FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA

DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOXÍA INGLESA E ALEMÁ

COURTESY MARKERS IN REQUESTS: THE CASE OF *PRAY* AND *PLEASE* IN LATE MODERN ENGLISH

Tesis de doctorado realizada por
Fátima Faya Cerqueiro
y dirigida por Belén Méndez Naya

Santiago de Compostela, 2013

Fdo.: Fátima Faya Cerqueiro   Fdo.: M. Belén Méndez Naya

M. Belén MÉNDEZ NAYA, Profesora Titular de Filología Inglesa del Departamento de Filoloxía Inglesa e Alemá de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela y directora de la tesis de doctorado realizada por Dña. Fátima FAYA CERQUEIRO con el título de "Courtesy markers in requests: The case of *pray* and *please* in Late Modern English", dentro del Programa de Doctorado de Filología Inglesa (Estudios Ingleses: Tendencias Actuais e Aplicacións).

INFORMA: que la citada tesis es de una investigación original que cumple los requisitos de fondo y forma de un trabajo académico de estas características. En la tesis se aborda el estudio del origen y desarrollo de *please*, un marcador de cortesía que no había sido investigado de forma detallada hasta el momento, comparándolo con su antecesor *pray*, y poniendo de manifiesto la relevancia de las estructuras de tipo imperativo (*be pleased to, please to*) en su desarrollo. La tesis consta de una sección teórica, donde se revisan diferentes aproximaciones al estudio de los marcadores de cortesía, y de una parte empírica basada en el análisis de varios corpus.

Y firmo el presente informe para que conste a los efectos de admisión previa a trámite de dicha tesis en Santiago de Compostela, a 13 de mayo de 2013.

Fdo. M. Belén Méndez Naya

Vouchsafe me for my meed but one fair look:
A smaller boon than this I cannot beg,
And less than this I am sure you cannot give.
(Shakespeare, *The two Gentlemen of Verona*)

Table of contents

List of tables

List of figures

Agradecimientos

A nivel institucional esta tesis doctoral ha sido posible gracias a la financiación de distintos organismos: Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (ayudas CONSOLIDER HUM2007-60706 y FPI BES-2005-9113), Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (ayuda FFI2011-26693-C02-01), Consellería de Cultura, Educación e Ordenación Universitaria de la Xunta de Galicia (ayuda CN2012/012).

Durante los años en los que he desarrollado este trabajo muchas personas han contribuido en mayor o menor medida en su elaboración. A todos ellos, gracias. En primer lugar, querría dejar constancia de mi gratitud al grupo Variación, Cambio Lingüístico y Gramaticalización, dirigido por la profesora Dra. Teresa Fanego, a la red ELC y a todos sus miembros. Gracias a mi tutora, la Dra. Belén Méndez-Naya, por su comprensión, por todas sus recomendaciones y consejos, por su valioso trabajo y por el tiempo dedicado para que esta tesis se haya podido llevar a cabo. Gracias también a las profesoras Dra. Paloma Núñez-Pertejo y Dra. María José López-Couso, por haber formado parte del tribunal que evaluó mi trabajo de investigación tutelado y a la Dra. María José López-Couso y al Dr. Tomás Jiménez Juliá por haberlo hecho en mi memoria de licenciatura. Quiero hacer una mención especial a la profesora Dra. Ingrid Tieken, quien me dio una excelente oportunidad para colaborar con ella en una comunicación, trabajo que aumentó mi curiosidad y mis ganas de investigar en un momento en el que una tesis no entraba en mis planes.

Quisiera agradecer, asimismo, la acogida que me han ofrecido en todos los lugares en los que he realizado estancias de investigación. En primer lugar, un agradecimiento a la Unidad de Investigación VARIENG, de la University of Helsinki, y en especial a las profesoras Dra. Terttu Nevalainen y Dra. Irma Taavitsainen, quienes me abrieron las puertas de este centro. Un agradecimiento sincero a todos los miembros de este grupo de investigación, que en tantas ocasiones se mostraron disponibles para resolver dudas y que me facilitaron acceso a todo tipo de materiales, que han resultado esenciales en mi investigación. El

Abstract

This PhD dissertation focuses on the study of the two main courtesy markers in requests in the Late Modern English period, namely *please* and *pray*. Both of them are borrowings from French and came to replace native strategies (e.g. the Old English parenthetical *ic bidde*) in this pragmatic function. *Pray* had been the major courtesy marker in requests since the Early Modern English period, but it started to fall into disuse during the Late Modern English period, when a new form, *please*, started to gain ground.

A preliminary analysis of the pragmatic markers *please* and *pray* in the multi-genre corpus *ARCHER* (A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers) showed that these features are only available in fiction, drama and letters. Following these results, I proceeded to the analysis of several single-genre corpora. As regards fiction, I resorted to a selection from Chadwyck Healey's *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (1700-1780) and *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (1782-1903). For drama I used the drama section in *A Corpus of Irish English*. Finally, I paid attention to correspondence, and studied two epistolary corpora covering different periods within Late Modern English (the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* (1761-1790) and *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* (1860-1919)) and a selection of letter-writing manuals extracted from *ECCO* (Eighteenth Century Collections Online) database.

My study relies on corpus linguistics methodology, and gets insights from Historical Pragmatics, Politeness Theory and Speech-Act Theory, while the origin and development of the courtesy marker *please* is accounted for in terms of grammaticalisation.

The thesis includes a revision of the literature on the different theoretical approaches and provides the accounts and descriptions of these two courtesy markers in the literature, both for Present-day English and for earlier periods. I also

looked at Late Modern English reference works in order to gain insight as to how the speech act of requests was apprehended in the period.

In my corpus analysis I explore the different sources which have been proposed in the literature as the origin of the courtesy marker *please*. In addition to conditional structures of the type *if you please*, in my study I draw special attention to imperative structures such as *be pleased to*, and *please to*, which constitute in my opinion the major source of the Present-day courtesy marker *please*. The process of grammaticalisation of *please* from these imperative structures would be as follows: *Be pleased to > please to > please* (verb) > *please* (courtesy marker). Thus, the courtesy marker *please* would have originated in a full matrix clause rather than in an already parenthetical conditional form. The grammaticalisation of *please* follows similar patterns to those identified in the development of other pragmatic markers, not only in English, but also cross-linguistically.
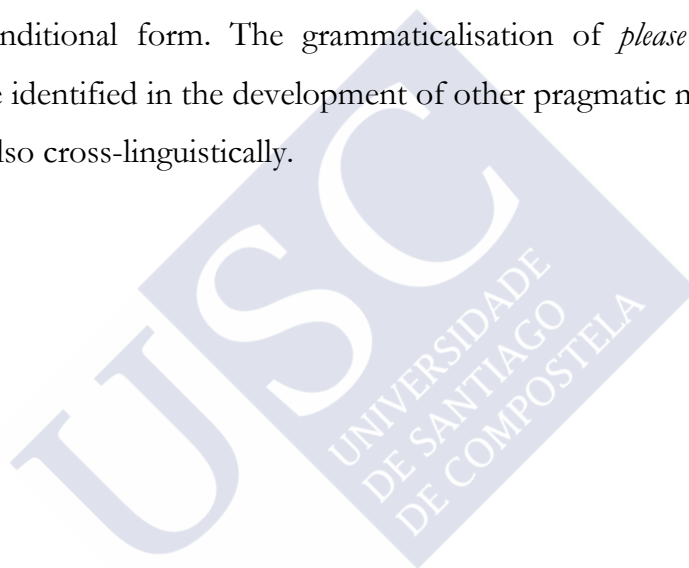
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aim of the study

Interest on pragmatic markers such as *well*, *now*, or *you know* has greatly increased over the last two decades both from a diachronic and a synchronic point of view (cf. Brinton 1996; Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen 2006 for two book-length studies). Studies devoted to the origin and development of pragmatic features have been in vogue in recent years, thus constituting an important area of research within historical linguistics. However, in spite of the increasing amount of work already done in the field of pragmatics from a diachronic perspective, there is still a good deal to say regarding the development of the different individual forms. In particular, the emergence of courtesy markers, that is "formulaic expressions of politeness and propriety" (Quirk *et al.* 1985: §8.90), and, among them, of *please*, the main focus of the present study, constitutes an almost unexplored area in the literature on pragmatic markers. This lack of attention is particularly striking because most of the requests uttered in everyday English conversation need to be supported by the word *please* in order to show good manners and to make sure that our request will be granted. *Please* is a very frequent word which commonly surfaces in the most habitual interactive events, from colloquial exchanges to more formal oral or written events. It is certainly strange that such a frequent word has received so little scholarly attention, both from a synchronic and a diachronic point of view,

especially since, as mentioned above, pragmatic markers have become a favourite topic of research.

From a diachronic point of view the origin of *please* has been dealt with in dictionaries such as the *OED* (s.v. *please* adv. and int.; s.v. *please* 6d), which lists a number of possible sources for the form, marginally by Busse (1999, 2002), who focuses on the shift from *pray*, the earlier courtesy marker in requests, to *please*, and a bit more in depth by authors such as Traugott and Dasher (2002), Brinton and Traugott (2005a) and Brinton (2006, 2007a, 2008), who regard the emergence of this marker as a particular type of language change, namely grammaticalisation. As far as Present-day English is concerned, references to *please* are found in usage manuals and grammars and in some publications dealing with pragmatics, such as Aijmer (1996), who explores the use of *please* as a pragmatic marker in requests, and Wichmann (2004, 2005), who is particularly interested in the prosody of requests containing this marker.

My interest on *please* started during my PhD courses (*Tercer Ciclo*). I was intrigued to know when and how words like *please*, *thank you* or *cheers* (meaning 'thanks') entered the language and became so popular and almost automatic in the adequate contexts both for native speakers and learners of English as a foreign language. My first steps in the study of the courtesy marker *please* started then, with the essays I had to write for two of my courses, and culminated in my MA Thesis entitled *On the origin and development of the courtesy marker* please*: A corpus-based analysis*. My preliminary studies showed that even though the verb *please* was frequently used in the Middle and Early Modern English periods, there was no evidence of its use as a courtesy marker until much later. Its use as a request marker is a fairly recent

phenomenon that can be dated in the Late Modern English period.[1] It was in Late Modern English that *please* shared its prominence with *pray*, the main request marker from the medieval period onwards.

Although the replacement of *pray* by *please* has already been approached in the literature (cf. Kryk-Kastovsky 1998; Busse 1999, 2002; Akimoto 2000), there is still room for further research when it comes to identifying the possible reasons underlying this replacement. To this end, my study provides a comparison of the courtesy markers *pray* and *please* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a full description of other variants of these markers such as *prithee* and *if you please*.

Therefore, the main aims of the present study are (1) the description of *pray* and *please* as the main requests markers in the Late Modern English period and the exploration of the competition between them, which led to the eventual demise of the marker *pray* in requests in favour of *please*; (2) a contrastive analysis of the courtesy markers *pray* and *please*, with particular emphasis on their different pragmatic functions and on origin and development of the latter. I will pay attention to the pragmatic features that enabled *please* to become the preferred marker in requests, and the processes of language change that can be identified in its evolution. Furthermore, with its detailed analysis of courtesy markers, (3) this study also throws light as to how the speech act of requests is apprehended in the Late Modern English period.

---

[1] There is controversy regarding delimitations in Late Modern English and different dates have been proposed. Whereas many authors avoid drawing up the boundaries, Beal (2004: 2) includes the 'long' eighteenth and nineteenth century as part of the 'Later Modern English.' I will delimit Late Modern English from the late seventeenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. See Section 1.5 for more details.

