CHAPTER 15

Changes in different stages

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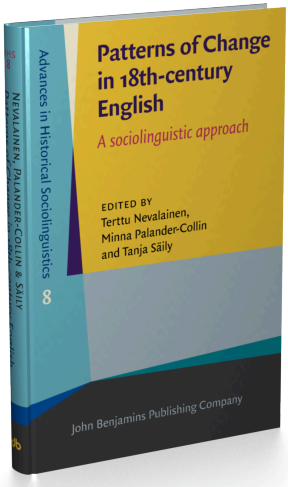

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CHAPTER 15

Changes in different stages

15.1 Introduction

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The linguistic changes that we have analysed in this volume were at different stages in the 18th century: some were practically completed, others in mid-range and one, the progressive aspect, only beginning to spread. Even those changes that reached completion in the course of the long 18th century were at different stages at the beginning of it. They also patterned differently in sociolinguistic terms, or, as the case may be, failed to show any obvious sociolinguistic profile in the data, and variant-specific patterns could emerge within a linguistic variable.

In this chapter we will compare the processes of change we have analysed in individual chapters. Special attention is paid to the time courses of these changes and the sociolinguistic patterns associated with them. We are interested in the extent to which changes that have reached the same stage also pattern in a similar manner socially across time, but our changes show somewhat different stages during the 18th century and direct comparisons are often difficult. Table 15.1 summarises the linguistic features studied and indicates the phase of change in consecutive periods as well as those social factors that proved relevant in each period (for the phase of change, see 5.1.2). All studies on linguistic features in Chapters 6–12 looked at gender and social class as far as it was possible with the data available. If gender and/or social class were relevant, i.e. statistically significant, factors in a given period, they have been marked down in the table. If they are included in parentheses, there seems to be a tendency where gender and/or social class has some impact on linguistic variation but a clear pattern or statistical significance cannot be discerned. As the two linguistic forms *thou* and *do*, which are 'completed' for the whole of the 18th century, are so infrequent in the data, nothing very conclusive can be said about the impact of gender or social class. Most likely, they are not important but what emerges instead in both cases is a register related use. The progressive, *-ness* and *-ity*, on the other hand, are difficult to assign a stage of change as they are not measured within a linguistic variable.

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Table 15.1 Summary of linguistic features according to the stage of change and social variation (gender, social status)

	1680–1699	**1700–1719**	**1720–1739**	**1740–1759**	**1760–1779**	**1780–1800**
	stage of change	**stage of change**	**stage of change**	**stage of change**	**stage of change**	**stage of change**
	social variation	social variation	social variation	social variation	social variation	social variation
thou	**nearing completion**	**completed** (shift from status related markedness to register related)	**completed** (shift from status related markedness to register related)	**completed** (shift from status related markedness to register related)	**completed** (shift from status related markedness to register related)	**completed** (shift from status related markedness to register related)
periphrastic *do*	**nearing completion** (register) **completed**	**completed** (register) **completed**	**completed** (register) **completed**	**completed** (register)	**completed** (register)	**completed** (register)
-man	(gender; primarily used by men), social status (upper classes leading) **nearing completion** gender	(gender; primarily used by men), social status (upper classes leading) **completed** (gender; women	(gender; primarily used by men), social status (upper classes leading) **completed** (gender; women	**completed** (gender; primarily used by men), social status (upper classes leading)	**completed** (gender; primarily used by men), social status (upper classes leading)	**completed** (gender; primarily used by men)
says	(men leading) **mid-range** gender (women leading)	leading) **completed** (gender; women leading)	leading) **completed** (gender; women leading)	**completed**	**completed**	**completed**
does	**mid-range** gender (women leading), social status (upper	**nearing completion** gender (women leading), social	**nearing completion** gender (women leading), social	**completed**	**completed**	**completed**
has	classes leading)	status (upper classes leading)	status (upper classes leading)	**completed** (social status)	**completed** (social status)	**completed** (social status)

