prestige patterns

The dichotomy of *changes from above* and *changes from below* has led sociolinguists to notice that not all linguistic changes are motivated by people from intermediate or higher socio-economic status normally associated with being more prestigious. However, the prestige of a linguistic variant has been recognised as a complex issue to deal with. Meyerhoff (2006: 37) affirms that the prestige of a variant is not always linked to high social status. Therefore, it is not accurate to say that the prestige of a linguistic variant marks only the higher social class of the speaker because the variant is more prestigious. These observations have given rise to the distinction between *overt* and *covert* prestige (Labov, 1972: 249). This dichotomy was firstly introduced by Labov in his sociolinguistic theory but popularised by Trudgill. In sociolinguistics, prestige has been defined as a high social status that a certain sociolinguistic variant acquires as a consequence of a subjective reputation. This linguistic

behaviour is motivated by the social attitudes exhibited to certain linguistic variants. This is what has been identified as *overt prestige*, that is when the prestige of a linguistic variant is expressed publicly and generally associated with the speech of speakers with a higher social status. Speakers are highly aware of this and talk about it in terms of standardness. For example, the variant constricted [r] in New York City, which is regarded as more standard than the *r*-less variant. By contrast, *covert prestige* is shown by people who are oriented (normally unconsciously) to variants which are less standard with respect to others, despite being in favour of those *overt prestige* variants.

It has been attested that the contrast between *overt* and *covert prestige* is obvious in the linguistic behaviour of men and women (see Trudgill, 1972: 187–188; Hernández-Campoy, 1993: 165–168 and Cheshire, 2002: 426–427). Because of a higher sense of social awareness in the valuation of language, women tend to use prestigious linguistic variants more frequently than men which lead them to promote conscious linguistic changes following standard norms. On the other hand, men from lower social clasess tend to value in a positive way their belonging to their social group along with the linguistic features that identify them. This is a case of covert prestige which can also boost the development of unconscious changes from below.

In a study on Norwich English, based on evidence from subjective evaluation tests, Peter Trudgill (1972) found that some of the informants overtly talked about one of the variants under study and recognised that it was more prestigious than the other and, moreover, they affirmed that they used the most prestigious variant although they did not. Particularly, many of the interviewed informants (many of the men) claimed that the Standard Southern British English pronunciations of *tune* ([tjun]) and *dune* ([djun] were more prestigious than the local Norwich variants they used which did not contain [j]. As they used the local variant more often but were overtly concerned with the supra-local prestige of the standard variant, the attitude towards the local variant was covert. Therefore, it is this difference between what speakers say they do and what they actually do that shows covert prestige. Consequently, Trudgill argued that there exits a relationship between non-standard speech and covert prestige. Women acquire social status indirectly or implicitly, whereas men do it through occupational status. Hence, women are more likely to secure their social status through their use of standard norms, which are overtly prestigious linguistic variants. Accordingly, the higher use of non-standard forms in men can be explained as an orientation to the covert prestige of working-class linguistic variants, mainly associated with working-class masculinity and way of living, which has favourable connotations for male speakers:

> […] informants perceive their own speech in terms of the norms at which they are aiming rather than the sound actually produced' then the norm at which a large number of Norwich males are aiming is non-standard *WC* speech. This favourable attitude is never overtly expressed, but the responses to these tests show that statements about 'bad speech' are for public consumption only. Privately and subconsciously, a large number of male speakers are more concerned with acquiring prestige of the covert sort and with signalling group solidarity than with obtaining social status, as this is more usually defined […] Therefore, we have been able to demonstrate both that it is possible to obtain evidence of the 'covert prestige' associated with non-standard varieties, and that, for Norwich men, working-class speech is statusful and prestigious.
>
> (Trudgill, 1972: 187–188)

Following this line of reasoning, we may argue that covert prestige is presumably associated with certain linguistic forms. As Trudgill (1972: 194) aptly affirms, covert prestige is evidence of the "value system of our society and of the different sub-cultures within this society" which leads to linguistic changes from below.

It is rather more difficult to trace patterns of linguistic change related to covert and overt prestige from a diachronic perspective since we lack a clear definition of standard varieties in the history of languages what makes difficult to investigate the linguistic behaviour among sexes in relation to the most overtly prestigious forms during a given period of study. However, it is easier to assume that the social and educational activities related to women would have affected the way they spoke. Following from this, it is therefore possible to establish correlations between linguistic changes diachronically and the gender of the informants (Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 120–121). It goes without saying that there were unequal educational opportunities for women in the past until the nineteenth century as well as social/legal discrimination and subordination to men. This would have prevented women from having contact with more overtly prestigious, linguistic variants. For this reason, it is logical to affirm that few women would have had contact with prestigious linguistic forms and hence it is not expected to detect linguistic changes from above led by women in the past (Nevalainen, 1996b: 79).

In her investigation on the replacement of multiple negation by the non-assertive *not… any* during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Nevalainen (1999: 521–524) compared male and female usage and results shaped into a clear trend aligned with gender. In the periods under study, men appeared as the informants leading the disappearance of multiple negation which contrasts with Present-day English, where women are considered to

lead the process of changes from above by favouring standard language forms. As Figure 30 illustrates, there is a change in progress led by people from intermediate social levels, principally merchants, professionals or social aspirers. Those informants who had access to legal and official documents were the innovators with respect to those from lower or higher social classes. During the second period, from 1580s to 1610s it seems that differences between both social groups started to become more balanced. Finally, in the third period (1660–1681) although multiple negation was still present, there was a decrease in its use among the informants and the change seems to have nearly reached its completion.

Figure 3.15 shows that during the sixteenth century, men who were used to communicating through the written medium tended to avoid multiple negation. Nevalainen supported this by stating that multiple negation was absent from legal documents of the period (1999: 523). As for women here, they belonged to the upper ranks of society who also tended to reject the innovating change in progress. Thus, these results lead Nevalainen to conclude that, due to its origin and social distribution, the change of multiple negation to single negation is a change from above in which women were not responsible for fostering neither this linguistic form nor any standard language norms (1999: 524).

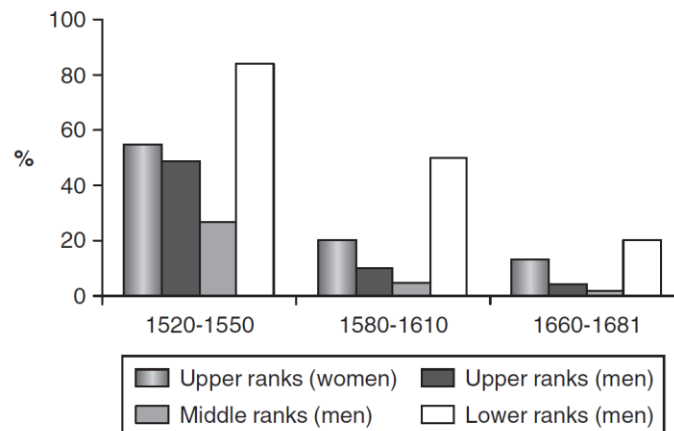

Figure 3.15. Multiple negation according to social rank and gender from 1520 to 1681 (adapted from Nevalainen, 1999: 523)

3.3. Style-shifting: Sociolinguistic patterns of stylistic variation

3.3.1. The concept of *style* in sociolinguistics

Within the field of sociolinguistics, the term *style* has long been considered as a crucial factor for the understanding of language in society. However, its definition and consideration has been very limited, receiving little attention in the variationist framework (see Macaulay, 1999; Coupland, 2011: 141). As stressed by Gadet:

> Single-speaker variation has received considerably less attention from sociolinguistics over the years than other types of variation. Methodological complications alone - i.e. how to follow a single speaker through different (and in particular informal) situations are by no means sufficient to explain the neglect of this area of study.
>
> (Gadet, 2005: 1353)

Currently, and within the context, sociolinguistics pursues to uncover the factors that contribute to the relationship between stylistic variation and its social and ideological contexts (Bradford, 1997: 85). According to Fowler, style in sociolinguistics is basically:

> A theory of varieties, of correlations between distinctive linguistic choices and particular socio-cultural circumstances. The individual text can be described and interpreted in relation to the stylistic conventions which generate it and the historical and sociological situation which brought it into existence.
>
> (Fowler, 1981: 174)

Therefore, the study of language and society through the correlation between extra- and intra-linguistic factors has allowed sociolinguistics to account for variability in language. It is in this correlation where the study of style has enjoyed a pivotal role within the field of sociolinguistic variation, in which stylistic variation constitutes a principal element alongside linguistic and social variation. Furthermore, stylistic variation has proved to be really fruitful for the tracing of linguistic changes in progress and for understanding how this phenomenon functions (Labov, 1966/2006). Given the particular central position that style enjoys in the correlation of *diaphasic*, *linguistic* and *social* elements, intra-speaker variation is clearly seen as inherent to sociolinguistic studies, constituting a main focus of research in the field. The field of sociolinguistics has been able to evince this relationship between linguistic variation and social variation in terms of sociolinguistic variation (see Figure 3.16). As Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (1968) showed, language change involves variability, but not the reverse, and it necessarily implies diffusion. This is because linguistic change is correlated with patterns of stylistic variation. On balance, as Ure (1982: 7) stated, the diaphasic scope of a language counts as a sociolinguistic symptom of social change and differentiation.

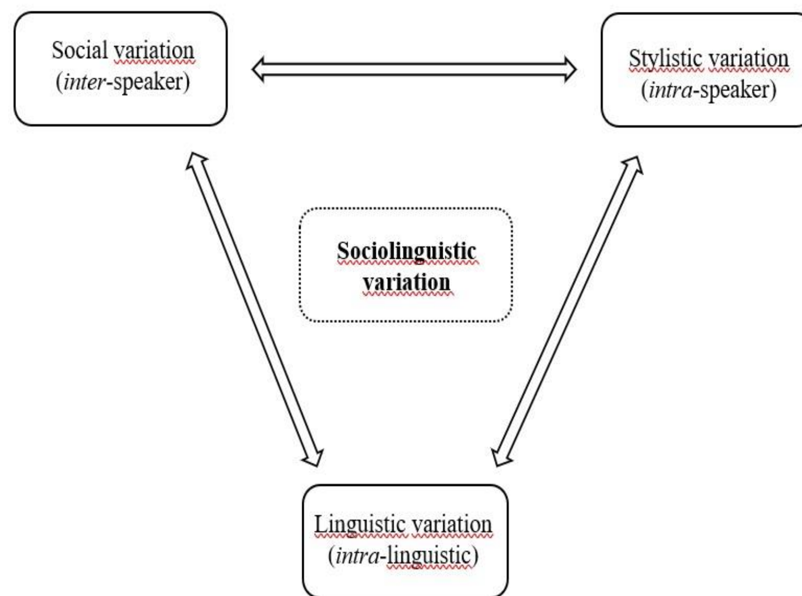

Figure 3.16. Sociolinguistic interface relating stylistic variation with linguistic variation and social variation (adapted from Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2012: 2)

Having been previously defined and understood in a narrower sense, style has been treated as an ordinary parameter, alongside social factors, "in the correlational sociolinguistic study of urban communities" and restricted to particular varieties of language "produced by different degrees of formality in particular situations and with particular interlocutors (Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 30). This issue has resulted in the distinction between *inter*-speaker (social) and *intra*-speaker (stylistic) variation (see Figure 3.17): "[t]he social dimension denotes differences between the speech of different speakers, and the stylistic denotes differences within the speech of a single speaker" (Bell, 1984: 145). In this sense, stylistic variation constitutes a fundamental factor along with social variation and linguistic variation (Eckert & Rickford, 2001: 1; Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2012: 1–2). The term *inter*-speaker variation alludes to the range of variation between speakers from different social groups whereas *intra*-speaker variation refers to the stylistic differences in an individual speaker (Halliday, 1978).

Currently, new approaches to the study of style focus on the explanation of its nature, mechanisms and motivations. As established by Bell (2014: 8), we can distinguish two main approaches to the study of style in sociolinguistics: a macro and a micro one.

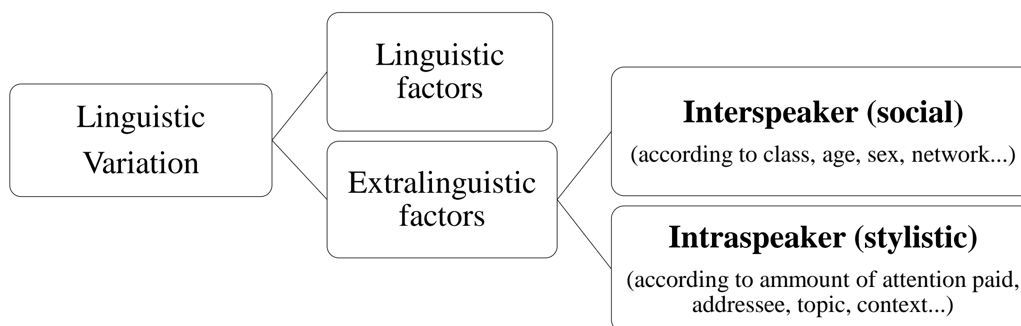

Figure 3.17. Linguistic variation in sociolinguistics (adapted from Bell, 1984: 146)

The first approach is maximalist, and it encompasses all types of linguistic levels (from micro-variables of pronunciation to discourse or genre patterns) including also a great variety of social factors.[5] It conceives style as a proactive selection from linguistic variables that range from the most usual ones to discourse and genre patterns along with socio-situational factors (Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 31). The micro approach is more minimalist in that it studies linguistic features as variables that can have alternating variants happening in very specific linguistic environments (Bell, 2014: 294–295). However, over the years, crossover between the two approaches has been a key factor within the field of variationist sociolinguistic research. As Bell underlines:

> […] in the past decade or more there has been an increasing and fruitful crossover between the two. Variationist analysis has been extended to a wide range of stylistic material, and richer social concepts have been applied to all kinds of language. When I began research on style in the 1970s, I could justifiably label it "the neglected dimension". Now style is at the centre of sociolinguistic theorization and method […].
>
> (Bell, 2014: 297)

3.3.2. Style-shifting as linguistic variation

The study and observation of stylistic variability has been of paramount importance when it comes to detecting the phenomena of language change in progress (see Labov, 1966/2006; and Traugott, 2001). Despite its relationship with variationist sociolinguistics, the study of

[5] See the situational components in Hymes's speaking taxonomy (1972). Each of the following compononets that Hymes establishes is a group of factors considered crucial to define a social situation that is constituted: Speaking (referring to goals, context, participants, etc.), Act sequence (message form and content), Key (tenor), Instrumentalities (forms of speech and channels), Norms (of interpretation and interaction), and Genre.

style has not received considerable attention within the variationist tradition and it has been addressed from a context-based and topic-based approach rather than focusing on speaker and listener (Macaulay, 1999). The previous delimitation of style in variationist studies conceived the concept of style-shifting as a universal factor, understood as a social reaction (response) to a particular situation; in other words, the speaker is only conscious of his/her own speech depending on external factors, such as audience, addressee, topic, etc. (Hernández-Campoy, 2016). The Attention to Speech model (see Labov, 1966/2006) alludes to this assumption, which understands stylistic variation in a narrower sense, paying attention to context and topic. This approach to stylistic variation was questioned by scholars due to the lack of information paid to all cases of intra-speaker variability in the 1980s, particularly in the theory of the Audience Design model proposed by Bell (1977, 1984). The phenomenon of stylistic variation in language production has been said to be conditioned by extralinguistic factors and its effective social meaning has been associated to different theories and linguistic constructs accounting for its functioning and inherited nature. Historically, the study of the different motivations that are involved in stylistic variation has occupied a central position in the field of social theory, and specially the existing relationship about structure (sociolinguistic norms and limitations) and agency (speaker's creativity and ability to customise our sociolinguistic behaviour according to our intentions). According to Bell (2014: 305–306), "[a]pproaches which treat speakers as untrammeled agents do not take enough account of the role of structure in interaction and life, just as approaches which treat speakers as sociodemographic correlates did not take adequate account of individual agency".

New approaches to sociolinguistic variation understand style-shifting as a response to audience members. Although this new view on stylistic variation provided a fuller account on the matter, it was still unable to explain other factors that contribute to stylistic variation. As Gadet (2005: 1353) aptly reasons, this marginalisation has to do with the difficulty to measure single-speaker variation in different situations. In this way, style has been restricted to the study of speech acts analysing degrees of formality in different situations with particular interlocutors. More recently, the Speaker Design theory has ultimately filled the gap for the explanation of styles within the variationist framework. It is a multidimensional model which views stylistic variation as the projection of someone's persona (see Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2012; and Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 146–182). More recently, this has resulted in the study of style-shifting of different interlocutors in society with reactive (responsive) or proactive (initiative) motivations (Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2012: 2).

As remarked by Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa (2010, 2012), new approaches to stylistic variation focus on the proactive potential of style-shifting in discourse and the individuality of speakers. That is, interlocutors make use of different stylistic choices when addressing someone else in order to project a specific identity in society. Accordingly, this has meant that previous approaches to the study of style, have diverged from deterministic and system-oriented to more social constructionist and speaker-oriented approaches to inter- and intra-speaker variation (see Figure 3.18). The reasoning for this new shift relies on the understanding of language variation as acts of identity considered socially motivated, active and agentive. Thus, linguistic variation is now understood as not only reflecting but also creating social meaning by shifting the focus of attention to the individual's manipulation of the conventional social meaning (construction of *personae*) so as to account for other stylistic choices.

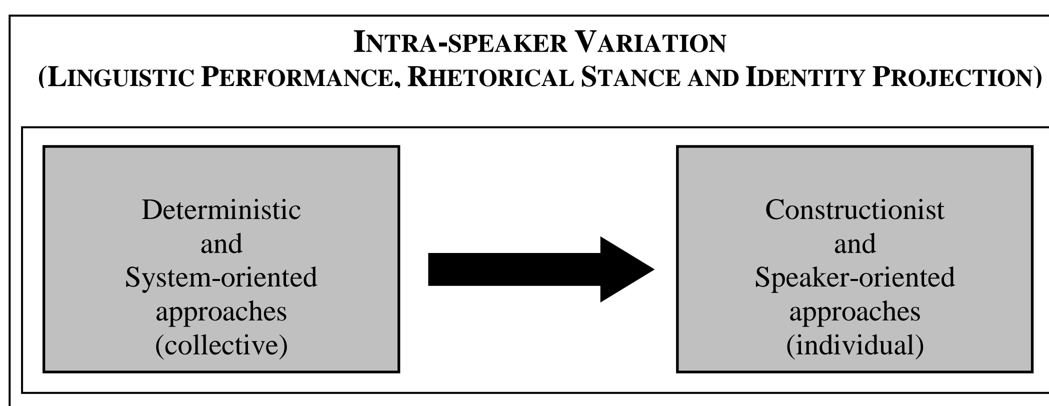

Figure 3.18. Shift from deterministic and system-oriented to social constructionist and speaker-oriented approaches to intra-speaker variation (adapted from Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2012: 7)

While traditional approaches to social and stylistic variation relied on the fact that forms of language use are deterministically conditioned by the conventional social grouping to which informants belong alongside the context of situation, new methodologies shifted the focus to a more constructivist approach. Thus, the potential of speakers is considered meaningful to design their linguistic production so as to change their social image as a communicative strategy. Thus, speakers are capable of projecting different identities by selecting one linguistic form over the rest (see Podesva, 2012). After Eckert's (2012) formulation of the third-wave approach to intra-speaker variation, it has been easier to identify those more salient linguistic variables that project the identity of a speaker in specific contexts along with his/her social positioning.

For the interpretation of historical data, historical sociolinguistics has been employing and applying the methodologies of present-day sociolinguistic research to linguistic material of the past. The interdisciplinary field of historical sociolinguistics favours the research of both heterogeneity and vernacularity to reconstruct patterns of linguistic variation and change longitudinally in speech communities from the past. This can be achieved thanks to the use of electronic linguistic corpora and the assistance of corpus linguistics along with social history, which allow researchers to explore the sociolingiuistic behaviour and interaction diachronically and more accurately.

Despite these developments and the application of contemporary sociolinguistic findings to historical sociolinguistics, the concept of intra-speaker variation has been marginal within this field, and it has not developed the same relevance as inter-speaker variation. More recently, historical sociolinguistics has flourished by focussing on socially-based variation patterns and styles attested longitudinally and highlighting the relevance of text-types to fruitfully study intra-speaker variation (Kytö, 1991; Auer, 2015; Hernández-Campoy & García-Vidal, 2018a, 2018b; Hernández-Campoy, Conde-Silvestre & García-Vidal, 2019). The question now is how to reconstruct and interpret stylistic variation from historical written documents. One way to circumvent this problem is by using historical written records, which reflect the oral register as much as possible. Romaine (1998: 18) has acknowledged that personal letters could be the written genre that best reproduces the oral language, since neither were they thought to be published nor to be read aloud. Historical private correspondence has been considered as better suited than any other type of written genre for the investigation of stylistic variation and the relationship between the informant and the addressee. Moreover, the study of personal letters for the reconstruction of sociolinguistic contexts that have fostered language change and variation has been of important relevance so as to attest traces of long-term linguistic changes in the past (see Dossena & Fitzmaurice, 2006; Nevalinen & Tanskanen, 2007; Dossena & Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2008; Nurmi, Nevala & Palander-Collin, 2009; Pahta *et al*. 2010; Dossena & Del Lungo Camiciotti, 2012; Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 2013; and Auer, Schreier & Watts, 2015). Thus, this genre is material worth studying for the detection of personal communicative styles of informants and addressees as part of communities of practice (see Kopaczyk & Jucker, 2013; and Conde-Silvestre, 2016a), and for the relationship that both informants and addressees could have maintained: closer (same family/kinship/friendship) or more distant (different social class, professionals, etc.). With this assumption, historical research has afforded a new interest in studying private correspondence to analyse the variety of styles that could have impinged on

historical changes in language. The approach followed in these types of studies has considered the speech community as a macro-cosmos, following the first and second-waves from synchronic sociolinguistics (Eckert, 2012), but more recently new studies are considering the third-wave sociolinguistic approach, following microscopic approaches in historical sociolinguistics to detect language change in progress and change the focus of analysis to the study of individuals' sociolinguistic behaviour in social interaction (see Palander-Collin, 1999a, 1999b; Auer, 2015; Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre, 2015; Conde-Silvestre, 2016a; Schiegg, 2016; Hernández-Campoy & García-Vidal, 2018a, 2018b; Voeste 2018; amongst others).

3.3.2.a. Attention to Speech model

Determinism and neopositivism (the so-called *quantitative revolution*) have been the philosophical basis for the conceptualisation of variation theory in sociolinguistics (see Hernández-Campoy & Almeida, 2005; and Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 66–67, 2018). These two schools of thought assume that "everything is caused by something in a predictable way, the universe is a deterministic and mechanistic place where the laws of nature would allow us to easily describe, explain, and predict its state" (Hernández-Campoy, 2018: 34). Therefore, it follows from this that causality is the main principle when explaining the correlation between linguistic elements and extralinguistic factors in sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistic behaviour is conceived as predictable in terms of provenance of the speaker, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. In other words, researchers of sociolinguistic variation would predict the informants' verbal practices, and even stylistic features, according to socio-demographic features. Inspired by deterministic and neopositivistic theories, Labov's approach to stylistic variation was understood as a conscious social reaction (response) to a situation, which was scaled in terms of formality (Labov, 1966/2006, 1972). The Labovian axiom captures the amount of attention that a speaker may pay to his/her own speech dividing the stylistic continuum into five speaking styles (see Figure 3.19). The stylistic continuum established by Labov has come to be known as the Attention to Speech model (or Audio-Monitoring), based on the fact that style-shifting is the product of the speaker's conscious social reaction to his/her own speech (through speech self-monitoring) and determines the degree of formality that can be achieved in a speech act: a speech can be more or less formal depending on the amount of attention a speaker pays to his/her own speech. This amount of attention paid depends on external factors (addressee, audience, topic and situation), which define the linguistic variety employed (Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2012: 2). Thus, style is considered as an

independent variable that sees diaphasic repertoire as conditioned by macro-sociological categories.

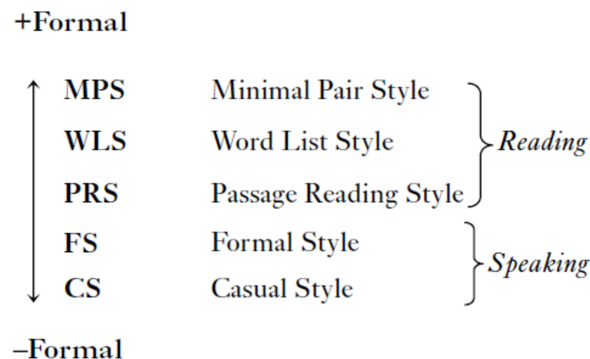

Figure 3.19. Labovian axiom of speech stylistic continuum (from Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 77)

In his study of the pronunciation of postvocalic /r/ in New York City, Labov (1966/2006) was able to identify that the different social class groups analysed changed their sociolinguistic behaviour in the same direction: by using more prestige linguistic forms when the stylistic context is more formal, and vice versa (see Figure 3.20). Consequently, a single speaker employs different linguistic variants in different situations for different purposes.

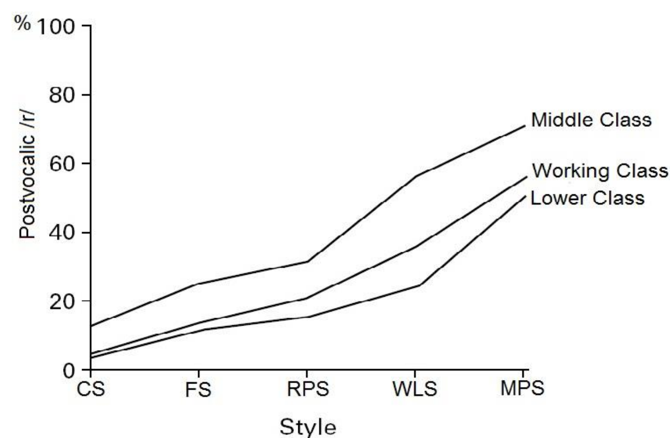

Figure 3.20. Postvocalic /r/, social class and styles in New York City (from Labov, 1966/2006: 141)

As a result, the Attention to Speech model was conceived as a universal factor for the explanation of style differences. It inherited the basic principles related to the theoretical assumptions of sociolinguistics at the time (Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 82–83):

1) *The Principle of Graded Style-shifting:* although some speakers exhibit a wider range of verbal repertoire, it has been acknowledged that no single speaker is mono-stylistic.
2) *The Principle of Range of Variability:* speakers' variation in their linguistic production is not greater than the differences we find among the social groups they belong to.
3) *The Principle of Socio-stylistic Differentiation*: the linguistic features implied in stylistic variation are the same which mark social variation.
4) *The Principle of Sociolinguistic Stratification:* variation emanates from a hierarchy of evaluative judgments, where *indicators* only detect social stratification and *markers* denote both social stratification and style-shifting.
5) *The Principle of Stylistic Variation:* differences in style represent different ways of saying or expressing the same things.
6) *The Principle of Attention:* differences in styles can be arranged according to the amount of attention paid to speech.
7) *The Vernacular Principle:* the vernacular speech requires the least attention among all the different types since it is the most spontaneous and natural one.
8) *The Principle of Formality* (The Observer's Paradox): any systematic observation of the vernacular speech must diminish its effects on the informant's linguistic production so as to ensure that speech is uncounciously and naturally produced.

3.3.2.b. Audience Design model

Labov's Attention to Speech model was considered the basis of style-shifting until the 1980s. The labovian view of stylistic variation began to be questioned due to limitations in its theoretical and methodological approaches. The belief of measuring style-shifting by the amount of attention paid to speech with the formal-informal stylistic continuum was not able to embrace all factors that constitute stylistic variation in interpersonal communication. According to Bell (1984: 150), the degree of speech self-monitoring does not reflect intra-speaker variation since it is understood as a response between a situation and a style. Therefore, Labov's axiom was unable to offer an explanatory model of sociolinguistic patterns involved in style-shifting but rather a mere descriptive framework portraying the social structures and norms that guide interpersonal communication, where speakers are considered as androids that modify their verbal repertoire passively through style-shifting ignoring any intentional language or stylistic choice proactively. As Bell stressed (2007: 91),

"[w]hat happens when a speaker talks in any social situation involves many linguistic features almost simultaneously, at all levels of language, all contributing to the mosaic of the sociolinguistic presentation of self in everyday life".

During the 1980s, notions such as *speaker agency*, *audienceship*, *addressivity* or *responsiveness* acquired distinctive importance for the formulation of new theories of intra-speaker variation. Based on the speech accommodation theory (Giles, 1979) and the linguistic marketplace (Bourdieu & Boltanski, 1975; Sankoff & Laberge, 1978), Bell (1977, 1984) formulated his Audience Design theory, which conceived stylistic variation as a "response to inter-speaker variation, chiefly as manifested in one's interlocutors" (1984: 158). This model underlines the importance of external factors, such as the audience a speaker addresses to, so as to explain the causes of style-shifting. Accordingly, the focus of intra-speaker variation is now on the audience: people engage in style-shifting in response to external stimuli (the audience), thus introducing an initiative (proactive) dimension, in addition to the responsive (reactive) dimension (Hernández-Campoy, 2018: 38).

In search of an explanatory model for stylistic variation, Bell found in his pioneering case study that the same radio presenter he was studying switched his linguistic production when addressing two different radio stations in New Zealand: YA Station (attracting an audience with a higher social status) and ZB Station (local station, attracting a wider range and types of audiences). Particularly, Bell found that, among other linguistic variables, the intervocalic /t/ voicing, known as voiced flap [ɾ] in words like *writer* or *better* and more typically associated with the working classes, was more frequently used when the newsreader was addressing the audience of ZB Station (see Figure 3.21). Consequently, the realisation of intervocalic /t/ as an alveolar voiced flap [ɾ] was considerably higher on the ZB station, which contrasts with the realisation of it as a voiceless or voiced [d]/[t], and hence the use of more conservative variant (realisation) when addressing the public in YA station. Bell's explanation (1982, 1984) to this style-shifting was formulated on the fact that a speaker tends to shift his/her speech attunements to suit the audience s/he is addressing. Specifically, the radio presenter in his study was shifting from the more conservative realisation of /t/ in intervocalic position to the less standard one in order to fit in the different social communities of speech, understanding in this way that our choice of linguistic behaviour may be influenced by that of the audience.

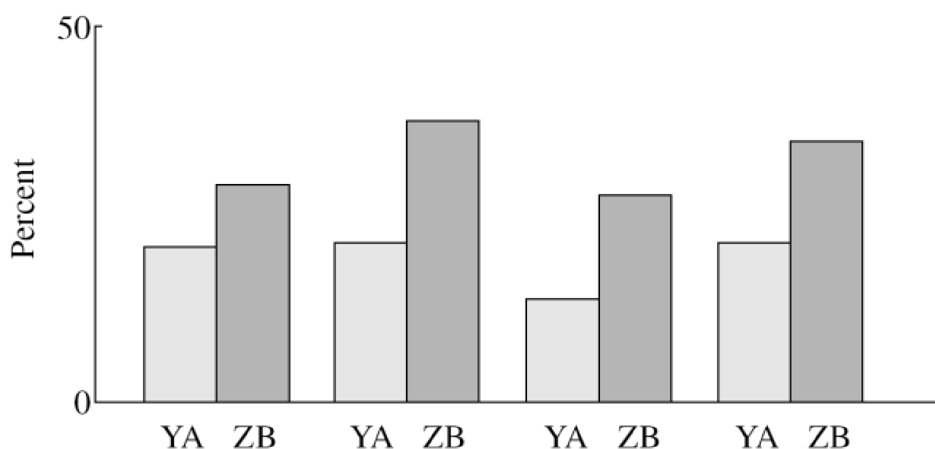

Figure 3.21. Percentage of t-voicing in intervocalic contexts by four newscasters on two New Zealand radio stations: YA and ZB (from Bell, 1984: 171)

As a result, the Audience Design model offers a fuller account of the explanation of stylistic variation more accurate than the Attention to Speech model, since it seems to be more applicable to natural and spontaneous conversations; it attempts to explain the relationship between *inter*- and *intra*-speaker variation and introduces the element of speaker agency when speakers engage in natural conversations (Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2012: 3). Given these conditions, Bell (see Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 115-116) defines *style* as follows:

1) *Relational activity:* Style is what an individual speaker does with a language in relation to other people.
2) *Indexicality*: Style derives its meaning from the association of linguistic features with particular social groups.
3) *Responsiveness* and *audienceship*: Speakers design their style primarily for and in response to their audience.
4) *Linguistic repertoire*: Audience design applies to all codes and levels of a language repertoire, monolingual and multilingual.
5) *Style axiom*: Variation on the style dimension within the speech of a single speaker derives from and echoes the variation which exists between speakers on the 'social' dimension.
6) *Accommodative competence*: Speakers have a fine-grained ability to design their style for a range of different addressees, as well as for other audience members.

7) *Discourse function*: Style-shifting according to topic or setting derives its meaning and direction of shift from the underlying association of topics or settings with typical audience members.
8) *Initiative axis*: As well as the 'responsive' dimension of style, there is the 'initiative' dimension, where the style-shift itself initiates a change in the situation rather than resulting from such a change.
9) *Referee design*: Initiative style-shifts are in essence 'referee design', by which the linguistic features associated with a reference group can be used to express identification with that group.
10) *Field and object study*: Style research requires its own designs and methodology.

Regarding the historical sociolinguistic framework, recent studies are now applying synchronic sociolinguistic patterns of stylistic variation to the analysis and interpretation of historical data. Thus the focus of study is the observation of the individuals' sociolinguistic behaviour taking into account context types and addressees. However, as Auer (2015: 134) stressed: "[t]he question […] arises as to how stylistic variation is reflected in written documents, i.e. in particular in written records from earlier stages of a language". As mentioned before, private letters from historical corpora have been considered a fruitful resource to the study of sociolinguistic variability and stylistic choice within a speech community in earlier periods. Koch and Oesterreicher (1994) state that the relationship between the features of written and spoken language is perceived more like a continuum than a dichotomy, beyond the phonic-graphic distinction. Consequently, private correspondence is considered as the type of text that best imitates the oral genre and intended as a dialogic exchange.

Hernández-Campoy and García-Vidal (2018b) managed to find the same patterns of audience design in the disappearance of the runic symbol <þ> at the expense of the Latin-based grapheme <th> in English at the end of the Middle Ages. This phenomenon is observed in the sociolinguistic behaviour of John Paston I, member of the Paston family ascribed to the minor gentry social class. The style-shifting practices that this informant presents denote the presence of Bell's Audience Design model in accordance with the uniformitarian principle. Specially, the distribution of variability in John I when addressing his different social-ranked recipients exhibits upward and downward accommodation patterns. As Figure 3.22 shows, there is a higher use of the innovative <th> when addressing social groups of higher status (such as royalty, 100% or nobility, 97%) and it barely presents variability, which contrasts

with the other groups of recipients: 82% when addressing his wife, 74% with minor gentry and 73% with professionals.

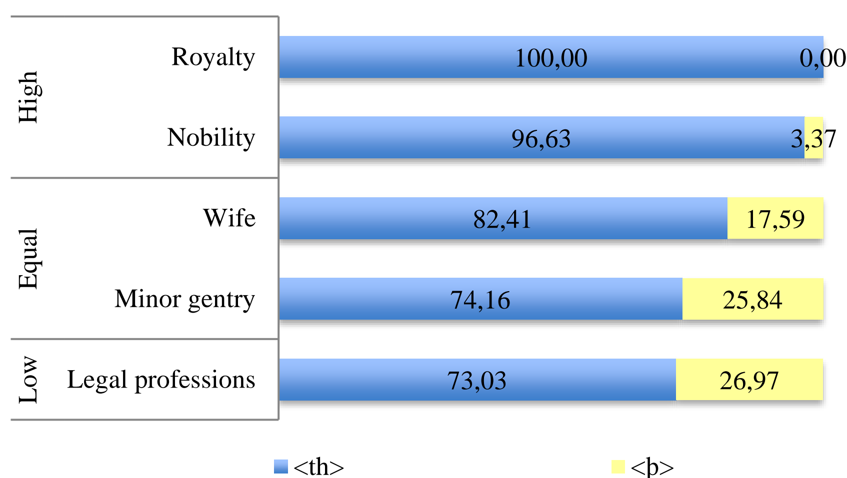

Figure 3.22. Contrast of percentages of usage for variable <th> and <þ> and audienship in John Paston I (from Hernández-Campoy & García-Vidal, 2018b: 398)

3.3.2.c. Speaker Design model

Yet, the theories of the Attention to Speech model and the Audience Design model formulated for the explanation of stylistic variation would not be able to encompass all the factors that contribute to style-shifting (Schilling-Estes, 2002: 383). More recently, there has been a tendency to incorporate social constructivist (creative) approaches to style phenomena that view the speaker's socio-linguistic behaviour as a very important instrument to portrait images of them. Subsequently, variationists are now becoming aware of the fact that speakers are involved in the process of language production more actively in that they are constantly shaping and re-shaping interactional norms and social structures in a strategic way to project multiple identities, instead of just accommodating to the audienceship (Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2012: 4). In this way, there is a need for more speaker-centered approaches capable of explaining social meaning transmitted through the multiple choices that a speaker may make among the different stylistic resources. Based on social identity theories, Bell's Audience Design model is now developed further: "language acts are acts of identity, a very important symbol of group consciousness and solidarity, a signal of group identity and linguistic loyalty" (Hernández-Campoy, 2018: 43). According to this assumption, in current sociolinguistic studies, the stylisation of a particular linguistic variable is now viewed as being capable of exhibiting a particular identity, considering then diaphasic variation as a

sociolinguistic resource that enable speakers to manage their own style so as to reflect and transmit social meaning (see Coupland, 1985, 2001a, 2001b, 2007; Traugott & Romaine, 1985; Johnstone, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2009; Schilling-Estes, 2002: 377; Moore, 2004; Jaffe, 2009; Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2010, 2012; Hernández-Campoy 2016: 146–182; amongst others). As Bell (2007: 95) stressed, style thus is a powerful device that represents the speaker's ability to signal some kind of identity, attitudes, ideologies or social position.

The philosophical thought inspiring this third-wave sociolinguisitc approach to style is a post-modernist social constructivist conception of social theory of knowledge that assumes the existence of different realities that can have multiple interpretations. Accordingly, current sociolinguistic studies are viewing style-shifting as initiative (proactive) rather than just responsive (reactive), since interlocutors can have the ability to adopt different social positions through speaker's agency in language choice or through the shaping of style.

With this philosophical background, the Speaker Design model emerged as a multidimensional model, taking into account a wider range of factors contributing to style-shifting that might customise people's speech acts. Therefore, this new approach focuses on the initiative facet of stylistic variation along with the individuality of speakers, viewing the individual voice as agent for the transmission of sociolinguistic meaning (Johnstone, 2000: 417). Hence, the individual voice plays a crucial role now in the understanding of the social context of language:

> Taking the perspective of the individual on language and discourse means shifting to a more rhetorical way of imagining how language works. It means shifting to a way of thinking about communication that incorporates ideas such as strategy, purpose, rhetorical ethos, agency (and hence responsibility), and choice - without, of course, ignoring the many ways in which individuals' options may be limited or sometimes nonexistent. It means imagining other people not only (or not always) as 'the creatures of their social relationships', but as their 'orchestrators' […].
>
> (Johnstone, 2000: 419)

More recently, conceptualisations of style-shifting have meant a shift from deterministic and sytem-oriented to more constructivist and speaker-oriented approaches to stylistic variation. As Coupland (2001a: 197) stated, style-shifting has to be understood as part of the social organisation of meanings through active discourse action, where linguistic choice entails the

representation of the self within relational contexts, articulating both relational and identity goals.

Hernández-Campoy and Cutillas-Espinosa (2010, 2012 and 2013) identified the Speaker Design phenomenon in a Spanish former president of the region of Murcia in south-eastern Spain. The analysis of her speech in the 1990s, showing non-standard features, confirmed the third-wave sociolinguist approach when conveying social meaning. The vernacular variety she used is stigmatised within Spain and it also carries some kind of covert prestige for Murcian speakers. The President's speech was compared with other politicians and non-politicians from Murcia and also with other regions of Spain (see Figure 3.23). Results show that the subject under study went against traditional industrialised Western-world expectations for both occupation and social classes and gender/style (see Labov's Gender Paradox, 2001). At the inter-speaker variation level, her percentages shown for standard Castilian linguistic forms are lower (49.4%) when compared with other female politicians (81%), and even lower than those standard forms exhibited by other groups (male politicians 75.4% and male non-politicians 62.3%).

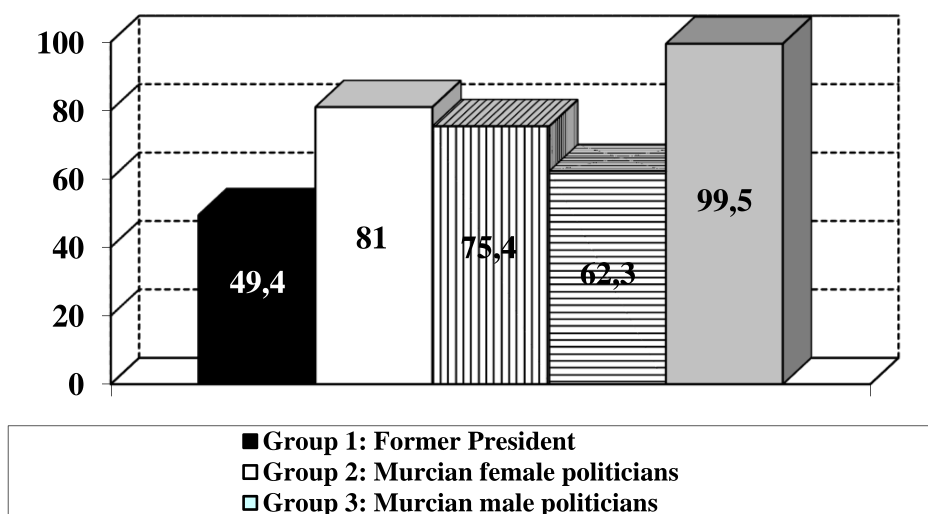

Figure 3.23. Inter-speaker variation: usage levels for standard Castilian variants according to speaker group (from Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 169. See also Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2010: 303)

Regarding intra-speaker variation (see Figure 3.24), the President's scores generally reflect a higher use of standard linguistic variants in more formal contexts although unexpectedly she was using her most non-standard speech forms in the most formal context, the investiture, with 42.2%. Despite having had access to university education and knowing the Standard Castilian variety perfectly, President Martínez seemed to have make use of his speaker's

agency to achieve popularity related to identity construction by using local Murcian features. Therefore, according to Hernández-Campoy and Cutillas-Espinosa (2010: 307), what she was actually reflecting was the intention of capitalising on the covert prestige of some dialectal features, related to "localness" or "hardworkingness" so as to appeal to socialist voters. Intentionally, she was creating her dialectal speech to project an image that fosters the Murcian identity.

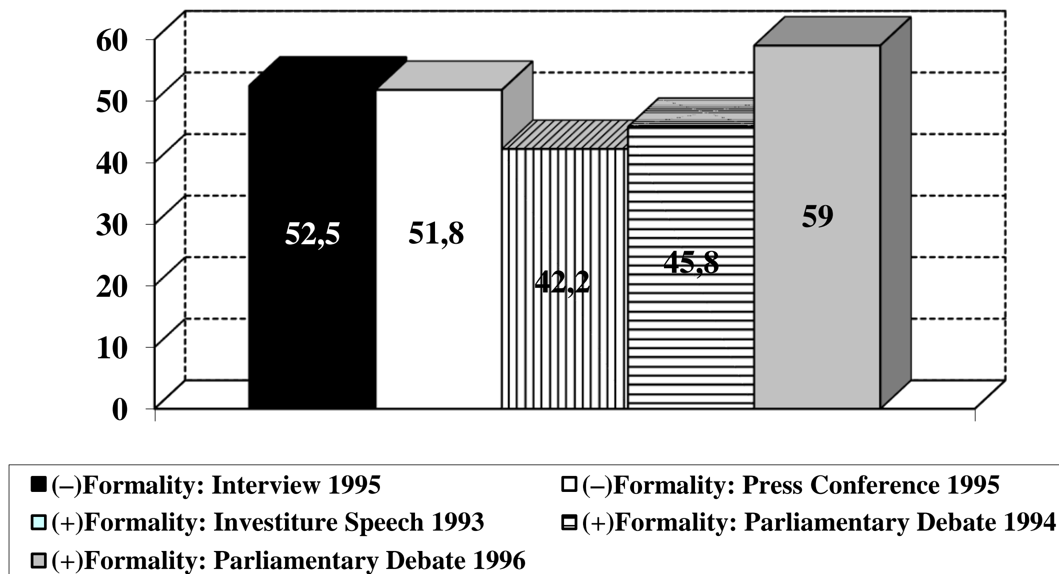

Figure 3.24. Intra-speaker variation: President's scores for standard Castilian variants in different situations of formality (from Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 169. See also Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2010: 304)

Within the framework of historical variationist sociolinguistics, Hernández-Campoy and García-Vidal (2018a) found the phenomenon of Speaker Design again in the Paston family. Surprisingly, in his letter to King Edward IV in 1475, John II exhibited a lower percentage of the innovating standard form <th> at the expense of the <þ> (33% standard) compared with the rest of the social groups (see Figure 3.25). Despite exhibiting higher percentages of the standard form when addressing his audienceship like his father John Paston I (see section 3.3.2.b), John Paston II showed style-shifting when addressing the royalty. The reason Hernández-Campoy and García-Vidal (2018a) provided for this peculiar sociolinguistic behaviour is mainly based on Speaker Design theory: the underuse of the standard <th> spelling and hence the overuse of the non-standard variant <þ> may be understood as a conscious case of *hyper-vernacularisation*. Unlike hyper-dialectism, hyper-vernacularisation refers to the use of non-standard forms that are not properly used according to socio-

demographic and stylistic contexts (see Cutillas-Espinosa, Hernández-Campoy & Schilling-Estes, 2010). Thus, John II was pursuing a communicate effect by using vernacular forms: he was trying to project a low-social profile (ordinary persona and downward social mobility), asking for help to King Edward IV to reclaim what he considered to be his inheritance, the manor of Caister Castle. The historical background of the Paston family was the War of the Roses (1455-1487) and the family found themselves embroiled in different struggles, such as the Siege of Caister-at that time it was held by the Paston family but the Duke of Norkolk and the Duke of Suffolk were disputing about the ownership. Hence, John Paston II used a strategy in his letter to the King to project nearness or comradeship just to achieve his goal.

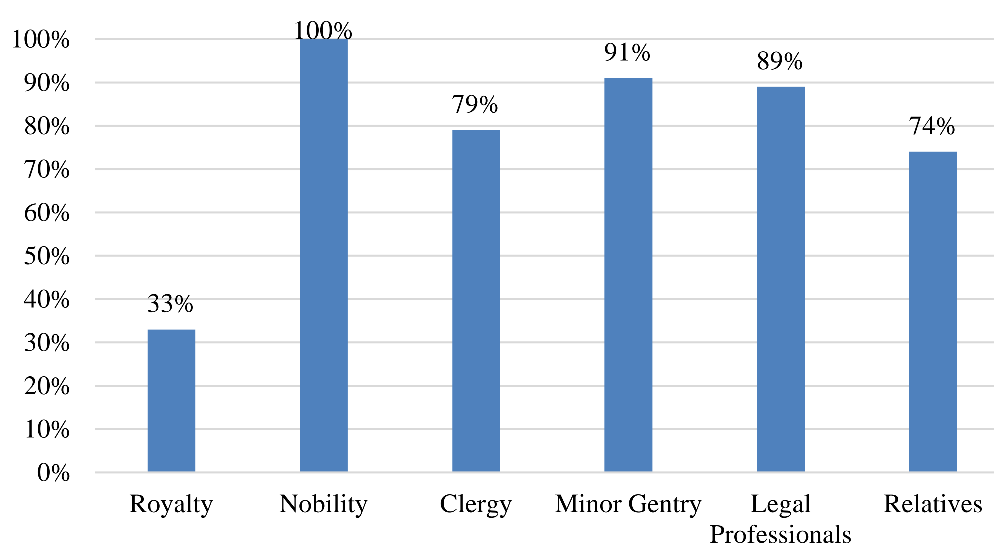

Figure 3.25. Percentages of the innovating <th> spelling in the letters of John Paston II according to his audienceship (adapted from Hernández-Campoy & García-Vidal, 2018a: 16)

The intra-speaker variation shown in both studies reinforce the idea that sociolinguistic performance exhibited in different contextual factors has to be carefully considered and studied and analysed through microscopic analysis.

Chapter 4
Objectives

Historical sociolinguistics has fostered an interest in attesting language change and development in the history of languages by reconstructing the sociolinguistic contexts in which language change occurs longitudinally, and identifying the factors that may have contributed to linguistic variation – legitimating the historical validity of some *sociolinguistic universals*. Different sociolinguistic studies have focused on the quantitative variationist analysis of some linguistic variables by using historical data and establishing correlations with sociolingusitic factors, specifically socio-demographic parameters (age, gender, social class, etc.) to reconstruct the context that could have favoured the development of these linguistic variables. As mentioned before, scholarly interest in adjective comparison grew specially in the second half of the twentieth century (both synchronically and diachronically) mainly focusing on the use of the periphrastic variant as oppossed to the inflectional one and on the variability and forces that conditioned the choice between both forms. However, I observed that historical sociolingusitic research on this topic has been scarce since most of the previous works pay attention to either the origin and linguistic development of the periphrastic variable or to the factors that influence the alternation between both forms of comparative variants (this latter has been mainly examined in contemporary English).

Moreover, the application of findings from contemporary sociolinguistic research to interpret linguistic material from the past in this particular issue has not been given any attention. Therefore, the analysis of lingusitic patterns across extralinguistic factors is crucial so as to give an accurate picture of the context in which certain linguistic variables are being developed. In tune with these claims, and by using the historical corpora PCEEC and CEECE based on private correspondence, the aims of this research are:

1. To examine linguistic variation in the adjective comparative system in English from 1418 to 1800 in two corpora by observing, detecting, quantifying and analysing the presence of the different variants for adjective comparison (inflected, periphrastic and double forms) according to extralinguistic factors such as gender, social rank and age.

2. To ascertain ratios of the entrenched synthetic way of comparing adjectives versus their analytical counterparts in the corpora used to observe how these variants diffuse across time according to syllable-length and etymology of the adjective.

3. To investigate to what extent some extra-linguistic factors such as age, gender, social status of the informants and period of time could have had an influence in the use of the periphrastic form, which may let us consider whether this variant was more prestigious at the time.

4. To see if there are any linguistic and extralinguistic mechanisms and motivations for style-shifting in the adjective comparative system during Early/Late Middle English by applying current multidimensional models of intra-speaker variation (Audience Design) to historical corpora of correspondence, attesting theoretical models of diaphasic variation by assuming that: the development of linguistic variables is associated to socio-historical factors; and the past should be studied in order to understand the present and viceversa.

Chapter 5
Methodology

5.1. The dependent variable

Linguistic variation has been demonstrated to be constrained by extralinguistic (social) and/or linguistic factors within the field of *Urban Dialectology*. The *linguistic variable* is the object of our study and it has been defined as "a linguistic unit with two or more variants involved in covariation with other social and/or linguistic variables. Linguistic variables can often be regarded as socially different but linguistically equivalent ways of doing or saying the same thing, and occur at levels of linguistic analysis" (Chambers & Trudgill, 1980: 60). Depending on the linguistic nature of the variables, they can be classified as segmental – phonetic-phonological, grammatical (morpho-phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic or lexical) and orthographic – and suprasegmental (intonation, features of the voice, etc.) (see Figure 5.1). Certainly, variables of the phonological level are the most used in sociolinguistic analysis because they are clear indicators of linguistic variation and easier to quantify. However, variants of the syntactic and lexical levels are more difficult to measure due to the problem of semantic equivalence (Lavandera, 1978; Milroy & Gordon, 2003: 185–190). Therefore, the linguistic variable is an entity that fluctuates depending on socio-demographic (such as gender, age, social class, etc.), stylistic (spontaneous, formal, etc.), and/or linguistic parameters (segmental or suprasegmental) (Hernández-Campoy & Almeida, 2005: 46). Those variants which denote a social and/or stylistic meaning are *sociolinguistic variables*: set of alternatives that have social significance but that are used to say the same thing (Fasold, 1990: 223–224).

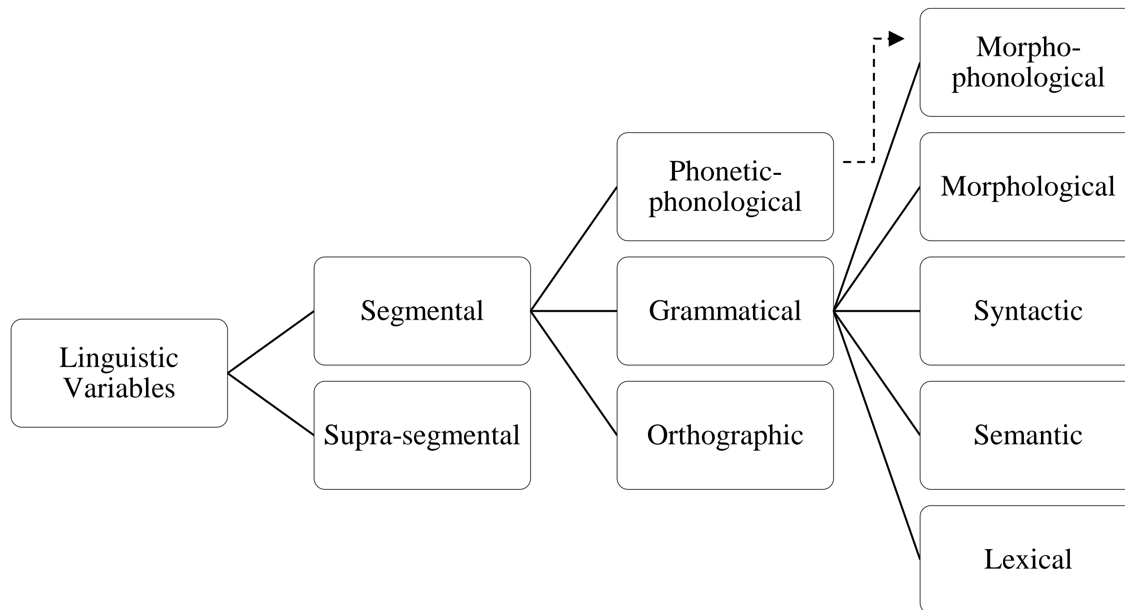

Figure 5.1. Typology of linguistic variables (adapted from Hernández-Campoy & Almeida, 2005: 48)

William Labov (1972: 7–8) suggests some general principles on "what are the most useful properties of a linguistic variable to serve as the focus for the study of a speech community". These are: a) variables that occur frequently in a language so as to obtain enough tokens of the different variants of each variable for its analysis; b) variables that are structural in that they must be central to the wider linguistic system and an integral part of it and c) variables whose social distribution has to denote a high stratification when it comes to correlating them with other social parameters or linguistic variables. Similarly, Trudgill (1974: 80) states that the selection of the linguistic variables has to be justified according to: a) the amount of social significance in the use of the segments involved; and b) the amount of differentiation involved. These ones are dependent variables, which intervene with others where a relationship exists. More specifically, a dependent variable is a variable that is observed so as to detect any influence attributed to the action of other variables; in other words, a dependent variable can only be explained and understood when it is analysed in a context with other intervening variables.

Different historical sociolinguistic studies have focused on the quantitative variationist analysis of morpho-syntactic features using linguistic corpora (Romaine, 1982; Rissanen, 1997; Rutkowska, 1999, 2003; Newman, 1999; Nevalainen, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Nevalainen & Ramoulin-Brunberg, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2003; Nevalainen, Ramoulin-Brunberg & Trudgill, 2001; Wright, 2001; Bergs, 2005; Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 1982, 1987, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Calle-Martín, 2014, 2015; Calle-Martín & Conde-Silvestre, 2014; Calle-Martín &

Romero-Barranco, 2014, 2015; Conde-Silvestre & Calle-Martin, 2015; amongst others). These studies establish correlations with sociolinguistic aspects, such as specific socio-demographic parameters (status, age, gender, social networks, etc.) or broader issues, such as multilingualism, code-switching, language mixing, attitudes, standardisation, dialect contact, dialect levelling, etc. (for a full report see Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2005). However, in this diachronic sociolinguistic practice, none of the morpho-syntactic studies has paid attention to the mechanisms of adjective comparative formation from a historical sociolinguistic perspective, with the exception of the distribution of comparative linguistic forms in different American and British English text types by Kytö and Romaine (2000) and the socio-stylistic analysis of double comparatives by González-Díaz (2004, 2006b, 2008: 159–172), as seen in Chapter 1.

For the purpose of our study, in order to detect evidence of social (according to gender, age and social status), and linguistic variation we use as dependent variables the alternations between the variant forms of the comparative morpho-syntactic variable for English adjectives: inflected vs. periphrastic comparative, along with double forms.

5.1.1. Description of the linguistic variable (*-er/more*)

As introduced in section 1.1, the comparison of adjectives in English to a high degree is mainly produced in two different ways (see example (8)): an inflected (synthetic) form by which the suffix *-er* is attached to the root of the adjective (*stronger*) and a periphrastic (analytic) form in which the adverb *more* is used before the adjective (*more productive*). However, among the range of comparative structures, we can also find double comparatives (*more stronger*) and comparison expressed by irregular forms (*worse*, *better*, *further/farther*). These latter forms have not been included in the historical analysis as they are beyond the scope of this work (see section 5.4).

(8) a. *Lucy is* ***more ready*** *to do the tasks than John* (analytic comparative)
b. *He seems to be a* ***stronger*** *man* (synthetic comparative)
c. *Jim is* ***more prouder*** *of his daughter than Robert (*double comparative)
d. *Mary is* ***better*** *at playing rugby than Carl* (irregular comparative)

For the study of the development in the use of the comparative formation patterns used from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, it is necessary to mention the treatment of this issue on

contemporary grammar books.[1] Bauer states the rules for comparative alternation in the twentieth century as follows:

> What we appear to have, then, is a situation where, at the beginning of the century, the rules are becoming more fixed. Disyllabic adjectives which end in the suffix *-ly* take periphrastic comparison, other adjectives ending in *-y* and also those ending in syllabic *-le* take the suffixed comparison except for a few remnants which will vacillate between the old irregular form and the new regular form.
>
> (Bauer, 1944: 58)

Moreover, he suggests that the method for comparing adjectives in English has indeed become more systematic during the twentieth century:

> The change in the course of this century appears to have been only incidentally an increase in the use of periphrastic comparison. Rather, the change has been a regularization of a confused situation, so that it is becoming more predictable which form of comparison must be used.
>
> (Bauer, 1994: 60)

In contemporary rules of grammar, double comparatives are considered ungrammatical and "comparison in relation to a higher degree is expressed by the inflected form in *-er* […] or their periphrastic equivalents with *more* […]" (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 458). The comparison strategy choice between these two alternatives is largely conditioned by the length of the adjective. Thus, monosyllabic adjectives tend to be compared by inflection; disyllabic adjectives can be compared by both inflected and/or periphrastic forms; and adjectives with more than two syllables can only be compared by using the periphrastic method (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 461–463). However, additional information to these general claims is necessary since they do not seem as distinct and precise as they might be. Occasionally, monosyllabic adjectives can also be compared periphrastically, such as in the case of *cross*, *fake*, *ill*, *loath*, *prime*, *real*, *right*, *worth* or *wrong* (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 1583). Moreover, participial adjectives also take analytic forms, such as *boring/bored*, *wearing/worn*, *pleasing/pleased*, etc. On the other hand, according to Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1583), some monosyllabic adjectives allow periphrastic forms as an alternative to inflectional forms, although the inflectional forms are more usual with adjectives that are more common, hence more frequent, such as *big*, *hot*, *old*, *young*, *small*, etc. Regarding disyllabic adjectives, Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1583) affirm

[1] For a more detailed account see Quirk *et al.* (1985); Greenbaum and Quirk (1990); Swan (1991); Huddleston and Pullum (2002); Leech and Svartvik (2003); amongst others.

that the analytic forms are always possible for comparison, while inflectional ones are only possible with certain adjectives, such as *polite*, *quiet*, *common*, *solid*, *cruel*, *wicked*, *pleasant* or *handsome*, "although periphrastic forms seem to be gaining ground" (Quirk *et al*. 1985: 462). Other adjectives that can have both forms of comparison are mentioned in Cobuild's grammar, such as *gentle*, *handsome*, *likely*, *mature*, *narrow*, *obscure*, *remote*, *shallow*, *stupid* or *subtle* (Sinclair, 1995: 441). However, there are certain disyllabic adjectives that can readily take inflections when they end in an unstressed vowel, for instance, those ending in -*y* (*easy*, *happy*, etc); in -*ow* (*mellow*, *shallow*, etc.); and in -*le* (*able*, *noble*, etc.) (Quirk *et al*. 1985: 462). Moreover, there are other types of disyllabic adjectives which exclude the use of inflections, mainly the ones ending in -*ful* (*careful*, *useful*, etc.); -*ish* (*brutish*, *boorish*, etc.); -*al* (*global*, *legal*, etc.); -*ic* (*caustic*, *magic*, etc.); and -*ous* (*anxious*, *cautious*, etc.) (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 1583). However, it is important to mention that we may distinguish between adjectives ending in -*y* and -*ly*, since the former favour inflectional forms, whereas the latter favours periphrastic forms, such as *friendly* or *lonely*, and so do *eager* and *proper* (Quirk *et al*. 1985: 462). According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1583–1854), this issue is more lexically determined than phonologically conditioned, since they propose pairs of disyllabic adjectives that are initially stressed, and which have the same phonological endings, such as *clever* or *pleasant* (which can take inflections) and *awesome* or *placid* (which do not take inflections). With regard to adjectives with more than two syllables, they are normally compared by using the periphrastic form. Exceptions to this rule are adjectives beginning with the negative suffix -*un* (*unhappy*, *unhappier*) which only take inflectional forms (Quirk *et al*. 1985: 462). Furthermore, Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1584) point out another exception with *shadowy* and *slippery* – although recognising that the forms *shadowier* and *slipperier* are rare but acceptable.

As it has been considered, the contemporary rules in grammar books host the view that the length and final segment of the adjective are the main factors governing the use of inflectional forms vs. periphrastic forms when comparing adjectives in English. However, apart from these assumptions, different empirical studies about the factors that condition comparative alternation in Present-day English have suggested other functional motivations in the choice between synthetic vs. analytic strategies (see section 1.4), such as origin of the adjective, phonological, prosodic, semantic, pragmatic, syntactic and psycholinguistic factors.

Historically, the issue of what factors condition the choice between the inflected or periphrastic form has been attested in some studies (as observed in section 1.4 above). According to Barber (1976/1997: 146), there exists a difference between the comparative

system in the EModE period and Present-day English, namely "that today there is a fairly strict regulation of the two methods". Pound also commented on this issue, arguing that during the fifteenth century:

> […] the form of comparison is governed by no fixed principle, such as length, ending, accent, or the source of the word. Instead the two methods are used quite indiscriminately, according to the author's choice.
>
> (Pound, 1901: 18)

In the same fashion, Jespersen (1956: 347) stated that the "rules given in ordinary grammars are often too dogmatic", since the treatment of this subject in the literature refers to the syllable structure of the adjective as the main factor for the choice between the synthetic vs. the analytic form. The pioneering article by Kytö (1996) on the diachronic development of the comparative formation patterns for adjectives marks the beginning of precisely data-driven research on the topic, primarily differentiated by length of the adjective and ending. This has been followed by a wide range of subsequent studies, for example, Kytö and Romaine (1997: 340) have proved that the synthetic form is preferred over its analytic counterpart in 99% of 1248 monosyllabic adjectives, which is corroborated in Leech and Culpeper (1997: 355). It is the EModE period the one which has witnessed the competition between both forms of comparing adjectives in English. Following Mondorf's principle of *more*-support (2009: 117–170), after the EModE period, the comparative system moves "towards a division of labour, in which the analytic variant comes to be used in cognitively complex environments. By contrast the synthetic variant holds its own in cognitively simple and easy-to-process environments" (Mondorf, 2009: 117). She advocates that the factors conditioning the choice are mostly aspects of "morphological complexitiy and argument complexity", but also "provenance/origin". As regards variation in diachrony, Poldauf (1948: 240) stated that the rules governing comparative formation in the eighteenth century were less consistent than those operating in the twentieth century. Kytö and Romaine (1997: 200) studied this issue in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the eighteenth century, authors preferred the synthetic variant and in the nineteenth century the analytic, for example in the use of *willing*.

As mentioned in section 1.3, new patterns for comparing adjectives in English developed after the introduction of analytic comparison. There has been an ongoing debate as for the origin of the analytic form for comparison. Some authors speculate that the origin of this form emerged mainly under French and Latin influence (Pound, 1901: 3; Mossé, 1952; Strang,

1970: 301; Kytö, 1996; Kytö & Romaine, 1997) while others hold the view that this form was a native English development (Emerson, 1894: 368; Knüpfer, 1921: 368; Curme, 1931: 503; Poldauf, 1948; Brunner, 1951; Faiss, 1977: 164; Mitchell, 1985: 84; González-Díaz, 2003: 28, 2006a, 2008: 28). As stated by Kytö and Romaine, the use of these two methods for comparing adjectives was not fixed after the introduction of the analytic form:

> […] after an initial spurt in the use of the new periphrastic type of comparison in some environments, the newer forms eventually oust the older ones completely. In other environments, however, the newer forms recede in favour of the older inflectional type.
>
> (Kytö & Romaine, 1997: 330–331)

During the EModE period, Kytö and Romaine (1997: 335) state that the distribution of synthetic and analytic forms was quite balanced. Additionally, the introduction of the new analytic form led to a third construction of comparative adjectives: double comparison. Nevertheless, this form was not as frequent as the synthetic and analytic forms during the EModE and late Modern English periods, although they ended up disappearing at least from the written language (Kytö & Romaine, 2000: 173).

Thus, there were three possibilities when comparing adjectives in English during the EModE and scholars such as Pound (1901: 18) believed that their use was mainly conditioned by the author's choice. However, some other modern linguists (Kytö & Romaine, 1997) have followed a more socio-stylistic approach to the topic revealing that other factors such as text type, word structure and stylistic factors played also a role when selecting one form of comparison over the other. The data analysed has revealed that in rather formal texts, the use of periphrastic forms was more frequent than in other types of texts that could reflect oral speech (such as handbooks or private letters), where inflectional forms prevailed (Kytö & Romaine, 1997: 185). These results may hypothetically reveal that the introduction of periphrastic forms could have begun in the written language and spread to oral registers during the EModE period. Stylistic factors influencing the comparison strategy choice have also been studied in historical data. According to Görlach:

> […] style is the (usually deliberate) characteristic selection of linguistic means of expression made by an individual or a group from the alternatives that the linguistic system or the norm allows. […] Style is subject to changing fashions to an even greater degree than other aspects of the language. Such change appears to have been especially rapid in the last decade of the sixteenth century […]
>
> (Görlach, 1991: 29)

Furthermore, Curme and Jespersen also point out that the stylistic factor may have influenced the choice of the comparison strategy in English so as to put emphasis on the element being compared, although their opinions differ slightly. Jespersen (1909/1956: 356) claims that periphrastic forms "are generally felt more vigorous [and] more emphatic". On the other hand, Curme affirms that periphrastic forms were of a more "stylistic advance", since:

> […] the use of a separate word (more/most) instead of an inflectional ending allows the speakers/writers to place additional stress on the comparative element, if they want to emphasise the idea of degree, or on the adjective to emphasise the meaning.
>
> (Curme, 1931: 504)

This assumption has also been stated by Kytö and Romaine (2000: 185) indicating that periphrasis "may possibly have emerged as stylistic option first in the written language to emphasise and focus on the comparison itself rather than the quality referred to in the adjective".

Concerning double comparatives studied in historical data, Görlach (1991: 147) points out that the use of double comparison was more frequent in colloquial registers, serving as a mode of expressing emphasis. The use of such forms rose in the sixteenth century and they "were accepted in respectable prose, too. Ben Jonson praised them as a special virtue of the English language" (Görlach, 1991: 84). However, these double forms were "condemned as being illogical" by the end of the century. González-Díaz (2004, 2006b, 2008: 159–205) examined the distribution of double comparatives in EModE from a socio-stylistic perspective. Results show that double comparison was associated with the upper classes and educated usage until the first decade of the seventeenth century and underwent social downgrading since double forms were more frequent in non-standard registers, still found nowadays.

Taking into consideration the sociolinguistic nature of this study, a more socio-stylistic account on the development of the adjective comparative variants (inflected, periphrastic and double forms) in English is carried out considering some extralinguistic factors, such as social rank, age and gender from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. Special attention is given to the etymological origin of the word, syllable-length of the adjective and to the possible application of the contemporary theoretical models of Audience Design (Bell, 1984, 2001) to intra-speaker variation patterns in order to explore style-shifting in the use of the adjective comparative variable.

5.1.2. Comparison and typological patterns

According to Carter and McCarthy (2006: 759), "comparative forms compare one entity or process with another". This process is normally carried out with comparative adjectives and adverbs in which a *than*-phrase is most commonly followed, suggesting that two things may be different in quality or quantity. Stassen (2001: 993) defines *comparison* as a "mental act by which two objects are assigned a position on a predicative scale". As Wlodarczyk states:

> One of the typological parameters of comparative constructions is predicate marking. English is among the few languages which use an overt marking on the predicative adjective. This typological feature is limited to Europe and coincides with the presence of a comparative particle (*than* in English). The case of English […] is special in that both existing types of overt marking, i.e. by means of an affix as well as a special adverb (Stassen, 2001: 995), are allowed.
>
> (Wlodarczyk, 2007: 1–2)

Therefore, English may make use of both the affix (*-er*) and the adverb (*more*) for a predicate in construction that can be followed by a *than*-clause as shown in example (9):

(9) *In fact, I think that this school has a* ***brighter*** *future* ***than*** *the private school has*. (Carter & McCarthy, 2006: 759)

Although it is one of the most common patterns in comparative clauses, the use of a *than*-clause is not always present in a comparative structure. In addition to the use of comparative structures followed by *than*-clauses introducing a second element of comparison, the following typological patterns concerning comparative adjective constructions of superiority are among the ones which have been considered in the analysis:[2]

1- **Comparative + *than*-clause:** as mentioned above, this is the most common construction in a comparative structure. It is normally used to specify another thing in the comparison clause by mentioning explicitly another second element after *than* (Sinclair, 1995: 195). See examples (10) and (11):

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[2] See Quirk *et al*. (1985: 465–474); Sinclair (1995: 195 196); Francis *et al*. (1998: 370–377); Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1106–1163) and Leech and Svartvik (2003: 198–199) for a more thorough revision of adjective comparative structures.