Previous work on pragmatic markers from a historical perspective usually pays attention to those items generally listed in the literature, and therefore regarded as core members of the class "pragmatic/discourse marker" (see Section 2.3; Brinton 2007a: 47). *Please* and *pray* are generally absent form these lists. The main aim of this piece of work is precisely to place these two markers in focus, thus contributing to the study of pragmatics in general and of pragmatic markers in particular.

1.2. Theoretical frameworks

My research can be situated at the interface of different branches of linguistics, namely historical pragmatics, corpus linguistics and grammaticalisation studies. This section offers a cursory look at the origins of modern pragmatics as a discipline (Section 1.2.1), with special reference to the emergence of historical pragmatics (Section 1.2.2), and an overview of grammaticalisation studies (Section 1.2.3).

1.2.1 Pragmatics

When it comes to studying pragmatic markers in general, and courtesy markers such as *please* and *pray* in particular, it becomes clear that they differ substantially from items belonging to word classes which are well established in traditional grammar. *Please*, for example, which is regarded as an adverb in some dictionaries, fails to show features of the core members of this category and dictionaries usually define its use rather than its meaning (cf. Section 5.3). Therefore, an adequate description of courtesy markers like *please* can only be attempted taking into consideration language use and the context in which the word appears, rather than just its

morphology, the syntactic functions it realises or even its semantics. In other words, what is of prime importance is the pragmatics of these elements. Pragmatics as a linguistic discipline has precisely language use and communication as its object of study. It has been defined as "the study of language usage" (Levinson 1983: 5), the use of language "in communication" (Leech 1983: 1), and "the study of language use or [...] the study of linguistic phenomena from the point of view of their usage properties and processes" (Verschueren 1999: 1). In pragmatic studies attention is paid to "those relations between language and context that are **grammaticalised**, or encoded in the structure of a language," (Levinson 1983: 9) [bold original]. Context, both linguistic and extralinguistic, plays a central role in pragmatics; in other words, the circumstances in which an utterance is produced are key in this field of study. Context is present in definitions of pragmatics as a way to distinguish pragmatic meaning from semantic meaning. The relevance of context in language was highlighted by Malinowski, a scholar working in the field of the philosophy of language, already in the twenties, before the emergence of pragmatics proper:

> Exactly as in the reality of spoken or written languages, a word without *linguistic context* is a mere figment and stands for nothing by itself, so in the reality of a spoken living tongue, the utterance has no meaning except in the *context of situation*. (Malinowski 1923: 307, quoted in Verschueren 1999: 75) [italics original]

The analysis of the context in which a certain form occurs is essential to understand its pragmatic function. This is even more so when we deal with material dating from earlier historical periods, for whose analysis it is not possible to consult with a native

speaker, or to resort to the analyst's linguistic intuition. Some of the issues covered by pragmatics are mentioned in definitions of the discipline, such as the ones given above, and Huang's, who considers that "[t]he central topics of inquiry of pragmatics include implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and deixis" (2007: 2). Speech acts, that is, "action[s] performed by the use of an utterance to communicate" (Yule 1996: 134), are certainly relevant for the present study, since *please* and *pray* are markers found in a particular speech act, namely requests (see Section 2.1). Therefore, a study of request markers must necessarily be approached from the point of view of pragmatics.

Another topic directly related to speech acts and frequently discussed within pragmatics is politeness. Politeness is clearly relevant to the present study since courtesy markers are among the devices whereby politeness is conveyed.

It was the philosopher Charles Morris who, in 1938, was the first author to use the term 'pragmatics' to refer to a third part of semiotics, the general science of signs, together with syntax and semantics (cf. Levinson 1983: 1; Huang 2007: 2). Nevertheless, the discipline of pragmatics, as we understand it nowadays, can be said to go back to the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century. Pragmatics can be regarded as an interdisciplinary branch of learning, since it has its origin outside linguistics, in the philosophy of language. In fact, the first authors to work in the field were not linguists but philosophers. In addition to Malinowski, names like Austin, Searle and Grice can be regarded as the fathers of the discipline, since they have contributed to the field with ground-breaking theoretical works. Austin's pioneering ideas on speech acts appeared in a compilation of his lectures which was published posthumously in 1962, while Searle's Speech Act Theory, which followed

Austin's theories, was first formulated in 1969. Grice's work on communication follows this tradition of philosophical thinking but his approach is generally considered to be part of linguistics rather than a branch of philosophy and constitutes the basis of the modern study of pragmatics (cf. Levinson 1983: 16-17). His ideas represented a major advance in the field, with contributions such as the notion of 'conversational implicature,' and the so-called Cooperative Principle. The concept of 'implication' is used to indicate that "something might be said to be implied as distinct from being stated" (1961: 127). Grice (1996: 123-124) further distinguishes between 'conventional implicatures,' and 'nonconventional implicatures.' In the former, a meaning which is not explicit in the text is inferred from a linguistic expression. In Levinson's terms, conventional implicatures are "non-truth conditional inferences that are *not* derived from superordinate pragmatic principles [...], but are simply attached by convention to particular lexical items or expressions" (Levinson 1983: 127). Among the latter group we find 'conversational implicatures,' in which a new meaning, which is not explicit in the text and not present in the meaning of the words used, can be inferred from the context.

The Cooperative Principle is a concept shared by speaker and addressee which determines the success of communication depending on four maxims (Grice 1996: 123-125):

- Quantity: that is, "the quantity of information to be provided"
- Quality: under the supermaxim "try to make your contribution one that is true"

- Relation: with the maxim "be relevant"[2]
- Manner: related to "*how* what is said is to be said"

While the sixties can be said to represent the starting point of pragmatics, it was only in the eighties that pragmatics gained status as an independent field of study. In 1983 two European linguists published two important general works which served to delimit the scope of pragmatics as a research field. One of them is Stephen Levinson who in his 1983 monograph systematised pragmatics as a field of research and gave it a proper status as a discipline. In Levinson's view pragmatics encompasses issues such as deixis, conversational implicature, presupposition, speech acts alongside aspects of discourse and conversation analysis. Levinson, however, does not handle other issues although he admits they are part of pragmatics, among them context, topic/comment, prosody, intonation and stress, the relations between pragmatics and syntax, the acquisition of pragmatic aspects by children, and the inclusion of "proto-pragmaticists" like Malinowski (1983: ix-xii) in the field.

The second prominent figure in the early days of pragmatics is Geoffrey Leech, who, in his book-length work *Principles of Pragmatics*, also published in 1983, offers a comprehensive account of what he refers to as "general pragmatics." This comprises different theoretical fields related to the "communicative use of language." Like Levinson, he deliberately excludes aspects which other authors

---

[2] This maxim becomes Sperber and Wilson's (1986) main foundation in their Relevance Theory model, which reduces Grice's maxims to their single 'principle of relevance' as a key concept in communication. Proposed originally as a critical revision of the Gricean model, it has proved highly influential in the literature.

would include within pragmatics, namely "more specific 'local' conditions on language use" or in Leech's words 'socio-pragmatics' (Leech 1983: 10). He leaves out of his study topics which would nowadays be included within the field, such as, for instance, Grice's conventional implicatures, the attitudinal function of intonation, non-verbal communication or 'referential pragmatics' (Leech 1983: 11).[3] By contrast, Leech takes into account issues such as performatives, speech acts and communicative grammar, but perhaps one of his most interesting contributions is the proposal of a Politeness Principle "as a necessary complement" to Grice's Cooperative Principle (1983: 80). Both Levinson (1983) and Leech (1983) are the foundation stones of a discipline which has never since stopped growing and expanding its views.

1.2.2 Historical linguistics, historical pragmatics and the advent of computerised corpora

In my research I am not only interested in the pragmatic functions of courtesy markers, but also in their emergence and development over time. A study like this, is then at the crossroads between pragmatics and historical linguistics. Historical pragmatics is a very recent offshoot of pragmatics, which arises from the interest pragmaticians showed in diachronic developments and the extension of historical linguists towards pragmatic issues. The spread of pragmatics to written data has also allowed the emergence of a discipline that can almost exclusively rely on written material.

---

[3] Leech defines referential pragmatics as "the assignment of reference to referential expressions in a given utterance." (Leech 1983: 11)

There is no doubt that the flourishing of historical linguistics in general and of historical pragmatics in particular in the last two decades is directly related to the increasing availability of computerised corpora and research tools. The first steps in general synchronic corpora in machine-readable form started in the sixties (Quirk's *Survey of English Usage*, 1959, and Francis and Kucera's *Brown Corpus*, 1961) and opened up the way to other types of corpora, thus setting a model for corpus compilers. The first spoken corpus came out in the seventies (Svartvik's *London Lund Corpus*, 1975), whereas the first diachronic corpus, the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts*, was compiled in the eighties by a group of scholars led by Matti Rissanen at the University of Helsinki and released in 1991. Corpora thus became central for historical linguistics, since, in Matti Rissanen's words they "give us the opportunity to master huge quantities of textual material, to collect and sort evidence with a speed and level of accuracy that the scholars of earlier decades could only have dreamt of" (Rissanen 2000: 7). Since then there have been series of follow-up corpora focusing on present-day texts like the *British National Corpus*, or on texts from the past like the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence*, and the *Zürich English Newspaper Corpus* (cf. Rissanen 2000). Many corpora released up to 1999 are part of the *ICAME* (*International Computer Archive of Modern and Medieval English*) collection, available in CD-ROM.[4] Many authors distinguish several generations of corpora. Thus, the *Brown Corpus* would belong clearly to the first generation, whereas the massive *British National Corpus* would be within the second generation corpora. Over the last few years we have witnessed the proliferation of more specialised corpora,

---

[4] More information on *ICAME* corpora and conferences can be found in their website: <http://icame.uib.no>.

the so-called third generation corpora (cf. Koester 2010), which are usually smaller and often represent only one text-type or focus on a single topic, among them we can cite the *Corpus of Early English Medical Writing* (2005-2010) and the forthcoming *Corpus of English Religious Prose*.[5]

The amount of electronic material made available goes hand in hand with computer tools, which have experienced a constant development as regards lexical searches, concordances or data sorting. Particularly useful have proved to be those concordance programs which have gradually increased the speed in the processing of data and have thus facilitated the access of researchers to these data.

Historical pragmatics has benefited from the advances in corpus linguistics as regards both corpora and tools, which have enabled the linguist to address research questions otherwise impossible to be formulated, such as those in which the low frequency of tokens requires a huge amount of texts. The connection between historical linguistics and corpus studies has led some scholars to refer to this field as 'historical corpus linguistics' (cf. Kohnen 2009).

The label 'historical pragmatics' was first used by Dieter Stein in his 1985 article "Perspectives on historical pragmatics." This pioneering work gives an overview of different research initiatives —most of them within a German context— which had been already carried out, but that could be included in the field of historical pragmatics. In fact, several works published before the discipline had been 'created' would nowadays be classified within historical pragmatics. Stein's article constitutes an unpretentious claim for further work and theoretical basis.

---

[5] The research unit VARIENG (University of Helsinki) includes in their website detailed information on the different range of corpora available: http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/index.html.

According to Stein 'socio-historical linguistics' may adopt two main approaches: the 'micro-approach,' which focuses on "individual linguistic items in language change" and the 'macro-approach,' which takes into account "the way in which changes in the outside world are reflected in the language" (1985: 347-348).[6] Stein places 'historical pragmatics' within the macro-approach and lists a number of topics that can be studied through this perspective, such as the historical analysis of speech acts (cf. Jucker and Taavitsainen 2008a) and the relation between diachronic changes and changes in society (Nevala 2010; Culpeper and Demmen 2011). Many works with a more literary bias, such as those on literary pragmatics (cf. Sell 1991) or literary discourse (cf. Fitzmaurice 2010), could also fall within this discipline. Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice have attempted a "provisional and fairly neutral" definition of historical pragmatics claiming that it "focuses on language use in past contexts and examines how meaning is made. It is an empirical branch of linguistic study, with focus on authentic language use in the past" (2007: 13).

