JIHOČESKÁ UNIVERZITA V ČESKÝCH BUDĚJOVICÍCH
FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA
ÚSTAV ANGLISTIKY

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

LANGUAGE CHANGE IN TERMS OF GENDER IN THE ERA OF EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Jana Kozubíková Šandová, Ph.D.

Autor práce: Lucie Ježková, DiS.
Studijní obor: Anglický jazyk a literatura – Německý jazyk a literatura
Ročník: 3.

2019

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že svoji bakalářskou práci jsem vypracovala samostatně, pouze s použitím pramenů a literatury uvedených v seznamu citované literatury.

Prohlašuji, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. v platném znění souhlasím se zveřejněním své bakalářské práce, a to v nezkrácené podobě elektronickou cestou ve veřejně přístupné části databáze STAG provozované Jihočeskou univerzitou v Českých Budějovicích na jejích internetových stránkách, a to se zachováním autorského práva k odevzdanému textu této kvalifikační práce. Souhlasím dále s tím, aby toutéž elektronickou cestou byly v souladu s uvedeným ustanovením zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. zveřejněny posudky školitele a oponentů práce i záznam o průběhu a výsledky obhajoby kvalifikační práce. Rovněž souhlasím s porovnáním textu mé kvalifikační práce s databází kvalifikačních prací Theses.cz provozovanou Národním registrem vysokoškolských kvalifikačních prací a systémem na odhalování plagiátů.

České Budějovice ………………………..

………………………………………

Lucie Ježková

Poděkování

Chtěla bych poděkovat vedoucí mé bakalářské práce, Mgr. Janě Kozubíkové Šandové, Ph.D. za trpělivost a odborné vedení.

Anotace

Gender v jazyce je jedno z velmi diskutovaných témat sociolingvistických studií. Podobně kontroverzní je i téma jazykové změny, která stále bývá považována za úpadek jazyka namísto jeho vývoje. Tato bakalářská práce se bude zabývat vztahem mezi těmito okruhy. Zároveň se bude zaměřovat i na vůdce jazykových změn. Na základě důkladného prostudování mnoha sociolingvistických studií byla stanovena hypotéza, která ukazuje na ženy, jakožto vůdce jazykových změn. Verifikace hypotézy zahrnuje vybrané jazykové změny z období rané moderní angličtiny, na kterých bude analyzováno jejich rozšíření s ohledem na iniciátory těchto změn. Výzkum bude prováděn na základě osobní korespondence z období rané moderní angličtiny.

Klíčová slova: Sociolingvistika, Jazyk a gender, Jazyková změna, Vůdci jazykových změn, Raná moderní angličtina

Annotation

Language and gender has always been a major subject for sociolinguistic discussion. Moreover, the same applies to language change, which is still by some considered to be rather a decay in language than its progress. This thesis aims to investigate the relation between these two areas. Furthermore, it tries to establish the leaders of language changes with regard to gender. Based on the analysis of many sociolinguistic studies, this paper comes up with the hypothesis that women are the leaders of language changes. The process of verifying the hypothesis comprises few selected examples of language changes in the period of Early Modern English, on which is analysed their spread and their initiators. The background for this thesis are the personal letters from the period of Early Modern English.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Language and gender, Language change, Leaders of language change, Early Modern English

Content

1   Introduction

The English language that is currently spoken has undergone major transformations to achieve its present state. It is the result of centuries of development and the process of evolving is still not at the end. Many factors were active in the process and gender was, and still is, one of them.

Language is a living entity that reflects the reality of the outer world, and thus it is obvious that the social variable is its inseparable part. As well as the language of elites distinctively differs from the language used by the poor, the same difference can be found in the language used by men from the one used by women. Language conforms to social situation so the marks of centuries long male superiority are evident.

Throughout the history, sex and gender have played an important role in human´s lives. However, it is necessary firstly to understand the difference between terms "gender" and "sex". No matter how similar these terms may look and how is their interchange common in real life, for the purposes of this thesis we need to be terminologically accurate. Whereas sex marks the physical differences, gender on the other hand primarily describes male and female differences in the personal, social and cultural field. These basic concepts are recently being challenged by new arising forms of self-expression which makes the difference between these terms even more complicated. Another distinction apart from the physicality can be seen in the matter of choice. Whilst sex cannot be chosen by individuals, gender can because it roots from the personal point of view, and thus is about identification with a certain concept. Another distinction between sex and gender is rooted in the approach of studies. The earlier studies imply that gendered behaviour is based on already existing sex differences. Then we describe certain behaviour as something that is typically male or female. However, modern studies rather separate the notion of gender from the individual males or females and focus more on the concepts and ideas of sex in general rather than on behaviour (Sunderland 29).

Historically, the understanding of gender has considerably changed what we now consider typically female was few centuries ago a male thing as well as female e.g. wigs, high heels or makeup. These distinctions between what is typically this or that we call stereotypes, their reflection can be observed in language as the traditional gender roles. Men and women are assigned certain positions and tasks in society as well as in language. One of them is e.g. their role in the dissemination of language change.

The role of gender differences in the spread of language change has been a major subject of various sociolinguistic researches. According to Rissel (1989), Holmes (1997), Labov (2001), Eckert& McConnell-Ginet (2003) etc., women play an important role in establishing language changes and are almost always "the vanguard of linguistic change" (Shin 136). In my bachelor thesis, I work with this hypothesis and try to verify it. My aim is to prove whether the results of the studies that women are the language innovators and leaders of language change are valid, especially for the period of Early Modern English.

This bachelor thesis consists of two major parts. The first part deals with theoretical background of language change and gender. The following empirical part presupposes then the connection of these two terms and based on Early Modern English correspondence, it tries to find the evidence for the leading role of women in the spread of language change. By means of language corpus I try to establish the role of women in the spread of language change in the Early Modern English period. My research is based on personal correspondence of that era.

I chose this topic for my bachelor thesis because I have always been intrigued by the gender differences and namely, by their reflection in language. Furthermore, the period of Early Modern English is according to many linguists one of the most productive periods of English language. Within this period, English experienced immense changes not only at the lexical and grammatical level but also in terms of its general importance. Moreover, it is the time of Shakespeare.

2 Research methodology

This research is guided by a corpus-based approach. In general, there are two ways how to analyse texts in corpus, concordancers that allow users to look at words in context and frequency data, for example a word frequency list, which comprises all words that appear in a corpus and specify how many times a certain word occurs in that corpus. The first one uses the means of a qualitative research and the second one of a quantitative research. Thorough the empirical part, I have used the word frequency list which has helped me to establish the frequency of certain words and the time when they have been used. However, to determine the leaders of language change, I have also analysed each example in terms of gender. Furthermore, from the acquired data, I have created graphs that help to illustratively depict the results of my research.

The most suitable way to prove or disprove my research hypothesis that "Women are leaders of language change in Early Modern English" is with help of corpus and frequency data approach. In comparison with other linguistic research topics dealing with gender differences in speech, in this case, it is not possible to interview the respondents to find out their use of standard or less standard expressions due to its anchoring in the period of Early Modern English, since all of the respondents are not alive anymore.

For my theoretical part, I predominantly worked with books and articles focusing on the issue of gender in relation with language and language change. For the empirical part, I based my research on the electronic corpus CEECS which will be further described in the following chapter.

3 Corpus linguistics

The research of this bachelor thesis is grounded in the use of language corpus which provides the required information for further study. The extensive search in its materials allows me to follow the aim of this paper to determine the leaders of language change in Early Modern English.

The use of electronic corpora has immensely simplified the study of language, while since now larger amounts of data are stored in an accessible format, and particular linguistic features can be searched for (Walker 4). Furthermore, electronic corpora are usually designed to be a representative sample of transcribed utterances or written texts (McEnery 1).

Corpus linguistics is an area which focuses upon a set of methods or procedures to study language. Corpus based approach can be applied to many areas of linguistics. Electronic corpora presented us a new way of how to deal with large scale of data in reasonable timeframe. Without the use of computer that helps us read, search and manipulate the data, working with extremely large datasets is not realisable for human analysts, not even for a team of analysts. Corpus utilises in great amount tools that help to search and go through texts more effectively. Namely concordancers allow users to look at words in context. Another tool called word frequency list lists all words that appear in the corpus and specifies the number of such appearances. These two tools are representatives of qualitative and quantitative methods that are equally important to corpora linguistics. For a corpus research to be most efficient, precisely put question is requested (McEnery 2).

The main scope of electronic corpus is a text which is defined as "a file of machine-readable data" (McEnery, 2) which are usually in textual form e.g. each file represents a newspaper´s article or an orthographic transcription of some spoken language. However, corpora are working not only with textual information, nowadays video data are also a source for research (McEnery 2).

For my investigation of language changes in the Early Modern English correspondence, I will use the *Corpus of Early Modern Correspondence Sampler* (CEECS). This corpus was released at the University of Helsinki under the leadership of historical sociolinguist Terttu Nevalainen. The corpus has been compiled to facilitate sociolinguistic research into the history of English. The CEEC, and its sampler version CEECS was completed in 1998, and spans the decades from 1410 – 1680. It comprises

over 450,000 words in more than 1,123 letters completed by 194 writers (Tanja, Varieng, *"The Research Unit for Variation, Contacts and Change in English"*, helsinki.fi). By searching in the corpus for certain terms, either for the particular instances of language change, or for the correspondents using innovative, or on the other side, outdated terms, I will aim to establish one sex as the leader of a certain language change.

4   Language and gender

Since the topic of this bachelor thesis is gender-related, I consider it crucial to elaborate the relation between language and gender. In this chapter I will try to outline the general relation between these two entities. Further in the chapter I will mention some of the ideas behind the theory that women lead language change more often than men and the reasons for it.

As all languages, English varies according to the circumstances in which it is spoken or written. The use depends on *where* it is being used, *why, when, how*, and of course, *by whom*. The use of language will vary according to the social setting, the level of formality etc. The choice of language variant will differ when you gossip with your friend, or when you conduct a lecture on astrophysics. There is also an enormous diversity in the use of language based on the geographical surroundings. One of such diversities of the use of language is also gender-related, and thus can be observed when listening to speech led by either men or women.

When we use language, we express our attitudes regarding not only the outer world. In the way the language is used, we can mark the inequalities between different social statutes, stances of power and dominance and even differences between men and women. Even though we may not notice, we are exposed to gender-related language uses on daily basis. The concept of gender is incorporated in the way we think and act and to contemplate about it as about separate concepts without projecting ourselves and our experience into it may be a tough proposition, but that is what makes the whole gender related study so interesting.

Gender and language were the matter of academic study already before the Women´s Movement that began in the turn of 1960´s and 1970´s, but it was a matter in hand for common people for centuries. People were describing and judging the way other people speak and comparing it with the way they should (Sunderland 2). Based on the way women differed in the way they spoke emerged various comparisons such as *"Women are nine times more talkative than men"* (Hebrew) or an English proverb *"Many women, many words; many geese, many turds"* (Coates 16). Usually, the women´s speech was branded in a negative way as basically "too much". One of the most common stereotypes about women is that they are too talkative. Apart from the matter of quantity, the quality of their talk was assessed in a negative way too, for example in sayings like *"Women´s and children´s opinion´"* (China) or *"The tongue is babbling but the head*

knows nothing about it" (Russia) (Sunderland 3). In the course of time the prescriptive ideas about how women should talk found their way into etiquette books for women and women´s self-expression was suppressed (Sunderland 4). Even now when the tolerance is much greater, we would still consider some expressions or attributes in speech as typically male or female e.g. these two expressions:

"(a) Oh dear, you've put the peanut butter in the refrigerator again."
"(b) Shit, you've put the peanut butter in the refrigerator again." (Lakoff, "Language and Women´s Place" 50).

From these sentences it is obvious which utterance has been said by a man and which by a woman. Even though it is not marked, based on our experience and stereotypes, most people would assign the genders to the sentences right. Then on the other hand, when a woman uses the second sentence, the majority of people would disapprove (Lakoff, "Language and Women´s Place" 50). However, such vulgar expressions are becoming more popular at women than they were in the past. Partially it is due to equalisation in language to which predominantly contributed feminism. The Women´s Movement, in the early stages known as Women´s Liberation Movement, brought some serious impetus to language and gender study. The role of woman and its reflection in language started to be analysed, furthermore, some feminists claimed that language even "degrades" women (Sunderland 10). New changes in language use had to be made to adapt to rising demands for equality in language as it has already been the case in politics where women fought for their role and rights in society. Terms for professions that used to be considered "manly" but now are also feminine had to be revised e.g. "manager" now works for both genders as well as "spokesperson" or "chairperson", and the typical female markers are being reduced as well e.g. "lady doctor" to simply "doctor", "usherette" to "usher", "air hostess" to "air attendant" etc. (Sunderland 12). It is important to note that these changes were executed on the incentive of women, not men even though that men were so far the ones who dominated the field.