(10) *[b]ut he cant let no lease, take no fine, nor can we give any, were his terms **more moderate than he** att present mentions*. (CEECE, from Anne Clavering to Sir James Clavering, 1709)

(11) *I am importuned by Hunt the baker's family (whom I believe to be much **honester than himself**,) […]* (CEECE, from Henry Purefoy to Conquest Jones, 1740)

2- ***The* + comparative + (*of*)**: this comparative construction indicates that two things are being compared but sometimes they secondary term of comparison can be omitted. Huddleston and Pullum explain that this construction may appear in "set comparison" by clarifying that:

> […] the superlative is restricted to set comparison, while comparative grade is used predominantly in term comparison [followed by a *than*-clause] but occurs also in set comparisons where the set has just two members.
>
> (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 1103)

These "two members" can also be implicit (see examples (12) and (13)). Moreover, this pattern can be used as a subject or object, as well as a complement (Francis *et al*. 1998: 371). The main function of *the* here is a determiner in a noun phrase structure, but also a modifier. According to Carter and McCarthy (2006: 765), the structure *the* + *comparative* + *of* is more frequent in formal contexts than *the* + *comparative*.

(12) *I pray God fit us for **the more necessary** duty of obeying, and preserve to us our laws and our religion* (CEECE, from John Fell to Christopher Hatton, 1699)

(13) *If the person I recommended be not the better for it, as I hope he will, yet I shall be **the happier*** (CEECE, from George Lyttelton to Alexander Pope, 1738)

3- **Comparative adjectives after a linking verb (postpostive position)**: comparatives adjectives used after a verb (Sinclair, 1995: 194-195) such as in example (14):

(14) *[E]arle's vanity has tempted him to invent the account of her former way of Life; that his triumph in securing her might be **greater***. (CEECE, from Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 1799)

4- ***A* + comparative + noun + prepositional phrase:** the adjective is placed in attributive position followed by a noun which is in turn followed by a prepositional phrase or a clause, acting as the pattern of the noun (Francis *et al*. 1998: 371). See examples (15) and (16):

(15) *[n]ext Poste shall be able to give you* ***a more particular*** *account* ***of*** *my negiciations in this place [...]* (CEECE, from William Bolton to Robert Heysham, 1696)

(16) *I must begin by giving you thanks for my tippet than wch. a better present and* ***a more useful*** *one* ***to*** *me was never chosen* […] (CEECE, from Martha Temple to Jane Martha Temple, 1697)

5- **Omission of a secondary term of comparison**: a second term of comparison may be implicit in the text when it is recoverable from the previous context (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 1102). See example (17):

(17) *[s]ome were appointed to Collect all the Technical words and Termes; especialy those of* ***the more liberal Imployments*** *[...]* (CEECE, from John Evelyn to Samuel Pepys, 1689)

6- **Double comparatives:** although being marginal and ungrammatical today, the use of double comparatives has also been included in the analysis of the historical data. See example (18):

(18) [*b]ut those that came to Sowthehamton wyth the schype to cawse the Frenche men to be* ***the more gladder*** *to medyll wyth them*. (PCEEC, from William Paston to John Paston III, 1488)

7- **Degree modification of comparative adjectives:** in order to indicate a much greater or small degree on a scale of comparison, adverbs such as *far*, *much*, *a lot* or *rather* are used before the comparative adjective, see example (19):

(19) *[b]ut you have painted to yourself a cloud* ***much blacker than*** *I hope itt is in reality [...]* (CEECE, from Henry Liddell to Sir James Clavering, 1710)

In spite of the fact that all occurrences of inflected and periphrastic comparatives of adjectives under investigation are included in the analyses, the following uses have been discarded:

1- **Quantifiers uses of *more***: When the adverb *more* is used as a quantifier rather than as a degree marker it has been excluded from the historical analysis, such as in example (20):

(20) *[I] hope plead somewhat in my favour, and in consequence give me* ***more particular reason*** *of rejoicing in the event*. (CEECE, from King Adolphus Hanover to Prince Adolphus, 1795)

2- **Defective comparative adjectives (irregular forms)**: Irregular comparative adjectives such as *better*, *worse*, *further/farther* have also been eliminated from the analysis since they might distort results due to their high amount of appearance, such as in example (21):

(21) *[e]ls had yow given me a* ***better*** *account of the monies received and to receave [...]* (PCEEC, from John Holles SR to John Holles JR, 1620)

3- **Proportional clauses**: Proportional clauses consisting of two comparative phrases beginning with *the* have also been discarded from the analysis since the construction itself indicates parallel or proportional increase or decrease, and hence it can create parallelism with the adjective that follows (Quirk *et al*. 1985: 1111; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 1135–1136). See example (22):

(22) *We begin to feel more Calm- but* ***the more Calm*** *I feel (tho' perhaps a contradiction)* ***the more ruffled*** *I am with the People [...]* (CEECE, from Jane Leigh Perrot to Mountague Cholmeley, 1800)

5.2. The independent variables

Independent or extralinguistic variables are those ones that are not linguistic in nature, condition the behaviour of the dependent variables, and which help the researcher find a sociolinguistic explanation to the linguistic variation of a dependent variable – and its variants – under study

(Hernández-Campoy & Almeida, 2005: 56). When carrying out a sociolinguistic analysis it is necessary to take into account external factors (such as location, age, gender, social rank, etc.) that may influence the linguistic diversification and changes affecting a linguistic variable. In sociolinguistics, linguistic changes are understood as changes that are in connection with social change, giving form to the ways in which a language develops. This interaction between language and extralinguistic factors is highlighted by Chambers and Trudgill when dealing with variability:[3]

> The study of variability thus combines linguistic and nonlinguistic elements. In theory, we can distinguish the linguistic variable itself, which is realised phonetically by its variants in the context of variable constraints, and the parameters of style and class, which define the social context in which any speech event inevitably takes place. However, it is only in the presence of the latter that the linguistic variable becomes meaningful, because it is dependent upon them and correlated with them. In practice, the distinction between the linguistic and nonlinguistic aspects of variability cannot be made, because the most compelling proof of the structural significance of the linguistic variable consists in showing that the variable alters in an orderly way when one or more of the independent social variables change.
>
> (Chambers & Trudgill, 1980: 149)

Thus, when reconstructing the past, historical sociolinguistics has to rely on factors that may explain and capture the relationship between language and society of the periods being studied. Accordingly, the meaning of variability in a linguistic variable has to be recovered from the historical texts analysed (Kyełkiewicz-Janowiak, 2012: 307). In the following sections, the extralinguistic variables used as independent variables for this study will be described. These are mainly the periods dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century along with the socio-historical contexts in England. As socio-demographic variables, we will pay particular attention to social ranks, gender, age, social networks and mobility and stylistic factors related to intra-speaker variation.

[3] However, Labov (1994: 3) asserts that external factors as well as internal factors are not always interdependent: "[…] when the analyses are carried out, it appears that the two sets of factors - internal and external - are effectively independent of each other. If an internal factor is dropped or changed, changes appear in other internal factors, but the external factors remain unchanged; if an external factor is dropped or changed, other external factors change, but the internal factors remain as they were (Sankoff & Labov, 1979; Weiner & Labov, 1983). Moreover, the internal factors are normally independent of each other, while the external factors are heavily interactive".

5.2.1. Periodisation: periods and socio-historical contexts

This study covers the periods from the last part of ME (1410–1500) to the first part of Late Modern English (1500–1800) in the analysis of private correspondence collected from the PCEEC tagged version (1410–1681) (Nurmi *et al*. 2006) and the extended version of this, the CEECE (1681–1800) (Nevalainen *et al*. 2000–).[4] For a period spanning 390 years, it is long enough to let us have access to several generations of informants so as to make real-time observations on language change. The social, economic and cultural background of this study serves for the reconstruction of the social context of the language used in the aforementioned periods. Burke (1992) alludes to the concepts of gender, family, kinship, class, status, social mobility, power, etc., as well as issues such as social structure, culture or function when offering a new discussion on the relationship between social theory and history. In this way, this section provides an overview of the main events that took place in England under the periods studied as well as accounts for factors such as social class or socio-economic aspects.[5]

The major events covered here include the last period of the Middle Ages, and social and cultural movements, such as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the beginnings of the Romantic period.

5.2.1.a. Late Middle English

This span of time in the PCEEC is characterised by the spread of the incipient standard language from ME to EModE. The ME period is defined by the development of a new national feeling in England as a consequence of the war with France. Social ranks were reorganised due to the fall of the feudal system in England. This event gave rise to a new class of "wage-earning labourers" (Nevanlinna *et al.* 1993: 39). Therefore, the English middle class gradually grew in terms of wealth and a sense of well-being. Moreover, London became a really important city after the establishment of the central government there. On the other hand, many people died during this period because of frequent plagues. This reduced the population considerably and had consequences for education, as "the number of clerical teachers who could have maintained the tradition of teaching in Latin decreased" (1993: 39). Thus, the vernacular language started to emerge. By the end of this century, public documents started to be written in English.

[4] See sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 for a detailed description of the periodisation of the corpus.

[5] See section 5.2.2 for detailed information on socio-demographic variables in England from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century (such as social rank, age and social networks and mobility), and particularly in the corpora used for this study.

Subsequently, the labouring and merchant classes grew in economic and social power, and hence English started to increase in importance in comparison to Anglo-Norman. Furthermore, John Wycliffe had already challenged the authority of the Church as part of a movement called *Lollardy*, by which the Bible was translated into English during the fourteenth century (see Aston, 1987; and McArthur, 1992: 1135).

Regarding the linguistic situation of the period, there was a considerable structural change from the early to the late ME period. The language underwent significant changes, such as the consolidation of the change from a synthetic to a more analytic syntax. Conventional views suggest that firstly, inflections in the system started disappearing due to the phonetic change of vowel reduction in unstressed syllables, and as a result analytic patterns arose to mark grammatical distinctions. However, other opposite views suggest that inflectional patterns ceased because they stopped being functional (Baugh & Cable, 1951/2002: 309). Contact with other languages in the period (mainly Latin and French) could have also had an influence on this. According to Lass (1999: 4), it was after the post-Conquest period in which a framework of bilingualism may have probably existed in England and left its mark on the lexicon, morpho-syntax, and even stylistic changes (probably due to the continuous contact with Latin).[6] Moreover, the shift from a local to a national language was rapidly carried out. The rise of printing brought to England by William Caxton in 1476, helped to increase the use of English as a first language and also to the spread of literacy among the population of England, since printing books became available at reasonable prices. Although the event of Caxton's establishment of a press in London is related to an incipient form of standard language in England, it was not until the late fifteenth century that a more prestige variety of English emerged (though during the century, Chancery English started to be the variety used by most writers outside London) (Lass, 1999: 6). Thanks to the rise of the standard and to prescriptive tendencies, literary works reached a wider range of people from different social ranks. Furthermore, the use of the vernacular language spread to scientific academic treatises and private correspondence. However, it is important at this point to bring to the fore the ideological and linguistic dimension of the concept of standardisation of the period. As Downes stated, standardisation is:

[6] However, Lass (1999: 4) argues that "structural change precipitated by contact occurs only where there is a large-scale, persistent bilingualism, and the opportunity for massive code-switching or even 'creolisation'". He even continues adding that "[…] this was probably never the case at any point in time in the history of English" which clearly contrasts with previous reflections on the matter by Bailey and Maroldt (1977) and Poussa (1982), suggesting that ME was a creole.

> […] a complex of belief and behaviour towards language which evolves historically. It is a social behaviour towards language, deeply integrated into such historical factors as the development of literacy, the growth of nationalism and the evolution of centralizing states. A standard language is a social institution and part of the abstract, unifying identity of a large internally differentiated society.
> (Downes, 1984/1998: 34)

According to Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy (1998: 129–130), recent definitions of "standard languages" tend to associate the term with extra-linguistic factors and ideological practices which involve a particular linguistic behaviour motivated by "social, commercial needs and […] connected to such social practices as the nationalistic centralization of states" as well as the promotion of one variety over others which eventually lead to "the authoritative extension of a class-based used of language". During this period, new genres emerged, but it was in the last part of the ME period when two important new genres came up: drama and private letters. These text types reflect the spoken language of the period since they contain passages with a colloquial tone or even imitating speech (see section 5.3.1). During the fifteenth century, English was still far from being a world language since probably fewer than seven million speakers spoke the language (Lass, 1999: 3). This situation changed in the course of the eighteenth century when England became an empire with some "Anglophone enclaves" as America, India or Australia (Lass, 1999: 3). After this expansion, the English language would become of significant importance because of its influence on these colonised places apart from the ones previously mentioned (including Ireland and Africa).

Among the linguistic effect processes that happened during this period (apart from the change of synthetic to analytic patterns), there is an internal demographic movement from the North and East Anglia to the South and especially to London from late ME onwards, which also contributed to variation and change in the English language. For example, this can be appreciated in the diffusion of the northern *-s* ending for the third person singular in the present simple tense replacing the earlier *-th* in ME. Obviously, these types of change took time to be completely replaced, and could have emerged from pragmatic and social factors (register, addressee, age, sex or status of the speaker) as well as the influence of syntactic environments (Lass, 1999: 138).

Politically, the fifteenth century has been considered as a period of transition: it was neither fully medieval nor early modern. Although Henry V (1386–1422) had won a significant victory against the French in 1415, the preoccupations regarding the previous battleship with the French were still present (Allen, 2008: 23). By 1453, an interest in gaining the English

throne between Lancastrian and Yorkist claimants ended up in a civil war. After the accession to the throne of Henry Tudor VII (1457–1509) in 1485, the War of the Roses finally ended. At the end of the fifteenth century, England was "a late medieval Catholic monarchy, with a weak parliament and monarchs with theoretically absolute power" (Lass, 1999: 3).

5.2.1.b. Early Modern English

The PCEEC and the CEECE offer a time-span covering all the sub-periods in the Early Modern English. Therefore, in this section information about social and linguistic conditions that prevailed during this period – and hence during the life-time of our informants in the corpora – is presented.

This period marks a pivotal era for the configuration of standard English (see Fisher, 1996; Bex & Watts, 1999; and Wright, 2002). Two major developments arose from the last part of the sixteenth to the seventeenth century: the Reformation and the Revolution. The Reformation was a popular movement dealing with religious issues in England aiming at reforming some religious practices of the Roman Catholic Church which resulted in the establishment of Protestantism under the reign of Henry VIII (1491–1547) in 1529.[7] This movement also affected other fields of life such as the educational system, as many schools were run by the Catholic Church. Moreover, due to the dissolution of the monasteries, landownership was also affected by this movement, since around 25-35 per cent of the cultivated land in England was owned by the Crown and the Church (Clay, 1984: 144). It was not until the late seventeenth century that this portion dropped to 5-10 per cent when the Crown adopted a policy of sales in the 1540s (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 31). As a consequence, millions of acres were relocated and transferred to private ownership (primarily members of the nobility or gentry).

The Reformation movement was strengthened with the accession of James Stuart (1566–1625) to the throne in 1603 since he "[…] soon proved to Catholics and Puritans alike that he was no more minded to introduce radical religious reform than his predecessor had been" (Hiscock, 2008: 121). When Charles Stuart (1600–1649) ascended to the throne in 1625, a Civil War took place after dissolving the Parliament in 1629. This derived in serious disorder and political unrest when Charles attempted to impose the English Prayer Book in Scotland (Hiscock, 2008: 122). This is what has come to be known as *The English Revolution* (1642–

[7] The length of the reformation period has also been an issue of scholarly debate among historians (see Marshall (1997) or Kaartinen (1999).

1688), a period of conflict and political turmoil during the middle years of the seventeenth century. However, as regards the social order, the revolution movement in 1649 did not result in any significant change in the English social system or social distribution (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 31). After Charles I's execution (1649), a new future arose during the interregnum regime with the return of Charles II to the throne in 1660.

During the EModE period, society was highly stratified and hierarchical. The Renaissance is defined as a period of economic transition, moving from feudal economies to a structure of private ownership, that is, a period characterised by owners' desire to make profit. Thus, this is what has been known as an early form of "capitalism" (Hiscock, 2008: 129). According to Rissanen, Kytö and Palander-Collin (1993: 54), we may notice how English society developed from a "fairly static, sparsely populated Catholic peasant society into an increasing stratified and economically diversified Protestant society, whose population more than double". Language change went hand in hand with the development of England's society. Due to the Reformation movement, the change of attitude towards the use of the English language that started in the last period was reinforced during the EModE period. As a consequence, many important literary works had already been published in English by that time, motivated by Protestant believers who were supporters of the translation of the English Bible. However, not only did linguistic changes take place at the time but also changes in attitudes in English society. The feeling of nationalism became of crucial importance for the establishment of the English language, and consequently, the displacement of Latin and French (see Barber, Beal & Shaw, 1993/2009: 176). However, there was also a renewed interest in classical Greek and Latin. Therefore, during the Reinassance period, a number of translations from Latin were made, which resulted in many classical Latin and Greek words (regarded as pure and logical language) which were brought into the English language (Barber, Beal & Shaw, 1993/2009: 177–178). The incorporation of a massive quantity of words from these languages was opposed by some scholars and culminated in the so-called *inkhorn controversy* (see Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 1998: 14). The use of borrowings from the classical languages was regarded as a sign of educational or even social superiority. During the Reinassance period, as far as linguistic aspects are concerned, Latin was considered the international language of intellectual dialogue. In fact, writers wrote their works first in Latin to secure international recognition and prestige (this was the case of *Utopia* (1516) by Sir Thomas More).

The development of the printing press contributed to the consolidation of the English language: spelling and grammar started to be codified and the first English grammar, by Ben

Jonson in 1640s, together with the first English dictionary, by Samuel Johnson in 1755, were published. Regarding important linguistic changes, the Great Vowel Shift was the most prominent development that marked the evolution of the English language. It essentially refers to changes which affected the long vowel sounds in English (see Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 1998: 161–188; Pyles & Algeo, 1964/2010: 144–146; Brinton & Arnovick, 2011: 327–338; amongst others). Regarding grammar, the evolution from a synthetic to an analytic system is reinforced and strengthened during this period: case endings were almost completely ousted, periphrastic and compound tenses were definitely consolidated. Standardisation also played a role here since prescriptive tendencies attempted to impose certain grammatical patterns (see Langer & Nesse, 2012; and Sairio & Palander-Collin, 2014). From the fifteenth to the late seventeenth centuries, the interest in literacy was a major concern in people, who wanted to achieve a better education. By that time, education seemed to be socially stratified: there were differences in the way both boys and girls were educated. Boys could have access to academic education while in the case of girls it was exceptional to some from the higher social environments. This cultural situation created an important social division between boys and girls (see section 5.2.2 b):

> […] children of the lower social strata rarely went to school and, if they did, their families could hardly afford it for more than a year or two. An apprenticeship, lasting seven years, was the most common form of education among the middling ranks, although […] this was also the training that many younger sons of gentry families had to choose.
>
> (Brooks, 1994: 54; quoted in Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 41)

The arrival of Charles II in England (1660) after his exile in France marked the beginning of the Restoration period (1660–1688). As far as religious issues at the time are concerned, at first he granted religious toleration; however after the Act of Uniformity was passed in 1663 excluding Roman Catholics and radical Protestants from government offices, it was soon recognised that Charles II “meant to extend toleration to Roman Catholicism” since he had made “ […] a secret alliance (the Treaty of Dover) with Louis XIV, the Catholic King of France” (Morrissey, 2008: 218). The rivalry in the religious field continued the following years when James II violated the Test Act in 1673. However, in 1687 he offered religious toleration with the Declaration of Indulgence. It was not until 1707 that Britain was made “great” again after the Act of Union, when England and Scotland merged their Parliaments under the reign of Queen Anne (1665-1714). Britain was becoming well-organised and increasingly becoming more urban and modern. However, around 50% of the population was employed in agriculture

(Morrissey, 2008: 228). Thus, there is a shift from the independent farmer to the "larger tenant farmer" with "a need for distribution, transportation and merchandising the products of the larger, eighteenth-century farm" (2008: 228).

During the last decades of the eighteenth century, the majority of the population of Britain was still working in rural areas or in domestic service. During the eighteenth century, Britain was a society with an important difference between two main spheres of activity: the public and the private (Kitson, 2008: 314). The public was devoted to political and more intellectual life, whereas the private was mainly run by women at home, in charge of the education of children (see section 5.2.2.b). The last period of the eighteenth century was also characterised by a transformation in ideas, primarily about science, which came to be known as "natural philosophy". As for the distribution of social ranks, the country was governed by aristocratic families but below them, "a landed gentry of some 12.000 families" also controlled the government but at local levels (Kitson, 2008: 322).

The eighteenth century is characterised as the Age of Reason; the rationalistic spirit directly had an influence on the stage of codification of a normative grammatical standard aiming at reducing variation in form. Thus, this period saw a proliferation of prescriptive grammars and dictionaries attempting to codify and fix the language (Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 1998: 219–224). However, some of the weaknesses that this presented were that eighteenth-century grammarians made prescriptive judgements based on what was correct in grammar but neglecting the observation of how language was actually used (Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 1998: 227).

5.2.2. Socio-demographic variables

5.2.2.a. Status: rank

The PCEEC and the CEECE used in this study contain personal letters written by informants from different social ranks who lived in England between c. 1418 and 1800. This offers the researcher the possibility to have an easy access to the language used by the people from the period under study, as well as the opportunity to contrast the use of certain linguistic variables by members from different social ranks. As Trudgill asserts:

> […] the internal differentiation of human societies is reflected in their languages. Different social groups use different linguistic varieties, and as experienced members of a speech community we have learnt to classify speakers accordingly.
>
> (Trudgill, 1975: 23)

Assuming that the use of language by speakers from different social ranks conditions language variation in the past, accurate models of social stratification are required. In historical sociolinguistics, when dealing with the reconstruction of social orders it is important to study the different foundations upon which past societies were based, such as the hierarchical model. It has been mentioned in previous literature that the term *class* is not the preferable one among historians when describing pre-industrial societies in order to avoid anachronisms (Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 2004). Instead, other terms such as *social rank*, *status*, *order*, *estate*, *degree* or *sort* have been proposed (Wrightson, 1982, 1991; Burke, 1992; Cannadine, 1999). As mentioned in section 2.3.1, for the interpretation of written historical data it is important to take into account other parameters to reconstruct the social stratification of the informants analysed. This task should be backed up by other disciplines such as social history, which allows the historical sociolinguist to understand how a social system functioned at particular points in time. When compiling historical corpora for the study of language variation and change, researches determine the social class of the informants by being provided with personal information such as kinship, profession, social networks, level of education or property ownership. During the Medieval period, society was traditionally represented in three different states: *nobility* (those who fight), *clergy* (those who pray) and *labourers* (those who work). Nevertheless, social orders changed over time due to the social, cultural and economic background of each period in history, and as a consequence new social positions developed. For example, as mentioned in the previous section, during the English Renaissance numerous social, economic, demographic, political and cultural events took place, which directly affected the social stratification of the period. This entailed different changes in the elaboration of a more complex social system: the tripartite estate was now distributed into numerous ranks in which social stratifications were divided in a functional way but also in a hierarchical order. Following the minimum of four models for social division established by Labov (1990) for an accurate sociolinguistic analysis, Nevalainen (1996a: 58) devised an alternative flexible set of four models of rank hierarchy to represent the social stratification in Tudor and Stuart England (see Figure 5.2). She arrived at the conclusion that the distinction between *gentry* and *non-gentry* people is crucial for the historical sociolinguistic analysis. Model 1 is rather general, presenting only the traditional tripartite division mentioned before. Models 2 and 3 represent a further subdivision of the *gentry* and *clergy* into upper and lower, hence understanding that they were internally hierarchical, depending on titles or incomes. Another significant difference between models 2 and 3 is that in model 2 *professionals* are seen as a separate category, whereas

model 3 assigns them to the *gentry* or *non-gentry*, depending on the income or lifestyle of the informants studied. This further subdivision into *gentry* or *non-gentry* is also applied to the category of *merchants*, who could also have the opportunity to rise up the social ladder to become part of the *gentry*. Concerning the *clergy*, the issue seems to be more complex since its status changed over time. The first two models show an independent status for the clergy as a rank, but model 3 represents a subdivision into *nobility*, *gentry* or *non-gentry* since, after the Reformation, the clerical state could turn into a profession and they could acquire a higher social rank (*upper clergy*), which could be associated with the *nobility* during the seventeenth century, or with the *gentry* (Nevalainen, 1996a: 60). Furthermore, models 2 and 3 also incorporate a separate category of *social climbers,* [8] referring to upwardly mobile people who could cross the dividing line between *gentry* and *non-gentry* depending on the success of their careers. Finally, model 4 provides a more contemporary view of social status during the end of the period, classifying society into "*the better*", "*the middle*" and "*the poorest*".

Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4?**
(Royalty)	*(Royalty)*	*(Royalty)*	
Nobility	Nobility	Nobility	'Better sort'
Gentry	Gentry	Gentry	
	- Upper	- Upper	
	- Lower	- Lower	
	Professions	*Professions*	
		→Gentry	
		→Non-Gentry	
Clergy	Clergy	*Clergy*	'Middling sort'
	- Upper	*→ Nobility*	
	- Lower	*→ Gentry*	
		→Non-Gentry	
Merchants	Merchants	*Merchants*	
		→ Gentry	
		→ Non-Gentry	
	Social Climbers	*Social Climbers*	
Non-Gentry*	Non-Gentry*	Non-Gentry	
			'Poorest sort'

Figure 5.2. Typological models of social stratification in Tudor and Stuart England (from Nevalainen, 1996a: 58)

As it is appreciated in Figure 5.2, it is a difficult task to try to reconstruct the social hierarchy of past societies since there were many people who crossed the lines dividing social ranks due

[8] In Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, (2003: 37) the term *social climber* is changed to *social aspirer* or *upwardly mobile*, so as to avoid negative connotations that could have been associated to the term and to make reference to those people who could move more than two degrees up the social ladder.

to the different social background they could be assigned to during their lives. Therefore, information of speakers in historical analysis is not always so extensive as to clearly determine the order to which an informant belonged, since social ranks were not clear-cut. Wrightson tries to capture the complexity of this issue in the following lines:

> […] were all members of the learned professions gentlemen or not? Should leading merchants and urban plutocrats be assimilated to the gentry or accorded a separate, somewhat lower, grading of their own? What distinguished a lesser yeoman from a husbandman in practice; and should husbandmen, cottagers, and labourers be lumped together or carefully distinguished? Contemporaries came to different conclusions on such issues.
>
> (Wrightson, 1991: 43–44)

For their subsequent pilot historical sociolinguistic studies, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1996) and Nevalainen (1999), employed model 2. However, some years later, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, (2003: 136) proposed a more fine-grained model of social order and status in Tudor and Stuart England, as seen in Figure 5.3.

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Royalty	Royalty	Upper ranks	'Better sort'
Nobility	Nobility		
Gentry	Gentry		
– Upper/Prof			
– Lower/Prof			
Clergy	Clergy		
– Upper			
– Lower			
Social aspirers[3]	Social aspirers	Social aspirers	
Professionals	Professionals	Middle ranks	'Middling sort'
Merchants	Merchants		
Other non-gentry	Other non-gentry	Lower ranks	'Poorest sort'

Figure 5.3. Models of social stratification (from Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 136, after Nevalainen, 1996a: 58)

The main reason why the first model proposed was modified is because both Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 136) considered that linguistic differences could be more reliable with coarser divisions of the social rank. The main differences are that this new model "keeps apart upper and lower gentry, upper and lower clergy, and also distinguishes between nonprofessional and professional gentlemen". Model 2 was the one chosen for their analysis of social variation (since model 1 proved to be too detailed), model 3 for changes along the S-

curve and model 4 only used to lend support to model 3. Based on this new model, and as mentioned in section 2.3.1, they also presented a social hierarchy stratification. Nevalainen (1999: 508) and Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 36) approached this issue by designing a particular model of social stratification in Tudor and Stuart England, following the social historians' transition model of social status from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries. This model is primarily based on titles, landownership, incomes and lifestyle. As stated by Nevalainen, this model represents:

> […] a social hierarchy as a rank scale running from the nobility down to paupers. The notion of rank is related to the medieval hierarchy of estates, each performing a function of its own. Suggesting that position of status groups was typically acquired at birth, this social-distribution view of society is founded more on consensus than on conflict. Despite its insensitivity to social mobility and the gradation of status groups in towns, the model may serve as a point of departure for testing the linguistic relevance of social status in the early modern period. [9]
>
> (Nevalainen, 1999: 507)

Therefore, this model shows two main estates: *gentry* and *non-gentry*, although there is a *professional order* that is made up of army officers, government officials, lawyers, medical doctors, teachers, etc. considered as "social aspirers" who could move up the social ladder if they had successful careers (Nevalainen, 1996a: 61). The *gentry* were at its turn subdivided into *nobility* (royalty, duke, archbishop, etc.) and *gentry proper* (baronet, knight, esquire, etc.). Finally, the *non-gentry* is also subdivided into *urban non-gentry* (merchants, craftsmen, tradesmen, etc.) and *rural non-gentry* (farmers, tenants, etc.). This model of social stratification was employed in some studies so as to test the long-term spread of some linguistic variables, such as the personal pronoun *you* in subject function, the use of the plural form *are* competing with *be* and the use of the relative *which* to the detriment of *the which*. After analysing the results of the use of these linguistic forms according to social rank, Nevalainen identified that changes seemed to be led by those who "had successful careers and moved several degrees up the social ladder" (Nevalainen, 1996a: 73; Nevalainen, 1999: 500).

During the eighteenth century, the structure of society was conceived in terms of *classes* distinguished primarily on economic criteria. As Cannadine explains (1998/2000: 5), during

[9] The use of the term *class* has been traditionally defined in terms of "class consciousness and conflict" and endowed with ideological connotations (Nevalainen, 1999: 507). However, Fletcher (1996: 283) affirms that by 1700s "the gentry had established a sense of class identity, based upon a set of distinct cultural and intellectual assumptions, which differentiated them from the multitude". Therefore, it was not until the eighteenth century when the language of class was established.

the course of the eighteenth century, the social structure of Britain was more drastically changed since "the aristocracy began to enter a second and much longer era of decline […] the middle class became more vigorous, more numerous and more ambitious […] and the first industrial proletariat also came into being". Accordingly, the difficulty lies in selecting the criteria to follow to distinguish the social class from the speakers through the language they used. Much of this task depends on attitudes which are difficult for the researcher to trace back from historical written data.

A great deal of research on the correlation between linguistic variation and social ranks has been carried out over the last sixty years. One of the main findings in these studies is related to the evolution of standard language according to social stratification. Romaine (1988: 1464) suggests that the effects of standardisation are more notable in people from the intermediate ranks rather than in people from the top or bottom of the social hierarchy in a speech community. Therefore, it has been considered that middle groups lead linguistic changes that mirror standardisation and therefore they are more innovative (J. Milroy, 1992: 211–214). However, the social group of mobile merchants has also been paid attention in that the linguistic analyses carried out suggest that this group was also leading changes in earlier English (Milroy & Milroy, 1993: 69), although other scholars confirm that these linguistic changes have only made their way into colloquial English (Wyld, 1920/1936: 184).

5.2.2.b. Gender

Although being scarcer than men's writings, letters by women from different social levels are included in both the PCEEC and the CEECE, and thus they have also been included in our analysis. As it is well-known, women's writings were more limited than men's during the early sixteenth century.

Gender[10] has been a speaker variable used to determine social variation in language history. Depending on the approach adopted or the social status analysed, the view of gender roles during EModE has been varied. Traditionally, the view of *patriarchy* has two meanings: the more traditional one, "ruled by (the) father(s)", and the more feminist one, "wide-ranging domination of women by men" (Gowing, 1996: 5). Moreover, other connotations associated to

[10] The choice of the term *gender* instead of *sex* suggests a more complex interpretation concerning social practices rather than just the biological definition of *sex*. It has been analysed that gender identities show different tendencies of variation. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1998: 490) state that this linguistic variation could be examined in terms of "*communities of practice*": "[…] aggregates of people who come together around mutual engagement of some common endeavour".

both types of gender have been sociologically constructed (Foyster, 1999: 28–31). The qualities associated to manhood were described in terms of masculinity, dry humours, reason and strength and always considered of a higher superiority than women. On the contrary, the connotations associated to women were more negative: the inferiority of women in comparison with men was evident in all aspects of life; they were deprived of social or public life and seen as more “fragile” (Nevalainen, 1999: 510). Moreover, the typical social roles assigned to men and women during the period were those of breadwinner in the case of men and housewife and caretaker of the house and the children (Erickson, 1993; Laurence, 1994; Eales, 1998: 60–85; Mendelson & Crawford, 1998: 256–344). However, neither all women were married in EModE nor limited to domestic work, although, as mentioned before, the social role they acquired came from a woman’s family position and not from her skills as a professional (Nevalainen, 1999: 511). Unmarried women were socially ranked according to their father’s status whereas married women according to their husbands’ (Nevalainen, 1996b: 78; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 37).

Honour or virtue was also considered another difference between genders. While men earned respectability and honour by their actions in both public and private life, women’s honour came from their sexual reputation which could even ruin their social persona – see Fletcher (1996); Gowing (1996) and Foyster (1999), amongst others. Apart from this, other disadvantages that women suffered are. no choice to hold properties within marriage and no possibility to participate in trade. Within this scenario:

> […] women needed to look to marriage for security, and to keeping a home as occupation, although how that played itself out would tend to vary along class lines […] among the upper classes, the wedding itself had commercial benefits, while among the working classes, the marriage did. In both cases, the married woman was said to have disappeared into the marriage as far as the law was concerned.
>
> (Morrissey, 2008: 239)

But one of the most significant differences between men and women related to linguistic aspects during the EModE period is education, which was socially stratified, and it also varied according to gender. As mentioned at the very beginning, the scarcity of historical written data by women is probably due to constraints of literacy in the past, which leads to unequal representation of both genders in historical sociolinguistic data. The written production of women was more limited and so was their level of education compared to men’s. This reality was also extended to women from the upper social ranks who did not receive the same formal

education. Latin, which was the language used in higher education, was also a feature associated to the social elite and thus to manhood as well (Thomas, 1986). However, as women had been in charge of the education of children at home, acquiring the role of educators, many grammar books were written to fulfill this purpose (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2010). In terms of figures, by the time of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603), 20% of the male population was literate and could write whereas only 5% of the female population did (Cressy, 1980: 176). However, these percentages increased by the time of the Civil War (1642–1651) 30% for men and 10% for women. Although lagging behind gentry men, it is assumed that during the seventeenth century literacy rates of women and men from the gentry was quite equal since both could read and write (Cressy, 1980: 1041–174; Heal & Holmes, 1994: 252–254; Jewell, 1998: 146–154; Nevalainen, 1999: 514). However, this was more different in practice: "town differed from country, and professional people came at the top of the literacy hierarchy" (Nevalainen, 1996b: 79). At the same time, even if a woman was able to read and write, she could not have access to higher education. During the eighteenth century, it has been estimated that literacy rates were also socially and regionally stratified with at least 60% of the male population and 40% of the female population being literate in England and Wales (Cressy, 1980: 176–177). In the field of sociolinguistics, the role of gender in language change is a well-known researched area. As stated by Holmes:

> […] whatever the particular sources of the change, and whether they are regarded as vernacular or prestige innovations, women play an important role in establishing changes as components of the standard language.
>
> (Holmes, 1997: 135)

There are numerous studies dealing with the role of social status and gender as factors conditioning linguistic variation and change (Trudgill, 1974; Labov, 1984; Eckert, 1989a). A controversial debate emerged about gender differences for more standard or prestigious linguistic forms. For example, L. Milroy (1992: 171) argued against assumptions related to the preference of prestige forms according to gender, suggesting that "it does not seem rational to account for the interacting effect of sex and class by invoking some stereotyped notion of the status consciousness of women". Correlations between gender and social status determine that there exists heterogeneity in women and men as social characteristics, although social perceptions of the different gender groups may be seen very differently. Moreover, as Milroy and Milroy (1993) state, gender divisions have seemed to override differences in social status, "while in fact it seems best to treat them in conjunction" (Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak, 2012: 319).

As advanced in section 2.3.5, in Present-day sociolinguistics, it has been identified that women are the leaders of linguistic changes "that spread above the level of social consciousness and involved the new prestige forms of higher-ranked social groups" whereas women from lower social levels tend to use more vernacular forms (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 111). However, Labov (1990) has determined that women use more standard forms than men, favouring overt prestige forms, although also assuming that sometimes they are also the innovators in changes from below. One of the social explanations offered for this is that as women are granted less status than men, they use prestige forms to gain a higher position in society, respect and prestige (Eckert, 1989a; Labov, 1990). On the other hand, Milroy (1999) attributes the use of less standard form in men to peer constraint, since using standard forms could set them apart from their peers.

In historical sociolinguistic research, the issue is more complex due to the problems we have previously mentioned with social reconstruction of the past. It is more of a challenge for a historical sociolinguist since less than 2% of all printed material which was published during the seventeenth century was written by women (Crawford, 1985). Researchers have found that gender and social rank are significant for linguistic behaviour (see Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 110–156; Okulska, 2006; Raumolin-Brunberg, 2006; Palander-Collin, 1999a, 1999b; Nurmi; and Nevala & Palander-Collin, 2009). Some earlier studies have attested that gender differences may be traced back to periods before the codification of a standard language (Nevalainen, 1996a, 1999b, 2000b; Palander-Collin, 1999b, 2000; Vuorinen, 2002). These studies point that women promoted vernacular forms in late medieval times and in the early modern period. In the same spirit, Romaine (1982: 167–170) identified that women tended to use more vernacular forms than men in the relativisation strategies in written data from Middle Scots Correspondence. However, by using the EModE period of the *Helsinki Corpus*, Kytö (1993b) finds that women used *-s* third person singular for the present-tense more than men. In addition, Palander-Collin (1999a: 246) also found that women were leading a linguistic change in the gramaticalisation of *I think* in the CEEC corpus. In the same fashion, women seem also to be in the vanguard of the promotion of the progressive form *-ing* during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Arnaud, 1998). However, some discrepancies arose when other findings reported that women proved to be more conservative than men in the use of the older *be*-dominated paradigm of perfect constructions instead of *have* (Rydén & Brorström, 1987: 206); or in the use of more colloquial forms (*but only*) during the seventeenth century (Nevalainen, 1991: 178–182). More recently, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 118–127) carried out some case studies in which women were ahead of men when using more innovative forms.

Among these changes we find the replacement of subject *ye* by *you*, the diffusion of *my* and *thy* as opposed to *mine* and *thine* as well as the determiner *its* or the innovative pro-word *one*. In contrast, other few changes were reported to be led by men, such as the decline of multiple negation or the generalisation of the pronoun *which* (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 128–131). Nevalainen (1999: 524) points out that, as in the case of contemporary sociolinguistics, "16th-century women would have been responsible for promoting language norms other than those of everyday speech". She continues adding that it is important not to forget the role of social rank since these women from the EModE period who were also active in the process of adopting standard forms came from the gentry and the professionals ranks.[11]

5.2.2.c. Age

In sociolinguistics, the extralinguistic variable of age has also been employed for the tracing of linguistic variation and change. The PCEEC and the CEECE offer letters written by people from different ages as well as different generations and lifespans. This provides the researcher with the opportunity to analyse inter-generational differences so as to obtain information about language change within certain age cohorts, and how this was transmitted to succeeding generations. Sociolinguistic studies have benefited mainly from apparent-time studies, whose results lie on the fact that language patterns remain almost the same from adolescence through adulthood. Moreover, other sociolinguistic studies rest on the assumption that younger people tend to be in the vanguard when using more standard forms with respect to mature people (see, for example, Martínez Martín, 1983: 15; and Almeida, 1992). However, in contexts in which variables are rather more stable it is more complex to determine linguistic changes according to age. Cheshire (2005) points out that results from many variationist studies analysing linguistic changes of this type show a curvilinear pattern exhibiting that less prestigious forms are used by younger and older people. In the same vein, Trudgill (1974) also identified this curvilinear pattern attending to age when studying the two variants of the pronunciation of *-ing* in Norwich: the prestigious RP form [ŋ] and the non-prestigious one [n]. While middle-aged people used more frequently the most prestigious variant [ŋ], younger and older people tended to show an increase in the use of the non-RP variant [n]. The reason why this tendency in the use of prestigious versus non-prestigious forms was distributed this way according to age is explained as follows:

[11] Earlier studies have also proved that there are also linguistic differences among the higher ranks (see Nevalainen, 1996a; Palander-Collin, 1998; Nurmi, 2000; Raumolin-Brunberg, 2000; amongst others).

> We can probably account for this by supposing that for younger speakers the most important social pressures come from the peer group, and that linguistically they are more strongly influenced by their friends than by anybody else. Influence from the standard language is relatively weak. Then, as speakers get older and begin working, they move into wider and less cohesive social networks [...] and are more influenced by mainstream societal values and, perhaps, by the need to impress, succeed, and make social and economic progress. They are also, consequently, more influenced linguistically by the standard language. For older, retired people, on the other hand, social pressures are again less, success has already been achieved (or not, as the case may be), and social networks may again be narrower.
>
> (Chambers & Trudgill, 1980: 92)

Historical corpora have proved particularly meaningful in the study of language patterns by using both apparent and real-time studies (see Raumolin-Brunberg, 1998) since the data offered is notably useful for the analysis of individuals' linguistic practices through longitudinal studies. As mentioned in section 3.2.3, by using the age of speakers as an independent variable, Raumolin-Brunberg (2005), plotted the spread of the verbal suffixes *-(e)th* and *-(e)s* for the present indicative third person singular in six generations. Results suggest that the change in each generation of informants presents both a communal and generational pattern (see Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 83–99; Raumolin-Brunberg, 2005: 44). However, in examining individual usage (see Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 92–99), the data analysed reveal that linguistic variation has to be explained by resorting to other socio-linguistic variables such as geographical or social contexts. A further important factor to mention is the variability of grammar at early stages of acquisition. According to Nahkola and Saanilahti (2004: 90) categorical linguistic features remain categorical in the idiolect, whereas features acquired as variable normally change during the individual's lifespan.[12] This means that "[t]he more equal the proportions of the rivalling variants are, the more likely it is that one of the variants will increase its proportion and gain dominancy during the speaker's life" (2004:90). Following this assumption, Raumolin-Brunberg states that those linguistic features acquired as categorical do not show patterns of change in an individual's lifetime. Additionally, she argues that change is initiated by innovators and "there is no evidence that these innovators are children" (2005: 47).

[12] Nahkola and Saanilahti's investigation (2004: 90) suggest that "[...] if a speaker acquires a feature with little or no variation in it, no major changes are likely to take place during the speaker's lifetime". On the other hand, if speakers acquire a variable with one prevailing variant, they are more likely to change it during their lifespan.

5.2.2.d. Social networks and mobility

By studying vernacular varieties in detail, Milroy and Milroy (1985) (see also J. Milroy, 1992, 1998) offer new methodological principles to study language change from a more micro-sociolinguistic approach. Particularly, they advocate distinguishing *stability* and *change* in linguistic variation; analysing separately the linguistic behaviour of speakers and the systematic aspects involved; and observing *natural language* so as to find the origins of innovations in linguistic change. Due to the flexibility of social stratification and the possibilities of changing one's social status, individuals could interact with members from other social groups, extending their acquaintances beyond their social rank and establishing new relations. As a consequence, the sociolinguistic construct of *social network*[13] was introduced as a new independent variable to take into account:

> The main methodological difference between network […] and other variables that have been examined is that it is based, not on comparison between groups of speakers, but on relationships contracted by individual speakers with other individuals. It is assumed that all individuals are embedded in networks of personal ties.
>
> (Milroy & Milroy, 1998: 59)

Following from this, a social network is considered as an external variable conditioning the study of linguistic change. According to Milroy (2000: 217–218), a social network is the sum of relationships that an individual has established with others, inside or outside his or her social rank. These relationships have been defined as *ties* (interpersonal contacts) or *nodes* which are of distinct types. However, the connotations that *social networks* entail are more complex in that the researcher has to take into account the social circle between groups of individuals. As Conde-Silvestre aptly explains:

> A social network is close-knit and dense if most of its members keep some relationship with the others, so that if several individuals from the same network talk about a third or fourth party, it is likely that all of them have some acquaintance with him or her. Networks can also be loose-knit and less dense, when the mutual conversance of their members is less widespread: some of them have relationships with others, while others have only sporadic, brief bonds. Finally, networks can be

[13] The term *community of practice* has been associated to *social networks*, whose interrelationship with linguistic variables has proved particularly useful in sociolinguistic research. A community of practice is also explained in terms of interaction with other individuals, but it pays attention to the subjective experience of the members of each group with respect to the limits of their community, in other words, the linguistic forms that are more typical or identifiable with a particular group. The study of Eckert (1989b) on different adolescent gangs in Detroit has been of paramount importance to the field.

> multiplex or uniplex depending on the social domains in which interpersonal contact is established: in the workplace, the neighbourhood, within groups of friends, kin, or family […].
>
> (Conde-Silvestre, 2012b: 333)

Then, the linguistic behaviour of the informants analysed may change according to their social networks, their density, multiplexity, etc. As Figure 5.4 shows, network bonds can be of a higher or lower density; a low-density network implies that the members know the central individual but not one another, but a high-density network denotes that everyone knows all the other members. Evidence on this fact has been provided by some scholars (see Labov, 1972, 1973; Milroy & Milroy, 1985b; and Milroy, 1980/1987) assuming that individuals are highly influenced by other members from the same social network and even they have attested linguistic differences within the same social networks associated with the peripheral or central position of their members. Because of weak ties among individuals, they may not have the capacity to maintain some linguistic features and hence they are more likely to innovate. Therefore, a type of social organisation with greater mobility but weak ties will facilitate language change whereas those based on close-knit networks will not foster language change.

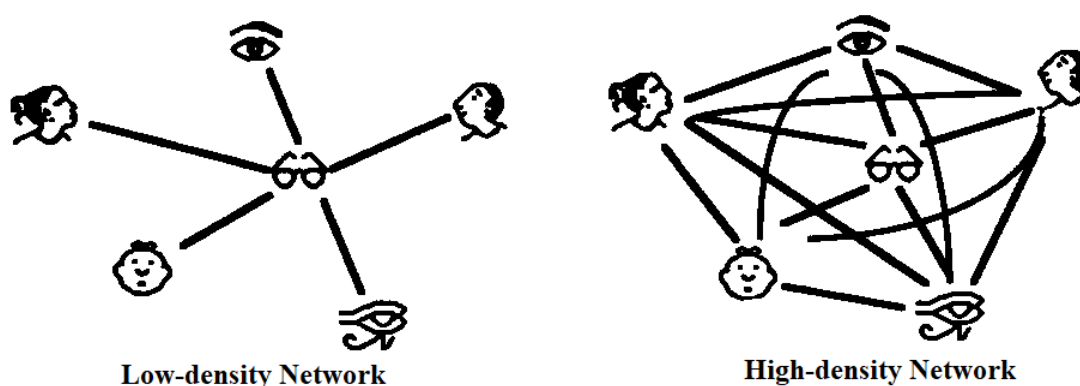

Figure 5.4. Low-density and high-density networks (from Chambers, 1995/2009: 80)

This statement rests on the assumption made by Granovetter (1973, 1982), which establishes that weak social ties are responsible for the transmission of linguistic features in society. In consonance with this, Milroy (1980/1987), has attested that the more multiplex and dense a social network is, the more entrenched the language will be, in the sense that vernacular forms will be maintained, supporting in this way the local variety. On the other hand, loose-knit networks are more susceptible to promote change (Bergs, 2005: 33). Thus, the language of these informants is considered as not innovative because the structure of the social network acts as a conservative force supporting the local variety. They do not tend to interact in wide range of

social networks and hence they do not participate in the process of transmission, thus their linguistic features cannot be spread further. Generally, a speaker who occupies a peripheral or central position in a social network is considered as the most innovative, establishing weak ties with other members of other social networks. Therefore, these types of speakers are considered as marginal informants who are more likely to adopt new linguistic features since they are not affected by intragroup pressures (Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 168). This particular personal lifestyle of an individual is what Milroy (2002: 565) refers to as mobile individual: speakers who have many weak ties but as they are mobile, they are not ascribed to any particular social network and hence they may favour diffusion and innovation. For this reason, these members are considered linguistic innovators, since they are conscious of innovation, transmitting linguistic forms from one network to another. Another important concept to mention at this point is the so-called *early adopters*. Milroy and Milroy (1985b: 364–370) and Milroy (2002: 562–563) describe the term by suggesting that these are influential network members, occupying a central position and establishing strong ties with others. They start to use the innovative linguistic form spreading it to other members of their close-knit social network. According to Bergs (2005: 41), the new linguistic form will only be embedded in a language if the early adopters, who participate in the diffusion of linguistic features, evaluate it positively by acquiring a more prestigious value. In historical sociolinguistics**,** the study of the informants' social networks poses a problem due to the lack of information that historical data may present. The researcher has to reconstruct these social networks from the written material that has come to us. The laborious task that this implies helps researchers discover how linguistic forms were diffused by personal contact with other individuals. However, it is possible to assume that, following the uniformitarian principle, human beings have the natural tendency to establish social relationships and create high-density or low-density ties with others, and therefore this form of interaction could have also been the same in the past. As Milroy (1980/1987: 239) points out "since all speakers everywhere contract informal social relationships, the network concept is in principle capable of universal application". On this account, Bergs (2000) tries to advice the researcher by suggesting being cautious when reconstructing social networks from the past, since not all factors and situations are applicable to the history of languages. In this sense, Bergs (2000: 41, 2005: 44–47) distinguishes between structural factors and content as two different dimensions of historical social networks. With respect to the former, little data is needed so as to reconstruct a decent network. Thus, what is needed is "data on who is part of a given network and who is in contact with whom" (2005: 46). Regarding the latter, Bergs (2000: 240) states that the evaluation of content factors is much more difficult since a more detailed picture is

required: the multiplexity or reciprocity of a given tie in which it is socially-embedded. It also implies knowledge of the historical background and social context of the "transaction". In other words, "[…] what constitutes an important transaction today need not necessarily have been an important transaction six hundred years ago, and vice versa" (2005: 46). Thus, social networks are not universally applicable as they depend on the researcher's notion of content or transaction. Hence, subjective interpretation is required which obviously can be different from one analyst to another. According to Conde-Silvestre (2007: 177–178), it is more feasible to reconstruct the social networks typical of certain social structures at a macro level that prevailed in different speech communities; in other words, he is suggesting finding out the social motivations that conditioned conservatism or innovation in a language. At this level, it is also possible to reconstruct those external factors such as social or geographical mobility that could have influenced linguistic change, as well as tracing the peripheral members of the social networks studied. Moreover, for the study of social networks in historical sociolinguistics, Barnes (1972), establishes some methodological distinctions to apply when reconstructing them. He distinguishes between *ego-centric* and *socio-centric* networks. The former attend to the usual *dots-and-lines model*, therefore obeying the uniformitarian principle. The latter rely on a more general level, paying attention to the effects that the different structures of social networks have on the behaviour of individuals.

The reconstruction of the social structure prevailing during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance has been widely studied, which has helped researchers trace linguistic changes connected to a number of extralinguistic factors such as mobility, gender, age, socio-economic background or the geolinguistic profiles of informants. Between 1500 and 1700 the increase in population in England was due to the arrival of immigrants (especially from the north) since London became a centre of trading within a large international social network market. The mixture of this population must have established a social structure of weak ties within loose-knit networks that could have fostered the diffusion of different linguistic changes in London (and out of London too) earlier than in other cities of Britain (Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 2002). Drawing data from the CEEC, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (Nevalainen, 2000c; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 157–184) have reconstructed the geographical diffusion of some linguistic variants during the late fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as the extension of the pronominal object form *you* into a subject function replacing *ye*, and the third person singular present indicative ending -*(e)s* vs. -*(e)th.* Results show that both variants are more frequent in texts from London and less frequent in texts from East Anglia and the North where diffusion seems to have been slower. One plausible

explanation for this is the fact that the new demographic situation of London at the time could have had an influence on the social networks of its inhabitants. Letters in the fifteenth-century Paston collection, a gentry family from Norfolk, offer an interesting example of social mobility during the late Middle Ages in England. Bergs (2000, 2005) has scrutinised this corpus to study changes in progress. He identified biographical details from different members of the family which could have had an influence on their verbal repertoire. In this sense, he used an ego-centric model to find out the personal and social circumstances of each member which could have singled them in or out as innovators in linguistic behaviour. In line with this, the Speech Accommodation Theory established by Giles (see Giles, 1973; and Giles & Smith, 1979) was actually the basis for the application of the concept of social networks in sociolinguistic research. As mentioned in section 3.3.2.b, this theory suggests that the linguistic behaviour of individuals is conditioned by their desire to create a distance from other people (linguistic divergence) motivated by social differences. Alternatively, the type of linguistic behaviour chosen could also lead to linguistic convergence, for the sake of social equality, solidarity or the need of approval – see Coupland (1996) for a detailed review on this issue. In this line, a great deal of research has been carried out so as to analyse the motivations for style-shifting. This model has also been applied to the field of historical sociolinguistics; for instance, Hernández-Campoy and García-Vidal (2018a, 2018b) have also studied the sociolinguistic behaviour of some members from the Paston family by applying contemporary sociolinguistic patterns of stylistic variation, such as the Audience Design model or the Speech Attention model (see section 3.3). In a nutshell, the interpersonal relations of the members of the family conditioned their linguistic choices in a similar way to present-day approaches to sociolinguistic styles. For example, when studying the use of <þ> and the Latin-based grapheme <th> by John Paston II, it was found that in one of the letters addressed to the king, he was not so standard but rather more vernacular in the use of this linguistic form. The historical reconstruction suggests that John Paston II was actually playing with these variants so as to establish a closer social relationship with his addressee.

5.3. Data gathering: linguistic corpora as digital archival sources

5.3.1. Private correspondence

Nevalainen (2007: 1) defines the term *letter* as "written communication typically addressed to one or more named recipients and identifies the sender and conveys a message; even if it is just to say that the message […] is included in an enclosure […]". In studying language change from a historical sociolinguistic perspective, private letters have proved particularly useful

since they yield information on events of a particular period as well as personal information on the informants and addressees. Moreover, they may cast light on linguistic changes in the history of a language because they are relatively close to speech, contributing to broaden the perspectives in historical sociolinguistics. In exploring the sociolinguistic behaviour of informants over prolonged periods of time, private letters, written by members of several generations from the same community of practice, social rank or family, have been considered enormously useful to trace linguistic variation at the macro-level to explore how changes in progress spread cross-sectionally and longitudinally (paying attention to macrosociological aspects such as social rank, age, gender, etc.). Moreover, they have also been studied from a micro-level perspective by analysing the linguistic behaviour of individual speakers (see Eckert & McConnel-Ginet, 1992; and Kopaczyk & Jucker, 2013). Having to rely on written documents for the study of language variation and change, historical sociolinguists have to make use of only written material that has come to us and of methods and procedures from the field of synchronic sociolinguistics. This issue should not limit the possibilities of research in this field since, as Romaine states (1982: 14) "spoken and written languages are instances of the same language embodied in different media". As mentioned in section 2.3.3, insufficient social representativeness in written material may bias the results obtained as some social groups could be under-represented, such as illiterate people who were not able to write. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1996) have proposed an approach to deal with this historical written material by arguing that it is essential to analyse a written text in the same ways as spoken language. According to Romaine, written data is the only available material to trace back language change:

> It seems best to regard speech and writing as types of linguistic behaviours or events which may be realized in different channels […] spoken and written language are instances of the same language embodied in different media.
>
> (Romaine, 1982: 14)

Among the written material that has come to us in order to trace back linguistic changes, personal letters are among "the most involved and therefore oral of written genres" (Romaine, 1998: 18). Thus, these are the types of texts that researchers have to employ so as to find out "material as close to actual speech as possible, only in written form" (Sević, 1999: 340). As they were not planned for publication, private letters are considered as dialogic exchanges which may provide an enriching source of information on less consciously monitored styles

(Biber & Finegan, 1989). To a certain extent, private letters are "the least influenced, and, still less, dominated by traditions of a 'writing of distance', so that their private texts can be regarded as the most 'oral' written sources in language history" (Elspass, 2012: 158). Thus, in line with these assumptions, private letters may reflect the personal communicative styles of an informant who seeks to maintain and negotiate a certain social relationship with his/her addressees as part of a local community of practice (see Conde-Silvestre, 2016a): whether the social relationship that both informant and addressee maintain is closer (family, friendship) or distant (business-like, etc.).

A radically different approach to language history has been termed *language history from below* (Elspaß, 2005; Elspaß, Langer, Scharloth, & Vandenbussche, 2007). This approach to language change implies a different starting point for the explanation of language change involving the acknowledgement "of language registers of 'historical orality' which are basic to human interaction and which are prototypically represented by speech in face-to-face-interaction" (Elspass, 2012: 160). Thus, it appears natural that private documents are well-represented in terms of *historical orality*. In fact, private documents have been analysed in different studies of historical language change and variation on the non-standard level so as to counterweight the traditional tendency of some language historiographers to ignore minority languages or registers. Among the main historical corpora that contain a great deal of private letters of correspondence are *The Helsinki Corpus*, the CEEC and the CEECE. The next section will be devoted to the description of the two corpora of private letters of correspondence used in this study.

5.3.2. The Parsed Corpus of English Correspondence (PCEEC)

The PCEEC was published in 2006,[14] compiled at the University of Helsinki by the Research Unit for Variation and Change in English, and it is based on the original *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC), completed in 1998. Due to copyright restrictions, the CEEC could not be released but other versions of the CEEC family corpora, such as the PCEEC or the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler* (CEECS) version (Nevalainen *et al*. 1998)

[14] The Project for tagging and parsing the original CEEC started in 2001 and was carried out in cooperation between the Universities of Helsinki and York (https://www.helsinki.fi/en/researchgroups/varieng). The CEEC was launched in 1993 whose project leader was Terttu Nevalainen from the University of Helsinki at the Department of English Studies. For more information about these corpora, visit: http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC/ceec.html and http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC/pceec.html

were released and made public as part of the corpus. The PCEEC consists of 84 collections of 4.970 private letters written by 666 informants from different social classes (see sections 5.3.2a and 5.3.2b below)[15], with an original size of 2.159.132 running words. Table 5.1 gives numerical information about the main differences between the original CEEC, PCEEC and the PCEEC flat text version and tagged version. As a matter of fact, the tagged version is the same corpus as the PCEEC flat text version but containing a slightly higher number of words, as metadata information along with tagging words are included in each letter, since plain texts are not provided with these data. For our classification of letters, we have used the word count of the PCEEC tagged version (which slightly differs from the flat text version in 739.725 words) to normalise the data obtained according to sociolinguistic parameters (such as social class, gender, age or period of time) for the sake of comparison (see section 5.4 for methodological implications). This information is quite enriching since it facilitates the analysis of the linguistic variable and its variants when correlating them with the independent variables.

Table 5.1. Differences amongst CEEC, PCEEC flat text version and PCEEC tagged version

Corpora	**CEEC**	**PCEEC flat text version**	**PCEEC tagged version**
Words	2.597.795	2.159.132	2.898.857
Collections	96	84	84
Letters	5.961	4.970	4.970
Writers	778	666	666
Time-span	c.1410-1681	c. 1410-1681	c. 1410-1681

The metadata information is used as a heading for each letter, including information about the year and place where the letter was written, the name of the collection in which each letter is included, the name of the informant and the recipient, their years of birth and their gender along with their type of social relationship, as shown in example 23 for letter 1 from the *Cliffo* collection:

(23) <Q_Cli_c_1490s_t_Henry7> <l_cliffo_001> <a_Henry_Tudor_VII> <a-gender_male> <a-rel> <a-dob_1457> <r_Henry_Clifford_I> <r-gender_male> <r-rel> <r-dob_1454>.

[15] For more information on each of the letters collections in the PCEEC see file://localhost/Volumes/Untitled/PCEEC-2016-08-03/PCEEC/corpus_description/index.htm. All the collections in the PCEEC contain the same letters as the CEEC, but with the exception of Clifford, Henslowe, Oxinden, and Royal2, which include just a subset of the original due to copyright restrictions.

The PCEEC spans the decades from 1410 to 1681, covering almost 300 years. However, with respect to the original CEEC, there are two main differences in the PCEEC; unlike the CEEC, the PCEEC's files come into three different formats: plain texts, part-of-speech tagged texts and syntactically parsed texts. Another difference is that the PCEEC contains less material than the original not published CEEC. The part-of-speech tagging was carried out by Arja Nurmi and the syntactic annotation by Ann Taylor. The corpus is distributed by the Oxford Text Archive and also available in the International Computer Archive of Modern and Medieval English (ICAME). The purpose of the compilation of the original CEEC was to offer researchers historical sociolinguistic material for the study and application of present-day sociolinguistic methods to historical data. Some of the earliest findings reported so far by using the CEEC corpus are in Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1996, 2003), Palander-Collin (1999a, 1999b), Nurmi (1999), Nevala (2004) or Laitinen (2007).

Private and personal letters definitely rank as one of the best text types for variationist and sociolinguistic analyses. This is possible thanks to the correlation of context parameters such as social status, gender, age, education, social mobility or regional differences of both the writers and recipients. The application of sociolinguistic methods to these historical data is possible thanks to the compilation of these historical corpora as well as the metadata containing meaningful background information about the writers, the letters and even the recipients. In compiling the corpus, authenticity of the letters has also been an important issue. In the PCEEC, there are many collections based on autograph sources, although a minor percentage was written by secretaries, such as in the case of Samuel Pepys (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 1996: 44). In the case of drafts and copies, both Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg suggest treating them as authentic letters (1996: 45) since both represent the language of the author. Finally, the PCEEC contains an extra database *Excel* file with detailed information on the metadata of each informant and letter, as discussed in the next section.

5.3.2.a. Metadata

As mentioned above, the PCEEC contains full and detailed socio-linguistic information for each informant, recipient and letter, provided by the Helsinki team and Ann Taylor (assisted by Joanne Close) at the University of York. The metadata included is similar to the parameter coding designed for the original CEEC, but rather more extensive. As mentioned earlier, this information is given in the *txt* plain files as a heading for each letter, but it also comes in a separate file (Associated Information File- AIF) providing further details on the metadata

information for each letter. See Table 5.2 as an example of the metadata information given for the fourth letter from the Arundel collection in the PCEEC.

Moreover, as mentioned before, the PCEEC also provides the researcher with the metadata information in a heading on each letter (including the year of the letter) which facilitates the sociolinguistic study by the researcher.

Unlike the CEECE, the PCEEC does not provide the researcher with the specific social status of the author and recipient but rather the title or occupation. Moreover, in a small number of cases, there are also some unknown authors and recipients about whom we do not know anything, hence they are labeled as "unknown". Therefore, methodological considerations have been taken into account when classifying the tokens obtained from those subjects into social categories and age groups (see section 5.5.1).

Table 5.2. Metadata information on the fourth letter from Arundel collection in the PCEEC

Collection	Arundel 004
Name of the author	Thomas Howard III
Title	2nd Earl of Arundel and Surrey/Politician DNB)
Gender	Male
Year of birth	1585
Relationship to the recipient (if known)	Son
Name of the recipient	Anne Howard [N.Dacre]
Title	Countess of Arundel
Gender	Female
Year of birth	1553?
Relationship to the author (if known)	Mother

5.3.2.b. Informants

As seen in Table 5.1 the number of authors in the PCEEC is 666. These informants can be classified along a number of sociolinguistic parameters, such as social rank, gender, age and author/addressee. Men are much more represented than women in every period since they used to have greater access to literacy at the time. Table 5.3 represents the running words produced in the PCEEC according to gender division:

Table 5.3. Running words by men and women in PCEEC

Gender	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**
Running words	2.419.762	479.095	2.898.857
%	83.5%	16.5%	100%

As regards social class, these informants range from royalty to merchants, from different ages and sexes. I have decided to follow the labels that the PCEEC and CEECE offer as for the

different social ranks but with a slight change in the 'merchants' and 'others' groups. Thus, I have named them as 'non-gentry: merchants', since apart from merchants we can also find yeomen, artisans or craftsmen, and as 'non-gentry: others' since the informants from this group do not belong to the gentry. With all this in mind, the typology of social ranks selected for the present study is summarised in Figure 5.5.

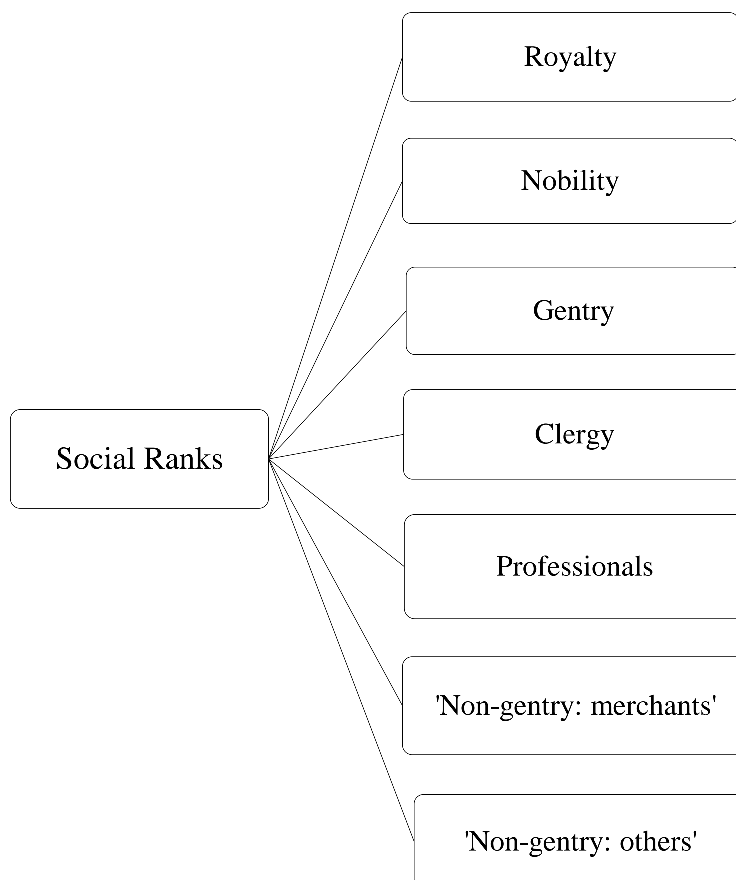

Figure 5.5. Typology of social ranks used as socio-demographic variables

As expected, the upper classes are better represented due to literacy issues. Table 5.4 shows the distribution of the amount of words written by each social rank as a whole in the PCEEC:[16]

Table 5.4. Running words by men and women according to social class in PCEEC

Social rank	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**	**%**
Royalty	47.538 (60.8%)	30.670 (39.2%)	78.208	2.7%
Nobility	462.011 (69.8%)	199.839 (30.2%)	661.850	22.8%
Gentry	708.875 (80,3%)	173.976 (19.7%)	882.851	30.5%
Clergy	330.983 (95%)	17.304 (5%)	348.287	12%
Professionals	288.915 (100%)	0 (0%)	288.915	10%
Non-gentry: merchants	102.508 (99.6%)	434 (0.4%)	102.942	3.6%
Non-gentry: others	478.932 (89.4%)	56.872 (10.6%)	535.804	18.5%
Total	2.419.762 (83.5%)	479.095 (16.5%)	2.898.857	100%

[16] See section 5.4 to know about the methodological decisions for the classification of social ranks along with the age cohort in this study.

As illustrated, the gentry group is the best represented with 30.4% unlike the merchant group with 3.6%. However, as Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 45) point out "there is sufficient material for the sociolinguistic research on relatively high-frequency linguistic phenomena".

In studying the progression of changes, we have also extracted the word count of informants from different ages dividing age cohorts into young, middle-aged and mature people. As depicted in Table 5.5, once again, we can see that the proportion of female informants is much lower with respect to men. As mentioned before, there are some unknown authors in the corpus whose dates of birth and death are not known. Thus, they had to be eliminated from the analysis according to age cohorts for each sub-period. Those informants ranging from 31 to 50 years old are better represented in the corpus with a total of 45.3%.

Table 5.5. Running words by men and women according to age cohorts in PCEEC

Age cohort	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**	**%**
Young	284.568 (63%)	166.909 (37%)	451.477	21%
Middle	816.690 (83.6%)	159.825 (16.4%)	976.515	45.3%
Mature	670.703 (92.4%)	55.083 (7.6%)	725.786	33.7%
Total	1.771.961 (82.3%)	381.817 (17.7%)	2.153.778	100%

5.3.3. Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extension (CEECE)

The CEECE, compiled at the University of Helsinki, was intended to expand the periods covered in the original CEEC.[17] The CEECE was initiated in 2000 and finished in 2006, although it is not published yet. It covers the eighteenth century, thus introducing the Late Modern English part, which starts in 1653 and ends in 1800. It consists of 4.921 letters included in 77 different collections and written by 311 informants. Some of the collections are continuations of previous ones included in the original CEEC, such as Pepys 2.[18] Table 5.6 illustrates the contents in the CEECE in both flat text version and coding version. Once again, I have used for the analysis the word count of the coding version (which includes metadata information, such as the names of the addresser and addressee, the name of the collection the letter belongs to, etc.) (see example 24), which slightly differs from the flat text version in

[17] For more information about the CEEECE, see Kaislaniemi (2018) and visit the web page: http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC/C18_posters.pdf.

[18] To see all the collections of letters included in the CEECE, visit the web page: http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC/Kaislaniemi_posteri_96dpi.pdf.

162.942 words. The CEECE was mainly compiled to provide a diachronic continuity to the CEEC so as to follow the process of linguistic change that was still ongoing during the seventeenth century (which is the period where the PCEEC also terminates) and continue tracking linguistic changes during the eighteenth century. Since literacy increased among the lowest social ranks during the eighteenth century it was hoped to get an ampler evidence of language from this social rank in the CEECE and the effect of prescriptivism in these personal letters too. For this same reason, it was also expected to find more representativeness of women's letters than in the PCEEC.

Table 5.6. Differences between CEECE flat text version and CEECE coding version

Corpora	CEECE flat text version	CEECE coding version
Words	2.220.345	2.383.287
Collections	77	77
Letters	4.921	4.921
Writers	311	311
Time-span	1653-1800	1653-1800

Following the CEEC corpora, the CEECE contains informants from different social ranks. However, due to the different cultural background of the eighteenth century in comparison to previous periods, not all social categories are necessarily considered the same as before. Therefore, as Kaislaniemi states:

> […] the clergy were not nearly as important in 18th-century England as they had been in the 16th century, thanks to advance in literacy and the availability of the Bible in English. So, the fact that a high proportion of the CEECE data comes from the professional classes and from Londoners is rather a reflection of changes in English society than of skewed data.
>
> (Kaislaniemi, 2018: 47)

The social parameters contained in the CEECE are explained in detail in the following sections.

5.3.3.a. Metadata

The CEECE metadata information is only available at The Research Unit for Variation, Contacts and Change in English (VAREING) at the University of Helsinki. Unlike the PCEEC, more detailed sociolinguistic information is contained in the CEECE. The main social parameters are: collection of the letter, year of birth, social rank, lifespan, education, social mobility, religion, place of birth, relationship with recipients, country, number of letters sent

and received and even some additional notes when known. Again, when the author is not known, it has been classified as the social rank "others". Moreover, as mentioned before, unlike the PCEEC, which only contains the title or occupation of the authors and addressees, the social rank of each informant is already given in the CEECE. Among them we find: royalty, nobility, gentry upper, gentry lower, professional, clergy upper, clergy lower, merchants and others. See example 24 as the header of the first letter in the Addison collection:

(24) <L_ADDISON_001> <Q_A_1699? T_JADDISON> <X_JOSEPH ADDISON> [\7. TO CHARLES MONTAGU (LATER EARL OF HALIFAX)\]}] [^FROM JOSEPH ADDISON^] [\PARIS, SATURDAY, 14 OCTOBER, 1699\].