One decade later, 1995 witnesses the publication of the first volume bearing the title of *Historical Pragmatics* (Jucker 1995), which contains over 20 contributions. In their programmatic introduction to the volume, Jacobs and Jucker establish the theoretical framework of the discipline. They propose the subdivision of historical pragmatics into two distinct approaches, namely pragmaphilology and diachronic pragmatics, and organise the different contributions to the volume according to these two subdisciplines. Pragmaphilology includes studies on the extralinguistic factors surrounding a historical text or author, "including the addressers and

---

[6] Traugott (2004) reintroduces Stein's distinction between 'macro' and 'micro-approach' and identifies the 'macro-approach' with pragmaphilology, whereas the 'micro-approach' coincides with diachronic pragmatics (2004: 538).

addressees, their social and personal relationship, the physical and social setting of text production and text reception, and the goal(s) of the text" (Jacobs and Jucker 1995: 11). Diachronic pragmatics, by contrast, "studies the historical development of pragmatic elements, such as discourse markers or speech acts, or it studies the pragmatic causes of language change" (Jucker 2006: 330), and can be further divided into two different approaches: form-to-function mapping, which focuses on the development of particular items (cf. Brinton 1996), and function-to-form mapping, which compares different stages of language functions (cf. Jucker and Taavitsainen 2008a). In Taavitsainen and Jucker (2010) form-to-function is also referred to as semasiology, whereas function-to-form corresponds to onomasiology. Studies on pragmatic markers from the point of view of grammaticalisation would be linked to diachronic form-to-function mapping, whereas studies on a specific speech act or function would be related to function-to-form mapping. Of these two approaches to historical pragmatics, the present study would be inscribed mainly in the form-to-function type, since it takes into consideration individual items, namely the courtesy markers *please* and *pray*, making use of Speech Act Theory from the perspective of the behaviour of these items in a certain type of speech act, that is, the act of requesting. In addition, this thesis also includes a brief function-to-form approach to requests in order to provide a complete view of how this speech act was understood in the Late Modern English society.

Also relevant to the development of historical pragmatics as a discipline is the launching of the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* in 2000. This journal, edited by Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen, approaches the study of issues such as the development of certain pragmatic constructions, items or functions, the analysis

of contextual factors or theoretical and methodological issues on historical pragmatics.

A recent contribution to the state of the art is the edited volume *Historical Pragmatics* (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2010), which came out fifteen years after the publication of Jucker's programmatic volume. More than 20 contributors examine the main areas of a now mature field. In the introduction, Taavitsainen and Jucker (2010) rephrase the three main concerns in historical pragmatics, namely language use in earlier periods, the diachronic development of language use and the communicative causes of language change. Whereas the first and second approaches match the concepts of pragmaphilology and diachronic pragmatics, the third one meets a discourse orientation in line with Brinton's 'historical discourse analysis' (2001b).

In addition to the works mentioned above and to the articles included in the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, several other works published over the past few years have contributed substantially to the establishment of the discipline. Among them, we should mention Arnovick's (1999) *Diachronic Pragmatics*, which focuses on the realisation of certain speech acts and markers in the history of English, offering several case studies such as the developments of the polite expressions *goodbye* and *bless you*, and the evolution of insults and promises. Also relevant is the volume *Historical Dialogue Analysis* (Jucker, Lebsanft and Fritz 1999), which proposes the study of historical dialogue analysis as part of historical pragmatics. The volume edited by Jucker and Taavitsainen (2008a), devoted to the function-to-form approach, and more specifically to the analysis of different speech acts in the history

of English, is another relatively recent contribution to this fascinating branch of linguistics.

Among the various issues Jacobs and Jucker (1995) list in their introduction as possible candidates to be investigated through the approach of historical pragmatics, are "speech acts, implicature, politeness phenomena, or discourse markers" (1995: 5). In fact, one of the topics which has attracted the attention of many scholars working on pragmatics over the last few years is precisely the development of discourse or pragmatic markers (cf. Section 2.3). The focus on particular pragmatic items is relatively recent: the first volume on discourse markers was published in 1988 (Schiffrin 1988), and the emphasis was on the markers found in the spoken language. It was only after a widening of scope that items occurring in written texts were also considered worthy of study. A very important contribution to the study of pragmatic markers is Brinton (1996), which approaches these items from a diachronic perspective. This study represented a substantial advance in the consolidation of historical pragmatics, and particularly of the form-to-function approach.

In this setting, the study of courtesy markers in Late Modern English provided in this dissertation acquires special relevance for several reasons. First, the origin and development of *please* and *pray* as request markers is interesting from the diachronic point of view, since their development follows well-established patterns of language change, and can thus contribute to form-to-function studies on pragmatic markers. In this way, it is worth investigating why such a frequent everyday courtesy marker like *pray* is eventually replaced by *please*, and which internal and external factors are linked to this replacement. Second, the analysis of the

pragmatic features and functions that may have played a role in the emergence of several courtesy markers will constitute an interesting contribution to the field of historical pragmatics. Third, a detailed description of the origin and evolution of *please* and its predecessor *pray* will strengthen an area of historical pragmatics. On the one hand, the study of both markers as individual items may provide a diachronic account of the emergence, evolution and establishment of a given form. On the other hand, a wider study of these courtesy markers in larger contexts, such as the state of the art in the speech act of requests or the situation of politeness in modern English may contribute to the understanding of some major changes in this period, namely shifts from negative to positive, and from positive to negative politeness.

1.2.3   Grammaticalisation studies

Another branch of linguistics particularly connected with the development of pragmatic markers, and therefore relevant to the present investigation is that of grammaticalisation studies.[7] Grammaticalisation studies are nowadays a well-established discipline, with its own theoretical and empirical methodology, and constitute one of the most important research areas within historical linguistics. Grammaticalisation is understood as "the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical function and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions" (Hopper and Traugott 2003: xv). The term 'grammaticalisation' is used to refer both to the

---

[7] As for terminology, in addition to the more extended term grammaticalisation, some authors have used different labels, such as grammaticisation (cf. Hopper 1991), and less commonly grammatisation.

process and to the theoretical framework. Thus, the label is used also to refer to "the study of grammatical forms, however defined, viewed not as static objects but as entities undergoing change" (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 19).

While, as seen in the preceding section, historical pragmatics is a relatively young discipline, the study of the origin of grammatical forms has an old tradition. According to Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer (1991: 5), we find a similar notion in Chinese writers of the tenth century, comparable to observations which appeared again in eighteenth century French philosophers. Lehmann (1995: 1) sees an antecedent in the eighteenth century "pre-typologists" like Condillac or Horne Tooke, who offered explanations for the origin of personal endings of verbs. In spite of these first approximations to the study of the development of grammatical forms, the seeds of grammaticalisation studies are generally placed in the early nineteenth century with the work done by early typologists like Schegel or Humboldt. Of special relevance is Humboldt's 'Agglutination theory,' which identifies four different stages in the development of languages, affecting different linguistic areas, from pragmatics to morphology (cf. Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer 1991: 6-7; Hopper and Traugott 2003: 18-20). The Agglutination Theory had German followers, especially neogrammarians such as Gabelentz, who regarded the evolution of grammatical forms as a cyclical process, suggesting that it was the result of two tendencies, one towards articulation and the other one towards distinctness (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 20-21; Lehmann 1995: 3-4). In addition to typologists, in the early nineteenth century there were Indo-Europeanists following Humboldt's theory. One of them was Franz Bopp, who was interested in language change, and

particularly in the development from lexical to grammatical (Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer 1991: 6; Lehmann 1995: 2-3; Heine 2003: 576).

The twentieth century represents the starting point of grammaticalisation studies proper. The term was coined by the French linguist Meillet, the father of grammaticalisation studies and the first author to devote a whole work to this type of language change. Meillet distinguished two main processes for the emergence of new grammatical forms, besides the already known idea of analogical innovation, he proposed grammaticalisation as "the attribution of grammatical character to a previously autonomous word" (Meillet 1912: 131, quoted from Hopper and Traugott 2003: 22). Since analogy is possible only when other linguistic forms are available, grammaticalisation was regarded as an essential process in the emergence of new grammatical forms, affecting not only individual items but extensible also to phrases or sentence word order (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 22-23).

Grammaticalisation studies were put aside during the period of structuralism and taken up again only in the 1960's through the work of Indo-Europeanists like Kuryłowicz, who proposed a well known definition of grammaticalisation:

> Grammaticalization consists in the increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status, e.g. from a derivative formant to an inflectional one. (Kuryłowicz 1965: 69)

Thus, Kuryłowicz added to Meillet's definition by proposing a continuum in the grammatical or lexical status of different items, in such a way that word classes for instance could be classified along a cline by being closer either to the grammatical or

lexical ends. In this sense, Traugott (2002) establishes a distinction betweeen 'primary grammaticalisation,' applied to changes from lexical to grammatical, and 'secondary grammaticalisation,' which refers to changes from less to more grammatical. A further step in grammaticalisation studies is represented in the seventies by Tom Givón, who emphasised the cyclical aspect of linguistic change, proposing a "development from free lexemes to bound affixes, which undergo attrition and eventually fusion with the stem, the result being the beginning of a new cycle" (Givón 1971: 411-412, quoted from Campbell and Janda 2001). Givón introduced the focus on discourse proposing his famous cline:

discourse > syntax > morphology > morphophonemics > zero

This meant the inclusion of pragmatics, and not only syntax, as a prior stage in the process of grammaticalisation. Givón's famous slogan "today's morphology is yesterday's syntax" was complemented by Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer with "today's syntax is yesterday's pragmatic discourse" (Heine *et al.* 1991: 13).

Grammaticalisation studies became a prominent field of research in the eighties and its importance has increased over the last decades.[8] Since the eighties one of the main figures in grammaticalisation studies has been Elizabeth Closs Traugott. Traugott (1995) proposes a different cline, which is particularly relevant for the present study, because she regards the development of discourse particles as

---

[8] As a proof of the status and recognition of grammaticalisation studies nowadays, we can mention the triennial conference devoted to this topic, which started in 1999 and has already had five editions, the last one was held in July 2012 in Edinburgh.

a case of grammaticalisation. Thus, discourse elements are placed at the end of the continuum, rather than at the beginning as was the case with Givón's cline:

Clause Internal Adverbial > Sentence Adverbial > Discourse Particle

Traugott's work on grammaticalisation has included the analysis of different pragmatic elements, such as discourse markers, paying attention to their development from adverbials to elements at the discourse level. In fact, in more recent definitions of grammaticalisation she includes the notion of pragmatic context as one of the triggers for this type of language change:

> the process whereby lexical material in highly constrained pragmatic and morphosyntactic contexts becomes grammatical, and already grammatical material become more grammatical (Traugott 1997: 15)

The idea of pragmatic increase in grammaticalisation is linked to the inclusion of pragmatics as part of grammar, and has been referred to as 'grammaticalisation as expansion' (Traugott 2010). Ever since 1995, with Elizabeth Traugott's paper, pragmatic features have been one of the focus of grammaticalisation studies regards pragmatic features. In fact, studies within the form-to-function approach of historical pragmatics have been greatly influenced by grammaticalisation studies. As was the case with historical pragmatics, grammaticalisation studies have also benefited from the wealth of corpora available nowadays, especially of historical corpora. This has enabled several authors to pay attention to the evolution of pragmatic markers in the last decades. A good example of this line of research is

INTRODUCTION

Brinton's 1996 *Pragmatic Markers in English: Grammaticalization and Discourse Functions*, which was followed among others by Traugott in her studies on discourse markers (Traugott 1997). Studies of this type, not only for English but also for other languages, represent a meeting point between historical linguistics and pragmatics, since both approaches aim to analyse pragmatic features in the language as elements exposed to processes of change. The fact that grammaticalisation and other related processes such as subjectification, intersubjectification, and pragmaticalisation may be part of historical pragmatics is reflected in the inclusion of several articles devoted to these processes of change in Jucker and Taavitsainen's 2010 edited volume on historical pragmatics. Through the theoretical framework provided by grammaticalisation studies we may account for the history of pragmatic features, how they emerge, how they develop and whether they continue to be used or become obsolete and are eventually replaced by other markers.