A substantial part of early non-feminist studies on language and gender arose from studies of social dialects. Among other things they claimed to establish differences between the men´s and women´s language use, namely that across social classes women consistently tend to use more of the features that are connected with the standard, more "prestige" form rather than men do. A study assembled by William Labov confirmed that. He interviewed several men and women across social classes on the pronunciation of the

(ng) sound. This sound can be pronounced in two different ways where the pronunciation as [ŋ] is considered to be the Standard form whereas the [n] pronunciation is more common in vernacular. According to his study and expectations, the higher the social class was, the more prestige variant was used. Also, no matter from which class a woman was, women were consistently producing more of the prestigious forms than men in the same classes (Talbot 20).

Based on the division of social classes, sociolinguists have distinguished between the "change from above" and "change from below" to refer to the spreading of linguistic innovation through the society.

In "Variation and Gender" in *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, Suzanne Romaine states that:

Change from above is conscious change originating in more formal styles and in the upper end of the social hierarchy; change from below is below the level of conscious awareness, originating in the lower end of the social hierarchy. (103)

Gender plays here the key role as women tend to lead the change from above whereas men from bellow.

The question that arises when studying the leadership of linguistic changes is why these are women who tend to incline to the standard form more often than men. It is after all men, whom were given a higher social status and power in most societies. Isn´t it then a little bit paradoxical that they are women who tend to use more prestigious variants than men? (Romaine 104)

One of the possible explanations gives Chambers (132-133), and thus that women´s greater verbal abilities are those which are responsible. For him are the differences rather sex-based or biological then gender-based. Another explanation offers Trudgill (1972) or James (1996) that women may be using linguistic means to achieve social status which was denied to them. I see this stance more likely, however, I do not deny the different verbal abilities behind. It simply implies that due to women´s historically lower social status, they tried to adapt to the situation and at the same time prove that they are "worthy" by using language that was reserved for higher social classes. It indicates the importance of traditional male and female roles in society. Their use of standard variant might be seen as another instance of women´s powerlessness which corresponds to Lakoff´s view ("Language and Women´s Place" 50) that women´s

language is the "language of powerlessness". Traditionally, there was a direct link between perceived femininity and the use of standard form of English, especially in the Victorian England was their use of standard English associated with being a lady (Romaine 104). Nonetheless, no matter how understandable is the explanation of the increased use of prestige forms by women in the past, it does not explain why women even today use more of the standard variants than men. Today women got access to high-status without the need to marry a high-ranking gentlemen, furthermore, they have access to high-paying jobs etc. so it would be expected that the need to use more prestige forms of language would diminish when there is no need for it anymore. Although, as an example of sociolinguistic study states, the need didn´t decrease or diminish, it has rather been maintained or even increased (Nordberg, Sundgreen 52). The reason why it is happening may lay in the fact that the traditional roles in the society are so firmly established that it is not that simple for women to abandon their deep-rooted tendency to use more prestige forms to keep their social status. The research also shows that another role in the spread of the standard form plays the age of participants of the study. While women overall surpass male population, these are younger women who are ahead of men in the adoption of standard English, older women worked in domestic and agriculture and men in constructions, while younger population have better access to more white collar jobs where they come in contact with standard English (Romaine 110).

Another sociolinguists have proposed that the reason why women use more prestige forms may not be so much in the prestige connotation that lays in the use of the standard variant that attracts women, but rather the stigma of non-standard speech that women are avoiding (Romaine 110). The stereotypes connected with the use of one linguistic form over the other constraint the free choice of language variant. Language does not simply work as a passive reflector of society, it also creates it. However, there is a ceaseless interaction between society and language, and to expect that language will reflect all changes in society at once would be incorrect, since the language needs some time to accommodate to new changes. In this scenario, the society has to change first, and that is what launches the language change (Romaine 112).

This chapter has provided a description of different uses of language and has focused mainly on the connection between language and gender. Another standpoint of this section was the relation between gender, language and society and their interconnection. The following chapter will deal with language change and its connection with gender.

5 Language change

Language change is a key term that pervades the whole thesis and in the same time interconnects different chapters. Firstly, I will try to define language change in general, then in the background of Early Modern English period, and lastly, I will base my empirical research upon it.

5.1 Features of language change

Time changes everything, and there is no reason why language should escape this universal law. Language change is the phenomenon by which certain permanent changes are made in the features of language und its use over time.

Linguists state that language change takes place when a generation of speakers produces linguistic expressions that differ, either in their form or in distribution, from speakers of previous generations (Yang 231).

Language change affects all areas of language; it is not reduced for example on slang or phonetics. Language is in an unceasing change whether these are changes phonetical, syntactical, lexical or discoursal.

Language change is chronological and relative dependent on other changes in language; the result of one change would have been different if it had preceded or followed the other change (Hickey 6). For example, let´s analyse the palatalisation and i-umlaut in Old English where the processes took place. An instance of palatalisation is *cinn*, which changed to *chin*, it is the shift of c [k] to [tʃ]. An example of i-umlaut is *cuning* to *cyning* [kyniŋ] (fronting of back [u] to [y]). It is clear that palatalisation preceded the change of i-umlaut otherwise the pronunciation of e.g. *king* would be [tʃiŋ] (Hickey 7). These examples prove that language change is chronological, and the succession of particular language changes has its order.

Another feature is the relation of language change to language variation. Language variation is essentially what we see when a language has more than one way of expressing the same thing. The linguistic element that has more than one form is called "variable". Language change, on the other hand, can be thought of as two or more forms that compete for usage after a new form is introduced, these competitions cause the frequency of use of each form to change as the new form replaces the old one (Gardiner, Nagy 78). However, while language change requires language variation, it doesn´t work vice versa.

5.2 The notion of linguistic corruption

A result of misunderstanding the language change is that there are ideal forms of language, often considered as "pure" or "right", and that existing language represents corruption of the ideal form (Algeo 10). As an example of such distinctive perception of language change can stand Greek spoken today which is supposed to be a degraded form of Classical Greek rather than its development (Algeo 11). When we would follow this view then all Romance languages, whose origins lay in Latin, would then be corrupted. The same could be applied to English.

The change can either originate from the errors in spelling, or from the deviations from the purity of standard language. However, these deviations have been in the course of time standardised and became the accepted form.

There are theoretically two possible explanations or different kinds of perception of language change. It can be viewed either as a decay of language, this theory corresponds with the idea of corruption, then there is the notion of evolvement to a more efficient state. It is simply "the survival of the fittest" (Aitchison 6-7).

But why are there more people who see the language rather decaying than progressing? The insecurity of the fast-moving world affects language as any other part of human life. The rejection of language change was at its peak in the eighteenth century with the purism movement and writers such as Jonathan Swift, Samuel Johnson etc. (Aitchison 8). Even earlier, in Early Modern English people tackled the issue of the right form of language. The admiration of Latin led to the notion of "fixed, correct" form for any language, including English. Also, the fact that Latin was predominantly written or read led to the belief that the written form was somewhat superior and the innovations of language were tried to be more avoided in the written form than in the spoken language (Aitchison 9). However, the language change did not evade writing at the end, because no matter the efforts, language change cannot be supressed, since it is a natural process.

5.3 Research on language change

Language change can be seen as a diachronic variation that means variation over time whilst the synchronic variation, to which the diachronic is related to, means variation at a certain point in time (Sunderland 32).

However, neither the synchronic nor the diachronic approach provides the true picture of linguistic change. That can be only achieved by the connection of both approaches. Apt comparison uses McMahon in her book *Understanding Language*

Change where she says that "the synchronic analysis is like a still picture whereas a diachronic one is more like a film." (10).

There are two main streams of sociolinguistic study of the history of English. The first kind, the study of social histories of language, aims to fix the balance between standard textbook accounts of the language as a system and the social forces behind it whilst the second study is corpus-based and deals with individual changes in linguistic and extralinguistic context (Nevalainen, Raumolin-Brunberg, *Sociolinguistic and Language History* 4).

The common denominator of sociolinguistic approaches and research goals is the social view of language. All linguistic choices speakers make are constrained by social background such as socioeconomic class, gender, age, social and geographical mobility, membership to certain ethnic group etc. These are all external constraints which are considered to be independent variables whereas language is dependent variable (Nevalainen, Raumolin-Brunberg, *Sociolinguistic and Language History* 12).

There have been introduced five different issues that sociolinguistic research on language change should tackle: constraints, transition, embedding, actuation and evaluation. Constraints mean possible changes or possible conditions of these changes, transition is the process of transfer of the innovations from one speaker to another, embedding deals with the comprehensive analysis of both linguistic and social structures where the innovations arise, actuation refers to a particular change in a particular language at a given time, and deals with the reason why these changes occur in one language when a similar change does not occur in another language although the conditions are the same. The last issue is evaluation which discusses the level of social awareness that is related to a change in progress (Nevalainen, Raumolin-Brunberg, *Sociolinguistic and Language History* 14-15).

Another tool for analysing change is the place of origin which is connected with the direction of diffusion. It deals with the origin of spread of changes which can be either from above or below (see above, *Language and Gender*). While changes from above are introduced by the dominant social class and usually with full public awareness, changes from below appear firstly in the vernacular and remain below the level of social awareness for longer period of time (Nevalainen, Raumolin-Brunberg, *Sociolinguistic and Language History* 15-16).

Language change can be basically assigned to one of two types, either is the change caused by a structural aspect of language, we call this internal motivated change,

or if there is no obvious reason for the change, it is regarded as external motivated change (Hickey 3).

Internal change leads to greater balance in the system, to removal of marked elements, it essentially leads to regularisation. All levels of language are connected, and thus a change in one part of language may cause change in another. For instance, in Old English, the loss of word endings led to perishing of the case system which affected the loss of grammatical gender in Middle English. An instance of internal change would be so called "analogy" in sense of regularisation of irregular set of forms (paradigms). The simplest example comes from strong and weak verbs. In English, the weak form with /t/ or /d/ in the end is more common than the strong form marked by stem alternation due to its efficiency and predictability in the creation. An example when the weak form took over the strong one – *prove: proved* (instead of former *proven*) (Hickey 3). Reasons for these changes arise e.g. from language contact as migration, conquests or trade business where the language is influenced by another language, and we speak of borrow or loan words, constructions etc. Also, an ongoing tendency is to simplify the language, and hence the regularisation.

On the other side stands the external motivated change where is no discernible internal reason why the change should have started. An instance of such change is the major shift of long vowels which started in the Middle English. Another example, present mainly in the American English, is the colloquial development of synthetic forms of auxiliary verbs where phonetic reduction leads to a fusion of *to* with a preceding verb form as in *going to − gonna* (Hickey 4). Possible reason for the change can be social differentiation when certain social groups adopt distinctive form of expressing in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation … For example, swear words undergo changes more often as they lose their force for speakers who use them, and thus the need for new and stronger words arises (Hickey 4).

5.4 Kinds of language change

5.4.1 Phonetic and phonological change

At phonetic level, change concerns the syllable structure, merges of unstressed syllables with stressed ones, etc… (Hickey 5).

Epenthesis "Vowel epenthesis is a low-level phonetic rule which is used to break up clusters of consonants which are unacceptable in a certain language or variety" (Hickey, 20). The syllable boundary is indicated by a dot.

Film /film/ - [fi.ləm]   (Irish English)

Arm /arm/ - [a.rəm]   (Hickey 20)

Metathesis involves the reversal of linear order with two segments, most commonly it occurs with a vowel and /r/.

bridde (Middle English)   *bird* (Modern English)

Two words from one root Usually different variants of a single root develop different meanings, and thus survive in language. In the case that the meanings stay the same, one variant ceases to exist. The source of the differences in form may vary, for example the word *parson* is a form of *person* that arose with the lowering of Early Modern English /e/ before /r/ such as in other words /derk/ - /dark/. The form with /ar/ acquired new meaning of an ecclesiastical person (Hickey 21).

Collapse of phonetic form This is a common change that leads to homonymy. It happens when two different pronunciations become one due to convergence. For instance, the word *ear* (as part of the body) and *ear* (as head of corn with seeds) have over time acquired the same pronunciation. When testing the origin of these words though, from German *Ohr* "ear of body" and *Ähre* "ear of corn", it is obvious that these words are etymologically separate entities (Hickey 22).

5.4.2 Morphological change

This thesis deals with the language change in the Early Modern English period, namely with the change at the morphological level. It focuses on the changes of usage of different words such as the replacement of *ye* by *you*, *mine, thine* by *my* and *thy* etc. It also deals with the change of frequency of usage of *–th* suffix in favour of *–s* suffix. This section will describe some of these changes.