5.3.3.b. Informants

One of the greatest strengths of the corpus is the gender division. The proportion of female informants in the CEECE is better represented than in the PCEEC, with 27% of running words compared to 16.5% in the PCEEC (see Table 5.7). According to Kaislaniemi (2018: 50), there is no considerable change in the proportion of female informants along the eighteenth century, since after dividing the data into twenty years span, the material written by women is mainly between 20% and 30%. However, as he indicates, during the first part of the period (1680–1699), there is less material from female informants but in the last period (1780–1800) there is a rise in the material from females due to the introduction of royal family letters (mostly from the House of Hannover) and letters from writers such as Fanny Burney, Hester Piozzi, Sara Lennox, Jane Austen or Mary Wollstonecraft.

Table 5.7. Running words by men and women in CEECE

Gender	Men	Women	Total
Running words	1.738.688	644.599	2.383.287
%	73%	27%	100%

Table 5.8 presents a breakdown, based on word count, of the data in the CEECE according to the social rank of the writer. Unlike the PCEEC, the category of professionals is better represented amounting to 26.9% of the total running words in the corpus. Due to the development of the middling ranks, during the eighteenth century the professional category, along with non-gentry: merchants, became more influential. In general terms, the upper ranks are better represented than the lower ones and the social coverage of men is greater than that of women. In the last two sub-periods of the CEECE (1760–1800), there is a slight increase of letters from the lower social ranks, although their proportions are quite low in the previous periods. The regional parameter is not covered in this study but the main areas used in the

CEECE are: East Anglia, the North, London, the Court, the Home Counties, other areas of England and abroad.

Table 5.8. Running words by men and women according to social class in CEECE

Social rank	Men	Women	Total	%
Royalty	116.795 (77.5%)	33.861 (22.5%)	150.656	6.3%
Nobility	203.958 (48.1%)	219.722 (51.9%)	423.680	17.8%
Gentry	474.226 (74.1%)	165.896 (25.9%)	640.122	26,9%
Clergy	342.223 (84.7%)	61.890 (15.3%)	404.113	17%
Professionals	468.894 (77.7%)	134.958 (22.3%)	603.852	25.3%
Non-gentry: merchants	60.070 (91.6%)	5.477 (8.4%)	65.547	2.8%
Non-gentry: others	72.522 (76%)	22.795 (24%)	95.317	4%
Total	1.738.688 (73%)	644.599 (27%)	2.383.287	100%

Table 5.9 provides the representation of men and women according to some age-cohorts as noted above in the PCEEC: young, middle age and mature people. In contrast to the PCEEC, the CEECE shows an increase in young authors with a representation of 26.9% of the total amount of words. As in the case of the PCEEC, letters written by authors whose year of birth is unknown have been eliminated from the analysis, and hence from the division of running words into age cohorts. Once again, it is the middle-aged people the most representative in the CEECE as well as in the PCEEC.

Table 5.9. Running words of letters by men and women according to age cohorts in CEECE

Age cohort	Men	Women	Total	%
Young	361.986 (59.7%)	244.641 (40.3%)	606.627	26.9%
Middle-aged	760.798 (77.5%)	220.908 (22.5%)	981.706	43.5%
Mature	524.768 (78.6%)	142.505 (21.4%)	667.273	29.6%
Total	1.647.552 (73%)	608.054 (27%)	2.255.606	100%

Finally, regarding letter quality, the CEECE only includes letters that were written by an identifiable subject. Linked to this, the idea of Bergs (2005: 79) regarding scribes and authors must be taken into account. As he aptly mentions in his study of the Paston Letters, scribes tended to take down more faithfully the morpho-syntactic items that were dictated to them, which was contrary to phonological or graphological variables: “the question of authorship and scribes does not play such an important role in morphosyntactic variables as in phonological or graphological variables”.

5.4. Data selection procedure and instruments

Our primary data comes from both the PCEEC tagged version and the CEECE corpora of personal letters encompassing the historical periods from the fifteenth century to the end of the

eighteenth century. The reason why these corpora have been selected for the present study of the evolution and distribution of the adjective comparison system in English according to some social parameters is because these text types are the closest to oral registers, as previously discussed in section 5.3.1. The period covered by both corpora is crucial to test and trace back the evolution and linguistic changes in progress in historical sociolinguistic research. Moreover, they offer a wide variety of sociolinguistic parameters providing the researcher with full information about different extralinguistic factors that could have had an influence on the evolution or adoption of certain linguistic forms. The linguistic variable used in this study is the adjective comparison system in English, specifically its three variants: the inflected (*-er*), the periphrastic (*more*) and double comparatives (*more* + *-er*). The selected variants have been analysed on the basis of extra-linguistic criteria, such as age, gender, social rank and social relationship between the recipients at a temporal distribution of successive ninety-nine-year periods (see section 5.5). In addition, other linguistic factors have been taken into account, such as the division of the tokens according to the number of syllables and the origin of the comparative adjective (Germanic/native origin vs. Romance origin)[19] so as to ascertain ratios of the adjective comparative system employed under the periods covered. Thus, the present study intends to contribute to expand the historical development and distribution of the adjective comparative system according to the aforementioned social parameters insofar as this had not been accounted for in previous literature.

In order to retrieve all the instances, the *txt* tagged version of the files of both corpora were used so as to look for all comparative construction occurrences. In the case of the PCEEC, as noted above, the tagged version is already provided for the researcher, but in the case of the CEECE, we had to use the tagger programme *Claws*[20] for the grammatical tagging of this corpus, which reliably achieved around 97% precise degree of accuracy. The tagged *txt* files of both corpora were loaded to *AntConc* (Anthony, 2008),[21] a free concordance programme that is available online (see example of this in Figure 5.6). The search term introduced in the programme for the selection of the synthetic variant in the PCEEC was *ADJR* and in the CEECE *AJC* since it is only the comparative synthetic variant the one that appears in the tagged version.

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[19] The term 'Germanic/native adjectives' is used in the present study to refer to those adjectives of Germanic and Old Norse etymological origin, whereas the term 'Romance adjectives' indicates the adjectives under this label come from Latin or French etymological origin.

[20] The programme Claws was developed by the University Centre for Computer Corpus Research on Language at the University of Lancaster. For more information visit http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws/.

[21] http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/.

As for the selection of the analytic variant, the *Middle English Compendium* (McSparran *et al*. 2001-2018) electronic source was used in order to retrieve all the possible spelling variants of "*more*" at the time. The search elements keyed in *AntConc* were: *more*, *mar(e)**, *mor**, *moore*, *moare* and *moch*. The resulting occurrences were saved as *txt* files and copied to *Excel* sheets as illustrated in Figure 5.7.

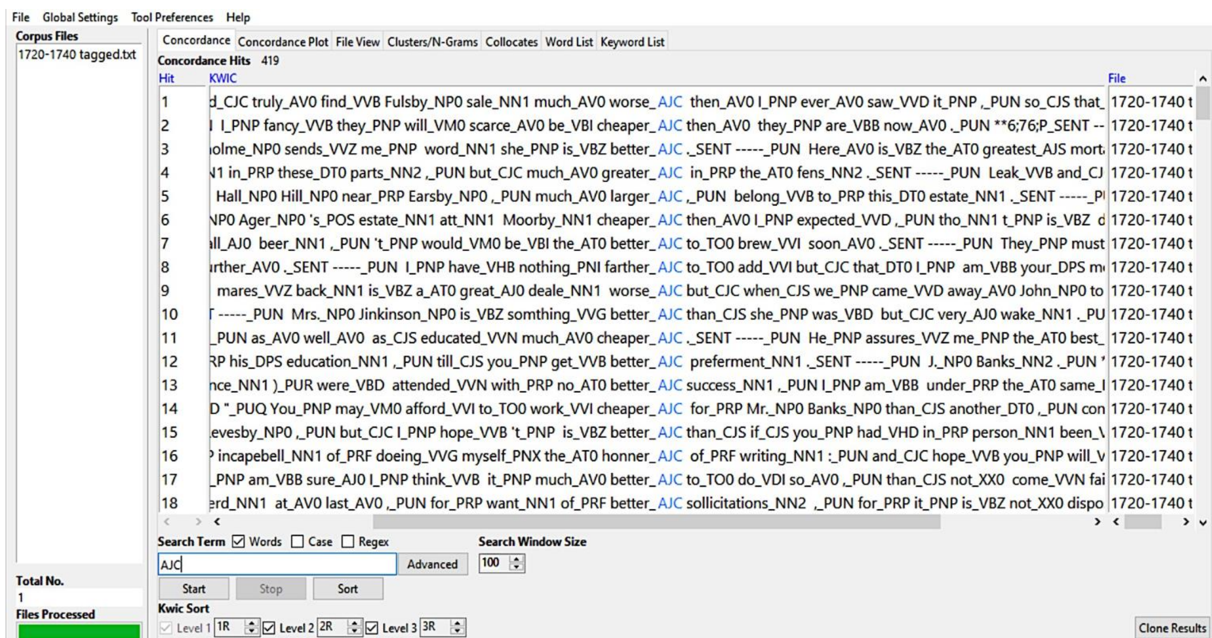

Figure 5.6. Sample of concordance analysis with *AntConc*

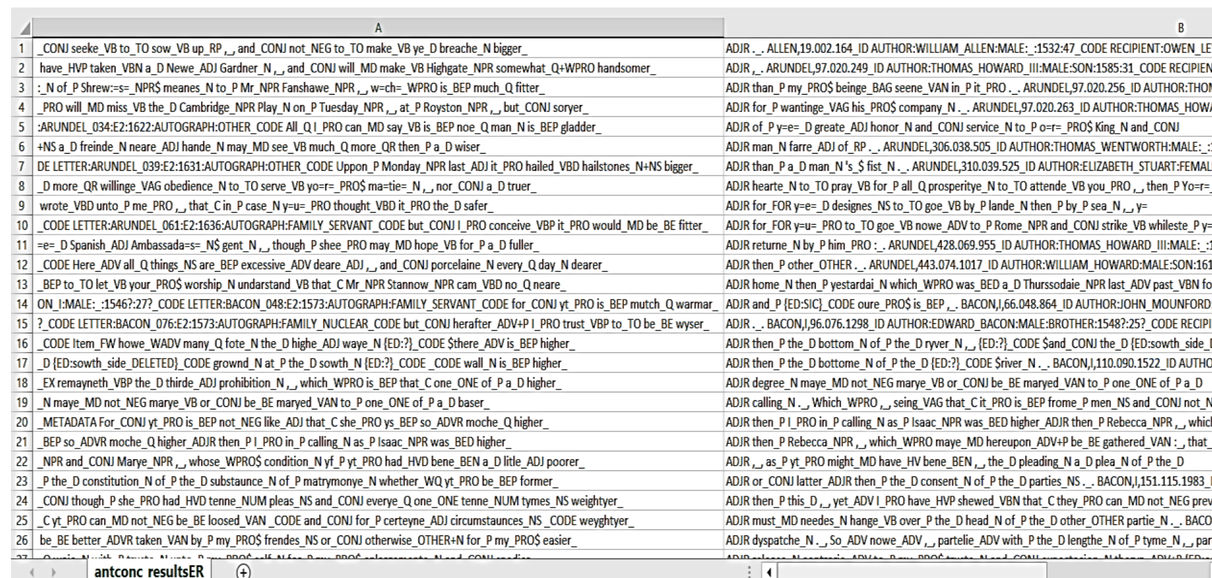

Figure 5.7. Sample of *Excel* sheet with occurrences

In the case of double comparatives, they were retrieved when the synthetic variant was searched for. Table 5.10 presents the final occurrences retrieved from both corpora as well as those selected for the analysis. All occurrences that have been excluded from the analysis are mentioned in the above section 5.1.2. Finally, for the classification of tokens according to the origin of the word, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Simpson *et al*. 2000-2020) has been employed so as to know the etymology of each comparative adjective. In the next section 5.5, the distribution and correlations of the tokens selected for this study is presented according to the socio-linguistic parameters mentioned before.

Table 5.10. Final occurrences retrieved and selected from both PCEEC and CEECE

Variants	**Retrieved**	**Selected**
-er	7.880	2.922
more	14.822	2.413

Statistical analyses have been used in the results obtained to test whether the results are significant or not. For large size data, the *chi-square significance test* has been applied (Cantos, 2013: 75–84) to assume that the data is normally distributed. Moreover, to show the relationship between the linguistic variants, the *Pearson correlation test* has been used to measure the degree of linear relationship between the variants (Cantos, 2013: 58–63). However, it has not been applied when the results obtained are 0 or too skewed. The Analysis of variance (*ANOVA*) has also been employed when analysing the development of the inflected and periphrastic forms along time with no consideration of social rank to show if results are statistically significant (Cantos, 2012: 52-58). Finally, the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test* (see Cantos, 2013: 45) has been applied to more irregular distributions of data to test whether there are differences between the distribution of the data among groups or not. For its application, the main concern is to compare samples concerning their mean value of the variants.

5.5. Methodological considerations for the analysis of data and correlations

The material covered in this study was divided in ninety-nine-year periods with the exception of the first one (eighty-two-year periods) since the starting point of the first letter including comparative adjectives in the PCEEC. The period between 1601 and 1700 contains the last part of the PCEEC – until 1681 – and the first twenty-eight years of the beginning in the CEECE. As in the division of the OE and early ME sections of the *Helsinki Corpus*, the periods were divided into ninety-nine-year periods because the material is more scant (Kytö, 1993a).

However, to prove that there are no radical differences between these temporal divisions in the data obtained, a sample of twenty-year periods in the last century (1701-1800) is shown and analysed in the empirical part of the study.

As the material we have from men and women, social ranks and age is not balanced in the corpora insofar as the amount of words represented by each of these social parameters is not equal, direct comparisons may prove unreliable and skewed. Thus, the primary step is to normalise the data since the tokens obtained have been extracted from sub-corpora with different sizes. For this reason, we need to convert all the figures obtained to a common scale. To do so, the formula for this calculation is to multiply the number of tokens obtained by 10.000 and divide them by the number of words of the text sample used (Biber *et al*. 1998: 33; Cantos, 2012: 108). In this way, a straightforward comparison is possible. Therefore, the total amount of running words found in the letters of each category was calculated to normalise the frequency counts obtained. In the next sections, the word count for each category is provided along with the correlations employed for the analysis of the variable.

5.5.1. Gender

As noted above, the presence of women in the corpora used is less frequent than that of men mainly due to literacy issues. As Table 5.11 shows, the presence of women's writings reflects a major increase in the last sub-period, amounting to 30.2%. However, there is a significant slump in the second sub-period with only 6.5%. (see also Figure 5.8).

Table 5.11. Running words by men's and women's letters per period

Periods	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**	**%**
1418-1500	446.919 (83.8%)	86.668 (16.2%)	533.587	10.1%
1501-1600	820.980 (93.5%)	56.924 (6.5%)	877.904	16.6%
1601-1700	1.450.740 (80.2%)	358.009 (19.8%)	1.808.749	34.2%
1701-1800	1.439.811 (69.8%)	622.093 (30.2%)	2.061.904	39%
Total	4.158.450 (78.7%)	1.123.694 (21.3%)	5.282.144	100%

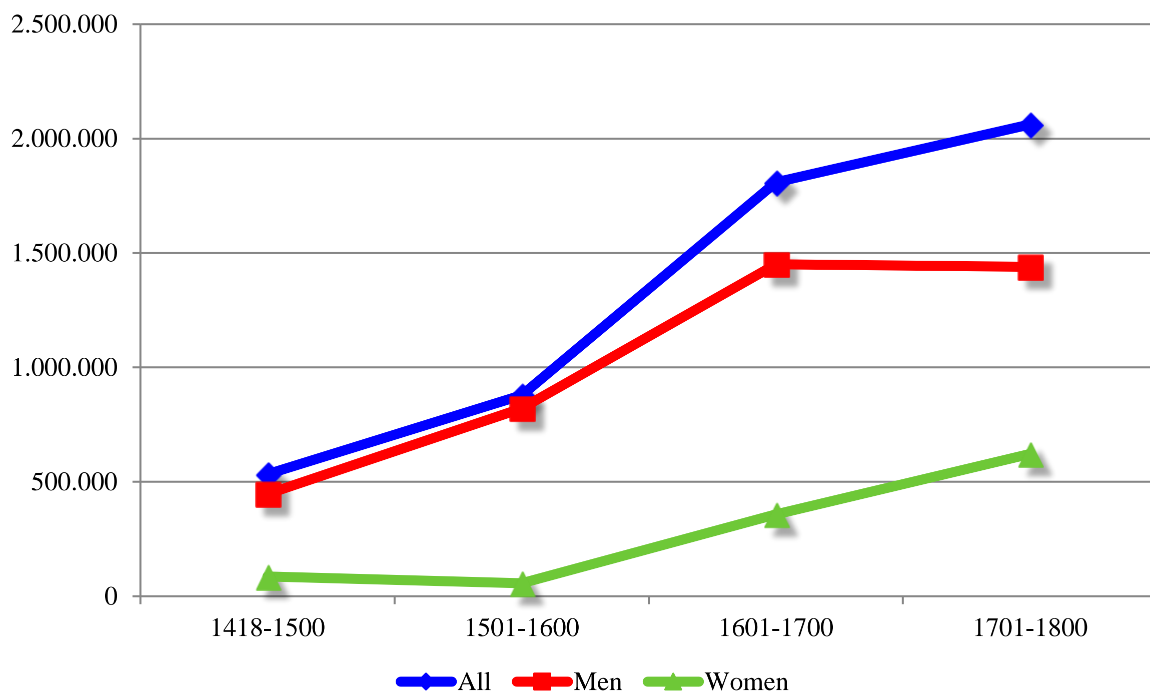

Figure 5.8. Number of words per period by men's and women's letters (absolute frequencies)

5.5.2. Social ranked Audience Design

With the aim of exploring how the adjective comparative variable works in different social ranks, we divided the occurrences obtained from men and women into seven different social groups based on model two of social stratification proposed by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 136) (see Figure 5.3). Moreover, the decision follows Wrightson's proposal (1994: 50–51) that the social stratification from the sixteenth century could be extended to the eighteenth century. As he suggests, the incoming 'language of sorts' may:

> […] lump together the distinguishable estates and degrees of inherited social theory into broad groupings which anticipated the social classes of the nineteenth century. It could imply alternative conceptions of the fundamental nature of social differentiation, express conflicts of interests, and edge perceptive contemporaries along the path towards a thoroughgoing reappraisal of the structures of society, the basis of social inequality, and the dynamics of social process.
>
> (Wrightson, 1994: 50–51)

Therefore, informants have been classified according to the following social ranks:

i) Royalty: king, queen, prince, princess.
ii) Nobility: duke, marquess, earl, viscount, baron, countess, etc.
iii) Gentry: sir, dame, baronet, knight, esquire, gentleman, etc.
iv) Clergy: archbishop, bishop, abbot, priest, vicar, abbess, rector, etc.
v) Professionals: army officer (captain, etc.), government official, lawyer, medical doctor, teacher, diplomat, poets, etc.
vi) Non-gentry: merchants: craftsman, yeoman, tradesman, etc.
vii) Non-gentry: others: servants, steward, unknown social rank of informants, etc.

In a further analysis, we explore and correlate each of the authors with the social profiles of their addressees and with the type of interpersonal relationship found in the corpora with the aim of exploring audienceship in the use of the adjective comparison variable. Thus, we attempt to apply Allan Bell's models of Audience Design (1984, 2001) to intra-speaker variation in our corpora to find addressee-based patterns of style-shifting in the communicative interaction of our informants. As Bell has demonstrated, audienceship is a fundamental key in stylistic variation (Bell, 1984, 2001) so as to reflect the accommodation processes in social interaction. In fact, as Meyerhoff (2006: 42) states, audience design "both classifies the behaviour (the speaker is seen as proactively designing their speech to the needs of a particular audience) and encapsulates the presumed motive for the behaviour (who is the speaker's audience)". However, as the number of tokens retrieved per informant was quite low, we decided to approach audience design by arranging all the informants from the same social rank and collecting all the occurrences of the linguistic variants under study when addressing their recipients to analyse audience design from each social status, but not per individuals. Thus, when analysing audienceship, a further profile (apart from the seven mentioned above) was introduced, and that is *relatives*, including brothers, sisters, wife, husband, father, mother, etc. These social profiles of addressees and their interaction provide us with information about the multiplexity and density of our informants' social networks and their interpersonal relationship within their speech community along with an impact on their linguistic choice and use (see Milroy & Milroy, 1985b).

Table 5.12 presents the total amount of running words for both men and women divided into the seven social ranks. It shows that the social class of the gentry is better represented in our data in every period, followed by the nobility. As mentioned before, lower social ranks are less represented and this is shown in the total number of words for the merchant social category in each period, although it gets increased at the end of the eighteenth century.

Table 5.12. Running words by men's and women's letters per period according to social rank

All	**1418-1500**	**1501-1600**	**1601-1700**	**1701-1800**
Royalty	10.316	44.340	29.817	144.391
Nobility	25.097	247.261	392.976	420.196
Gentry	203.418	261.249	545.199	513.107
Clergy	15.212	155.382	270.423	311.383
Professionals	76.120	52.830	229.598	534.219
Non-gentry: merchants	83.743	4.796	35.466	44.484
Non-genry: others	119.681	112.046	305.270	94.124

Table 5.13 shows the breakdown of the aforementioned running words but only for male informants. The absolute frequencies illustrated in Figure 5.9 depict how the professional rank increased during the eighteenth century as well as the clergy group. However, with respect to lower social ranks, there is a slight decrease in the number of words written by merchants in the last period in comparison with the first period.

Table 5.13. Running words by men's letters per period according to social rank

Men	**1418-1500**	**1501-1600**	**1601-1700**	**1701-1800**
Royalty	9.840	16.125	23.026	115.342
Nobility	21.063	232.521	210.268	202.117
Gentry	128.974	258.583	436.964	358.580
Clergy	14.460	154.764	253.622	250.360
Professionals	76.120	52.830	225.783	403.076
Non-gentry: merchants	83.309	4.796	35.466	39.007
Non-gentry: others	113.153	101.361	265.611	71.329

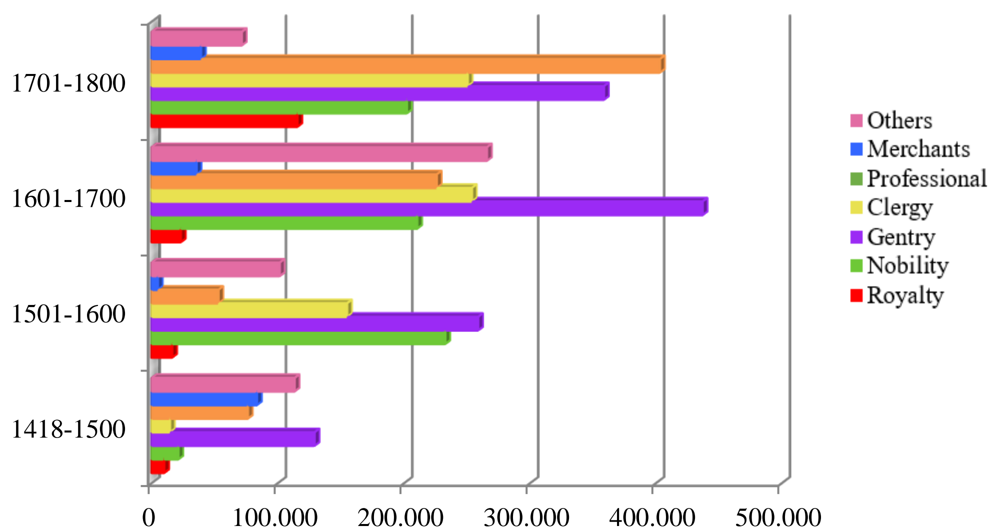

Figure 5.9. Number of words per period by men's letters according to social rank (absolute frequencies)

As for women, Table 5.14 shows the classification of running words according to the social rank of female informants. Unlike male merchants, female merchants are better represented in the last part of the period and the same applies to professionals. However, with no doubt, it is the nobility group the one which has increased considerably from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth century (see also Figure 5.10).

Table 5.14. Running words by women's letters per period according to social rank

Women	1418-1500	1501-1600	1601-1700	1701-1800
Royalty	476	28.215	6.791	29.049
Nobility	4.034	14.740	182.708	218.079
Gentry	74.444	2.666	108.235	154.527
Clergy	752	618	16.801	61.023
Professionals	0	0	3.815	131.143
Non-gentry: merchants	434	0	0	5.477
Non-gentry: others	6.528	10.685	39.659	22.795

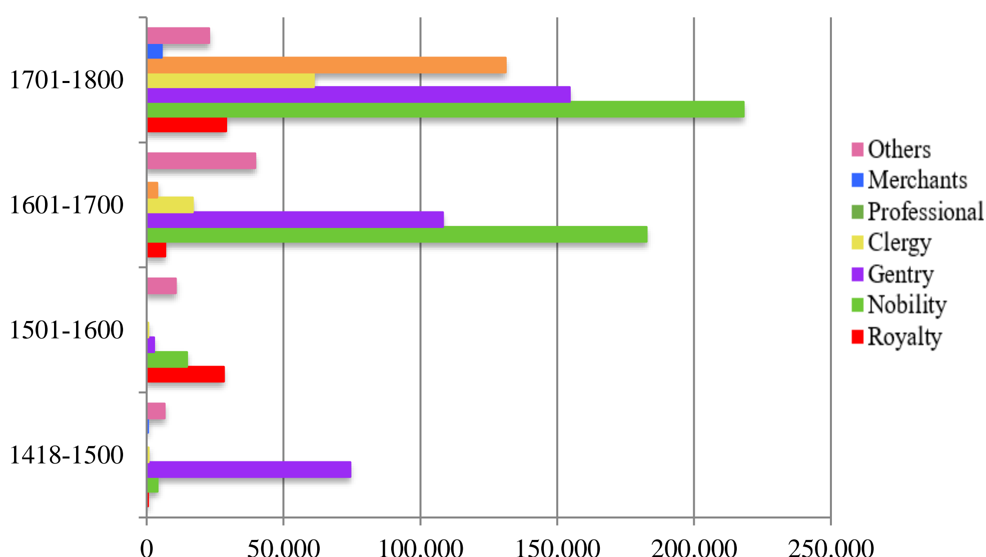

Figure 5.10. Number of words per period by women's letters according to social rank (absolute frequencies)

5.5.3. Age

In order to trace the generational pattern of language change and the spread of the synthetic, analytic and double comparative variants in English, we also divided the tokens obtained into three different year cohorts for each period, subdivided in turn into gender:

i) Young people: from 12-30 years old

ii) Middle-aged people: from 31-50 years old

iii) Mature people: from 51-onwards

The tabulation of the results from this correlation allowed us to notice how the different informants found in the corpus, generation after generation, gradually change their linguistic behaviour with respect to the use of the aforementioned variants. However, as noted above, the year of birth is not available for all writers in the corpora. Therefore, some informants had to be eliminated from this analysis (See Appendix I). The total amount of words for both men and women is presented in Table 5.15 and displayed in Figure 5.11. As it is illustrated, middle-aged people are better represented in our corpora with respect to young or mature people. In fact, their presence increases during the eighteenth century.

Table 5.15. Running words by men's and women's letters per period according to age-cohorts

All	1418-1500	1501-1600	1601-1700	1701-1800
Young	75.593	92.248	351.734	539.281
Middle	127.928	345.860	596.887	887.546
Mature	230.890	280.570	561.551	522.817

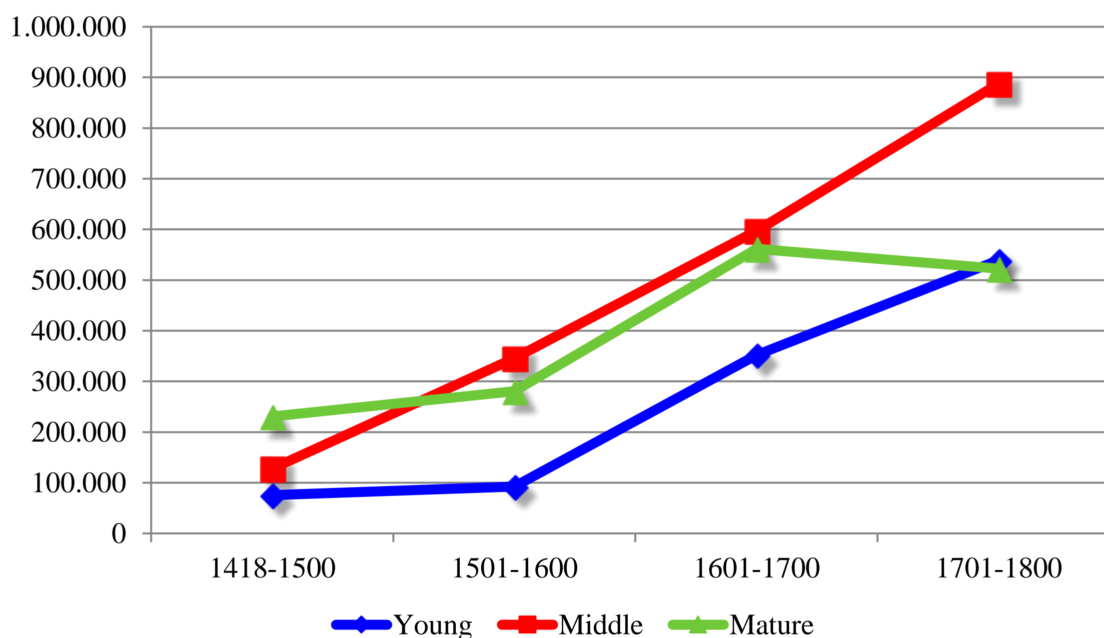

Figure 5.11. Number of words per period by men's and women's letters according to age cohorts (absolute frequencies)

If we subdivide this data into female and male categories, we obtain different word counts. In the case of male informants, Table 5.16 and Figure 5.12 reveal a rise in the production of letters in the last part of the sub-periods by middle-aged people. Therefore, the graph seems apparently identical when running words from both sexes are all lumped together, although with a slightly decrease in the percentage of words written by mature people during the fifteenth century and an increase in the sixteenth century.

Table 5.16. Running words by men's letters per period according to age-cohorts

Men	1418-1500	1501-1600	1601-1700	1701-1800
Young	62.011	82.347	201.287	300.909
Middle	84.128	338.067	483.350	671.943
Mature	18.586	259.568	531.172	386.145

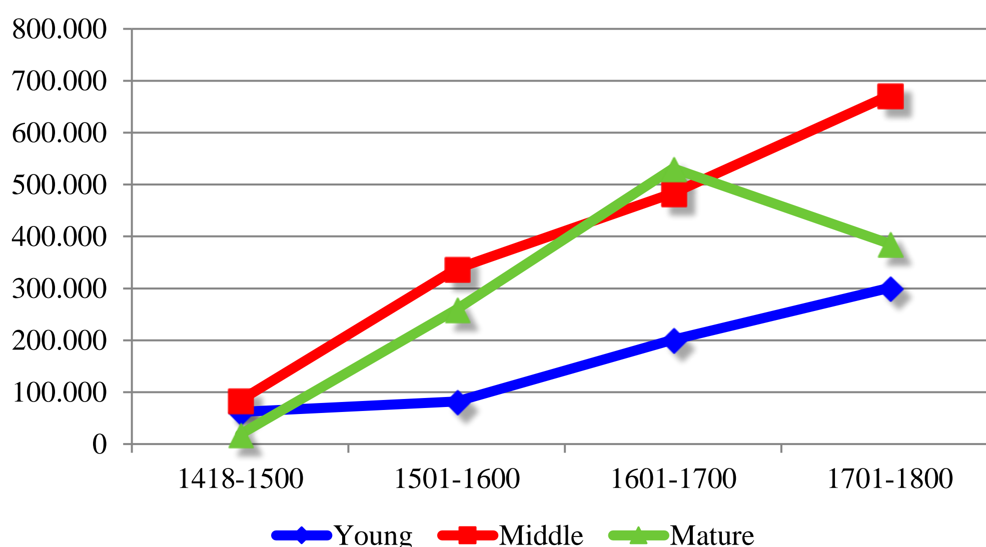

Figure 5.12. Number of words per period by men's letters according to age cohorts (absolute frequencies)

However, in the case of female informants, the scenario is different. As illustrated in Table 5.17 and Figure 5.13, young female writers are the ones who prevail at least from the sixteenth century onwards, followed by middle-aged and mature people.

Table 5.17. Running words by women's letters per period according to age-cohorts

Women	1418-1500	1501-1600	1601-1700	1701-1800
Young	13.582	9.901	150.447	238.372
Middle	43.800	7.793	113.537	215.603
Mature	9.535	21.002	30.379	136.672

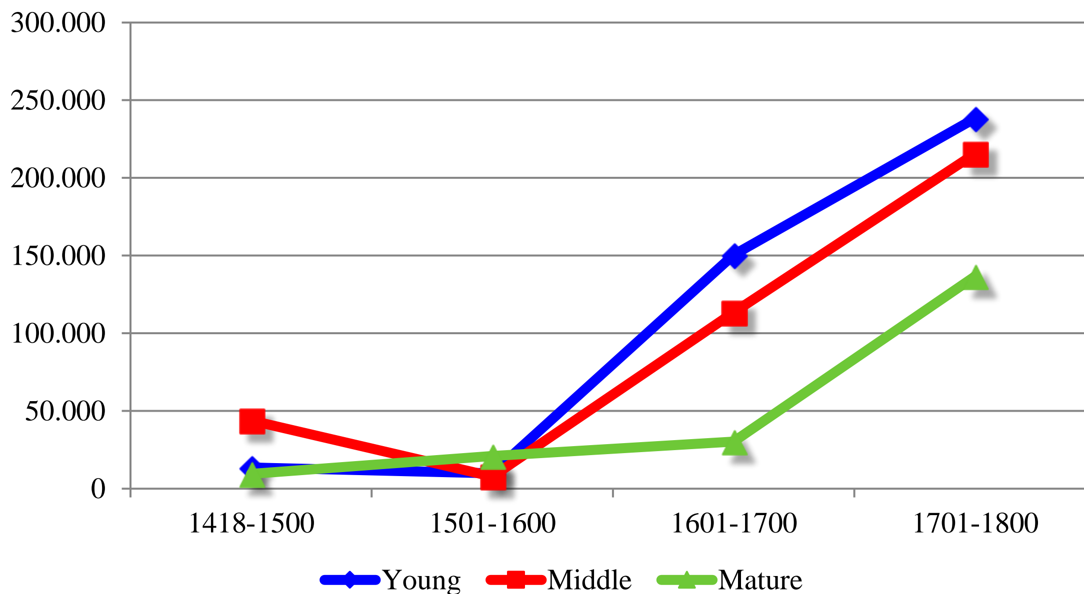

Figure 5.13. Number of words per period by women's letters according to age cohorts (absolute frequencies)

5.5.4. Correlations: samples of Excel spreadsheets

In this section, we present the correlations of the linguistic variants with the sociolinguistic parameters selected that we have followed for the retrieval process of all the tokens. As an example, Table 5.18 shows how the scores for the information of audience design were collected for the synthetic comparative adjectives. We used the same table when collecting all the occurrences for analytic comparative adjectives in the four different periods under study.

Table 5.18. Example of table used for audience design in nobility for the retrieval of synthetic and analytic forms

Synthetic	Nobility	Royalty	Nobility	Gentry	Clergy	Profess.	Merchants	Others	Relatives
Native	1								
	2								
	3								
Romance	1								
	2								
	3								

The orange cell indicates that the nobility here is the informant and the rest their different addressees. In its turn, each token was divided into syllable number and origin of the word. Number 1 in the table refers to monosyllabic adjectives, number 2 to disyllabic and number 3 to adjectives of three syllables or more. Finally, each of the tokens was also further subdivided into "Germanic/native" or "Romance" depending on the origin of the comparative adjective

employed by the informants. This same type of table was used for women and men separately and also for synthetic and analytic comparative adjectives. As for double comparatives, the number of occurrences we obtained was quite low and therefore we extracted them and copied the metadata information in a separate *Excel* file.

As mentioned before, as the number of tokens per informant was quite low and it could have complicated the interpretation of audience design, we decided to approach this by arranging all the informants from the same social rank and collecting all the tokens we found when they addressed their recipients. In this way, we may notice how each social rank uses the comparative variants when addressing members of different social status, as illustrated in Table 5.18. Therefore, we use the template presented in Table 5.19 for each individual when extracting the occurrences. Score profiles per informant was as follows:

Table 5.19. Example of table used per individual: John Paston III

Gentry	John Paston III	Relatives		Nobility		Recipients:
		Synth.	Analy.	Synth.	Analy.	John Paston II-Rel.
Native	1	7	1		1	Margaret Paston-Rel.
	2	1				John Radcliffe-Nob.
	3					
Romance	1					
	2					
	3		1			

In this particular case, the informant John Paston III has been selected as an example. He was classified as a gentry member and the comparative adjectives found in his letters were addressed to some relatives and to a member from the nobility. As it is illustrated, he employed eight synthetic tokens when addressing his family but none when addressing a member from the nobility. As for analytic tokens, he used two when addressing his family members but one when addressing the nobility. See Appendix II for the rest of the results obtained for each informant.

Finally, the same procedure was used when analysing age-cohorts in the four different periods. Table 5.20 shows an example of the table used when classifying tokens by young, middle-aged and mature people. The same template was used for women in each period.

Table 5.20. Example of table used for each cohort in men

MEN					
			Young	Middle	Mature
SYNTHE	NATIVE	1			
		2			
		3			
	ROMANCE	1			
		2			
		3			
			Young	Middle	Mature
ANAL	NATIVE	1			
		2			
		3			
	ROMANCE	1			
		2			
		3			

After having considered the methodological procedures employed in this study, the next chapter deals with the results obtained for the analyses of the comparative linguistic variants according to the extralinguistic factors of gender, age and social rank.

Chapter 6
Analysis and Interpretation of Data

In this chapter we shall examine the distribution of the data obtained regarding the use of inflected, periphrastic and double comparative forms from different sociolinguistic perspectives from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, with a further close-up study on the evolution of the periphrastic form with a division of 20-year sub-periods during the eighteenth century. Firstly, the data is distributed into both female and male in section 6.1. Further sub-divisions have been taken into account to focus on the origin and number of syllables of the adjectives used for comparison so as to seek for any type of influence as far as comparison strategy choice is concerned when correlated with gender. Secondly, section 6.2 deals with the distribution of the data into social ranks (royalty, nobility, gentry, clergy, professionals, 'non-gentry: merchants' and 'non-gentry: others'). The data have been further analysed in accordance with gender to find out differences in linguistic usage when analysing the evolution of the inflected and periphrastic comparative variants, and particular attention has also been paid to the origin and number of syllables of the adjectives used for comparison in each social rank according to gender. Within this section, a distribution and analysis of double comparatives is provided according to social ranks. Finally, a third subsection has been also included to explore intra-speaker variation by applying current sociolinguistic theories such as Bell's model of Audience Design (1984, 2001) to seek for possible addressee-based patterns of style-shifting in the communicative interaction of informants from different social ranks. Thirdly, section 6.3

examines the use of both inflected and periphrastic comparative forms from the sociolinguistic perspective of age by applying real-time and apparent-time analyses to see any possible differences in linguistic behaviour generation after generation. Finally, section 6.4 offers a micro-level examination of the periphrastic form according to gender and social rank during the eighteenth century (CEECE) with a division of 20-year sub-periods.

6.1. Gender

The correlation per gender in our analysis includes both groups of male and female informants in the PCEEC and CEECE. The raw data have been extracted from the *Excel* spread sheets in Appendix II. In view of the different sizes of words written by both sexes in the sub-periods under study, the token frequencies drawn for each variant are based on the pooling of normalised frequencies, which allows us to compare the overall figures between both sexes from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Hence the figures have been normalised to a text of 10.000 words for comparison, and the word count used in this study to normalise frequencies is that presented in Table 5.11 in Chapter 5. In the next sections, results for the distribution of the adjective comparative variants according to gender and correlated with the origin and the number of syllables of the adjectives are presented.

6.1.1. Inflected, periphrastic and double comparison

Table 6.1 presents the normalised frequencies and absolute frequencies (these latter in between brackets) of the inflected, periphrastic and double forms according to gender from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The gender differences in the use of the adjective comparative system are also illustrated in Figure 6.1 for the sake of graphic visualisation. The overall picture depicts a relevant gender difference in the distribution of inflected, periphrastic and double comparatives across time. In general terms, there is a considerable increase in the use of the inflected and periphrastic variants in both male and female informants across time, but quite notable is the proportion of the periphrastic forms represented by women writers.

Table 6.1. Distribution of inflected (I), periphrastic (P) and double comparatives (D.C.) in letters by men and women (N=5353) (#-raw data and n.f.)

Data n.f & #	1418-1500			1501-1600			1601-1700			1701-1800		
	I	P	D.C.	I	P	D.C.	I	P	D.C.	I	P	D.C.
Men	1.83 (#82)	0.76 (#34)	0.08 (#4)	3.49 (#287)	3.16 (#260)	0.06 (#5)	5.31 (#771)	4.39 (#637)	0.04 (#6)	6.84 (#986)	5.84 (#842)	0 (#1)
Women	2.07 (#18)	2.30 (#20)	0.11 (#1)	5.44 (#31)	3.16 (#18)	0.52 (#3)	8.35 (#299)	4.32 (#155)	0 (#0)	7 (#436)	7.34 (#457)	0 (#0)

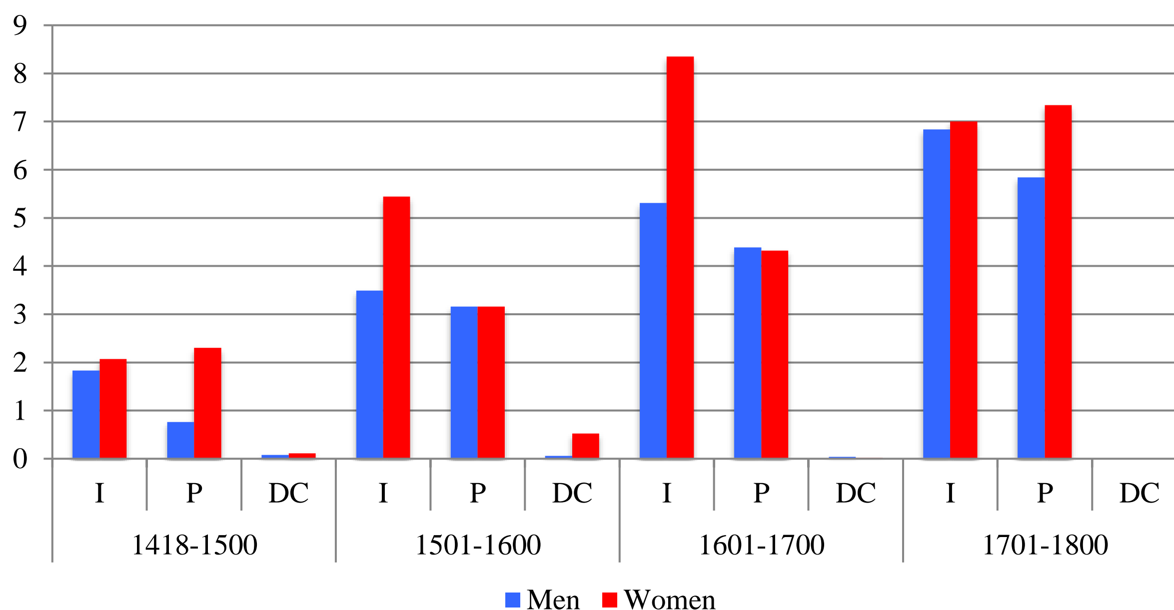

Figure 6.1. Distribution of inflected, periphrastic and double comparatives in letters by men and women (n.f.)

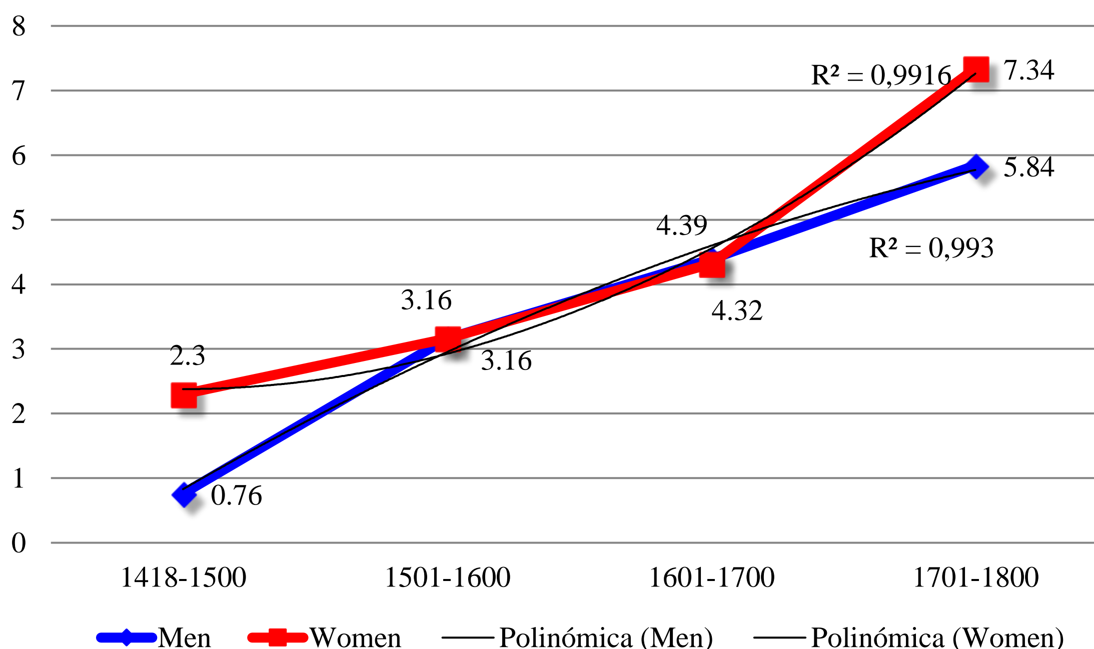

Figure 6.2. Distribution of the periphrastic adjective comparison in letters by men and women (n.f.)

In the same vein, although being scarce in our data, double comparatives are more frequent in women than in men, above all during the sixteenth century. They disappeared by the end of the eighteenth century in women's writings and were less frequent in letters by male informants (just one token found which represents 0 occurrences). Raw figures show that the differences in the use of inflected and periphrastic forms are statistically significant in the first period ($p \leq$

.05; χ^2= 6.83; *df* = 1), the third period ($p \leq .05$; χ^2= 17.30; *df*=1), and the fourth period ($p \leq .05$; χ^2= 6.29; *df*=1), but not in the second ($p \geq .05$; χ^2= 2.10; *df*=1). When all data is taken into account the use of both comparative linguistic variants seems to be statistically significant across centuries. Then, statistical testing suggests that women employed the periphrastic form more than men. However, normalised frequencies shed additional light on the issue in all periods. On closer view, Figure 6.2 illustrates the distribution of the periphrastic comparative variant in both genders from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

At a very first glance, there is an increase in the gender diffusion of the periphrastic variant. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a strong positive correlation showing a polynomial relationship for the gender-based patterns along time (with R very close to +1: 0.9916 in women and 0.993 in men). The incoming form spreads evenly in the course of time in both genders. However, there is a little overlap between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the pooled figures in the period ranging from 1501 to 1600 show the same amount of occurrences in both women's and men's writings: 3.16. In contrast, in the next period, there is a slight decrease in the use of the periphrastic form in women, 4.32 vs. 4.39 in men. Generally, the data obtained point to the fact that women were leading the spread of the periphrastic form as a comparative strategy, although men catched upon women in the use of the periphrastic form from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Therefore, it is the first and the fourth periods the ones which show how the use of the periphrastic variant for comparing adjectives in English differs considerably between men and women – in the first period women and men behave differently in the use of the periphrastic form with rates of 2.3 and 0.76, respectively, and also in the fourth period with 7.34 in women's writings and 5.84 in men's. Thus, results seemingly indicate that the spread of this form in the adjective comparative system was promoted by women and hence generally led and diffused by female informants. This phenomenon receives support from previous studies on gender and language change that had already reported that women tend to lead changes that come from above the level of awareness (see for example Trudgill, 1972; Romaine, 1978; Kytö, 1993b; Nevalainen, 1996a, 1996b; Arnaud, 1998; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 1998, 2003:118–125; Nurmi, 1999, 2000; Palander-Collin, 1999b; and Laitinen, 2018). According to Trudgill (1972: 187–188), women tend to use standard and more prestigious forms more frequently than men. As Romaine states (1978: 156): "females […] are clearly more concerned with the pressure exerted by local norms and asserting their status within the […] social structure". In the field of historical sociolinguistics, it has also been reported that gender differences may be traced back to earlier times even before prescriptivism and language standardisation, attesting the role of women as

leaders or promoters of more standard linguistic variables. More recently, Laitinen (2018) has investigated the emergences of both -*one* and -*body* in the EModE period, and results also clearly show that female informants played an active role in the diffusion and adoption of them.

6.1.2. Comparative forms and etymological origin of the adjective

This section offers an account of the influence that the etymological origin of the adjective could have exerted on the comparison strategy choice on our data. It provides a new distribution of the total number of inflected and periphrastic tokens shown in the previous section, but this time a further separation has been carried out between Germanic/native and Romance adjectives for both genders. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the assistance of the *OED* along with the *MED* has been crucial to determine the origin and the etymology of each of the adjectives retrieved. Table 6.2 summarises the analysis for Germanic/native adjectives first.

Table 6.2. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) comparative forms with Germanic/native adjectives according to gender (#-raw data and n.f.)

Germanic/ native n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	1.61 (#72)	0.20 (#9)	3.25 (#267)	1.15 (#95)	4.60 (#668)	1.15 (#168)	5.82 (#839)	1.09 (#158)
Women	1.84 (#16)	0.80 (#7)	4.56 (#26)	1.05 (#6)	7.01 (#251)	1.42 (#51)	5.61 (#349)	1.20 (#75)

Focusing on the data analysed, we can observe how the inflectional form is the preferred comparative strategy with Germanic/native adjectives over all the periods by writers of both genders. In male informants, the highest frequency of inflectional forms in Germanic/native adjectives occurs during the eighteenth century with a rate of 5.82; in the case of women's writings the highest frequency appears in the seventeenth century (7.01). However, there is a considerable increase in the use of periphrastic comparison from 1418 to 1800 by both genders, albeit not so extremely marked, being lower in the fifteenth century for both genders (0.20 in men's writings and 0.80 in women's), higher during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for male informants (1.15 in both periods) and during the sixteenth century for female ones (1.42). See examples (25) to (27) below:

(25) I seme to be here in ocio and I was never ***more buysied***, what with the matiers itself, and what with care lest I doo not well. (PCEEC, from Stephen Gardiner to Thomas Cromwell, 1535)

(26) […] sinc that time he hath been imploy'd in teaching a considerable School in Hartfordshire (if I mistake not) which I hope hath renderd him ***more fit*** to undertake the management of that place […] (CEECE, from Posthumus Wharton to Sir Daniel Fleming, 1687)

(27) Till then I must content myself with the thoughts of old England and those I left in it, & believe my affection will grow, if possible, ***more strong*** by absence. (CEECE, from Roger Newdigate to Elizabeth Newdigate, 1738)

Regarding adjectives of Romance origin, Table 6.3 represents the breakdown of inflected and periphrastic tokens in letters by men and women.

Table 6.3. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) comparative forms with Romance adjectives according to gender (#-raw data and n.f.)

Romance n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0.22 (#10)	0.55 (#25)	0.24 (#20)	2 (#165)	0.70 (#103)	3.23 (#469)	1.02 (#147)	4.75 (#684)
Women	0.23 (#2)	1.49 (#13)	0.87 (#5)	2.10 (#12)	1.34 (#48)	2.90 (#104)	1.39 (#87)	6.14 (#382)

As it is noticed, the number of periphrastic forms used with adjectives of Romance origin is higher than inflectional ones at all times, the maximum rate being reached during the last period, with a rate of 4.75 in men's writings and 6.14 in women's. However, inflectional forms also seem to undergo a slight increase in both genders (from 0.22 to 1.06 in men's writings and from 0.23 to 1.46 in women's) although without being quite noticeable. See examples (28) to (30) below:

(28) I know an ***honester*** and trew harted husband shall she never have. (PCEEC, from Anne Bacon to Elnathan Parr, 1613)

(29) 'tis possible, an extraordinary application and religious integrity, might perhaps supply the defects of ***profounder*** Science […] (CEECE, from John Evelyn to Samuel Pepys, 1680)

(30) The 10th Augt we saild thence for Balasore, wher wearriv'd the 15th; in which bay we have cont'd and rid out the monsoone, which has prov'd ***favourabler*** then expected (beinge leape yeare). (CEECE, from Joseph Haddock to Sir Richard Haddock, 1688)

On closer scrutiny, Figure 6.3 traces the overall diffusion of the periphrastic forms of adjective comparison for adjectives of Germanic/native and Romance origin according to gender. When compared periphrastically, both Germanic/native and Romance adjectives followed divergent tracks. With respect to adjectives of Germanic/native origin, the use of the periphrastic form is higher in women than men across all the periods except for the sixteenth century, with rates of 1.05 and 1.15, respectively. However, the gender difference is not so significant as the frequencies for both genders are not very unlike. As regards adjectives of Romance origin, the spread of periphrastic forms follows a different path with respect to adjectives of Germanic/native origin. As we can see in Figure 6.3, female informants use the periphrastic form more than men. This time the increase is more remarkable across the periods and it outnumbers the periphrastic form with Romance adjectives in men's writings, but with the exception of the seventeenth century. During this period, the use of periphrastic comparison in male's letters increases more (3.23) than in female's letters (2.90). The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a positive correlation showing a polynomial relationship with R much closer to +1 in Romance forms than in the case of Germanic/native ones. In short, Figure 6.3 mainly features a change in the diffusion of periphrastic forms with Romance adjectives in the course of time, which contrasts with the progression of periphrastic forms with Germanic/native adjectives along the centuries.

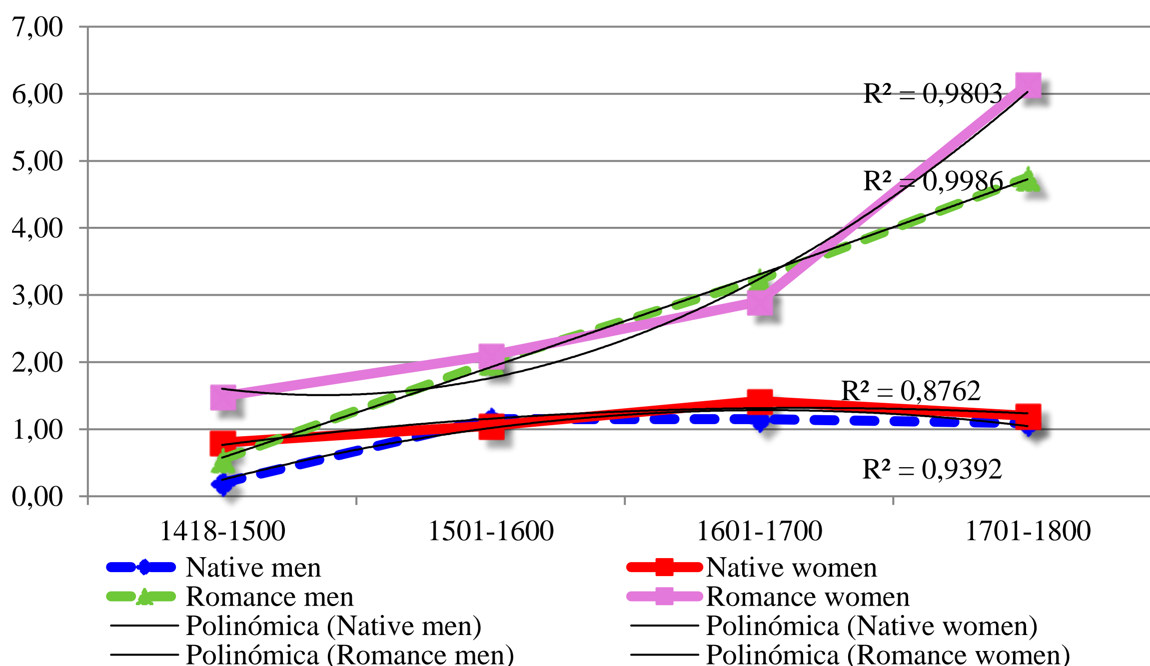

Figure 6.3. Gender variation in the distribution of periphrastic comparative forms with Germanic/native and Romance adjectives (n.f.)

As far as double comparison is concerned, Table 6.4 charts its distribution with Germanic/native and Romance adjectives according to gender and across periods. Figure 6.4 represents the visualisation of the double forms retrieved and classified in Table 6.4. Regarding gender differences, one can observe that double forms are more prone to be found in women's writings according to normalised frequencies. It is in the sixteenth century when higher rates are obtained: 0.06 in men's writings and 0.52 in women's.

Table 6.4. Distribution of double comparative forms with Germanic/native and Romance adjectives according to gender (#-raw data and n.f.)

Double Comparatives	1418-1500	1501-1600	1601-1700	1701-1800
Native men	0.04 (#2)	0.06 (#5)	0.02 (#4)	0 (#1)
Native women	0.11 (#1)	0.52 (#3)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)
Romance men	0.02 (#2)	0 (#0)	0.01 (#2)	0 (#0)
Romance women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)

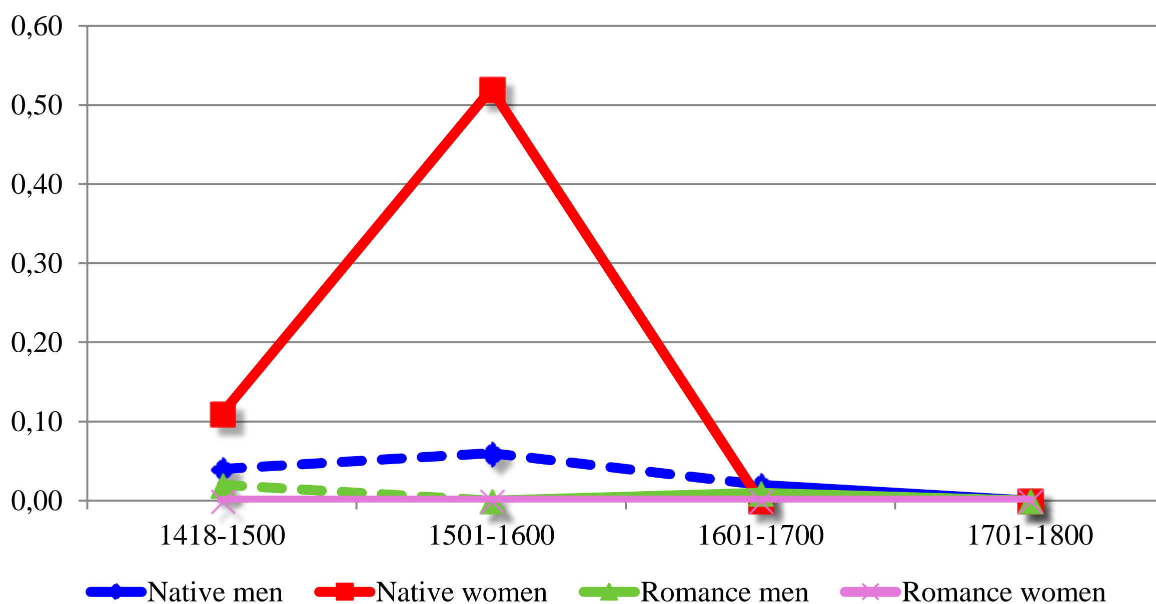

Figure 6.4. Gender variation in the distribution of double comparative forms with Germanic/native and Romance adjectives (n.f.)

Moreover, although the data is quite scarce due to the small number of tokens (N=20), it points to some kind of association of double comparatives with adjectives of Germanic/native origin: sixteen out of the tokens retrieved were Germanic/native adjectives and four of them of Romance origin. This fact is also bolstered by González-Díaz's socio-stylistic study of double comparatives in EModE (2004, 2008: 159–205). Although she did not analyse the tokens

retrieved according to etymology, one can appreciate that the majority of the double forms obtained in her study appear with adjectives of Germanic/native origin.[1] On the basis of these results, it seems that double comparatives tended to be notably lower with adjectives having a Romance origin and higher with Germanic/native adjectives. This suggestion may reinforce the hypothesis that periphrastic comparative constructions were commoner with Romance adjectives during the ME and EModE periods (see González-Díaz, 2018: 64), which would point to the fact that the periphrastic form for comparing adjectives in English could have been probably associated to a trend, which probably mirrored standard tendencies. Nevertheless, it would need further substantiation which will be completed in sections 6.2.3 with the division of double forms into social ranks.

6.1.3. Comparative forms and number of syllables of the adjective

In this section, a detailed account of the distribution of the inflected and periphrastic forms of comparison in monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives is presented according to gender across the periods. This allows us to examine if the number of syllables had an influence on the choice of either the inflectional or the periphrastic way of comparison in the development of this grammatical variable. Table 6.5 and Figure 6.5 show the raw data and normalised frequencies for the distribution of the inflectional form of comparison. As can be observed, the number of occurrences of monosyllabic adjectives compared by inflection is higher in both genders across time than of disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives. The distribution is quite varied in both genders since in women's writings, the figures outnumber men's use of monosyllabic adjectives with inflections in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries (4.91 and 7.09, respectively), but they are higher in men's writings during the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries (1.67 and 5.94, respectively).

Table 6.5. Distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives according to gender (#-raw data and n.f.)

Inflected n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	1.67 (#75)	0.15 (#7)	0 (#0)	3.21 (#264)	0.26 (#22)	0.01 (#1)	4.76 (#691)	0.54 (#79)	0.0 (#1)	5.94 (#856)	0.89 (#129)	0 (#1)
Women	1.61 (#14)	0.46 (#4)	0 (#0)	4.91 (#28)	0.52 (#3)	0 (#0)	7.09 (#254)	1.25 (#45)	0 (#0)	5.48 (#341)	1.52 (#95)	0 (#0)

[1] Gonzalez-Díaz analysed these double forms only in relation to social class. A further analysis classifying the double forms found in the corpora according to social rank and the origin of the adjective is provided in section 6.2.3.

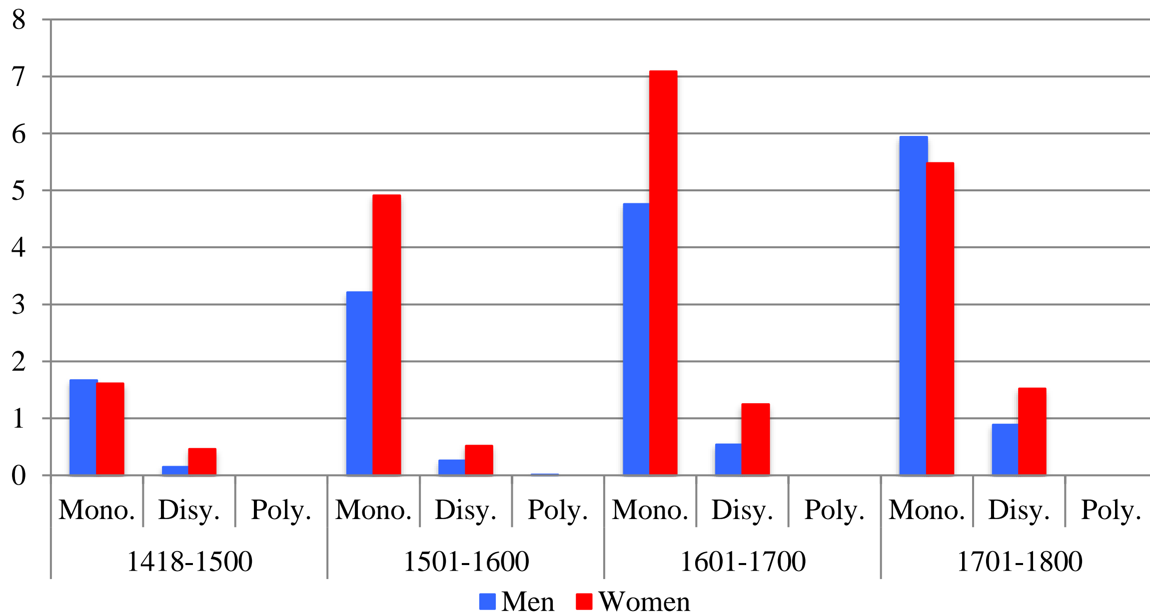

Figure 6.5. Gender variation in the distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives (n.f.)

The small amount of tokens in some cases does not allow us to apply statistical tests of significance. Regarding disyllabic adjectives, the tendency shows a more substantial diffusion of inflectional forms across periods in both genders. However, women tend to use them more frequently than men in each period. As regards polysyllabic adjectives compared by inflection, one can appreciate that, although the data is scarce, male informants are the ones who make a higher use of them, particularly from the sixteenth century onwards. See examples (31) to (33) below:

(31) […] ther was no man more piteful , no man more trew of his word, no man faster to his frend, no man ***diligenter*** nor more circumspect, which thing both the kings his masters notid in him greatly. (PCEEC, Thomas Wyatt SR to Thomas Wyatt JR, 1537)

(32) […] what wise man will thinke Barnes to be ***subtiller*** then Thimelthorpe or that Barnes was the cause he deceived you […] (PCEEC, George Gardiner to John Parkhurst, 1574)

(33) […] you may see I should be easily invited to lengthen my letter, which now I will conclude with my best wishes to Bacon, little Fred. and yourselfe that have no whear a ***faithfuller*** freind then Bedford. (PCEEC, Lucy Russel to Jane Cornwallis/Bacon, 1614)

As regards periphrastic comparison, Table 6.6 and Figure 6.6 illustrate the distribution of the raw data and normalised frequencies with monosyllabic disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives across periods. As can be seen, it is during the fifteenth century when women used more frequently the periphrastic form with monosyllabic adjectives, with a total rate of 1.03, which decreases in the following century to 0.52 but increases slightly again in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to 0.72 and 0.65, respectively. In contrast, men's use of periphrastic comparison with monosyllabic adjectives differs somewhat: the lowest figures are attested in the fifteenth century, with just 0.22, and the highest in the sixteenth century, with 0.70. After this period, the use of periphrasis with monosyllabic adjectives shows a decline in the seventeenth (0.66) and eighteenth century (0.45). As regards disyllabic adjectives, the periphrastic form is diffused more substantially in all the periods and in both genders. The higher amount of occurrences with adjectives compared periphrastically appears in female's writings across periods, with a slight exception in the seventeenth century, with 1.79 in male's writings and 1.73 in female's.

Table 6.6. Distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives according to gender (#-raw data and n.f.)

Periphr. n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0.22 (#10)	0.17 (#8)	0.35 (#16)	0.70 (#58)	1.47 (#121)	0.98 (#81)	0.66 (#97)	1.79 (#260)	1.93 (#180)	0.45 (#66)	2.15 (#310)	3.23 (#466)
Women	1.03 (#9)	0.69 (#6)	0.57 (#5)	0.52 (#3)	2.10 (#12)	0.52 (#3)	0.72 (#26)	1.73 (#62)	1.87 (#67)	0.65 (#41)	2.79 (#174)	3.89 (#242)

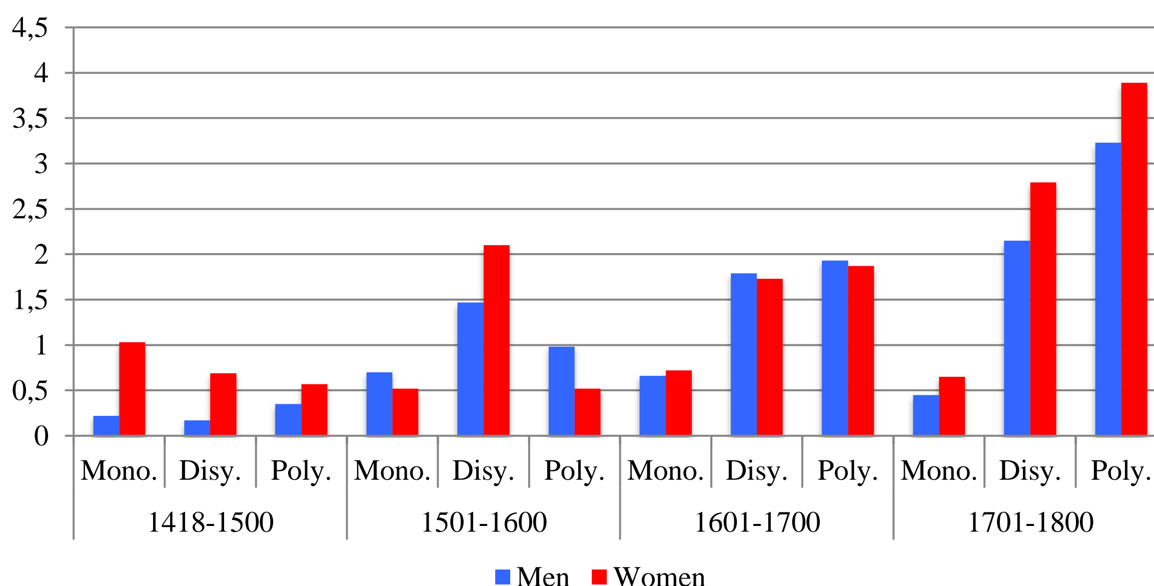

Figure 6.6. Gender variation in the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives (n.f.)

Finally, the occurrences of polysyllabic adjectives formed periphrastically show more variation with respect to gender differences. During the fifteenth century the amount is higher in women's writings than in men's, with 0.57 and 0.35 respectively. However, in the following two centuries, it increases slightly in men's writings at the expense of women's. Finally, it is during the eighteenth century when the use of periphrasis with polysyllabic adjectives by women outnumbers men's rates, with 3.89 in the former and 3.23 in the latter. See examples (34) to (36) below:

(34) Sundry English Catholiques are gon over into Ireland, where for the tyme they are at ***more quiet*** then yf they were in England […] (PCEEC, Richard Verstegan to Robert Persons, 1592)

(35) The King took us at a surprise, his coachs were order'd at three quarters of an hour warranting, but I was ***more ready*** then his Grace of Sommerset, who came before the Gold Staff wch was Lord Asburnham, so that the King went alone in the coach with the Duke of Sommerset. (CEECE, Peter Wentworth to Thomas Wentworth, 1714)

(36) I went to Deane with my father two days ago to see Mary, who is still plagued with the rheumatism, which she would be very glad to get rid of, and still ***more glad*** to get rid of her child, of whom she is heartily tired. (CEECE, Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 1798)

On the whole, the distribution of the inflected and periphrastic tokens obtained with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives according to gender points to a preference for inflections with monosyllabic adjectives by both genders, but when it comes to comparing monosyllabic adjectives with periphrasis, there seems to be a higher use in women's writings. The same preference applies to disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives, which indicates a higher use of the periphrastic form as a comparative strategy in female's writings than in men's. To better understand what type of women were leading the diffusion of this form, the following sections are devoted to the study and analysis of the frequencies obtained according to both social rank and gender.