Going back to the focus of the present dissertation, several authors have analysed the development of the courtesy marker *pray* as an example of grammaticalisation (Akimoto 2000; Traugott 2000; Brinton 2007a). In the present study I will pay attention only to the last stage in the history of *pray* as a request marker, when it was already grammaticalised, and I will explore the origin and development of *please* as a courtesy marker in requests. In this sense, the insights of grammaticalisation studies will undoubtedly be very relevant to my study on *please*.

1.3. Data problems

1.3.1 Limitations of historical linguistics

In William Labov's words, historical linguistics is the art of "making the best use of bad data" (1994: 11). First of all, the historical linguist has to rely mainly on written texts, since recordings of spoken data are only available for the most recent past, and therefore we are limited to the written material that has been preserved in spite of its shortcomings. In addition to the so-called 'bad-data problem,' Labov recognises the 'historical paradox' as another obstacle in historical studies, since we know that the present and the past are different, but is not possible to know to which extent (1994: 20-21).

The methodological difficulties which affect historical linguistics in general also apply to historical corpus linguistics and to historical pragmatics. Rissanen (1989: 16) notices three problems when compiling and using historical corpus, namely 'the philologist's dilemma,' 'God's truth fallacy,' and 'the mystery of vanishing reliability.' 'The philologist's dilemma' warns against the risk of using technological advances to substitute for the scholar's knowledge of texts and their context. 'God's truth fallacy' refers to the risk of considering the corpus as representative of a whole period, thus using it to extract conclusions without recognising its limitations. And, finally, 'the mystery of vanishing reliability' concerns the variables used in sampling and coding the corpus, since a high number of variables may reduce the amount of data under each parameter, and therefore the quantitative analysis of less frequent phenomena may reduce its reliability.

INTRODUCTION

Even though the compilation of historical corpora has represented a major advance for historical linguistics, it is not without problems. Apart from those mentioned by Rissanen, there are other issues which have a bearing on the limits of historical linguistics. Thus, one of the important aspects affecting corpus linguistics when dealing with earlier periods is text-type.[9] Text-type variation can provide interesting views about a particular element. Thus, Nevalainen regards genre as "the pivotal variable in variation studies, because it also makes it possible for the researcher to chart the progress of a given change in apparent time on a scale of formality or speechlikeness" (Nevalainen 1999: 544). In particular, the selection of a given text-type is a key issue when dealing with pragmatic aspects, since some pragmatic features are more likely to occur in certain genres than others. Especially relevant for the study of pragmatic features are text-types with a high degree of speechlikeness, for example drama, which can be used as an approximation to the oral language. In this respect, Rissanen points out that it is safe to hypothesise that those variants which are more frequent in speech-related genres, such as drama, than in other written text-types were more frequent in the spoken language of the period (cf. Rissanen 1986: 98).

---

[9] Some scholars use text-type and genre indistinctly. There are notable exceptions though, such as Biber, who regards text-types as "groupings of texts that are similar with respect to their linguistic form, irrespective of genre categories" (1988: 70). A similar cover term is 'register,' which sometimes is distinguished from 'genre,' meaning "a general kind of language associated with a domain of use, such as 'legal register,' 'scientific register,' or 'bureaucratic register'" (Biber, Connor and Upton 2007: 8). These terms will be used interchangeably in the present study.

1.3.2   Historical pragmatics: Methodology and limitations

In addition to the general limitations of the historical study of language, one of the first problems encountered by the historical pragmatician is that of scope, that is, the selection of topics that can be placed under the umbrella of this discipline and the feasibility of research on those topics, as it should be taken into account that some pragmatic features are more difficult to be tackled from a historical perspective than others. Whereas historical pragmatics shares some methodological problems with pragmatics applied to Present-day language, it is not always possible to apply methods from cross-linguistic pragmatic research to the historical data, since completion tests and questionnaires, as used by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) for instance, are not valid for historical analysis (cf. Culpeper and Archer 2008: 46; Taavitsainen and Jucker 2008a: 9-10). Thus, Jucker (1994) considers that certain research issues are particularly well suited to historical pragmatics, and following Leech's classification of general pragmatics (1983: 10-11, see above), Jucker (1994: 533-534) suggests that socio-pragmatic and pragmalinguistic factors are more suitable for comparison both for contrastive and historical pragmatics, while this is not the case with general pragmatics, an area concerned with general aspects of linguistic communication whose main features do not fit comparison studies.

Taavitsainen and Jucker (2010: 15-21) summarise the main problems of historical pragmatics and distinguish six main groups, namely (i) 'pathways of change,' that is, the recognition of general patterns in historical pragmatics change; (ii) 'meaning,' in reference to how form can be matched to function reliably; (iii) 'identification,' implying how to identify the correspondence of functions to forms; (iv) 'categorisation,' which refers to how individual pragmatic features can be

classified; (v) 'inventory,' that is, the grouping together of members belonging to the same category; and (vi) 'contextualisation,' understood as the analysis of the continuum from macro- to micro-levels of context. Groups (ii) and (iii) on the one hand, and (iv) and (v) on the other are corresponding mirror images respectively.

The aforementioned obstacles in the study of historical pragmatics are also related to the object of research, since whereas linguistic features of the form-to-function approach seem easier to analyse, when the study falls within the function-to-form mapping the difficulty increases. Thus, for instance, back in 1991 Traugott complained about the little work carried out in the field of speech acts from a historical perspective; it seems clear that the methodological problems could be one of the reasons for the late development of this approach (Traugott 1991: 387). Authors like Taavitsainen and Jucker (2007) and Kohnen (2007) describe the problems the researcher has to face when trying to identify speech acts in earlier periods. These derive mainly from the fact that speech acts are realised differently in different cultures, speech communities, periods or genres. Kohnen (2007: 139-140) points at the existence of two main problems as regards the study of speech acts: (i) it is not possible to provide a complete inventory of the forms of a speech act since they are "virtually irretrievable," and (ii) it is not possible to cover all the manifestations of a speech act across time, what he terms the issue of "hidden manifestations." Different methods have been proposed in order to make up for these handicaps. Thus, for example, Taavitsainen and Jucker (2007) make use of searches with speech act verb lists in order to account for the speech act of verbal aggression in the history of English, while Kohnen (2007) analyses a corpus of sermons looking for inventories of directives, covering also their "hidden

manifestations." Kohnen (2008b) proposes a "genre-based micro-analytic bottom-up methodology" (2008b: 309) to account for directives. This method consists of three main steps: first, an initial analysis in a limited one-genre corpus, second, this microanalysis is repeated in other genres and third, the manifestations and distributions are checked against multi-genre corpora, obtaining a representative final list of manifestations.

Manual searches are possible in small corpora, but searches in larger corpora need the support of computer tools. In the manual method, searches are eclectic, making use of "illustrative eclecticism" when the researcher analyses different forms based on previous knowledge, or of "structured eclecticism" when the functions are realised through a given set of forms (cf. Kohnen 2004: 240-241; Culpeper and Archer 2008: 58; Taavitsainen and Jucker 2008a: 10; Archer 2010: 383). The latter method, which allows the use of computer tools, becomes very helpful for the identification of elements such as Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs; see Section 2.3.3 below) or performative verbs (cf. Arnovick 1999; Kohnen 2002; Valkonen 2008). Jucker and Taavitsainen (2008b) note that studies of speech acts making use of routinised expressions, such as apologies, are easier to be analysed using computerised methods.

A different proposal for function-to-form studies is made by Taavitsainen and Jucker (2007, 2008b), who suggest an ethnographic approach to the study of speech acts. This method enables researchers to grasp how a given society understood a speech act by means of the study of the different labels and concepts applied to that act, and at the same time, it improves our knowledge of that society and that historical period. Taavitsainen and Jucker have applied this method to the

study of expressive speech acts (cf. Section 2.1), such as insults (2007) and compliments (2008b).

Function-to-form studies often need to identify both the function and the strategies associated with that function. In this respect, some of the problems in function-to-form studies are also found in form-to-function ones, and therefore the same methodological innovations could be applied to both types of research. Examples of this approach are Jucker *et al.* (2008) and Valkonen (2008), which deal with problems of precision (i.e. the high amount of non-relevant instances in software retrieval) and recall (that is, automatic searches may not include all the relevant examples). Jucker *et al.* try to apply the methodology used in present-day speech act studies to historical periods, dealing with errors of precision and recall by means of query language, and making use of random sampling when data are too large for handling. Additionally, since qualitative assessment is still essential in pragmatics, two annotators analyse all the data manually, taking into account only inter-annotator agreement. Valkonen (2008) discusses problems related to data retrieval in function-to-form studies, such as time-consuming manual searches, and proposes a pattern-based retrieval programme. He identifies and tags prototypical patterns, and checks them against a larger corpus. His study shows that whereas precision proves to be high in retrieval software, recall is less acceptable.

The choice of topics in the discipline of historical pragmatics will be necessarily related to the availability of data. Therefore, historical pragmatics presents several limitations as regards data as compared to modern synchronic pragmatics. These limitations have to do mainly with the nature of the texts under analysis, especially when they belong to a distant past. The use of historical corpora

entails several problems due to their intrinsic features, since in spite of the revolution of electronic corpora in corpus studies, as mentioned above, there is still a concern about the amount of data needed, their quality and representativeness. In addition, pragmatic features studied under the umbrella of historical pragmatics are more likely to appear in naturally occurring data and therefore the historical pragmatician may come across serious problems to find adequate material for analysis.[10] Görlach claims that "[h]istorical pragmatics is severely hampered by the lack of relevant data: not only is the complex field of spoken communication totally absent, but so are the conditioning factors of individual speech acts" (2001: 130). Nowadays a more positive view is possible and the future of historical pragmatics looks promising if we consider the amount of work already done in the field and the development of techniques and theoretical approaches.

1.4. Text-types and methodology

The importance of text-type for the study of historical linguistics, and particularly for the historical study of pragmatic features, has already been mentioned above (cf. 1.3.1). In this respect, some of the classifications suggested in the literature can be useful to determine which genres are more suitable for a given study. The courtesy markers analysed in the present study are more likely to occur in familiar or everyday spoken language, therefore it will be necessary to make use of text-types which are as close as possible to the spoken medium. Among the genres commonly

---

[10] This can be related to Rissanen's 'mystery of vanishing reliability' (cf. previous section) since the frequency of some pragmatic features is relatively low, especially in non-dialogical text-types and therefore, text-type selection could affect our analysis.

regarded as closer to the spoken language we usually find private letters and drama, but also fictional dialogue contained in other text-types like novels. Given that these three genres will be included in the present study (see Chapter 7), I will consider them individually taking into account the classifications suggested by Culpeper and Kytö (1999) and Koch (1999), in order to describe their main features and their convenience for the present study.