For many languages morphology is the mediator between deep syntactic case and surface realisation (Harya 113). At morphological and syntactical level, the changes clarify the structure by isomorphism (one meaning and one and only form), regularisation etc…

Second person pronouns in English Since the Old English, continuing through the Middle English, there have been singular pronouns for the second person *thou* and *thee* which started to disappear in Early Modern English, and have long since disappeared from mainstream varieties of English, except in religious usage (Hickey 23). Only one form of second person pronoun survived till present-day, and thus the form *you* which is interesting since it has previously been an oblique form. Here is the table of the pronominal forms:

	Sing.	Plural	
Nom.	*thou*	*ye*	
Acc./Dat.	*thee*	*you*	(sole surviving form in mainstream varieties)

However, we have said that in mainstream English, there is no distinction between singular and plural anymore, nonetheless, this doesn´t apply to certain English varieties. There are some alternative plural forms that are either the inherited nominative plural *ye* or a morphological compound *yous*, *y´all* or a combination of these two *yees* (Hickey 23). To compensate the missing second person plural pronoun in Standard English, the colloquial expression *you guys* is used even though it originated in the American English. Today it has no longer an exclusively male reference (Hickey 23).

Unrecognised morphology Due to language contact, sometimes the language users fail to recognise the morphological structure of a borrowed word like e.g. in borrow verb from Scandinavian, *batha-sk* which appeared as Middle English *bask* (bathe in the sun). The English did not recognise the morphological structure and treated the verb as monomorphemic and non-reflexive (Hickey 24).

Morphological misinterpretation As in previous example, it arises due to language contact, in this case, the morphological structure is misinterpreted e.g. French loan words with /s/ were interpreted as plural suffix and removed for the singular form of the loan, for instance french *cerise* which turned up as Middle English *cherry* without the final /s/ (Hickey 24).

5.4.3 Lexical change

Lexical and semantic changes are the most obvious changes of a language. Lexical changes deal with the changes in lexicon of a particular language. There are few ways how to meddle with the lexicon; new words can be created from already existing words, they are simply newly invented, or due to language contact with other cultures, they are

borrowed (Stehling 25). Borrowing is the most frequent lexical change in English language, the borrowed words are called "loanwords", examples of such words: *karaoke*, which originated in Japanese, *leitmotiv* from German etc. The motivation for such process can be a lack of words in native language for the description of an utterly new concept. Another reason is borrowing for prestige and magniloquence (Stehling 26). This was the case for borrowing in Middle and Early Modern English where the donors, the languages that borrowed the words to English, were French and Latin. This type of expanding the vocabulary was the most common in the EME period. According to Ishtla Singh *The History of English* was the EME era the time of the "fastest growth of the vocabulary in the history of English language" (145).

5.4.4   Semantic change

When we speak about semantic changes, we speak of changes in the meaning of a word. Like the latter, they can be internally or externally motivated. The alternation in meaning appear because words are constantly used and the intention of speakers is not always the same.

A science called *etymology* deals with tracing the history of words and their meanings, and works with etymological fallacy that presupposes that there is an original meaning to a word. However, according to Hickey, no matter how far back we go to trace a word´s meaning, there would have always been a stage before with probably different meaning (Hickey 24).

Semantic shift The simplest type of semantic change is the shift. When words change meaning, they usually do so in the context of other related words, in the word field. Once one word´s meaning shifts, the other words in the same word field are affected. Furthermore, the original meanings are usually not available anymore. An example of such semantic change is the word *gentle* which comes from Middle English and originally meant "born of a good family, with a higher social standing", later it acquired the sense of "courteous" and then it developed to today´s understanding as "kind, mild in manners" because these qualities were regarded as qualities of upper classes (Hickey 28).

Semantic differentiation Another case of semantic change is semantic differentiation, when two meanings arise from a single one. For instance the English fluctuation in preterite and past participle endings has stabilised at /-d/ ending for

processes e.g. *He spoiled his daughters* and /-t/ ending for results like in *spoilt brat* (Hickey 28).

Loss of lexical transparency It arises when a word, or part of it, becomes non-transparent to later generation which may re-interpret the word in a manner that is inconsistent with the original meaning. For instance, the Early Modern English word *sandblind* (partially sighted) derives from Old English word *sam-blind* (*sam* = half). When the word *sam* was lost in Enlish, the word came to be written with *sand-* at the beginning (Hickey 25).

Polysemous words These words have basic and figurative meaning e.g. foot and foot of the mountain. Typical for the figurative use is that it appears in phrases where the figurative meaning is clear, however, over time, it started to appear even in clauses without any specifying information. This is the first step towards the shift from basic to figurative meaning as the unmarked member of a pair. An example, the word *decimate*, originally meant to reduce to one tenth in size but over time it gained the meaning to waste, destroy (Hickey 25).

Another types are *semantic deterioration/pejoration* and *amelioration*. The first one refers to a worsening in the meaning, while the second one to improvement in the meaning of a word. An instance of the first mentioned semantic change is *villain*, originally "inhabitant of a village", later "scoundrel". Another example of pejoration is the word *boor* which originally meant "farmer" and it has developed to mean "crude individual", mainly used as an adjective *boorish*. Another instance is the word *knave* (today somewhat obsolete) which has the negative connotation of "scoundrel" but it came from more neutral word *cnafa* from Old English meaning "boy, servant" which roots can be seen in German word *Knabe* "young boy" (Hickey 25). An instance of the other type, amelioration, *nice* used to mean "foolish" and it has shifted over time to "shy", "subtle" and since 18th century it has the meaning of "pleasant" (Hickey 29).

Meanings tend to be more subjective For example, the word *while* which meaning has moved from "during" to ecompass the meaning of "although". Originally, it was used to express temporal situation and then the personal opinion. Even before, the meaning of while was "period" and it later shifted to "during" (Hickey 25).

Semantic expansion Certain words expand their meanings over time like in Middle English *bridde* used to mean "small bird" but later it came to mean all types of birds (Hickey 28).

Semantic restriction Semantic restriction is the opposite to expansion since its meaning does not broaden but reduce. *Meat* originally stand for "food" in general but later its meaning was restricted to denote to only animal flesh (Hickey 29).

Rise of metaphorical usage A very common semantic change is for literal expressions to acquire figurative usages as in the phrase *ahead of*, which came from literally "in front of someone" to "more advanced, in a better position" (Hickey 29).

Meaning loss due to homophony After certain vowels coalesced during the Middle English period, some words became homophonous e.g. *lætan* 'allow' and *lettan* 'obstruct, hinder' when only the meaning of "allow" survived (Hickey 30).

Development of opposite meanings In language sometimes exist opposite meanings for one and the same word. Such words are distinguished either by word class or context, sometimes even by both. An example is *sanction* which can mean "to allow sth." or "to forbid sth." (Hickey 30).

Language change is not an issue of the past, there is still a dynamic movement in English, mainly in shifts of word class and productive processes in syntax and the lexicon (Hickey 33). However, the focus of this bachelor thesis is oriented to language changes in Early Modern English and whether the leaders of these changes are men or women. According to Labov *Principles of Linguistic Change*:

…any theory of the causes of change must deal with the general finding that in the good majority of linguistic changes, women are a full generation ahead of men (501).

This theme will be elaborated in the following chapters.

6   Early Modern English

First of all, it is important to outline the period of Early Modern English in order to further work on the topic of Language changes in the Early Modern English period. I will start with describing the different phases of the development of English language, then I will continue with the general description of the EME period, and I will end this chapter with the specific linguistic changes that took place in this time.

6.1   Stages of development of English language

English started essentially as a West-Germanic language that has undergone some major changes resulting from the contact with Scandinavian languages, later also with French. Another decisive period of change was the Middle English that triggered multilingualism. This repeated contact with different populations was firstly followed by standardization and later in 18th century by codification (Ans van Kemenade "History of the English Language", *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, linguistics.oxfordre.com).

The English language has been significantly transformed over the centuries. Altogether, there are distinguished three main periods: Old English (before c 1100), Middle English (c. 1100 – 1500) and Modern English (c. after 1500). However, according to many historians, Modern English is further divided into Early and Late Modern English with dividing point 1700 (Nevalainen, *An Introduction to Early Modern English* 1). A great example of transformation that the language has undergone, Nevalainen gives as an example the translation of the Bible (Genesis 1:3) from all three main periods:

"a, God cwæð ða: Gewurðe leoht, & leoht wearð geworht. (Ælfric of Eynsham, early 11th century)
b, And God seide, Liȝt be maad, and liȝt was maad. (John Wycliffe, 1380′s)
c, And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. (Authorised Version, 1611)"

6.2   Outline of the period of Early Modern English

Early Modern English spreads through centuries marked by the end of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment (qtd. in Lass 1). According to Kastovsky these eras are: "periods of important cultural, political and intellectual upheavals" (qtd. In Stehling 7). Moreover, during this era was the English written language standardised (Stehling 7). It was time of not only language changes but political and cultural as well. By the mid-seventeenth century were laid the key structures

of modern parliamentary democracy and England was separated from the Roman Catholic Church under the reign of Henry VIII. By this act of receding from the Church lost Latin most of its influence on English language which was now able to start to develop on its own (Stehling 8). Furthermore, it was the time of philosophical thinkers such as Thomas More with his *Utopia*, *Iliad and Odyssey* were translated and of course, the major figure of the time was William Shakespeare (Stehling 10).

No matter how familiar and understandable may Early Modern English seem to us, in some aspects it is unlike Modern English in terms of orthography, syntax, morphology, semantics, pronunciation, in this time took its place the Great Vowel Shift, and hence worth being considered separately (Stehling 4).

There is a long tradition of considering Early Modern English as Shakespeare´s English but there is more to it than that. The Early Modern English era is also viewed as a transitional period that led to creation of Standard English. In functional terms, during this time the English language spread to all communicative purposes such as science and law. The printing press had a huge impact on language and its spreading. During this time a major development in English language took place. Among the main types of Standardization that took place during this period belongs change of spelling, due to language spread to specialized branches new vocabulary was adopted. No less it has shown in pronunciation in processes such as Great Vowel Shift, or in grammar when many changes resulted in new means of expression and bigger transparency. Another ongoing development was in word order that became more fixed over time (Terttu Nevalainen, "Early Modern English", *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, linguistics.oxfordre.com).

The question of duration of the period has different answers based on the different scientific approaches. It also depends on whether we consider the linguistic or language-external factors. Based on cultural and political turning points, the beginning of Early Modern English is found in 1476 with the introduction of the printing press in England which is also seen as one reason for the growing literacy among the people. During this time, English has gradually gained more respect among the languages such as French or Latin, and due to colonisation has the language spread from now on to other parts of the world. This expansion marked by the Declaration of Independence in 1778 is considered as the end of Early Modern English. However, when pondering purely the linguistic factors, the beginnings of the period would be dated back to fifteenth century to the increased homogenization of spelling and a sharp reduction of inflectional endings, whilst

the end of the period in seventeenth century would be connected to the virtual disappearance of the remaining syntactic redundancies and rapid redefinition of the existing grammatical categories (qtd. In Görlach 9-11).

Another factor that played role in the formation of Early Modern English was growing literacy. Due to introduction of printing press in England, the reading population grew bigger as more and more books were translated from Latin to English e.g. *Coverdale´s Great Bible* in 1530´s, followed by *King James Bible* in 1611 or *Illiad and Odyssey* (Stehling 11).

Besides, this increase in literacy and growing preference of English to Latin, new genres emerged e.g. first kind of mass media was introduced, the pamphlets etc. (Stehling 12).

Thanks to new technologies, scientific progress, grow in literacy and increase of new genres, Early Modern English has become known as the time of "great lexical enrichment", and due to very fast growing English vocabulary, English asserted its place as the language for all communicative purposes (Jucker 50).

Nevertheless, all these are processes with no exact point of beginning or end. Early Modern English is however commonly acknowledged as period of time between 1500 to 1700 (Nevalainen, *An Introduction to Early Modern English* 3).

6.3   Linguistic changes

6.3.1   Grammatical changes

There is no discussion about whether there are changes between Shakespeare´s and Modern English. Many scholars have widely agreed on e.g. inversion questions, the use of pronouns with imperatives or the use of modal verbs as main verbs etc. However, they also note that these and many other features show a decent amount of variation even in one play which is a clear indication of an ongoing change in the language of Shakespeare´s days (qtd. in Bergs, Brinton 817).

Nouns The EME period shares some features with Modern English such as the regular plural ending –s, the irregular plurals were mostly the same as those who survived until today, and the genitive –s. The use of apostrophe was optional during the sixteenth century and became established in the course of the seventeenth century (Oxford English Dictionary). The alternative form of the genitive was the possessive dative e.g. "Job´s Patience, Moses his Meekness, Abraham´s Faith" (Richard Franck, 1694).

Pronouns The change from the second person pronouns *thou* and *thee* has been already described in the chapter *Morphological Changes*. However, it is important to remember that after the period of Early Modern English, no case distinction remained. The possessive pronouns *my/myne* and *thy/thyne* in the way they have been used also disappeared, except for *my* which took over the other uses and *mine* which is used in nominative.