6.2. Social rank

6.2.1. Social rank and gender

This section reports the results of correlating inflectional and periphrastic comparative forms with the social rank and gender of the correspondents in our corpora. As mentioned in section 5.5.2, the social ranks selected for our study are the following ones: “royalty”, “nobility”, “gentry”, “clergy”, “professionals”, “non-gentry: merchants” and “non-gentry: others”. For each of these social categories, each individual’s use of the different variants for comparison in English has been quantified, pooled together and further divided into male and female informants (see Appendix II for raw data taken from each individual’s use of each variant and its distribution). Thus, results have been correlated with their respective social position and with their gender. A further correlation has been carried out with the origin and the number of syllables of the comparative adjectives so as to shed more light on the influence of these two factors on the comparative strategy used. Furthermore, as it has been considered that the comparative periphrastic form was not deep-rooted in the English system and hence it was considered as innovative, special attention has been paid to the development of the periphrastic form for each social category, attempting to contrast the rise and evolution of this linguistic variant among the different social ranks. Once again, as the texts from each social category and gender present a different word size in the four periods from our corpora, the token frequencies for each variant have been normalised to a text of 10.000 words. The word count used for this study is presented in Table 5.13 for male informants and Table 5.14 for female informants in section 5.5.2. Tables 6.7 and 6.8 below display the distribution of the normalised frequencies for each social category according to gender across the sub-periods under study. In the next sections, the correlations mentioned above for each social rank will be presented and analysed.

Table 6.7. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms according to the social rank of male informants (n.f.)

Men n.f.	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Royalty	1.01	1.01	2.48	3.1	3.90	1.73	5.89	6.41
Nobility	0.94	0.94	3.35	2.96	5.84	4.7	2.47	2.67
Gentry	3.1	0.93	3.82	3.63	6.04	4.66	7.22	6.16
Clergy	2.07	0.69	3.42	3.29	6.38	4.49	7.42	6.15
Profe.	2.62	0.65	4.35	3.4	4.56	4.47	8.58	7.54
Non-gentry: merchants	0.72	0.36	0	4.17	4.22	3.38	8.2	4.1
Non-gentry: others	0.88	0.88	2.95	2.07	3.57	3.87	6.3	2.66

Table 6.8. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms according to the social rank of female informants (n.f.)

Women n.f.	1418-1500		1501-1600		1601-1700		1701-1800	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Royalty	0	0	7.08	3.18	2.94	1.47	7.57	10.67
Nobility	2.47	2.47	5.34	4.75	5.8	3.44	7.24	7.93
Gentry	2.14	2.14	0	0	15.15	6.92	7.57	5.43
Clergy	0	39.89	16.18	0	7.14	3.57	7.7	9.66
Profe.	0	0	0	0	2.62	0	6.4	8.08
Non-gentry: merchants	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.82	1.82
Non-gentry: others	1.53	0	1.87	0.93	3.53	2.52	3.07	1.31

6.2.1.1. Royalty

6.2.1.1.a. Inflected and periphrastic comparison

In this section, the development of the inflectional and periphrastic comparative variants in letters by males from the royalty is presented. Figure 6.7 illustrates the normalised frequencies of both linguistic forms from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

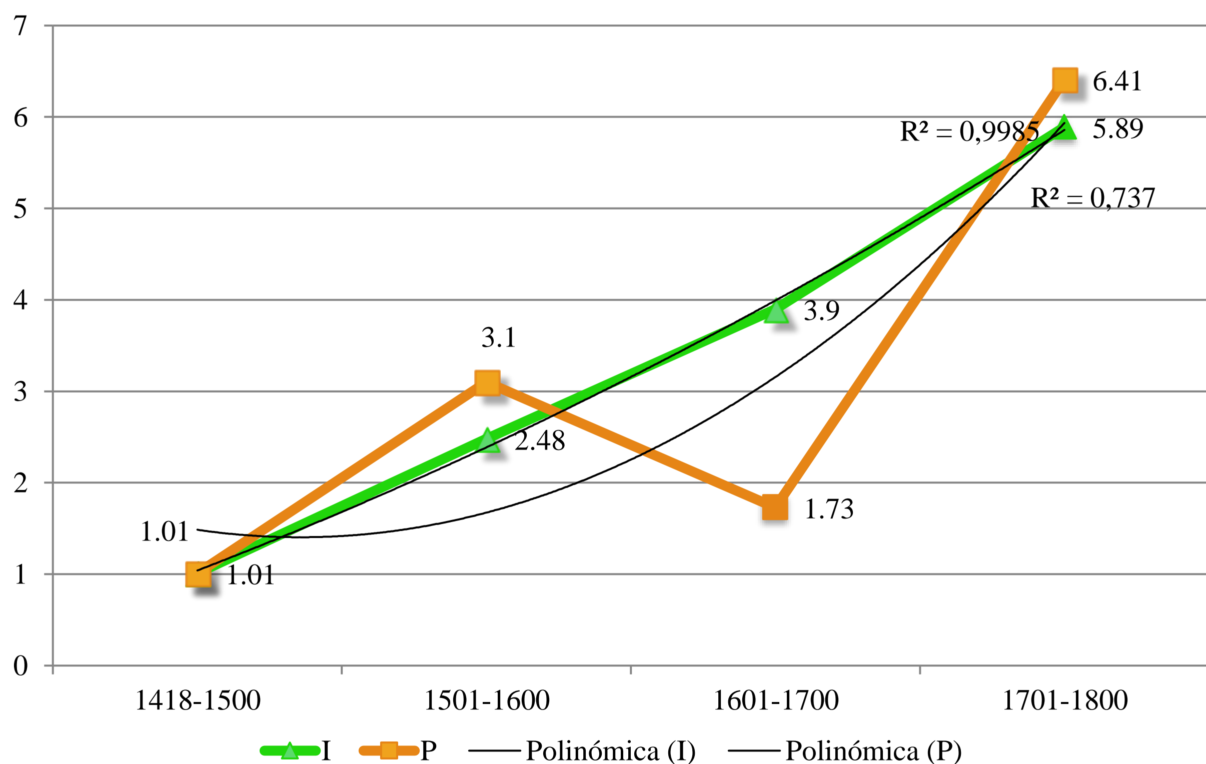

Figure 6.7. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by royal men (n.f.)

The correlation between male members from the royalty social rank and their use of inflected and periphrastic forms points at an uneven distribution in the use of the periphrastic variant across time. While the inflectional form exhibits a progressive increase along the centuries (with a strong Pearson correlation coefficient showing a polynomial relationship: R= 0.9985), the periphrastic form shows a considerable decline in the seventeenth century (1.73, and a weak Pearson correlation coefficient: R= 0.737), but reaches its highest point and outnumbers the inflectional variant in the eighteenth century with a rate of 6.41. Moreover, the periphrastic form also shows a higher rate to the detriment of the inflectional form (with 3.1 and 2.48 respectively) during the sixteenth century. When the majority of the tokens collected come from the same individual(s), the material requires a micro-level sociolinguistic approach. As we can see in Appendix II, during the first period, our data come from two main informants: Richard III (1452–1485) and Henry Tudor VIII (1491–1547). Although their tokens are quite low in both variants, it is Richard III the one who makes use of the periphrastic variant, whereas Henry Tudor VIII only employs the inflectional form. However, during the sixteenth century, the data collected come only from Henry Tudor VIII. During this century, we notice that the informant makes a higher use of the periphrastic form than the inflectional one. This would suggest that Henry Tudor VIII was becoming more familiar with the incipient periphrastic form associated with adjectives of Romance origin (see section 6.2.1.1.b). During the seventeenth century, letters by Charles Stuart I (1600–1649) and Charles Stuart II (1630–1685) are the main sources of data. Charles Stuart II seems to show a higher percentage of the analytic variant although the Germanic/native inflectional type is the one preferred. The number of informants during the eighteenth century increases and I have obtained data from nine royal men. Among them, George III (1738–1820) and George IV (1762–1830) present more extensive social networks and they seem more productive in the use of both inflected and periphrastic variants for comparing adjectives than the rest of the informants. In fact, the majority of the periphrastic tokens collected during the eighteenth century come mainly from them: George III presents around 56.3% of comparative adjectives formed periphrastically and George IV 59%.

With respect to royal female correspondents, the variants for the expression of adjective degree follow a similar track across time, but show a higher frequency than in letters by royal men. Figure 6.8 displays the diffusion of both inflected and periphrastic forms.

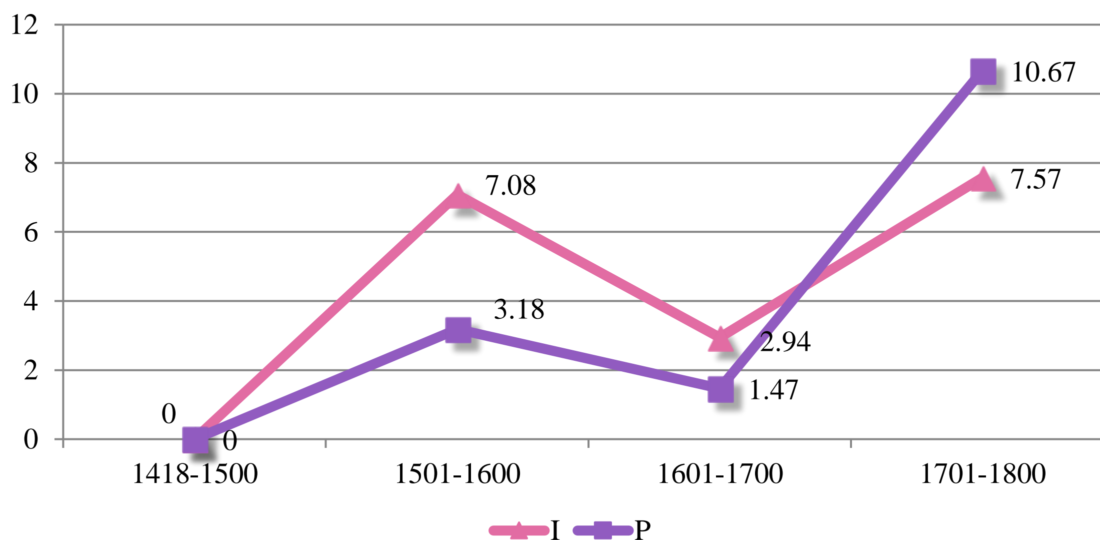

Figure 6.8. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by royal women (n.f.)

As mentioned in section 5.5, women are less represented than men in the corpora, and this especially applies to the royalty, above all during the fifteenth century (see Figure 5.9 in section 5.5.2). For this reason, no tokens have been found in the first period of our study. In the sixteenth century, a different picture is observed; while periphrastic forms seem to be the comparison strategy preferred by men during this period, the inflectional form is the one that prevails in women of the royalty during the sixteenth century at the expense of the periphrastic form. The data come from the female informants Elizabeth Tudor (1533–1603), Mary Tudor I (1516–1558), Margaret Stuart (1489–1541) and Catherine Parr (1512–1548). If we analyse the data microscopically, we can appreciate that Elizabeth Tudor, daughter of Henry VIII, is the only female who employs more periphrastic forms than the rest in her letters (34.8%). Moreover, according to Evans (2013), Queen Elizabeth was a leader of language innovation, since she used it to build her social identity as a female in a masculine position of power. The tendency for the preference of the inflectional form persists during the next century, but this time with a decline in the use of the periphrastic form compared with the previous period (just 1.47, representing one token). However, like royal male informants, it is at the end of the eighteenth century when the use of the periphrastic form in letters by women outnumbers the inflectional variant, with a normalised frequency of 10.67 in the production of royal women and 6.41 in that of royal men. As in the case of Elizabeth Tudor, we can perceive during this century a certain association of the linguistic behaviour by members from the same family. Amelia Hanover (1783–1810), the youngest daughter of George III, presents a higher preference for the periphrastic form reaching a percentage of 75% in comparison with the rest

of the female informants, who were sisters of Amelia – Charlotte Hanover (1766–1828), Augusta Hanover (1768–1840) and Elizabeth Hanover (1770–1840). Amelia (see Figure 6.9) was very young when she wrote her letters (between fourteen and seventeen years old at the end of the eighteenth century) and depite being much younger than her sisters, she was rather more productive in writing letters, with twenty-five attested. Amelia was very fond of her brother George IV and her father. In fact, she was the best-loved daughter of her father, who affectionately called her "Emily", and whose birth was really expected after the early deaths of two of her brothers. However, she died quite young, at the age of twenty-seven, due to an illness she was suffering since adolescence. Although having this special bond with her father, she was educated and supervised by Charlotte Finch (1725–1813), who taught her academic skills such as English, French or Geography (Flora, 2004; Weir, 2008). Our corpora do not contain any letter from Lady Finch to analyse her linguistic behaviour, but the metadata provided by the CEECE confirms that she belonged to the upper gentry, she travelled extensively during her youth and married William Finch, Vice-Chamberlain to George III. This gives us the clue that Amelia's formal education along with her close-relationship with her father could have had an influence on her linguistic practices. In keeping with the results obtained, and knowing that she is one of the youngest informants in the corpora at the end of the eighteenth century (1780–1800), one may observe that the predominance of the periphrastic comparative choice over the inflectional one clearly supports the hypothesis that the community was becoming aware of the more prestigious linguistic forms and was introducing them in their letters.

Figure 6.9. Amelia Hanover (from http://www.englishmonarchs.co.uk)

On closer scrutiny, we can observe in Figure 6.10 gender differences in the evolution of the periphrastic form for comparing adjectives in royal female and male informants in our corpora. Evidently, as discussed before, gender variation in the use of both variants across time is quite distinguishable. It indicates that the range of variation is wider in the last period for both genders with a fair amount of overlap in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, there is a considerable gender advantage in the diffusion of the periphrastic form in letters by royal women during the eighteenth century.

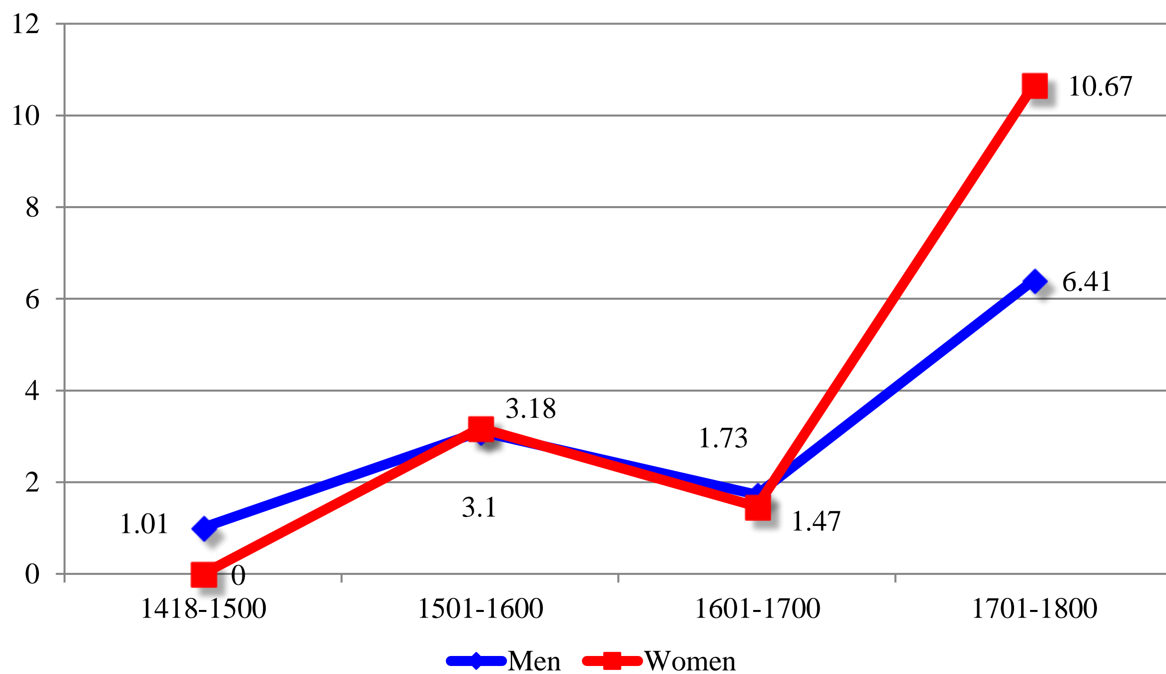

Figure 6.10. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by royal men and women (n.f.)

6.2.1.1.b. Comparative forms and etymological origin of the adjective

In this section, the distribution of the data obtained from letters by royal men and women for the inflected and the periphrastic form in connection with the etymological origin of the adjective is presented. Table 6.9 offers the distribution of inflected and periphrastic comparative forms with adjectives of a Germanic/native origin across periods in both royal genders, in both absolute numbers and normalised frequencies.

Table 6.9. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Germanic/native adjectives in letters by royal men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Germanic/ native n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	1.01 (#1)	0 (#0)	2.48 (#4)	0 (#0)	2.17 (#5)	0.86 (#2)	5.11 (#59)	1.04 (#12)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	5.67 (#16)	1.41 (#4)	2.94 (#2)	0 (#0)	5.85 (#17)	1.72 (#5)

The data point to a preference for the inflectional form with Germanic/native adjectives by both royal men and women across all the periods. However, the rate for periphrastic comparison with Germanic/native adjectives is higher in royal women during the sixteenth century, which coincides with the period of Elizabeth Tudor mentioned above. See examples (37) and (38):

(37) Wax ynough of Godz raison befal you to resist so distroing aduis, and be so wel lightned as not so dark a clowde may dim you from the sight of your best good, wiche cannot be ***more shunned*** than by the not yelding to so betrainge deceat […] (PCEEC, Elizabeth Tudor to James Stuart I/IV, 1566)

(38) […] I think myselfe obliged to you that wold make end of so uniust a war, and acknowelege the ded king of famous memorie ***more happy*** in suche faithful councelars than I see many kings in ther liuing seruantz. (PCEEC, Elizabeth Tudor to James Stuart I/IV, 1590)

The use of periphrastic forms with Germanic/native adjectives is also higher in women's than in men's writing in the eighteenth century. As noticed before, the Hanover sisters are the main informants during this period. Among them, Amelia, the youngest, is the one whose periphrastic comparative choice is greatest in comparison with her sisters' writings. For example, if we explore in more detail the data obtained for the comparative forms of the same Germanic/native adjective in all the Hanover sisters' letters, we can observe that it is Amelia, the only one who uses the periphrastic form. See examples (39) to (42) below, illustrating the comparative adjective of *happy* in the Hanover sisters' letters:

(39) It was very amiable of you not to forget to send it [the honey water], but I was not surprised as you are always so good to me and I really do beleive you love me

very much, which makes me ***happier*** than words can express. (CEECE, Amelia Hanover to the Prince of Wales, 1797)

(40) God grant every one may prove ***more happy*** & that next year I may be able to express all my best & most affte. wishes by word of mouth. (CEECE, Amelia Hanover to the King, 1798)

(41) I am better; you may imagine all I have lately gone through has hurried me. Now it is over I rejoice & feel much ***more happy*** & comfortable than I did before. (CEECE, Amelia Hanover to the Prince of Wales, 1799)

(42) You was very good in sending to me yesterday and had I remained in London nothing could have made me ***happier*** than the pleasure of seeing you […]. (CEECE, Charlotte Hanover to the Prince of Wales, 1793)

(43) She [mama] […] orders me to say that no one can feel more deeply all your affectionate expressions than what she does, & is ***happier*** than words can express at your ending your letter with saying 'we are all very happy & comfortable here'. (CEECE, Elizabeth Hanover to the Prince of Wales, 1795)

(44) I know but too well that has not been the case, but flatter myself that for the future your mind will be more at ease & ***happier*** than it has been for some years […]. (CEECE, Elizabeth Hanover to the Prince of Wales, 1797)

(45) I should not feel (^myself^) if I did not write to you, my dearest brother, on this day which, being the beginning of a new year, I trust may prove a ***happier*** one to you than the (^last^) in every sense […] (CEECE, Elizabeth Hanover to the Prince of Wales, 1798)

Clearly, *happier* is the preferred comparative choice by all these female informants. After having previously examined that the majority of the periphrastic forms in the eighteenth century come from Amelia Hanover, one can notice that the use of the comparative periphrastic form *more happy* is more extensively used than the synthetic in her linguistic practices, which differs from her sisters'.

In Table 6.10, the distribution of inflectional and periphrastic forms of comparison with Romance adjectives is presented.

Table 6.10. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Romance adjectives in letters by royal men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Romance n.f & #	1418-1500		1501-1600		1601-1700		1701-1800	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0 (#0)	1.01 (#1)	0 (#0)	3.10 (#5)	1.73 (#4)	0.86 (#2)	0.78 (#9)	5.37 (#62)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	1.41 (#4)	1.41 (#4)	0 (#0)	1.47 (#1)	1.72 (#5)	8.95 (#26)

One can first note that adjectives of Romance origin are more likely to be compared with the periphrastic form at the end of the eighteenth century. Gender differences reveal that the use of periphrasis with Romance adjectives is more frequent in royal female's letters during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but higher in male's letters during the sixteenth century. Quite notable is also the different distribution between men and women in their uses of the comparative strategy with Romance adjectives from the sixteenth century onwards: while inflectional forms increase in female's letters across time, they decrease during the eighteenth century in men's letters. Thus, the use of inflections with Romance adjectives does not follow the same track in men's letters. In fact, we can appreciate that the highest frequency of inflections with Romance adjectives in female's letters appears during the eighteenth century (1.72), which contrasts with their use in male's letters during the same period (0.72). Among the most widely used forms are *finer*, *milder*, *larger*, *easier*, *plainer* or *abler*. See examples (46) and (47):

(46) I will not now answer the letter you writt by your watterman who fell sick upon the way, and so I had the letter but some dayes since, but will expect a ***safer*** way to write then by the post. (PCEEC, Charles Stuart II to Henriette Stuart, 1667)

(47) From the Capitol we went to the Amphitheatre which is much ***larger*** than that of Nimes but not so well preserved. (CEECE, Augustus Hanover to the King, 1791)

Figure 6.11 plots the overall distribution of the periphrastic form of adjective comparison for native and Romance adjectives according to gender in the royalty rank. At first glance, it can be inferred from the graph that both royal men and women make a higher use of periphrastic forms with adjectives of Romance origin, with higher rates in women's letters. In fact, the Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a positive correlation showing a strong polynomial

relationship for the gender-based patterns along time in the case of royal female writers using the periphrastic form with Romance adjectives (with R close to +1: 0.9219) but weaker in men (R= 0.5446). However, during the seventeenth century, the use of inflections is higher in men's writings with both Romance and Germanic/native adjectives. Although the data is too limited to draw any accurate conclusion (N=5), the tokens collected point to a higher use of periphrastic forms in the letters by only two of the younger informants that appear in our data during the seventeenth century: Charles Stuart II (40% of periphrastic use) and Mary Stuart II (with only one periphrastic token). The rest of the informants – such as Charles Stuart I, Anne Stuart and Elizabeth Stuart – only used synthetic forms as a comparison strategy. Finally, the rise of the periphrastic form in correlation with Romance adjectives is highly marked in young Amelia Hanover among royal female letters, and in George III (above all from his forties onwards) and in his son George IV (during his youth and middle age) among the male royal letters.

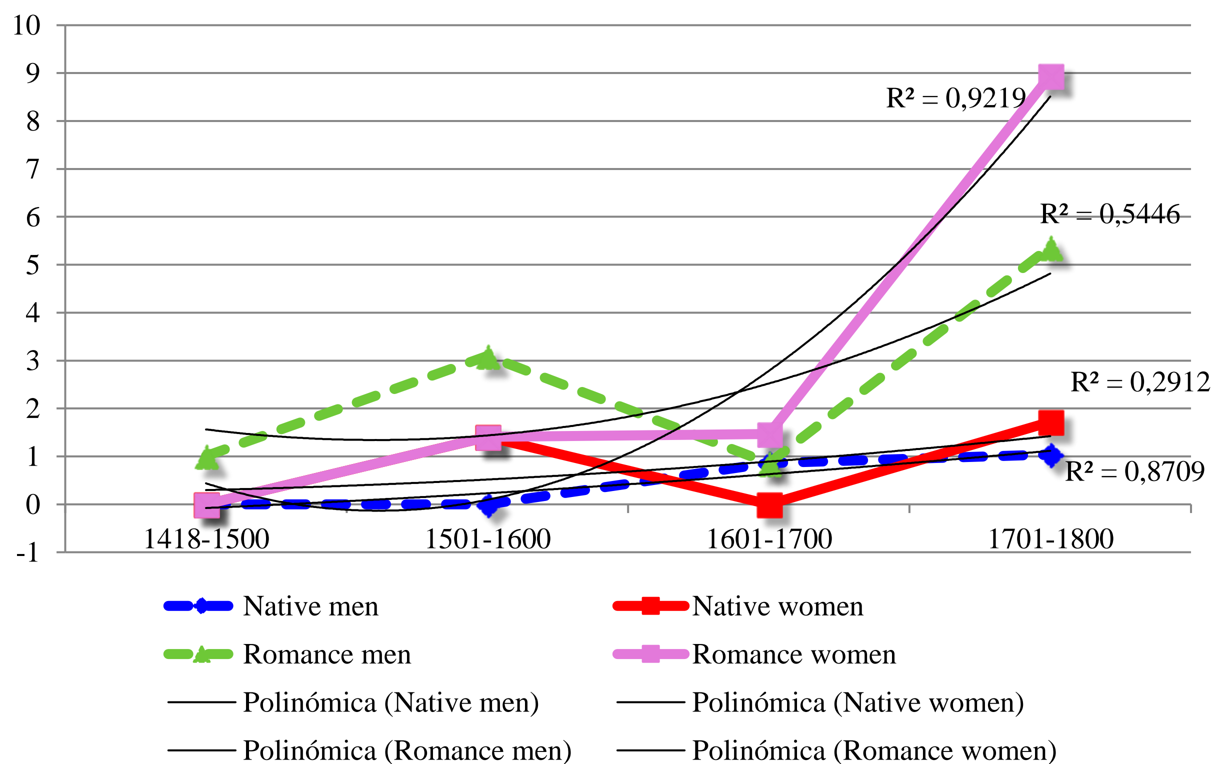

Figure 6.11. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by royal men and women (n.f.)

6.2.1.1.c. Comparative forms and number of syllables of the adjective

In this section, the distribution of the inflected and periphrastic forms of comparison in letters by the royalty is further analysed in connection with the number of syllables of the adjective, monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic, as well as with gender across the four periods. Table

6.11 and Figure 6.12 show the raw data and normalised frequencies of the distribution of the inflectional form. One can notice that the occurrences of monosyllabic adjectives compared by inflection is higher than the rate of disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives across time in the production of royal male informants. On the contrary, the highest use of inflections with monosyllabic adjectives in letters by royal female informants is attested during the sixteenth century with a rate of 6.37, and during the eighteenth century with 4.47. As for disyllabic adjectives, again, male informants tend to show a steadier increase in the use of inflections, but females show a more irregular one as in the case of monosyllabic adjectives: 0.70 in the sixteenth century, 0 in the seventeenth and 3.09 in the eighteenth century.

Table 6.11. Distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by royal men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Inflected n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	1.01 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	2.48 (#4)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	3.47 (#8)	0.43 (#1)	0 (#0)	5.02 (#58)	0.78 (#9)	0,0 (#1)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	6.37 (#18)	0.70 (#2)	0 (#0)	2.94 (#2)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	4.47 (#13)	3.09 (#9)	0 (#0)

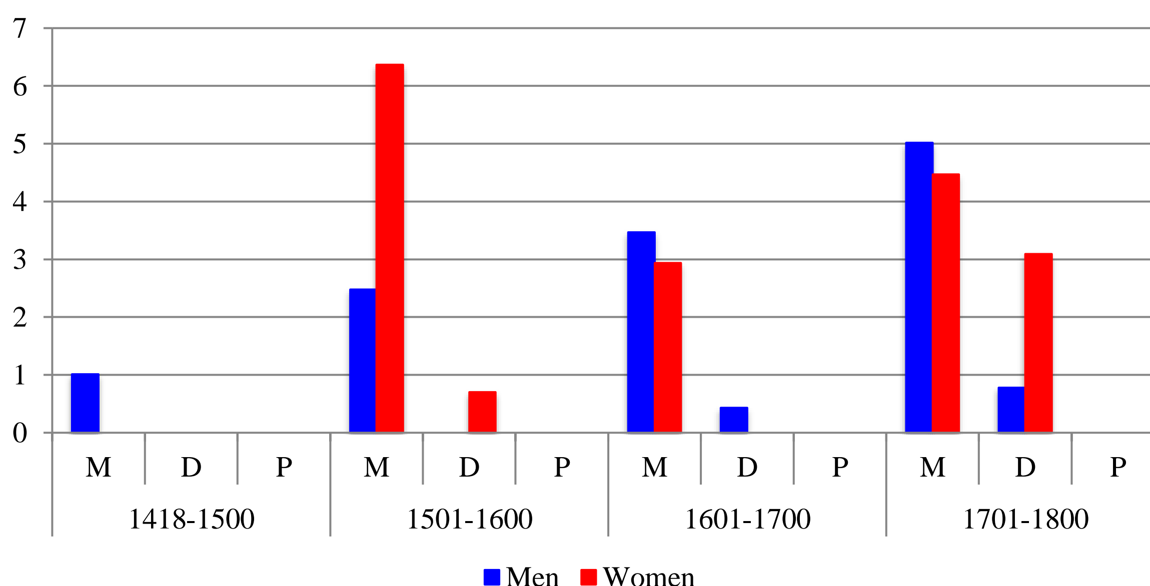

Figure 6.12. Gender variation in the distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by royal men and women (n.f.)

Regarding the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives according to gender, Table 6.12 and Figure 6.13 show a steadier pattern attested in royal female letters in the case of disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives. However, the distribution in the production of royal male informants is less regular since there is an increase

in the use of periphrastic forms from the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries, which decreases in the seventeenth and increases again in the eighteenth century. Moreover, as far as monosyllabic adjectives are concerned, there is also a slight increase in the use of periphrastic forms for comparison during the eighteenth century, with a normalised frequency of 0.34.

Table 6.12. Distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by royal men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Periphr. n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0 (#0)	1.01 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	1.86 (#3)	1.24 (#2)	0 (#0)	1.30 (#3)	0.43 (#1)	0.34 (#4)	2.51 (#29)	3.55 (#41)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	1.06 (#3)	1.41 (#4)	0.70 (#2)	0 (#0)	1.47 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	6.88 (#20)	3.78 (#11)

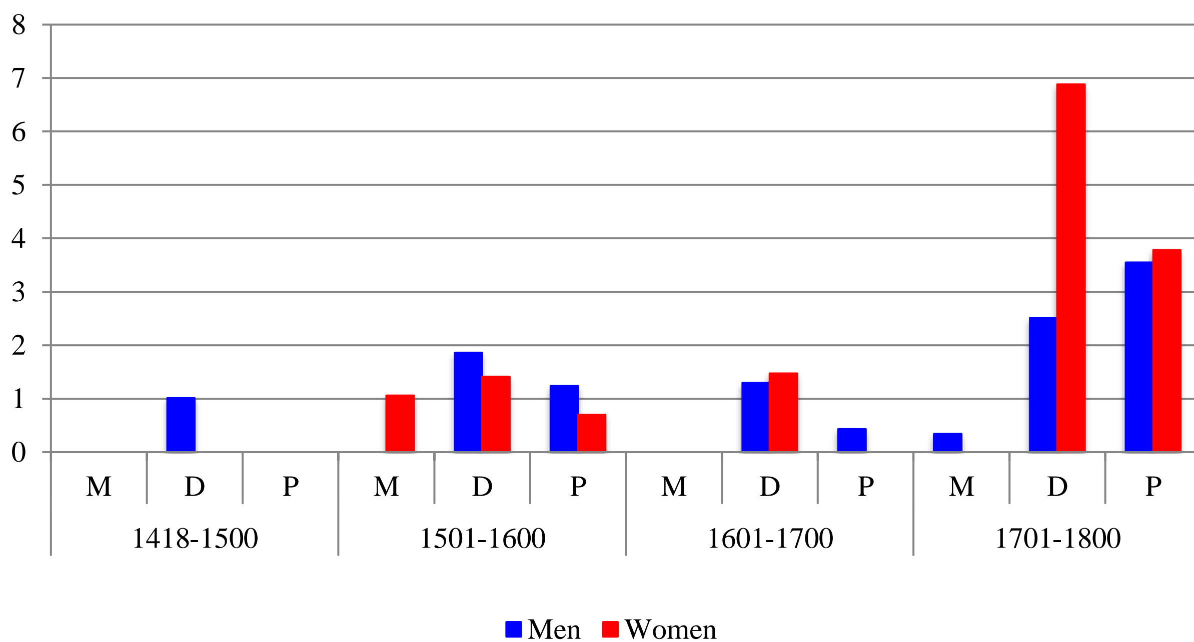

Figure 6.13. Gender variation in the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by royal men and women (n.f.)

After exploring the periods from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries for each of the variants of the comparative adjective system in English, as deployed in the letters by both royal men and women, I observed that the spread of the periphrastic form is led by younger royal women with a consequent recessive use of the inflectional form during the eighteenth century. The analytic variant shows an upward sloping curve in disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives over time, and it seems to adapt to Romance adjectives during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the contrary, a decrease in the use of periphrastic forms in monosyllabic adjectives is attested from the seventeenth century onwards, but showing a slight increase in its

use with adjectives of Germanic/native origin at the end of the eighteenth century. As for royal men, the trend seems to be somewhat similar to royal women but with a lesser frequency of periphrastic forms in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The seventeenth century is the only period in which royal men enhance their use of periphrastic forms over royal women. I have proved by means of the microscopic sociolinguistic approach that, during this period, Charles Stuart II is the informant who makes a higher use of the periphrastic form at the very beginning of the seventeenth century and Amelia Hanover during the eighteenth century. The trend that emerges is that from the mid seventeenth century onwards the trajectory of the diffusion of the *more*-variant for comparing adjectives exhibits higher rates among younger royal members, mainly females.

6.2.1.2 Nobility

6.2.1.2.a Inflected and periphrastic comparison

In this section, the evolution of the inflected and periphrastic forms used in the letters by noble men and women is presented. The social category of nobility is better represented in our corpora, offering a higher amount of running words (see section 5.5.2). Figure 6.14 displays the normalised frequencies for the use of both linguistic variants by noble men from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

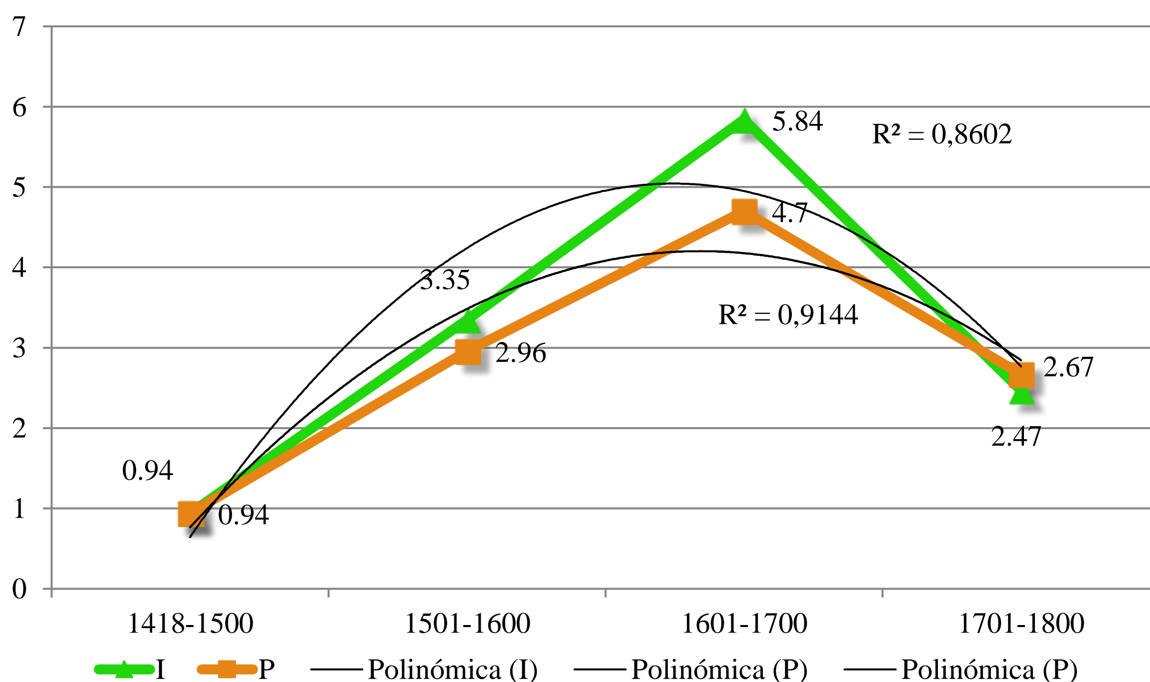

Figure 6.14. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by noble men (n.f.)

Unlike royal men, the diffusion of both variants shows a different behaviour from the sixteenth century onwards. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a positive correlation showing a polynomial relationship with R much closer to +1 in the periphrastic form than in the inflectional form. The spread of the periphrastic form starts out around the sixteenth century, reaching its highest point in the seventeenth, with rates of 4.7 and 5.84 for the inflected form of comparison respectively. However, although the periphrastic form shows a fall in its use during the eighteenth century, it still outnumbers the inflectional variant, with a frequency of 2.67 for the periphrastic and 2.47 for the inflected, but with a small number of occurrences altogether than royal men. During the sixteenth century, Thomas Cromwell (1485–1540) is attested in our corpora to be the noble man with the highest percentage in the use of the periphrastic variant (67%). Additionally, one of the double comparatives that have been obtained from our corpora occurs in one of his letters: "*more colder*" (see section 6.2.3). Ruiza, Fernández and Tamaro (2004) describe that this noble man was really adventurous and travelled a lot around Europe during his youth as a soldier and merchant. When he went back to England around 1510, he employed part of his life in the textile business and also worked as a moneylender. He started to lend money to Cardinal Wolsey who helped him enter Parliament. Years later, King Henry VIII named him Private Advisor (1531), Chancellor of the Exchequer (1533), Secretary of Estate (1534), Great Chamberlain (1539) and Earl of Essex (1540). Therefore, he also shows upward social mobility during his life.

The highest percentages of synthetic and analytic forms occur during the middle of the seventeenth century and the microscopic observation of the data reveals that these come from the linguistic profiles of John Holles SR, 1st Earl of Clare (1565–1637), and Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford (1593–1641) (see Figures 6.15 and 6.16). Both of them show more extensive range of social networks, with addressees from different social ranks. Both were educated at Cambridge and specialised in law. With respect to John Holles SR, "so attractive to him was the life of a great public official that he began early to prepare himself to undertake the responsibilities that service to the state involved" (Thomson, 1936: 148). He started to prepare for the military career and fought the Spanish and championed the Elizabethan settlement in Ireland. After this, he became a gentleman pensioner of Queen Elizabeth, hence gaining success as a courtier. As John Holles SR, Thomas Wentworth also travelled to different countries and due to his duties, he was a very mobile person; in fact he completed his studies abroad and became quite involved in the political affairs of the period. He was recalled to England becoming a chief advisor to the King. According to Chilvers (2010: 81), among the main King's advisors, Wentworth "was the ablest and cleverest of all […]". Thus, according to

the data, the highest percentage of the linguistic variants appears in the letters by these two informants from the nobility. John Holles SR's and Thomas Wentworth's use of the analytic variant reaches averages of 45% and of 50%, respectively. Moreover, it is noteworthy that two of the double comparatives obtained in the data occur in their writings at the beginning of the seventeenth century: "*more better*" (1613) by John Holles SR and "*more strikter*" (1617) by Thomas Wentworth (see section 6.2.3 for a detailed account of double comparatives).

Figure 6.15. John Holles SR
(from https://en.wikipedia.org)

Figure 6.16. Thomas Wentworth
(from https://blantonn.wordpress.com)

Another interesting fact is that at the time of writing the letters, Thomas Wentworth was much younger than John Holles SR, which apparently may indicate that a generational change was in progress.[2]

As for the eighteenth century, the use of both variants shows a drastic decline with respect to the previous century, although the periphrastic form keeps outnumbering the inflectional variant, with normalised frequencies of 2.67 and 2.47 respectively. The tokens obtained during this period are far fewer than in the previous century since the informants' use of the comparative variants is less notable. The only two informants that show a higher use of both variants, outnumbering in some periods the inflectional ones, are Allen Bathurst (1684–

[2] It is attested that the age of John Holles SR when writing his letters was between 50 and 60, whereas the collection of Thomas Wentworth's letters in the PCEEC indicates that he wrote the majority of his letters when he was between 20 and 40 years old.

1775) and Henry St. John (1678–1751), from the 1701 to 1740 and Granville Leveson Gower (1721–1803) from 1780 to 1800. A microscopical analysis shows that Allen Bathurst seems to have established more extensive social networks than the rest of the informants during this century. In fact, if we consider percentages of use of the periphrastic form at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Allen Bathurst shows the highest (67%) which coincides with his younger age when writing letters (from 1701–1720). Bathurst became a Tory politician who defended the Bishop of Rochester, Francis Atterbury. He travelled around Europe on the famous "Grand Tour of Italy" to acquire precious paintings and furniture. Among his main circle of friends were important writers and advisors at the time, such as Alexander Pope, William Congreve or Jonathan Swift (Chisholm, 1911: 520).

With respect to noble women, Figure 6.17 displays the distribution of normalised frequencies for both linguistic variants.

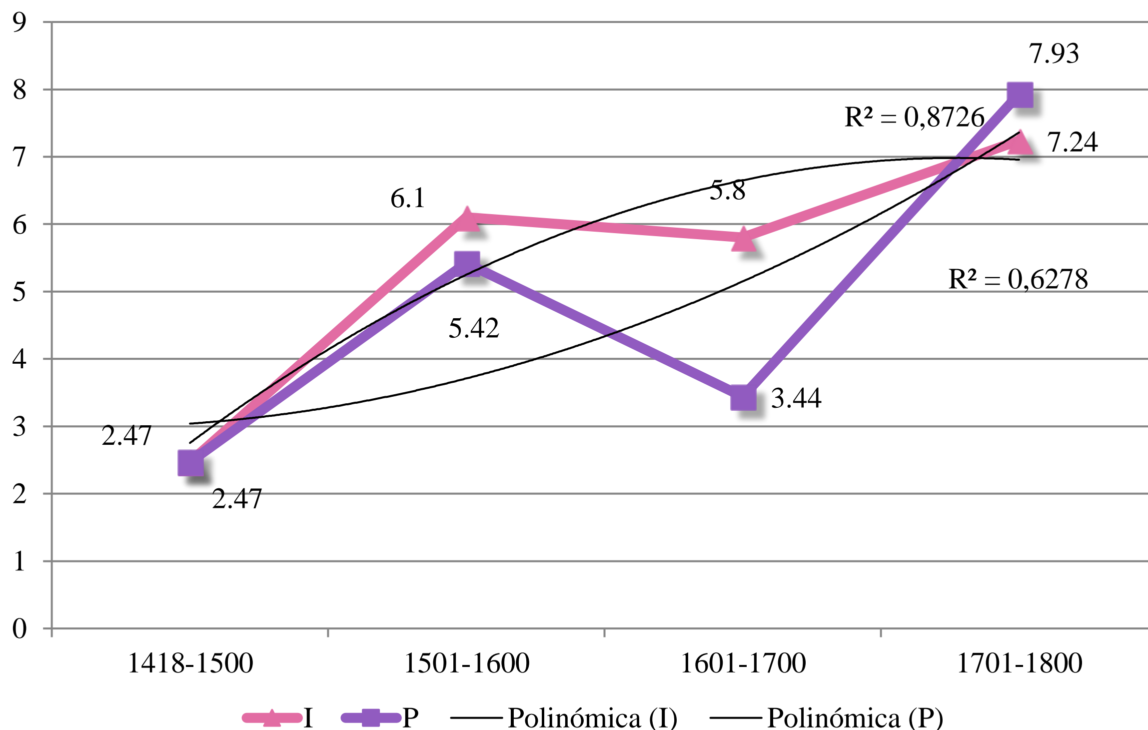

Figure 6.17. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by noble women (n.f.)

This time, the Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a positive correlation showing a polynomial relationship with R much closer to +1 in the inflectional form than in the periphrastic form. Gender differentiation in the use of both linguistic variants is notable in that noble men show a slightly different pattern of diffusion in comparison with noble women for both linguistic variants. As previously considered in section 5.5.2, the number of noble women and their corresponding running words in the corpora increase steadily across the periods,

showing a monotonic increasing relationship as opposed to the monotonic decreasing one in males. However, although both groups exhibit a normal distribution sample according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (see Cantos, 2013: 45) with no significant skewness, data from noble men are more consistent and homogeneous (D=0.17549; *p*=0.93233; Mean=59.625; Median=61.5; SD=42.691376; Skewness=-0.149723; Kurtosis=-0.697019) than those of women (D=0.2957; *p*=0.476; Mean=64.875; Median=36; SD=72.284038; Skewness=0.636261; Kurtosis=-1.53111). The inflectional form spreads more evenly in letters by noble women than in those by men and the periphrastic form also shows a different distribution, above all from the seventeenth century onwards.

Despite exhibiting higher frequencies than royal women, both noble women and royal women present a similar widespread diffusion of both inflected and periphrastic variants, since it is also during the seventeenth century when a decrease in the use of the periphrastic form is attested to increase again throughout the eighteenth. Although there is a considerable rise in the use of both linguistic variants from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century, the difference in use between both of them is not so significant. In contrast, in the seventeenth century there is a more significant difference in the use of both inflected and periphrastic forms, with frequencies of 5.8 and 3.44 respectively. The data obtained during this period come from seventeen noble women, but only two of them show a higher usage of the analytic variant. From a microscopic perspective, Brilliana Harley (1598–1643) and Arabella Stuart (1575–1615) are the ones who show a higher number of tokens in the use of the periphrastic variant (66.7% and 37.9%, respectively). Arabella Stuart presents more varied social networks, as inferred from the number of addresses in her letters. She was an English noblewoman, daughter of Charles Stuart (who died when Arabella was two years old), and successor to Queen Elizabeth I, although she had not aspiration to the throne. She was more influential and active in political affairs than Brilliana Harley. She was educated like a princess, being fluent in many Romance languages, such as French, Latin, Italian and Spanish (Cooper, 1866).

Like royal women, Figure 6.17 displays the highest rates of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by noble women during the eighteenth century. This time, although again the periphrastic variant seems to outnumber the inflected one, the difference is not as significant as in the case of royal women, with frequencies of 7.93 and 7.24 respectively ($p \geq 0.05$ ($\chi^2=0.7108$; $df=1$). During this period, the data collected come from twenty noble women, but only two of them are the most outstanding ones: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762) and Sarah Lennox (1745–1826) (see Figures 6.18 and 6.19). As shown in Appendix II, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is attested to have written letters from 1701 to 1761 approximately, and it is

in her letters written between 1740 and 1760 when the number of tokens of the periphrastic form is higher than those in the correspondence by the rest of the noble women from the eighteenth century (60% of the use of the periphrastic variant). Although Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's network of addressees is more extensive, Sarah Lennox also shows a high percentage of the periphrastic form to the detriment of the inflectional one from 1761 to 1800.

Figure 6.18. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (from https://commons.wikimedia.org)

Figure 6.19. Sarah Lennox (from http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk)

In fact, the data show that during the period 1761–1780, Sarah Lennox's use of the periphrastic form is higher than the inflectional variant with a percentage of 56%; the same applies to the period 1781–1800 when she reaches a percentage of 53% in periphrastic adjective comparison. Regarding their socio-linguistic profiles, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was a very mobile person, and a quite intelligent woman who was self-educated at an early age, learning Romance languages and writing poetry, which was quite unconventional for the period. She is remembered for being an aristocrat whose letters were particularly interesting, since it is from them that we know that she introduced the practice of inoculation for smallpox in Britain. She was a very challenging woman, considered like a leader of society who was against the contemporary social attitudes of the period. This proves that she was ahead of her times because of her intellectual and social growth. In fact, she was quite brave when opposing to her covenant marriage admitting that that was not pure or romantic love but rather financial. Therefore, she married her real lover, Edward Wortley Montagu (Halsband, 1956; Grundy, 2004; Bowles, 2015). With respect to the socio-cultural background of Sarah Lennox, she also studied

Romance languages as a young child and was the most distinguished daughter of Charles Lennox, 2nd duke of Richmond and Lennox. George III fell in love with her at an early age but finally she could not be the queen of England since it was not proper to have spouses from other social ranks at the time. Attention has also been given to the differences in ages of both noble women at the time when their higher percentages in use of the periphrastic forms are attested. In the case of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the majority of her comparative linguistic variants collected come from 1741–1760, when she was around fifty-two years old. However, Sarah Lennox's higher use of the comparative variants come from her letters written during the period 1761–1780, when she was between sixteen and thirty-five. This may indicate a generational change in linguistic choices in the nobility social rank, which will be discussed in section 6.3.

If we pay close attention to gender differences in the use of the periphrastic form by the nobility, we may notice that the trend is quite different from the royalty. Figure 6.20 illustrates the diffusion in the use of the analytic variant across all the sub-periods in letters by both noble men and women. Unlike royal women, from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century, noble women show a greater use of the periphrastic choice for comparing adjectives than noble men, with a normalised frequency of 5.42 during the sixteenth century. This indicates that noble women doubled the use of periphrastic forms from one century to another in their written practices. However, this systematic gender advantage promoted by women falls in the next period, during the seventeenth century, as it happens with the royalty. The microscopic analysis has revealed that during the seventeenth century the frequency of the periphrastic form comes mainly from two influential noble men at the time, John Holles SR and Thomas Wentworth, who were very productive and whose social networks seem to be have been quite varied. This description coincides with the increase in the use of the periphrastic form by noble women during the next century. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was the most influential and intelligent noble woman at the time, who also shows a more extensive network of recipients and whose personal profile indicates that she was ahead of her times. Hence, the data obtained for the rise of periphrastic forms in the different periods under study suggest that there seems to be a direct correlation between a higher use of the periphrastic choice in the comparative system and the individual's social mobility, social networks and education.

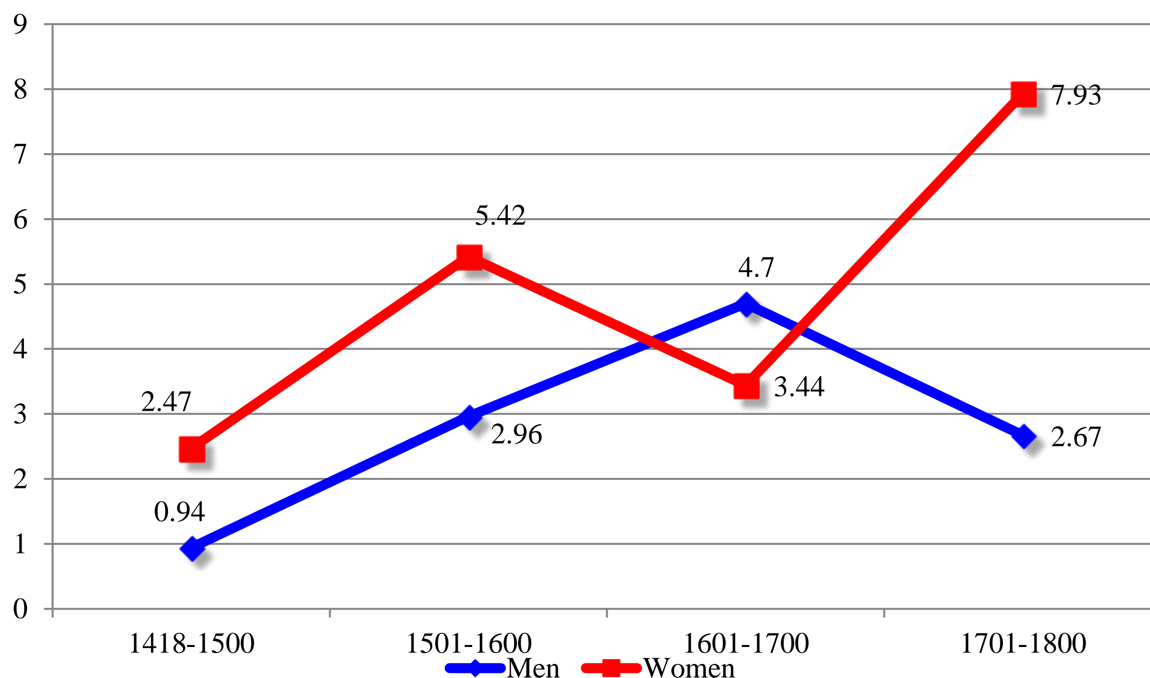

Figure 6.20. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by noble men and women (n.f.)

6.2.1.2.b. Comparative forms and etymological origin of the adjective

In this section, close attention is paid to the distribution of the data obtained from letters by noble men and women for the inflected and periphrastic choices of adjective comparison in connection with the etymological origin: Romance and Germanic/native. Table 6.13 presents the distribution of both absolute numbers and normalised frequencies of inflected and periphrastic comparative forms with adjectives of a Germanic/native origin across periods in letters by both noble men and women. The data suggest that noble men were more prone to use the comparative periphrastic variant with native adjectives during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, since no tokens have been found either for men or for women during the fifteenth century. In contrast, it is during the eighteenth century when noble women make a higher use of the periphrastic choice with Germanic/native adjectives, with a normalised frequency of 1.51. When comparing the data from both the royaly and the nobility, one can observe that a similar linguistic behaviour is portrayed, since the use of the periphrastic form by both royal and noble women peaks only during the eighteenth century, outnumbering the use by royal and noble men. See examples (48) to (51):

Table 6.13. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Germanic/native adjectives in letters by noble men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Germanic/ native n.f & #	1418-1500		1501-1600		1601-1700		1701-1800	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0.94 (#2)	0 (#0)	2.96 (#69)	0.77 (#18)	5.13 (#108)	1.37 (#29)	2.12 (#43)	0.59 (#12)
Women	2.47 (#1)	0 (#0)	5.42 (#8)	0.67 (#1)	5.19 (#95)	1.20 (#22)	5.96 (#130)	1.51 (#33)

(48) […] and yet I take it he was muche ***wyser***, and ***richer*** the same humor hath he infusd into his followers […] (PCEEC, John Holles SR to John Holles JR, 1616)

(49) I had little speeche with him, neither should I have been muche ***more wyse*** therby, then Powls […] (PCEEC, John Holles SR to Robert Carr, 1624)

(50) Could I bring my selfe to value a Man with no other Merit, I might be ***happier*** than I am. (CEECE, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Edward Wortley Montagu, 1711)

(51) […] we, my Dear, in our several little Cells are perhaps ***more happy*** than they, at least more easy. (CEECE, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Philippa Mundy, 1712)

As it is noticed, the same informant uses a different linguistic comparative variant in letters addressed to different recipients and at different times. In this specific case, some examples from the most productive noble members have been selected to show the sociolinguistic correlates of the different comparative strategy chosen.

In Table 6.14, the distribution of inflectional and periphrastic forms of comparison with Romance adjectives is presented. In general terms, results indicate that both comparative variants tend to show an increase in the production of both genders across the four periods when correlated with adjectives of Romance origin. Unlike noble men, the highest proportions of periphrastic and inflected forms with Romance adjectives are attested during the eighteenth century in letters by noble women, with 6.41 and 1.28 respectively. In contrast, noble men's use of the periphrastic and inflectional form with Romance adjectives had peaked a century before, with rates of 3.32 and 0.71, respectively for periphrastic and inflected forms. These two periods contain the data obtained from the two most productive members from the nobility social rank: John Holles SR and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Table 6.14. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Romance adjectives in letters by noble men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Romance n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0 (#0)	0.94 (#2)	0.38 (#9)	2.19 (#51)	0.71 (#15)	3.32 (#70)	0.34 (#7)	2.07 (#42)
Women	0 (#0)	2.47 (#1)	0.67 (#1)	4.74 (#7)	0.60 (#11)	2.24 (#41)	1.28 (#28)	6.41 (#140)

As in the case of royal women, the estimate for noble women is higher in the use of the periphrastic forms during the last period. On the contrary, royal men show a higher estimate during the sixteenth century and noble men during the seventeenth century. See examples (52) to (57):

(52) I have donne very many thinges without hir knowledge yet I call the Judge of all hearts to witnesse they have binne such as if she had not binne ***stricter*** then any childe […] (PCEEC, Arabella Stuart to Elizabeth Tudor, 1603)

(53) I do honor and love hyr with my holle hart, and I know an ***honester*** and trew harted husband shall she never have. (PCEEC, Anne Bacon to Elnathan Parr, 1613)

(54) Thus have I trickt yow out a small schizzo, or draught of the time, beeing as yet young as things shall grow, yow shall have a taste of them, and it may be my next letters may forme yow a ***perfecter*** creature. (PCEEC, John Holles SR to George Holles, 1625)

(55) Wee heare […] all his freinds make mighty addresses to my Ladye, but weather out of true respectts to you tow singly, or complicated with sum secrett designe to fortifie themselves the better to make themselves ***more able*** to ballance to doe the Treasorour a shrewde turne, I conceave may in good judgmente be doubted. (PCEEC, Thomas Wentworth to James Hay, 1633)

(56) It must be time and your owne wisdome which must discover this mistery, and therunto as unto lights much ***abler*** to discerne and judge I submitt itt […] (PCEEC, Thomas Wentworth to James Hay, 1633)

(57) [...] nothing can be ***more firm***, or, if you please to call it so, (^obstinate^) than he is in thinking that I can make him happy (\en de`pit de tout\). (CEECE, Sarah Lennox to Susan O'Brien, 1781)

On closer view, Figure 6.21 displays the overall distribution of the evolution of the periphrastic form of adjective comparison correlated with Germanic/native and Romance adjectives according to gender in the nobility rank. As it can be drawn from the Figure, noble women's use of the periphrastic form correlated with Germanic/native adjective follows an upward direction until the eighteenth century, which contrasts with a decrease in the use of periphrastic forms with Germanic/native adjectives by noble men. As for Romance adjectives, the trajectory shows a different picture; while both noble men and women show an increase in the use of periphrastic forms until the seventeenth century, their use in letters by noble women decreases, although it shows a sharp increase in comparison with noble men's use during the eighteenth century. Generally, this may suggest that the development of the periphrastic form in connection with Romance adjectives is more substantial in women's written practices than in men's, so we can talk about a change in progress mainly promoted by noble women from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, which decreases during the eighteenth century in the written production of noble men. However, the Pearson correlation coefficient test suggests a positive correlation showing a polynomial relationship with R much closer to +1 in Germanic/native forms than in the case of Romance ones.

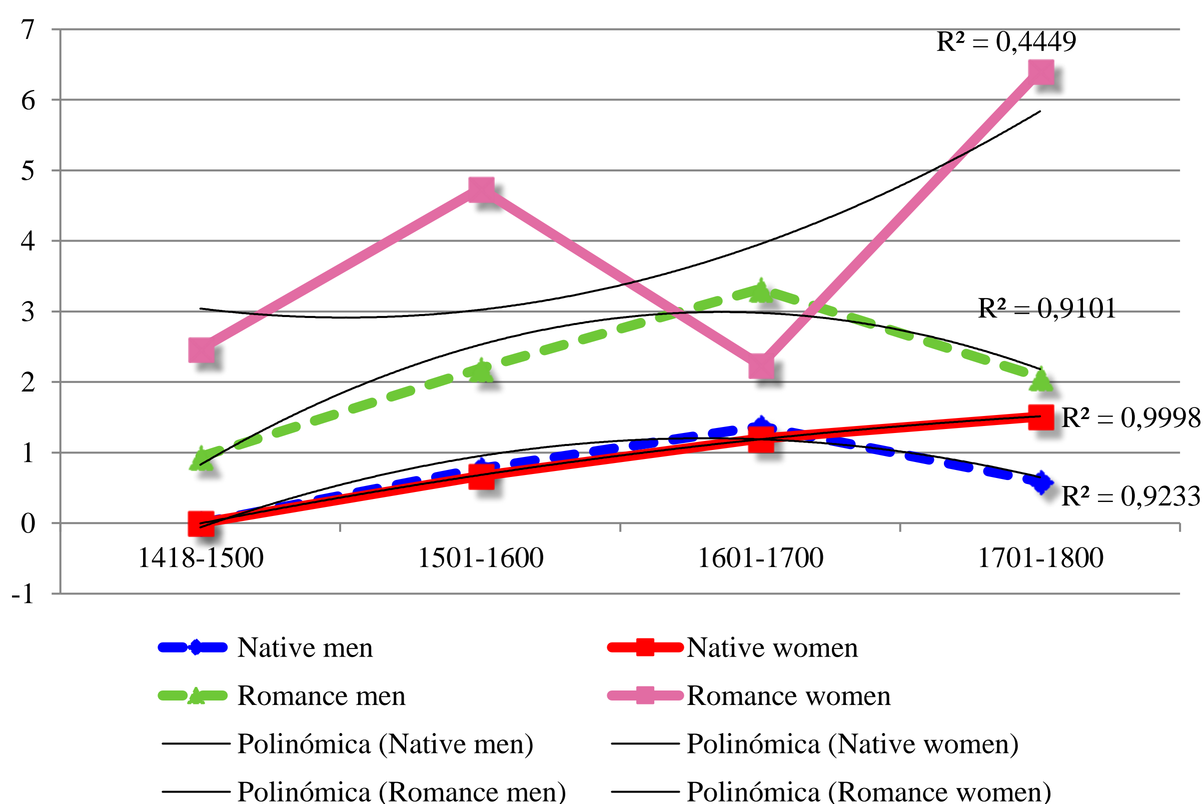

Figure 6.21. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by noble men and women (n.f.)

6.2.1.2.c. Comparative forms and number of syllables of the adjective

In this section, the distribution of the inflected and periphrastic forms of comparison in the nobility is further connected with syllable length (monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives) and gender. Table 6.15 and Figure 6.22 illustrate the raw data and normalised frequencies for the inflectional form of comparison. Regarding the results obtained, noble women tend to show a preference for the inflectional comparative form when correlated with monosyllabic adjectives in all the periods, and only used inflectional forms with disyllabic adjectives in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, outnumbering the occurrences obtained from letters by noble men. As for men, the tendency seems to be similar although they started using the inflectional form with disyllabic adjectives a century earlier than women.

Table 6.15. Distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by noble men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Inflected n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0.94 (#2)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	2.96 (#69)	0.38 (#9)	0 (#0)	5.46 (#115)	0.38 (#8)	0 (#0)	2.17 (#44)	0.29 (#6)	0 (#0)
Women	2.47 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	6.10 (#9)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	5.03 (#92)	0.76 (#14)	0 (#0)	5.68 (#124)	1.55 (#34)	0 (#0)

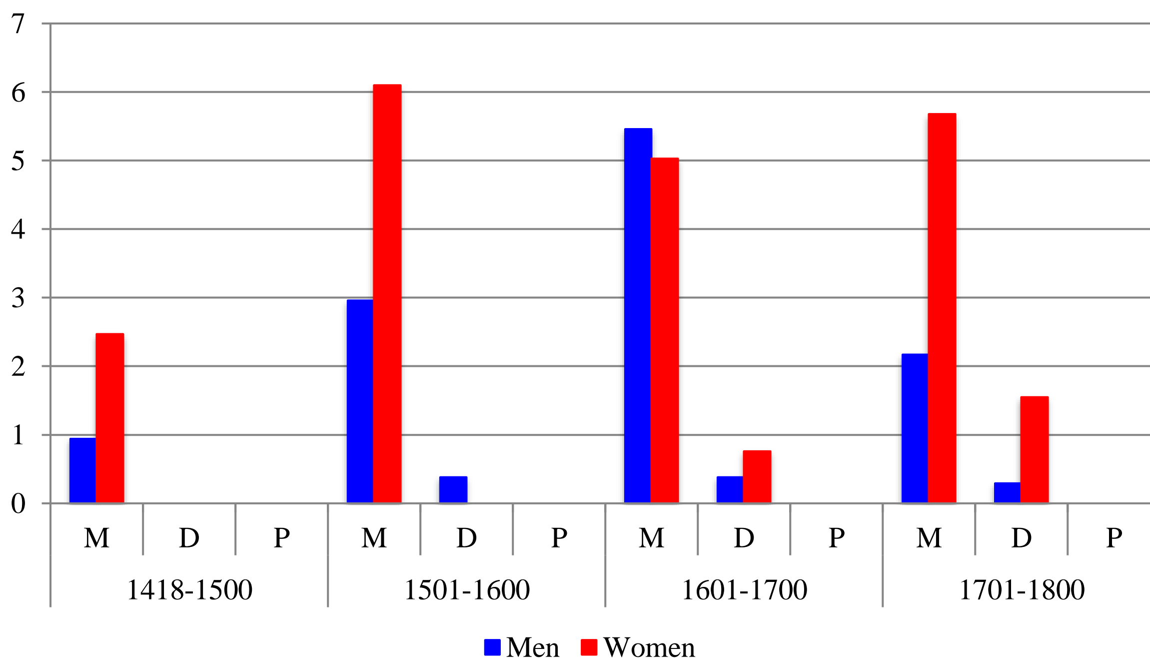

Figure 6.22. Gender variation in the distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by noble men and women (n.f.)

However, it is during the following centuries when noble women catch up on noble men in the use of inflectional forms with disyllabic adjectives.

Table 6.16 and Figure 6.23 show the distribution of raw data and normalised frequencies of the periphrastic form with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives according to gender across periods. The results shape a clearer progression in the use of periphrastic forms correlated with both disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by noble women across centuries, outnumbering the occurrences obtained by noble men. However, instead of presenting a progressive development, there is a clear peak in the use of the periphrastic form by noble men during the seventeenth century; the rate decreases again in the following century.

Table 6.16. Distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by noble men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Periphr. n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0.94 (#2)	0.51 (#12)	1.20 (#28)	1.24 (#29)	0.66 (#14)	2.04 (#43)	1.99 (#42)	0.44 (#9)	1.18 (#24)	1.03 (#21)
Women	0 (#0)	2.47 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	4.74 (#7)	0.67 (#1)	0.71 (#13)	1.14 (#21)	1.58 (#29)	0.59 (#13)	3.25 (#71)	4.08 (#89)

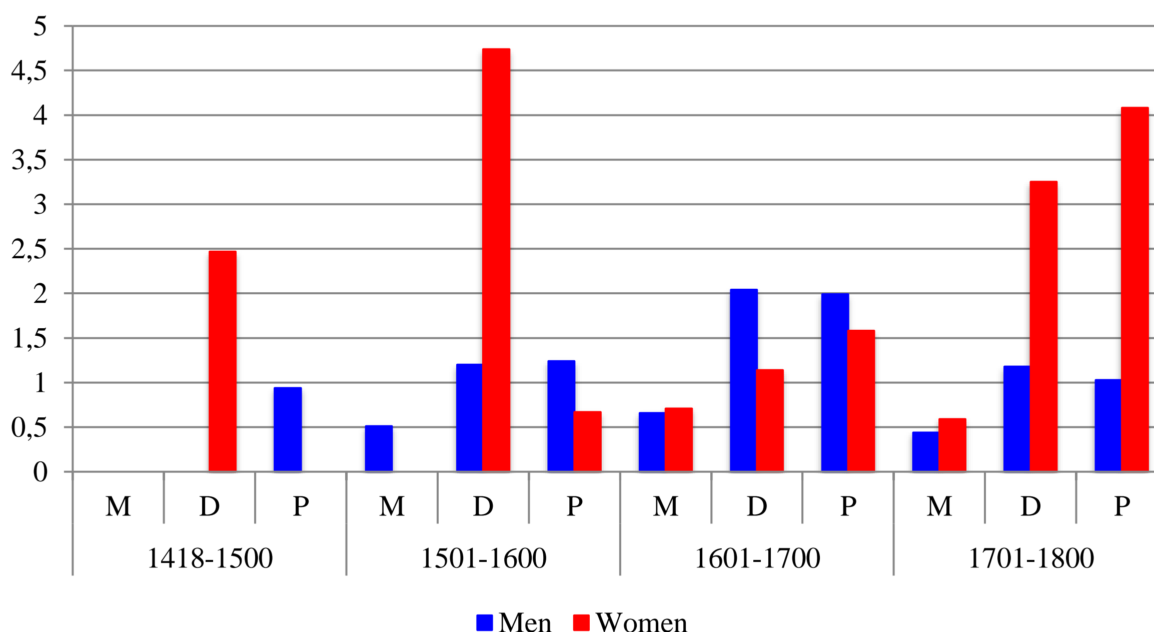

Figure 6.23. Gender variation in the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by noble men and women (n.f.)

On the whole, after analysing the distribution of the linguistic variants for comparison among members of the nobility, one may observe that gender differences are quite noticeable, above all during the eighteenth century. As in the case of royal women, noble women seem to be in the vanguard of the use of the periphrastic form, reaching the highest amount of occurrences in the eighteenth century. Moreover, progressive diffusion of the periphrastic form with

Germanic/native and Romance adjectives is also led by noble women at the expense of the use of the periphrastic form in letters by noble men. However, the change in progress is questioned during the seventeenth century when higher proportions of both comparative variants are attested in noble men's letters, although a sharp decrease follows during the next century. The microscopic analysis carried out indicates that some important figures in the history of England, such as John Holles SR and Thomas Wentworth, are among the main influential informants with higher percentages of the periphrastic comparative variant during the seventeenth century. The same applies to the drastic increase in the use of the periphrastic form during the eighteenth century in letters by noble women: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu along with Sarah Lennox are the major contributors to our data. Thus, as in the case of royal informants, results suggest that there seems to exist a direct correlation between a higher use of the analytic comparative variant and the socio-cultural background of the informant.

6.2.1.3 Gentry

6.2.1.3.a. Inflected and periphrastic comparison

This section deals with the distribution of the comparative variants as deployed in the letters by the gentry. The gentry can be considered as an upper social class whose members made a fortune out of the high amount of properties that they possessed (most of them inherited). They were a very important and wealthy group of people who mainly maintained relationships with members of the nobility and the clergy. Among them we find, sirs, dames, gentlemen, gentlewomen, knights, squires, baronets, etc. Therefore, the landed gentry could live only by rental income and for this reason many of them were involved in the world of business. Normally, gentlemen or gentlewomen did not work their own lands; they did not do manual labour, so they had to hire yeomen or farmers to do so (Mingay, 1976; Heal & Holmes, 1994).

As illustrated in section 5.5.2, the gentry group is the best represented across all the periods in the corpora, and it counts with more letters and hence more running words than the rest of the social ranks (see Table 5.12). Figure 6.24 illustrates the normalised frequencies for the use of both comparative variants in letters by gentry men from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. Unlike royal and noble men, the diffusion and development of both inflected and periphrastic linguistic variants in the production of gentry men is quite even. If we pay particularly attention to the evolution of the periphrastic form, it exhibits a slower initial spread in the fifteenth century but with a more rapid middle stage during the sixteenth century, amounting to a frequency from 0.93 to 3.63, with a subsequent increase in the use of both forms presenting no drops at all. Additionally, it is during the sixteenth century when an overlap

between the use of the inflectional and periphrastic forms is noticed, with frequencies of 3.82 and 3.63 respectively. In fact, the Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a positive correlation showing a strong polynomial relationship for the tendency along time in the use of inflected and periphrastic forms by gentry men (with R close to +1: 0.9824 in periphrastic forms and 0.9726 in inflected ones).