	1680–1699	1700–1719	1720–1739	1740–1759	1760–1779	1780–1800
	stage of change	**stage of change**	**stage of change**	**stage of change**	**stage of change**	**stage of change**
	social variation	social variation	social variation	social variation	social variation	social variation
its	**mid-range** social status, gender n/a	**mid-range** social status, (gender)	**mid-range** social status, gender	**mid-range** social status, (gender)	**nearing completion** social status, gender	**nearing completion** social status, (gender)
-body	**mid-range** gender (women leading), social status (upper classes leading)	**mid-range** gender (women leading), social status (upper classes leading)	**mid-range** social status (upper classes leading)	**mid-range** social status (upper classes leading)	**mid-range** gender (women leading)	**mid-range** gender (women leading)
-one	**incipient** social status	**incipient** social status	**new and vigorous** social status **incipient?** social status (middle classes leading)	**new and vigorous** social status **rising=new and vigorous?** social status (middle classes leading)	**new and vigorous** social status **rising=new and vigorous?** (gender; men leading), social status (middle classes leading)	**new and vigorous** social status **rising=new and vigorous?** (gender; women leading), social status (middle classes leading)
progressive	**incipient?** (gender; men leading), social status	**incipient?** (gender; men leading), social status (middle classes leading)				
-ness	**stable** no gender difference	**stable** no gender difference	**stable** no gender difference	**stable** no gender difference	**stable** no gender difference	**stable** no gender difference
-ity	**lower productivity** combined gender and register difference	**lower productivity** combined gender and register difference	**mid productivity** combined gender and register difference	**mid productivity** combined gender and register difference	**higher productivity** combined gender and register difference	**higher productivity** combined gender and register difference

15.2 From incipient to mid-range and beyond

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This section first looks at changes that range from incipient (below 15%) and new and vigorous (15–35%) to mid-range (36–65%), with some nearing completion (66–85%) but not reaching that stage (over 85%) by the end of the 18th century. The changes in these stages include the progressive, the indefinite pronouns ending in *-body* and *-one*, and *its*. The final section focuses on changes in derivational productivity and the difficulty of determining these processes in terms of distinct stages.

15.2.1 Time courses of change

The three changes we are comparing here can be regarded as change in progress, but they are still different in many ways as we will illustrate below. The changes in *-body*, *-one* and *its* can be measured as variables and we can say that by the end of the 18th century *-body* had reached mid-range, *-one* was still in a new and vigorous stage, whereas *its* was already nearing completion. The progressive, on the other hand, cannot be treated in terms of a linguistic variable and its frequencies are measured in normalized frequencies. It is therefore difficult to say which stage of change the form had reached by 1800.

Though the progressive was a low-frequency phenomenon, it became significantly more common over the 18th century as it climbed up from 4.45 (/10,000) at the beginning of the century to 10.88 at the end. It was used predominantly in the present tense. The progressive passive was not observed in the CEECE apart from the isolated case (described by Pratt and Denison 2000 as radical experimentation in Late Modern English), so all grammatical forms were not yet attested and the change was still ongoing. Compared to the 18th century, the progressive increased more vigorously during the 19th century; however, according to Anderwald (2012: 36), the positive evaluations of *be+ing* in the nineteenth century suggest that it was changing at a slow pace. Contemporaries did not perceive it as change in progress, and there thus appears to be an element of quiet stability in its increase.

The compound indefinite pronouns *-body* and *-one* first emerged in Middle English and their development has to be viewed in the complex grammatical context of other competing indefinite pronouns. Previous historical sociolinguistic investigations have shown that two of the compound indefinite pronoun variants were on the increase in correspondence data by the late 17th century (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003). On the one hand, *-body* had started to increase in the second half of the 17th century and was new and vigorous (15–35%), replacing the

independent forms as the most frequent variant by the early 18th century. On the other hand, the share of *-one* remained lower than *-body* throughout the decades. There are two possible language internal factors for the early dominance of *-body*. As shown by Raumolin-Brunberg & Kahlas-Tarkka (1997: 74), its introduction to all indefinite pronoun series was much faster than that of *-one*. Additionally, despite the fact that the meanings of both the variants denote singularity, the semantic weight of *-one* seems to have prolonged the grammaticalization process more than that of *-body*. These factors seem to play a role in its early success.