Verbs In the present tense, the second person singular inflection *-est* declined and today only third person singular is marked. Furthermore, there is a great change from the *–th* suffix towards the *–s* suffix which will be analysed later in this thesis, an example of this change are *doth* to *does*, *hath* to *has* etc.

Adverbs There was a widespread use of compound adverbs of the form *here*, *there*, *where* + preposition as an equivalent of preposition + *this*, *that…* (Oxford English Dictionary) e.g. "*To make there through nauigable passage*" (Thomas Blundevill, 1594).

Conjunctions In the time of Early Modern English were popular compound subordinating conjunctions with *that* as their second element such as *"Though that the Queene on special cause is here, Hir army is moued on"* (William Shakespeare, *King Lear*).

6.3.2   Spelling

The pronunciation of Early Modern English words is due to the absence of spoken records inaccurate, since it has to be deduced from writing, and thus it is uncertain to which extent can be the pronunciation recreated and reconstructed today, spelling is a much better candidate in tracing the language changes of the time. Spelling regularization is a process that had started approximately in the middle of the fourteenth century, in time when English gained new functions as a written language. An instrumental part in its spread played the copyist and printers with their spelling conventions. In the sixteenth century arose the question of spelling reform and divided people into two groups. Ones advocated for the reform because in their opinion, the English language had receded too far from the pronunciation, the other ones argued that there is too much variation in speech to establish a basis for a renewed orthography. Regularization took place and many teaching manuals and spelling books were published e.g. Edmund Cote´s *The English Schoole-maister* (1596) presented word lists with spelling rules and also a 1,400-word dictionary. In the course of the seventeenth century, the <u>/<v> alternation was also regularized to its current standard form, earlier was <v> used word-initially and <u>

word-medially and for both the vowel and consonant (Nevalainen, *An Introduction to Early Modern English* 4).

6.3.3   Vocabulary

During the sixteenth and seventeenth century the number of less common or rare words has considerably grown. This vocabulary growth represents the widening range of domains of the vernacular, and thus demonstrates the tendency of standardization of language to its maximal variation in use. Lancashire (qtd. in Bergs, Brinton) writes:

[t]he mother tongue remained small, well under 10,000 words, until the 17th century. Printed books, however, by saving and disseminating learned and technical words, expanded available vocabulary by 75% from 1500 to 1600 (637).

This expansion was perceived in two ways; some writers were in favour of such loanwords that introduced new concepts. The others advocated the use of existing English words or their compounds for the purposes of expressing new words. A known supporter of the introduction of new words was for example humanist and diplomat Sir Thomas Elyot who introduced words such as "participate" in five of its senses given in the Oxford English Dictionary or "persist" in three senses ("Vocabulary Expansion", *Oxford English Dictionary*, public.oed.com).

6.3.4   Semantics

Throughout the history of English, many language features have changed, it was not only the grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, but as well the semantics of the lexemes. These semantic changes might have had several reasons (Stehling 2). There are essentially three main types of semantic causes, namely: changes of socio-cultural circumstances, changes of point of view from which is the concept viewed and the linguistic context in which the word is used. According to Antoine Meillet the major basis for semantic changes has the process of borrowing from another language (qtd. in Stehling 230-71).

7 Role of women in Early Modern England

This section will focus on the second major topic of this thesis, and thus the role of women in the process of language change. Firstly, it will describe their general position in the society of Early Modern England. Then it will deal with their role in the spread of language changes.

7.1 Historical background

Even though there were two significant women who held supreme power from 1553-1603, women of Early Modern England were largely excluded from public sphere. They were not allowed to hold any major positions of power such as to be lawyers, jurors or members of parliament. Furthermore, they were not able to study at universities nor even encouraged to discuss political, constitutional or theological matters. Their worth resided above all else in their ability to take care of home and family. The religious and legal definitions of gender roles and norms in Early Modern England were proclaimed in the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559) and in *The Laws Resolutions of Women´s Rights* (1632) ("The Norton Analogy of English Literature", wwnorton.com).

7.2 Women´s writing

However, as early feminist scholars have established, women of aristocratic and middle class wrote prolifically. Nonetheless, these works were meant to be shared among family or private circle of friends, women who decided to print their works risked infamy and hostility. An exception created few female political activists and religious radicals such as Elizabeth Poole who recounted her visions to the Army Council in 1648 and again in 1649, another female figure who did not settle with the current situation was Anna Trapnel who spoke out against the opulent life of Cromwell and the rulers of England in 1654 or the leveller woman who petitioned Parliament in 1640´s about a range of issues (Richards, Thore 1). However, those women were still few and they were often met with ridicule and hostility. In general, early modern women did not usually intervene either because of the cultural prohibition against women´s speaking in public or because they did not receive formal education to do so (Richards, Thore 2).

Probably the most essential factor affecting women´s letter-writing was the variation in levels of female literacy and education. Until fifteenth century, there was a common practice for women to dictate letters rather than write them by hand. However,

since sixteenth century onwards, women increasingly wrote their own correspondence alone (Daybell 4). Letters were considered far more reliable than oral reports, and thus assumed greater authority. They were usually used to redress false reports or as a mean of confirmation. After personal interview, written letters stand higher in hierarchy of methods used for communication and were closely followed by dictated letters and rumours (Daybell 5).

7.3 Women as leaders of language change

The role of gender differences in language was already described in previous chapters, the question now is who leads the language changes. In general, it is believed that women are sort of a "vanguard of language change" (Shin, 136). However, it also matters if they are monolingual or bilingual as Laomi Lapidus Shin states in her study *Women as Leaders of Language Change: A Qualification from the Bilingual Perspective*. Nevertheless, this fact is not important for this thesis since it deals merely with monolingual speakers.

Sociolinguists have already recognised women´s role in the initiation and spreading of language changes. Women are considered as the leaders of language changes that go from above the level of public consciousness and involve new prestige forms proceeding from the upper ranks of the social class. On the other side are men, who lead changes in vernacular forms and below the level of public consciousness (Grégoire, "Gender and Language Change: The Case of Early Modern Women", homes.chass.utorento.ca). However, it is more complicated as Labov´s theory implies. So called gender paradox by Labov (*Language Variation and Change*) states that:

While women adopt prestige forms of language proceeding from the upper ranks and from above the level of public consciousness at a higher rate than men, they also use higher frequencies of innovative vernacular forms occurring below the level of public awareness than men do (213-15).

The evidence of women as language changes leaders is rather strong, according to Labov in his book *Principles of linguistic change*:

Any theory of the causes of change must deal with the general finding that in the good majority of linguistic changes, women are a full generation ahead of men." and he also writes: "women with a particular ability to confront established norms and the motivation to defy them (501).

31

The characteristic of language change leaders is determined by their personal statements, social histories and their philosophies of life (Labov, *Principles of linguistic change* 33). Labov comes up with the Nonconformity Principle where he states that the history of these leaders is essentially the history of nonconformity (*Principles of linguistic change* 410). In the comparison with other linguists, Labov describes the leaders of language change as influential central members of their social network rather than socially marginal people. There are two possible approaches how to analyse the social networks in Early Modern English, the macro-level approach and the examination of particular individuals and their life-stories (Bergs, Brinton 728).

The macro-level approach is based on the general history of early modern England and two major events that took place in this time, the Reformation in the sixteenth century and the Revolution with the Civil War in the seventeenth century. Both these events increased the "weak ties" in social networks and possibly accelerated the spread of ongoing language change (Bergs, Brinton 728). Furthermore, the changes usually spread from the bigger cities such as London than from countryside.

The second approach is more difficult because the amount of personal data about particular persons is limited. However, some information has been gained by comparing the leaders of linguistic change at different phases of the process of its spread. For instance the CEEC data (Nevalainen, Raumolin-Brunberg, *Historical Sociolinguistics: Language Change in Tudor and Stuart England* 130) suggests that at the utter beginnings of the process of integration of a new word, the leaders of *you* and *–s* suffix were geographically mobile people, with probably many weak links. On the other hand, the initiators of these changes, when the new linguistic features have been between 15-35% of the occurrences, have been probably individuals with an influential social position such as e.g. ruler Elizabeth I. with the third suffix *–s* (Bergs, Brinton 728).

Another sociolinguist who considered women as leaders of language change was Janet Holmes, she states that:

…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 (qtd. in Nevalainen, Raumolin-Brunberg, *Historical Sociolinguistics: Language Change in Tudor and Stuart England* 110).

Furthermore, while women are usually the initiators of linguistic change, men with no matter of social status are somewhere in the middle, not leading or resisting the change (Shin 136). This statement will also be analysed in the following empirical part.

The legacy of women´s experience in past times is unfortunately not easily recoverable. There were a few educated women who had the desire and ability to reflect on their experience in their own words, however, the majority of women could not and did not do that. If we know something about them, we know that from passing mention of their fathers, husbands or sons or from records from courts (Mendelson 1). However, there were some women that defied the system such was Elizabeth Poole or Anna Trapnel. The development of women´s writing was described in this chapter, from dictating letters to writing them by themselves. As little historical materials about women in Early Modern England we have, they have still played an important role. They are considered to be the leaders of some language changes according to many sociolinguists. Women tend to be more open towards language innovations and they are often those who lead the changes in language no matter of their class and social position even though they are more affected by them due to their weaker social position.

The next chapter will follow up with the analysis of certain linguistic phenomena in the era of Early Modern English with regard to gender. I will try to establish the leaders of these language changes.

8   Replacement of subject *ye* by *you*

The era of Old English (before 1100) distinguished between singular and plural second person pronouns, during the period of Middle English (1100-1500), especially during the late period, the singular second person pronoun had evolved into *thou/ thee*, depending on the case, while the plural had evolved into *ye/you.* During the era of Early Modern English, the original use of *ye/you* has transformed and it started to signify politeness and respect, while *thou/thee* was left for all the other singular uses. Eventually, *you* replaced all the other uses of *thou/thee* (Yaswen, The second person pronoun in Early Modern English, homes.chass.utorento.ca).

The role of the second pronoun plural *you* was until the later sixteenth century divided in accordance with the prepositional case and thus, the form *ye* was used in the subject form and *you* in object form. According to Grégorie ("Gender and Language Change: The Case of Early Modern Women", homes.chass.utorento.ca) the change when *ye* is swallowed by *you* hasn´t taken place until the sixteenth century.

The aim of this chapter is not only to analyse the different uses of *ye* and *you* with regard to prepositional cases, but also to establish the leaders of this particular language change. I will try to find out the turning point when the new form took over the old one, furthermore I will establish the gender of the initiators of this linguistic change.

Example No. 1

Letter VI., Richard Duke of York to the citizens of Shresbury, 1452

"…and more, keeping me within the bounds of my liegeance as it pertaineth to my duty, praying and exhorting *you*, to fortify, enforce, and assist me, and to come to me with all diligence, wheresoever I shall be, or draw, with as many goodly and likely men as *ye* may make to execute the intent abovesaid." (CEECS)

Example No. 2

Thomas Betson to Katherine Ryche, June 1476

"And now lately *ye* shall understond…"

"I had a letter ffrom Holake, youre gentyll Sqwyer, by the which I understond right well that *ye* be in good helth off body,…" (CEECS)

Example No. 3

Letter X., King Henry VII. to the Earl of Ormond, 1492

"Wherfore, and forasmoche as we have sent for our derrest wif and for our derrest moder to come unto us, and that we wold have your advis and counsail also in soche matiers as we have to doo for the subduyng of our said Rebelles, we praie *you* that, yeving your due attendaunce uppon our said derrest wif and lady moder, *ye* come with thaym unto us; not failing herof as *ye* purpose to doo us plaisir." (CEECS)

These three letters capture the use of *you* and *ye* in the time span from 1452 to 1492. The first excerpt records the speech of a duke to citizens of Shresbury, where he urges them to join him in his cause. We can see both variants of the pronoun *you*. The first pronoun used in the text is in objective case and has the form *you*, whilst secondly, it is used in the subjective case *ye*, which corresponds with Suzanne Grégorie´s statement with which she works in her article "Gender and Language Change: The Case of Early Modern Women".

Another documented example of the subjective form *ye* comes from 1476 from personal, mixed (between man and woman) correspondence. In this letter, 24 years after the first excerpt, where still both variants were used, only one form of "you" appears and thus, the subjective *ye*.

The third letter from the end of fifteenth century was meant for official purposes since it was written by the king to his earl. We can observe the use of both variants, corresponding with the given dogma that *ye* is used for addressing the subject and *you* for object.

These examples prove the use of *ye* in subject form and the use of *you* in object form. All above mentioned examples were recorded in the course of the fifteenth century. The change in the differentiation between the different uses of *you* described by Suzanne Grégoire has not yet affected the correspondence of fifteenth century. According to Grégorie, it should arise during the sixteenth century, so the use of *ye* and *you* is so far in accordance with the general tendency of the era.