Scholars do not see spoken and written as a simple dichotomy any longer. Biber (1988: 9-13) proposed spoken and written texts are not opposed extremes, but they rather operate along different continuous dimensions of variation, such as formal/informal, interactive/non-interactive, involved/detached literary/colloquial, or restricted/elaborated. In this way, Biber establishes a group of quantifiable features, taking into account co-occurrence patterns and grouping them by means of a factor analysis. In his research, this author analyses frequencies of 67 linguistic features in 23 different genres and establishes six major textual dimensions of linguistic variation (1988: 115):

– Dimension 1. Informational versus Involved Production
– Dimension 2. Narrative versus Non-Narrative Concerns
– Dimension 3. Explicit versus Situation-Dependent Reference
– Dimension 4. Overt Expression of Persuasion
– Dimension 5. Abstract versus Non-Abstract Information
– Dimension 6. On-Line Informational Elaboration

Thus, Biber identifies the behaviour of different linguistic features in several genres and establishes the relations among those genres and encourages the development

of a typology of texts. He summarises the findings in his analysis concluding that "there is no single, absolute difference between speech and writing in English; rather there are several dimensions of variation, and particular types of speech and writing are more or less similar with respect to each dimension" (1988: 199).

Biber's classification is relevant to the present study since the complete range of features covered by continuous dimensions reflects the characteristics of a text better than binary classifications. Thus, the first dimension selected by Biber, that is Informational versus Involved Production, "a fundamental parameter of variation among texts in English" (1988: 115), can serve us in the present study to distinguish some features of different text-types. In the case of a particular letter, we could analyse its potential interactional degree as opposed to its informational character or real-time production as opposed to careful editing. In fact, personal letters are among the most involved text-types together with face-to-face conversation or spontaneous speech. As a direct applicability of this dimension, we could determine whether courtesy markers in requests tend to appear more in highly informational or in highly interactional contexts. According to Biber (1988: 141), several genres, such as personal letters, hold an intermediate position in Dimension 2 (Narrative versus Non-Narrative Concerns) mixing narrative and communicative concerns. Fictional text-types are placed among the most narrative whereas professional letters are closer to the non-narrative endpoint. Dimension 3, Explicit versus Situation-Dependent Reference, could also provide interesting insights as regards some text-types, since references may be more explicit in a situation in which speaker and addressee do not share the same time or space (e.g. in letters), than in drama, where both addressee and speaker are on stage and they can depend more on the context.

Similarly, acquaintances may share more common references than strangers. Thus, whereas professional letters are placed among the more explicit text-types, personal letters appear on the situation-dependent side. As regards Dimension 4 (Overt Expression of Persuasion), it is remarkable that professional letters have the highest score for persuasive language in Biber's data, whereas other genres used in the present study, including fiction and personal letters hold an intermediate position (1988: 148-149). In Dimension 5, that is Abstract vs. Non-Abstract Information, we find that text-types such as fiction, personal letters and conversations have low scores, since they do have the kind of abstract and technical focus present in academic prose or official documents (1988: 151). Dimension 6 (On-Line Informational Elaboration) measures "informational elaboration that is produced under strict real-time constraints" (1988: 113) and therefore, prepared speeches, interviews and spontaneous speeches, all of them with informational focus, have the highest scores in this dimension.

One of the features considered by Biber (1988) in order to establish relationships among text-types is the frequency of 'discourse particles,' typical elements of spoken interaction, such as *well*, *now* or *anyway* (cf. Section 2.3). Among the genres showing a noticeable presence of these items, that is those with a mean over 0.5 with frequencies normalised to 1,000 words (cf. Biber 1988: 246), we could establish the following rank, from a higher to a lesser mean frequency: telephone conversations (6.6), face-to-face conversations (3.9), spontaneous speeches (3.6), interviews (3.0), prepared speeches (2.4), broadcasts (2.1) and personal letters (1.2).

Likewise, some authors propose a scale from communicative immediacy to communicative distance. In this way, Österreicher (1997) suggests written and

spoken do not always determine the levels of literacy and orality. In this way, the language medium (phonic or graphic) should be distinguished from the conceptualisation of language (spoken or written). Following Österreicher, Koch differentiates the concepts of 'communicative immediacy' and 'communicative distance' (1999: 399). The first is characterised by typical aspects of the spoken medium and the latter by aspects of the written medium. This is shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Communicative immediacy vs. communicative distance
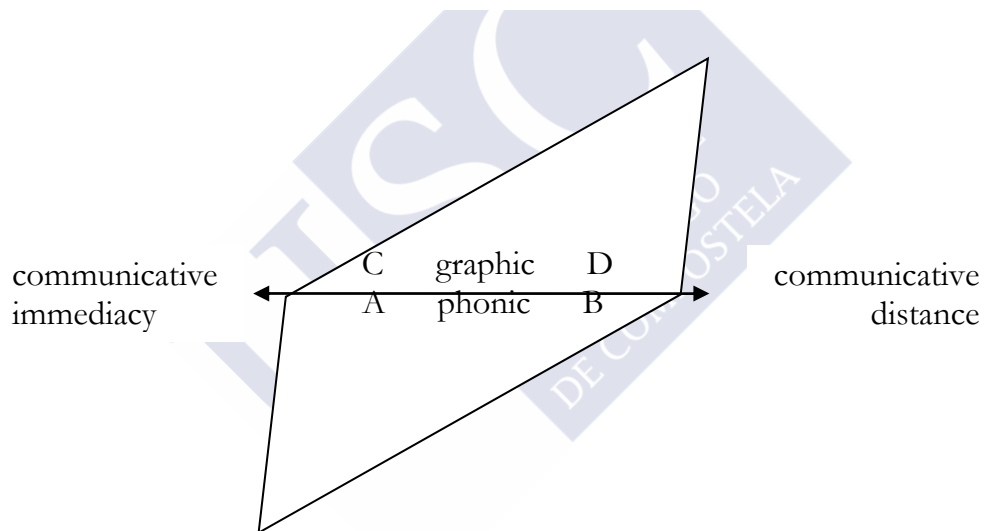
From Koch (1999: 400)

Area A represents features of communicative immediacy in the phonic medium. Area B represents features of communicative distance in the phonic medium. In a similar way, area C represents features of communicative immediacy in the graphic medium, while area D represents features of communicative distance in the graphic medium. Area A is bigger than Area B since realisations of language use in the phonic medium are commonly related to communicative immediacy (i.e.

spontaneous everyday conversation vs. a public lecture). Similarly, area D is bigger than area C, since the graphic medium is more commonly related to communicative distance (i.e. personal email vs. legal texts) (cf. Koch 1999: 400; see also Jucker 2000: 20-21)

Koch (1999: 400) establishes a group of parameters that identify 'communicative immediacy,' whereas the opposites would characterise 'communicative distance:'

(i)   physical (spatial, temporal) immediacy

(ii)   privacy

(iii)   familiarity of the partners

(iv)   high emotionality

(v)   context embeddedness (relevance of the non-linguistic context)

(vi)   deictic immediacy

(vii)   dialogue

(viii) communicative cooperation of the partners

(ix)   free topic development

(x)   spontaneity

Since my study is focused on communicative aspects of language, it should be necessarily supported by a selection of texts closer to the language of immediacy. Thus, this set of features will provide us with a better knowledge of the text-types selected and their main features. Moreover, this classification supports the study of texts of the graphic medium, such as personal letters, as a valid representation of informal or familiar language (cf. Section 1.4 on methodology).

When the *Corpus of Dialogues* (1550-1750) was launched, its compilers, Culpeper and Kytö (1999), established a classification of dialogues, which was made as a reflection of their corpus but meant to be representative of dialogues elsewhere (Culpeper and Kytö 1999: 295):

Dialogue	*Recorded*	*Re-constructed*	*Constructed*
Minimum of narratorial intervention	Trial proceedings Meeting records Parliamentary journals (debates)	(History, biographies)	Drama Handbooks in dialogue form
Narratorial intervention	Witness depositions Witness accounts	History, biographies	Prose fiction

The first distinction regards the authenticity of the dialogues: recorded —someone took notes during a speech event,— re-constructed —the narrator presents dialogue meant to have actually taken place— or constructed —imaginary dialogue. The second distinction concerns the degree of narratorial intervention. In this way, both drama and prose contain constructed dialogues, but the main distinction of dialogues in drama and dialogues in novels would be the embedding of the dialogue in first or third person and the presence of a narrator in the latter. Whereas in Koch's classification of linguistic distance and immediacy letters occupied a place close to the area of linguistic immediacy, Culpeper and Kytö (1999) do not include the epistolary genre here as a subtype of dialogue. Taking into account the main characteristics of letters, and especially personal letters, they are part of this study together with other genres, since even though they do not hold a pure dialogic

status, they can still provide an interesting account of the language of immediacy. In addition to this genre, some of the corpora selected for the present study include drama and prose fiction, and consequently both of them constitute samples of Culpeper and Kytö's constructed dialogue (cf. Section 1.4.1).

Therefore, for the present study several of the distinctions suggested by Culpeper and Kytö (1999) may be valuable. It will be important to determine the contexts in which the courtesy markers analysed occur, since the intervention of a narrator could describe a request avoiding the explicitness of the request itself together with the request marker used. Similarly, it will be important to consider the authenticity of the dialogues, since the overuse of a given expression could be due to a particular writer's intervention.

1.4.1   Text-types

1.4.1.1   Letters

Although the epistolary genre is absent from Culpeper and Kytö's (1999) classification of dialogues, this text-type offers valuable evidence since letters as communicative events assume a writer and an addressee without narratorial intervention. Fitzmaurice (2000: 361-364), for example, defends the interactive and interpersonal character of letters in spite of their written form. Private letters are written texts and, as such, some of the parameters suggested by Koch (1999) as indicators of 'communicative immediacy' do not apply to them. For instance, the criterion of physical immediacy is obviously not pertinent if we take into account that the spatial and temporal locations of writer and addressee are not shared. In the

written medium we assume a careful planning beforehand, so spontaneity is not a feature of private letters. However, they still show other features which come close to communicative immediacy. Since some of these features are related I will group them together. First, the level of privacy is usually higher than in other text-types since the familiarity of the partners is mostly taken for granted and therefore, we also expect a higher level of emotionality. Secondly, in private letters writer and addressee are supposed to share common ground, so that they can omit information relying on non-linguistic context, therefore the concept of context embeddedness would apply to letters. Moreover, private letters also show deictic immediacy to a lesser extent, even though space and time of writing and reading are different, other deictic elements would be shared. Thirdly, it is questionable whether letters hold features of dialogue or not. According to Jucker (2000: 23), a letter "may react to a previous letter and anticipate the reactions of the reader but they cannot attune instantaneously to the addressee's feedback," so letters can be said to contain elements of both dialogue and monologue. Jucker includes letters as a dialogue type of genuinely written data (1998: 5). It is also arguable that there is communicative cooperation of the partners since immediate feedback is not possible. Lastly, free topic development is typical of everyday conversation, but it is also possible in private letters. Therefore, private letters would be closer to area C than to area D in Koch's figure, sharing several features of communicative immediacy in the graphic medium.

The characteristics mentioned so far make this genre particularly valuable for the study of pragmatic aspects.[11] As Palander-Collin (2010: 661) remarks, "since more contextual information is usually available for letters than for many other written genres, letters are a particularly good genre for linguistic studies where contextualisation is crucial in the interpretation of language use." In addition, letters prove especially useful for the study of certain phenomena, since they "show many interactional features such as greetings and politeness formulae" (Jucker 1994: 535). Letters are also interesting for the study of speech acts, since it is very likely to find "many clearly recognisable speech acts such as questions, apologies, thanks, requests, promises, and so on" (Jucker 1994: 535). Consequently, private letters of earlier periods can reveal significant and reliable data regarding different topics on pragmatics, and especially those related to speech acts and courtesy markers. Tieken recognises the importance of information provided by letters in the Late Modern English period, since the conditions as regards travelling and cheaper postal rates made of this genre "an important vehicle for keeping in touch with faraway relatives and business relations" (2009: 10).