The diachronic trajectories in the results above show a marked cross-over in which the independent forms lose out to *-body* in the late 17th century as the main variant form in correspondence. The indefinites in *-body* undergo a period of vigorous growth and the change reaches a mid-range stage by the first decades of the 18th century. However, their increase is stalled and the share of *-body* starts to decline by the mid-century. In this process, they become stylistically marked as more informal and casual, associated more with spoken genres than written. The forms in *-one* remain minor variants until the early 18th century once the decline of *-man* to a minor variant is completed. As pointed out above, the incipient stages of this decline take place a century earlier in correspondence than in the literate texts investigated in D'Arcy et al. (2013). Their results show that the share of *-body* started to decrease in edited prose in the mid-19th century in a process in which the more ubiquitous *-one* became the prestige form used more frequently in formal and literate genres. All in all, the main forms remain variable in correspondence data at the end of the 18th century as *-body* is the dominant form, and a mid-range variant (36–65%), and *-one* reaches the new and vigorous stage by 1800.

In comparison to *-body* and *-one*, the progression of *its* is much faster. A possible explanation may lie in the relative simplicity of the linguistic variable in the third-person neuter possessive in comparison to indefinite pronouns. With regard to *its* and the main variant form *of it*, previous corpus studies indicate that *its* had been available as the third-person neuter possessive singular determiner at least from the beginning of the 17th century, and already by the 1650s *its* had gained the dominant position (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 1994: 176). The use further increased in the 18th century, reaching c. 80% share of the variable towards the end of the century, so that by 1760–1800 the change was nearing completion. The final completed stage was reached somewhat later in the mid-nineteenth century, but just as *-body* and *-one* continue as variant forms in Present-day English, *its* and *of it* variation still exists.

15.2.2 Sociolinguistic patterns

All three variables are relatively similar with regard to their absolute frequencies. The frequencies vary between some 1,400 and 1,700 instances in the CEECE data. These raw frequencies make possible nuanced sociolinguistic analyses, as seen in the preceding chapters, but we soon encounter the problem of vanishing evidence when we increase the number of independent variables. In addition, it is important to point out that language internal grammatical factors also played a role in the development of all of the features with certain grammatical environments favouring a specific variant form. The most salient sociolinguistic variables differed in each case and in different phases of the change.

Rank and register were shown to have the most significant influence in the use of the progressive. Middle class writers, specifically the professionals, were ahead of the other ranks throughout the century, which suggests that this quiet, seemingly inconspicuous change was led from below during the Late Modern period. The final decades of the century show that the usage increased throughout the social strata; at this point the rank difference started to even out. The progressive was also particularly frequent in familiar communication, correspondence between close family members (FN). This seems to confirm the associations of the progressive as a more "spontaneous, unmonitored, colloquial" language feature (Kranich 2010). As for gender, this was not a significant variable. Women's letters do not provide enough data of this low-frequency item until the end of the century, at which point women take the lead.

When we examine the overusers of the progressive, these outliers represent writers of lower and middle class background, both men and women, some of them social risers, who are active during the latter part of the century and who focused their use of this feature in their letters to close family members and close friends. The outliers thus epitomize the general trends that were observed: increased activity in usage during the latter part of the 18th century, in a familiar register, and largely as change from below.

With regard to the forms in *-body* and *-one*, the sociolinguistic stratification in CEEC is such that the change is led by women in the 17th century, but there are no significant correlations with writers' social status. In addition, the earlier results indicate that *-body* was more frequently associated with the South (London, the Royal Court, and East Anglia), whereas *-one* was dominant in the North. However, the size of CEEC makes it difficult to study a low-frequency variable in general, and the larger size of the CEECE offers more insights of social stratification and socio-cultural context for understanding this variable. If we use indirect evidence, the examination of the 18th-century grammars suggests that the changes in the

indefinites seem to have taken place below the level of linguistic awareness as they are not commented upon in grammars, but the corpus results question this observation.