An interesting use of *ye* comes from 1477, when a certain male correspondent uses *ye*, except in the accustomed nominative position, also in non-standard way, thus in other case than nominative, in this example, *ye* follows the verb *thank*:

Example No. 4

Letter V. Edmund Grindall, Archbishop of Canterbury, to Dr. Matthew Hutton, Dean of York, 1477

"I hartely thanke *ye* for your favour extendett towards this bringer W. Allen. I perswade my selfe that *ye* shewed him favour for my sake in the office bestowed vpon him, and thatt *ye* had remembrance off my sute made vnto *ye* for him heretofore, and therefore I thanke *ye* accordynglye." (CEECS)

Example No. 5

Alys, Lady Sudeley to Thomas Stonor, 1420´s

"…, made yn youre name and other, of the seid Maners to suche persons as be named in the same, wheche seid deedes the berer of this shall shewe unto *you*, as my full trust ys and hathe be unto *you*, like as the berer hereof shall enfourme *you*: to whom *y* prey *you* geve credence." (CEECS)

The first found example of the subjective use of *you* has been documented already around the year 1420´s in the personal correspondence between Alys, Lady Sudeley and Thomas Stonor. However, its use coexists together with the variant of *ye/ y*, which was used for the subjective form. Interesting is that both variants that serve here as indicators of the subjective form are used not only in the same sentence, but also just one element apart. However, it makes sense since the use of *you* in the subjective form is in its beginnings and people are still used to employ the form *ye/y*. In the excerpt is also used *you* as an object. This excerpt disproves Grégorie´s theory that the change when *you* is used as subject appears not until the sixteenth century because it does not matter that the exact year is unknown, we know that it has already appeared in the first half of the fifteenth century, thus earlier than Grégorie states in her hypothesis. The second part of our question is to determine the gender of the leader of language change. In this case, it was a woman who coined the term first. It is a turning point for the development of this exact linguistic phenomenon. Furthermore, it is also an important point for the perception of women and their role in language history, it proves that no matter of the status in society, it is possible to influence events. One does not have to be high-ranked to be able to do so. Nonetheless, Lady Sudeley was able to bring the innovation to language because she was an educated woman, on the other hand, women from lower social classes did not have the opportunity to be educated and thus, could not lead language changes in this way, through personal letters.

Example No. 6

Goddard Oxbrygge to Mistress Stonor, 1476

"Maistes, ther as *you* wrote to ffor your fesche I have aplyd hete as ny as kowd, but as I cane I will send it to *you* as sone as I maye, and thate shalbe a Tuysdaye or a Weddensdaye at the ffardest. And as for odir matterys that *you* wrote to me ffor, I have nat yete inqueryd off theme, ffor the tyme was sso shorte I cowd nat: the tyme wase sso shorte, sso I R[{eceived{] your letter a Tuysdaye betwyxte vj and vij a the kloke. And as for that *yo* wrote to me of Davy I wyll do acordyng to your wyll: and as ffor hyse gownys he had convyed theme, before *you* rod owte of London, into Whytebredys howse, and he had j off theme before he spake with me:…"(CEECS)

Another excerpt documents the subjective form of *you* several times at once. It was written by a male correspondent some 56 years later after the first appearance of *you* as subject. It is found after the conjunctions *as, that, before*. In the passage, we can also find the form *yo,* which I consider a shorter form of *you*, also used as subject. So far, we have always had another variant to pronouns *you* and *ye, yo* as a shorter form of *you* and *y*, as a short form of *ye*.

Example No. 7

Elizabeth Stonor to William Stonor, 1476

"Allso, Syr, I pray *you* to recomaunde me hartely unto here goode moderhode. Fordermore, Cosyn, I longe sore ffore *you*, to se *you* her in London whanne *you* have done your besenes: but I understonde that *you* have hade gret besynys syn you departyd ffrome me. Syr, *ye* schalle understond that I had no wrytyng ffrome my son Betson:…"(CEECS)

Example No. 8

Elizabeth Stonor to William Stonor, 1476

"And sur, *you* schall undyrstond that I have be with my Lady of Southfolke as on Thursday last was, and wayted uppon hyr to my lady the Kynges Modyr and hyrse, be hyr commaundment." (CEECS)

These two letters by Elizabeth Stonor to William Stonor record many pronouns and its variants. The subjective form *you* appears here after *when* (*whanne*) and *that*. Moreover, it alters here with the variant *ye*. Interesting is that the writing was not uniform those days and many different forms of one word were possible. Except the forms *you* and *ye*, in her next letter from the same year, we can see for example *allso* and *also*, *whanne* and *when*, *Syr* and *Sire* or even in the same letter, *understonde* and *uderstond*.

Example No. 9

Letter XXII., Queen Margaret, mother of Henry the Fifth, to her son, 1490

"*Y* wysse my very joy, as *y* efte have shewed, and *y* fortune to gete thys or eny parte therof, ther shall nedyr be that or eny good *y* have but yt shalbe yours, and at your comaundement as seurly and with as good a wyll as eny *ye* have yn your cofyrs, as wuld God *ye* cowd know yt as veryly as *y* thynke yt." (CEECS)

Another example is represented by a female correspondent and thus, the Queen Margaret when she addresses her son. We can apply our rule of her use of *ye* as well, however, she alters its use with the shorter variant *y*. Nonetheless, there is no apparent change of meaning, it only depicts the diversity in language.

Example No. 10

Letter XXI., King Henry the Fifth to his mother, Margaret Countess of Richmond, 1500´s

"Madame I have encombred *you* now with thys my longe wrytings, but me thyngks that I can doo no less, considering that hit is so selden that I do wryte, wherfore I beseeche *you* to pardon me, for verrayly Madame my syghte is nothing so perfitt as it has ben; and I know well hit will appayre dayly; wherfore I trust that *you* will not be displesed though I wryte not so often with myne owne hand, for on my fayth I have ben three dayes or I colde make an ende of this Letter." (CEECS)

The next excerpt appears around the 1500, the accurate year is not clear. In the chosen passage we can see that the longer form took over the shorter and it is used in the same manner as subject and object. In both cases, in the letters from around 1490 and 1500 *you* in subject appears only after *that*. Also, the correspondence appears between the same two people, only this time the initiator is the king.

Example No. 11

Letter XL. Mary Queen of France to Thomas Wolsey, 1514

"... I recomaund me un to *you* as hertly as I can, and as schoth ... intreated as the kynge and *you* thought I schuld have ben, for ... the morn next after the maryage, all my servants, both men and women ... dyscharged." (CEECS)

Another example, already from the beginning of the sixteenth century, is written by Mary, the Queen of France. For the first time *you* doesn´t appear as subject after the conjunction *that* but after another conjunction *and*.

Example No. 12

Letter LII. Sir Richard Wingfield to King Henry the Eighth, 1519

"Also for their further contentation and to meve them to come to Calais without stoppe or difficultie I have shewed them as is in th'instruccions: that inasmoch as your Grace shall not oonly ... and take a right great journey before *you* come to the See, but also must passe the See which is painfull, laborous, and duangerous:…" (CEECS)

In 1519 *you* is used in nominative once again, this time it follows *before* which is used as a conjunction. Based on the documented cases of the subjective form *you* we can generalize its use. So far, it has appeared only after a conjunction or a different word class which was used as a conjunction. It hasn´t been used in the first position in a sentence, yet. Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, the *you* form as subject is used more often and the *ye* form is sidelined. However, it hasn´t disappeared at once and both forms continue to exist together. Here are few examples of the use of *ye* in the course of sixteenth century that continues to appear in the letters of the sixteenth century and thus coexists with the form *you* which slowly takes over and is used for all cases. This will eventually lead to the disappearance of the case system in English language.

Example No. 13

Letter XLVIII. Queen Margaret to Cardinal Wolsey, 1516

"My Lorde Cardinal I comand me to *you*, and I vould fayne have spokyn vyth *you* but *ye* var gon or I coud cam to *you* and therefore I most vryt to *you* my mynde." (CEECS)

Example No. 14

Letter LII. Sir Richard Wingfield to King Henry the Eighth, 1519

"How be it, the great Master sayth that he thinketh verrily that if your Highnesse lye at Calais that the King his Master woll come, with a certain with him, and see your Grace in Calais in maskyr, and saith that after your Grace and the King here have seen oones togyther he puttyth no doubte but that *ye* shall mete oftyn by your owne accorde." (CEECS)

Example No. 15

Letter CXXVII. Jane Messyndyne, The Prioress and Convent of the Cistercian Nunnery of Legborne in Lincolnshire to their founder, 1537

"Yet if it may pleas your goodnes, we trust in God *ye* shall here no compleynts agaynst us, nother in our lyvyng nor hospitalitie kepyng. 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." (CEECS)

Example No. 16

Letter XV. Edmund Gryndall, Archbishop of Canterbury, to Dr. Matthew Hutton, Dean and Chapter of York, 1582

"And if it shall chaunce that the condicions offered by the said Doctor Gibson shall not be lyked of you, I will take suche further order with the said Doctor Gibson when he cometh downe, that he shall offer you other condicions which *ye* can not in reason mislike. (CEECS)

Example No. 17

Letter CCLXV. Prince Charles to Lord Villiers, 1610´s

"Ther is none that knowes me so well as yourselfe, what dewtiefull respect and love I have ever, and shall ever carrie to Kinge: and therfor ye may juge what greefe it is to me to have the ill fortune as that anie of *my* actions should beare so ill an interpretation as I fynd by your Letter this message I sent by *my* Lo. Mongomerie has borne." (CEECS)

We can see that in the first half of the sixteenth century both subjective forms, *you* and *ye*, have been used simultaneously and the variant *you* hasn´t yet swallowed the *ye* one. Later it is obvious that the *ye* variant is being seldom used and as e.g. in the letter by Jane Messyndyne from 1537, the need to have two forms to express object and subject

is lesser, since she uses in one letter *you* and *ye* to express the subjective position. Since the half of the seventeenth century, there is no evidence of using *ye,* or the shorter form *y* and the use of *you* finally takes over. The last recorded use is from 1544 and it was used by a male correspondent. After the analysis of these excerpts we can say that women really are those who launch the innovations and are less conservative to clinging to the old forms, while men are more likely to be more traditionalist and keep using the old forms rather than accept the language change. At least we can apply this rule at our observation of the distribution of two different forms expressing the difference between subject and object. Firstly, when the *you* form has been used as subject was around 1420´s and it was coined by a female correspondent while the last one to use *ye* was a male correspondent around 1610´s, the last female who did so was in 1540´s, some seventy years earlier.

In this part of my thesis, I will use the data I have analysed and based on them, I will create graphs that will illustratively depict the uses of innovative and outdated forms of certain words. In every chart, there are two lines; blue line symbolises the male correspondents and the red line the female correspondents.

In the following chart, there is a comparison of male and female correspondents and the frequency of their use of pronoun *you* in the nominative case. The major points of the chart is the beginning of the use of *you* in nominative case by women in the 1420´s, the next point is 1476, when male correspondents started to use the *you* form in nominative too. The next important milestone is 1500 where are documented the uses of *you* by both, men and women simultaneously. Then there is a slight stagnation of the female line, while male line keeps rising, this phenomenon is most likely due to the amount of letters written by male correspondents, but eventually, around the 1540´s, 1550´s the lines get even, which marks the prevailing tendency of the use of nominative *you* over *ye*.

Graph No. 1 Use of nominative *you* by men and women
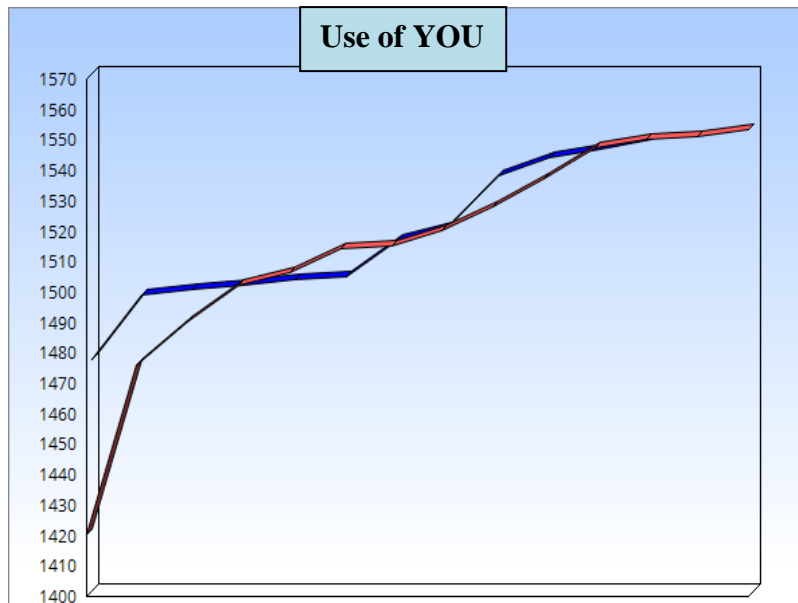
Use of YOU

Second chart describes the use of nominative *ye* over time and its decline. As is the case with the previous chart, blue line stands for male correspondents and red line for female ones. The nominative use of *ye* was widely spread in the fifteenth century and during the first half of the sixteenth century it has started to fall. The red line is significantly shorter which suggest that women stopped using the *ye* form much earlier than men did. In this case, there is no crossing of the lines which means that we do not have two letters from the same year. From the chart, it is obvious that the last documented example of the use of *ye* by women was in 1540´s, while men continued to use it till the beginning of the seventeenth century. That is a significant difference of circa seventy years. There is an example of using *ye* in 1580´s when it was already considered to be outdated and *you* has already been used regularly for around hundred years. Then the *ye* form does not appear for around thirty years and re-appears around 1610´s. That is the last documented case of the use of *ye* in nominative.