Letters became a good communication method and different social facts were behind this revolution. The increase of literacy, social and geographical mobility and the improvement of transport systems contributed to the development of letters and letter-writing in the Late Modern English period (cf. Section 1.5). Among other proofs of the relevance of letters in this period, we can recall the number of epistolary novels in eighteenth-century Europe, with British top

---

[11] Palander-Collin (2010) contains a good summary of the studies carried out on letters and letter-writing from a historical perspective.

exponents such as Samuel Richardson or Henry Fielding. Letters are also present in many eighteenth century portraits, which usually depict their protagonists holding a letter or even surrounded by letter-writing tools. Good examples of this are François Boucher's portrait of the Marquise de Pompadour, dated 1756 (Alte Pinakothek, Munich), Pompeo Batoni's portrait of Charles Joseph Crowle, dated 1761-1762 (Louvre, Paris), and Francisco de Goya's portrait of Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, dated 1798 (Museo del Prado, Madrid).

Figure 2. Boucher, *Portrait of the Marquise de Pompadour* (Alte Pinakothek)

Figure 3. Batoni, *Charles Joseph Crowle* (Louvre)

Figure 4. Goya, *Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos* (Museo del Prado)

1.4.1.2 Drama

In addition to genuine written data like letters, some genres closely represent the spoken medium and can be therefore used as proxies for speech, one of them is drama. Drama is probably the most profitable fictional genre for the study of pragmatic issues, especially those regarded as typical of the spoken language. Even though it should be admitted that this genre contains an imitation of actual speech, if "used with the necessary caution, plays may also yield insights into what counted as polite or impolite behaviour and how, for instance, greetings, insults or compliments were realised at that time" (Jucker 1994: 535). Culpeper and Kytö (1999) classify drama as constructed dialogue with minimum of narratorial intervention, since apart from stage directions, plays contain dialogue almost

exclusively. Most of the parameters established by Koch (1999) to determine communicative immediacy, such as privacy, familiarity of the partners or high emotionality, would depend on the particular play, scenes and characters, whereas others are intrinsic of the representation on stage (e.g. spatial and temporal immediacy, or deictic immediacy) and some of them are absent from a written play (e.g. free topic development). Taking this in consideration, drama is placed generally in the area of linguistic immediacy. There are important contributions to historical pragmatics using material from drama, thus testifying to the relevance of this text-type in pragmatic analyses. Many of them are focused on Early Modern English, and especially on Shakespearean works. Relevant examples are Brown and Gilman (1989) and Kopytko (1993), which apply Brown and Levinson's politeness model to Shakespeare's plays, and Busse (2002), which studies second person pronouns in Shakespeare. Other example of the productivity of drama in historical pragmatics are Mazzon's (2009) study on different elements of interaction, using a fifteen-century mystery cycle as a corpus, and Faya Cerqueiro and Vila Carneiro (forthcoming) on the greeting formula *hola* in Spanish Golden Age drama

1.4.1.3 Novels

Another fictional text-type commonly used in historical pragmatics studies is prose fiction, and particularly dialogue contained in novels, a text-type classified by Culpeper and Kytö (1999) as constructed dialogue with narratorial intervention. Even though novels generally contain a smaller amount of dialogue than text-types with minimum narratorial intervention and sometimes the interaction between

characters is shown through indirect speech, they can also contribute to the study of historical pragmatics providing interesting data. Fictional dialogue such as drama and novels, which is placed in Koch's figure within linguistic immediacy, would be included in the group of "mimetic or simulated orality in literature, parody and similar contexts," one of the eight different types of writing in a typology established by Koch (1999: 403), based on Österreicher (1997: 200-206). In addition to this type, this classification contains seven other types of 'authentic' writing (i.e. by semiliterate persons, sloppy writing or *stilus humilis* among, others). One of the problems that we may encounter when dealing with fictional dialogue is the difficulty to distinguish dialogue from narrative in word counts since only tagged corpora offer such a choice (see e.g. the discussion in Axelsson 2009). This is, however, a tedious and difficult task in non-tagged corpora, and for this reason fiction will be treated in this study as a homogenous text-type. Despite these disadvantages, one of the most positive aspects regarding novels from the Late Modern English period, as opposed to other genres, is their availability. The accessibility to novels from previous centuries has increased considerably. In addition to the *Chadwyck-Healey Literature Collections* —some of which are used in this study, as can be observed in the following section—, several collections contain this text-type as part of a narrative corpus. Several such examples are the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts*, or as a genre-focused corpus, the *Corpus of English Novels* (cf. De Smet 2005), both of them including texts from the *Project Gutenberg* and compiled by Hendrik De at the Department of Linguistics of the University of Leuven.

1.4.2   Selection of corpora

In order to study the emergence and development of the courtesy markers *please* and *pray*, I have selected a corpus-based approach, in the sense of Tognini-Bonelli, that is, the approach used "to expound, text or exemplify theories and descriptions that were formulated before large corpora became available to inform language study" (Tognini-Bonelli 2001: 65). Corpus-based approaches are distinguished from corpus-driven approaches, in which "the linguist uses a corpus beyond the selection of examples to support linguistic argument or to validate a theoretical statement" (Tognini-Bonelli 2001: 84). As indicated by McEnery *et al.* (2006: 8-11), the second type of study is more radical, since it rejects previous linguistic conceptions, corpus annotation or balance and representativeness, and thus corpus-based is generally used as a broad term including both types. Therefore, in the present study, following McEnery *et al.* (2006), I will refer to the corpus-based approach as a covering label.

For my study I have included data from different sources and several text-types. The following subsections describe these sources in more detail. First of all, I have selected a multi-genre corpus, *ARCHER*,[12] in order to account for genre distributions. After having looked at the results in different genres, I have included those genres in which relevant data were found, these were novels, drama and letters. For novels I have selected two *Chadwyck-Healey* collections from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; for drama, I have used *A Corpus of Irish English*, and finally, I have made use of different epistolary collections, namely the *Corpus of*

---

[12] I had access to several of these corpora (*ARCHER*, *A Corpus of Irish English* and *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose)* with the kind permission of the VARIENG Unit at the University of Helsinki during my stay in Helsinki in 2006.

Late-Eighteenth Century Prose,[13] *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* and a collection of letter-writing manuals, taken from *ECCO* database.

In those corpora and collections which allow the use of machine-readable programmes searches and concordances were run with *WordSmith* tools. First, wordlist tools were necessary in order to identify all the different spellings of the items under study available at different points in time. Later, those wordlists enabled word searches in the corpora analysed.

1.4.2.1 *ARCHER*

A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (*ARCHER*) started to be compiled by Douglas Biber (University of Northern Arizona) and Edward Finegan (University of Southern California) in the early 1990's. It covers the period 1650-1997, and was meant as a continuation of the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (c.750-c.1700), allowing analysis in written and spoken registers. Since Biber was one of its first compilers, this corpus allows research in the different dimensions he proposed (cf. Biber 1988) (see above Section 1.3.1), including not only written and speech based as differentiating factors, but also paying attention to several degrees of formality. Thus, whereas journal and diaries or letters would be situated at the informal end, legal, medicine or scientific texts would represent the more formal side (cf. Biber *et al.* 1994: 3-4). The multidimensional approach makes it also possible to distinguish variation in the same register throughout the centuries (Biber and Finegan 1997).

---

[13] I am grateful to David Denison for providing me access to this corpus.

Following the work already done at the universities of Northern Arizona and Southern California, English departments from different universities have joint the project to collaborate in its compilation, update and revision, namely Bamberg, Freiburg, Heidelberg, Helsinki, Lancaster, Manchester, Michigan, Salford, Santiago de Compostela, Trier, Uppsala, and Zurich. *ARCHER* is only accessible at these departments since this corpus is not available for distribution due to copyright permissions.[14]

The version that I have used for the present study is *ARCHER* 3.1, which increased the representativeness of previous versions and was released in July 2006.[15] The files in the corpus are classified according to three main parameters, namely genre, period and variety. The different codes of these three parameters are included as file extensions in order to allow a straightforward identification of the texts. Thus, the nine different genres included in the corpus are the following:

- d = drama
- f = fiction
- h = sermons
- j = journal or diaries
- l = legal
- m = medicine
- n = news
- s = science
- x = letters

---

[14] More information can be found in *ARCHER* website: <http://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/subjects/lel/research/projects/archer/>.

[15] A new version (ARCHER 3.2) is under compilation at the moment at the universities taking part in the consortium (cf. Yañez-Bouza 2011).

ARCHER is divided into nine periods, most of them of 50 years each. Nevertheless, in the analysis of this corpus I have further subdivided the different periods into decades for reasons of convenience (cf. Section 7.2).

- 0 = pre-1600
- 1 = 1600-49
- 2 = 1650-99
- 3 = 1700-49
- 4 = 1750-99
- 5 = 1800-49
- 6 = 1850-99
- 7 = 1900-49
- 8 = 1950-99
- 9 = post-2000

There are no texts belonging to periods 0 and 9 in *ARCHER* 3.1. Periods 4, 6 and 8 contain texts from the two main English varieties, and both of them will be considered in the present study:

- b = British
- a = American

File names contain three characters and include the year and the author's name abbreviation. The total number of running words is 1,789,309, whereas the number of files amounts to 955. Texts differ considerably in length. Every genre contains at least 10,000 words per period and variety (British or American), and a similar number of words for every period and in each variety (for instance sermons oscillate

between 10,123 and 11,146 running words, whereas fiction oscillates between 41,512 and 45,095). In a similar way, every period of fifty years contains a similar number of words, also similar for each variety (for instance in period 4 (1750-99) there are 178,675 running words in British English and 180,268 in American English). Numbers of files are also similar —if not equal— per genre, period and variety.

Taking advantage of the multi-genre approach which *ARCHER* allows, I selected the period 1850-1959 (649,170 words), in order to analyse the markers *please*, *pray* and *if you please*, paying attention to their distribution and pragmatic functions. For this period I made a further division into decades in order to observe the evolution of frequencies more in detail. The results of this analysis showed that those request markers were mainly found in three text-types, namely fiction, drama and letters. Therefore, further analysis of those three text-types was necessary to carry out the present study.

1.4.2.2 *Chadwyck-Healey*

Chadwyck-Healey has an online resource intended for the study and teaching of literature, *Literature Online*, which contains several collections of drama, prose and poetry from different periods in electronic form, including the *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (1996) and the *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (1998-2000). The *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* database contains 96 works in English prose covering the period from 1700 to 1780. The *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* database contains 250 classic novels in English from 1782 to 1903. In both resources the works are written by authors from the

British Isles. The most representative novels of these centuries are included — following the guidance of a panel of editorial advisors formed by professors from important universities, usually in the first edition. Magazine editions or corrected second editions are occasionally preferred.

Both databases allow a word or phrase search in the whole database, or searches limited to several factors: authors, author gender, years, works, and in the *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* also to different genres. These resources are meant for literary research rather than for linguistic studies, and thus, for instance, they do not provide word counts, something essential for a corpus study. In order to circumvent that disadvantage, the only option is to copy and paste text in a different text or word file. This can be a very time-consuming task, as the system only allows the selection of a small number of characters (less than 9,000 characters). As independent text or word documents, the files allow word counts and word searches.