The results show that the change towards *-body* was clearly promoted by women, but there are no gender-related patterns found for *-one* in correspondence data. This observation is confirmed both by the correlational results and the non-parametric bootstrapping evidence. This evidence here does not corroborate some previous observations that the forms in *-body* would have at the early stages been associated with men. In fact, evidence of vernacular associations of *-body* remains scarce in correspondence data. The results illustrate that it is closely associated with the highest social layer, i.e. the nobility, up to the mid-century. Similarly, it is firmly established in London a few decades before the other areas, as was also the case in Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg (2003). When one correlates the variant forms with writers' years of birth, the results show that *-body* in the early decades was a generational change as it peaks in the letters of those individuals who were born after the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. It starts to decline for the following generations, and *-body* and *-one* enter complementary trajectories.

These results suggest that the spread of *-one*, once it enters the stage of vigorous growth in the mid-century, is a change from above in which the driving force is the highest social layer. The *-body* forms in the first period are clearly associated with London, but this distinction disappears during the course of the century.

The incoming *its* seems to have spread regionally to different parts of the country before the more rapid rise of the form from 1740 onwards, when the dialectal differences level out. Just like the spread of the progressive, the development of *its* seems to be a change from below rather than from above in the sense that lower ranks lead the change. The diffusion is led by men for the most of the eighteenth century, but women quickly increase their use up to 90% towards the end of the century when the variant is firmly established as the third-person neuter possessive. Both generational and communal change operate simultaneously as different generations increased their use from what they must have learned in their infancy but not to the same level. The generations born immediately before and at the beginning of the final rapid rise no longer differed from each other.

In this data set, we have some possibilities of observing the significance of social variation in different stages of change as we have two changes in mid-range: *-body* in 1682–1800 and *its* in 1680–1759. In both cases we found gender and social variation during this phase. In the case of *its* it was not constantly significant, but it is difficult to say whether this is an artefact of varying quantities of data from different social ranks and genders in different subperiods.

15.2.3 Issues of change in productivity

The discussion so far has ignored the change in the productivity of *-ity*. This is because the nature of the change differs from the others in that the stage of the change is more difficult to evaluate. As with the progressive, there is no clear linguistic variable involved; furthermore, it is even more unclear what would constitute a "completed" change in terms of productivity.

What we may be able to observe is the stage at which an affix becomes productive, which in the case of *-ity* is in the Middle English period (Dalton-Puffer 1996: 106–107; Gardner 2013: 108–111; but cf. Dalton-Puffer 1994). At first the suffix occurs in loanwords from French, after which it starts to be perceived as a word-formational element in English, probably first by bi- or trilingual (English–French–Latin) individuals, who would have most often been highly educated men. However, a second important stage in its development takes place in the 16th century, when *-ity* is increasingly used in calques on Latin and from there develops its automatic productivity on bases in *-able* (Marchand 1969: 312–314; see, however, Dalton-Puffer 1996: 107 for earlier formations on *-able*). Again, we may assume the change to have been led by men with a classical education.

In the correspondence genre, we have evidence of a continuous growth in the productivity of *-ity* in the 17th and 18th centuries, possibly led by the middling rank of professionals (Säily & Suomela 2009; Chapter 12 above). In the 17th century, women are lagging behind, but by the 18th century, they have mostly caught up with men, with the exception of letters written to close friends, in which register men exhibit a more creative and playful use of *-ity*. The lowest classes, however, are still lagging behind in the 18th century. While the change may be linked to the overall increase in the productivity of *-ity* observed by Lindsay & Aronoff (2013) in the OED, part of it may also be due to stylistic change in middle- and upper-class letter-writing practices (cf. Biber & Finegan 1997).