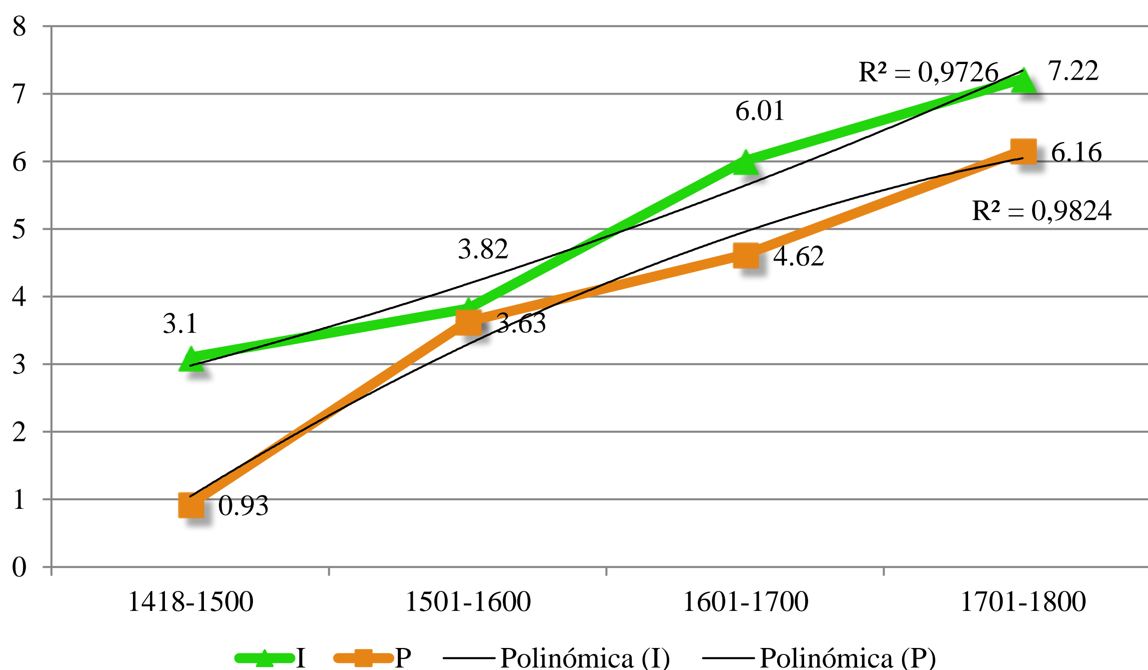

Figure 6.24. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by gentry men (n.f.)

Although royal and noble men also present similar overlaps during the sixteenth century, the social rank of gentry men shows a higher number of occurrences of both linguistic variants. It is from the seventeenth century onwards when both linguistic variants follow different tracks with a lower number of occurrences of the periphrastic form in comparison with the inflectional form. Although the latter outnumbers the former in every century, the rate of change of the periphrastic form increases from one period to another, reaching its peak in the eighteenth century with a frequency of 6.16. The data obtained during the fifteenth century in this study comes from the letters of members from the Paston family, specifically from John Paston I (1421–1466), John Paston II (1442–1479) and John Paston III (1444–1504). They belonged to the upper gentry and their social position is quite remarkable because they were core members in their family, whose social networks, as reconstructed by Bergs (2005: 69–70), show that John Paston I and John Paston III clearly occupied a central position in the family, along with John Paston I's wife, Margaret Paston. Thus, they were at the centre of their networks as

reconstructed by the evidence available from the addressers and addressees of their letters. Moreover, they were involved in a process of upward social mobility, generation after generation. In this sense, John Paston I received higher education, at Trinity Hall and Cambridge and took over the family wealth. Moreover, he became Knight of the Shire (1455) and Member of Parliament for Norfolk (1460–1462). As for his sons, they moved further up the social scale, for example John Paston II performed military services and joined the Court nobility and John Paston III performed duties as deputy of the Earl of Oxford and was knighted after his participation at the battle of Stoke (1487). Thus, they prospered through the course of time to the point that they were described as "an ambitious nouveau riche family striving to leave their humble origins behind as the Wars of the Roses unfold around them" (Castor, 2004: 73). Hence, the results I have obtained for the fifteenth century point to John Paston I as the innovator who presents a higher use of the periphrastic form in comparison with his sons, reaching a percentage of 45% during the first half of the fifteenth century, during his middle-age (between 23-44 years old). In contrasts, his sons, John Paston II and John Paston III show a percentage of 10% and 27% respectively. The sociolinguistic behaviour of the Paston family has been analysed from different perspectives in previous studies. In this case, our results coincide with those obtained by Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy (2013) when they analysed the use of the innovating <th> spelling in the letters of some male members of the family (see Figure 6.25).

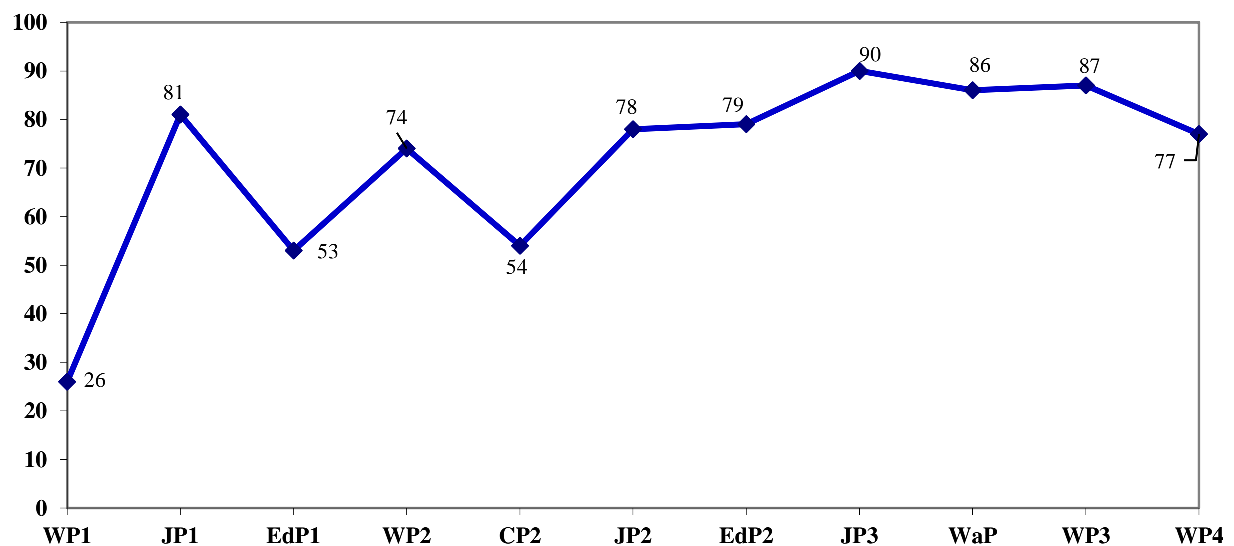

Figure 6.25. Average of the use of the innovating <th> spelling in the letters by male members from the Paston family (Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy, 2013: 293)

The evolution in the use of the innovating spelling <th> in letters by these generations of informants shows that John Paston I was one of the few members who used the new linguistic variant in higher proportions (82%) in contrast with his son, John Paston II (78%). John Paston III (90%) is the only member who shows a higher rate during the third generation. Thus, a comparison of both studies can give us a clue to characterise John Paston I's linguistic behaviour as typical of the "innovators", suggesting that the periphrastic form was more innovative or unconventional. Moreover, Berg's linguistic analysis also confirms this hypothesis (2005: 261).

During the sixteenth century, there is an important forward leap in the use of the periphrastic form, from 0.93 to 3.63. The microscopic observation reveals that the data obtained during this period come from twenty male informants. Among them, Thomas More (1478–1535) and Nathaniel Bacon I (1546–1622), show average percentages of the periphrastic form of 63% and 59% respectively. Although both of them had an important reputation at the time, the Figure of Thomas More was more notorious. Nathaniel Bacon I received higher education at Cambridge and prepared mainly for a life in office. He entered Parliament, possessed and purchased manors on different lands. Moreover, he campaigned against corruption, mainly, in the execution of licenses. He also was in favour of religious austerity, encouraged by his stepmother. Sir Thomas More (see Figure 6.26) was a lawyer, Member of Parliament and writer, who defended the practices of the Catholic Church and supported Thomas Wolsey, Archbishop of York, against the Protestant Reformation. Eventually, he became more influential when he was knighted and proclaimed advisor to King Henry VIII.

Figure 6.26. Thomas More (from http://www.bbc.co.uk)

He is the author of the famous philosophical book *Utopia,* which was aimed at a limited audience (with some sort of degree of formal education) since it was written in Latin, and although Latin was considered a *lingua franca* at the time, few people could hardly read it and write it (Roper, 2007; Ackroyd, 2012). Therefore, we may assume that his ability to read and write in Latin, along with his intellectual career and exposure to the incipient standard norms to fashion in written practices could have led Thomas More to use a higher percentage of periphrastic forms than the rest of the informants.

During the seventeenth century, progress in the use of the periphrastic form is evident, but it is more notorious in the use of inflectional forms, with frequencies of 6.01 and 4.62 respectively. Therefore, the increase is higher in the use of the inflectional variant in the social group as a whole. The data obtained for this period come from forty-nine male informants from the gentry rank. Among them, we find personalities such as Thomas Meautys II, Daniel Fleming, John Evelyn, Christopher Wandesfond or Justiniam Isham. The microscopic analysis suggests that letters from informants during the last part of the century tend to show a higher use of the periphrastic form. Among these informants are Thomas Meautys II (dates of birth and death unknown) (100% of periphrastic forms), and Justiniam Isham (1610–1675) (39% of periphrastic forms), John Evelyn (1620–1706) (51% of periphrastic forms) or Daniel Fleming (1633–1701) (41.3% of periphrastic forms). Not much biographical information has been recorded for Thomas Meautys II, but the rest seem to have had a more influential role as members of the gentry. They were educated at Oxford and Cambridge and were considered relevant figures in the history of England. Justiniam Isham was an English scholar involved in royalist politics, becoming a Member of Parliament and a Member of the Royal Society. He was in close connection with Brian Duppa (1589–1662), an English bishop and adviser to Charles I of England. In fact, most of his letters are addressed to him. John Evelyn was another significant personality, known for his diaries, translations and for being a founder member of the Royal Society; he also participated in the foundation of the East Indian Company and in different public committees. Due to his political and intellectual tasks, he travelled a lot around Europe, becoming a writer and translator. As for Daniel Fleming, he belonged to the upper gentry and was locally influential. Her social mobility is considered upward since he moved from being the Sheriff of Cumberland in 1660 to finally being knighted in 1681 and becoming a Member of Parliament for Cockermouth and Cumberland in 1685–1687. From his letters, we can deduce that he was a supporter of the Church of England but an enemy of the Protestant dissenters.

Results from the eighteenth century show a higher increase in the periphrastic form, although the inflectional form still keeps outnumbering the periphrastic one, moving from 4.62 to 6.16, and showing a lower interval of difference in use between both variables. The data come from fifty-nine male informants, but the vast amount of the tokens collected come from William Pitt (1708–1778) and Edward Gibbon (1737–1794). William Pitt's letters are attested to have been written during his middle age, whereas Edward Gibbon shows a great amount of letters written from the time he was thirteen years old to his fifties. In this way, the chronological progress of both linguistic variants can only be studied from Edward Gibbon's letters. William Pitt shows high rates of the periphrastic form (67%) from 1740 to 1760. In contrast, the higher amount of letters preserved from Edward Gibbon indicate that during the period 1760–1780 he also shows a high number of periphrastic forms (54%) which slightly increases during the period 1781–1800 (56%). If we analyse their biographical profiles, we find out that William Pitt was a more relevant figure in history. He is best known as being the 1st Earl of Chatham and a Prime Minister of Great Britain in the middle of the eighteenth century. Moreover, his role during the Seven Year's War (1756–1763) was especially important since he was the political leader of Britain at the time; as such he is also known for his famous appeal to national greatness and expansionism and therefore for his opposition to chief rivals for colonial power, such as Spain and France. Apart from this, he displayed talented skills of oratory, debating and rhetorics which he cleverly used in his speeches. For these reasons, scholars have considered him among the more intellectual British Prime Ministers (Thomas, 2003; Stragio, Hart & Walter, 2013: 225). Edward Gibbon is known for being a Member of Parliament and considered as the first English historian whose most important work was *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788). He is characterised by the quality of the irony used in his prose and his polemical conversions to Catholicism (1753) and then back to Protestantism during the late 1750s, after his stay in Switzerland. In this country, he published his first book *Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature* (1758) which was entirely written in French and was ignored in England.

In considering the evolution of the inflectional and periphrastic variants in the written practices of gentry women, Figure 6.27 depicts a less uniform distribution than the one obtained in letters by men across periods. According to the results obtained, gentry women's use of the periphrastic and inflected forms are alike during the fifteenth century, but with the same frequency for both forms, 2.14. The data from this period come mainly from the women members of the Paston family, and particularly from Margaret Paston (1420–1484), who exhibits a higher number of tokens of both linguistic variants (52.5% inflected forms and 48%

periphrastic forms). In fact, she is one of the few women in our corpora who makes use of a double comparative: *more saddere* (see section 6.2.3 for a detailed account of this).

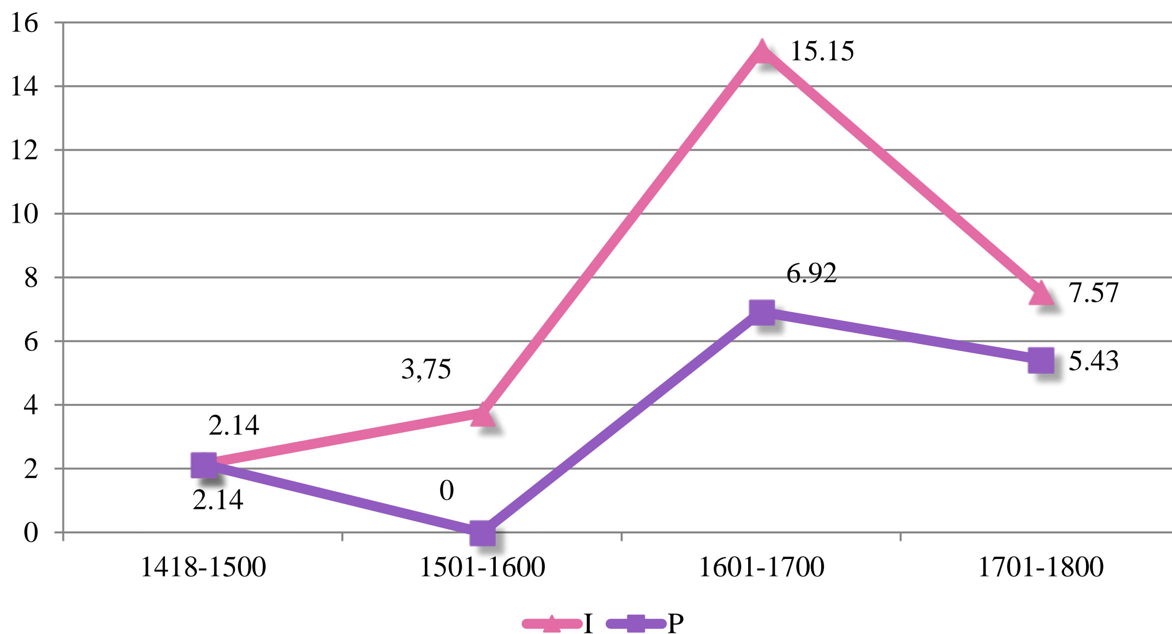

Figure 6.27. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by gentry women (n.f.)

Like her husband, John Paston I, Margaret Paston shows a higher rate in the use of the periphrastic form than the rest of the informants during the fifteenth century. The majority of the letters in the *Paston* collection are attributed to Margaret Paston (107 out of 422). This seemingly denotes that Margaret also occupied a central position in the family along with her husband and that she had considerable influence in the control of her family (see Bergs, 2005: 69; Figure 12). According to Wood, (2007: 53): “Margaret […] takes an active role, or even a lead, in state management and is a shrewd businesswoman and negotiator, pulling in support from dukes and bishops when it suits her purpose”. However, there exists the possibility that Margaret Paston did not write her letters but James Glowys, the family clerk, did it for her, although Bergs (2005: 79–80) and Cutillas-Espinosa and Hernández-Campoy (forthcoming) prove that this would only affect phonological or graphological variables, but not morpho-syntactic variation. Hernández-Campoy (2013) has previously studied the linguistic variables of mood and polarity in the letters of this couple and results suggest that, despite her authoritative administration in managing estate-related business, Margaret Paston seems to have adopted a “mere reporting role” (2013: 24) instead of making decisions. In this way, she clearly reveals her social position typical of medieval England:

> This characterisation as a chronicler, according to Barratt (1992: 12-16), has traditionally been identified as a strategy of submission used by women to attach themselves to a man's authority in order to participate in his activities. As Creelman points out, in adopting this role, she exhibits a "subordinate position as a wife obligated to provide her husband with frequent written reports in governing estate business in his absence" (2004: 112).
>
> (Hernández-Campoy, 2013: 24)

This points to the fact that John Paston I and Margaret Paston could have had influenced each other and hence they show similar sociolinguistic behaviours which might have conditioned the use of certain linguistic patterns.

Due to the lack of representativeness of letters by gentry women in the PCEEC corpus during the sixteenth century (see Table 5.14), only one inflected token was found in the letters of Dorothy Plumpton, amounting to a frequency of 3.75 in inflectional forms. The seventeenth century depicts a high increase in the use of both linguistic variants in comparison to gentry men. The use of the inflectional form (15.15) highly outnumbers the frequency of the periphrastic one (6.92). If we compare the results obtained during this period with those of the gentry men, we clearly observe that there is a considerable rise in the use of the inflected form, amounting to 15.15. As for the periphrastic variant, the results also suggest a higher increase in women than men but less drastic (6.92 among gentry women and 4.62 in gentry men). However, the data obtained from this period come from one single informant, Dorothy Osborne (1627–1695) (see Figure 6.28), who addressed all her letters to her lover William Temple.

Figure 6.28. Dorothy Osborne (from https://en.wikipedia.org)

This may skew the results for this particular period when analysing the social behaviour of gentry women as a group. Although the number of periphrastic tokens found in her letters is rather high with respect to other women (71 tokens out of 228), she shows a higher percentage in the use of the inflectional forms (68.9% and 31.1% respectively). As a woman, she has a high presence in the PCEEC due to the great quantity of letters she wrote during her life. In actual fact, the majority of her letters were written when she was twenty-five years old. She is mainly remembered for the legacy of her letters that have been preserved until today, which portray the image of a girl struggling to marry Sir William Temple against the parental consent of the respective families. They carried a clandestine courtship, which was mainly epistolary in nature. Although their families opposed to their marriage, they finally married in 1654. It is for her letters that Osborne is recognised as a progressive and talented writer at a time of political turmoil. After being under control by her family, she used the medium of correspondence as her private space where she could freely govern all aspects of her life. As her letters were not intended for publication and not even read by any other person but William Temple, the linguistic repertoire used is less formal, resembling a relaxed conversation; in Hintz's words (2005: 49): "[…] Osborne was able to use a less prescriptive, non-linear form to speculate on and probe topics of importance to her – rather like a relaxed but important conversation". In fact, in one of her passages she "wishes to increase her intellectual and linguistic range" making reference to her provincial setting as the main impediment to her linguistic development (Hintz, 2005: 53). In this context, Hintz states that (2005: 40) "[r]ather than shield her letters from the vagaries of shipwreck and fire, Osborne expected Temple to destroy them, ensuring that they did not reach the prying eyes of family and other voyeuristic individuals, although he obviously did not do so". After considering the socio-cultural profile of Osborne's letters and the fact that her letters were only addressed to her future husband, Sir Temple, one can notice that the high rates of inflectional forms confirm that it is these types of intimate contexts that may foster an overuse of the inflected linguistic variable at the expense of the periphrastic one. In this spirit, the results obtained may tentatively support the theory that periphrastic comparison was preferred in more formal contexts.

During the eighteenth century, the graph shows a decline in the use of both linguistic variables, 7.57 for inflectional forms and 5.43 for periphrastic ones. In comparing the results obtained with those in letters by gentry men, one can observe that the use of the periphrastic form is higher in men than women, whereas the use of the inflectional form is higher in women than men. Unlike the previous social groups, the gentry men are outstanding users of the periphrastic form during the eighteenth century. The data we obtained during this period come

from twenty-two gentry women informants. The microscopic obervation indicates that 54.8% of the periphrastic forms during this period come from three main productive women: Ann Clavering (1686–1734), Eliza Pierce (1733–1776) and Hester Piozzi (1741–1821). Little biographical information is known about Ann Clavering (53.1%) and Eliza Pierce (52.6%). The only infomation we have access to come from the metadata in the CEECE: Ann Clavering married Henry Liddel, a leading figure in the coal trade who lived in London and both were productive in writing letters during the first half of the eighteenth century. Also, they were heiress of their families' lands and none of them are reported to have received higher education or have travelled abroad during their lives. However, their use of the periphrastic form outnumbers the inflectional forms. Moreover, when compared with Hester Piozzi (35%), their percentages of the periphrastic form are higher. She travelled around Europe, knew Latin, French and Spanish and showed literary aspirations. She met important literary figures at the time such as Fanny Burney or Samuel Johnson who became her friends. In fact, it is for her correspondence with Samuel Johnson that Hester Piozzi is remembered. Therefore, we suppose that Piozzi could have a great control of the standard language at the time, during the last part of the eighteenth century (1780–1800), which could have influenced her linguistic choices when writing.

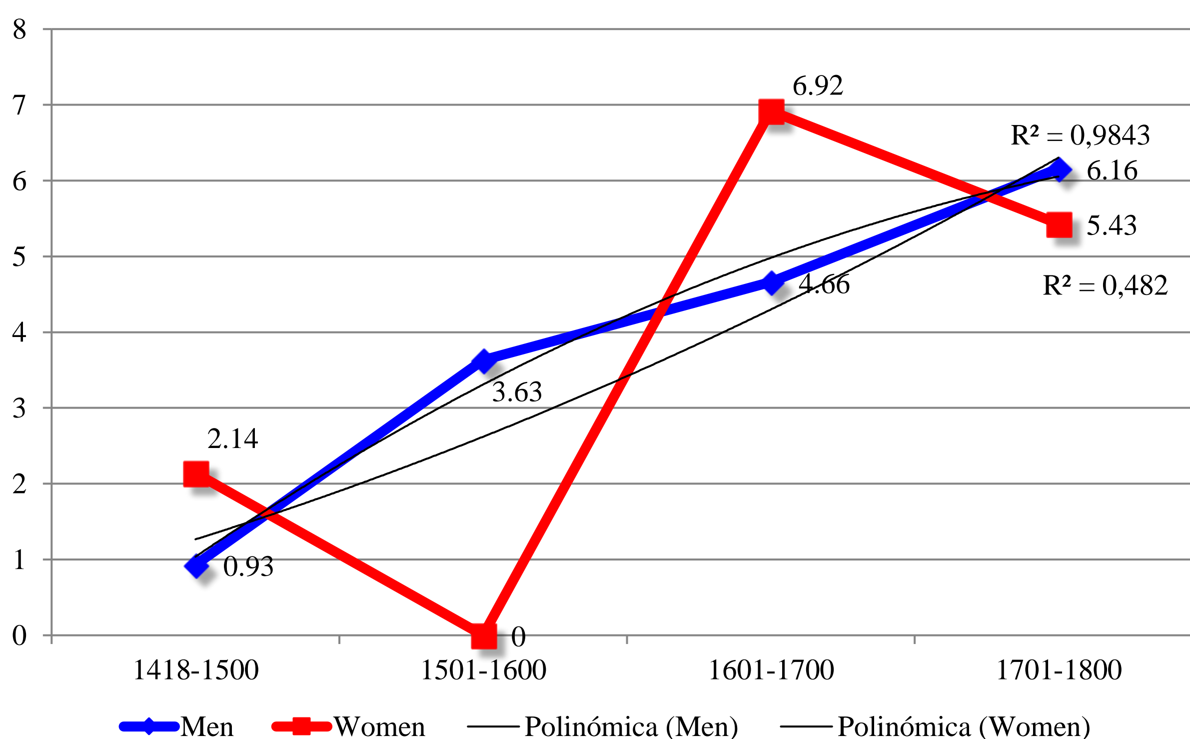

Figure 6.29. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by gentry men and women (n.f.)

On closer scrutiny, one can observe the evolution of the periphrastic form in both gentry men and women in Figure 6.29. As discussed above, results spread more evenly in letters by men than by women. In fact, the Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a strong positive correlation showing a polynomial relationship for the gender-based patterns along time, with R much closer to +1 in men (R= 0.9843) than in women (0.482). An explanation can be invoked from the microscospic observation carried out: we might surmise that this has triggered a more sketchy view on the evolution of the periphrastic form by gentry women. After analysing microscopically female informants across periods, we have detected that the use of these forms are socially-conditioned.

6.2.1.3.b. Comparative forms and etymological origin of the adjective

In this section, a further division of the data is presented so as to analyse the use of the inflectional and periphrastic comparative variants in correlation with adjectives of Germanic/native or Romance origin in the letters by gentry women and men. Table 6.17 offers the distribution of both absolute and normalised frequencies of inflected and periphrastic comparative forms with adjectives of Germanic/native origin across periods in the production of both genders.

Table 6.17. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Germanic/native adjectives in letters by gentry men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Germanic/ native n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	2.79 (#36)	0.46 (#6)	3.67 (#95)	1.66 (#43)	5.12 (#224)	1.09 (#48)	6.05 (#217)	1.25 (#45)
Women	1.88 (#14)	0.80 (#6)	3.75 (#1)	0 (#0)	11.73 (#127)	2.03 (#22)	6.27 (#97)	1.10 (#17)

In general terms, according to Tables 6.17 ad 6.18, regardless of gender distintion, the data shows a preference for the use of the inflectional form correlated with Germanic/native adjectives than with Romance ones ($p<0.01$; $\chi^2=20.8152$; $df=1$). If we delve further into it, we observe that during the fifteenth century, gentry men show a preference for the inflectional form correlated with Germanic/native adjectives and a higher use of periphrastic forms in the letters by gentry women, although these differences are statistically not significant at $p\leq0.05$. Gentry men show the highest frequency of periphrastic forms in Germanic/native adjectives during the sixteenth century (1.66), which corresponds to the time of Sir Thomas More. During the

seventeenth century, the number of occurrences in the use of the periphrastic form diminishes and the inflectional variant increases in gentry men's letters. On the other hand, during this period, the data obtained in letters by gentry women seem skewed. Thus, we can not generalise since it is only based on one female informant, Dorothy Osborne, who uses a great amount of both inflected and periphrastic forms. The use of the inflectional form correlated with Germanic/native adjectives is far higher than the periphrastic form, although results indicate that she is the female across all the periods who makes a higher use of periphrastic comparison with Germanic/native adjectives, reaching 2.03. Yet, the eighteenth century shows a higher use of periphrastic forms by gentry men than women, who also show higher occurrences of the inflectional form. See examples (58) to (64):

(58) The Kingis Highnes is glad that my Lord of Surrey now bygynneth savourely to perceive that the Lordis of Scotland entend but onely to dreve over the tyme of theyre annoyaunce and mych wold his Grace haue bene ***gladder*** that my Lord had savored hit byfore […] (PCEEC, Thomas More to Thomas Wolsey, 1523)

(59) And I thanke our Lorde I knowe no person lyuing that I wolde had one philippe for my sake, of which minde I am ***more gladde*** than of all the worlde beside (PCEEC, Thomas More to Margaret Roper, 1534)

(60) Your dawghter hath her health It seameth good unto my Lord by reason of want of rome here in my brother Windame house that she shold be delivered at Waxam, my brother Woodhouse his house, a place ***more fit*** both in respect of convenience of lodginge […] (PCEEC, Nathaniel Bacon I to Thomas Gresham, 1573)

(61) […] and has recoverd it soe well that you see shee confesses there is nothing in her condition she desyr's to Alter, at the Charge of a wish. shee's ***happyer*** by much then I shall ever bee, but I doe not envy her. (PCEEC, Dorothy Osborne to William Temple, 1627)

(62) I cannot think it deserv's that you should quitt all other Entertainments and leave your self nothing to bee happy in, but that which is an Effect of the absence you complaine of, and that which if wee were but a litle ***more happy***, wee should quickly dispise […] (PCEEC, Dorothy Osborne to William Temple, 1653)

(63) Thursday's Post will be the last that can find me here. how little coud I bear such an interruption of our intercourse, if it was not to change it for one still so much ***more sweet***! to hear from those loved lips the tender sentiments I have read […] (CEECE, William Pitt to Hester Grenville, 1754)

(64) […] this Neighbourhood is so very unlike the Vicinage of London, and the People's Notions of Right and Wrong so much ***more narrow*** as the Phrase is - and so much more Correspondent to my own […] (CEECE, Herster Piozzi to Hester Maria Thrale, 1796)

In Table 6.18, the distribution of inflectional and periphrastic forms of comparison with Romance adjectives is presented.

Table 6.18. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Romance adjectives in letters by gentry men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Romance n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0.31 (#4)	0.46 (#6)	0.15 (#4)	1.97 (#51)	0.91 (#40)	3.57 (#156)	1.17 (#42)	4.90 (#176)
Women	0.26 (#2)	1.34 (#10)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	3.41 (#37)	4.89 (#53)	1.29 (#20)	4.33 (#67)

The data point to a higher preference in the use of the periphrastic form correlated with Romance adjectives in letters by gentry women, although it is only in the seventeenth century when the differences are statistically significant at $p<0.01$. As with Germanic/native adjectives, it is only during the sixteenth century when gentry men show a higher preference for the periphrastic form with Romance adjectives (1.97) to the detriment of the inflectional form (0.15). Again, during the seventeenth century, Dorothy Osborne shows the highest presence of periphrastic forms with Romance adjectives but a lesser amount of inflectional forms. As for men, the use of both linguistic variants increases evenly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whereas gentry women show a decline. See examples (65) to (71):

(65) The Duke hath be more fervently set therevpon, and ***more cruell***, sith þat Wretyl, my lord of Claraunce man, was ther than he was before. (PCEEC, Margaret Paston to John Paston II, 1469)

(66) […] first and chiefly to haue a great reuerens of god and good opinion of godly things, next that ther was no man ***more piteful***, no man more trew of his word, no

man faster to his frend, no man ***diligenter*** nor more circumspect, which thing both the kings his masters notid in him greatly. (PCEEC, Thomas Wyatt SR to Thomas Wyatt Junior, 1537)

(67) […], seeing the sayd Duk not inclynable vnto them, occasion to be a gret dele ***more facile*** to the apoyntmente. (PCEEC, Thomas Wyatt SR to Henry Tudor VIII, 1540)

(68) […] only there is this difference that as all are more forcibly inclined to ill then good, they are much ***apter*** to Exceede in detraction then in praises. (PCEEC, Dorothy Osborne to William Temple, 1654)

(69) Upon my arrival at Turin, I was much disapointed to find Mr Pitt was to set out for England as to day. I saw him however yesterday, and nothing could be ***civiler*** than he was. (CEECE, Edward Gibbon Jr. to Edward Gibon Sr., 1764)

(70) It is making an old lover of mighty little consequence. She is as handsome as every and much ***genteeler*** seems pleased with her fortune rather than proud of it [...] (CEECE, Edward Gibbon Jr. to Edward Gibon Sr., 1765)

(71) [...] but I fancy he has been let to know by some means or other that he is not as great Consequence as he had suppos'd. He was much ***more Civil*** and attentive than I expected. (CEECE, Samuel Crisp to Sophia Gast, 1780)

Figure 6.30 presents the overall distribution of periphrastic forms of adjective in letters by gentry women and men across periods. Results shape a clear progression towards the use of the periphrastic form with Romance adjectives in gentry men, which increases steadily across time. In contrast, from the sixteenth century onwards, the use of periphrastic forms with Germanic/native adjectives starts decreasing but again shows a slight increase during the end of the eighteenth century. As regards gentry women, the use of both linguistic variants shows similar progressions with both Germanic/native and Romance adjectives, although the number of periphrastic forms correlated with Romance adjectives is slightly higher in each period. In fact, the Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a stronger positive correlation with a polynomial relationship in men (R= 0.9994) than women (R= 0.5885) using romance-based adjectives along time, much more than using native adjectives.

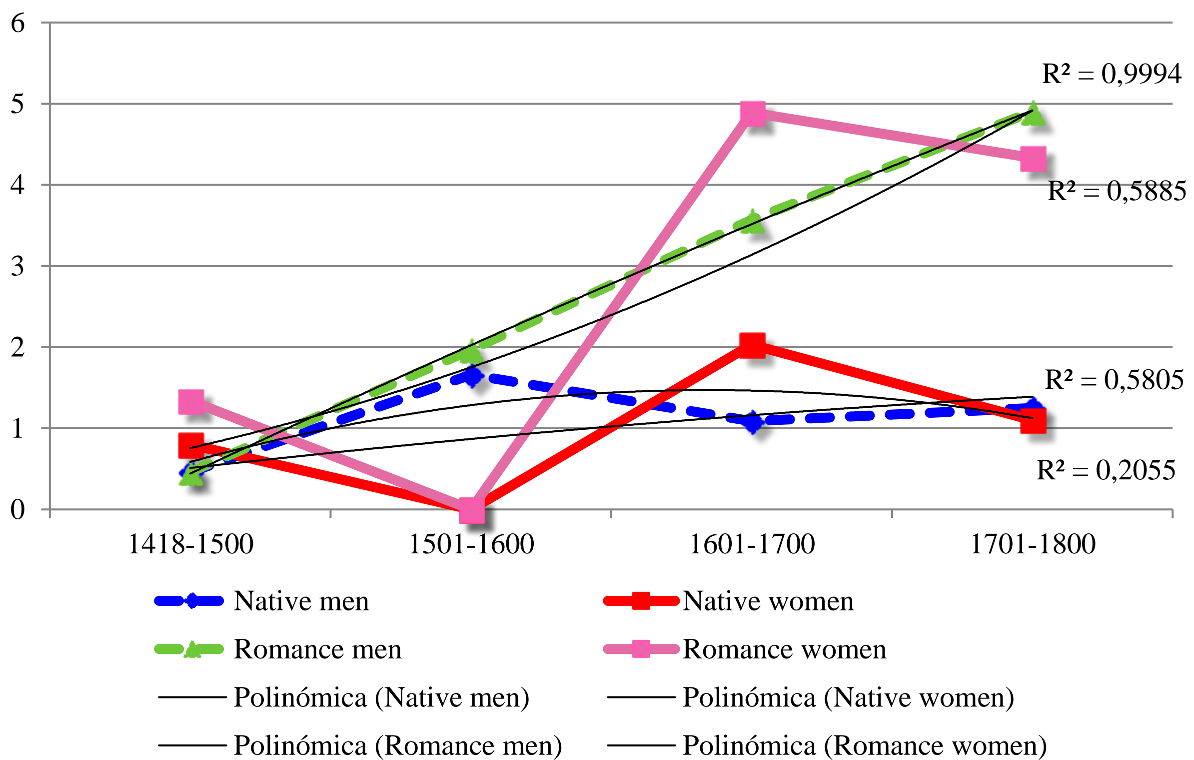

Figure 6.30. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by gentry men and women (n.f.)

6.2.1.3.c. Comparative forms and number of syllables of the adjective

In this section, the distribution of the inflected and periphrastic forms of comparison in the gentry social group is further divided into monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives according to gender across the periods. Table 6.19 and Figure 6.31 display the raw data and normalised frequencies for the distribution of the inflectional form of comparison.

Table 6.19. Distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by gentry men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Inflected n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	2.79 (#36)	0.31 (#4)	0 (#0)	3.71 (#96)	0 (#2)	0 (#1)	5.33 (#233)	0.70 (#31)	0 (#0)	6.41 (#230)	0.80 (#29)	0 (#0)
Women	1.61 (#12)	0.53 (#4)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	3.75 (#1)	0 (#0)	12.47 (#135)	2.67 (#29)	0 (#0)	5.88 (#91)	1.68 (#26)	0 (#0)

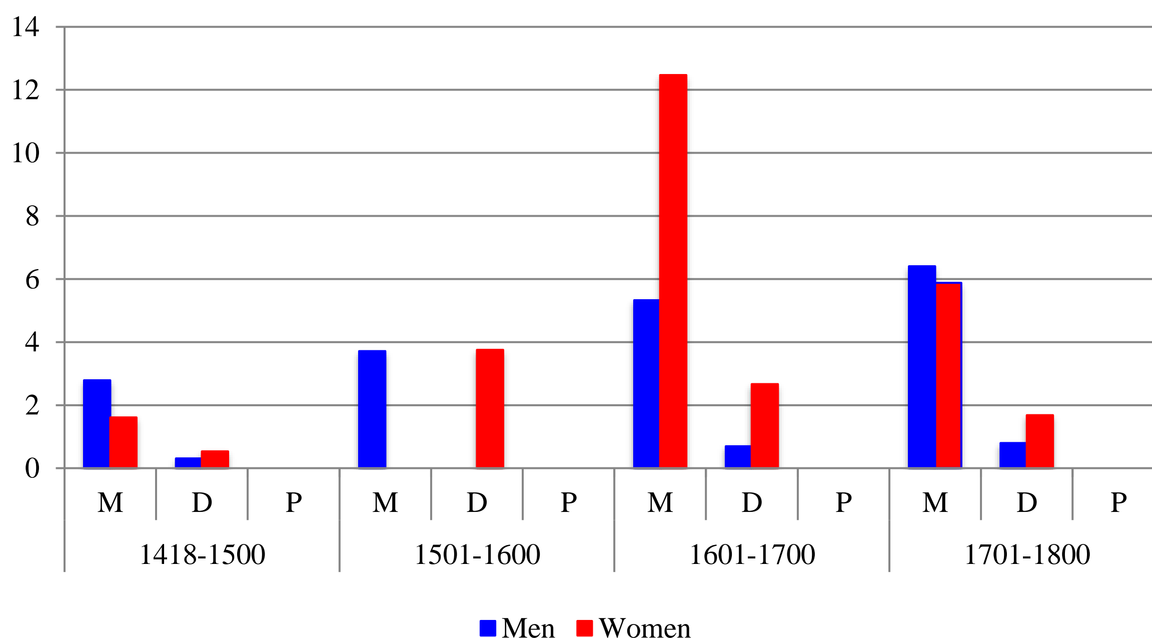

Figure 6.31. Gender variation in the distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by gentry men and women (n.f.)

Generally, inflected forms are more frequent in correlation with monosyllabic adjectives in letters by gentry men, which increase gradually from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. Although the number of occurrences with disyllabic adjectives is quite low, they also show a slight increase in the use of inflections across periods but with no tokens found during the sixteenth century. Unlike gentry men, gentry women show a higher use of inflected forms with disyllabic adjectives, especially during the seventeenth century with frequencies of 12.67 for the inflected forms and 2.67 for the periphrastic ones.

With respect to the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives according to gender in the gentry group, Table 6.20 and Figure 6.32 show the normalised frequencies for each type of adjective. Results suggest an increase in the use of the periphrastic form when correlated with disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by gentry men across periods. The trend with monosyllabic adjectives is quite different: the sixteenth century shows the highest amount of periphrastic forms reaching a normalised frequency of 1.04, which gradually diminishes during the next two centuries. As for gentry women, they show a more frequent correlation between periphrastic forms and monosyllabic adjectives, showing the highest rates in the fifteenth (0.94) and the eighteenth century (0.97). The main concern here is that during the fifteenth century periphrastic forms used to be more

frequent in association with monosyllabic adjectives. The seventeenth century shows a decrease of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic adjectives, but it shows a great upsurge when correlated with disyllabic adjectives, reaching a frequency of 3.14. Finally, during the eighteenth century the distribution seems to be more uniform, showing a preference for periphrastic forms with polysyllabic adjectives, followed by disyllabic and monosyllabic adjectives.

Table 6.20. Distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by gentry men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Periphr. n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0.31 (#4)	0.15 (#2)	0.46 (#6)	1.04 (#27)	1.58 (#41)	1 (#26)	0.43 (#19)	2.03 (#89)	2.19 (#96)	0.39 (#14)	2.14 (#77)	3.62 (#130)
Women	0.94 (#7)	0.53 (#4)	0.67 (#5)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0.83 (#9)	3.14 (#34)	2.95 (#32)	0.97 (#15)	1.74 (#27)	2.71 (#42)

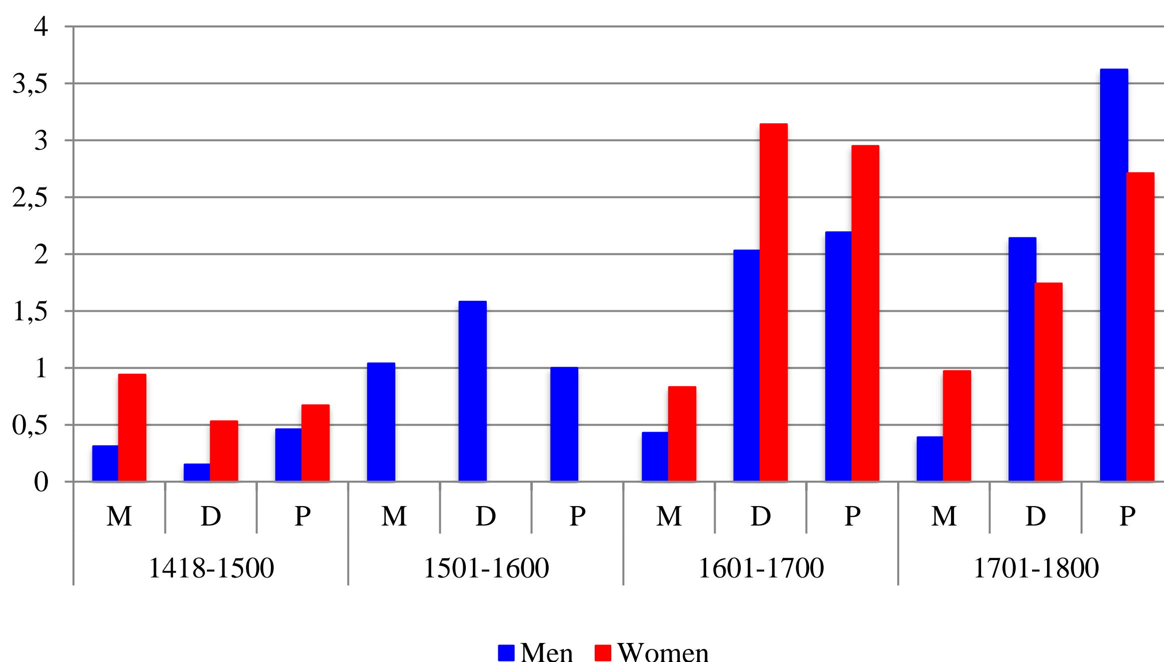

Figure 6.32. Gender variation in the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by gentry men and women (n.f.)

In line with the results obtained in this section, we can conclude by saying that the development of the inflected and periphrastic forms in the gentry social rank is more substantial and uniform in male than female informants. From a chronological perspective, gentry men show an ongoing diffusion of both linguistic variants but also a preference for inflectional forms in each period. It is from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century where the leap towards the use of the periphrastic form is sharper. Moreover, the sixteenth century is also the period when both linguistic forms

shows an overlap in their use. In contrast, the analysis of both linguistic forms in gentry women's letters has revealed that a microscopic observation is crucial when there is a lack of representativeness of the whole social group. The diffusion of both comparative variants shows irregular tracks and curves due to the lack of letters by gentry women during the sixteenth century and the lack of representativeness during the seventeenth century, since the data from this period is based only on the letters by Dorothy Osborne. However, gentry women tend to show a higher preference for the periphrastic form during the fifteenth century. Microscopic observation has confirmed that gentry women who were involved in business life were more prone to use the periphrastic variant and that they were also ahead of men. Moreover, the micro-sociolinguistic analysis has helped interpret the data during the seventeenth century, when a noticeable proliferation of the inflectional form was observed by Osborne in letters to her lover. In this way, the interpretation of the results can be extracted from the informants' sociolinguistic backgrounds.

Particular attention has been paid to the correlations of these findings with the use of Germanic/native and Romance adjectives and with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives for a more detailed account of gender differentiation in the use of both linguistic variants. Gentry men show a more ongoing diffusion in the use of inflectional forms with Germanic/native adjectives, normally associated with monosyllabic adjectives, and the use of periphrastic forms with polysyllabic Romance adjectives. However, results spread more unevenly in letters by female informants; even though the tendency normally favours the use of the periphrastic form to the detriment of the inflectional one, the highest amount of occurrences do not occur in the eighteenth century, but in the seventeenth (the period when Dorothy Osborne lived), when a higher use of them is noticeable in female letters associated mainly with disyllabic adjectives.

6.2.1.4. Clergy

6.2.1.4.a. Inflected and periphrastic comparison

This section explores the distribution of the comparative variants in letters by members of the clergy. People from the clergy belonged to the priestly class. They were involved in ecclesiastical life and matters, and their main goal was to spread the word of God to the population. As they were used to reading and writing in Latin, their linguistic behaviour has been associated to formal registers. In fact, they read the Bible in Latin at mass and in public squares to people. This social rank includes bishops, deacons, priests, abbess, etc. In our corpora, this social group is better represented by male than by female informants, as illustrated

in section 5.5.2. Figure 6.33 reproduces the results obtained from clergy men across periods in normalised frequencies. The Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a positive correlation showing a polynomial relationship with R much closer to +1 in the periphrastic form than in the inflectional form. Males from the clergy tend to show a pattern similar to gentry males in the widespread diffusion of both linguistic variants. Figure 6.33 shows a higher amount of occurrences of the inflectional form over the periphrastic one across centuries but with an overlap in the sixteenth century, similar to the pattern displayed among gentry men. The data from the fifteenth century come from four informants and only one of them makes use of the periphrastic form, with a rate of 0.69. During the sixteenth century, there is a considerable proliferation in the use of the periphrastic form. This period mirrors the competition between both inflected and periphrastic comparative variants since the difference between both is only 0.19 (3.42 for inflected and 3.29 for periphrastic forms).

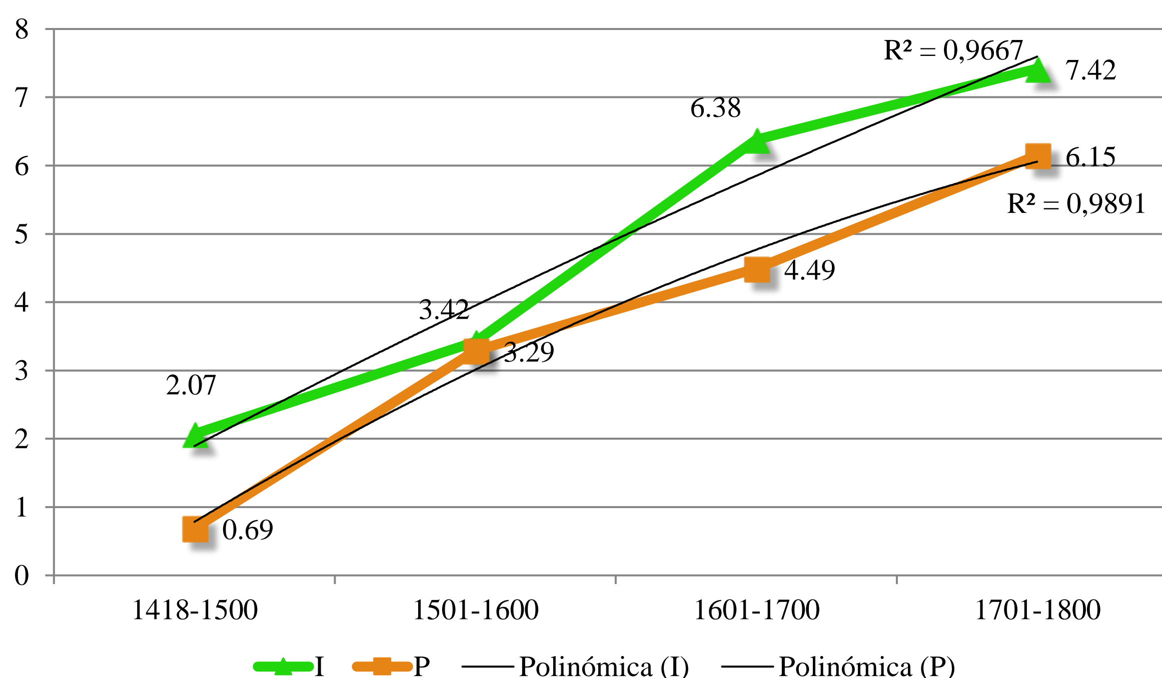

Figure 6.33. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by clergy men (n.f.)

This time, the data come from nineteen clergy men. If we pay attention microscopically, there are some of them who only make use of the periphrastic form, although showing a low amount of tokens. Among the most relevant figures who make a greater use of the periphrastic form we find Richard Verstegan (1550–1640) (71%), William Allen (1532–1594) (67%) and Stephen Gardiner (1482–1555) (51.7%). Verstegan is remembered for being an active member and supporter of the Catholic missions to England. He spent most of his life travelling and is

recognised as well for being a poet and a religious translator. He studied at Christchurch in Oxford but never took a degree. One of his most important works is *Theatrum crudelitatis hæreticorum nostri temporis* (1583) which contains illustrations of some martyrdoms in England, following the idea of Robert Persons, an English Jesuits priest, in *De persecution* (1582) (Pollen, 1912). However, Verstegan was arrested since it was considered that his book was a libel against Queen Elizabeth. Fortunately, Cardinal William Allen exerted some influence for his liberation. Then he became an agent for Cardinal Allen in Rome. From then on, his main job was the publication of Catholic books. The influence of Latin on his language and style was quite predominant and, in fact, he has been recognised as being also ahead of his times. His correspondence allows us to see that he was a very talented man, keen on literary and scientific matters.[3] As mentioned before, William Allen and Richard Verstegan worked together in the diffusion of the word of God in the Continent. Allen was an English Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, educated at the University of Oxford. His main occupation was to set up colleges so as to train English missionary priests to return back to England and keep Catholicism alive there. Under his orders, the Douai-Rheims Bible was translated into English and printed. As he was an active supporter of the Counter Reformation, he advised Pope Pius V (1504–1572) to depose Elizabeth I. After this, Elizabeth strengthened the persecution of Allen. Therefore, his goal in life was to restore Catholicism to his native country, England, from which he had to leave due to political and religious oppression. He even established an English College in Rome where he helped other members revise the Catholic version of the Vulgate Latin Bible – see Ward (1907), Carrafiello (1994), Duffy (1995) and Tarrago (2004) amongst others. Finally, the figure of Stephen Gardiner (1483–1555) has also been of great relevance since, apart from being an English bishop, he was involved in politics during the English Reformation. He was also appointed Lord Chancellor during Queen Mary I's and King Philip's reign. He studied at Cambridge, specialising in Greek and law. He had multifarious skills in legal and administrative affairs and Cardinal Thomas Wolsey made him his secretary. After this, he acquired some knowledge about foreign policies and performed his duties successfully. He travelled to France with Wolsey on a diplomatic mission. During the following years, he took part in some other missions to France and Germany, spending a lot of time abroad. Yet, after the execution of Thomas Cromwell (1540), he went back to England and was elected chancellor of the University of Cambridge (Bates, 2003). Therefore, the socio-cultural

[3] For a detailed account of Richard Verstegan's role in the society of the time see also Arblaster (2004), Ewing (2013) and Polkowski (2016) amongst others.

background of these three male informants seems to indicate that they were worldly and learned men, fluent in different languages, and probably highly conversant in Latin and used to the formal registers associated with this language during the period, which may have probably influenced their linguistic practices in English.

The seventeenth century shows an increase in the case of both linguistic variants, although higher in the use of the inflectional form (6.38). The data come from thirty-one males from the clergy. Among them we find distinguished figures such as, Brian Duppa, Nicholas Ferrar, Thomas Fitzherbert, George Fleming, John Fell or Humphrey Prideaux. Little biographical information about Duppa (1589–1662) is recorded. The main information we know is that he was an English bishop who studied at Oxford and became royalist and advisor to King Charles I of England. In our data, he is one of the clergymen during the period who made a higher use of the inflectional form (68.9%). However, it is during the late part of the century when the use of the periphrastic form seems to be higher in the letters by two main significant figures: John Fell (1625–1686) (63.6%) and Humphrey Prideaux (1648–1724) (70.6%). Both informants are ascribed to the upper clergy social group, since Fell was a Dean of Christ Church during 1660, bishop of Oxford in 1676 and chaplain to Charles II, whereas Prideaux was a lecturer in Hebrew at Oxford University, chaplain to Lord Chancellor Finch (1679), prebendary (1681) and finally Dean of Norwich (1702). Among their most notorious achievements, we find that Fell was a highly disciplined person who possessed talent for education and promoted the development of Oxford University Press. He has also earned distinction for being a Latinist philologist, and under Fell's direction, many classical works were published, including the Bible, the New Testament and some grammar books. John Fell employed Humphrey Prideaux in 1672 to work on an edition of *Florus*. Prideaux also took part on some projects as a linguist and translator correcting many works: among them we find the Book of Common Prayer or the Toleration Act of 1688 (Gordon, 1896). He also was author of important works such as *Life of Mahomet* (1697) or *The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews and Neighbouring Nations* (1715–1717).

The eighteenth century also illustrates a higher use in both comparative variants, but this time the difference with the rate from previous periods is higher as regards the periphrastic form. The number of male informants also doubles those of the previous period, with letters from forty-one males. The ones who present higher number of tokens in the use of the periphrastic form are: Richard Hurd (1720–1808) (63.6%), Francis Blomefield (1705–1752) (72.7%), John Tottie (1705–1774) (100%) or Thomas Twining (1734–1804) (65.8%). Despite the fact that all of them were relevant figures within the clergy and had acquired important titles

as Priest, Rector, Archedeacon or Bishop, they all show similar socio-cultural background. Both Blomefield and Tottie were born in 1705 which means that they were older than Hurd and Twining. Moreover, Hurd and Twining come from merchant and farmer families and hence they represent clear cases of upward mobility in this social layer. In contrast, Tottie and Blomefield were descendants of the gentry and clergy social ranks. This type of background may give us a clue that the higher use of periphrastic forms in the letters by both Blomefield and Tottie could have been socially-conditioned, since it may indicate that the high presence of these periphrastic forms in their letters could be associated with their upper social background.

Regarding females from the clergy, Figure 6.34 illustrates the distribution of normalised frequencies for both linguistic variants. The number of clergy women in our corpora is even lower than that of noble women (see section 5.5.2) which may skew results for this social group. Regardless of the low representation of clergy women in our corpora, the results of the normalised figures suggest a strong preference for the periphrastic form in the fifteenth century, which contrasts with its sharp decline during the sixteenth century. During the seventeenth century the use of the inflectional form keeps outnumbering the periphrastic one, which shows an increase during the last century. This picture does not show a consistent development of both linguistic variants, so a microscopic observation of the data is crucial to interpret the results.

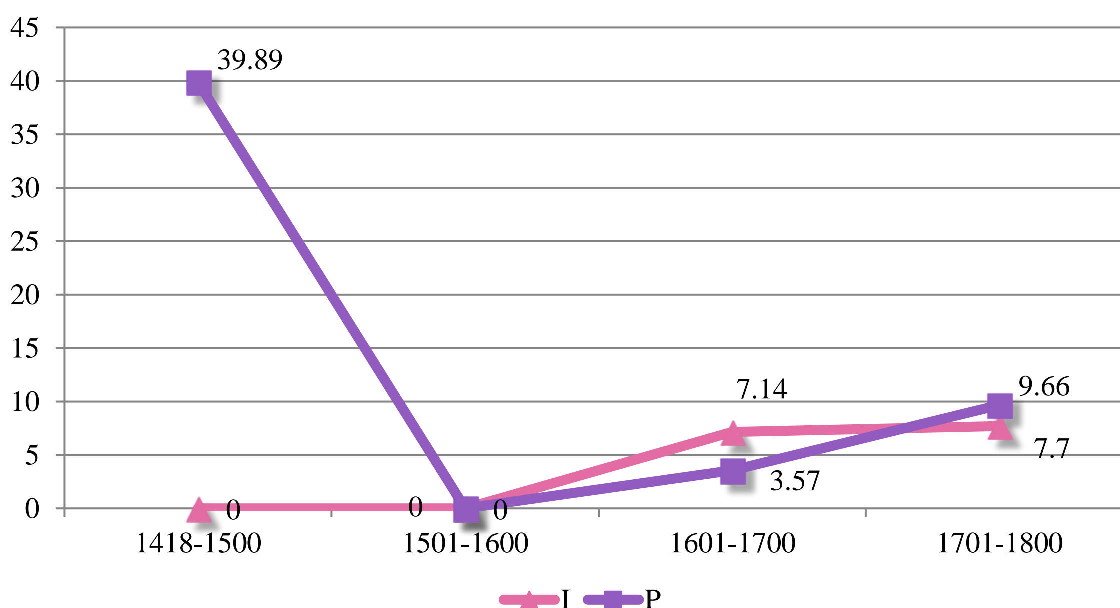

Figure 6.34. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by clergy women (n.f.)

The fifteenth century presents an overwhelming preference for the periphrastic form compared to the results for clergy men, reaching 39.89. The data come from one single informant, Joan

Keteryche (1459–1479), abbess of Denny, who only wrote one letter addressed to John Paston I. In the letter, she tries to persuade John Paston I to assist her since she declares that the house they lived in was in a really bad state. Moreover, Keteryche reminds him of the strict enclosure that nuns were suffering at Denny, which hampered her and other nuns on the world of business. Therefore, it was a plea letter where Keteryche advocates for some sort of freedom since "the cloistered spirituality of the mendicant nuns of Denny was not typical of late medieval English nuns" (Makowski, 2012: 11).[4] However, Davis (2004: 265) tentatively suggests that the letter could have been written by a clerk when he states that: "[t]he misspelling of John Paston's name –which is unique in the whole of the correspondence – and the absence of his Christian name in the address suggest that the clerk, and probably the Abbess, did not know him and would probably not hear of his executorship at once".[5] As we have previously mentioned, it is well-known that during medieval times letters might have been written by chaplains or clerks; nevertheless, as Bergs aptly explains (2005: 79–80), the issue of authorship and scribes would only affect phonological or graphological variables but not morphosyntactic ones. Therefore, considering that neither Joan or the clerk knew the addressee and that, as a matter of fact, the purpose of the letter was persuasive, I believe that a more formal register was employed by the author, which means that her use of periphrastic forms at the expense of inflectional ones could also be connected with formality.

As in the case of the fifteenth century, our corpora only contain the letter of one informant from the sixteenth century (1537). However, her profile does not show any use of the comparative variants. This century also coincides with the period in which the lowest amount of running words in letters by females from the clergy can be drawn from our corpora. The only female informant is Jane Messyndyne (unknown dates of birth and death), a Prioress of the nunnery of Legborne, whose letter is addressed to the founder. On close examination, we may distinguish that, although there is not any token of the comparative linguistic variants, Messyndyne makes use of four periphrastic superlatives and one double form: *more higher* (see section 6.2.3). González-Díaz (2004: 185–186) has previously analysed the use of double forms

[4] The popular decree of Pope Boniface VIII, *Periculoso* (1298), applied the law of enclosure to nuns all over the world. This strict way of living was questioned by academic lawyers at the time and at length, "[c]ompromises between nuns, their diocesan overseers, and popes themselves soon became the norm. Licences to leave cloister precincts on monastic business, for pilgrimages, and reasons of health, among other things, abounded. Indults for outsiders to enter the cloister were granted with such liberality that the restrictions set out in *Periculoso* had little impact on the majority of late medieval English nuns" (Makowski, 2012: 21). Hence, the letter of Joan Keteryche reminds us that the situation in some medieval English monasteries was still very strict.

[5] *Paiston* (or *jentilman Paiston*) is the misspelling form found throughout the letter to refer to Sir John Paston I.

in the CEEC and she determines that, although it is not statistically significant, the use of double forms in the corpus is commonly found among educated and respected speakers. As Messyndyne's letter was also a plea for help to the founder of her nunnery, González-Díaz states that "[t]his makes her missive acquire a more formal, serious overtone that are reminiscent of the elevated styles in which double comparatives were found in Shakespeare" (González-Díaz, 2004: 186). Thus, although the tone of the letter is rather formal, Messyndyne makes no use of periphrastic comparative forms at all.

The seventeenth century sees a higher amount or running words in letters from clergy women. However, the data come mainly from one informant: Winefrid Thimelby (1619–1690), a religious woman who was raised by a catholic family in the context of Protestant England, when mass was celebrated secretly and many Catholics were persecuted and arrested. Due to the banishment of Catholic practices in England, Thimelby left her country at an early age to attend school in Flanders, where she lived for the rest of her life, and became Prioress of her monastery in 1668 (Álvarez Faedo, 2011: 48–49). Probably, her consequent living in other countries of Romance language could have triggered an influence on Thimelby so that she became aware of and familiar with the more prestigious periphrastic form.

During the eighteenth century, an increase in the use of periphrastic forms is particularly noticeable, outnumbering the use of inflectional forms, with frequencies of 9.66 and 7.7 respectively. The data come from seven clergy women, but the majority of the tokens collected come from Elizabeth Carter's (1717–1806) and Jane Austen's letters (1775–1817) (see Figures 6.35 and 6.36).[6] Both informants also show the highest percentages in the use of periphrastic forms; 68.8% in Carter's letters and 48.1% in Austen's letters. The biographical information of these authors reveals that Carter was older than Austen and she wrote her letters between her twenties and her eighties. It is during this last period (1780–1800) when the use of inflectional forms is higher in her written practices than in the previous ones (1738–1780). Both authors were connected with the profession of the clergy because of her fathers' social rank. However, they are remembered for their contributions as writers in the eighteenth century. Elizabeth Carter was a poet, translator, writer and member from the Bluestocking Circle. She earned respect from her several publications, such as the English translation of *Discourses of Epictetus* (1759) and other translations of French and Italian poems. She was given a good classical education by her father (Nicholas Carter) and she became proficient in different Romance

[6] Despite their main labour as writers, these two female authors have been ascribed to the clergy social group following the social categorisation provided by the metadata of the CEECE. Both are ascribed to the lower clergy social rank, probably due to their fathers' work as clergymen.

languages. It is due to her career as a professional translator and writer that she is remembered as one of the most acclaimed figures of the period. Jane Austen was also an English writer, known primarily for her novels, which depict the British gentry and clergy of the time, such as *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) or *Emma* (1816). Little is known about her life but that she attended a boarding school and was also educated within the family. Due to her novels, she has gained wide acclaim in the history of English. Therefore, one can notice again a direct correlation between a higher use of the periphrastic form and the social-background and education of the informants.

Figure 6.35. Elizabeth Carter
(from https://www.britannica.com)

Figure 6.36. Jane Austen
(from https://www.britannica.com)

Figure 6.37 illustrates the evolution of the periphrastic form in letters by both clergy men and clergy women throughout the four periods. As mentioned above, the use of this linguistic variant diffuses more substantially in clergy men than in clergy women due to the lack of representative data from the letters by the latter. The picture shows higher rates during the fifteenth century, which diminish along the centuries. As previously mentioned, during the eighteenth century more women from the clergy are better represented. As in previous social ranks (royalty and nobility), we can appreciate that clergy women also outnumbered the use periphrastic forms by clergy men along the eighteenth century, with a normalised frequency of 9.66.

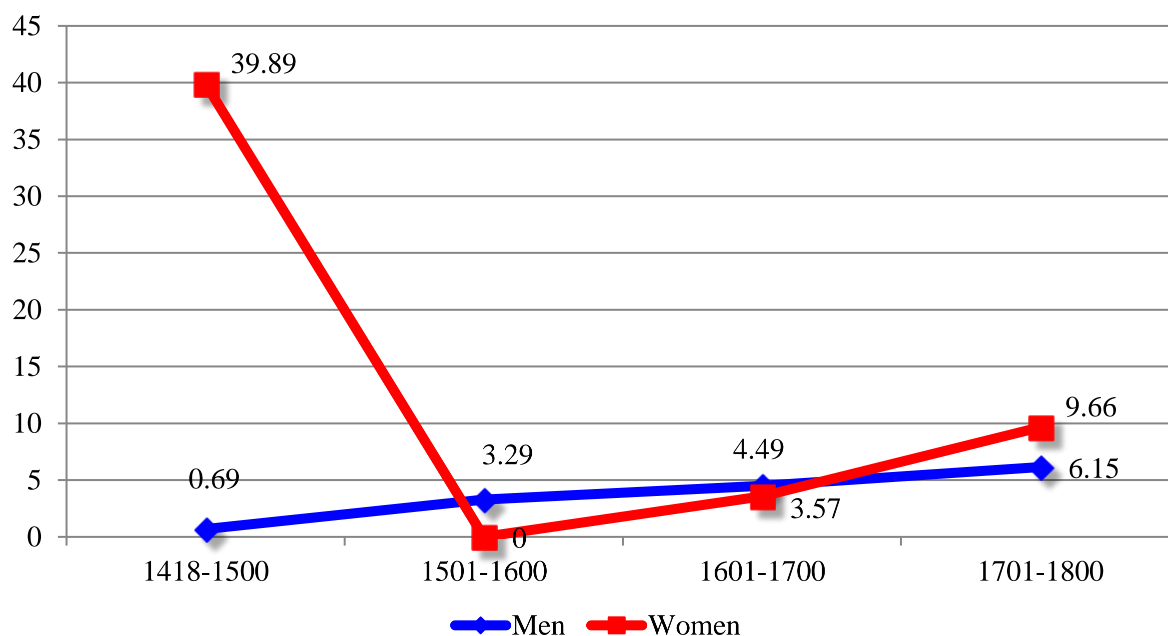

Figure 6.37. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in the letters by men and women from the clergy (n.f.)

6.2.1.4.b. Comparative forms and etymological origin of the adjective

This section explores the use of the inflectional and periphrastic comparative variants in correlation with adjectives of Germanic/native or Romance origin in letters by males and females from the clergy rank. Table 6.21 shows the distribution of both absolute and normalised frequencies of inflected and periphrastic comparative forms with adjectives of Germanic/native origin across periods in letters by both clergy men and clergy women.

Table 6.21. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Germainc/native adjectives in letters by clergy men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Germanic/ native n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	2.07 (#3)	0 (#0)	3.16 (#49)	1.16 (#18)	5.75 (#146)	1.18 (#30)	6.23 (#156)	1.15 (#29)
Women	0 (#0)	13.29 (#1)	16.18 (#1)	0 (#0)	7.14 (#12)	1.19 (#2)	5.57 (#34)	1.31 (#8)

In general terms, the data obtained indicate a higher preference for the use of inflectional forms in correlation with Germanic/native adjectives in letters by clergy men and a subsequent higher preference of periphrastic forms with Germanic/native adjectives in letters by clergy women, with a highest peak during the fifteenth century and a frequency of 13.29. See examples (72) to (82):

(72) [...] but also owre jeuellys, qwyche were ordeynid of owre fyrste fundacoun to araye owre chyrche and to stere vsse and provoke othere to worschipe God and to haue owre benefactoris in ***more fresche*** remembraunz, are now for nede leyde in morgage […] (PCEEC, Joan Keteryche to John Paston I, 1421)

(73) I seme to be here in ocio and I was never ***more buysied***, what with the matiers itself, and what with care lest I doo not well. (PCEEC, Stephen Gardiner to Thomas Cromwell, 1535)

(74) However, know, I am won of the hapiest persons living, though still methingkes I shuld be ***hapior*** diing. (PCEEC, Winefrid Thimelby to Katherine Aston, 1619)

(75) But I cannot say, requiescat in pace. Lets always rite when we can, and have patience when we cannot. so shall we be ***more hapy*** when we meet whonce agen. (PCEEC, Winefrid Thimelby to Katherine Aston, 1650)

(76) Hond deare Brother, Saving my quarill, a thousand thanckes for yr sweet condescendance, in letting me know part of yr, now my afflictions, though, for the first, I am ***more angry*** than sad. (PCEEC, Winefrid Thimelby to Herbet Aston, 1660)

(77) I was by my Brother (who in all respects is ***kinder*** to me than in any wise I was able to expect, so that I am very happy in haveing him here with me) (CEECE, George Fleming to Sir Daniel Fleming, 1688)

(78) […] all Sir that I have to say, is that I hope your other friends will be ***more kind*** to you and not fall short of what may be reasonably expected from them […] (CEECE, George Fleming to Sir Daniel Fleming, 1692)

(79) […] it was the glory of the (^Romans^) to teach the nations they conquered; our forefathers travelled to make their own native country ***more great*** and lovely by comparison.(CEECE, William Steer to Joseph Banks, 1710)

(80) I can hardly suppose that (^your^) curiosity has tempted you to peep into it, as (^mine^), which might well be supposed to be ***more keen*** upon that subject, has not yet even (^tried^) to prevail upon me to buy the book. (CEECE, Thomas Twining to Richard Twining, 1792)

(81) Dear Brother, Your packet found me a ***more busy*** man than I could have wished. (CEECE, Thomas Twining to Richard Twining, 1795)

(82) I went to Deane with my father two days ago to see Mary, who is still plagued with the rheumatism, which she would be very glad to get rid of, and still ***more glad*** to get rid of her child, of whom she is heartily tired. (CEECE, Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 1798)

In Table 6.22, the distribution of inflectional and periphrastic forms of comparison with Romance adjectives is presented.

Table 6.22. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Romance adjectives in letters by clergy men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Romance n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0 (#0)	0.69 (#1)	0.25 (#4)	2.13 (#33)	0.63 (#16)	3.31 (#84)	1.19 (#30)	4.99 (#125)
Women	0 (#0)	26.59 (#2)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	2.38 (#4)	2.13 (#13)	8.35 (#51)

As it can be inferred, the use of periphrastic forms correlated with Romance adjectives seems to be higher in letters by clergy women. It is during the fifteenth century when the use of the periphrastic form appears in correlation with both Germanic/native and Romance adjectives. However, as the use of periphrastic forms increase across periods in clergy men's letters, the use of inflectional forms also shows a slight increase, amounting to 1.19.

Figure 6.38 presents the overall distribution of the use of the periphrastic forms of adjective by both clergy men and clergy women across periods.