In spite of the different factors offered in the fiction corpora (i.e. authors, author gender, years, works and genres), I have not followed any factor for the selection other than taking the novels that the databases provide for the time-spans selected. I have selected three decades, with intervals of 80 years between one period and the next. The first period contains novels from the *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* and the two remaining periods novels from the *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, adapting as far as possible the first and the third periods to the limit dates of both corpora. These three periods cover the following years:

- Period 1: 1710-1720

- Period 2: 1800-1810
- Period 3: 1890-1900

I have selected all the novels offered in the databases for these years with the only exception of Thomas Hardy's *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* in Period 3. The reason for this exclusion is that in the same decade we also find Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved*, a revised version of the former novel, in which some chapters were rewritten and the title was shortened. In *The Well-Beloved* I found all the examples present in *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* and also some more. Since there was no point in having the same examples repeated, the first version, which at the same time lacked some examples, was left out. The distribution of novels in the three periods is as follows (see Appendix 1 for details):

- Period 1: 9 novels by 3 different authors
- Period 2: 13 novels by 11 different authors
- Period 3: 21 novels by 16 different authors

The total number of words of the whole corpus is 3,742,363.[16] The considerable differences in size of the three periods require the use of normalised frequencies to make the data comparable:

- Period 1: 646,032
- Period 2: 1,368,202
- Period 3: 1,728,129

---

[16] As mentioned above (cf. Section 1.4.1.3), these word counts do not differentiate between dialogue and narrative.

1.4.2.3 *A Corpus of Irish English*

A Corpus of Irish English collects Irish documents written in English from the early fourteenth century up to the twentieth century. Therefore, both of the two fictional corpora analysed in the study allow an examination of the diachronic evolution. The different genres represented in this corpus comprise poetry, glossaries, sketches and full-length plays. The material compiled from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries in the corpus includes not only "genuine representations of Irish English by native Irish writers" but also "texts by non-Irish writers where the non-native perception of the Irish English is found" (Hickey 1994: 26, 2003: 242).

The best represented genre in the corpus is drama, which is also the selected one in this study, and will contribute to complete the picture of relevant genres for the sake of the present research. The distribution of plays in the corpus is as follows (for a complete list see Appendix 2):

- Sixteenth century: 3 (by 3 different authors)
- Seventeenth century: 8 (by 7 different authors)
- Eighteenth century: 10 (by 8 different authors)
- Nineteenth century: 10 (by 4 different authors)
- Twentieth century: 13 (by 4 different authors)

As regards number of words, the drama selection of this corpus contains an approximate number of 500,000 words[17], although the twentieth century provides almost half of them:

---

[17] These figures were obtained using WordSmith word count tools. The manual included in Hickey (2003) does not offer word counts.

- Sixteenth century: 1,744

- Seventeenth century: 8,046

- Eighteenth century: 121,462

- Nineteenth century: 118,307

- Twentieth century: 244,644

This corpus contains a varied selection of playwrights, including prominent Irish and non-Irish authors, such as William Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde and Thomas Sheridan, prestigious figures in English literature as regards both linguistic and literary criteria.

1.4.2.4 Epistolary corpora

1.4.2.4.1 *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* (1761-1790)

As mentioned in the previous section, the main features of private letters place this text-type close to the language of immediacy. Letters show a high degree of speechlikeness, and at the same time reflect real samples of language. In addition, due to the interaction between writer and addressee the occurrence of requests is very likely. Therefore, we should expect that epistolary collections such as these would contain a high frequency of courtesy markers in requests.

The *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* is an electronic epistolary collection. It was compiled by David Denison and Linda van Bergen (2003) and is available online. The corpus contains about 300,000 words and can be easily explored with search software like *WordSmith* tools (Scott 1999/2004).

It comprises a collection of private letters sent to Richard Orford, a steward of Peter Legh the Younger at Lyme Hall in Cheshire, between 1761 and 1790, as well as some draft versions of his replies. The original letters are held by the John Rylands University Library of Manchester (see van Bergen and Denison 2007).

This collection contains dialectal English of the north-west, "non-literary English and English relatively uninfluenced by prescriptivist ideas." Often the language does not comply with standard language norms, both regarding grammar and spelling. As for the topics treated, even if most letters deal with 'business' issues, we also find everyday subject-matters. The letters are usually informal, and sometimes it is difficult to draw the line between professional and personal aspects (van Bergen and Denison 2007: 230). It seems that public and private are not clear-cut concepts in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries correspondence, both domains often mixing in one and the same letter (cf. Palander-Collin 2010: 652-653), and this corpus is a good example of this mixture. As a consequence, letters in this corpus may be difficult to classify as regards Biber's Dimension 1, since business-like features would belong into the informational side, whereas the narration of more personal details would point at the involved production side.

1.4.2.4.2 *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* (1860-1919)

A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose was compiled by David Denison, assisted by Graeme Trousdale and Linda van Bergen. It is available offline through the Oxford Text Archive or contacting David Denison. It contains five collections of letters covering the period 1860-1919, from five English families: the Amberleys, the

Webbs, the Greens, Ernest Dowson and Gertrude Bell. Two minor diary collections from the Amberleys and the Greens are also included. All the informants belong to high society backgrounds. All copyrights belong to the University of Manchester (Department of English and American Studies, formerly Department of English Language and Literature), except the text of *The Letters of Ernest Dowson*, whose copyright is held by Associated University Presses from New Jersey. Although the total number of words in the corpus is probably low for this type of study (approximately 100,000), the text-type is certainly relevant. Moreover, the main features of this collection enable a sociolinguistic approach, since we can examine the use and function of different request markers taking into account several variables, such as date, relationship, speaker, addressee, speaker's and addressee's gender or speakers' birth dates. All the decades in the corpus are represented with 20,000 words, although the word count for periods 3 and 4 is smaller:

- 1860-69: 20,000
- 1870-79: 20,000
- 1880-89: 6,000
- 1890-99: 13,000
- 1900-09: 20,000
- 1910-19: 20,000

The corpus is further divided in two subperiods: 1860-1889 (L86) and 1890-1919 (L89).[18] The date of birth range of main contributors is narrower than the period covered by the corpus: Lord and Lady Amberley (main writers in the collection)

---

[18] These labels are established by the compilers.

were born in 1842, Bell in 1868, Dowson in 1867, Green in 1837 and the Webbs in 1859 and 1858 (Denison 1994: 8 and *ODNB*).

1.4.2.4.3 Letter-writing manuals (eighteenth century)

Taking into account the importance of epistolary collections during the Late Modern English period and the lack of collections available for some decades, the inclusion of letter-writing manuals proved important for the present study. Manuals are not only relevant from a socio-historical perspective, since these guides were certainly very influential, but they also help us covering a gap of material in the Late Modern English period. In addition, the classification of letters into different types, such as family letters or business letters, can provide clues of the types in which certain phenomena may have first occurred. We also find letters of request, which can offer revealing insights on how people in this period understood this speech act.

The selection of letter-writing manuals was based on the list offered by Bannet (2005), taking into account the manuals available in the *Eighteenth Century Collection Online* (*ECCO*) databases.[19] In addition to letter-writers, I considered secretaries and other guides including a high number of letters, which were also accessible in this database. A total number of 48 works have been looked at, distributed in three periods during the eighteenth century: seven in 1700-1733, 23 in 1734-1767 and 18 in 1768-1800 (see Appendix 3 for a complete list).

As regards methodology, word searches are allowed in this database through scanned images of the original books in .pdf format, although they are not 100%

---

[19] I am grateful to the *Leiden University Centre for Linguistics* for providing me access to this collection.

reliable. Word counts, however, are not possible and therefore frequencies cannot be analysed. Given the characteristics of the *ECCO* database, this collection of letter-writing guides needs a different method of analysis, based on the percentages of the different uses and relevant forms of *please* and *pray*, which can be compared to a corpus of real letters. Similarly, I will consider different types of letters in which the forms analysed occur.

1.5.   Period under study

Since the present study concerns mainly the analysis of the courtesy marker *please* and *pray* in Late Modern English requests, a general view of the historical background of this period seems in order. The Late Modern English period brought about many social changes at different levels. One remarkable feature of the period is the high degree of politeness, civility and good manners. In fact, politeness is particularly characteristic of eighteenth-century England, which typically represents the polite society par excellence (cf. Section 2.2.1).

This period generally includes the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (cf. Dossena and Jones 2003; Beal 2004). For instance, the boundary dates established by De Smet (2005) in his *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* ranges from 1710 to 1920, setting the beginning of the Late Modern English period in the ending point in the Helsinki Corpus. Pérez-Guerra *et al.* (2007: 11) refer to 1700 and 1950 as generally agreed boundary dates. Other scholars extend this period up to the present time, for example Culpeper (2005: 14), who identifies Late Modern English from 1750 onwards. The first four volumes of the *Cambridge History of the English Language*

offer a chronological division, marking 1776 as the turning point between the third and the fourth volumes. As Lass (1999: 1) explains, this date corresponds to the American Declaration of Independence, and consequently to the birth of the first "extraterritorial English." As previously mentioned, Beal (2004) adopts a broad perspective preferring the label 'Later Modern English.' Even though her title selects the period 1700-1945, she suggests the time usually recognised by historians includes the 'long' eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although language would be far from homogenous in this period (2004: 2). This is also Görlach's point of view, who includes an earlier eighteenth century and a later nineteenth century within Late Modern English (1999: 5). This label is applied in broad terms in the present study, covering not only the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but also including the last decades of the seventeenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

At the socio-political level there were two main dynasties during the Late Modern English period, namely the Stuarts and the Hanoverians. Several important events that took place during this period contributed to change the course of history worldwide. A crucial event such as the colonisation of North America took place mainly under the rule of the Stuarts. The Hanoverian period saw the acquisition of new territories added to the overseas empire, such as Australia, New Zealand, India and several territories in Africa, but also the loss of America. The expansion of England also meant the expansion of English to the colonies and the increase in the number of English speakers. England witnessed a period of internal stability, especially in the period from 1680 to 1760, which gave rise to the development of a civil society (cf. Becker 1994: 79).

The period also saw the growth of the population, both in Great Britain and in the colonies. Whereas at the beginning of the Stuart Period the population of the British Isles amounted to seven million, by the mid seventeenth century it had not yet reached eight million. The number stabilised for different reasons (see Morrill 1984: 286-290). Migrations were frequent in the country especially towards London and other growing cities, but they also started to be frequent overseas towards the West Indies (1984: 294). The rise of the population was very dramatic during the Hanoverian period, from seven million at the beginning of the period to almost 40 million at the beginning of the twentieth century (Langford 1984: 377; Matthew 1984: 474).

In England, the Modern English period witnessed significant achievements at different levels which would bring about notable effects on the people and the culture of the period. Two aspects regarding transport systems were improved during the eighteenth century, namely the construction of a national road network, which increased considerably in the period 1750-1770, and the development of the waterway system, especially in the second half of the century. These systems contributed to the development of regional economies and a national market, favouring industry and commerce (Langford 1989: 391-415). As a consequence, different provincial cities experienced a great increase in population and importance, and the improvement of urban centres favoured a growing middle class together with its social demands.

The government-run post office started in England in 1685 and meant a revolution as regards administrative and political issues, transatlantic contact, development of commerce and the transmission of news. With the aid of the

improved transport systems, the postal delivery system facilitated the distribution of newspapers and the communication between individuals, since the service became affordable for the lower classes (cf. Tavor Bannet 2005: 9-12). In addition, after 1840 postage became cheaper with the introduction of the Penny Post in England (Tieken 2009: 2).