Comparing this change with the three discussed above, we can see that similar social categories are at play: social rank, gender and register may all affect productivity. As a stylistic choice, *-ity* in the 18th century is both elevated (as a Latinate, "learned" suffix) and an involvement feature; as such, it is perhaps more akin to the outgoing second-person singular pronoun *thou*, discussed in the next section.

15.3 From nearing completion to completed

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This section discusses the final stages of four processes of change, showing that, while variation may complicate any attempts at a general sociolinguistic typology of linguistic change, it nonetheless allows us to discern certain patterns that changes display when they are nearing completion and become completed. A recessive variant typically undergoes register change but it can also continue to display gender and social status variation (e.g. *hath*, indefinite *-man* compounds). Moreover, outgoing forms can be grammatically repurposed (*do*) and assigned new socio-pragmatic functions (*thou*).

15.3.1 Time courses of change

Looking at four sets of declining expressions, we found that the use of the second-person pronoun *thou* had largely receded by the end of the 17th century and was confined to specific registers in the next. In fact, estimating the number of *thou* users by the century, no quantitative change was found between the 17th and 18th century in either of the two letter recipient categories considered, family (6%) and close friends (2–3%). There was, however, a noticeable drop in the frequency of the use of the pronoun in letters to family members in the 1700s compared to the previous century (less than one instance per 10,000 words).

A declining trend could also be traced in the frequency of periphrastic *do* in affirmative statements in the 18th century. Although a significant alternative, it had never become the majority choice as a semantically empty tense carrier. The last two decades of the 17th century continued at about the same level of use as the previous decades but the 18th-century data showed a rapid decline in the normalized frequencies of the outgoing form. These frequencies were approaching those reported for Present-day spoken usage in several studies, suggesting that *do* use had already reached its current low-level plateau. However, the levels at which affirmative *do* was used were roughly ten times higher compared to *thou*, which suggests that there was a distinct difference in the relative pervasiveness of these two recessive features – but not necessarily their relative salience, as we will suggest below.

Verbal *-s* spread by means of lexical diffusion, and the most frequent item, *have*, was the last to display the incoming form, the auxiliary *have* being even slower than the main verb. Of the three verbs studied, the incoming forms *has* and *does* were in mid-range in the last two decades of the 17th century, while *says* was already nearing completion. Having passed the 85% mark, the change was completed with

does and *says* in the first two decades of the 18th century, whereas *has* was only nearing completion at the time, and went to completion in the course of the next 20 years. The average number of individuals preferring the outgoing form *hath* was in the order of 5% during the 18th century, dropping from about one third in the last two decades of the 17th century to 10% in the first two decades of the 18th century, and declining steadily after that.

The linguistic variable of indefinite pronouns with singular human reference is complex in that, apart from one outgoing (*-man*) and two incoming compound variants (*-body* and *-one*), it involves a set of outgoing independent forms (*some*, *any*, *every*, *each*). The independent forms continued to decline in the course of the long 18th century from about 30% at the beginning to below 10% at the end, while *-man* compounds lingered on at a 10% frequency throughout the century. As the use of the two recessive sets of variants declined, the variable was reduced to competition between the two compound alternatives, *-body* and *-one*. As many as two thirds of the individuals studied preferred the outgoing forms at the turn of the 18th century but their proportion was reduced to one third from the mid-century on.

15.3.2 Sociolinguistic patterning of recessive variants

As noted above, the use of the recessive second person singular pronoun *thou* was confined to letters exchanged by nuclear family members and, to a lesser extent, by close friends. Moreover, as a form of address, *thou* could be used to index status and power relations, for example, by parents addressing their children and a husband addressing his wife. A similar trend emerged with periphrastic *do* in affirmative statements, as it tended to be used more in correspondence with intimates than with more distant recipients. However, the trend was not statistically significant, nor were the writer's gender or social status, except for the slight overuse of *do* in affirmative statements by the upper gentry. That, too, may be due to other factors, such as the dominance of that group in the first 20-year period studied.