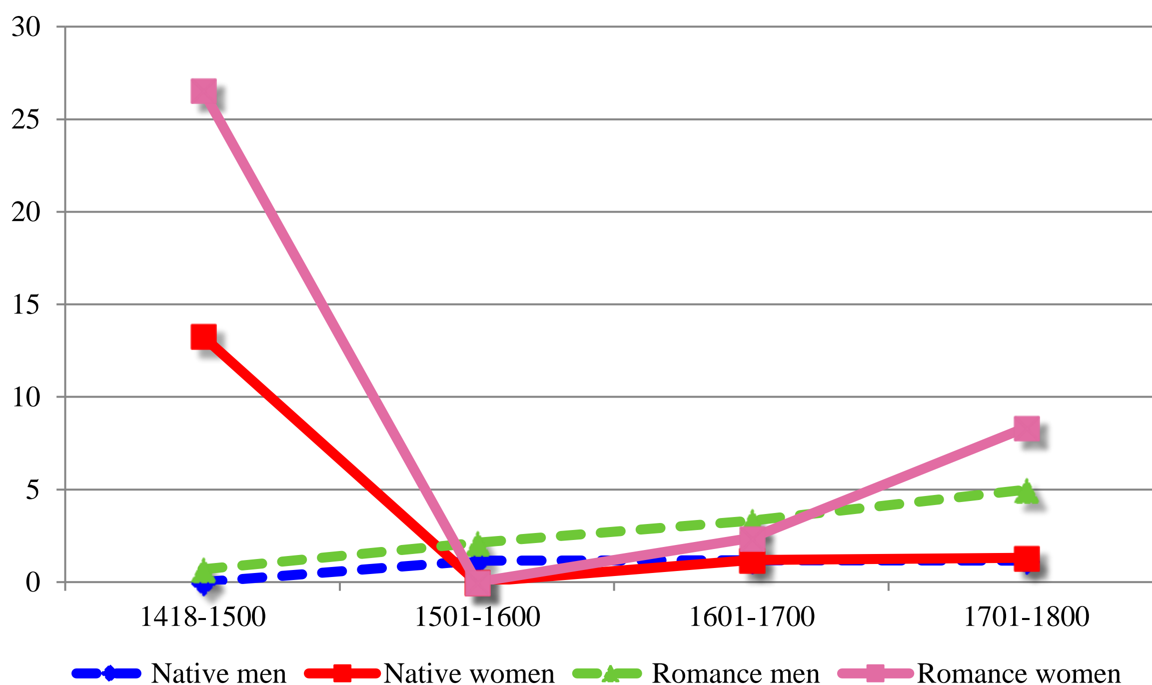

Figure 6.38. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by clergy men and women (n.f.)

Although it is clearly evident that clergy women show a higher use of periphrastic comparative forms in the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries correlated with both Germanic/native and Romance adjectives, it is in the letters by clergy men where a more progressive adaptation of the periphrastic forms with Romance adjectives is portrayed.

6.2.1.4.c. Comparative forms and number of syllables of the adjective

This section assesses the distribution of the inflected and periphrastic forms of comparison in the letters of clergy men and women according to the number of syllables of the adjective (monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic) across the four periods. Table 6.23 and Figure 6.39 offer the raw data and normalised frequencies for the distribution of the inflectional form of comparison.

Table 6.23. Distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by clergy men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Inflected n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	2.07 (#3)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	3.16 (#49)	0.25 (#4)	0 (#0)	5.59 (#142)	0.78 (#20)	0 (#0)	6.27 (#157)	1.15 (#29)	0 (#0)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	16.18 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	6.54 (#11)	0.59 (#1)	0 (#0)	5.89 (#36)	1.80 (#11)	0 (#0)

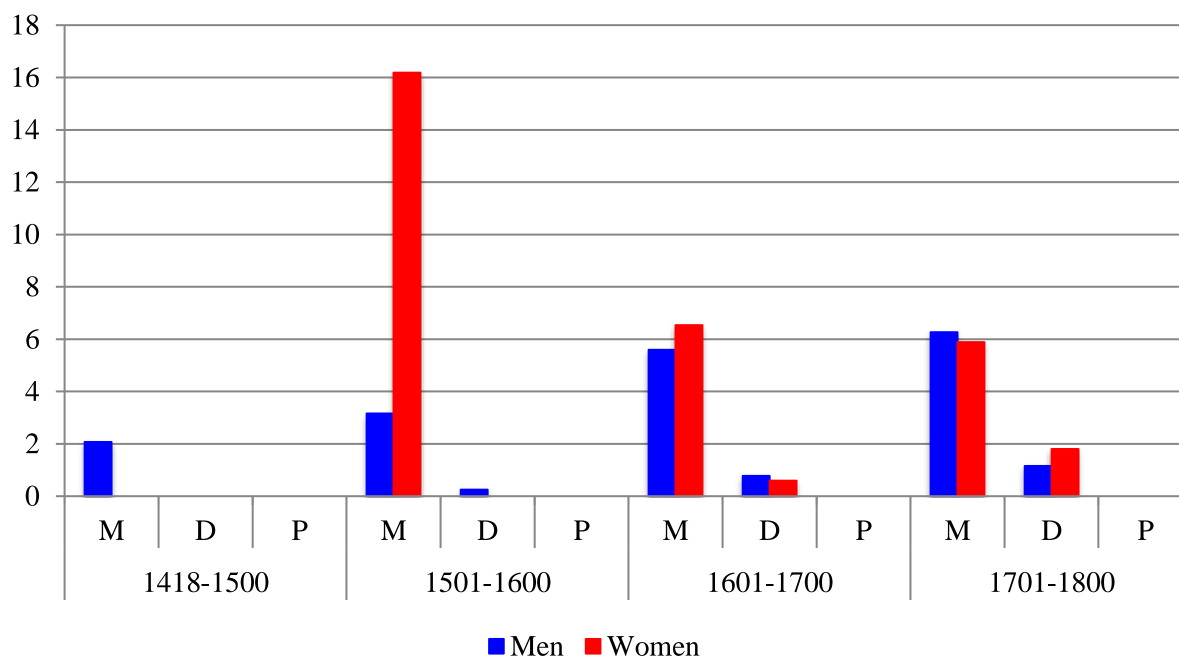

Figure 6.39. Gender variation in the distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by clergy men and women (n.f.)

In general terms we can appreciate a more uniform spread of the inflectional comparative forms in monosyllabic adjectives in letters by clergy men along the four periods, and a presence of inflected forms in disyllabic adjectives from the seventeenth century onwards. In contrast, the distribution in letters by women from the clergy is more distorted: a higher presence of inflectional forms correlated with monosyllabic adjectives is shown during the seventeenth century, which decreases in the next period. However, as in the case of clergy men, the use of inflections with disyllabic adjectives is also noticeable from the seventeenth century onwards, reaching a higher use in the eighteenth century with a frequency of 1.80.

Regarding the distribution of periphrastic forms in monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives according to gender in letters by clergy men and women, Table 6.24 and Figure 6.40 show the normalised frequencies for each type of adjective. The picture drawn from this analysis represents a higher presence of periphrastic forms in disyllabic adjectives from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries in the production of clergy men. It is only during the eighteenth century when an increase in the correlation between periphrastic comparative forms and polysyllabic adjectives is noticed. As for clergy women, again, the picture presented provides us with a distorted image of the phenomenon. However, during the eighteenth century a clearer distribution is appreciated; clergy women show a higher rate of periphrastic forms

than clergy men with the three types of adjectives; the highest figure attested when correlated with polysyllabic adjectives.

Table 6.24. Distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by clergy men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Periphr. n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0.69 (#1)	0.64 (#10)	1.80 (#28)	0.83 (#13)	0.78 (#20)	1.89 (#48)	1.81 (#46)	0.23 (#6)	2.39 (#60)	3.51 (#88)
Women	26.59 (#2)	13.29 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	1.78 (#3)	1.78 (#3)	1.14 (#7)	2.94 (#18)	5.57 (#34)

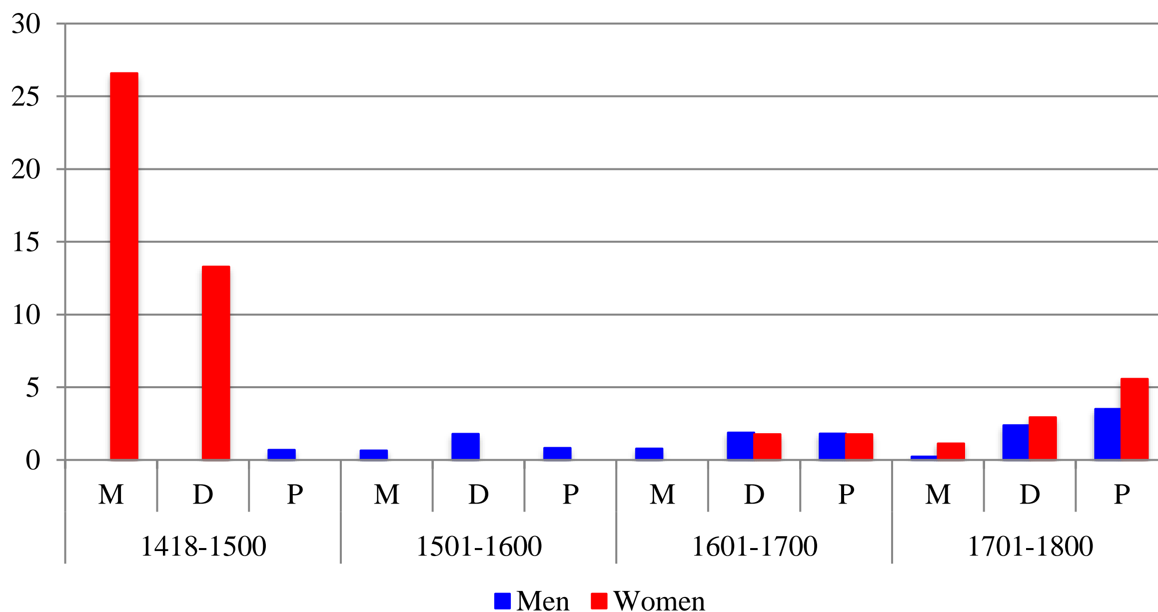

Figure 6.40. Gender variation in the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by clergy men and women (n.f.)

From the results obtained in the previous analyses of the comparative strategy used in letters by clergy men and women, it follows that the former show a steadier spread in the use of the periphrastic form across centuries, mainly preferred with polysyllabic adjectives of Romance origin. In the case of clergy women, results have presented a distorted image due to their lack of representativeness in our corpora from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Despite this general assumption, and according to the normalised frequencies obtained, we have noticed that the individual linguistic behaviour of our female informants reveals that clergy women would have been early adopters of the periphrastic form, which shows the highest rates during the eighteenth century. Moreover, this form combines with both Germanic/native and Romance adjectives during the fifteenth century and decreases in Germanic/native adjectives during the

eighteenth century. This may mirror an ongoing adaptation of the comparative formation patterns to English standardisation processes.

6.2.1.5. Professionals

6.2.1.5.a. Inflected and periphrastic comparison

This section investigates the distribution of the linguistic comparative variants in letters by members of the professional group. As mentioned in section 5.5.2, the group of professionals includes all sorts of people who represent the middle section of society with a distinguished profession, such as medical, secretaries, lawyers, writers, teachers, army officers or government officials (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2013: 33). Upward social mobility spread among people who belonged to this social layer:

> One of the signs of upward mobility was the self-identification as gentleman that occurred among middle-ranking people. With time, the titles of the lower gentry, Master and Mistress, spread among the professionals and wealthy merchants
>
> (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2013: 33)

Thus, paths open to upward social mobility via professions were possible, above all from the 1640s onwards. As in the case of the clergy, the professional men in our corpora are better represented than professional women at the time, mainly due to the constraints on education that most women underwent and the limitations to develop a professional career. Figure 6.41 reproduces the results in normalised frequencies obtained from letters by professional men across periods. The Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a positive correlation showing a polynomial relationship with R much closer to +1 in the periphrastic form than in the inflectional form. Unlike the gentry men and the clergy men, professional men show some differences in the diffusion of both linguistic variants. This time, the overlap between the inflectional and periphrastic forms is found once century later, that is, during the seventeenth century, with frequencies of 4.56 for inflectional forms and 4.47 for periphrastic ones. Another considerable difference is that the professional social rank shows the lowest amount of periphrastic forms for adjective comparison during the fifteenth century, just 0.65. The data we obtained from the fifteenth century come from seven professional men. Among them, Richard Calle (bailiff), Richard Page (lawyer) and "Henry V Signet" (clerk) show the highest percentages of the periphrastic form: 67%, 100% and 33.3%, respectively. Very little biographical information is known about Richard Page and "Henry V Signet".

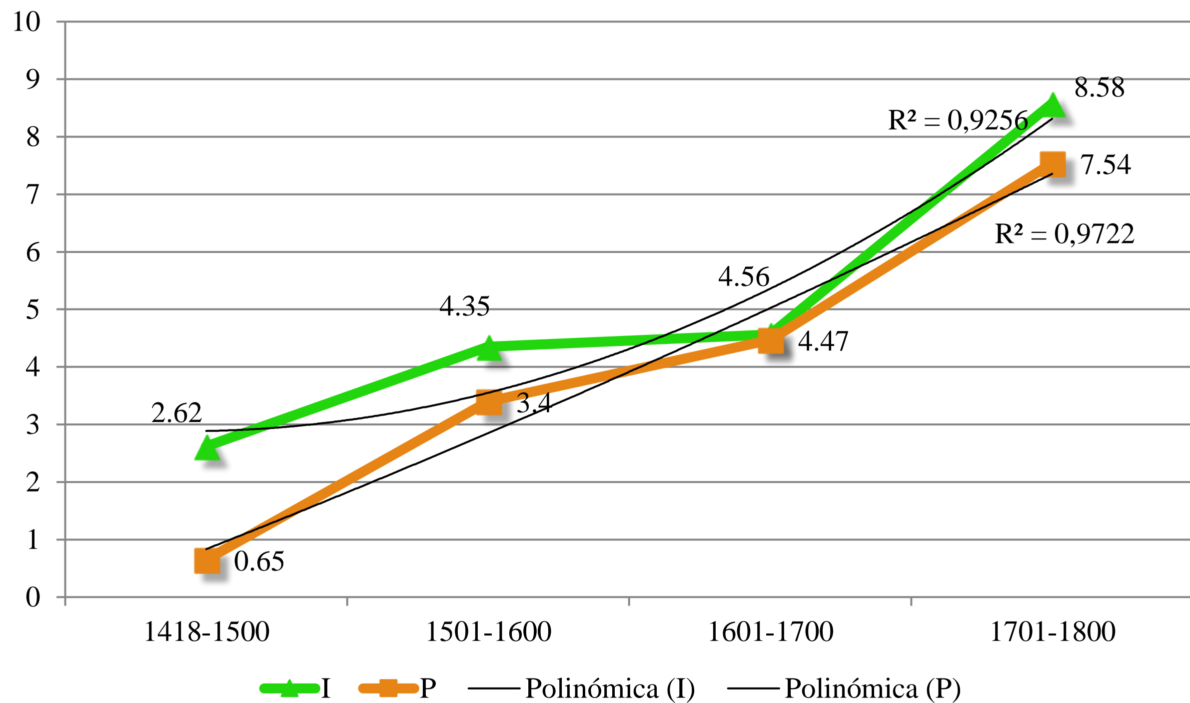

Figure 6.41. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by professional men (n.f.)

However, Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy (2004) found in their analysis of social class and diffusion of chancery spellings that, among the informants analysed, Richard Page showed higher percentages of linguistic spelling forms related to the incipient Chancery norms (around 80%), which means that as a lawyer, he could have been aware of these uniformed practices and probably was trained in the use of them, during the development of his legal profession in London. In addition, as Risannen points out, the legal texts of this period contributed to the process of standardisation which could have had a great impact on other written genres (2000: 121). Thus, our results for Richard Page show a similar linguistic behaviour in the use of the more prestigious variant of comparison in English: the periphrastic one.

As for Richard Calle, it is known that he was the bailiff of the Paston family, who was in charge of the management of the family's finances and maintained a secret romance with Margery, the daughter of John Paston I and Margaret Paston. As Bergs states (2005: 64): "[w]hen her daughter proclaimed her intention to marry Richard Calle […] Margaret seems to have been infuriated but failed to prevent the marriage. Rumor has it that she eventually forgave Calle, since he was a very good steward, but not her own daughter". For gentry families, marriages were mainly regarded as a strategy to gain land and status, and thus the marriage of Margery to Richard was not welcome in the family. However, as Calle had aspirations and

capacity to run their finances (skills that the family did not possess) they soon realised that they could not do without him. As a consequence, Margery and Calle finally got married, which entailed the upward social mobility of Richard after getting married with a gentry woman.

During the sixteenth century, a sharp increase in the use of the periphrastic forms is noticed, although the inflectional form still prevails as the preferred one for adjective comparison. The data come from eleven professional men. The great majority of them make use of the periphrastic form, but it is Lodowick Bryskett (1545–1612) the one who shows a higher amount of tokens, reaching a percentage of 58%. It is from his letters that we know the sociolinguistic profile and life of Bryskett. Although he was sent to Kent and Cambridge to study, he did not obtain a degree. In 1565, he travelled to Ireland, the country he would be associated with for the rest of his life. He was in close relation with Sir Henry Sidney, lord deputy of Ireland at the time, who sent Bryskett on business to Italy. In 1575, Sidney was appointed lord deputy of Ireland for the third time and obtained a grant from the Queen to Bryskett to work as an official clerk to the Privy Council. He became intimate friend of Philip Sidney (Henry Sidney's son) with whom he travelled on a continental tour during three years to countries such as Italy, Germany or Poland. Afterwards, he became the secretary of the Munster council. Although much of his business life is related to secretary services, Bryskett is also known for his literary works, such as the translation of *Baptista Giraldo*, which he published as *A Discourse of Civil Life, Containing the Ethike Part of Morall Philosophie* (1606) (Plomer & Cross, 1927).

During the seventeenth century, both linguistic variants follow similar tracks to the point that their use represents an overlap with frequencies of 4.56 for inflectional forms and 4.47 for periphrastic ones. The data obtained come from twenty-seven professional men and the majority of them show a high use of periphrastic forms in their letters. Among them, the ones who show higher amounts of tokens are Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), Balthasar St. Michel (unknown dates of birth and death) and John Jones (1597–1660). Although the three of them make a high use of the periphrastic form, it is Balthasar St. Michel (53.3%) and John Jones (73.8%) the ones who show higher percentages in comparison with Samuel Pepys (41.5%). Among the three of them, it is John Jones who could have established more extensive social networks, addressing his letters to relatives, members from the nobility, royalty, gentry and also to his equals and other common people. John Jones is remembered as a Colonel who served in the Parliamentarian forces in Wales during the English Civil War. After the end of the war, he became a judge of King Charles I. According to Dodd (1959), John had a good education and legal training and was also competent in Latin. Hence, a direct correlation between a higher use

of the periphrastic form and more extensive social networks along with formal education can also be perceived in the case of John Jones.

The course of the eighteenth century presents an overwhelming increase in the use of both linguistic variants in comparison with the previous century, with frequencies of 8.58 for inflectional forms and 7.54 for periphrastic ones. This means that during the eighteenth century, the social group of professional men presents the highest rates in the use of both linguistic variants over the rest of the social ranks. The data come from fifty professional men, and among them we find relevant figures such as Alexander Pope, Daniel Defoe, William Clift, Charles Burney, William Cowper and Erasmus Darwin. The higher numbers of tokens come from Daniel Defoe (1660–1731), William Cowper (1731–1800) and Charles Burney (1726–1814), presenting 61.8%, 48.4% and 45.5% of periphrastic forms respectively. The last two show more extensive social networks than Daniel Defoe. However, Defoe shows the highest percentages in the use of the periphrastic form. The three of them are relatively famous for their notorious occupation: they became admirable writers at the time whose works are appreciated in the history of English literature and of the English language. Among these three, Daniel Defoe is the oldest, and according to their sociolinguistic profiles, he is the only one who toured elsewhere in Europe, travelling extensively in France, Italy and Spain. Therefore, his social mobility seems to be greater than the rest. Moreover, he published around 250 works, including *Robison Crusoe* (1719), *Moll Flanders* (1722) or *Roxanna* (1724) and he is also considered the father of English journalism.

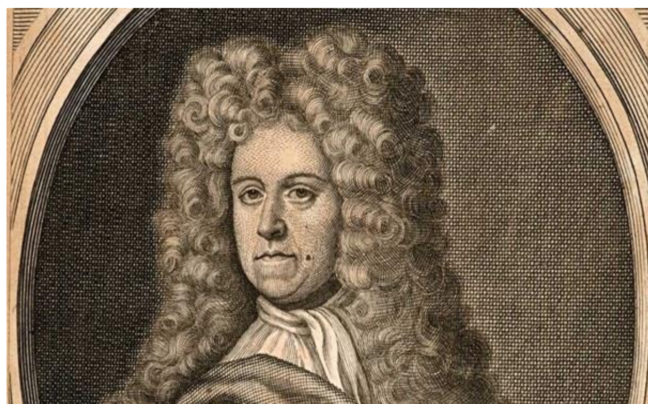

Figure 6.42. Daniel Defoe (from https://www.bl.uk)

With respect to professional women, the picture obtained provides us with a distorted image of the evolution of adjective comparison due to their lack of representativeness between the fifteenth century and the seventeenth. As seen in Figure 6.43, the presence of professional

women in our corpora starts in the seventeenth century. However, our data show that only one professional woman, Jane Pinney (1646–1694), from the period 1601–1700 used the linguistic variants under study, but only the inflectional form, with a rate of 2.62. It is during the eighteenth century when professional women are more extensively represented in our corpora. The data obtained come from eleven female informants and results clearly show a higher preference for the periphrastic form over the inflectional one, amounting to 8.08. It is from the 1740s onwards when the presence of professional women is more frequent. The most notorious ones are Elizabeth Draper (1744–1778), Fanny Burney (1752–1840) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797). All of them make a higher use of periphrastic forms: Burney 59.4%, Draper 53.1% and Wollstonecraft 63.8%.

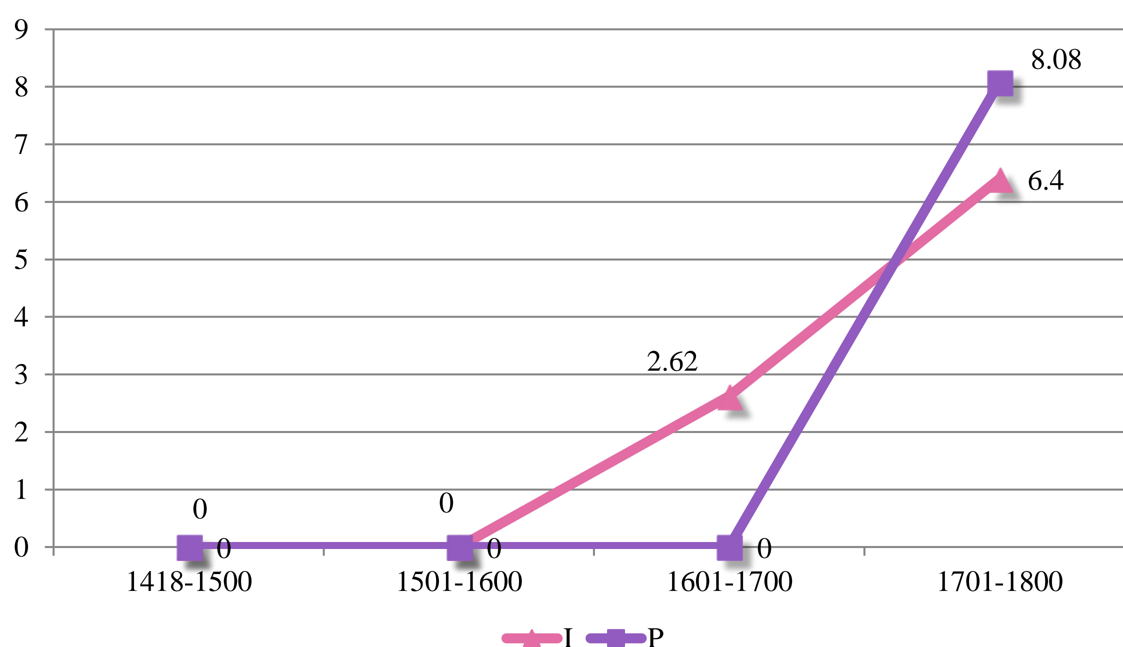

Figure 6.43. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by professional women (n.f.)

As regards their sociolinguistic profiles, the only one who shows upward social mobility is Draper, the oldest of the three female informants, who was born in a merchant family. In contrast, Wollstonecraft represents downward social mobility since her family fortune declined steadily. However, during this state of turmoil, she was employed as a teacher and some years later opened a school for girls along with her sisters. She learnt by herself other languages such as French, Dutch, Italian or German and became a specialised writer for the *Analytical Review*. She also travelled around Europe, to countries such as France, Ireland or even Scandinavia. Moreover, the target audience of her letters is quite varied which coincides with Draper's more

extensive social networks. As for Burney, she does not represent social mobility since she came from a family whose members can also be ranked as professionals. She was educated at home and taught herself Romance languages such as French and Italian. Thus, what seems to be common among these female informants making higher uses of the periphrastic variant is the upper social rank of their families and their extensive social networks.

On closer examination, Figure 6.44 represents the diffusion of the periphrastic form in letters by both professional men and women. As it is clearly seen, male informants make a progressive use of the periphrastic form across periods. In fact, the Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a stronger positive and more consistent correlation with a polynomial gender-based relationship in professional men (R= 0.9722) than in professional women (R= 0.9333) using periphrastic forms along time. However, it is during the eighteenth century when their rates are slightly outnumbered by professional female informants (8.08 versus 7.54).

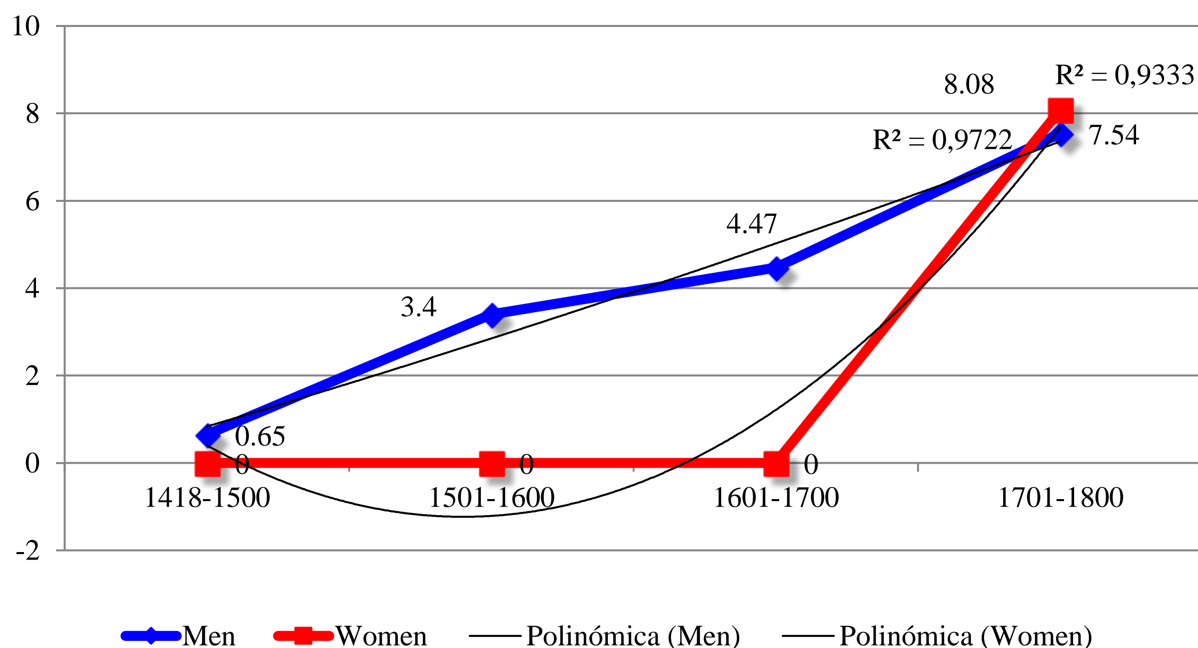

Figure 6.44. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by professional men and women (n.f.)

6.2.1.5.b. Comparative forms and etymological origin of the adjective

In this section, a further division of the data is presented so as to analyse the inflectional and periphrastic comparative variants in correlation with the origin of the adjectives, either Germanic/native or Romance, in the letters by professional women and men. Table 6.25 represents the distribution of both absolute and normalised frequencies of inflected and

periphrastic comparative forms with adjectives of a Germanic/native origin across the four periods in both professional genders.

Table 6.25. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Germanic/native adjectives in letters by professional men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Germanic/ native n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	2.49 (#16)	0 (#0)	4.16 (#22)	1.89 (#10)	3.72 (#84)	0.93 (#21)	7.39 (#298)	1.26 (#51)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	2.62 (#1)	0 (#0)	4.95 (#65)	0.91 (#12)

It is during the sixteenth century when higher proportions of periphrastic forms with Germanic/native adjectives are attested in the linguistic repertoire of professional men (1.89). In contrast, during the eighteenth century, professional women show a relatively low frequency of periphrastic forms correlated with Germanic/native adjectives (0.91). See examples (83) to (87):

(83) […] there is more drink spent in a day in hir house, then taking out the tappe of a vessell and letting it ronne still till it be ronne out and so out of one vessell after an other all the day long I say ***more dronke*** in a day then can ronne out. (PCEEC, William Paget to James Bassett, 1526)

(84) I shalbe forced make a jorney over to hym with your letter for the ***more spedy*** dispatche of Walsingham mens buysynes. (PCEEC, John Baker to Nathaniel Bacon I, 1579)

(85) […] and by the assistance of his Irish, British, and other Confederats in Ireland, utterly to destroy the English Inhabitants, and make the period of the English Interest in Ireland ***more bloody*** than the beginning of the late horrid Rebellion. (PCEEC, John Jones to Hardresss Waller, 1659)

(86) Good god Doctor where did you learn that I was grown quite grave. Its true Marriage has made me a little ***more steady*** than I was before, but grave I never shall be till I am the mother of a dozen children. (CEECE, Mary Rawson Hart Boddam to Thomas Pickering, 1760)

(87) I was ***more sorry*** for the awkward appearance to Mrs. M: than surprised at the awkward feel which made you relinquish the visit upon second thoughts. (CEECE, Fanny Burney to Mrs. Francis, 1794)

In Table 6.26, the distribution of inflectional and periphrastic forms of comparison with Romance adjectives is presented. As it is shown, the periphrastic form is progressively adopted with Romance adjectives in male's letters across the periods.

Table 6.26. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Romance adjectives in letters by professional men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Romance n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0.52 (#4)	0.65 (#5)	0.18 (#1)	1.51 (#8)	0.84 (#19)	3.54 (#80)	1.19 (#48)	6.27 (#253)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	1.44 (#19)	7.16 (#94)

The lowest amount of inflectional forms is attested in the sixteenth century, when the periphrastic form was more frequent when correlated with Germanic/native adjectives. Regarding women's letters, they make a higher use of periphrastic forms in connection with Romance adjectives during the eighteenth century. See examples (88) to (92):

(88) I might henceforth have to be considered for my painefull service that I determine to geve over the toyle thereof, and to betake myself to a ***quieter*** kynde of lyfe. (PCEEC, Lodowick Bryskett to Francis Walsingham, 1581)

(89) I have begon to wayne my self from that desyre, and to frame my self wholy to a ***more quyett*** kynde of lyfe with a resolute determinacion to content my self with whatsoever state it pleaseth God to call me vnto […] (PCEEC, Lodowick Bryskett to Francis Walsingham, 1582)

(90) I am free from the cough but only in the morninge a quarter of an howre. I am ***fayntер*** weaker then ever but with no payne. (PCEEC, John Hoskyns I to Benedicta Hoskyns, 1618)

(91) I have better advice upon it, which I hope to have against the new post, wishing onely that I had some ***plainer*** Characters given me of him, as to his quality, and manner of liveing […] (PCEEC, Samuel Pepys to Balthasar St. Michel, 1679)

(92) […] he professes to neglect the Greek Writers, who could have given him more Instruction on the very Heads he professes to treat, than all he others put together who does not know, that upon the Latine, the Sabine, & Hetruscan Mythology (which probably might themselves at a ***remoter*** Period of Time owe their Origin to Greece too) the Romans ingrafted almost the whole Religion of Greece to make what is call'd their own? (CEECE, Thomas Gray to Horace Walpole, 1747)

In Figure 6.45, we can observe how the periphrastic form fluctuates in both genders across centuries. The figure depicts a progressive adaption of Romance adjectives with periphrastic forms in male informants (R= 0.9994 in Pearson coefficient test), and a decline of them in the seventeenth century. On the contrary, the adaption of the periphrastic form to Germanic/native or Romance environments in professional women's letters is harder to justify, since it is only in the eighteenth century when they are properly represented, and hence more occurrences are found. Considering the eighteenth century, we may observe a stronger preference for the periphrastic forms in connection with Romance adjectives than with Germanic/native adjectives by both genders; this preference is even higher in female's letters.

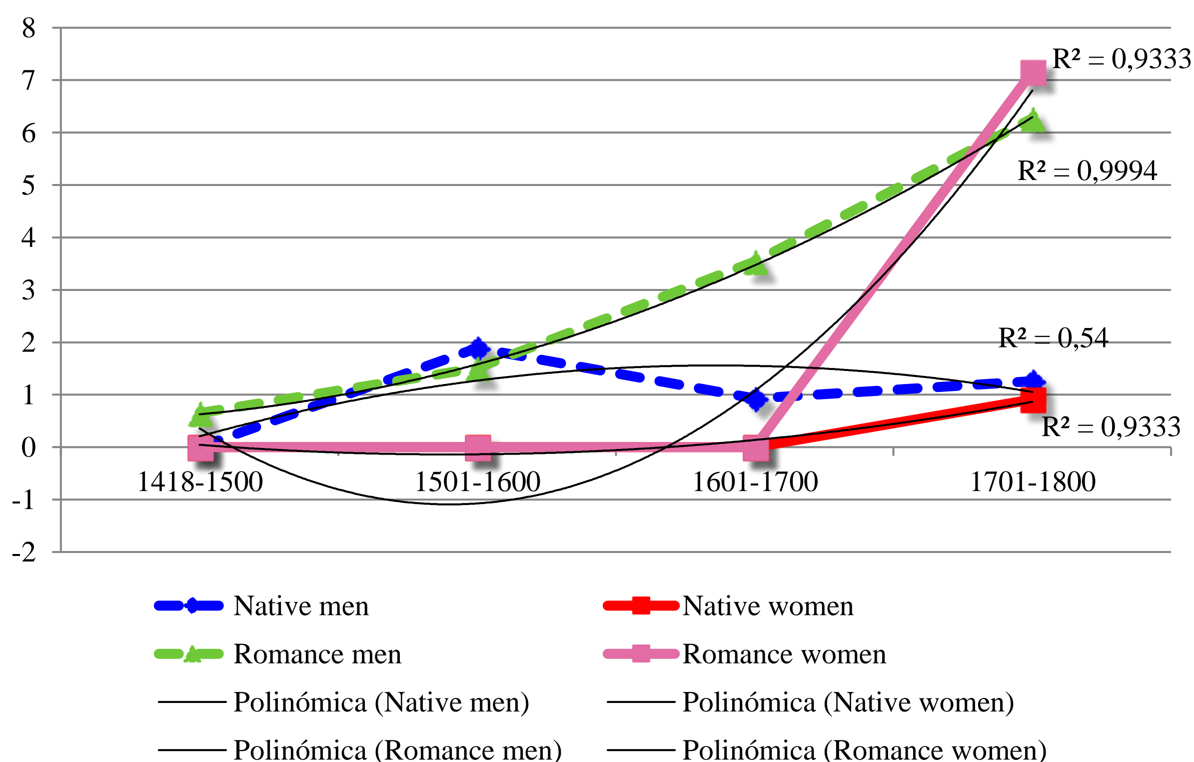

Figure 6.45. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by professional men and women (n.f.)

Clearly, by this time, Standard English was progressively being shaped, and the division of labour by which adjectives of Romance origin are highly associated with periphrastic forms and Germanic/native ones with inflectional forms is clearly appreciated during the course of time, but being highly marked in the eighteenth century.

6.2.1.5.c. Comparative forms and number of syllables of the adjective

In this section, the distribution of the inflected and periphrastic forms of comparison in connection with the number of syllables of the adjective (monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic) is presented for the professional rank according to gender and across the four periods. Table 6.27 and Figure 6.46 provide the raw data and normalised frequencies for the distribution of the inflectional form. As may be noticed, the number of monosyllabic adjectives compared by inflection is higher in both genders across time than those with disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives. The distribution is quite varied in both genders since the frequency of monosyllabic adjectives taking inflection in women's writings outnumbers those in men's in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries (5.09 and 7.09 respectively); however, frequencies are higher in men's writing during the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries (1.67 and 5.94 respectively). Regarding disyllabic adjectives, the trend follows a systematic increase in the use of inflections throughout the periods in male's letters, although the inflectional variant appears to be on the decline in the sixteenth century, with a rate of 0.48. The scarce data obtained from female letters indicate that inflectional forms are only present in disyllabic adjectives during the eighteenth century, amounting to 1.06. Nonetheless, no occurrences of inflectional forms were found with polysyllabic adjectives in letters by any gender.

Table 6.27. Distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by professional men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Inflected n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	2.49 (#19)	0.13 (#1)	0 (#0)	3.78 (#20)	0.56 (#3)	0 (#0)	4.03 (#91)	0.48 (#11)	0 (#1)	7.54 (#304)	1.04 (#42)	0 (#0)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	2.62 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	5.33 (#70)	1.06 (#14)	0 (#0)

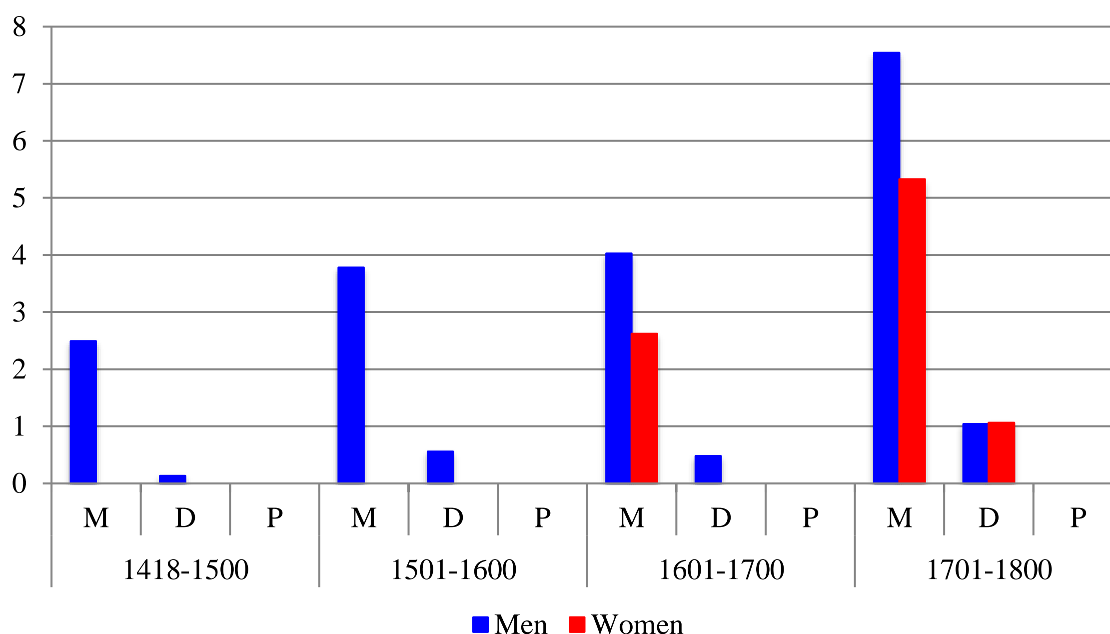

Figure 6.46. Gender variation in the distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by professional men and women (n.f.)

With respect to periphrastic forms and their correlation with syllable length (monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic) according to gender in the professional rank, one can observe that in male's letters it is not until the seventeenth century when a higher use of periphrastic forms with polysyllabic adjectives is noticed. It is also worth-mentioning the progressive adaptation of periphrastic forms in disyllabic and monosyllabic adjectives since it is in the fifteenth century when the highest rates are found with monosyllabic adjectives (0.39). Moreover, their number increases during the sixteenth century (1.13) and starts decreasing from the seventeenth century onwards. With respect to femal letters, we only found data during the eighteenth century. The trend suggests a uniform distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives, reaching its peak with polysyllabic adjectives (4.88) and outnumbering men's use (4.16).

Table 6.28. Distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by professional men and women (#-raw data and n.f.)

Periphr. n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0.39 (#3)	0.13 (#1)	0.13 (#1)	1.13 (#6)	1.51 (#8)	0.75 (#4)	0.66 (#15)	1.59 (#36)	2.21 (#50)	0.66 (#27)	2.70 (#109)	4.16 (#168)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0.38 (#5)	2.82 (#37)	4.88 (#64)

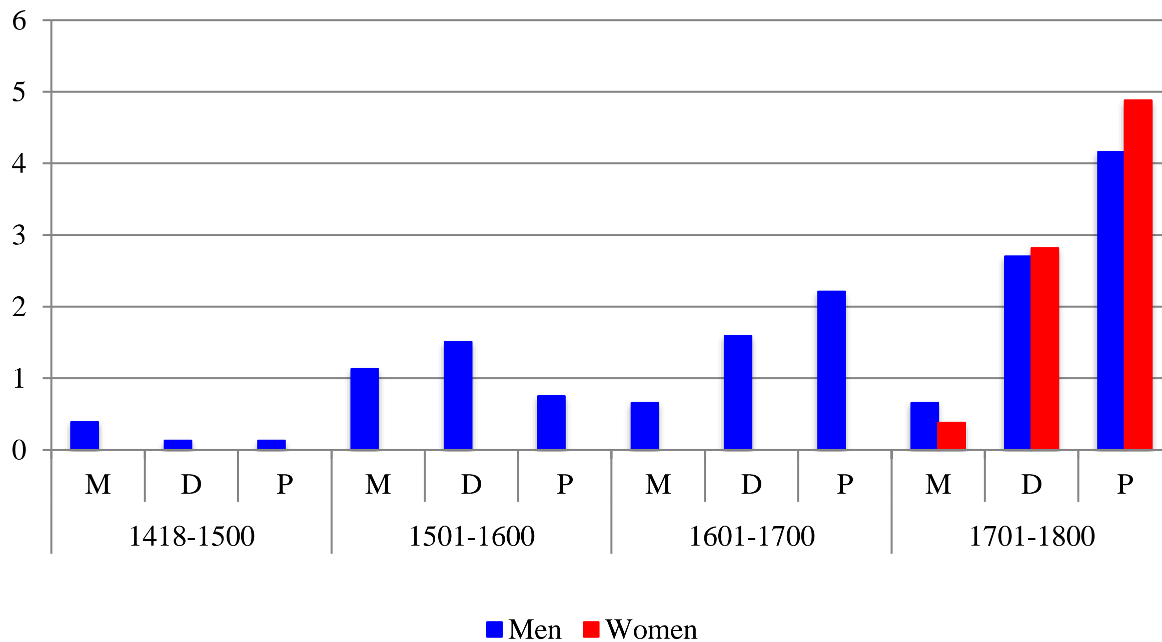

Figure 6.47. Gender variation in the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by professional men and women (n.f.)

The results presented for the social rank of professional men show a higher presence of comparatives in contrast with the previous social ranks analysed. However, the periphrastic variant shows the lowest amount of occurrences during the fifteenth century in all social ranks so far analysed, which contrasts with the sharp increase in the use of periphrastic forms in the sixteenth century. The curve reaches an overlap between the two variants in the course of the seventeenth century but presents an increase in the use of inflections during the eighteenth century. The analysis of the correlation of these linguistic comparative variants together with the origin of the adjectives and the number of syllables reflect a clear progression towards adaptation of periphrastic forms with Romance polysyllabic adjectives, but with a peak associated with Germanic/native adjectives during the sixteenth century. Thus, this reveals that the social category of professional men probably introduced the periphrastic comparative variant uniformly and progressively in their writings throughout the centuries, specially emerging from the sixteenth century. We can state that, due to the overlap between both linguistic variants, the seventeenth century mirrors the awareness of the use of the periphrastic form in letters by professionals, which spread along the eighteenth century, showing higher rates from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century.

On the other hand, due to the absence of professional women until the seventeenth century, we cannot pinpoint the exact evolution of the phenomenon.[7] But being able to analyse microscopically the data obtained during these centuries, we may conclude that the introduction of the periphrastic form in professional women's letters was later than in men, although the periphrastic form in letters by females outnumbers the rates found in men's writings during the eighteenth century. Hence, once more we can point to the possibility that professional women's writings reflected more standardised, prestigious practices as attested in their repertoire by the uniform distribution of both linguistic variants in combination with the etymological origin and the number of syllables of the adjectives.

6.2.1.6. 'Non-gentry: merchants'

6.2.1.6.a. Inflected and periphrastic comparison

This section deals with the distribution of the comparative variants in letters by the non-gentry mainly by merchant members. The social mobility of this group could change rapidly depending on their wealth and social position in national and international trade (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2013: 35–36). In addition to merchants and traders, this category also includes yeomen, craftsmen, artisans, etc. Due to their lack of representativeness, letters by merchant women are scarce in our corpora. The data I have obtained is scant (N= 88) and very little is known about the role of merchant women elsewhere in Europe from the fifteenth century to at least the seventeenth century. So far, we know that the roles of women at that time were mainly those of wife and mother. Female participation in commerce was not frequent since they were left out from any moneyed background as a result of the barriers against women participating in trade and other economic and political spheres. Only some women from the upper ranks were an exception to this rule, mainly women from the nobility or the gentry. Thus,

[7] As seen in section 5.2.2.b, the attainment of literacy in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance times was mostly linked to social conventions and gender (Cressy, 1980; Vincent, 1989; Barratt, 1992/2010; Goldberg, 1992; Wheale, 1999; Daybell, 2001; Krug, 2002; or Orme, 2006). Women had much less opportunities for accessing education than men because of their subordination to patriarchal hierarchy: conventional beliefs of the time assumed that women were subservient to men, with their labour being mainly focused on household management and child-raising (Barratt, 1992/2010: 2). During the sixteenth century, for example, only 20% English males and 5% females could sign their own name. In the early seventeenth century literacy ability increased to 33% in men but just 10% in women, whereas by the eighteenth century it was about 50% and 20% (Vincent, 1989:1 and Wheale, 1999: 43). There was not a national sense about the need of mass literacy until the early nineteenth century, and it was not until the 1950s when illiteracy began to be regarded as a shameful stigma among poorer people. In historical sociolinguistic research, illiteracy – especially among female population – and the subsequent use of scribes when practising written correspondence make authorship and the social category of gender constitute some of the most controversial socio-demographic issues when doing research on remote periods (Bergs, 2005, 2015; Wood, 2007; and Cutillas-Espinosa & Hernández-Campoy, forthcoming).

men account for the whole proportion of 'non-gentry: merchants' in our data. Figure 6.48 displays the normalised frequencies of both comparative variants in letters by males from this group from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

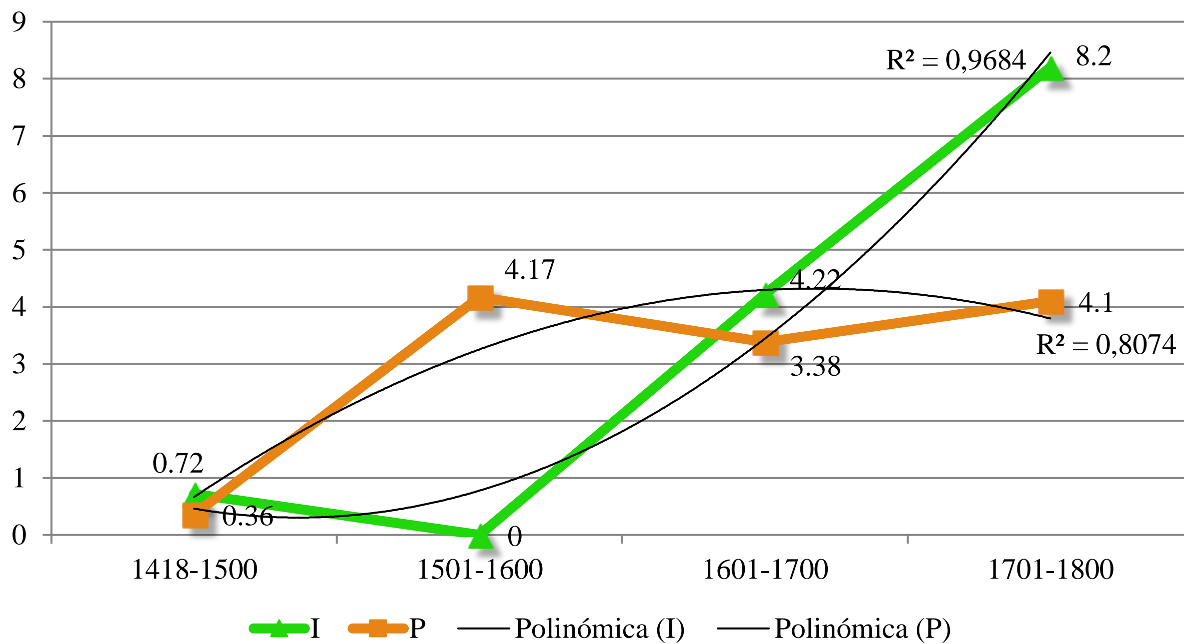

Figure 6.48. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by men from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group (n.f.)

In comparison with the previous social groups analysed, males from this one present a rather different picture. First, they show the lowest amount of occurrences in the use of both comparative linguistic variants during the fifteenth century, which contrasts drastically with the higher use of periphrastic forms during the sixteenth century, reaching its peak in 4.17. However, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the use of inflectional forms experiments a remarkable increase to the detriment of the periphrastic form, with a peak during the eighteenth century (8.2). In fact, the Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a stronger positive correlation with a polynomial relationship in 'non-gentry: merchants' using inflected forms (R= 0.9684) than periphrastic ones (R= 0.8074) along time. The data obtained from the fifteenth century come from four male merchants: three of them are members from the Cely family who engaged in the wool trade: Richard Cely the elder, George Cely and William Cely. Thomas Betson was another wool trader who worked in association with Sir William Stonor as co-shipper (Hanham, 2005: 33). It is William Cely (50%), a relative of the family, and Thomas Betson (100%) the ones who make the highest use of the periphrastic form. As merchants, they

used to travel regularly between England and the rest of the continent, most usually to Calais. According to Raumoulin-Brunberg, the wool-merchant community:

> […] seemed to have a number of strong ties in their social networks, which manifested themselves in intermarriage and business partnership within a family. On the other hand, merchants travelled a great deal meeting different people, and both cities, London and Calais, were places where loose and uniplex social ties flourished.
>
> (Raumolin-Brunberg, 1996: 96)

In her study on the use of the subject pronoun *you* versus *ye*, Raumolin-Brunberg has indicated that the older generation of the Cely family, including Richard Cely the elder, does not employ the new form *you* at all, and that some members of the younger generation, such as Richard the younger and George Cely, were more conservative in the use of this linguistic variant (1996: 97–99). In a similar way, Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy (2004) investigated the diffusion of chancery spellings in the written practices of some members of the Cely, the Paston and the Stonor families, including the sociolinguistic behaviour of two of my informants: George Cely and Thomas Betson. Results suggest that "[…] Thomas Betson (80%), Sir John Paston III (62%) and Sir John Paston II (62%) show a highly uniformed standardised idiolect, while George Cely (23%) uses a highly uniformed non-standardised variety" (2004: 142). Apparently, although we count with few occurrences (N=7), these findings coincide with our results in that the letters from the Cely informants only show the entrenched inflectional form, with the exception of William Cely.[8] On the contrary, Thomas Betson, is the only merchant informant from the fifteenth century who does not use inflectional forms but just periphrastic ones. As for his biographical information, we only know his date of death (1486). He became a wealthy man since he specialised in the wool business; his experience, along with his careful capacity for management and accounting, made him highly lucrative (Power, 1963: 120–151; Hanham, 2005). These findings suggest that the new wealthy merchants started to be aware of their social status in society, which could have led them adopt more prestigious linguistic practices associated with social mobility and the possible establishment of weak ties in loose-knit social networks. Additionally, he was also an ambitious man who in some occasions attempted to oust some of his contemporaries from the favour of his masters in the Stonor circle (Carpenter, 1996: 56–57; Power, 1963: 156–158).

[8] For a detailed account on the life of the Cely family, see Hanham, (1973), (1975) and (1985).

The sixteenth century provides us with a completely different picture, since the highest occurrences of periphrastic forms are attested. The data collected come only from two informants: Francis Johnson (merchant) and Richard Manser (yeoman), whose date of birth and death are unknown. They only make use of the periphrastic form with a percentage of 100%.

During the seventeenth century, an overlap in the use of both forms is appreciated, with a frequency of 4.22 for inflectional forms and 3.38 for periphrastic ones. This time, the data come from six males from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group. Among them, the highest amount of tokens comes from Arthur Woodnoth (1590–1650) who was a goldsmith and Nathaniel Pinney (1659–1724) who was a merchant. Both also show the highest rates of the use of the periphrastic form with 67% and 36.4%, respectively, but little biographical information is known about them.

The eighteenth century presents clear divergent tracks between the use of both comparative variants: while periphrastic forms rise slightly from the seventeenth century to the eighteenth century, inflectional forms rocket to 8.2. The data come from eleven informants. Among the most notorious ones we find John Bunce (unknown dates of birth and death), Richard Champion (1743–1791) and Thomas Cadell (1742–1802). The highest amount of occurrences in the use of the periphrastic forms is also found in their letters: John Bunce, (100%), Richard Champion (25%) and Thomas Cadell (75%). Bunce was a grocer and tallow chandler who became inspector under Mr. Pennington, a man of good fortune and greatly respected. Champion is considered as a man of education, porcelain manufacturer and member of the society of merchants. Unfortunately, he lost his fortune and moved to South Carolina. Finally, Candel became a bookseller and publisher in London. None of them show a clear clase of upward social mobility.

With respect to females from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group, given the scarcity of our data and their lack of representativeness (N=2), it is quite complex to provide a proper gender comparison. We have only obtained data from the eighteenth century, which corresponds to two female informants: Ann Hales (b. 1707), who only makes use of the periphrastic form and Jane Fuller (unknown dates of birth and death), who only makes use of the synthetic form. Therefore, the final figure represents a rather distorted picture to draw any precise conclusion (see Figure 6.49 below).

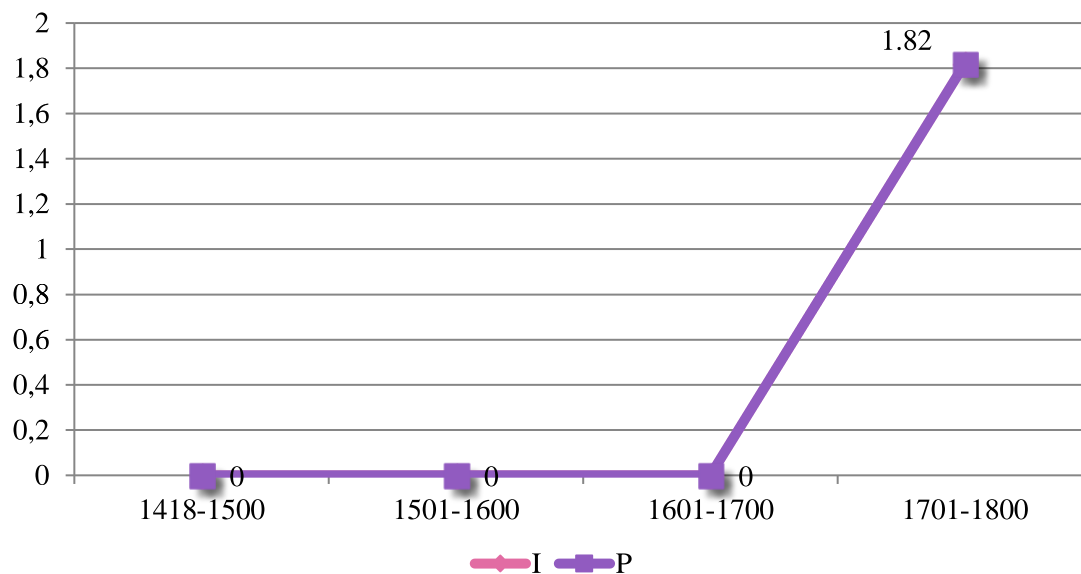

Figure 6.49. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by women from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group (n.f.)

Thus, when it comes to comparing the trajectory of the periphrastic form in both genders, it becomes especially difficult without sufficient data from female informants. Nonetheless, Figure 6.50 suggests that males from this group did not normally use the periphrastic form during the fifteenth century. However, the increasing appearance of the new periphrastic form from the sixteenth century onwards implies the implementation of the more innovative linguistic variant in their writings.

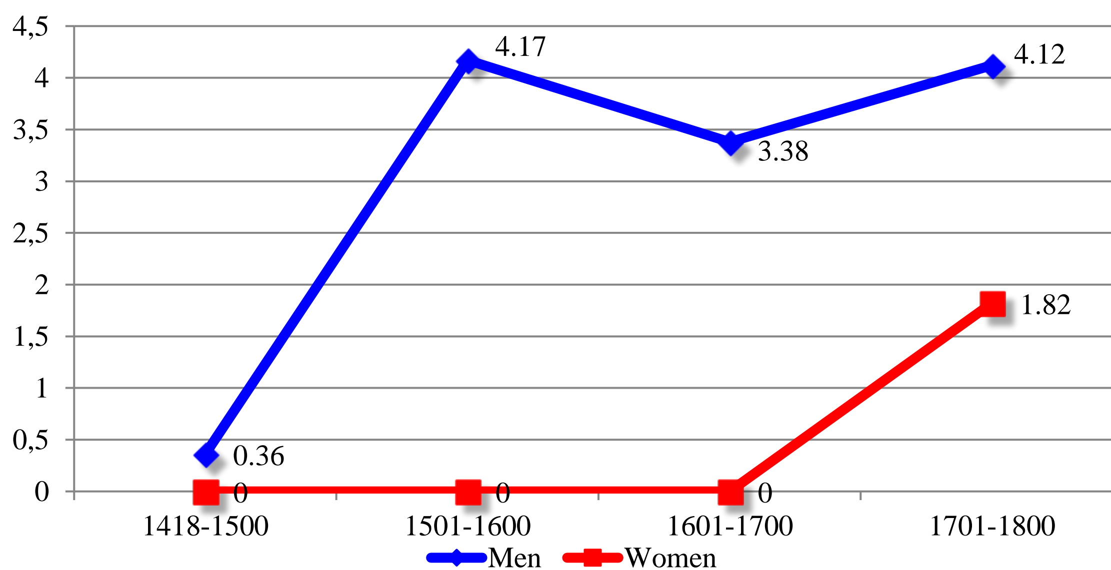

Figure 6.50. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group (n.f.)

In contrast, the data from letters by females suggest that, although the periphrastic form seemed to have been completely adopted during the eighteenth century by the rest of the social ranks, they were still not quite prone to use the more innovative form in their letters.

6.2.1.6.b. Comparative forms and etymological origin of the adjective

This section investigates the correlation of the inflected and periphrastic forms with the etymological origin of adjectives, Germanic/native or Romance in letters by males and females from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group across periods. Table 6.29 shows the distribution of both absolute and normalised frequencies of inflected and periphrastic comparative forms with adjectives of Germanic/native origin across periods in letters by both genders.

Table 6.29. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Germanic/native adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group (#-raw data and n.f.)

Germanic/ native n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0.60 (#5)	0.12 (#1)	0 (#0)	4.17 (#2)	3.94 (#14)	0.28 (#1)	7.43 (#29)	1.02 (#4)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	1.82 (#1)	0 (#0)

The main conclusion we can draw from Table 6.29 is that the inflectional form is the preferred comparative strategy throughout all the periods. However, it is during the sixteenth century when we find a dramatic rise in the use of periphrastic forms, amounting to a frequency of 4.17. See examples (93) to (95):

(93) As to what you writ concerning the ministry, must give you the same answer I did in my last visit if you think there can be any way taken to accomplish me for it, there's none shall be ***more ready*** to embrace it [...] (CEECE, Nathaniel Pinney to John Pinney, 1680)

(94) The Harvest in the Southern part of the Kingdom as I last wrote you, is not so good as near us, which is a ***more hilly*** country. (CEECE, Richard Champion to Thomas Willing & Richard Morris, 1774)

(95) The Parliament is dissolved - the general Supposition for this unexpected Event is, the Minister dreads the News from America, & is fearful the People at home would be so inflamed as to elect a Parliament not answerable to his Wishes, & he thinks

them now ***more cool***. (CEECE, Richard Champion to Thomas Willing & Richard Morris, 1774)

Table 6.30 summarises the distribution of inflectional and periphrastic forms correlated with Romance adjectives. The number of periphrastic forms is higher than inflectional forms across periods, reaching the peak during the seventeenth century with a frequency of 3.10. The use of the inflectional form seems also to undergo a slight increase across time (from 0.12 to 0.76). See examples (96) to (97) below:

Table 6.30. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Romance adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group (#-raw data and n.f.)

Romance n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0.12 (#1)	0.24 (#2)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0.28 (#1)	3.10 (#11)	0.76 (#3)	3.07 (#12)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	1.82 (#1)

(96) People drawes in their money they lent for the publique Service of the nation as fast as It becomes due, and every body supposes that that Comodity in a verry litel tyme will become ***more valluable*** then ever […] (CEECE, Nathaniel Pinney to John Pinney, 1689)

(97) I hope to see you here, that is next moneth possibley, I question not but other provission ***more suiteable*** to your inclynations will offer. (CEECE, Nathaniel Pinney to John Pinney, 1689)

On closer scrutiny, Figure 6.51 represents the diffusion of the periphrastic form correlated with both Germanic/native and Romance adjectives. It clearly illustrates a noticeable increase in the use of periphrastic forms with Romance adjectives from the seventeenth century onwards, with the exception of a remarkable rise with Germanic/native adjectives during the sixteenth century. As in the case of female informants during the eighteenth century, their distribution suggests that they only used periphrastic forms with Romance adjectives.

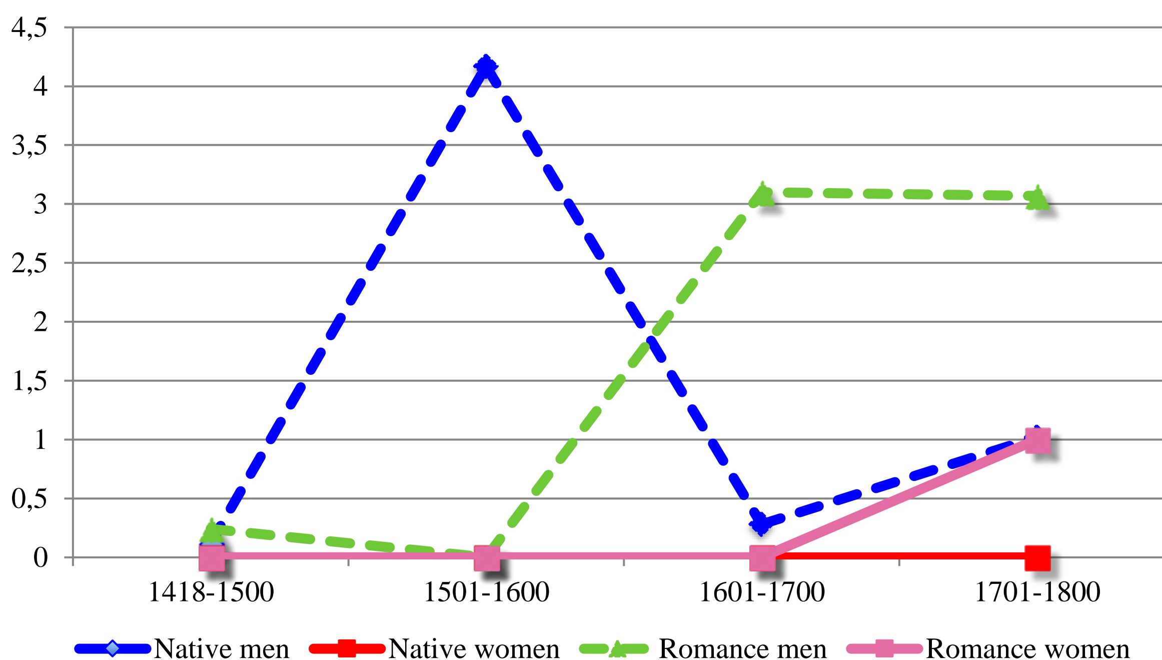

Figure 6.51. Gender difference in the evolution of the periphrastic form in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group (n.f.)

6.2.1.6.c. Comparative forms and number of syllables of the adjective

Table 6.31 and Figure 6.52 summarise the distribution of the inflectional forms according to the number of syllables of the adjective (monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic). The first observation that one can make from both genders is that the inflectional form is better suited with monosyllabic adjectives for all the periods, showing a slight rise with disyllabic forms only letters by males.

Table 6.31. Distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group (#-raw data and n.f.)

Inflected n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0.72 (#6)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	4.22 (#15)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	7.17 (#28)	1.02 (#4)	0 (#0)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	1.82 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)

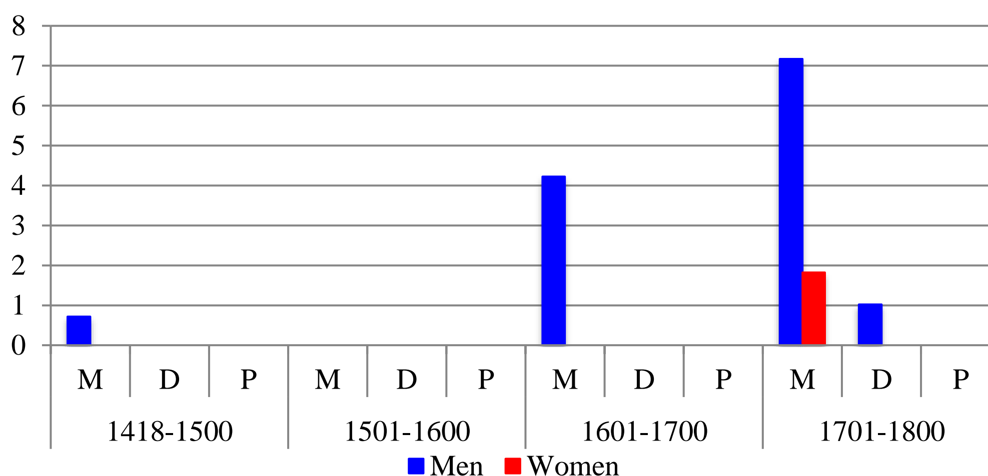

Figure 6.52. Gender variation in the distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group (n.f.)

Regarding the distribution of periphrastic forms in monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in this social rank, Table 6.32 and Figure 6.53 show that from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century there are higher rates of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic and dysyllabic adjectives.

Table 6.32. Distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group (#-raw data and n.f.)

Periphr. n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0.12 (#1)	0.12 (#1)	0.12 (#1)	2.08 (#1)	2.08 (#1)	0 (#0)	0.84 (#3)	0.28 (#1)	2.25 (#8)	0.76 (#3)	1.02 (#4)	2.30 (#9)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	1.82 (#1)	0 (#0)

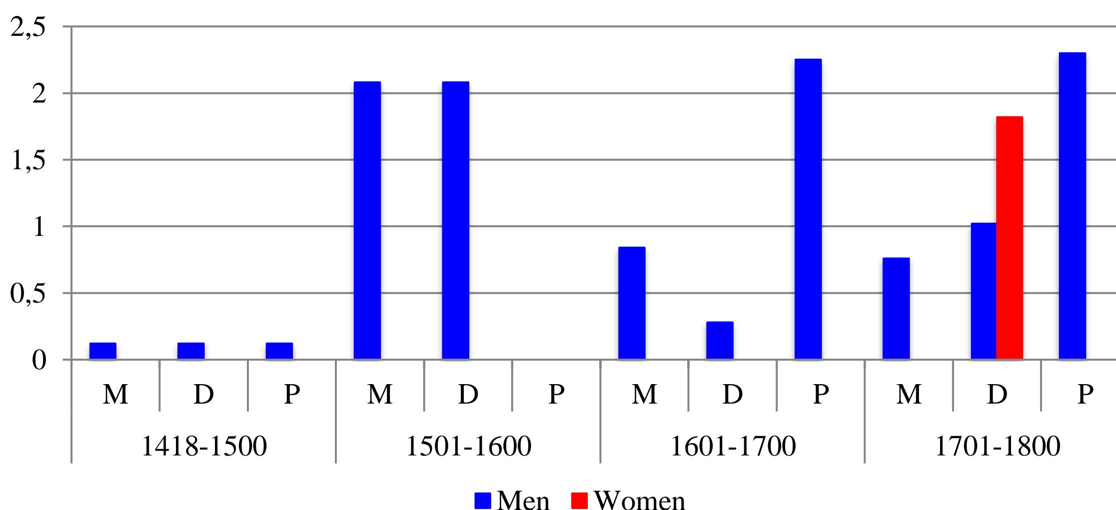

Figure 6.53. Gender variation in the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group (n.f.)

However, it is from the seventeenth century onwards when we can detect a more substantial distribution with higher occurrences and disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by males.

In view of the results obtained, we may conclude this section by suggesting that the merchant social rank was not advanced in the use of the periphrastic form during the fifteenth century. Although it seems to have been adopted from the sixteenth century onwards, showing an overlap with the inflectional form during the seventeenth century and a subsequent rise during the eighteenth, it was highly outnumbered by the inflectional form. This may suggest that the 'non-gentry: merchants' were late comers in adopting the new form due to the strong presence of inflectional forms in their letters. Results also indicate that, like the rank of professional men, males from this group show great internal variability during the seventeenth century but tend towards a preference for the inflectional form during the eighteenth. Moreover, the fact that the peak in the use of the periphrastic form during the sixteenth century appears correlated with monosyllabic and disyllabic Germanic/native adjectives suggests a steady adaptation of the periphrastic form to the English adjective comparative system. Finally, as for the role of women in the use of both linguistic variants, it has been hard to justify since their presence is only relevant during the eighteenth century, probably due to their illiteracy in the Middle Ages and Tudor times (Cressy, 1980: 175–177). Another possible reason could be that they could not afford a clerk or scribe due to financial issues. In any case, results from female letters from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group during the eighteenth century show a slow amount of occurrences in the use of both comparative variants, which clearly justifies the existence of gender difference in the use of the innovative periphrastic form, placing males ahead of females.

6.2.1.7. 'Non-gentry: others'

6.2.1.7.a. Inflected and periphrastic comparison

This section deals with the distribution of the comparative variants in the letters by a group of informants, principally common people, whose social category is either unknown or different from the rest (such as peasants, servants, stewards, etc.). To classify them, I have adopted the label 'non-gentry: others' as it appears in the metadata of CEECE. As illustrated in section 5.5.2, the group of 'non-gentry: others' is one of this group best represented across all the periods in the corpora. Figure 6.54 illustrates the normalised frequencies for the use of both

comparative variants in the letters by the male informants from this social group across centuries.