In this analysed linguistic phenomenon, women were not only ahead by using the innovative form earlier, moreover, they also stopped using the obsolete form much earlier than men. The next phenomena we will deal with are the possessive determiners *my* and *thy*. As well as with the forms *ye* and *you*, we will focus on their spread and the gender of the innovators of this language change.

Graph No. 2 Use of nominative *ye* by men and women

Use of YE
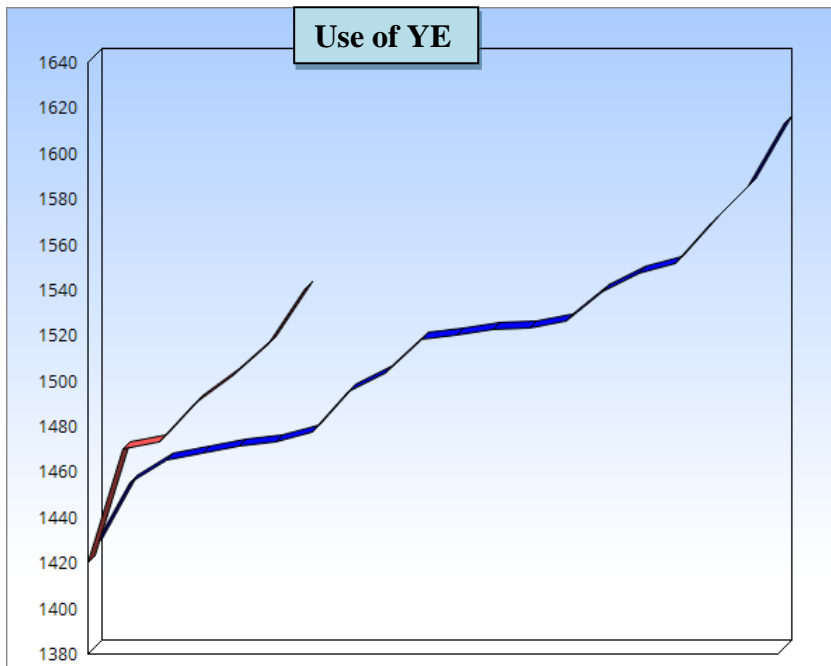
9 *My* and *Thy*

Even though the gender prevalence in dissemination of *you* is most likely the most apparent, it is also traceable at the dissemination of the shorter variant of the possessive determiners *my* and *thy*, whose distinction was earlier purely phonological, divided according to its position in a sentence without a change of meaning. *Mine/Myne* and *thine/thyne* were used before "h" and vowels, much as "an" was, while *my* and *thy* before consonants (Grégorie). Thereafter when *my* occupied the function of *mine*, *mine* was restricted to use as a nominal (as in "That is mine." or "Mine is here."), just as the "s-forms" *hers, yours, ours, theirs* had been since Late Middle English (Algeo, 2010, s. 165).

Example No. 18

Thomas Stonor to Sir John Fortescue, 1424

"…: to wyche endenturys lakketh +te selyng of *my* uncle Belknap, wyche shall ensele +tem whanne he com fro beyonde see." (CEECS)

The letter by Thomas Stonor from 1424 is the first registered example of the pronoun *my* before a vowel. In the comparison with nominative *you*, which use was firstly coined by a woman, this time, the first person to use the innovative form *my,* was a man. The next one to use this form was also a man, almost twenty years later, nonetheless before "h". Its use was however still considered marginal since the form *mine* was still used.

Example No. 19

Thomas Maykyn to William Marchall, 1440

"Wherfor I p~y yow in case that ye haue reseyuyd the foreseyd lett~s ande testament so sendeth me relac~on of the matters, and yf ye haue not reseyuyd hem so wryteth down unto your brothur Thomas in hast to wete whare and whom he delyuy~ hem, for as thus awysyd, he schall reseyue no mo lett~ of *my* hondes ne of *my* charge this xx=ti= yere efte sonys trewly, for and the testament be lost unto, lesse than ye haue eny copye +t~of I am lyke to be dangeryd and noysyd for no trewe man…" (CEECS)

Example No. 20

Dame Katherine Arundell to Thomas Stonor, 1473?

"Ryght trusty Cosyn, I comaunde me to you: and where as hit was agreed by you and *my* councell at your beyng at Dorchester byfore Crystmasse that Richard Tomyowe, consyderyng the gode service that he hath don for *my* husbonde and me in dayes passed and the charges that he must do for me here after, shulde be made sure of landes and tenementez to the yerely value of xx=ti= marke." (CEECS)

The first female correspondent who used *my* before "h" was Katherine Arundell around the year 1473 which means that men were in this case those, who were more open towards the language change. Moreover, based on the analysed data, the use of *my* before "h" was much more open to both forms *my/mine* than it was with vowels. The first documented letter by female correspondent, where she uses *my* before vowel didn´t appear sooner than in 1490´s. The appearance of my before vowels and "h" was rather marginal in the fifteenth century, however with the arrival of the sixteenth century, it started to spread more. Nonetheless, the change wasn´t established yet and in the course of the sixteenth century both forms have been used simultaneously. In the following three examples appear the different uses of *my*.

Example No. 21

Letter XXII. Margaret Beaufort to her son, King Henry the Fifth, 1490´s

"*My* oune suet and most deere Kynge and all *my* worldly joy, yn as humble maner as y can thynke y recommand me to your Grace, and moste hertely beseche our lord to blesse you;…(CEECS)

Example No. 22

Letter XLII. Queen Elizabeth to James, 1593

"… I am ashamed that so disordard coursis makes *my* pen excide a lettar, and so drives me to molest your yees with *my* to long skribling, and therfor end, with *my* ernest prayers to God that he wyl inspire you to do, in best time, al for your best."(CEECS)

Example No. 23

Letter LI. Queen Elizabeth to James, 1593

"…I refer me to *my* owne lettar what dome I gaue therof…."

With the end of the sixteenth century, *my* appears before both, consonants and vowels, which can be seen at the excerpts above. Examples no. 21 and 22 prove that in the course of sixteenth century, *mine* is no longer employed on daily basis and instead of it, *my* is used. However, there were few documented uses even after the beginning of the seventeenth century as the following examples show.

Example No. 24

Letter CCLXV. Prince Charles to Lord Villiers, 1610´s

"Ther is none that knowes me so well as yourselfe, what dewtiefull respect and love I have ever, and shall ever carrie to Kinge: and therfor ye may juge what greefe it is to me to have the ill fortune as that anie of *my* actions should beare so ill an interpretation as I fynd by your Letter this message I sent by *my* Lo. Mongomerie has borne." (CEECS)

We can see that the use of *my* is in the seventeenth century already established. Interesting is that no matter how innovative the author of this letter is due to his use of *my* instead of the old form *mine*, when we use our previously gained knowledge about the use of *ye* and *you*, we can see that the obsolete form *ye* is used. Therefore we cannot generalise the users of one innovative form to be innovators also for other language changes.

Example No. 25

Letter LX. From Archbishop of York Richard Sterne to same, John Cosin, 1665

"…,that I may by the same hand, by which I have received His Majestie's commands, returne an accompt of yours and *mine* own care and diligence in performance thereof. And so I bid your Lordship heartily farewell and remaine,…" (CEECS)

Example no. 25 depicts the last documented use of *mine.* The letter dates back to the second half of the seventeenth century, the exact date is 1665. After that no other example was to be found in the CEECS Corpus. The author of this letter was Archbishop of York, this fact may be a reason why *mine* was used so stubbornly even in the seventeenth century, more than fifty years after the last documented case. In the beginning of this thesis, it was mentioned that some expressions no matter how obsolete they are, may still be used in special types of writing e.g. writing for religious purposes.

Graph No. 3 Use of possessive *my* before vowels and "h" by men and women
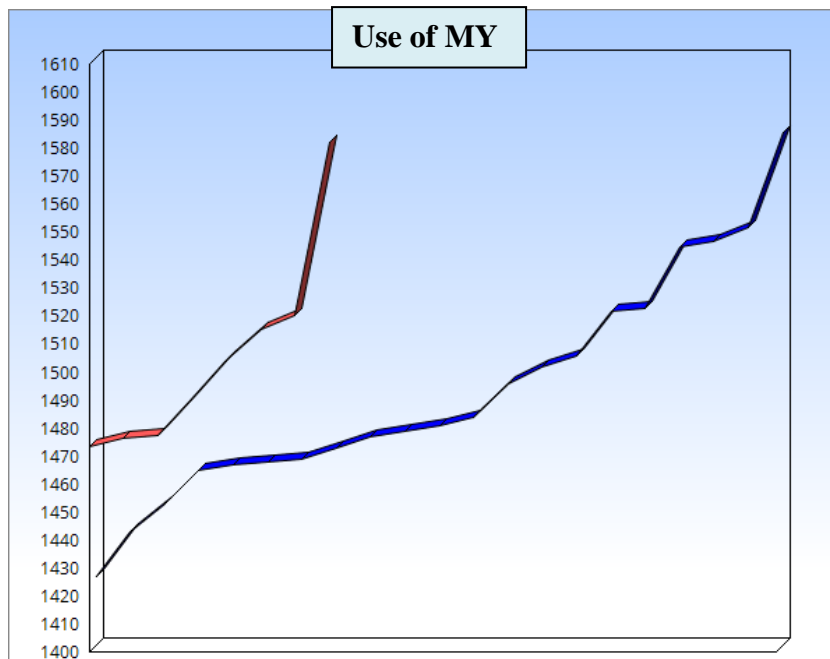
These two graphs show that men were both those, who introduced the use of possessive *my* before vowels and "h" and contradictorily, at the same time those, who also kept using the outdated *mine* variant the longest. Women on the other hand lagged behind at the beginning but once they accepted the new form, they caught up the pace and since the beginning of the sixteenth century, used the innovative form quite frequently. Furthermore, in regard with the *mine* form, the last documented use was in 1551, while men used it thorough the seventeenth century.

Graph No. 4 Use of possessive *mine* before vowels and "h" by men and women

Use of MINE
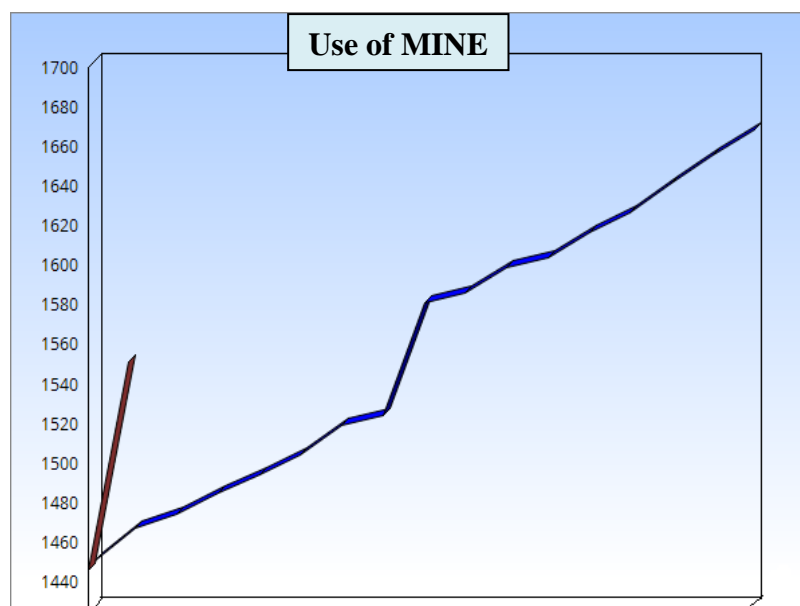
When analysing the distribution of *thine* or its variant *thyne* with *thy*, we must bear in mind that its use was limited to intimate or familiar conversations and was thus altogether used by people of lower social status, unfortunately it is not possible to find enough evidence in CEECS Corpus. However, there were few examples that all appeared in the course of seventeenth century and all correspond with the general rule of the different distribution of *thy/thyne* that *thy* appears before consonants and *thyne* before vowels. Nonetheless, according to Schnedl, the appearance of *thy/thyne* before "h" in the Early Modern English Period was rather variable and not as firmly established as with *mine* (180).

