

## Case Selection of the Personal Pronouns in Early Modern English: With Special Reference to English Renaissance Drama

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The purpose of this study is to clarify the choice of the subjective case and the objective case of the personal pronouns in Early Modern English (EModE). As a corpus of written texts with high orality, this study examines an independently constructed corpus of English Renaissance drama. The present study consists of ten chapters as detailed below.

First, Chapter 1 explains the aim and the background of this study. In Present-day English (PE), both of the pronominal cases occur in the particular environments, and some have been denounced as ungrammatical by prescriptivists. The earliest attestations of the nonstandard usage in such environments are predominantly found in the EModE texts, but there is no quantitative investigation focusing on EModE, compared to the later eras, so that the factors remain still obscure to some extent. Chapter 2 summarises the historical development of the pronominal system from Old English onwards, as well as describing some characteristics of the third person pronouns in EModE, such as the indefinite use; in addition, Chapter 2 briefly reviews the prescriptive accounts of the personal pronouns in 15 grammars, 13 of which were published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the two others as the representatives of the eighteenth century, in order to show which pronominal case would have been regarded as the standard usage for each context around the year 1600. Chapter 3 reviews the arguments in the previous studies and classifies them into several categories, including the phonetic analogy, the relative attraction, and the influence of French. Chapter 4 explains the details of the corpus investigated in the present study, which contains the texts of the earliest printed editions of the dramatic works which are generally attributed to Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson, including some collaborations thereof. Shakespeare accounts for more than a half of the number of words in the corpus, followed by Jonson at approximately 30%, and Greene and Marlowe at more than 10% each.

Then, Chapters from 5 through 9 then examine in detail how the pronominal cases are used in the particular contexts. Chapter 5 treats the cases after *to be*, for either the subjective complements or the inverted subjects. The standard usage is overwhelmingly found, and the proportion of the nonstandard usage to the total is less than 5%. There are two notable tendencies of the use of the personal pronouns after *to be*: Jonson, who in his *Grammar* prescribed the subjective case in this environment, also employed the objective case several times, and mostly in the colloquial expression, < *here be them* + rel. >; the playwrights used the subjective case alone after the indicative past *was/were*. Most of the instances with the objective case cannot be attributed to the factors the previous studies presumed. It is therefore likely that the objective case is merely a variant of the subjective case

in such environments.

Chapter 6 examines the choice of the personal pronouns after *as/than*, as well as *but* and its synonyms, namely *except(ing)* and *save*. The particles, namely *as*, *than* and *but*, are said to have the ambiguous character as both the conjunctions and the prepositions, but the employment thereof as the conjunctions is generally seen as standard. There are a few instances of the nonstandard usage, all of which are found in the works of Shakespeare. However, this can be explained by the low frequency of both the standard and nonstandard usages and the lack of balance in the corpus, as Shakespeare's works account for approximately half of it. In addition, none of the explanations claimed in the previous studies can be regarded as decisive factors.

In Chapter 7, the personal pronouns in the coordinated noun phrases (CNP) with *and/(n)or* are surveyed. Of all the instances containing at least one pronominal conjunct in CNPs, those with *and* amount to approximately 80%. The occurrences of the nonstandard usage are rare and mostly found in CNPs with *and*. As for the nonstandard usage of the subjective case, a greater part of the instances in the corpus includes the phrase <NP + *and I*> (e.g. *between you and I*), which may be caused by an overwhelming frequency of *I*, as well as a marked tendency to put *I* in the last position within the coordination, likely due to politeness. Meanwhile, the nonstandard usage of the objective case is often found when it is placed directly after the reflexive pronouns (e.g. *myself and them*), but it is shown that the phonetic similarity between the former part of the reflexive pronouns and the objective case of the personal pronouns, such as *myself* and *me* or *themselves* and *them*, which is claimed by the preceding studies, has a small influence on such use, if any at all. It is also suggested that the subjective case might be more freely employed as the conjuncts of CNP in EModE than in the latter stages of the language.

Chapter 8 scrutinises the personal pronouns accompanied by the imperatives. In EModE, the imperative verbs can be followed by the second person pronouns, namely *thou*, *thee*, *ye*, and *you* (e.g. *look thou/thee/ye/you*). The two pronominal cases seem to be indiscriminately employed in this environment, whereas the plural forms were already somewhat interchangeable in Middle English. The previous studies indicate that the singular objective form, *thee*, after the imperatives can be interpreted either as the indirect objects of the verb or the reflexive dative, which is also corroborated in the present study. Moreover, it is indicated that there are some differences as to which verbs were preferably used by each playwright, which might contribute to the problems of authorship to some extent.

Chapter 9 also examines the use of the pronominal cases in any other contexts, albeit only for the first person singular *I/me*, which are used most frequently in the corpus of all the persons and the numbers. The most of the instances of the nonstandard usage are found in the environments discussed in Chapters 5 through 7. Some of the nonstandard instances are intentionally used as a stylistic device denoting that the speakers are of foreign origins, namely the native speakers of French, in the plays of

Greene, Shakespeare, and Jonson, while other instances are seldom found. It is also revealed that *I* is frequently used with the finite verb ellipted, especially in connection with some participles, including *and*, *not*, and *(n)or*, whereas *me* sometimes seems to be used instead of the subjective case when put isolated with exclamation.

Finally, Chapter 10 concludes the overall arguments of the present thesis on the use of the pronominal cases in the corpus of English Renaissance drama. The nonstandard usage accounts for less than 5% in the particular environments, whereas the nonstandard usage, albeit of the first person singular forms alone, is found much more infrequently, or at the approximate rate of 0.5%, regardless of context. It is, therefore, suggested that the particular environments investigated in Chapters 5 through 7 have some characteristics in common to promote the nonstandard usage. Both cases of the personal pronouns can be placed in isolated positions in EModE, which is somewhat ambiguous in that they can be explained by both the absolute use and the ellipsis of the finite verbs. This may have resulted in the later expanded use of the objective case. This study concludes that such development is explained by the principle of linguistic economy, and the survival of the subjective case primarily for the subjects of the finite verbs in PE might be justified under the influence of the prescriptivist attitude.