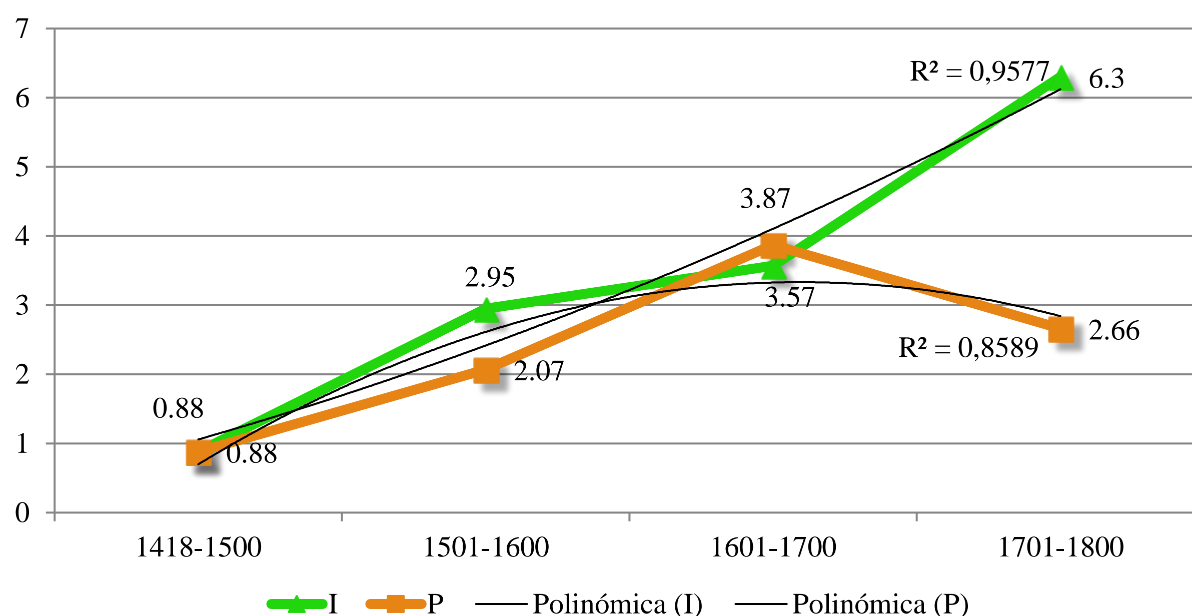

Figure 6.54. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by men from the 'non-gentry: others' group (n.f.)

In general terms, the two-curves in Figure 6.54 show that the use of both comparative linguistic variants spread uniformly from the fifteenth century to the sixteenth century, although the inflectional form prevails. However, during the seventeenth century there is a rise in the use of periphrastic forms, which seems to slightly outnumber the inflectional ones (3.87). It is during the eighteenth century when the two linguistic variants follow different tracks; there seems to be an upward curve in the use of inflectional forms, reaching a frequency of 6.3, while the periphrastic forms drop to 2.66. In fact, the Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a positive correlation showing a stronger polynomial relationship for the tendency along time with R closer to +1 (R= 0.9577) in inflected forms than in periphrastic ones (R= 0.8589). It is difficult to carry out a micro-sociolinguistic analysis of the linguistic behaviour of the informants from this group since very little is known about them. During the fifteenth century, the data come from ten male informants. Appendix II shows that Edward Plumpton was the one with higher tokens and percentages of the periphrastic form (100%), without showing any instance of the inflectional one. The data of the sixteenth century come from nineteen male informants. The majority of them only use the inflectional form but among the ones that stand out due to their use of the periphrastic one are John Hart (100%) and Gabriel Harvey (70%).

The data from the seventeenth century come from twenty male informants. Among the ones who show higher percentages of the periphrastic form we find Henry More (1614–1687) (60%), Anthony Antonie (unknown dates of birth and death) (58.8%), Nemehiah Wharton (unknown dates of birth and death) (100%) and John Chamberlain (1554-1628) (49.4%). However, the data obtained during the eighteenth century come only from ten male informants. Among the most notorious we find Carolus Charles (unknown dates of birth and death) and George Culley (1735–1813). The vast majority of the male informants during this century make use only of the inflectional variant, but the ones who make the greatest use of the periphrastic form are Carolus Charles (66.7%) followed by George Culley (38.1%). As mentioned above, we do not have information about the profiles of the people from this group. The dates of birth and death for most of them are not provided in the corpora. This is, for instance, the case of Charles. We only know that he was a manufacturer and outworker for Peter Stubs. More information is given about Culley; he was an agriculturist, who became known as an improver and innovator of farming and breeding along with his brother, being also involved in the business affairs of their occupation.

As regards female informants from the group of 'non-gentry: others', Figure 6.55 presents the normalised frequencies across centuries. The two-curves show a clear preference in the use of the inflectional forms at all times, without showing any overlap between the two linguistic variants.

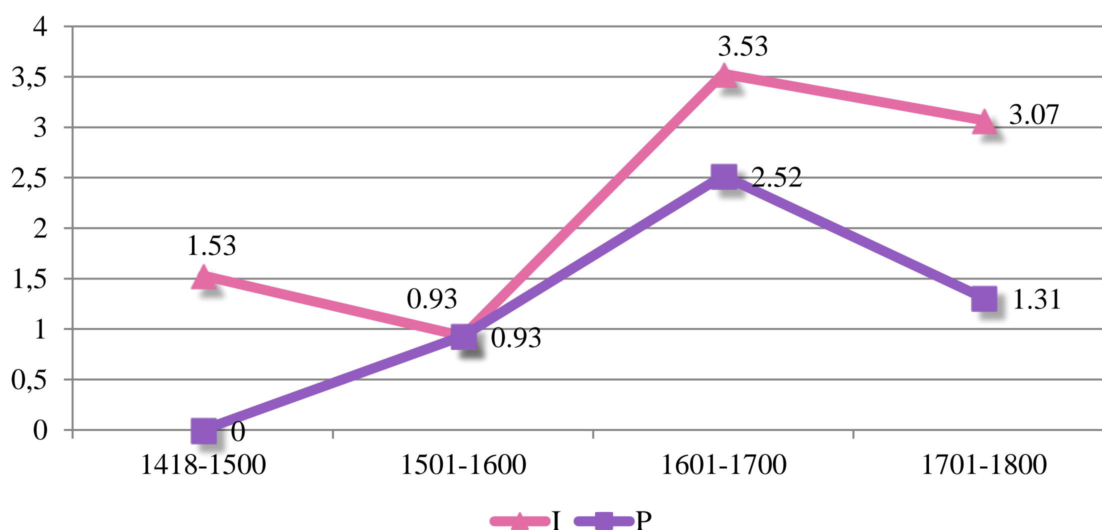

Figure 6.55. Distribution of inflected and periphrastic forms in letters by women from the 'non-gentry: others' group (n.f.)

Like in the letters by males from this group, the highest frequencies of both forms are found during the seventeenth century, amounting to 3.53 in the case of inflectional forms and 2.52 in

periphrastic ones. From then on, a sharp drop is noticeable in the use of periphrastic forms (1.31), and a slight drop in the use of inflectional forms (3.07).

The data from the first period come from just one informant, Alice Crane (unknown dates of birth and death), showing only instances of inflectional forms. During the sixteenth century, the data come from three informants and it is only Elizabeth Pole (unknown dates of birth and death) the one who makes use of the periphrastic form. The seventeenth century shows a higher rise in the use of the periphrastic form. The data come from sixteen female informants, seven of whom only make use of the periphrastic form without showing any single instance of the inflectional one. These are Elizabeth Cottington, Alice Collingwood, Alice Fleming, Janes Waynwright, Jane Hook, Paulina Jackson (1640–1689) and Mary Collet (1601–1664). There is little biographical information about these informants and only the dates of birth and death of Paulina Jackson and Mary Collet are known. Finally, the data for the eighteenth century come from just five informants, but the majority belong to the period 1780 to 1800. There are hardly any tokens of the periphrastic in the letters by females of the period. The only one who makes an attempt to use them is Eleanor Brathwaile (66.7%) about whom nothing is known.

Figure 6.56 represents the development in the use of the comparative periphrastic form in letters by both genders. Results clearly situate men ahead of women in the use of the periphrastic form of comparison along all the centuries under study. Both genders also coincide in the same rise and fall of the periphrastic form. Periphrastic forms are hardly present during the fifteenth century, but they experiment a sharp rise from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, and a subsequent decline in the eighteenth century.

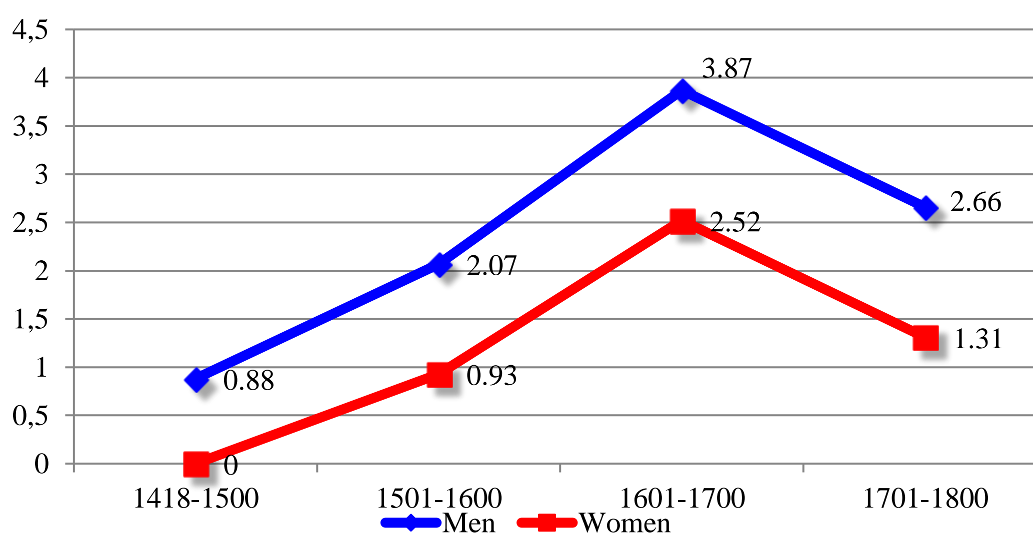

Figure 6.56. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: others' group (n.f.)

6.2.1.7.b. Comparative forms and etymological origin of the adjective

In this section, a further division of the data is presented so as to analyse the use of the inflectional and periphrastic comparative variants in correlation with the Germanic/native or Romance origin of the adjectives, and with the gender of the informant within the group of 'non-gentry: others'. Table 6.33 shows the distribution of both absolute and normalised frequencies of inflected and periphrastic comparative forms with adjectives of Germanic/native origin across periods in letters by both genders.

Table 6.33. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Germanic/native adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: others' group (#-raw data and n.f.)

Germanic/native n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0.79 (#9)	0.17 (#2)	2.76 (#28)	0.39 (#4)	3.27 (#87)	1.39 (#37)	5.18 (#37)	0.70 (#5)
Women	1.53 (#1)	0 (#0)	0.93 (#1)	0.93 (#1)	3.53 (#14)	1.26 (#5)	2.19 (#5)	0 (#0)

The data point to a progressive rise in the use of both inflectional and periphrastic variants in letters by both genders from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, being the inflectional form the preferred one. During the eighteenth century, the periphrastic forms diminish in both genders. See examples (98) to (102):

(98) I was with-ynne the walles of your cite. God sauf the gouernour therof he was besy to trappe me, ***more besy*** than he wole be a-know […] (PCEEC, Thomas Denys to John Paston II, 1461)

(99) […] and such others your adversaries, which […] hath done to you and yours the most iniury and wrong, that ever was done, or wrought, to any man of worship in this land of peace. And non ***more sory*** therfore, then I myselfe is. (PCEEC, Elizabeth Pole to Robert Plumpton I, 1501)

(100) Unles we wil onli admit of that to be done whitch we our selvs onli have dun, in philosophical disputations to give popular and plausible theams […] ***more fit*** for schollars declamations to discurs upon then semli for masters problems to dispute uppon […]. (PCEEC, Gabriel Harvey to John Young, 1573)

(101) But I hold it an harmless passtime to sitt still and admire them that are ***more happy*** in that exercise (PCEEC, Henry More to Edward Conway JR, 1623)

(102) I am ***more free*** from Mr. Green by either tye or promise than I am from you […] (CEECE, Carolus Charles to Peter Stubs, 1792)

Table 6.34 shows the distribution of both linguistic variants with Romance adjectives according to gender. Both seem to spread regularly across centuries, but a higher frequency of periphrastic forms appears during the seventeenth century in letters by males, to decrease again in the next century (1.96). See examples (103) to (107) below:

Table 6.34. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms with Romance adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: others' group (#-raw data and n.f.)

Romance n.f & #	**1418-1500**		**1501-1600**		**1601-1700**		**1701-1800**	
	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P
Men	0 (#1)	0.70 (#8)	0.19 (#2)	1.67 (#17)	0.30 (#8)	2.48 (#66)	1.12 (#8)	1.96 (#14)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	1.26 (#5)	0.87 (#2)	1.31 (#3)

(103) And thanne I moeved hym whether it shuld be ***more expedient*** to yow to haue a warant accordyng to that bille or ellis make a newe bille after the note that ye sent me of my maister John Pastons hand. (PCEEC, James Gresham to William Paston I, 1444)

(104) Most honorable and renowned Lady, That which to the most seemes great presumption, for me to attempt this kinde of enterprise unto so high a personage, the ***more noble*** and illustrious that you are […]. (PCEEC, Alice Collingwood to Arabella Stuart, 1611)

(105) […] and even in Cheapside where they shold be ***more civill***, they were redy to pull and teare them out of the coaches as they passed to their lodgings or to the surgeans. (PCEEC, John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 1623)

(106) […] and if your Ladiship will please to endeavour with me to enter into this sanctuary of safety and tranquillity of minde so excellent company can not but encrease his happinesse in these ***serener*** Regions who could reap so much content

therefrom though in showres and stormes. (PCEEC, Henry More to Anne Conway, 1660)

(107) Since his Brother wrote you he was extream ill, had hectik fitts and was so much reduc'd that Mr. Hodgshon fear'd a decline and proposed consulting Dr. Ainsley, but it put on a ***more favourable*** appearance in his hott fitts [...], so he prepar'd medison to be given every 2 houers for 8 and forty howers [...] (CEECE, Eleanor Brathwaite to Mary Senhouse, 1788)

Figure 6.57 shows the distribution of the periphrastic form in letters by both male and female informants across the four periods. Results show an increasing trend in the use of the periphrastic form associated with adjectives of Romance origin in both genders, but higher in the case of male informants. Moreover, the figure also shows an overlap in the use of the periphrastic form with both Germanic/native and Romance adjectives during the seventeenth century in letters by women and a subsequent sharper decline when used with native adjectives during the next century. The Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a positive correlation showing a stronger polynomial relationship for the tendency along time in periphrastic forms with Romance adjectives by males (with R close to +1: 0.9592) than females (R= 0.8154) and than with Germanic/native adjectives.

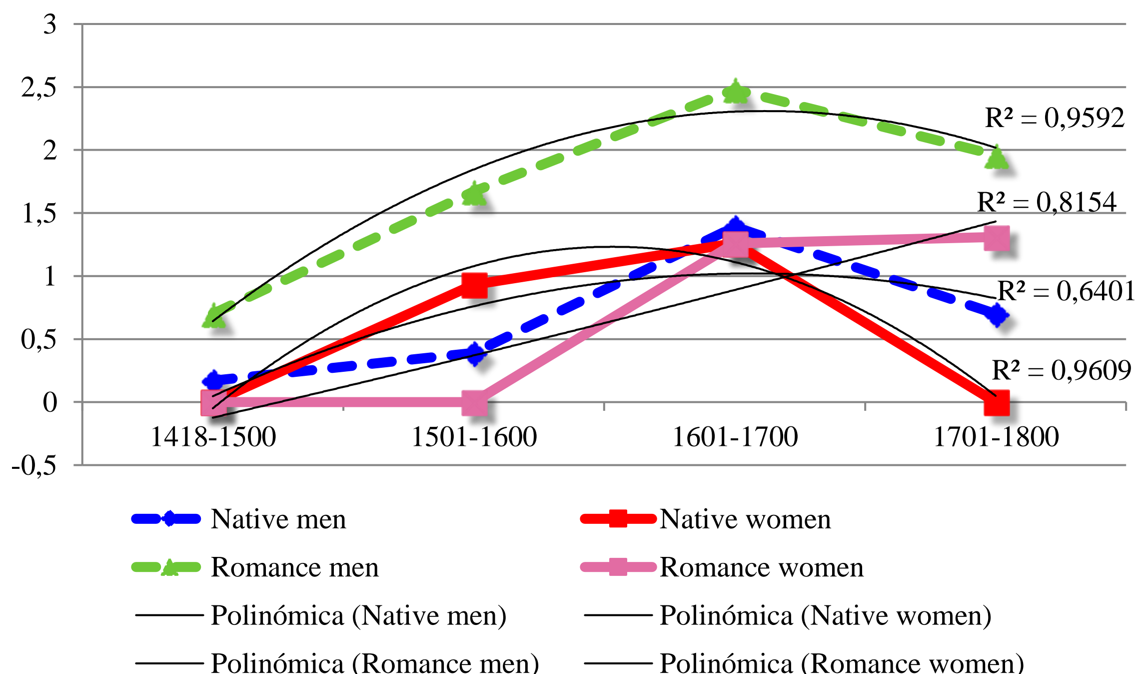

Figure 6.57. Gender difference in the development of the periphrastic form according to letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: others' group (n.f.)

6.2.1.7.c. Comparative forms and number of syllables of the adjective

In this section, the distribution of the inflected and periphrastic forms of comparison in letters by 'non-gentry: others' is further correlated with the number of syllables of the adjective (monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic) and with gender across the four periods. Table 6.35 and Figure 6.58 display the raw data and normalised frequencies for the distribution of the inflectional form.

Table 6.35. Distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: others' group (#-raw data and n.f.)

Inflected n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0.70 (#8)	0.17 (#2)	0 (#0)	2.56 (#26)	0.39 (#4)	0 (#0)	3.27 (#87)	0.30 (#8)	0 (#0)	4.90 (#35)	1.40 (#10)	0 (#0)
Women	1.53 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0.93 (#1)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	3.27 (#13)	0.25 (#1)	0 (#0)	2.63 (#6)	0.43 (#1)	0 (#0)

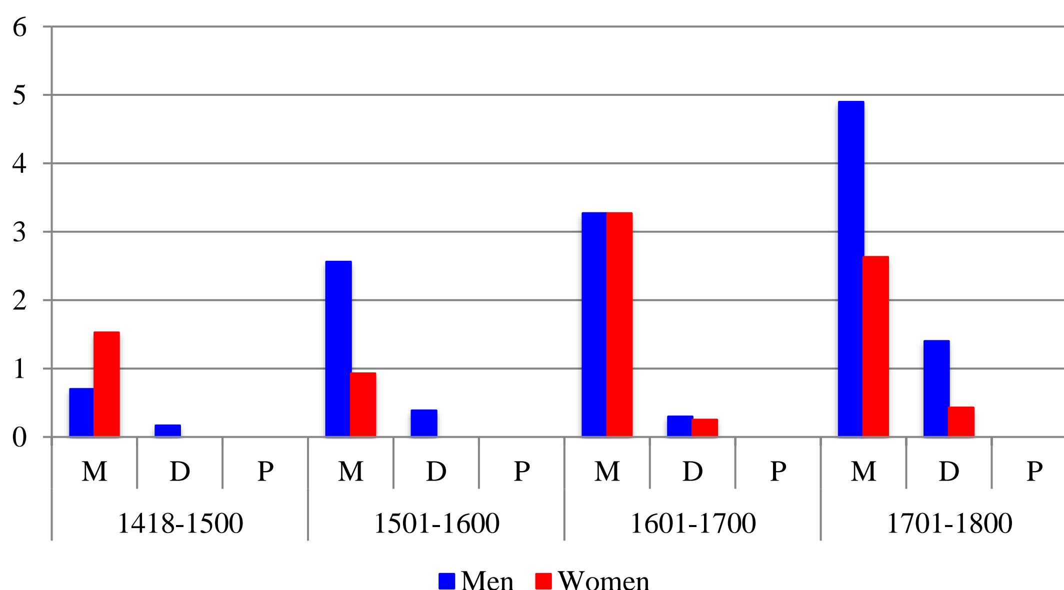

Figure 6.58. Gender variation in the distribution of inflected forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: others' group (n.f.)

The distribution of the data point to a uniform spread in the use of inflectional forms with monosyllabic and disyllabic adjectives across centuries, but with higher percentages in writings by males.

Regarding the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives and gender, Table 6.36 and Figure 6.59 show the raw data and normalised frequencies for each type of adjective.

Table 6.36. Distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: others' group (#-raw data and n.f.)

Periphr. n.f & #	**1418-1500**			**1501-1600**			**1601-1700**			**1701-1800**		
	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.	Mono.	Disy.	Poly.
Men	0.17 (#2)	0.26 (#3)	0.44 (#5)	1.18 (#12)	0.88 (#9)	0 (#0)	0.97 (#26)	1.50 (#40)	1.39 (#37)	0.42 (#3)	0.98 (#7)	1.26 (#9)
Women	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0 (#0)	0.93 (#1)	0 (#0)	1 (#4)	1 (#4)	0.50 (#2)	0.43 (#1)	0 (#0)	0.87 (#2)

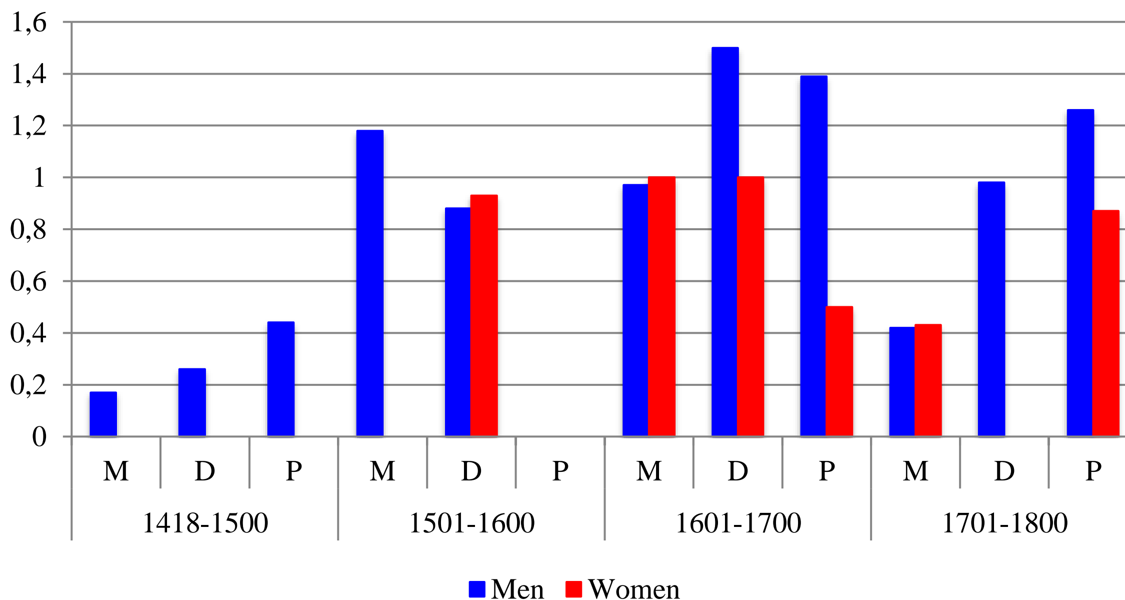

Figure 6.59. Gender variation in the distribution of periphrastic forms with monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in letters by men and women from the 'non-gentry: others' group (n.f.)

In general terms, the periphrastic form shows a slower adaptation when correlated with disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives in women's letters; they show more occurrences with monosyllabic adjectives than polysyllabic adjectives during the seventeenth century, although the small number of tokens does not allow us to apply statistical tests. This could tentatively suggest that men were in the vanguard of linguistic changes conforming to the standard and to prescriptive norms from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century.

In light of the results obtained for the group of 'non-gentry: others' we may conclude by saying that both inflectional and periphrastic variants seem to follow similar trajectories from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, the period in which male informants make a higher use of periphrastic forms over inflectional ones. From then on, both comparative forms follow divergent track; we have noticed an overwhelming preference for the inflectional form over the periphrastic one during the eighteenth century in male writings. As in the case of 'non-

gentry: merchants' and professionals, the period of overlap in this social group is also the seventeenth century, in the letters by male informants. Gender differences are quite remarkable, since female informants within this group show a higher preference for the use of the inflectional form over all the periods but coincide with men in showing a higher use of the more innovative variant during the seventeenth century. Finally, the correlation of the results with the etymological origin and number of syllables of the adjective reveals that male informants tended to employ the periphrastic form more substantially with Romance adjectives and with disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives across periods. In contrast, female informants have shown higher rates of the periphrastic forms with Germanic/native adjectives until the seventeenth century. What seems to emerge here is that both the use of the innovative periphrastic form and a simultaneous accommodation to standard practices are clearly led by men.

6.2.2. Close-up on the development of the inflected and periphrastic forms according to social rank

This section provides a summary of the results obtained in tracing the development of the periphrastic form according to the social categories of royalty, nobility, gentry, clergy, professional, 'non-gentry: merchants' and 'non-gentry: others' without making distinction between genders. But firstly, from a global perspective with no consideration of social rank, as Figure 6.60 shows, the development of the periphrastic and inflected forms along time suggests patterns of a monotonic increasing relationship for both.

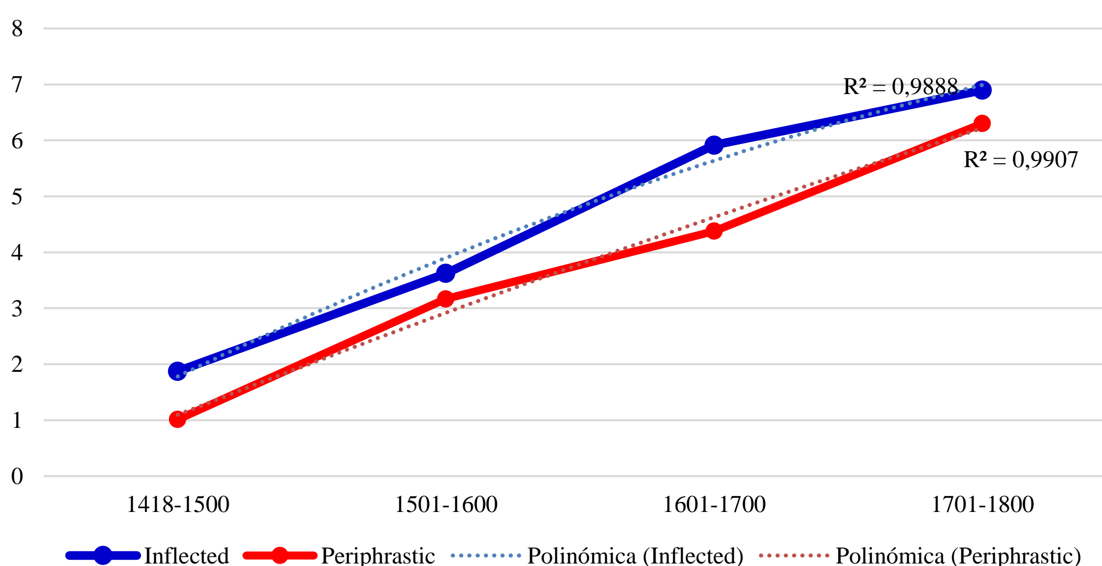

Figure 6.60. Development of the periphrastic and inflected forms along time (n.f.)

Statistically speaking, as Tables 6.37 and 6.38 exhibit, the application of a two-way ANOVA test (see Cantos, 2013: 57-58) for the independent variables time periods and social rank groupings (regardless of gender) with inflected and periphrastic forms respectively suggests that there is significant differencing between social ranks ($p \leq 0.05$) and also between periods ($p \leq 0.01$), being H_0 rejected in both cases. Additionally, the Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a stronger polynomial relationship with R closer to +1 in the use of periphrastic forms (R= 0.9907) than of inflected ones (R= 0.9888). As can be observed, the overlap between both comparative linguistic variants occurs during the sixteenth century, spreading during the seventeeth century and reaching highest rates during the eighteenth, showing again a similar overlap as in the sixteenth century.

Table 6.37. Two-way ANOVA for inflected forms (social ranks and time periods)

Independent variables	Sum of squares (SS)	Degrees of freedom (df)	Square means (SM)	F	*p*-value
Between Social Ranks	148846.8571	6	24807.8095	3.3439	0.0216
Between Time Periods	165869	3	55289.6667	7.4527	0.0004
Error (residual)	133538	18	7418.7778		
Total	448253.8571	27			

Table 6.38. Two-way ANOVA for periphrastic forms (social ranks and time periods)

Independent variables	Sum of squares (SS)	Degrees of freedom (df)	Square means (SM)	F	*p*-value
Between Social Ranks	90015.7143	6	15002.619	2.7382	0.0454
Between Time Periods	132447.5357	3	44149.1786	8.0577	0.0003
Error (residual)	98623.7143	18	5479.0952		
Total	321086.9643	27			

If we comparare these results with the ones in section 6.2.1, we may deduce that the curve shown here is similar to that found among the upper social orders, with the overlap between both forms taking place in the sixteenth century. This suggests that: a) upper social groups are better represented in our corpora; b) the sixteenth century is seen as the period of flourishing for the periphrastic form chiefly among upper social ranks; and c) that the two linguistic variants started to find their way in the English system from the seventeenth century onwards.

Considering social ranks individually, as Figures 6.61 and 6.62 show, all the aggregate proportions of the normalised frequencies of the inflected periphrastic comparative variants have been pooled together and normalised to a text of 10.000 words for comparison (see Appendix II for the raw data and normalised frequencies). The word count used for this study is the one presented in Table 5.12 in section 5.5.2. Results clearly show that the development

of the periphrastic form as a more prestigious variant is led by members from upper social ranks, being the clergy the most noticeable leader during the fifteenth century, followed by the gentry, the nobility and the royalty, whereas the other groups lag behind (professionals, 'non-gentry: merchants' and 'others').

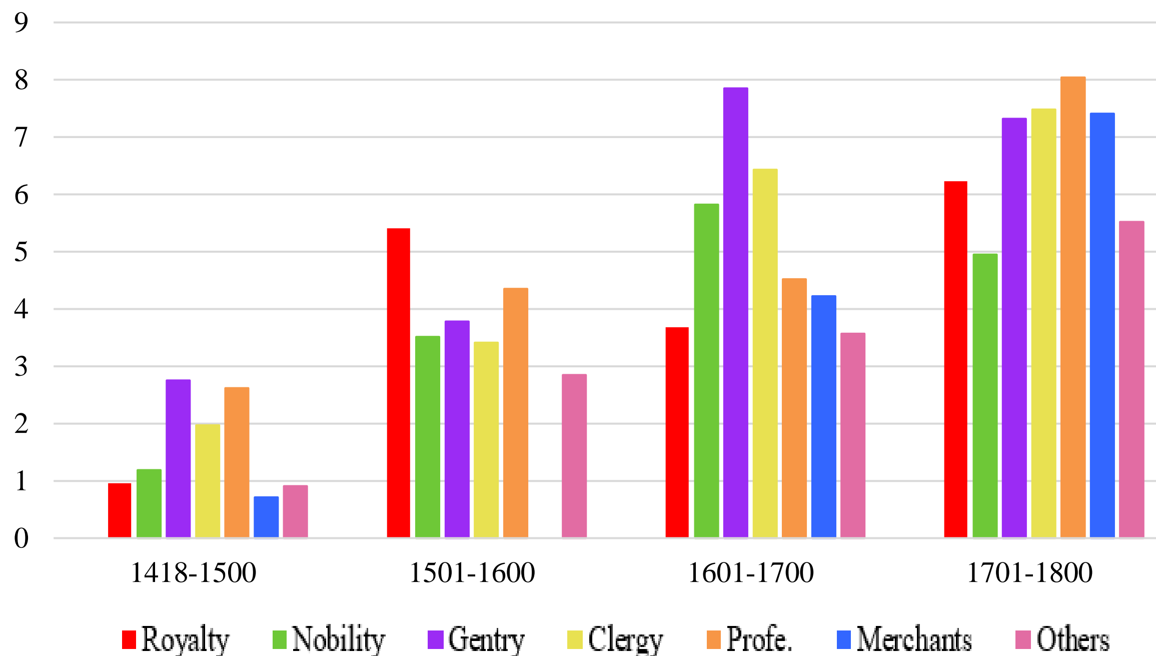

Figure 6.61. Development of the inflected form according to social rank (n.f.)

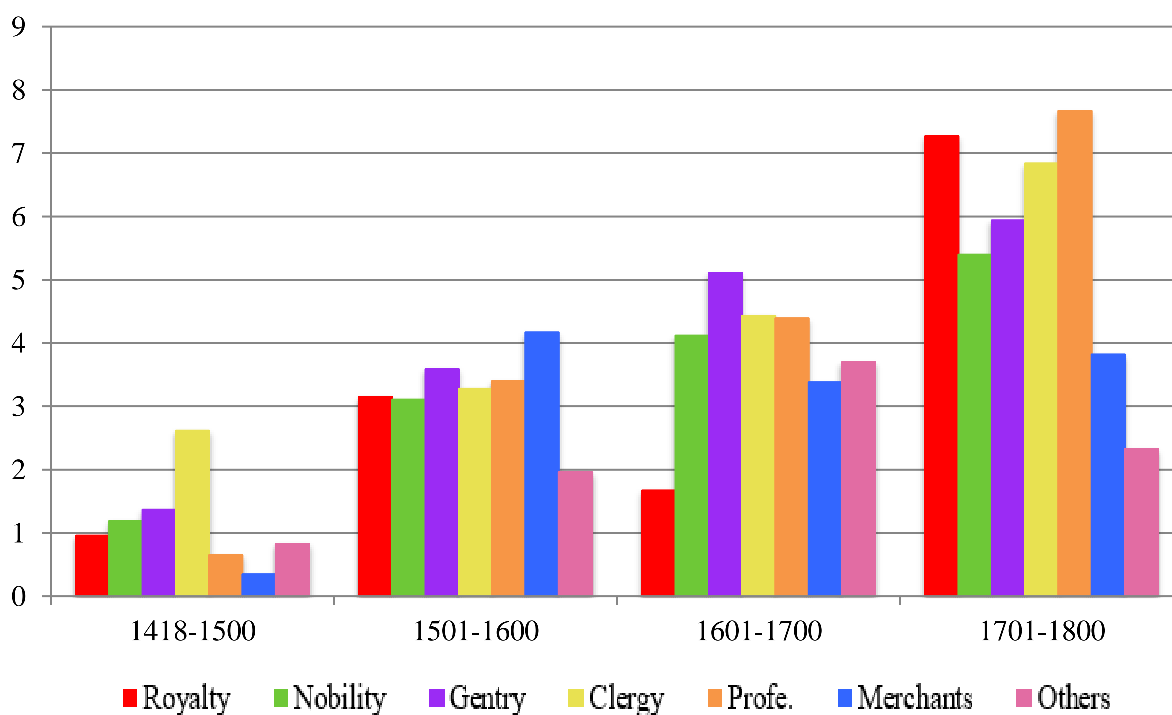

Figure 6.62. Development of the periphrastic form according to social rank (n.f.)

It is during the sixteenth century when the periphrastic linguistic variant spreads to lower social layers, showing higher frequencies among 'non-gentry: merchants', followed by the gentry. During the seventeenth century the gentry group seems to stand out in the use of the periphrastic variant followed by clergy and professionals. Finally, during the last period (1701–1800) the periphrastic forms peak in the private correspondence by professional people. These results suggest that there is significant variation in the use of the periphrastic forms for comparing adjectives in English according to the informants' social status, and therefore that the use of the periphrastic form has been socially-conditioned along the centuries. The findings point to a clear introduction of periphrastic comparison from above, that is, from the highest social layers. More especially, it is the clergy who could have introduced the periphrastic form, and due to the relationship that they used to maintain with members from the gentry and nobility, they could have also exerted some kind of linguistic influence on them, as represented in the normalised frequencies obtained during the fifteenth century. This periphrastic comparative form may have spread to lower social ranks rapidly. It is during the next centuries when people in connection with social mobility and a possible establishment of weak ties in their social networks, such as 'non-gentry: merchants' and professionals, show a considerably rapid increase in the use of the periphrastic forms, which reach higher frequencies in the letters by professional, the clergy and the royalty during the eighteenth century. The ranking of R-values obtained by means of Pearson correlation coefficient tests for the different social rank grouping in inflected and periphrastic forms (see Table 6.39) confirms this evolution in their behaviour. As illustrated, the gentry group shows a stronger polynomial relationship with R equal to +1 in the use of the periphrastic form, but so strong in the use of the inflected variant (0.849), followed by the clergy and the nobility. This suggests that statistically speaking, the use of periphrastic forms by higher social groups is not arbitrary and the same applies to the use of the inflectional forms by members from lower social ranks, such as 'non-gentry: others' with a strong relationship with R closer to +1 (0.9724).

Table 6.39. Ranking of R-values obtained by means of Pearson correlation coefficient tests

Periphrastic Forms		Inflected Forms	
Gentry	1	Non-gentry: "others"	0.9724
Clergy	0.9971	Clergy	0.9681
Nobility	0.9927	Nobility	0.9591
Professionals	0.9675	Non-gentry: "merchants"	0.9495
Non-gentry: "others"	0.8353	Professionals	0.9223
Non-gentry: "merchants"	0.8144	Gentry	0.849
Royalty	0.7583	Royalty	0.6641

6.2.3. Double comparatives

This section analyses the double comparative forms in our corpora. As discussed in section 1.2 above, González-Díaz (2004, 2006, 2008: 135–214) has offered the most comprehensive survey of double comparatives from a diachronic socio-stylistic perspective to date. The data in her analysis of the socio-stylistic distribution of double comparatives come mainly from different plays of William Shakespeare, the *Corpus of English Dialogues* (CED) (Kytö & Culpeper, 2006), the Early Modern English part of the *Helsinki Corpus* (HC), the CEEC (Nevalainen *et al*. 1998) and texts by other EModE dramatists, such as Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Heywood and John Fletcher. Her findings indicate that double comparatives were initially associated to the speech of the upper classes and were used in educated contexts. In particular, she remarks that:

> […] factors other than standardisation and prescriptivism had an influence on the disappearance of double periphrastic forms from the written language […]. They started to disappear before the second half of the seventeenth century, as a result of a gradual loss of prestige that they underwent from the last decade of the sixteenth century (c1594). The loss of prestige led to a subsequent process of stigmatisation (nearly under completion around 1672) that restricted double periphrastic forms to the non-standard registers in which they are found nowadays.
>
> (González-Díaz, 2004: 201)

As far as private correspondence is concerned, González-Díaz also investigated double comparatives in this specific type of written register by using the CEEC. As mentioned in section 5.3, our data come from the PCEEC and CEECE to cover the periods from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. The issue here is that I have found seventeen instances of double comparatives in the PCEEC (from 1467 to 1651) and González-Díaz only came across three instances of double forms in the CEEC (2004: 185). It is worth mentioning at this point that the PCEEC is based on the original CEEC, and hence the PCEEC is a smaller version of the CEEC.[9] In the present study, I have also included the three instances of double forms found in González-Díaz's analysis (2004), amounting to a total of seventeen tokens plus three instances found in the CEECE (from 1692 to 1734), amounting to twenty instances in total. Table 6.40 shows the distribution of double comparatives found in both corpora. Specifically, González-Díaz only makes reference to the tokens by Dorothy Plumpton (*more better*), Jane Messyndyne (*more higher*) and John Jones (*more quicker*), and she concludes by stating that although the examples

[9] http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC/index.html

obtained are not statistically significant, they are of paramount importance because they present the same social distribution found in the study of double comparatives in other corpora, as they occur in writings coming from high professional ranks. See also examples from (108) to (127) below, corresponding to each double comparative found in our corpora, from number 1 to 20, successively.

Table 6.40. Distribution of double comparatives found in the PCEEC and CEECE (1467-1734)

Nº token	Double comp.	Year	Author	Recipient
1	*More saddere*	1467	Margaret Paston (Gentry)	John Paston (Gentry-relative)
2	*More clerer*	1476	Thomas Betson (Merchant)	William Stonor (Gentry-relative)
3	*More redyer*	1480	William Goldwyn (Professional)	Annys Wydeslade/Stonor (Others)
4	*More sewrer*	1484	William Cely (Merchant)	Richard & George Cely (Merchant-relative)
5	*More gladder*	1488	William Paston III (Gentry)	John Paston III (Gentry-relative)
6	*More better*	1506	Dorothy Plumpton (Gentry)	Robert Plumpton (Gentry-relative)
7	*More bolder*	1530	Robert Acurs (Others)	William Brereton (Professional)
8	*More lykyr*	1530	Gilbert Godbehere (Others)	William Brereton (Professional)
9	*More gladder*	1536	Edward Stanley (Nobility)	George Talbot (Nobility)
10	*More higher*	1537	Jane Messyndyne (Clergy)	Founder of the nunnery of Legborne (Clergy)
11	*More colder*	1539	Thomas Cromwell (Nobility)	Henry Tudor VIII (Royalty)
12	*More whoter*	1592	Richard Verstegan (Clergy)	Robert Persons (Clergy)
13	*More forwarder*	1594	Anne Townshend (Nobility)	Nathaniel Bacon I (Gentry-relative)
14	*More strikter*	1613	Thomas Wentworth (Nobility)	William Wentworth (Gentry)
15	*More better*	1617	John Holles SR (Nobility)	Francis Norris (Nobility)
16	*More lyker*	1620	Timothy Hutton II (Merchant)	Timothy Hutton I (Gentry-kin)
17	*More quicker*	1651	John Jones (Professional)	Edmund Ludlow (Professional)
18	*More severar*	1692	Roger Fleming (Gentry)	Sir Daniel Fleming (Gentry-relative)
19	*More quicker*	1695	James Fleming (Professional)	Sir Daniel Fleming (Gentry-relative)
20	*More freer*	1734	Richard Wardman (Others)	Thomas Wentworth (Nobility)

(108) Therfore I wold ye shuld send home your brothere or ell Dawbenye to haue a rewle and to takyn in such men as were necessary for the saffegard of the place for if I were there wyth-ought I had the ***more saddere*** or wurchepfull persones abought me, […] (PCEEC, from Margaret Paston to John Paston, 1467)

(109) […] ffor I shall send you ***more clerer*** writinge ffrom Cales by the mercy off Jhesu, whom I besech ever to preserve your maystershipe in helth and vertu. (PCEEC, from Thomas Betson to William Stonor, 1476)

(110) And my service schall be the ***more redyer*** to yow at all tymys with the grace of God, wyche have yow in kepynge. (PCEEC, from William Goldwyn to Annys Wydeslade/Stonor, 1480)

(111) Allsoo syr, I thyncke as ffar as my symppull reson geyff me, hytt ys ***more sewrer*** schyppyng now than schall be hereaffter, ffor dyuersse causes etc. (PCEEC, from William Cely to Richard & George Cely, 1484)

(112) […] all the Englysche-men went vndyr the hetchys soo that they schewyd no more but those that came to Sowthehamton wyth the schype, to cawse the Frenche-men to be the ***more gladder*** to medyll wyth them. (PCEEC, from William Paston III to John Paston III, 1488)

(113) Wherfore, she is to me ***more better*** lady then ever she was before, insomuch that she hath promysed me hir good ladyship as long as ever she shall lyve. (PCEEC, from Dorothy Plumpton to Robert Plumpton, 1506)

(114) […] yff that yt wold pleyse you to commonde me to do som pleyseur ar seruys to any of yore frendes , that wold be to me greyte comforth , & then I myght be the ***more bolder*** to call vppon yore masterchypp at my nedes […] (PCEEC, from Robert Acurs to William Bereton, 1530)

(115) […] then he sendys for hym; for nother Master Huntyngton whych ys hye stewarde, nor Master Solerer, nor hys chapplyn can do hym any plesor, but be as chylderne in comparyson of hym in the premyssys, and stoned ***more lykyr*** shadoys then men of gravyte. (PCEEC, from Gilbert Godbehere to William Brereton, 1530)

(116) And I shall be moche ***more gladder*** to do his Grace suice, then he to comand me, to the vtter most of my lytill power accordyng to my moost bound dutye […] (PCEEC, from Edward Stanley to George Talbot, 1536)

(117) In consideracion wherof if it may please your goodnes, in our great necessitie, to be a meane and sewter for your owne powre Pryory, that it maye be preserved and stond, you shalbe a ***more higher*** Founder to vs than he that first foundid oure Howse. (PCEEC, from Jane Messyndyne to Founder of the nunnery of Legborne, 1537)

(118) […] Christophor the said ConesTables secretary […] as he had brought at his retourne afore, a cold answer from Themperour, he brought it at this last tyme moch ***more colder***, so that there is but litel hope of spede bitwen them. (PCEEC, from Thomas Cromwell to Henry Tudor VIII, 1539)

(119) The old Recorder called Fletewood is oute of his office; the cause I thinck was only slacknesse in proceeding against Catholikes, for another hathe it that is of a ***more whoter*** spirite. (PCEEC, from Richard Verstegan to Robert Persons, 1592)

(120) […] I see no reason why you shoulde be leade with a vaine hope of Mr Gaudy, seeinge he is no ***more forwarder*** to imbrace the match, but to deferr yt too yeares longer. (PCEEC, from Anne Townshend to Nathaniel Bacon I, 1594)

(121) In the first part he spoke sumthings touching the increase of Papists, his maiesties care and watchfullnes to preuent ther increase, but rather by the clearing of sum points as yeat obsqure and the exeqution of that which hath allready been inacted then by ***more strikter*** order, bycause that seuerity is soe far from altering men 's consciences that itt doth rather confirme them in thear opinions […] (PCEEC, from Thomas Wentworth to William Wentworth, 1613)

(122) […] your Lordship when yow cum will, by fynding muche ***more better*** satisfy your self, and discern my ignorance, which is the rather to be pardoned, because yet my desire to serve yow is equall with those that ar more able […] (PCEEC, from John Holles SR to Francis Norris, 1617)

(123) I can see no reasson that I should receve such kindnesses from him as I have obtyned, in somuch that they have semed to savor ***more lyker*** the deedes of a

ffather then a ffrinde […] (PCEEC, from Timothy Hutton II to Timothy Hutton I, 1620)

(124) The Lord is gratious in his Dealing towards us […] that or low spirits are apt to grow regardles of the manifestacions of his love when we enjoy them in a continued series, may have the ***more quicker*** and more feeling apprehensions of them I am sorry with all my soule […] (PCEEC, from John Jones to Edmund Ludlow, 1651)

(125) […] I am apt to think yt ye old grudge is not cold, and againe finding me more submissive then formerly makes him ***more severar*** then usuall he hath been […] (CEECE, from Roger Fleming to Sir Daniel Fleming, 1692)

(126) I cannot think any way ***more quicker*** for preferment than thakeing Orders, and commendable; Soe with my prayers for your Health. (CEECE, from James Fleming to Sir Daniel Fleming, 1695)

(127) […] we had a great dale of better gentlemen, but they was ***more freer*** of their mony, and spent a great dale more mony then we did […] CEECE, from Richard Wardman to Thomas Wentworth, 1734)

Although González-Díaz corroborates that double comparative forms occur only in the letters by members from upper social ranks in the CEEC, I have found instances in letters from informants of lower social position (such as ‘merchants’ and ‘others’), as shown in Table 6.40. In particular, six instances of double comparative forms in the writings of members from lower social ranks have been found, representing 30% of the total amount. Thus, I am focusing mainly on those instances drawn from letters by members of the lower ranks. These are number 2, 4, 7, 8, 16 and 20 in Table 6.40. Moreover, I have also found instances of double comparatives beyond 1651, although they are few in number. It should be also noted here the social status of the addressee and the sociolinguistic profile of the addresser. For example, tokens 2 (*more clerer)* and 4 (*more sewrer*) correspond to Thomas Betson and William Cely (merchants). As mentioned in section 6.2.1.5, Thomas Betson along with William Cely could have been aware of the linguistic fashion at the time since they are among the merchants who show higher frequencies of the periphrastic form. Therefore, it is not surprising that, despite belonging to a lower social rank, they also employed double comparative forms in their writings. Tokens 7

and 8 correspond to Robert Acurs and Gilbert Godbehere (ranked as 'non-gentry: others'). Their letters were both addressed to the same person, William Brereton, considered as a professional (higher in the social ladder). In actual fact, both letters describe a kind of petition to Brereton from Acurs and Godbehere to be admitted as his apprentices. Therefore, the register seems to be more formal as the main aim of the letter is a plea. Finally, tokens 16 and 20 come from Timothy Hutton II, a merchant who addressed a kin of the family in 1620 and 1734, and Richard Wardman, an unknown person ranked as 'non-gentry: others' who addressed Thomas Wentworth, from the nobility, in 1613. From the results obtained, we could confirm that the register in the letters of those informants belonging to lower ranks would change in written documents to accommodate to either their aims in writing the letter or the respective addressees' status. As Croft (2000: 181) states, it is in these sociolinguistic situations when we find speakers who "wish to identify with a more powerful group, particularly speakers with weak ties to a local network who may have some doubt about their social identity". Hence, it could be possible that the informants were seeking for a kind of social identification to pursue their goals.

Apart from this assumption, I have also considered a further issue related to the origin of the double comparative adjective. For this specific purpose, I have looked at the Germanic/native and Romance origin of the double comparative forms collected from our data, together with those found in the corpora used by González-Díaz (2004) so as to find out whether the etymological origin of the adjective could have had any influence on the choice of the double structure. Table 6.41 below summarises the results obtained.

Table 6.41. Distribution of double comparatives with Germanic/native and Romance adjectives found in González-Díaz (2004) and in our study

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Corpora used in González-Díaz's study</th><th colspan="3">Corpora used in our study</th></tr>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Source</th><th colspan="2">Nº of D.C.</th><th rowspan="2">Source</th><th colspan="2">Nº of D.C.</th></tr>
<tr><th>G/N</th><th>Romance</th><th>G/N</th><th>Romance</th></tr>
<tr><td>Shakespare's plays</td><td>29</td><td>5</td><td rowspan="3">PCEEC</td><td rowspan="3">14</td><td rowspan="3">3</td></tr>
<tr><td>CED</td><td>4</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>HC</td><td>4</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other EModE dramatists</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td rowspan="2">CEECE</td><td rowspan="2">2</td><td rowspan="2">1</td></tr>
<tr><td>CEEC</td><td>3</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>44</td><td>12</td><td>Total</td><td>16</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>%</td><td>78.6%</td><td>21.4%</td><td>%</td><td>80%</td><td>20%</td></tr>
</table>

A close look at Table 6.41 reveals an interestingly strong preference for the use of double comparatives with adjectives of Germanic/native origin. In fact, the percentages in both studies are quite similar: nearly 80% of the double comparatives found in both studies are preferred with Germanic/native adjectives, above all from the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth

century. This may reinforce the hypothesis that the use of the periphrastic variant was an indicator of a more elevated and educated style, since apart from being mainly associated with adjectives of Romance origin, it is also used in combination with Germanic/native adjectives in letters normally addressed to members from the upper ranks. It is also interesting to note that from the four instances of double comparatives with Romance adjectives found in our corpora, two of them are in the letters of lower social rank informants: Betson and Cely. As merchants, and due to their wider social mobility and weak ties in loose-knit social networks, they could have probably acquired ample knowledge of the trend or fashion at the time. In short, they could have seen this as a sign of refinement and use them wisely in their letters to sound more attractive to their recipients depending on the purpose of their letters.

6.2.4. Social ranked Audience Design: the intersection of inter- and intra- speaker variation

The main aim of this section is to explore intra-speaker variation by applying Bell's models of Audience Design (1984, 2001) so as to find out possible addressee-based patterns of style-shifting in the communicative interaction of our informants, as observed in Hernández-Campoy and García-Vidal (2018b) with some members of the Paston family. As seen in 3.3.2.b, according to Bell (1984: 158): "[i]ntraspeaker variation is a *response* to interspeaker variation, chiefly as manifested in one's interlocutors". From this assumption, it follows that style-shifting is considered as a dialogue-based product of speakers' linguistic production in interactive social contexts, representing both interpersonal and intergroup relations. Thus, "[s]tyle derives its meaning from the association of linguistic features with particular social groups" (Bell, 2001: 142), which denotes an interrelation of inter- and intra-speaker variation, along with linguistic evaluation, since "historically, style differentiation of a variable is derived from social differentiation by way of social evaluation" (Bell, 1984: 157). Consequently, a certain linguistic variable which allows style-shifting is subject to the evaluation by members of a speech community. As a result, differences in style also carry group social meanings, since stylistic variation emerges from inter-group language variation by means of social evaluation (see Figure 6.63). This co-occurrence of inter- and intra-speaker variation led Bell to formulate a hypothesis where the basis of stylistic variation leads to the association of a particular style with a specific group:

> A sociolinguistic variable which is differentiated by certain speaker characteristics (e.g., by class or gender or age) tends to be differentiated in speech to addressees with those same characteristics.

> That is, if an old person uses a given linguistic variable differently than a young person, then individuals will use that variable differently when speaking to an old person than to a young person (cf. Helfrich 1979) – and, mutatis mutandis, for gender, race, and so on. In so far as women speak differently than men, they will be spoken to differently than men.
>
> (Bell, 1984: 167)

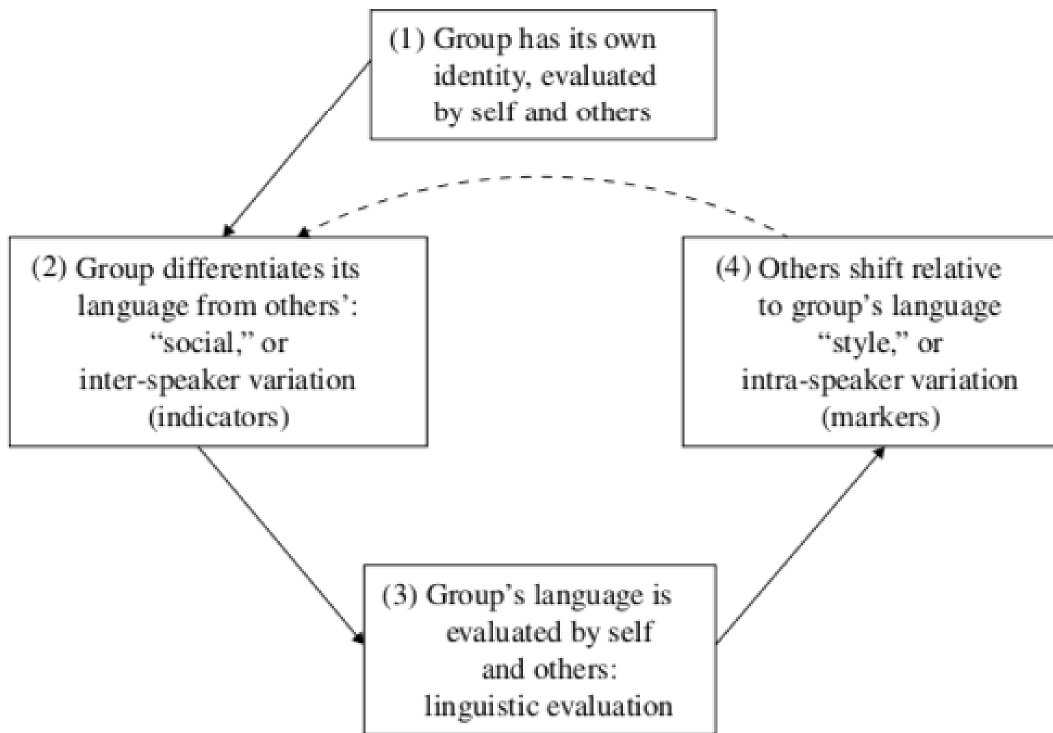

Figure 6.63. The derivation of intra-speaker variation from inter-speaker variation (Bell, 1984: 152)

Assuming that Bell's Style Axiom derives from a relationship between intra- and interspeaker variation which depends on social evaluation, it follows that variation in the speech of a single individual echoes the variation existing among speakers on the social dimension. Thus, style-shifting emerges from the variability among different social groups where intra-speaker variation is seen as a function of inter-speaker variation. As Hernández-Campoy points out:

> […] the wider the social variation, the wider the stylistic variation. [T]he axiom assumes that the same linguistic variables operate simultaneously on both the social and stylistic dimensions, and, given that social evaluation is the engine linking both […], the range of variation of style shifts will never exceed that of social variation.
>
> (Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 120)

This means that a given speaker uses different linguistic styles in different situations and for different purposes, which constitutes the *verbal repertoire*. But, as Figure 6.64 shows, intra-speaker variation is a function of inter-speaker variation, which entails that style-shifting derives from socio-demographic variation: "the variation that any one individual shows in their speech will never be greater than the differences between the groups that their style-shifting is derived from" (Meyerhoff, 2006: 44).

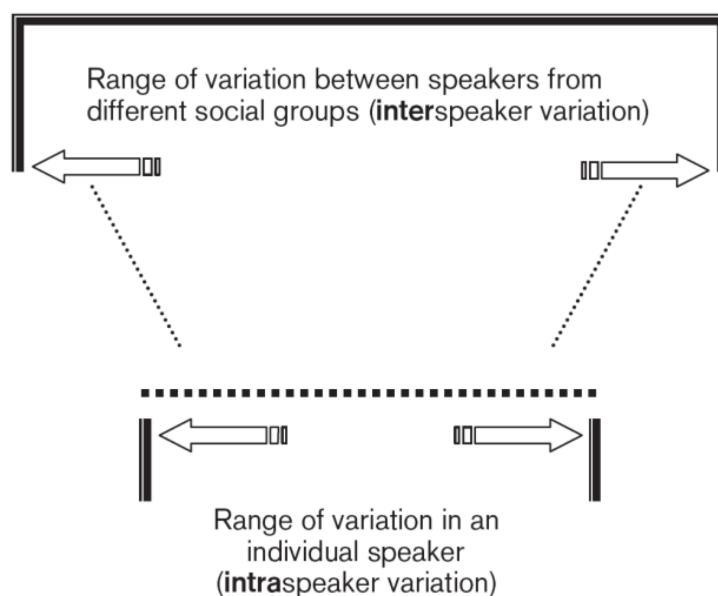

Figure 6.64. Inter-speaker and intra-speaker range of variation (from Meyerhoff, 2006: 45)

Some individuals will thus exhibit a much wider range of intra-speaker variation than others and their differences will be socially-based mostly. As Trudgill (1974) found in his Norwich stydy, the different social class groups had different frequencies in usage of the sociolinguistic variables observed, and drew a symmetrical pattern, where the most formal style of the lowest social group is similar to the most informal style of the highest social class (see Table 6.42). It is in then this intersection between the stylistic and the social dimensions that makes style be a crucial sociolinguistic concept, because, as Labov illustrated (1972: 240), there is a point along the symmetrical axis where it would be difficult to distinguish "a casual salesman from a careful pipefitter". Therefore, as mentioned in section 5.5.2, we attempt to approach audience design by arranging all the comparative tokens retrieved from informants of the same social class (men and women jointly).

Table 6.42. (ng) Indexes by social class and style in Norwich. Usage of non-standard variants (adapted from Trudgill, 1974: 92)

Social Class	Style			
	WLS	**PRS**	**FS**	**CS**
MMC	000	000	003	028
LMC	000	010	015	042
UWC	005	015	074	087
MWC	023	044	088	095
LWC	029	066	098	100

Thus, we will attempt to analyse how each social group would use the inflectional and periphrastic comparative variants when addressing recipients from different social ranks to test the sociolinguistic practices that could be ascribed to certain social groups collectively within the community so as to observe patterns of intra-speaker variation of the social groups when addressing other members from different social orders as an outcome. To do so, in the following sections the linguistic behaviour of each social group will be examined individually when being addressed by the rest of the social groups (see Figure 6.65). As mentioned in section 5.5.2, when analysing audience design, the further profile of *relatives* emerges, which includes any kin, brothers, sisters, wife, husband, father, mother or even in-law members of the family. Again, for the sake of comparison, the raw data have been normalised to a text of 10.000 words by using the running words presented in Table 5.12 in section 5.5.2. The raw figures can be seen in Appendix II for each individual.

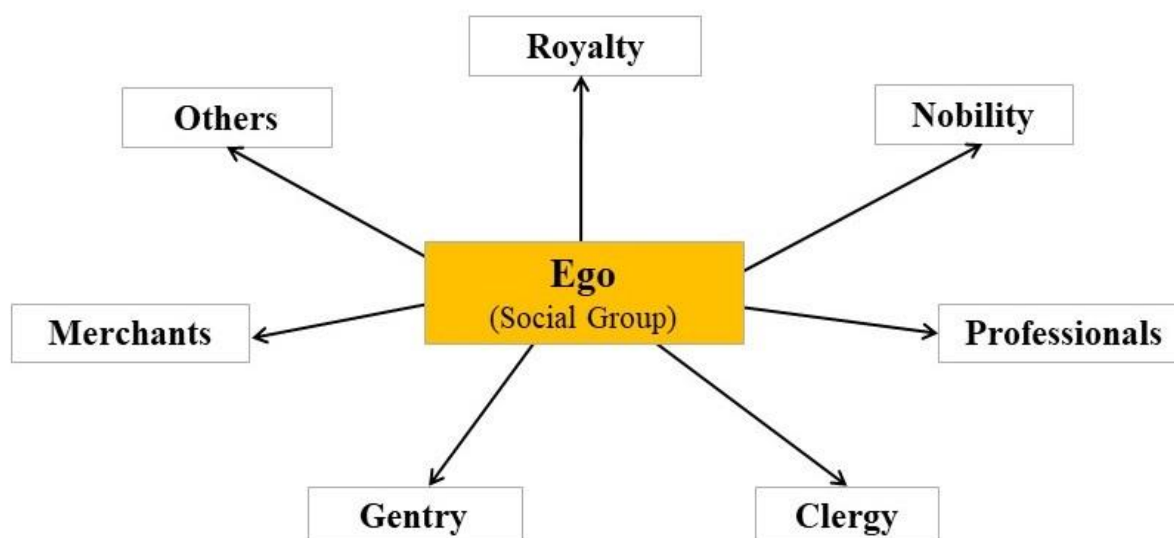

Figure 6.65. The audience-based interaction between social ranks

6.2.4.a. The royalty as addressee

This section explores the application of Audience Design to find out addressee-based patterns of style-shifting in the communicative interaction of members from different social ranks when addressing the royalty. Figure 6.66 traces the diffusion of both comparative linguistic variants found in letters from equals (members from the royalty), nobility, clergy and professionals when interacting with the royalty across the four periods.

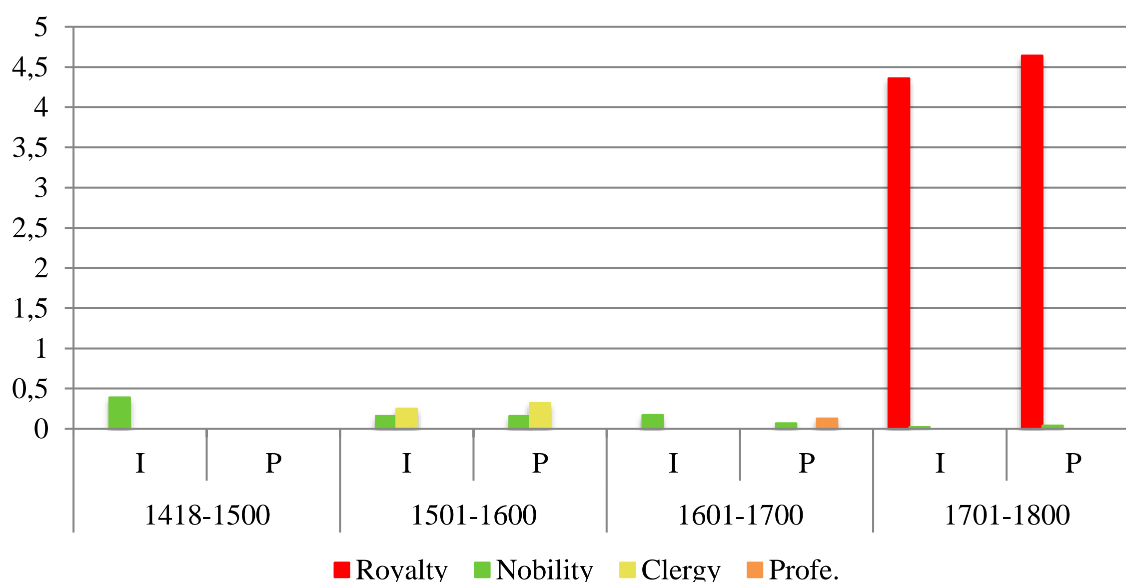

Figure 6.66. Inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms used by social groups when addressing the royalty (n.f.)

As expected, the interaction normally occurs with members from higher or equal social positions, although some instances have been found in letters by professionals during the seventeenth century. The results show a higher use of the periphrastic form when addressing the royalty in letters by the clergy during the sixteenth century, by professionals in the seventeenth century and by equals (i.e. other members of the royalty) during the eighteenth century. The differences in relation to the social position of the addressees show that during the sixteenth century the clergy uses more periphrastic forms (0.32) than the nobility; they also point to a kind of upward accommodation of the professionals when addressing the royalty during the seventeenth century (0.13) in so far as they only used the periphrastic form. The nobility does not show any uniform patterning of either variants when addressing the royalty: higher amounts of inflectional forms are found during the fifteenth century but it is not until the eighteenth century when the periphrastic form outnumbers the inflectional one. Finally, during the eighteenth century, private correspondence addressed to equals show similar rates for both

comparative forms, although the periphrastic still outnumbers the inflectional one (4.64 and 4.36 respectively).

6.2.4.b. The nobility as addressee

In this section, inter-speaker variation is explored in the communicative interaction of members from different social ranks when addressing the nobility to find out addressee-based patterns of style-shifting. Figure 6.67 illustrates the diffusion of both comparative linguistic variants found in letters from equals (i.e. other members from the nobility), royalty, gentry, clergy, professionals and 'non-gentry: others' when interacting with the nobility across periods.

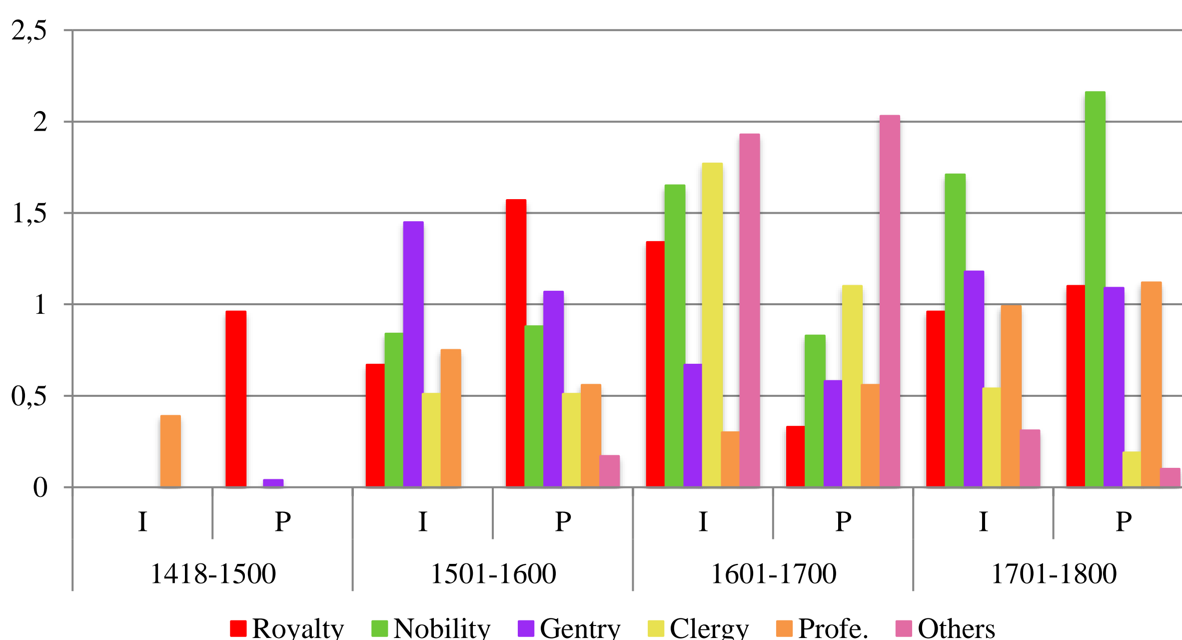

Figure 6.67. Inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms used by social groups when addressing the nobility (n.f.)

The analysis of the nobility as addressed by equals, royalty, gentry, clergy, professionals and 'non-gentry: others' shows a more extensive interaction with more social groups than the royalty. On average, results show a progressive use of the periphrastic comparative form over the inflectional one by members from the royalty along all periods. However, unlike the royalty, the clergy tend to use more inflectional forms when they addressed the nobility, peaking during the seventeenth century with a frequency of 1.77. Interestingly, patterns of upward accommodation through style-shifting are also noticeable in the group of professionals; their periphrastic occurrences used in their letters increase from the seventeenth century onwards, exhibiting the highest peak during the eighteenth century with a frequency of 1.12. The same

patterns of accommodative behaviour are observed in the group of 'non-gentry: others', although in different periods; from the sixteenth century to the seventeenth century members from this group show a higher use of periphrastic forms in their letters, in fact they show the highest rates during the seventeenth century (2.03). In contrast, members from the gentry do not show a uniform diffusion of either variant when addressing the nobility. During the fifteenth century the periphrastic form is the preferred one, although showing lower rates, but from then on, the inflectional outnumbers the periphrastic. Finally, when addressing their equals, the nobility exhibits more varied patterns in the use of both linguistic variants since their letters tend to show a higher use of periphrastic forms during the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, reaching 2.16, although during the seventeenth the inflectional form is preferred.

6.2.4.c. The gentry as addressee

In this section, inter-speaker variation is explored in the communicative interaction of members from different social ranks when addressing the gentry social group to find out addressee-based patterns of style-shifting. Figure 6.68 illustrates the diffusion of the use of both comparative variants found in letters from equals (i.e. members from the gentry), royalty, nobility, clergy, professionals, 'non-gentry: merchants' and 'others' when interacting with the gentry across periods.

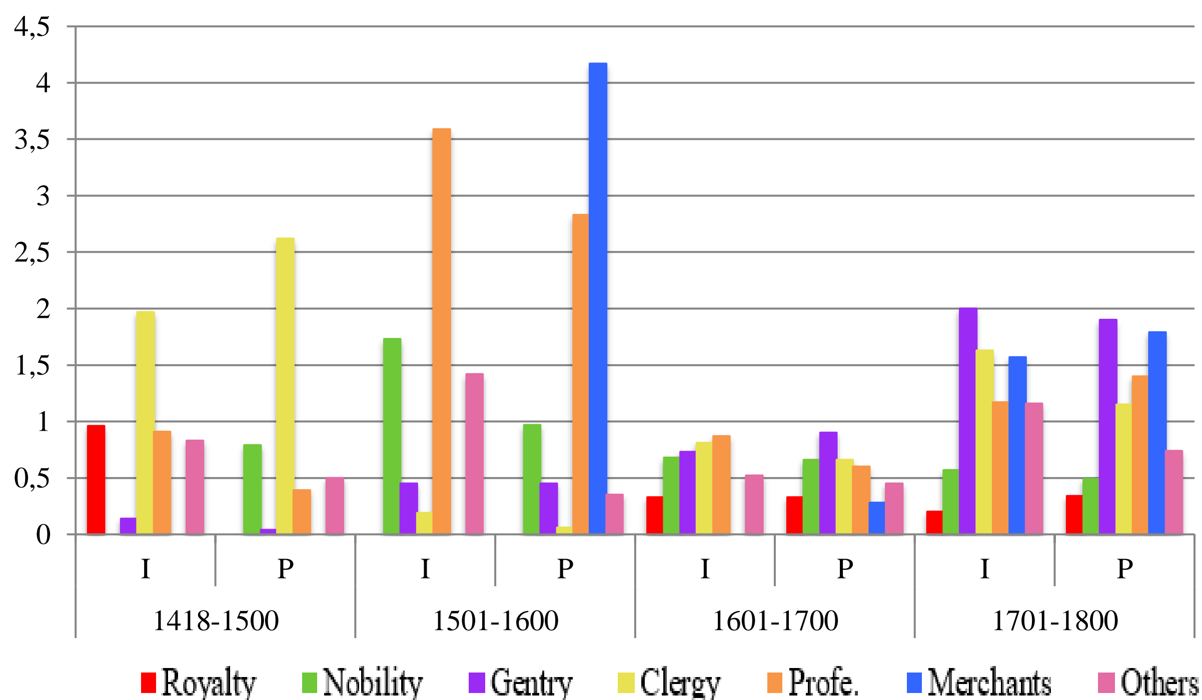

Figure 6.68. Inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms used by social groups when addressing the gentry (n.f.)