In the comparison with *my/mine* where the movement to unification of forms appeared already before the end of the sixteenth century, the change with *thy/thyne* must have appeared much later, based on the analysed examples perhaps some hundred years later (Schnedl 180).

Example No. 26

Letter XII. Nathaniel Bacon to Jane Lady Cornwallis, 1613

"My brother Killigrew kyses *thye* hands, w=th= my sister, sending you many thanks for yo=e= kind tokens." (CEECS)

Example No. 27

John Jones to Philip Jones, 1653

"Deare ffreind,

Thy Brother gives me a cordiall acco=t= of your retaining mee in your memory."
(CEECS)

Example No. 28

Letter LXX. Winefrid Thimelby to Gertrude Aston, 1670´s

"My sweet Chyld,

How couldst thou fynd in *thy* hart to give adition to my troble, in parting with thee, and
to be at such charges to vex me?" (CEECS)

 Already in the first letter we can see that *thy*, or as in this particular use its variant
thye, was used in an intimate context. The same is valid for the following examples as
well. All three examples indicate a close relationship between the correspondents. In
examples no. 26 and 28, *thy* is used before "h", in examples no. 27, it is used before a
consonant. Furthermore, all three examples have been written by men.

10 Third person singular suffix *(-e)s* versus *(-e)th*

In comparison with Middle English period, the personal endings were somewhat simplified due to the loss of *-e* as an ending for the first person singular in the present indicative e.g. *ich sitte* form in Middle English vs *I sit* in Early Modern English. The endings that were used in Early Modern English have since disappeared but in those times there were several variants for some of the persons:

I	*sit*	
thou	*sittest, sitst*	
he, she	*sitteth, sits*	
we, you, they	*sit*	(Algeo, 176).

The third person singular present-tense suffix has since transformed from *(-e)th* to *(-e)s* such as in case of *doth* versus *does*. The *-s* suffix started to prevail in the seventeenth century, though both forms have been still used simultaneously. Firstly, we will analyse the *–th* suffix at the verb *have* and at some full verbs.

Example No. 28

Letter II. Archbishop Chichele to King Henry the Fifth, 1418?

"…I assentyd in to the same persone, and so comuned with hym ther offe, and told him owre comun avis; and he *hath* ziven his assent ther to and or *deyneth* hym in alle hast to come to zour presence, so that I hop he schal be with zou at the same tyme that zour chapel schal come:…" (CEECS)

In the passage from the letter from the first half of the fifteenth century we can see the use of *-th* suffix in third person singular, once at the auxiliary verb *have* and once at full verb *order*.

Example No. 29

Letter III. Robert Waterton to King Henry the Fifth, 1420

"And upon Wedynsdaye next sall zour Justice sitte at Zorke upon the deliverance of the Gaole there and a Cession of the Pees also, at which tyme I suppose to speke with many of the gentyls there, and als sone aftyr as I maye be answerd I sall certifie os zowe *hase* lykid to comaunde me, wyth all the haste possible." (CEECS)

The first documented use of *has* is tracked back to the first half of the 15th century. In the early stages of using *has* instead of *hath*, the variant *hase* appeared. It was much more common, especially at the beginning, an example of such use can be seen in example above.

Example No. 30

Queen Margaret to her son, 1490

"…lettyre of favour to hys corte of Parlyment for the treve expedicyon of my mater whyche soo long *hathe* hangyd, the whyche y well know he *dothe* expecially for your sake, for the whyche my ..." (CEECS).

Despite the fact that the modern form of *have* has already appeared, not even at the end of the fifteenth century it wasn´t established yet and the suffix –*th* still appeared. An example comes from a letter from the end of the fifteenth century written by Queen Margaret to her son, where the forms *doth* and *hath* are used, this time with an affix -*e*.

Example No. 31

Letter CXLIV. Germayn Pole to his right worshipfull and most especiall gud father in law, Sir Robart Plompton, 1503

"Furthermore, Sir, if it please you to understand of the great unkindnes that my grandam *hath* showed unto me now latly, as the bringer herof can more planly shew you by muth, to whom I besech you to take credence on. For be ye sure, Sir, that I was never so unkindly delt with; all is because that she well know it that ye are asunder, therfor she *thinketh* that she may give and sell all at her owne playsure." (CEECS)

However, there have already been documented uses of the –*s* suffix, in the beginning of the sixteenth century there is only one prevailing form, and that is the -*th* as in auxiliary *hath* or full verb *thinketh*.

Example No. 32

Letter XXXII. Edmund de la Pole to Thomas Killingworth, 1505

"Also the capetene *has* vord that the K. of Romes has send for me my naggetels iiij. pore, a nodder rede bonet." (CEECS)

This excerpt depicts the use of *has* as a full verb.

The following two examples, both from the first half of the seventeenth century, demonstrate the daily use of -*s* suffix in the third person singular in the verb *has*, either as auxiliary, or full verb. In the seventeenth century, *has* has already replaced *hath*, however, *hath* is still used, even though, its use is rather peripheral.

Example No. 33

Letter IV. Mr. Parr to Anne Lady Bacon, 1613

"I am so much the more bold to answer your letter, in as much as it *has* pleased you first to use me, and my La." (CEECS)

Example No. 34

Letter CCCXXXV. King Charles to the Duke of Buckingham, 1626

"For Blenuill he *hes* yet but made his formale demands concerning the Ships, to which he *has* a delatorie answer while we heere from France concerning the restitution of oure Ships." (CEECS)

Example No. 35

Letter LV. Winefrid Thimelby to Herbert Aston, 1670´s

"…; and if he can find she *hath* any frinds that will contribute to the making of her hapy heer, he also will offer his mite." (CEECS)

The last documented use of hath goes back to 1670´s although it was quite rare to use it so late in the seventeenth century. More popular and widely used form was *has*.

The chart below illustrates the history of using the –*s* suffix at verb *have*. The blue line represents the male correspondents, the use of *has* has been coined by a man in 1420, while female correspondents started to use the innovative form much later, not until 1528. Interesting is the fact that there was a drop in the use of *has* by men from 1519 to 1610, which is indicated in the chart by the straight line, while the rise by the sharp points, these spots are the years of the written letters. There are no other letters since 1680´s in the CEECS Corpora, but based on the analysed development and our modern use of *has*, we can say that its use continued further.

The second chart describes the use of *hath*. As we can see, it was the most common variant during the fifteenth century and maybe quite surprisingly, it continued to be very common during the sixteenth century as well and even remained popular during the seventeenth century. The last documented use of *hath* by woman was in 1642 while the last man who used it was in 1670´s.

Graph No. 5 Use of suffix –s at the verb *has* by men and women

Use of HAS
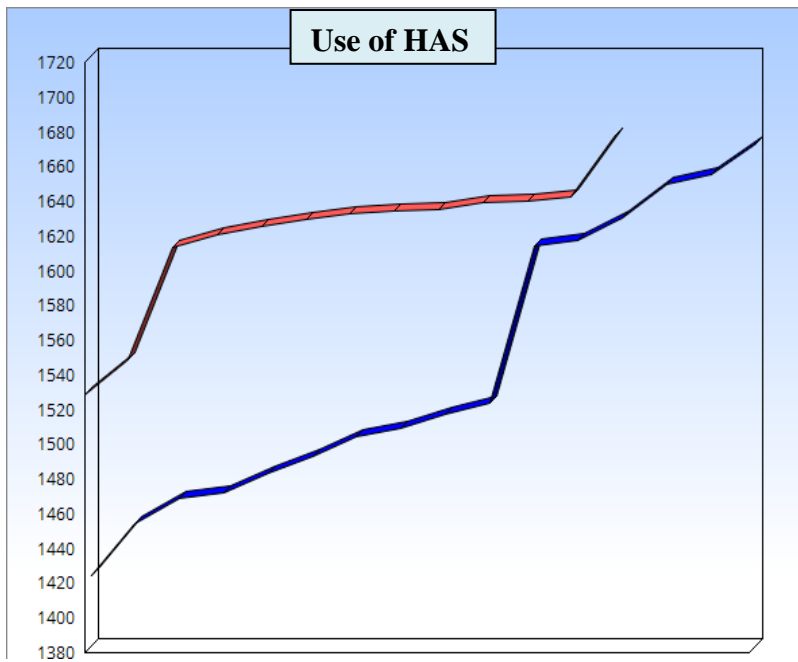
Graph No. 6 Use of suffix –th at the verb *hath* by men and women

Use of HATH
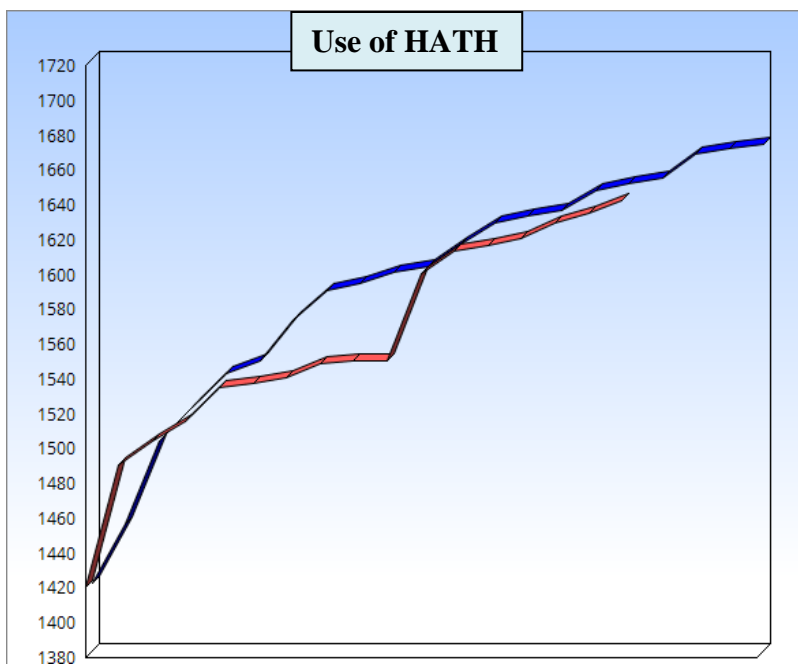
Example No. 36

Letter XLI. Roert Dudley, the Early of Leycester to Mr. Secretary Walsyngham, 1586

"The gentleman ys worthy of a greater favour, and able to serve hir majesty many ways in this

countrey; he *thinkes* some lack in me that he receaves no answere or comfort all thys while. (CEECS)

This letter from the end of the sixteenth century proves that some full verbs were used with the *-s* ending before the end of century, while the verb *have* continued to be used in the more archaic form *hath*. Furthermore, none of these examples prove that female correspondents led this change of *-th* suffix to *-s* suffix.

When we analyse the appearance of *doth/does*, in contrary with *have*, *does* appears circa in the 1479. However, in the 1490´s, the variant *doth* is still used and thus, overlaps with the *does* form. Not even hundred years later is the change from *-th* suffix to *-s* suffix in third person singular established, yet.

Example No. 37

Richard Page to Sir William Stonor, 1479

"Syr, ther ys a frere prechour off thabbey of Dertford, is name is frere Hugh Fabri, whiche y have allway aught my verry good will and favour onto, and so *does* Appelton, Martyn, and all the gentlemen in oure parties." (CEECS)
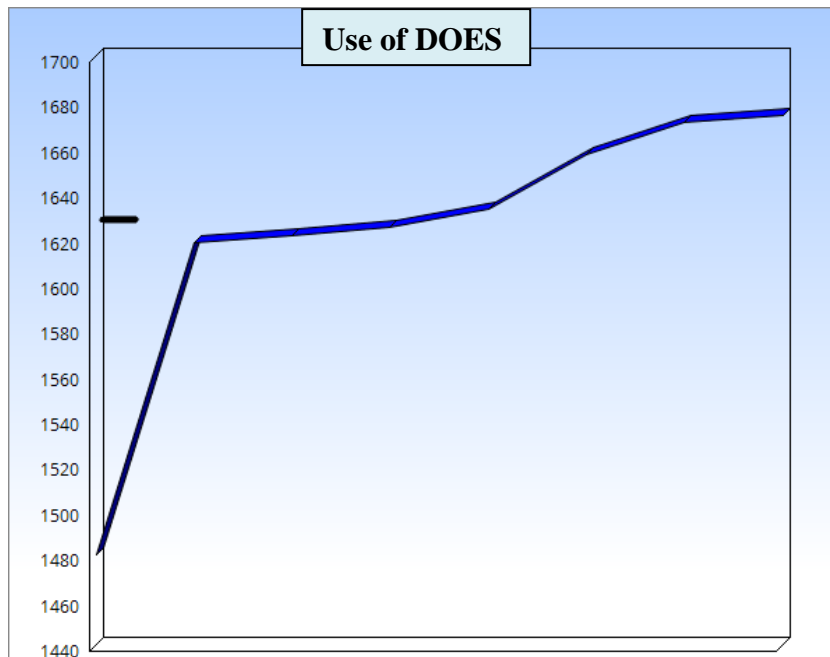
Example No. 38

Letter CXLIX. Elizabeth Cornwallis to Jane Cornwallis, 1631?