The relationship between the writer and the recipient correlated to some extent with the outgoing *hath* variant of *have* in the first period, although other social variables emerged as more relevant, as was also the case with the outgoing indefinite pronoun variants. As to gender variation, the verbal *-th* and the independent indefinite pronouns and especially *-man* compounds continued to be used longer by men than women, confirming the often noted tendency of male conservatism in linguistic change. Social status variation was also detected with these outgoing forms. The *hath* variant was used longer by members of the clergy and of the lower ranks than by other social strata. The *-man* compounds were also overused by clergymen and, towards the end of the 18th century, relatively high levels were attested

among the gentry. However, taken together, the outgoing indefinite variants were attested longest among the professionals and members of the clergy.

Sociolinguistic patterning of other kinds could also be detected with the outgoing variants of the singular indefinite pronouns with human reference, which were the recessive forms to take the longest to go out of use in the 18th century. When the writers' years of birth were taken into account, the decline of the recessive variants proved generational rather than communal and the systematic gender difference prevailed. As to regional tendencies, the independent forms were preserved longer in the North than in London and elsewhere in the South.

15.3.3 Changing indexicalities

The diffusion of linguistic features can, but need not, be connected with the speakers' awareness and marked by changes in the ways in which the incoming and outgoing forms are evaluated. Evaluation typically involves specialization along dimensions such as colloquial – formal/obsolete, local – supralocal, and vernacular – standard. All the recessive features that we have discussed were canonized in biblical use, the *King James Bible* (1611) and the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662), but the ways in which they were indexed in the course of the 18th century did not follow one single pattern.

With *thou*, uses related to register came largely to replace those related to status during the 18th century. Biblical and literary quotes were used to create and maintain interpersonal relations on a more distant level, while creative use of *thou* could license interpersonal intimacy and familiarity between friends. The relative overuse of the indefinite *-man* compounds and the third-person *hath* by members of the clergy, also points to conscious awareness of register associations and formality distinctions but not of the same kind as were created using *thou*. A second-person pronoun, *thou* could index the writer's involvement with the addressee ("other-involvement"), while, as third-person markers, *-man* compounds and *hath* could not.

Hath must have been associated with educated written usage by some writers, but it possibly represented a locally valued regional variant for others. The long history of verbal *-s* provides a good example of a series of changing evaluations with varying degrees of diatopic (regional) and diatypic (register) differentiation over time. Contact between the northern *-(e)s* and the southern *-(e)th* created both regional and register differentiation in the south as well as in the north when *-(e)th* spread there especially in writing in the 15th and 16th century (Moore 2002, Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 177–180). However, comments such as those made by Gil (1619) on *has* being a northern form suggest a continued regional

bias in favour of the retention of *hath* in the south in the early 17th century. Some vestiges of regional distinctions can be detected in individual usage in the CEECE in the 18th century although they are neither frequent nor systematic.

Although the use of affirmative periphrastic *do* was frequent compared to *thou*, for example, its social evaluation is more difficult to judge. One can infer from the linguistic environments it inhabits that ego-involvement is one function that supported the outgoing form: it was preferred with first-person subjects and verbs expressing speech-acts, cognitive process and emotion, in that order. However, there was also a large group of other verbs that co-occurred with noun-phrase subjects and could not be analysed in these terms. Another explanation, often given in studies of *do* in affirmative statements, is also offered here, namely, that the weight of an NP subject could trigger the use of *do* to increase the weight of the VP.

What was the role of the 18th-century normative grammar in these various processes? Chapter 3 and our surveys of the individual changes suggest that it was indirect at best. Poplack, Van Herk & Harvie (2002: 94) summarize in general terms the way in which 18th- and 19th-century grammars treated the outgoing forms that we have discussed:

> [G]rammars frequently mentioned the co-existence of a high-status innovation and an older variant with a long tradition in educated or formal use. Forms such as *thou*, third-person *-eth* or second-singular *-est*, and unstressed periphrastic *do* in the present and preterite, were all probably near-moribund in common usage for several centuries before grammars were willing to dispense with a reference to them, or to euthanise them as 'solemn' or 'ancient'.