The interaction of the different social groups with the gentry is greater than with the rest of the social categories. The most remarkable conclusion we can draw from the figures is that members from the lower ranks (mainly 'non-gentry: merchants') inspired upward accommodation since they show higher frequencies of the periphrastic comparative variant than of the inflectional form. In fact, they show the highest frequencies in the sixteenth century (4.17). In this sense, the gentry as users of the language could have inspired upward accommodation to members from lower ranks because they could have been considered as a more overtly respected social group. It is also possible that being a middle rank they were addressed by members of all social groups more extensively than the royalty and the nobility. Unlike the addressed-based patterns found in the group of professionals when addressing the royalty and nobility, members of this social group do not show a preference for the periphrastic form over the inflectional one when addressing the gentry, although they show more occurrences of the periphrastic form when compared with the rest of the social groups (2.83 in the sixteenth century or 1.4 in the eighteenth). Upward social mobility was also possible for many professionals at the time, who could cross the borderline via their professions to become members from the gentry (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2013: 33). Therefore, possibly many of them could have belonged to the gentry at the time of writing and in this sense their linguistic behaviour may be interpreted as that of equals. In consonance with this, members from the gentry also show a preference for inflectional forms almost in all periods when addressing their equals, with the exception of the seventeenth century (0.9). Altogether, socially high users of the language, such as the nobility and clergy show similar sociolinguistic practices when addressing the gentry: it is in the fifteenth century when the use of the periphrastic form is higher than the inflectional one, but it decreases along the centuries. However, despite presenting less interaction with the gentry group, the royalty presents higher uses of the periphrastic form only during the eighteenth century. As mentioned in section 6.2, we advocate carrying out microscopic observations within the different social groups when results are scarce or distorted. In this sense, information was given about this issue in section 6.2.1.1 where I noticed that young members from the royalty tended to show a higher preference for the periphrastic form during the eighteenth century. Probably, this may explain the difference in use of both linguistic comparative variants among socially high users of the language. Finally, the social group of 'non-gentry: others' does not show evidence of preference for the use of periphrasis but just higher uses of inflectional comparative forms when addressing the gentry.

6.2.4.d. The clergy as addressee

In this section, inter-speaker variation is explored in the communicative interaction of members from different social ranks when addressing the clergy to find out addressee-based patterns of style-shifting. Figure 6.69 presents the diffusion of the use of both comparative linguistic variants found in letters from equals (i.e. other members from the clergy), royalty, nobility, gentry, professionals, 'non-gentry: merchants' and 'others' when interacting with the clergy across periods.

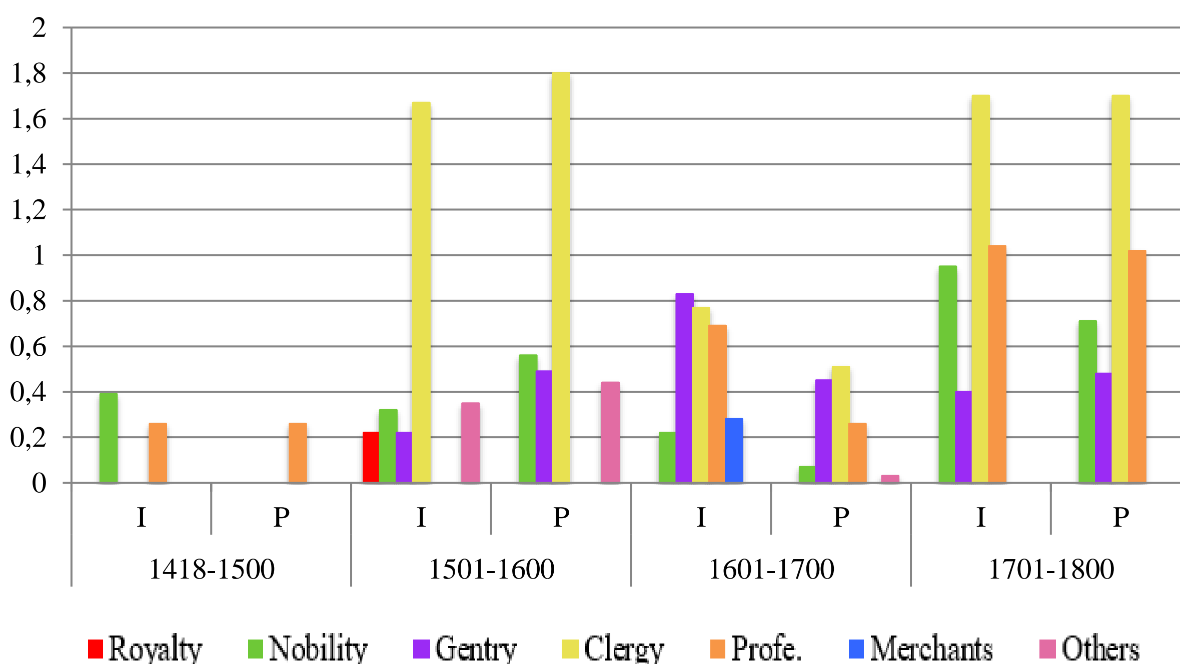

Figure 6.69. Inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms used by social groups when addressing the clergy (n.f.)

Considered as a high-status addressee, the clergy seems to have had more interaction with other high-status informants such as equals, gentry and nobility, but also with lower rank members such as professionals. In keeping with the results obtained, equals are the ones who present higher rates of the periphrastic form than the rest of the groups, especially during the sixteenth century. Additionally, these results confirm the conclusions reached in section 6.2.1.4, when the clergy group was analysed according to their use of the linguistic comparative variants, indicating that they could have initially introduced or helped to spread the periphrastic variant to the rest of the social groups. In fact, it is during that century when higher rates of the periphrastic form are found in letters from the nobility, gentry and 'non-gentry: others' when addressing the clergy. During the next two centuries the picture seems to be rather different: the use of inflectional forms tends to be higher in each social group when interacting with the

clergy, which apparently changes during the course of the eighteenth century when the use of both linguistic variants overlaps as a similar amount of occurrences for both are found.

6.2.4.e. The professionals as addressee

In this section, inter-speaker variation is explored in the communicative interaction of members from different social ranks when addressing the social group of professionals to find out addressee-based patterns of style-shifting. Figure 6.70 shows the diffusion of both comparative variants found in letters from equals (i.e. other members from the social group of professionals), nobility, gentry, clergy, 'non-gentry: merchants' and 'others' when interacting with professionals across periods.

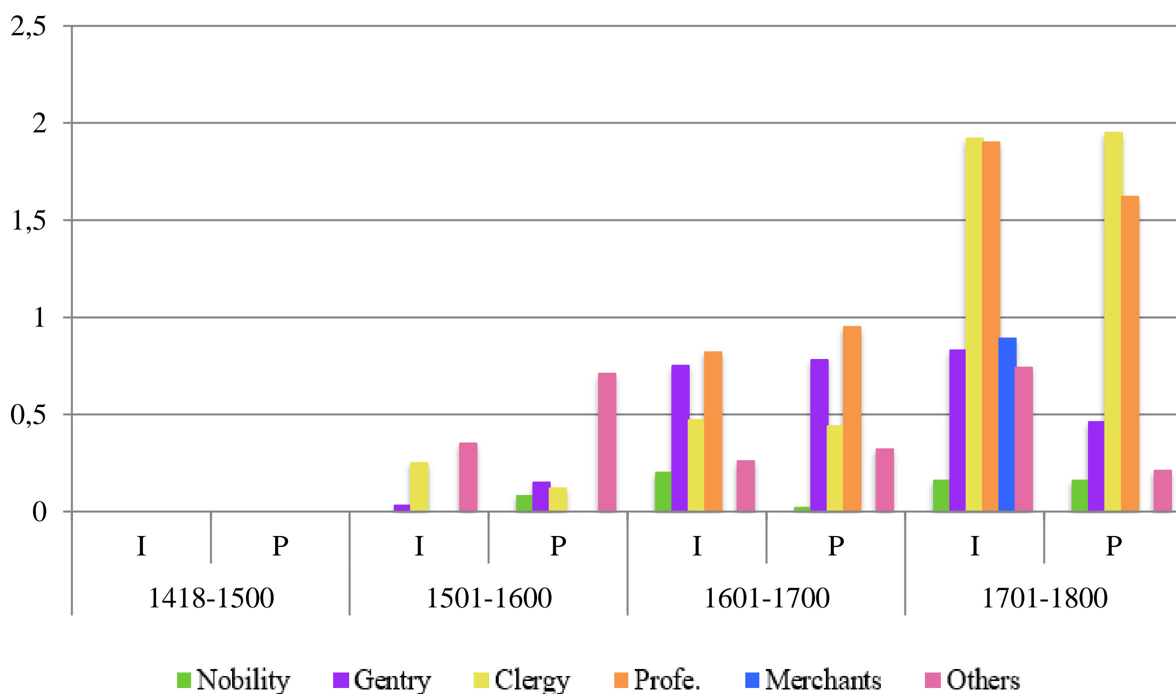

Figure 6.70. Inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms used by social groups when addressing the professional rank (n.f.)

The interaction with professionals shows a remarkable increase in the use of both comparative linguistic variants across time. In general, during the sixteenth century the majority of the social groups which addressed professionals show more occurrences of the periphrastic form, being higher among the group of 'non-gentry: others'. In contrast, the clergy exhibits higher frequencies of the inflectional form. In general, during the seventeenth century, the majority of the social groups show a similar linguistic attunement based on audienceship: the periphrastic form is higher in almost all the social groups when addressing professional people, except

among the nobility and the clergy. We could tentatively state that the higher social groups (nobility and clergy) show downward accommodation when addressing professionals. During the eighteenth century, the picture seems to be the same with respect to higher social groups, but different with 'non-gentry: merchants'. When they addressed professionals they do not show any periphrastic form at all during the eighteenth century.

6.2.4.f. The 'non-gentry: merchants' as addressee

In this section, inter-speaker variation is explored in the communicative interaction of members from different social ranks when addressing the 'non-gentry: merchants' group to find out addressee-based patterns of style-shifting. Figure 6.71 exhibits the diffusion of the use of both comparative linguistic variants found in letters from equals (i.e. other members from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group), gentry, clergy, professionals and 'non-gentry: others' when interacting with 'non-gentry: merchants' across periods.

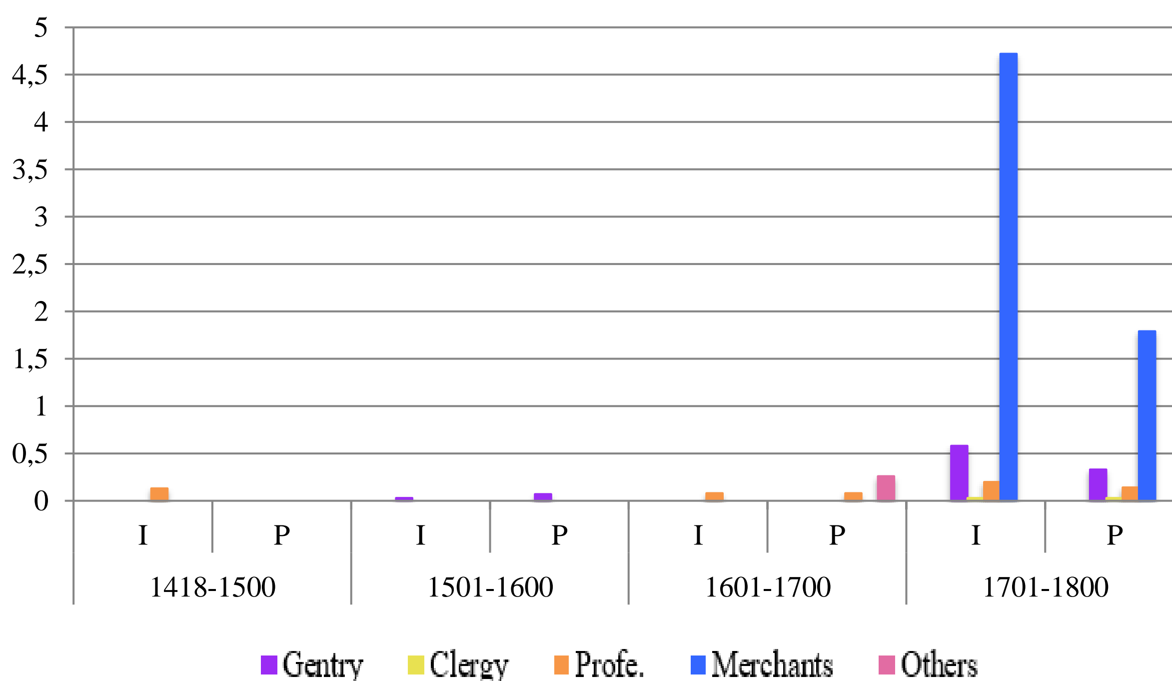

Figure 6.71. Inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms used by social groups when addressing the 'non-gentry: merchants' rank (n.f.)

The interaction with 'non-gentry: merchants' has not been so extensive across centuries, either because they were not used to writing letters, and hence they were not normally addressed by the other groups, or because of the fragmentary availability of archival sources. In fact, it is only during the eighteenth century when more letters addressed to people from the 'non-gentry:

merchants' group are found. Results suggest that, unlike the addressee-based patterns shown when addressing members of higher social status, equals show an overwhelming preference for the inflectional form (4.72) when addressing other members of their gorup. Thus, this social group shows more occurrences of the inflectional form when addressing their equals during the eighteenth century, which contrasts with a higher use of periphrastic forms indicating upward accommodation when addressing members from the gentry. Hence, with high- ranked addressees, people from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group modulate their linguistic practices in the use of the comparative variants, with higher rates of the innovative or more prestigious periphrastic form than of the vernacular/conservative inflective form. This performance reinforces the idea that when addressing high-ranked addressees, members from lower ranks may shift their language production as a strategy in search of affective effects to please their audienceship or as an imitation of their linguistic practices so as to pursue any kind of petition or aim. Thus, as Hernández-Campoy and García-Vidal state, it is this type of informants who reflect:

> […] multiplexity of social networks and regular mobility, which led to the weakening of ties to local communities and [promoted] the development of a polyhedral image in individuals, shaping a multi-faceted creative behaviour, exhibiting and aligning with different social identities for different purposes at different times and places and in different contexts of social relations and interaction.
>
> (Hernández-Campoy & García-Vidal, 2018a: 23)

Therefore, the results obtained here show variability in individual stylistic choices when addressing members from different social ranks, and, to some extexnt, the existence of some social awareness of the prestige associated with different linguistic forms.

6.2.4.g. The 'non-gentry: others' as addressee

In this section, inter-speaker variation is explored in the communicative interaction of members from different social ranks when addressing the social group of 'others' to find out addressee-based patterns of style-shifting. Figure 6.72 presents the diffusion of both comparative variants found in letters from equals (i.e. other members from the 'non-gentry: others' group) royalty, nobility, gentry, clergy, professionals and 'non-gentry: merchants' when interacting with individuals ranked as 'non-gentry: others' across periods.

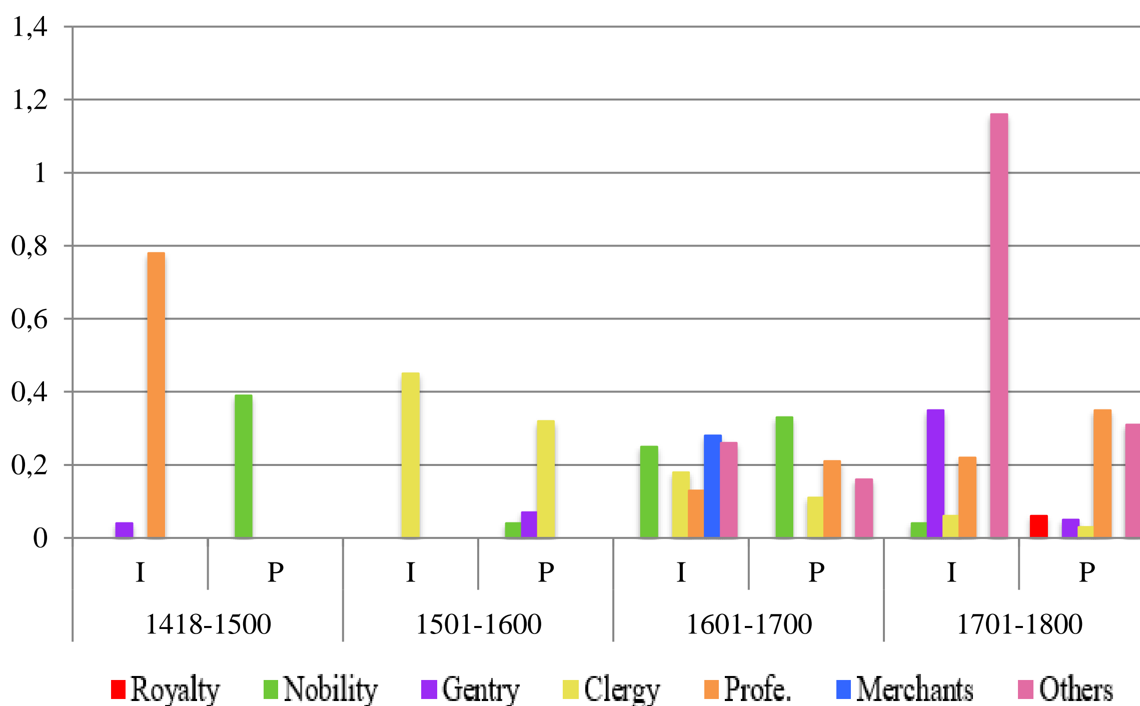

Figure 6.72. Inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms used by social groups when addressing the 'non-gentry: others' rank (n.f.)

Members of the group 'non-gentry: others' interacted with different social ranks in their letters. Among the most prominent we find professionals, equals, nobility or clergy. It is difficult to draw precise conclusions for this social rank since little information is known about the individuals who belong to it. In any case, the results obtained point to a higher use of the periphrastic comparative variant by members from higher social ranks (mainly royalty and nobility). In contrast, members from the clergy and gentry used more inflectional than periphrastic forms, as well as 'non-gentry: merchants' and equals. It is the professional rank which shows a greater deal of variation: during the fifteenth century the data point to a drastic use of inflectional forms when they address individuals ranked as 'non-gentry: others'. However, from the seventeenth century onwards the preferred linguistic variant is the periphrastic one, increasing the frequencies from one period to another (0.21 and 0.35 respectively).

6.2.4.h. Relatives as addressee

In this section, inter-speaker variation is explored in the communicative interaction of members from different social ranks when addressing their relatives to search for addressee-based patterns of style-shifting. Figure 6.73 presents the diffusion of both comparative linguistic

variants found in letters from the social ranks of royalty, nobility, gentry, clergy, professionals, 'non-gentry: merchants' and 'others' when interacting with their relatives across periods.

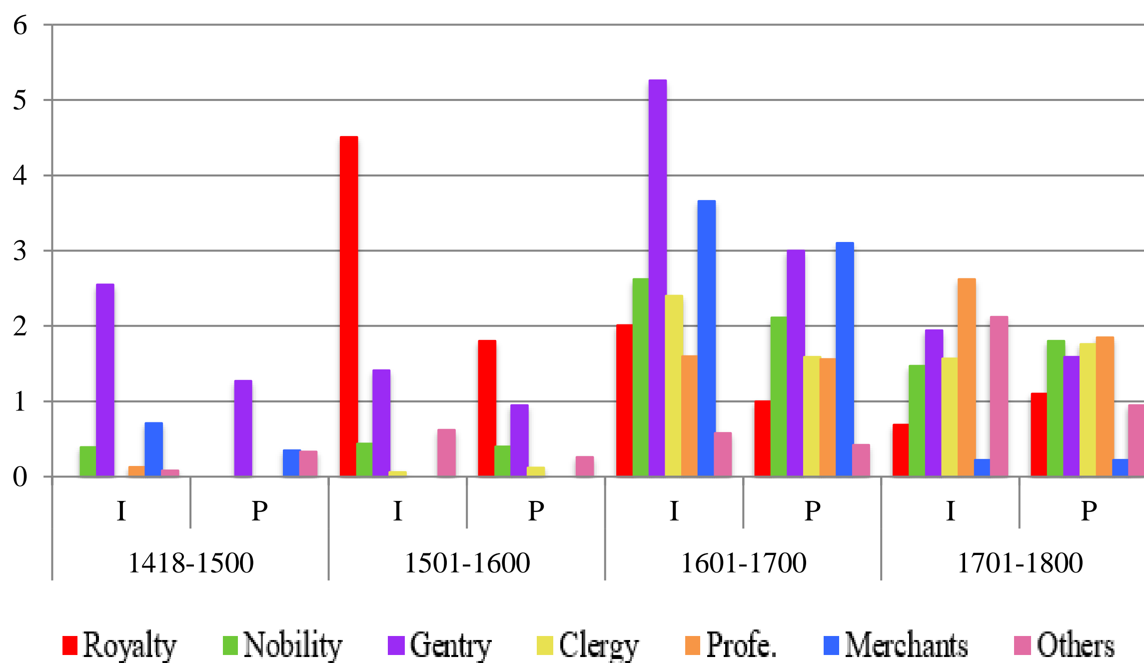

Figure 6.73. Inflected (I) and periphrastic (P) forms used by social groups when addressing relatives (n.f.)

In general terms, results suggest that all social ranks prefer the inflectional form when addressing their relatives. However, I found that higher social ranks, such as royalty, nobility and clergy make a higher use of periphrastic forms only during the eighteenth century. In contrast, the rest (gentry, professional, 'non-gentry: merchants' and 'others') show higher rates of inflectional forms in almost all the periods.

6.3. Age

This section outlines the distribution of inflected and periphrastic comparative forms into different age cohorts across time to test ongoing changes among the writers in both real and apparent time. As mentioned in section 3.2, the combination of both real and apparent time analyses provides fruitful information about the way in which linguistic changes unfold (see Hernández-Campoy, 2020, for example). In order to trace the generational pattern of language change and the spread of the synthetic and analytic variants in English, I have divided the informants into the following age groups: young people (from 12-30 years old), middle-aged people (between 31-50 years old) and mature people (from 51 onwards). As noted in section 5.5.3, the year of birth is not available for all the writers in the PCEEC and CEECE, so some

of the informants have been excluded from this analysis. Once again, in view of the different word-sizes of the written production by young, middle-aged and mature people in each sub-period, the token frequencies drawn for each variant are based on normalised frequencies (10.000 words), which allow us to compare the overall figures from each age cohort across time. The word count used in this study to normalise frequencies is presented in Table 5.15 in section 5.5.3 above. Figure 6.74 shows the normalised frequencies obtained for the inflected and periphrastic variants divided for each age cohort in the four centuries encompassed in the analysis.

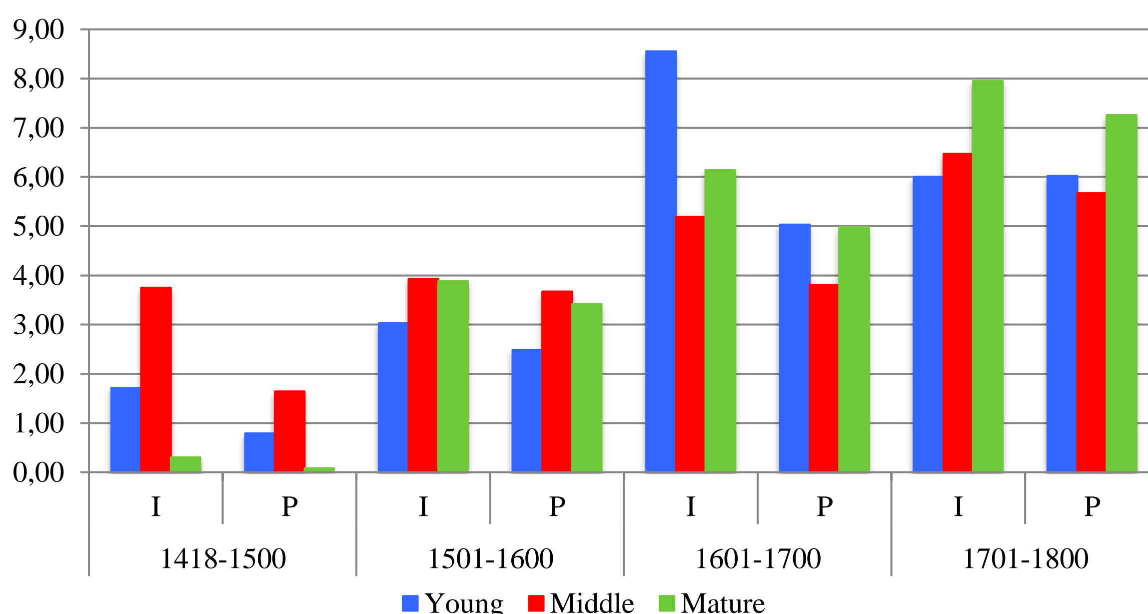

Figure 6.74. Inflected (I) and periphrastic forms (P) across time in letters by young, middle-aged and mature people (n.f.)

During the fifteenth century, Figure 6.74 shows a greater use of both comparative variants in the letters by middle-aged people, followed by young and mature people. During the sixteenth century, a sharp rise of both variants is appreciated in successive generations; this is highly noticeable in mature people's letters. However, in the seventeenth century middle-aged people lag behind and it is the group of young and mature people who advance in the use of both variants; they both show similar frequencies in the use of the periphrastic variants, whereas young people highly outnumber middle-aged and mature people in the use of inflectional forms. Finally, during the eighteenth century, mature people seem to reach the highest percentages in the use of both inflectional and periphrastic forms. If we look closely at the evolution of the periphrastic form in Figure 6.75, we can clearly observe a real-time growth in its use by mature

people, although the process was started by middle-aged informants. Moreover, during the last period, middle-aged people lag behind. In fact, the Pearson correlation coefficient test indicates a positive correlation showing a stronger polynomial relationship for the tendency along time in the case of use of periphrastic forms by mature writers (with R close to +1: 0.9885) and young ones (R= 0.9832).

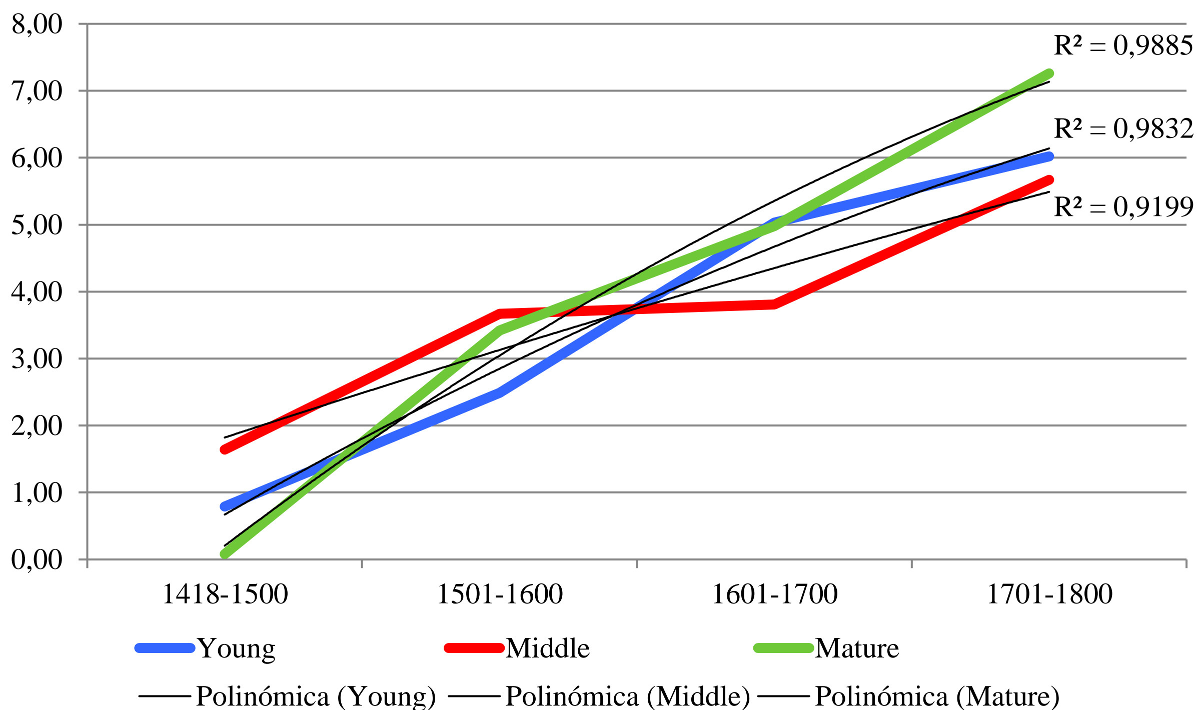

Figure 6.75. Diffusion of the periphrastic form across time in letters by young, middle-aged and mature people (n.f.)

6.3.1. Men and women age cohorts

In order to observe in more detail the linguistic behaviour of men and women, frequencies have been divided into both female and male young, middle-aged and mature senders. To normalise the data, the running words shown in Tables 5.16 and 5.17 in section 5.5.3 above have been used. Figures 6.76 and 6.77 show the distribution of the comparative variants according to the age-cohort of male and female informants, respectively.

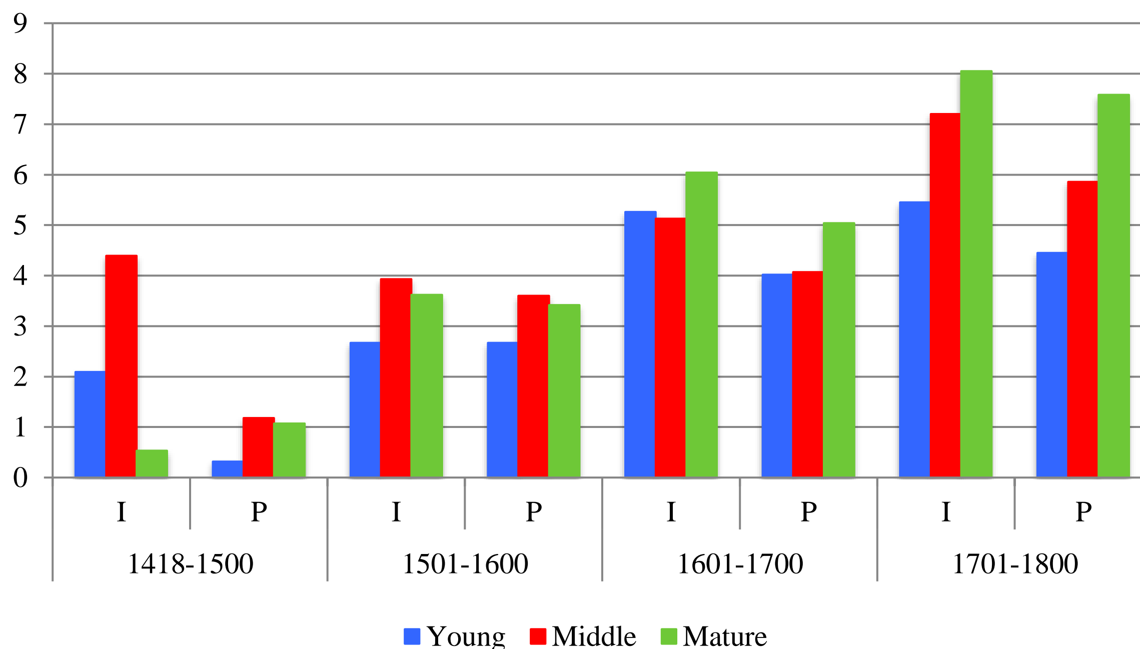

Figure 6.76. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic forms (P) across time in letters by male young, middle-aged and mature people (n.f.)

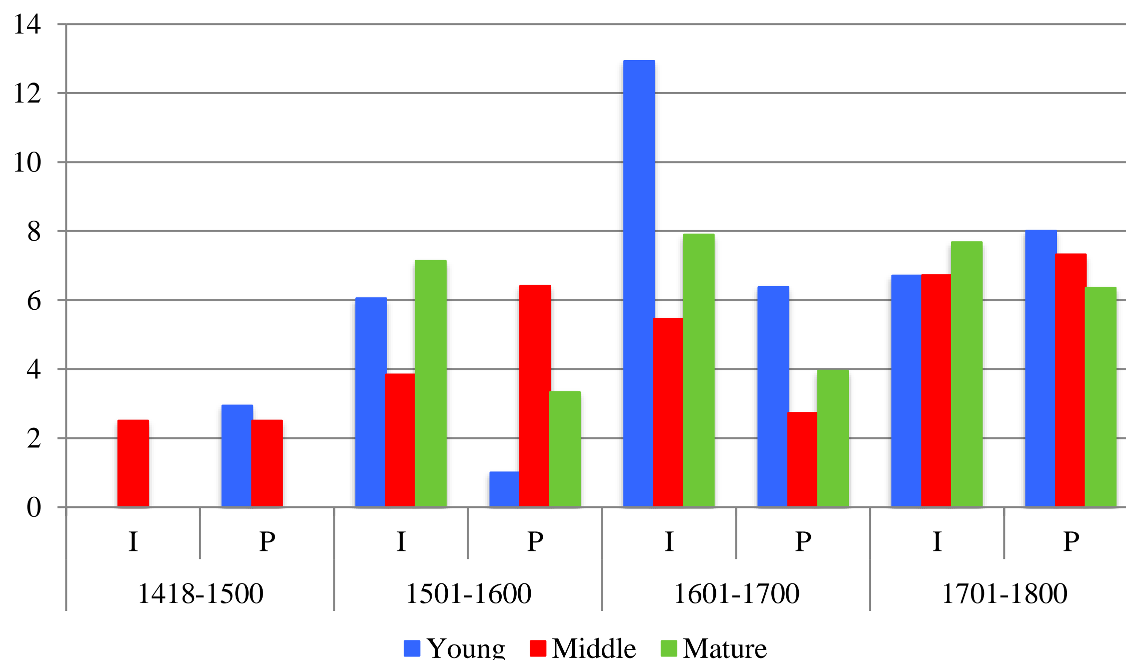

Figure 6.77. Distribution of inflected (I) and periphrastic forms (P) across time in letters by female young, middle-aged and mature people (n.f.)

Concerning the evolution of the periphrastic comparative variant, we can observe a different progression in male and female informants. Regarding male informants, the periphrastic variant represents a steady rise in the language of successive generations. In particular, middle-aged

and mature male informants seem to show higher rates from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, but a rapid increase in the language of mature informants appears from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. It does not mean that the periphrastic forms ousted the inflectional variant, but simply that this group of informants had adopted the periphrastic form earlier and had become more familiar with it to the extent that they feature in their letters more than in those by other groups. Contrarily, although the use of the periphrastic variant decreases in male middle-aged informants in comparison with mature informants from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, there is an overlap in the use of these linguistic variants by middle-aged and young people in the seventeenth century, although they show divergent tracks during the eighteenth century, with younger people lagging behind.

On the other hand, a different pattern can be observed in the language of female informants from all age cohorts. The range of variation among the female and male younger generation is very broad. As observed in Figure 6.77, female young informants show higher frequencies in the use of the periphrastic forms outnumbering female middle-aged and mature people in almost all periods, with the exception of the sixteenth century when the use by the younger generation clearly dimishes. This variation is not easy to explain, but we believe that some factors might be found in the social background of the informants as analysed in sections 6.2.1. It seems that female mature people show a progressive growth of the periphrastic form among the different age-groups analysed, increasing from century to century, except in the eighteenth century when they lag behind. The development in the use of the periphrastic form by female middle-aged informants also shows a rather distorted generational pattern. While it seems that there is a rapid increase from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century, a drastic fall is appreciated during the course of the seventeenth century, which undergoes again a rapid increase during the eighteenth century.

6.4. Close-up study of the periphrastic comparative variant during the eighteenth century (20 years span-time)

This section aims at offering a micro-level examination of the diffusion of the periphrastic form during the eighteenth century by establishing 20-year sub-periods. For this purpose, the data collected have been divided into female and male informants in a 20-year span of time. In a further analysis, the data have also been distributed among the different social ranks studied in previous sections so as to prove that no radical differences are attested when analysing the eighteenth century as a whole in previous sections. The data obtained have been normalised to a text of 10.000 words by using the word count on Appendix III for each social rank in each

sub-period. Figure 6.78 exhibits the evolution in the use of the periphrastic form between men and women across the eighteenth century.

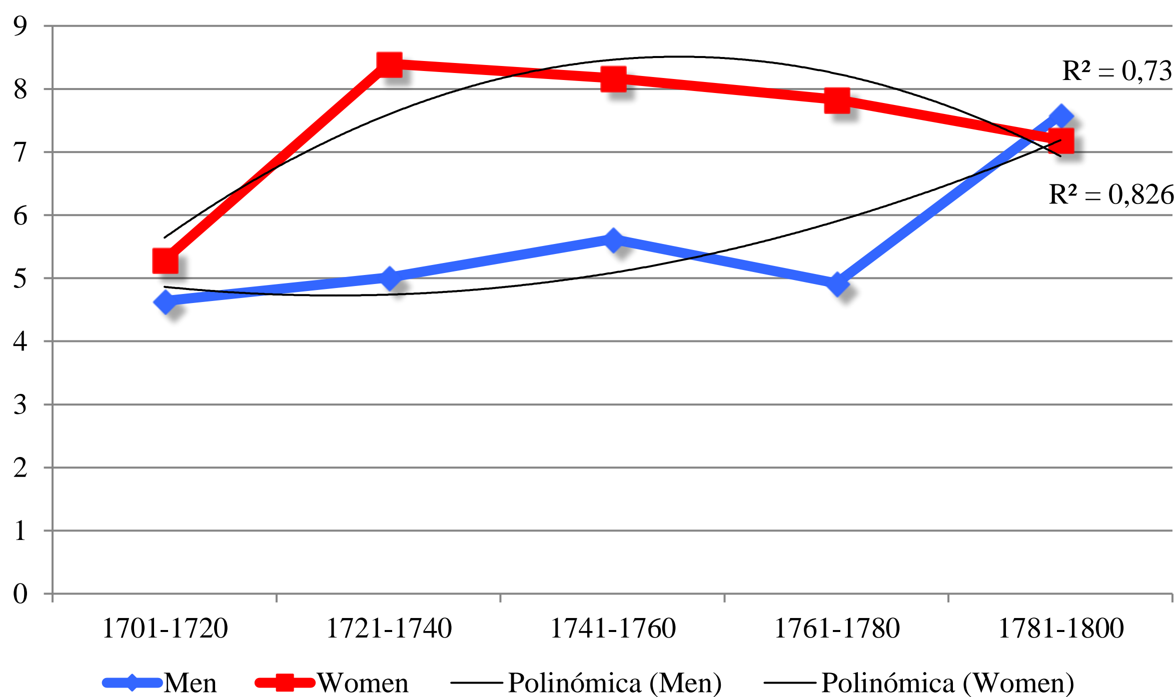

Figure 6.78. Distribution of the periphrastic form along the eighteenth century in letters by men and women (n.f.)

Results show that women outnumber men in the use of the periphrastic form in almost all the sub-periods during the eighteenth century, except from 1781 to1800 when a rise is seen in men's letters. Figure 6.78 also shows clear generational differences between men and women, which may suggest that women were a generation ahead of men and thus in advance of men in the development of language change and variation. These conclusions fit the observations of gender differentiation in Labov (2001: 149–192; 307–309): men seem to have carried out a learning process from their mothers' linguistic output. In this way, women are clearly seen as the leaders of linguistic changes who were one or two generations ahead of men. Men acquired the new forms one or two generations after (see also Conde-Silvestre, 2007: 156–164).

If we compare these results with Figure 6.2 in section 6.1.1, we come to the same conclusion: female informants clearly make a higher use of the periphrastic form across the eighteenth century, but showing greater frequencies from 1721 to 1760.

For a detailed account of the evolution of the periphrastic form according to social rank, the data have been divided into female and male informants from the different social ranks across the eighteenth century. Figures 6.79 and 6.80 show the results obtained for both genders.

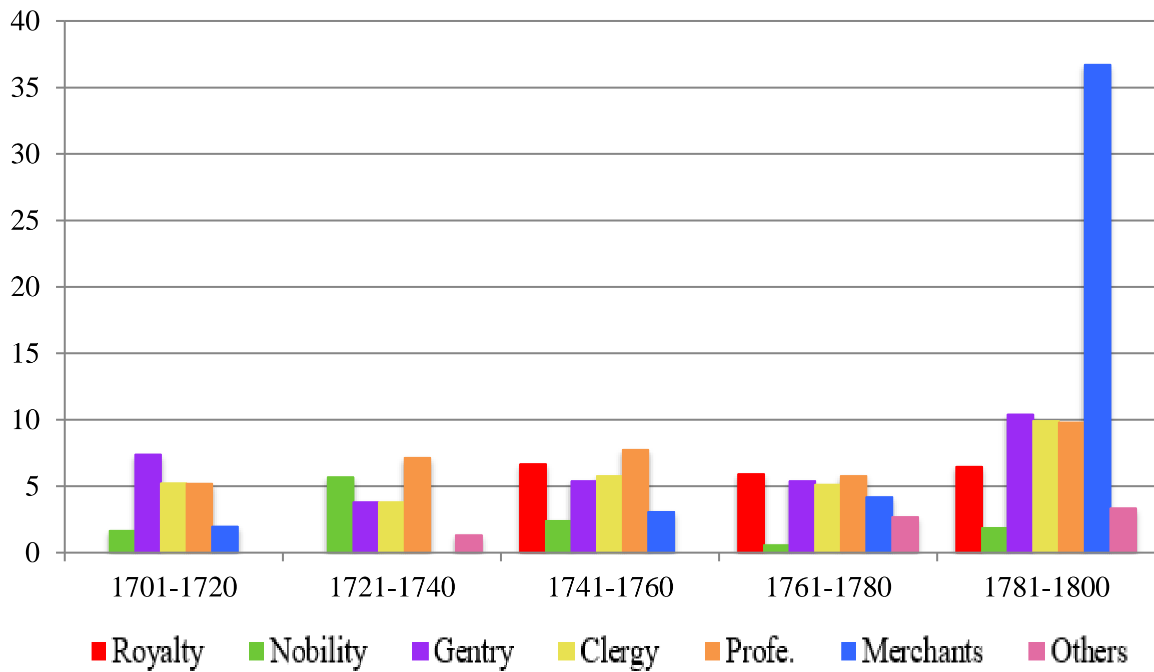

Figure 6.79. Diffusion of the periphrastic form in letters by male informants across the eighteenth century (n.f.)

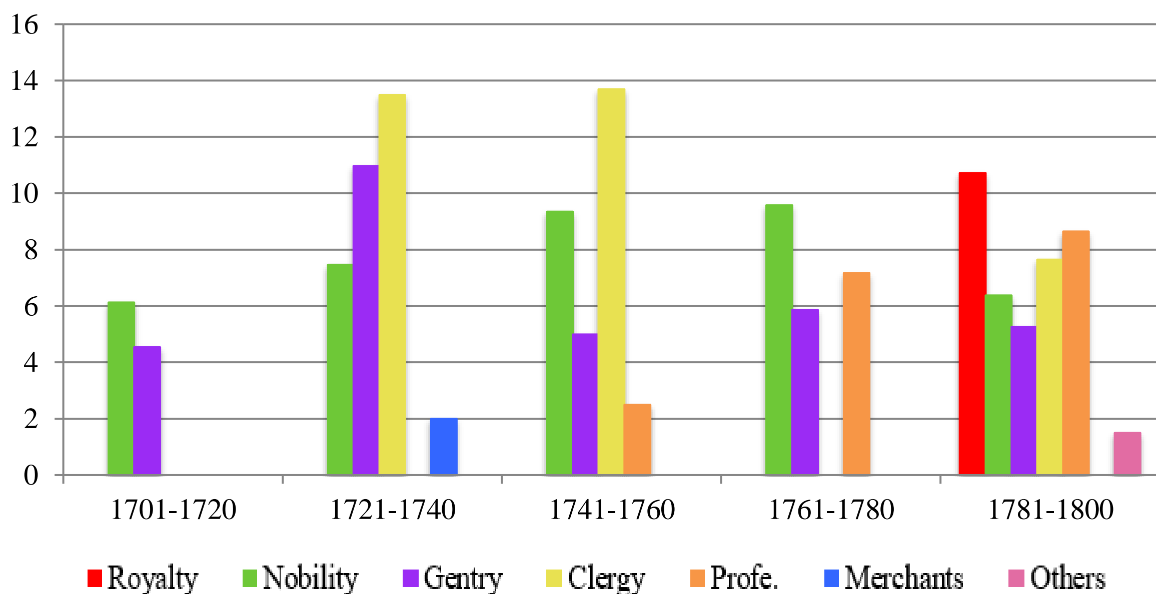

Figure 6.80. Diffusion of the periphrastic form in letters by female informants across the eighteenth century (n.f.)

The figures depict a more notable use of the periphrastic forms mainly in letters by the clergy and professionals from 1721 onwards in both genders. The royalty also presents higher rates in both genders but from 1741 onwards. Quite outstanding is the overwhelming use of the periphrastic form only by males from the 'non-gentry: merchants' group during the last part of the eighteenth century. If we compare the results obtained with Figure 6.62 above, we come to

the same conclusion: during the eighteenth century the periphrastic form for comparing adjectives in English spread more noticeably to letters by members of lower social ranks such as professionals or the 'non-gentry: merchants' group, but it was still highly present in letters by higher-ranked writers/correspondents such as royalty, nobility, gentry or clergy members.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

7.1. Theoretical conclusion

The present study has been intended to contribute to a fuller understanding of the evolution of adjective comparison in English from a historical-sociolinguistic perspective. With this aim, the analyses carried out have thus investigated the development of the synthetic, analytic and double comparative patterns from a historical-sociolinguistic perspective based mainly on some extralinguistic factors used as independent variables (i.e. gender, social rank and age) from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries in private letters extracted from the PCEEC and the CEECE. The main goal has been to find out how each comparative form operated at these levels but, focusing chiefly on the use of the periphrastic as a more prestigious and formal linguistic variant.

From an inter-speaker perspective, the analyses concerning the choice of comparative forms according to the gender, social rank and age of addressers have revealed that:

- Younger women from upper social ranks were ahead of men in using the periphrastic form in almost all the periods under study. In general terms, there is a gradual increase in the use of both comparative variants (inflected and periphrastic) across time, being the deep-rooted inflectional one the most preferred.
- However, if we pay close attention to the use of the comparative variants by different social groups at different points in time, we observe that periphrastic forms oust inflectional ones mainly in letters from informants belonging to the

upper orders. More specifically, members belonging to the clergy show higher rates of the periphrastic form during the fifteenth century, followed by the royalty, the nobility and gentry groups. The sixteenth century mirrors an overlap in the use of both comparative variants in letters from the upper orders. In contrast, the period of overlap between both forms among lower social ranks has been attested in the seventeenth century. This may suggest that there is a socially-conditioned advancement in the use of periphrastic forms, which could have been previously introduced from upper social ranks, specifically from the clergy group and subsequently spread to other upper social orders during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries due to the relationship that they used to maintain with members from the gentry and/or the nobility. Hence, they could have also exerted some kind of linguistic influence on them, spreading the periphrastic variant to lower social orders mainly during the seventeenth century (professionals, 'non-gentry: merchants' and 'non-gentry: others') as a probable change from above in the labovian sense. Moreover, the sociolinguistic microscopic approach carried out in our research has allowed us to identify observable differences in the linguistic production of some informants from different ranks in connection with social mobility and the possible establishment of weak ties in their social networks; a substantial increase in the use of the periphrastic form usually accompanies these profiles, mainly in the letters by professionals, clergy and royalty members during the eighteenth century. In this way, it is possible to deduce that the choice of comparative strategy could have been determined by the particular social stratification of the informant(s) as well as their particular socio-cultural background and the social ties they established with others. Therefore, our findings fully support the issue that social factors considerably correlate with the development of the periphrastic comparative linguistic variant from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

- The analysis concerning age as an extralinguistic factor in connection with the choice of comparative strategy suggests that the periphrastic form has witnessed a generational change from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. It has become evident that some informants made gradually higher use of the periphrastic variant during their lifetimes, and from generation to generation. These results suggest that the introduction of the periphrastic comparative variant into the English system has resulted in an ongoing change in the

linguistic production of a community by showing higher proportions of this form century after century.

From an intra-speaker perspective, the analyses concerning comparative alternation according to the social rank of addressees have revealed that:

- The application of current sociolinguistic models to our historical data has fruitfully contributed to a better understanding of social distinctions in the past after establishing "a historically valid basis" for its analysis, as Nevalainen and Raumoling-Brunberg (2003: 202) claim. Particularly, the use of Bell's model of Audience Design (1984, 2001) applied to our historical data has permitted us to explore possible addressee-based patterns of style-shifting in the communicative interaction of our informants which could reflect language choice for the transmission of social meaning in epistolary communication, as observed in Hernández-Campoy and García-Vidal (2018b). The style-shifting practices that our informants present denote the relevance of Bell's audience-centred approach since the variability in the use of the inflectional vs. the periphrastic comparative linguistic form when addressing different social-ranked recipients exhibits upward and downward accommodation patterns. It follows that, by being socially aware of the prestige that the use of the periphrastic form could have had in the past, writers from lower social ranks played with these two variants to pursue a socio-pragmatic effect when addressing members from upper social orders. Therefore, they show upward verbal adjustments by making a more frequent use of the periphrastic form with their upper social-ranked addressees than when addressing equals or relatives. Similarly, members from upper social orders exhibit downward accommodation when addressing relatives or lower social-ranked informants by making a higher use of the inflectional form.
- Moreover, the analysis of Audience Design applied to double comparative forms reinforces the hypothesis that the use of comparative periphrastic variants was an indicator of a more elevated and educated style, since – in addition to being found in letters from members belonging to the upper orders – it was also found in epistolary documents from informants of lower social ranks who addressed people from above them in order to accommodate to their speech, adopting a more serious tone in formal registers.

- The socio-linguistic results examined suggest that private letters may also enlighten and trace the tendencies or propensities of language change processes of a linguistic system. Moreover, they are fruitful to explore the motivations when pursuing a communicative effect and its stylistic choices for the construction of social meaning through accommodative processes.

7.2. Methodological conclusion

Historical sociolinguistics has favoured the correlation of extralinguistic factors and linguistic features in remote speech communities so as to trace the diffusion of language change by reconstructing the sociolinguistics context in which linguistic variation occurs. Change does not take place isolatedly but in social interaction with other factors:

> Change implies choice. Changes crucially depend on the choices that language users make in adopting or rejecting a particular new form, function or construction in the first place. The outcome of these choices can be seen in language records of different kinds, in both speech and writing, but we cannot know how homogeneous these records are in social terms without taking into account their producers and production circumstances.
>
> (Nevalainen, 2018: 3)

Thus, it is of paramount importance to account for both linguistic and social factors when it comes to analysing language change diachronically. For this purpose, historical private correspondence has been very useful for research on the variety of linguistic behaviours according to socio-demographic factors (social rank, gender or age in our present case), which could have affected linguistic changes in the history of the English language. Moreover, when historical sociolinguistic analyses are complemented with **microscopic observations**, research acquires more diagnostic accuracy and thus more validity. In this way, it allows us to approach language variation and change as a micro-cosmos, conveying a more precise picture of changes through the analysis of the most significant informants within a collectivity of individuals. Ideally, both studies of collectivity and individuality would therefore be very enriching to be accounted for in studies of sociolinguistic variation and the diffusion of language change.

7.3. Follow-up research

New avenues for further research are still open to contribute to a more accurate picture of the evolution and development of the periphrastic comparative variant in the English language. The

field of historical sociolinguistics requires a huge amount of research because of its fragmentary and scarce nature, and, therefore, researchers are to do their best to get access to the bottom of the historical issue and to reconstruct the past in order to explain the present by making the best use of bad data. Thus, it is inevitable that some lacunae remain to be accounted for due to the difficulty of reconstructing the past. In this sense, it is better to have a great amount of evidences to bring to light fruitful conclusions by studying the development of the periphrastic form in other corpora from a wider range of sociolinguistic factors related to both inter- and intra-speaker variation at macro- and micro-levels of linguistic analyses.

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APPENDIX I

- Informants excluded from PCEEC in the analysis of age (no date of birth given)

-Adrian Carew
-Alice Collingwood
-Alice Crane
-Alice De La Pole
-Alice Fleming
-Ambrose Randolph
-Anne Bacon
-Anne Meautys
-Anne Montague JR
-Anthony Antonie
-Balthasar St. Michel
-Bartram Calthorpe
-Baynham Throckmorton
-Bernard Randolph
-Brian Rocliffe
-Catherine Lyttelton
-Charles Hatton
-Christopher Hatton IV
-Christopher Mickleton
-Dorothe Randolph
-Dorothy Bacon
-Dorothy Plumpton
-Edmund Banyard
-Edmund Stonor
-Edward Plumpton
-Eliza Cottington
-Elizabeth Brews
-Elizabeth Cornwallis
-Elizabeth Hatton
-Elizabeth Masham
-Elizabeth Pole
-Elizabeth Smyth
-Elizabeth Stonor
-Elnathan Parr
-Frances Basire
-Francis Harris
-Francis Johnson
-Francis Wyndham
-George Cely
-George Thimelthorpe
-Gilbert Gerard
-Gilbert Godbehere
-Henry Brougham
-Henry Colet
-Henry Hobart
-Henry V Signet
-Isabel Bowes
-James Gloys
-James Gresham
-James Harrison
-James Mickleton
-James Waynwright
-Jane Hook
-Jane Townshend

-Joan Keteryche
-Joan St. John
-John A. Borough
-John Baker
-John Barrington
-John Becon
-John Brograve
-John Calthorpe
-John Collas
-John Harington
-John Heydon
-John Jackson
-John Luke
-John Mounford
-John of Norton
-John Osbern
-John Percival
-John Russe
-John Saunders
-John Shillingford
-John Tempest
-John Turner
-Judith Barrington
-Mary Bourchier
-Miles Stapylton
-Names Unknown 7
-Names Unknown 13
-Names Unknown 19
-Nehemiah Wharton
-Oliver Naylor
-Peter Sterry
-Philippe Cotton
-Privy Council
-Randolph Brereton
-Richard Calle
-Richard Cely SR
-Richard Manser
-Richard Page
-Robert Acurs
-Robert Barrington
-Robert Barwick
-Robert Ratclyf
-Roger Fleming
-S.Mewce
-Stephen Drury
-Stephen Smith
-Thomas Barrington
-Thomas Betson
-Thomas Bourchier
-Thomas Bowes
-Thomas Clere
-Thomas Corie
-Thomas Denys
-Thomas Henham
-Thomas Howes
-Thomas Meautys II
-Thomas Mull
-Thomas Saunders
-Thomas Stockwell
-Walter Elmes
-William Bolton
-William Cely
-William Chantrell
-William Downing
-William Goldwyn
-William Herward
-William Masham
-William Meux

- -William Smythe
- -William Taylor
- -William Wentworth II

- Informants excluded from CEECE in the analysis of age (no date of birth given)

-Alice Hatton
-Anne Banks
-Catherine Banks
-Charles Hatton
-Charles Sanderson
-Elias Grist
-Elizabeth Theobald
-George Phipps
-George Talbot SR
-Hannah Slocock
-Hester Grenville
-James Kenting
-John Bunce
-John Mattews
-John Price Jones
-John Sherlock
-Joseph Tolson
-Jospeh Haddock
-Mary Colton
-Matthew Alexander
-Mrs.S.Birch
-Ms. E. Spense
-Peter Wentworth
-Ralph Gowland JR
-Richard Wardman
-Theophilus Hughes
-Thomas Hubbard
-Thomas Marsham SR
-Willam Bolton
-William Berkely
-William Dawes

APPENDIX II

See CD-ROM attached.

APPENDIX III

- Word-count of the eighteenth century divided into 20-year sub-periods (M: men; W: women; T: total)

Word Count	1680-1700			1701-1720			1721-1740		
CEECE	M	W	T	M	W	T	M	W	T
Royalty	1453	4812	6265	0	144	144	0	0	0
Nobility	1841	1643	3484	54725	44082	44082	47532	36150	83682
Gentry	115646	11369	127015	58255	48368	48368	52599	10930	63529
Clergy	91863	867	92730	11492	0	0	26258	8893	35151
Profe.	65818	3815	69633	82771	0	0	43474	0	43474
Merchants	21063	0	21063	10174	0	0	0	5005	5005
Others	1193	0	1193	4284	0	0	7676	903	8579
TOTAL	298877	22506	321383	221701	92594	92594	177539	61881	239420

Word Count	1741-1760			1761-1780			1781-1800		
CEECE	M	W	T	M	W	T	M	W	T
Royalty	3000	0	3000	13533	0	13533	98809	28905	127714
Nobility	29076	47023	76099	17367	40679	58046	53417	50145	103562
Gentry	100389	32038	132427	98318	11942	110260	49019	51249	100268
Clergy	105772	14608	120380	60482	2217	62699	46356	35305	81661
Profe.	55463	4014	59477	91800	33431	125231	129568	93698	223266
Merchants	6501	0	6501	21515	472	21987	817	0	817
Others	355	1374	1729	25944	618	26562	33070	19900	52970
TOTAL	300556	99057	399613	328959	89359	418318	411056	279202	690258

Resumen de la tesis (Español)

Esta tesis doctoral presenta un estudio enmarcado en la disciplina de la Sociolingüística Histórica que tiene como principal objetivo examinar la evolución y desarrollo de la variante sintética/inflexiva (-*er*), analítica/perifrástica (*more*) y "forma doble" (*double forms*) (*more bigger*) del adjetivo comparativo en inglés desde el 1418 al 1800, atendiendo a factores sociodemográficos como el género, la edad o estatus social.

Más concretamente, con el fin de analizar el desarrollo y uso de las construcciones comparativas en inglés desde una perspectiva sociohistórica, se hizo uso de los corpus de textos históricos *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (PCEEC) (Nurmi *et al*. 2006) en su versión etiquetada – que hace referencia al tipo de información lingüística morfosintáctica al igual que sociodemográfica – y del *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extension* (CEECE) (Nevalainen *et al*. 2000–). Ambos corpus cubren los periodos desde el siglo XV hasta el siglo XVIII y constan de colecciones de correspondencia pública y privada en inglés, alcanzando en torno a 9.891 cartas. Éstos abarcan emisores y remitentes de diferentes clases sociales y generaciones de la misma comunidad de práctica durante los períodos históricos inglés medio tardío e inglés moderno temprano, facilitando así la investigación sociolingüística histórica en la lengua inglesa. Dado su carácter epistolar, el empleo de correspondencia en la investigación histórico-sociolingüística ha permitido llevar a cabo la correlación de variables (o variantes) lingüísticas y sociales, así como el desarrollo de estudios en tiempo real sobre

diferentes cambios lingüísticos en la lengua inglesa. Además, este tipo de material histórico ha sido considerado como el más cercano y fiel al registro oral (Romaine, 1998: 18; Sević, 1999: 340), permitiendo así reconstruir los factores extralingüísticos que podrían haber estado relacionados con variación estilística usada en las cartas de los informantes. De tal modo, las colecciones de correspondencia privada histórica con autores de diferente caracterización socio-demográfica están siendo una fuente de datos de lengua en uso muy valiosa para llevar a cabo investigación sociolingüística, producida en situaciones de interacción comunicativa interpersonal real. Además de permitirnos rastrear los fenómenos de cambio y variación lingüística en el seno de las comunidades de habla, como hasta ahora se había estudiado desde perspectivas macro, las cartas privadas pueden arrojar luz sobre las motivaciones y mecanismos para el desarrollo y aplicación de la variación intra-hablante y sus opciones estilísticas en los individuos para trasmitir significado social en sociedades del pasado remoto, como la Inglaterra medieval, ya desde perspectivas micro. Por consiguiente, el presente estudio también lleva a cabo la aplicación del modelo de variación estilística de *Diseño de Audiencia* de Allan Bell (1984, 2000) a la correspondencia epistolar extraída de los corpus PCEEC y CEEE en el uso de las variantes del adjetivo comparativo en inglés para detectar posibles patrones de variación intra-hablante. El modelo de Bell concibe la variación estilística como el resultado de una adaptación a las características de una audiencia presente o ausente, diferenciando una motivación responsiva convergente (*Addressee Design*) y otra iniciativa divergente (*Referee Design*) en los procesos de acomodación. El estudio de estas cartas dirigidas a unos destinatarios muy variados socialmente nos ofrece unos claros patrones de *Addressee Design* y *Referee Design* en su comportamiento sociolingüístico cuya interpretación inevitablemente requiere de la Historia Social y la información biográfica personal de los distintos informantes y recipientes.

La literatura existente sobre el uso de la variante sintética y análitica en el uso del grado comparativo en inglés ha sido principalmente de corte sincrónico, centrandose en factores lingüísticos para la justificación de la elección de una forma u otra, tales como factores fonológicos, sintácticos, morfológicos, semánticos, pragmáticos, frecuencia de uso, longitud del adjetivo, etc. (Leech & Culpeper, 1997; Hilpert, 2008; Mondorf, 2009; entre otros). De esta manera, el grado comparativo en inglés se ha convertido progresivamente en el centro de la investigación lingüística de corpus, aunque menos estudiado en el marco variacionista. Desde una perspectiva diacrónica, el análisis del desarrollo de las variantes del adjetivo comparativo en inglés ha sido más estudiado en relación a las motivaciones subyacentes en el uso de la forma sintética o analítica atendiendo a factores meramente lingüísticos. Además, otros estudios han

prestado especial atención al origen de la forma analítica *more* para la comparación de adjetivos en inglés, lo cual ha suscitado debate entre diferentes autores sin llegar a ningún consenso. A raíz de la Conquista Normanda, muchas formas léxicas junto con costumbres culturales fueron introducidas en Inglaterra. Esto derivó en una situación sociolingüística de multilingüismo durante la edad media con un alto contacto de lenguas entre el inglés, el francés y el latín. Por esta razón, algunos autores consideran que la forma analítica pudo haber sido introducida en la lengua inglesa a raíz de influencias externas por el contacto con lenguas romances (especialmente el latín y el francés), señalando que su uso no es frecuente en diferentes dialectos del inglés y que por tanto esta estructura pudo haber sido introducida por analogía con la formación analítica francesa *plus* o latina *magis* (Pound, 1901; Mustajona, 1960/2016: 280; Danchev, 1989: 170, 172–173; Kytö, 1996; Kytö & Romaine, 2000). Sin embargo, otros autores mencionan que la forma analítica es un recurso nativo ya existente en el inglés antiguo que proviene de la colocación lingüística del adverbio *ma* junto con participios (Emerson, 1894; Mitchell, 1985; González-Díaz, 2008: 16). Tras la investigación sobre el origen de la forma analítica del adjetivo comparativo en inglés, González-Díaz (2006a: 731) concluye que esta forma proviene igualmente del inglés antiguo (más concretamente del siglo IX) aunque la mayoría de textos analizados para su estudio son traducciones al inglés del latín. Posteriormente, González-Díaz analiza construcciones perifrásticas del inglés antiguo comparándolas con las estructuras utilizadas en los textos originales en latín. Sus resultados muestran que seis de veinticuatro ejemplos son calcos semánticos del latín y que el resto son incorporaciones del inglés antiguo resultantes de traducciones no literales de estructuras del latín que no mostraban comparativo de superioridad. A la luz de estos hechos, sigue siendo incierto el origen y desarrollo de la forma perifrástica de comparativo en inglés. Además, desde la práctica diacrónica, ninguno de estos estudios ha arrojado luz sobre los mecanismos de formación del grado comparativo en ingles desde una perspectiva sociolingüística-histórica, con la excepción del estudio de Kytö y Romaine (2000) sobre la distribución de las formas lingüísticas de comparativo en diferentes tipos de textos de inglés británico y americano, y el análisis socio-estilístico de formas dobles de comparativo de González-Díaz (2004, 2006b, 2008: 159–172).

En base a la justificación de este estudio, la prenste tesis doctoral contribuye a arrojar luz sobre la evolución y desarrollo de las formas sintéticas y analíticas para la formación del comparativo en inglés desde una perspectiva sociolingüística-histórica que tiene como objetivo detectar posibles variaciones entre estas formas para ofrecer una visión más precisa y rigurosa de su desarrollo a través de los siglos XV al XVIII. El presente estudio está estructurado en

siete partes. La primera parte tiene como objetivo ofrecer el marco teórico de esta tesis doctoral, dividido en tres capítulos principales: a) un primer capítulo dedicado al desarrollo teórico del adjetivo comparativo en inglés desde una perspectiva histórica, atendiendo a las principales teorías sincrónicas y diacrónicas centradas en el estudio del desarrollo de la forma inflexiva y perifrástica, asi como al desarrollo historico de los adjectivo comparativos dobles; b) un segundo capítulo que examina las disciplinas en las que se enmarca el presente estudio: la sociolingüística y la sociolingüística histórica, ofreciendo una revisión sobre los orígenes y desarrollo de ambas. Además, se tratan los principales problemas que la sociolingüística histórica ha suscitado debido al carácter fragmentario del material histórico para la investigación en esta disciplina, junto con las soluciones que se han ofrecido para resolver estos problemas. Entre ellas cabe destacar el uso de métodos y ciencias auxiliares para el proceso de reconstrucion del contexto social, apoyándose por ejemplo en la disciplina de la *historia social*; c) un tercer capítulo en el que se revisan las principales teorías sobre los cambios y variaciones lingüísticas, examinando los principales *universales sociolingüísticos* tales como *la hipótesis del patrón curvilíneo*, *cambios desde arriba y cambios desde abajo*, *prestigio encubierto y prestigio manifiesto* (diferenciando entre el comportamiento lingüístico masculino y femenino), y otros relacionados con el factor tiempo como cambios generacionales o cambios en diferenciación de edad.

La segunda parte de este estudio se centra en cuatro principales capítulos. El capítulo cuarto de esta tesis trata los principales objetivos y justificaciones del presente estudio. En el capítulo cinco se detalla la metodología que se ha seguido para el análisis de las variables dependientes e independientes, así como la periodización del contexto histórico de esta tesis doctoral y las características de los corpus de textos utilizados para tal fin. Además, se exponen las consideraciones metódologicas y correlaciones llevadas a cabo para la selección de los datos e instrumentos utilizados, junto con el tratamiento de los corpus. En el capítulo seis se exponen los resultados de la presente tesis doctoral, junto con el análisis e interpretación de los mismos. Más concretamente, los resultados en este capítulo se organizan en tres secciones: a) la primera parte del análisis ofrece el resultado del uso de las diferentes fomas comparativas con el factor género de los informantes. A su vez, se ofrece un análisis correlacionando el uso de las formas comparativas con el origen etimológico junto con el número de sílabas de los adjetivos; b) la segunda parte del análisis se divide a su vez en tres secciones. En la primera se exponen los resultados de las formas comparativas correlacionadas con el género y estatus social de los infomantes: realeza, nobleza, burguesía, clérigo, profesionales, y otros grupos sociales no pertenencientes a la burguesia como los mercaderes y “otros”. Bajo la etiqueta de “otros” se

incluyen todos aquellos emisores y remitentes cuya información socio-demográfica no es proporcionada en los corpus. Al igual que en la sección de género, los resultados del uso de las formas de comparativo por los distintos grupos sociales han sido analizadas también desde el punto de vista del origen etimológico y número de sílabas de los adjetivos. En la tercera sección se exponen los resultados de las formas dobles de los comparativos, atendiendo al rango social del emisor y receptor para analizar su uso y distribución socio-estilística. En la tercera parte de esta sección se ofrecen los resultados extraídos de la aplicación del modelo de variación estilística de *Diseño de Audiencia* de Allan Bell (1984, 2000) a las variantes lingüísticas del adjetivo comparativo en inglés para detectar posibles patrones de variación intra-hablante. De esta manera, se analiza el uso de las formas de comparativo de cada clase social cuando se dirigen a los diferente grupos sociales previamente mencionados para atestiguar si hay preferencias a la hora de utilizar la forma inflexiva o perifrástica del adjetivo comparativo cuando miembros de una misma clase social se dirigen a receptores de diferentes clases sociales; c) la tercera sección de este capítulo trata la distribución de las formas de comparativo correlacionadas con el factor género y edad para detectar posibles cambios lingüísticos en tiempo aparente y tiempo real. Para ello, los emisores fueron divididos en tres grupos: jóvenes (de 12 a 30 años), mediana edad (de 31 a 50 años) y edad avanzada (de 51 años adelante); d) finalmente, la última sección de este capítulo se centra en el análisis de la difusión de la forma perifrástica durante el siglo XVIII, estableciendo subperiodos de 20 años, atendiendo a factores de género y estatus social.

En último lugar, el capítulo siete detalla las principales conclusiones teórico-metodológicas emanadas del capítulo seis. Se concluye que, la forma perifrástica del adjetivo comparativo en inglés era usada en mayor medida por informantes femeninos desde el siglo XV al XVIII, normalmente en cartas de mujeres pertenecientes a niveles sociales superiores. Asimismo, el análisis de las formas de comparativo correlacionadas con el estatus social del emisor y receptor señala que la forma perifrástica era más frecuente en cartas de emisores de rangos sociales más altos. Además, el uso de la forma inflexiva era más frecuente cuando estos emisores se dirigian a sus familiares o miembros de clases más bajas. De la misma manera, se han encontrado patrones de variación estilística de emisores correspondientes a clases sociales más bajas (como gente no perteneciente a la burguesía), ya que el uso de la forma perifrástica es mayor que la inflexiva cuando se dirigían a miembros de clases sociales más altas. Igualmente, el uso de las formas dobles de comparativo es más frecuente en cartas de emisores pertenecientes a grupos sociales superiores, apareciendo también en alguna carta de miembros no pertenecientes a la burguesía cuando se dirigen a miembros de clases sociales más altas.

Además, el análisis de las formas de comparativo correlacionadas con el factor edad refleja un cambio generacional en el uso de la forma perifrástica a través de los siglos XV al XVIII, siendo más relevante durante el siglo XVIII, cuya forma era liderada por mujeres a principios de siglo para posteriormente ser frecuente en cartas de informantes masculinos. Todo ello apunta hacia el hecho de que la forma perifrástica podría haber sido introducida en la lengua inglesa a través de grupos sociales más altos, lo cual conlleva a pensar que esta forma gozaba de un carácter mas prestigioso.

Este estudio conlleva, por tanto, el perfeccionamiento de procedimientos que permiten reconstruir la lengua en su contexto social, así como desarrollar patrones de comparación en el proceso de reconstrucción de esta fenomenología sociolingüística y, de este modo, perfeccionar la teoría del cambio y la difusión. Combina, por tanto, la rica tradición filológica de interpretación de los textos con trabajos recientes dentro del marco de la metodología cuantitativa.

Palabras clave: adjetivo comparativo inglés; comparativas flexivas/perifrásticas; contacto de lenguas; sociolinguistica historica; variación inter-/intra-hablante; lingüística de corpus.