"…: but while you are plesed to stand at this distans, I feare my husband will not do that which his hart most desirs, for he does ashure himself that affection you ons had to him is clear gon, and that it is hopeles for him to seek your love." (CEECS)

The graph no. 7, based on the analysis of CEECS Corpus, shows the use of *does* and its development. Unfortunately, there was only one documented female correspondent, who used *does* and it was around the year 1631. The first man, who used this form appeared already in 1479, then there was a large gap of not using this form and it re-appeared in the 1620´s.

Graph No. 7 Use of suffix –s at the verb *does* by men and women

Example No. 40

Thomas Betson to Elizabeth Stonor, 1478

"…: your honour and worshipe off contenewaunce here after stykkythe as nye myn hart as *dothe* eny freind, man or o+ter about you, be my trouthe, our blissid lord so helpe me." (CEECS)

Example No. 41

Letter LVI. Archbishop Matthew Hutton to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, 1597

"In your last letters you shewe as the cheffe cause that her Highnes *doth* not resolve to be the great want off fitt men for that place." (CEECS)

Example No. 42

Letter XLVI. Winefrid Thimelby to Herbert Aston, 1660´s

"I am strangely in love with it, which tooke from yr eyes that multipliing glace, through which you are ust to looke upon the seeming good in me. Jesus, what doth my brother Aston say, what meanes he?" (CEECS)

These three examples, all from different centuries show that the suffix *-th* in *doth* is still used. However, since the 1620´s, the variant *does* appears but its use is rather sporadic.

The chart below shows that *doth* has been used for a very long time, it lasted even during the seventeenth century. Once again it depicts that men, however open to this language change, kept using the older form *doth* longer than women, circa until 1666, which is the last documented example of its use.

Graph No. 8 Use of suffix –th at the verb *doth* by men and women
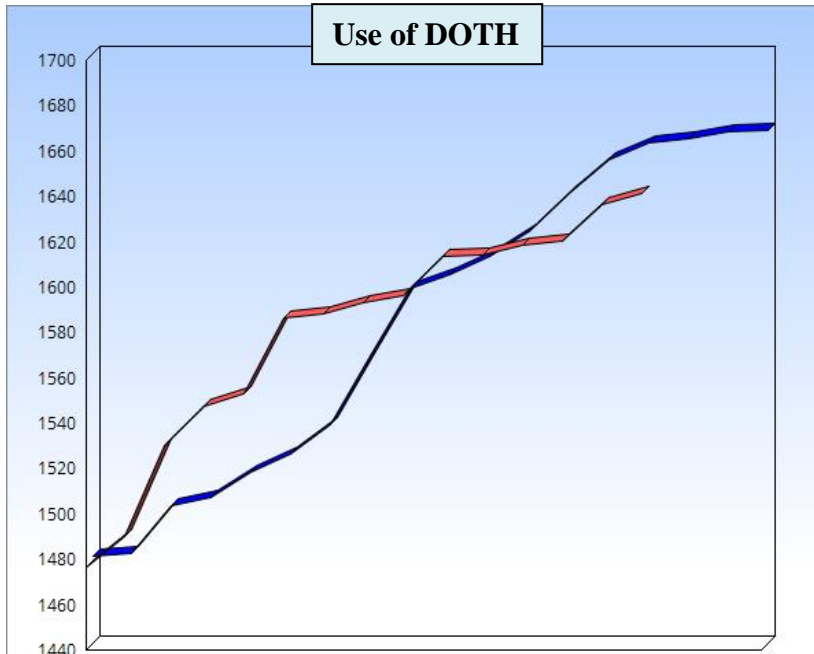
In relation to the leaders of this language change, based on the analysed examples of the verbs *do*, *have* and few others such as *think* or *order*, women were this time overall the more traditionalist ones and men led the change from third person singular *-th* suffix to *-s* suffix.

11 Conclusion

In this thesis, we addressed the issue of women as leaders of language change. The scope of this hypothesis was the period of Early Modern English and the research was grounded in the study of personal letters from this time.

Even though there have already been many sociolinguistic studies dealing with the relation between language and gender, there were only few that discussed the issue of women as leaders of language change. The possible reason can be that in the course of history women´s opportunities to learn were limited and thus, there are not enough historical materials to work with. We do not know much about women from lower social classes since their opportunities were even lesser. That is the reason why we do not speak in the era of Early Modern English of the change from below but change above, since there are some materials available about women from higher social classes, namely we handle their personal letters.

This paper is based on the theoretical study of different aspects of the impacts that women have on language, particularly on language change. There have been various sociolinguistic studies that discussed it. The generalisation of their results would be that women serve as a so-called "vanguard" of language change, with this result came up even the top linguist such as William Labov or other linguist like e.g. Naomi Lapidus Shin. However, these and many other studies analysed women´s role in the spread of language change in different environments, Labov focused on the phonetic and phonological innovations in a number of geographical areas in Britain, Shin focused on bilingual settings etc. Nonetheless, the period of Early Modern English, as one of the most crucial periods in English language in terms of language change, is only insufficiently analysed. Aim of this thesis was to create a study that will analyse women´s influence on language changes in the EME period.

Thorough analysis of personal letters from fifteenth to seventeenth century has been the foundation for understanding the time and language changes that took place there. I have chosen three linguistic phenomena and tracked their use; the replacement of *ye* by *you*, *myne/thyne* by *my/thy* and third person suffix *–th* replacement by *–s* suffix. Moreover, I have created graphs that help to visually imagine these changes and assign them to time and gender.

In the first example, the replacement of nominative *ye* by objective *you* is discussed and the hypothesis that women lead the language change is proved. Furthermore, the idea implied by Suzánne Grégorie that men do not lead or resist linguistic change is disproved, since men resist the change by using the old form *ye* even forty years after the last female used this expression.

In the second analysed example where we focused on the spread of possessive determiners *my* and *thy* that replaced the forms *mine* and *thyne*, the leaders of this particular language change came to be men. However, it is quite paradoxical that men initiate the language change process but I have found out that men also continue to use the obsolete forms the longest. The same applies to the last examined example, the change from –*th* third person suffix to –*s* suffix at verbs *have*, *do* and few other lexical verbs.

My research has been limited, of course, by the extent of the corpus I have worked with and with the lack of historical materials written by women. It can certainly be more elaborated if I have had access to more corpora dealing with the period of Early Modern English, where would have been equally represented men and women.

All in all it can be said, that women may sometimes lead linguistic changes but men may too. It depends on certain circumstances that may be once in some aspects more inclined to women, the other time to men. No matter which case is this, men almost always do not let go so easily the routine ways by adhering to the outdated forms. Women may not always be the leaders, they however do not resist the change and once they adopt it, they continue to spread it instead of resisting it. Even though they do not always lead the language change, it has been a remarkable progress that they managed to lead it at least in one of the discussed examples, when we consider the role they had in the society of Early Modern England.

Through the process of writing this thesis I have learnt a great deal of language change and understood that it is natural and happens whether we wish it or not. It also makes me contemplate what the language will look like in some hundred years, when I already know how it looked almost four hundred years ago. I merely wish that women will play again a role in its change. This time it will be hopefully more noticeable.

List of references

Primary source

Nevalainen, Terttu; Raumolin-Brunberg, Helena; Keränen, Jukka; Nevala, Minna; Nurmi, Arja; Palander-Collin, Minna. *CEECS/Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler*. Department of Modern Languages, University of Helsinki 1998.

Secondary sources

Aitchison, Jean. *Language change: progress or decay?,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 6-9

Algeo, John. *The Origins and Development of the English Language*. Sixth Edition. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010, pp. 10-11

Bergs, Alexander, Brinon, Laurel J. *English Historical Linguistics*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/Boston, pp. 637, 728, 817

Chambers, J. K. *Sociolinguistic theory : linguistic variation and its social signifikance*, Oxford; Cambridge , Mass: Blackwell, 1995, 132-133.

Coates, Jennifer. *Language and Gender*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2nd edition, 2011, p. 16

Daybell, James. *Early Modern Women´s Letter Writing*, *1450-1700,* Palgrave Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 4-5

Görlach, M. *Introduction to Early Modern English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 9-11

Gardiner, Shayna, Nagy, Naomi. *Stable Variation vs. Language Change and the Factors that Constraints Them*, University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics, 2017, p. 78

Harya, Trisna Dinillah. *Language Change and Development: Historical Linguistics, Premise*, Journal of English Education, 2016, p. 113

Hickey, Raymond. *Motives for Language Change*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 3-7, 21-25, 28-30, 33

Jucker, Andreas H. *History of English and English historical linguistics*. Klett, 2000, p. 50

Labov, William. *Principles of linguistic change*, vol. 2 Oxford: Blackwell. 2001, pp. 33, 410, 501

Labov, William. "The intersection of sex and social class in the course of linguistic change.", *Language Variation and Change*", 1990, pp. 213, 215

Lakoff, Robin. "Language and Women´s Place", *Language in Society,* vol. 2, no. 1, Cambridge University Press, 1973, p. 50

Mendelson, Sara, Crawford, Patricia. *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720*, Clarendon Press, Oxford. Publication, 1998, p. 1

McEnery, Tony, Hardie, Andrew. *Corpus Linguistics: Method, Theory and Practice.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, p. 1, 2

McMahon, April M. S. *Understanding Language Change*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 10

Nevalainen, Terttu. *An Introduction to Early Modern English*, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 1, 3, 4

Nevalainen, T., Raumolin-Brunberg, H. *Sociolinguistic and Language History. Studies based on the Corpus of Early Modern English Correspondence*, Rodopi, Amsterdam – Atlanta, 1996, pp. 4, 12, 14-16

Nevalainen, Terttu & Raumolin-Brunberg, Helena. *Historical Sociolinguistics: Language Change in Tudor and Stuart England.* London: Pearson Education Ltd., 2003, pp. 110, 130

Nordberg, Bengt, Sundgreen, Eva. *On the rate of change of some variables in present-day Swedish.* Toronto, 1999, p. 52

Richards, Jeniffer, Thore, Alison. *Rhetoric, Women and Politics in Early Modern England.* Taylor&Francis e-library, 2006, p. 2

Romaine, Suzanne. "Variation and Gender", *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, Blackwell Publishing, 2003, pp. 103, 104, 110, 112

Schendl, Herbert. "Language History and Linguistic Modelling", *Language History*, vol. 1, Mouton de Gruyter, 1997. S. 180

Singh, Ishtla. *The History of English: A Student´s Guide*, Routledge, 2013, p. 145.

Shin, Lapidus Naomi. *Women as Leaders of Language Change: A Qualification from the Bilingual Perspective*, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, 2013, p. 136

Stehling, David. "Semantic Change in the Early Modern English Period", *Latin Influences on the English Language*, Hamburg: Anchor Academic Publishing, 2013**,** pp. 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-12, 25, 250, 271

Sunderland, Jane. *Language and Gender: An Advanced Resourse Book*, Routledge 2006, pp. 3, 10, 12, 29, 32

Talbot, Mary. *Language and Gender*. 2nd edition, Polity Press, 2010. pp. 18- 20.

Walker, Terry. "Trials, Depositions, and Drama Comedy", *Thou and You in the Early Modern English Dialogues*, John Benjamin´s Publishing Company, Uppsala, 2007, p. 4

Yang, Charles D. "Internal and external forces in language change", *Language Variation and Change*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 231

Internet Sources

Grégoire, Suzánne. "Gender and Language Change: The Case of Early Modern Women", University of Toronto Libraries, 2013, www.homes.chass.utoronto.ca

Kemenade, van Ans. "History of the English Language", *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, Aug.2018, linguistics.oxfordre.com

Nevalainen, Terttu. "Early Modern English", *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, Aug 2017, linguistics.oxfordre.com

"Vocabulary Expansion". *Oxford English Dictionary*, public.oed.com

Säily, Tanja. "Varieng: The Research Unit for Variation, Contacts and Change in English". 22 May 2012, www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC/.

"The Early Seventeenth Century: Gender, Family, Household". *The Norton Analogy of English Literature*, wwnorton.com

Yaswen, Cheratra. "The second person pronoun in Early Modern English", 2003, www.homes.chass.utorento.ca