Concerning education and level of literacy at the beginning of the Late Modern English period, only the upper classes or the children living in urban areas could benefit from education. In 1697 charity schools were established and soon spread all over the country allowing a higher literacy rate in children from poor social classes, although not all of them attended these schools. The Church played a very important role in this development since they were the main promoters of elementary education. In the 1770s there was a revival of charity schools and in the nineteenth century the education improved considerably until it was made obligatory in 1870. In the 1840s and 1850s adult education contributed to increase the level of literacy, in fact many grammar books in these decades were addressed to adult self-teaching. From the eighteenth century classical teaching of Latin in schools was gradually given up in favour of the vernacular. Thus, the education system was crucial to the spread of the English standard (cf. Langford 1989: 130-133; Görlach 1999: 9-13 and 2001: 14-17).

Some changes regarding religion took place in this period, and especially in the Victorian Era (1837-1901), as suggested by Culpeper and Demmen (2011). On the one hand they mention secularisation. A good indicator of increasing secularisation is the data regarding religious attendance in the 1851 Census, with more than five million potential church-goers staying at home in England (Matthew

1984: 465-466). On the other hand, Culpeper and Demmen point at the rise of Protestantism. In fact, in the same Census the number of Protestant Dissenters (4,5 millions) was not far from those belonging to the Church of England (5,2 millions) (Matthew 1984: 465). Protestant work ethic played an important role in society, since they promoted work as "a source of self-fulfilment in modern life" (Culpeper and Demmen 2011: 54).

As opposed to the general view, the Late Modern English period was dynamic both as regards linguistic changes and social, cultural and political transformations (cf. Tieken 2009: 10). All these developments and achievements played an important role in the reading public, they created a favourable environment for the mass-market of potential letter-writers and in a similar way they took part in language contact and in the spread of standard written English. Tieken (2009) shows that the language in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries differed from Present-day English regarding main issues such as pronunciation, spelling (or spellings, since there were both private and public systems), vocabulary or grammar.

1.6. Distribution and parts of the study

The present study will be structured into nine different chapters. After this first introductory chapter, Chapters 2 and 3 are devoted to different aspects related to the theoretical background. More specifically, Chapter 2 analyses the different theories linked to pragmatics, such as Politeness Theory and Speech Act Theory, explaining how they are related to the present study. Chapter 3 deals with grammaticalisation, pragmaticalisation and other processes of change, reviewing how these concepts have been applied in the literature in relation to the

development of pragmatic markers. Chapter 4 is function-to-form oriented and thus, it offers an approach to the speech act of requests in the Late Modern English period. Chapter 5 presents a review of the information on the items *please* and *pray* showing how they are described in Present-day English grammars and dictionaries, and how their origins and developments have been approached in the literature. Chapter 6 provides a taxonomy of the different structures featuring *please*. Chapter 7 includes the analysis of the data in different corpora. First, a preliminary study will show the necessity to focus on some genres. Then, three genre-specific corpora will be examined in order to go through all the structures and the figures of the pragmatic markers *please* and *pray*. Chapter 8 includes two additional studies focused on the epistolary genre. Chapter 9 discusses tendencies and findings taking into consideration the theoretical frameworks previously exposed. The final chapter will present a summary of the conclusions and questions for further research.

I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS
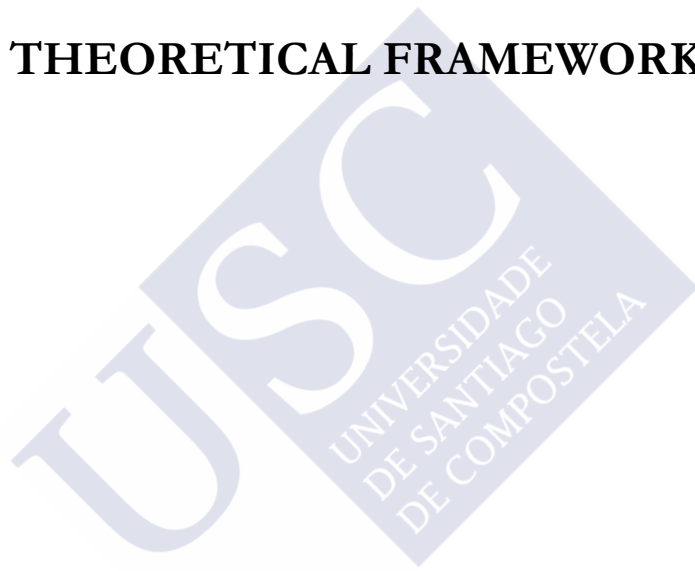
2. PRAGMATICS: THEORIES, APPROACHES AND THE STUDY OF PRAGMATIC MARKERS

As already mentioned (cf. Section 1.2.1), there are different theoretical approaches that can be placed within the framework of pragmatics, such as Speech Act and Politeness Theories. For the purposes of the present study, I will focus on two theories which acquire special relevance with respect to the courtesy markers under analysis, namely Speech Act Theory (Section 2.1) and Politeness Theory (Section 2.2). In addition, I will pay attention to different classifications of pragmatic markers and the terminology used in the literature as well as how *please* and *pray* have been described and classified (Section 2.3).

2.1. Speech acts

2.1.1 Origins of Speech Act Theory

As expressed in the title of Austin's 1962 work, we do things with words, that is, we may perform actions via utterances. Such utterances have been labelled 'speech acts.' Speech acts are usually classified into different types and are given specific labels such as 'apology,' 'complaint,' 'promise,' 'insult' or 'request.' Austin's work was inscribed in philosophy, but it was presented as valuable both for philosophers and grammarians. Austin observed that certain utterances have some special

features, among them, they cannot be classified as descriptive or judged in terms of true or false. Thus, he established the following two conditions for expressions of this type:

> A. they do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all, are not 'true or false'; and
>
> B. the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not *normally* be described as, or as 'just', saying something. (Austin 1975: 5) [emphasis original]

These utterances do not belong into any "recognized grammatical category," (1975: 4) and they do not serve to make a statement. In fact some utterances can constitute part of an action, as in the following examples given by Austin:

> (E.*a*) 'I do (sc. take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)' —as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony.
>
> (E.*b*) 'I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*' —as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem.
>
> (E.*c*) 'I give and bequeath my watch to my brother' —as occurring in a will.
>
> (E.*d*) 'I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow.' (Austin 1975: 5)

The mere fact of issuing the utterance means accomplishing an action. In this way, sentences E*a-d* are named "performatives" since they 'perform' different actions (Austin 1975: 6). Such actions may be realised through a performative verb, that is, "the verb naming the action while performing it" (Huang 2007: 95). For example, in E*d* the action of betting is realised by uttering the words *I bet*, and therefore it is an

"explicit performative," whereas "implicit performatives" do not contain a performative verb (Austin 1975: 32).[20] Within speech acts, Austin distinguished three related components depending on their communicative force:

- the locutionary act: that is, saying something meaningful,

- the illocutionary act: the use of an expression with some purpose,

- the perlocutionary act: the actual effect or consequence on those who hear the utterance.

Hence, a common locution such as *My patience is wearing thin* may also have illocutionary force as a warning, and at the same time a perlocutionary effect, for instance frightening someone.[21]

Searle's (1969) development of Austin's theory is still within the philosophy of language —this is clear also from the title, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. He distinguishes three different kinds of speech acts: uttering words (utterance acts); referring and predicating (propositional acts) and stating, questioning, commanding, promising, etc. (illocutionary acts). These three acts can be realised simultaneously (1969: 24). Examples of verbs denoting illocutionary acts include *argue, assert, describe, greet, request, state, order, warn*, etc. (Searle 1969: 23).

---

[20] Leech rejects Austin's proposal of performatives, because he does not accept that the canonical form of the utterance should contain an explicit performative, this is referred to as the 'performative fallacy' (Leech 1983: 175-177).

[21] It is worth mentioning that the extended use of the label 'speech act' is generally applied to Austin's concept of illocutionary act.

Searle is responsible for the most widely accepted taxonomy of speech acts, which provides an alternative to Austin's catalogue. While Austin distinguishes five classes of speech acts: verdictives, exercitives, commisives, behavitives and expositives (Austin 1975: 151), Searle proposes the following groups of illocutionary acts according to their different functions, which constitute a limited set of language uses (Searle 1979: 12-27; see also Leech 1983: 105-107, Yule 1996: 53-54 and Huang 2007: 106-108): "we tell people how things are, we try to get them to do things, we commit ourselves to doing things, we express our feelings and attitudes, and we bring about changes through our utterances" (1979: 29):

- **assertives** (or representatives), such as boasting, complaining, concluding, suggesting or swearing, which express the speaker commitment to what he believes to be the truth of the proposition;

- **directives**, such as commands, orders, requests or suggestions, which are attempts to get someone to do something;

- **commissives**, such as in promises, threats, refusals or pledges, which express the speaker's intention to commit himself to a future action;

- **expressives**, like apologising, congratulating, thanking or welcoming, which reflect the expression of psychological states;

– **declarations**, which usually take place within an institutional framework relating the propositional content to the reality. Examples of declarations are sentencing, christening or excommunicating.[22]

It should be noted, however, that some illocutionary verbs may fit in more than one category. This is the case, for instance, of *insist* and *suggest* which can be directives or assertives (1979: 27).[23]

Furthermore, Searle establishes twelve dimensions of variation, which serve to differentiate individual illocutionary acts or groups of acts. Among them, the first three are particularly important for the above taxonomy (Searle 1979: 2-8):

1. differences in the point or purpose of the act. These differences constitute the 'essential conditions,' that is the best distinguishing factors for illocutionary acts (cf. next section on felicity conditions). Thus, orders and requests share the same illocutionary point, i.e. the "attempt to get the hearer to do something" (1979: 2), but differ in their illocutionary force (see 4 below).

2. differences in the direction of fit between words and the world. This dimension takes into account the relation between language and reality, since "the illocutionary force determines how that content is supposed to relate to

---

[22] Leech (1983: 179-181) argues that 'declarations' should not be included in a taxonomy of Speech Acts since they are the "linguistic part of rituals," and therefore conventional rather than communicative acts.

[23] In fact, this is one of Leech's criticisms to Searle's theory (1983: 207), which he terms the 'illocutionary-verb fallacy'.

the world" (1979: 4). The direction of fit can be words-to-world and world-to-words. Thus, assertives belong to the former, in that they describe the speaker's perception of reality, and directives and commissives to the latter, since they initiate a change through words. Expressives, by contrast, have no direction of fit. Declarations are peculiar since they work in both directions words-to-world and world-to-words.

3. differences in expressed psychological states. Attitudes or states, such as belief (statements or assertions), desire (requests or orders), intention (promises or threats) or pleasure (congratulations or welcomes), are expressed through illocutionary acts. This dimension is associated with sincerity conditions (see Section 2.1.2).

4. differences in the force or strength of the illocutionary point. Thus, requests and orders share the same illocutionary point but are represented with different degrees of strength.

5. differences in the status or position of the speaker and hearer. Thus, depending on the status of the speaker and the hearer the same act can be interpreted as a request or as an order. This dimension corresponds to one of the preparatory conditions (see next Section).

6. differences in the way that the utterance relates to the interests of speaker and hearer. These differences are reflected in the acts of congratulations and condolences. This dimension is another preparatory condition (see next Section).

7. differences in relation to the rest of the discourse. This feature applies mainly to performative statements, which serve to relate utterances in the discourse, as in *I reply*.

8. differences in the propositional content determined by Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices or IFIDs (see Section 2.3.3 below). Thus, a request involves a future event, whereas a report regards the past or the present. This dimension is related to the propositional content conditions of speech acts (see following Section).

9. differences in the speech acts that must always be speech acts, and those that can, but need not be performed as speech acts, such as a greeting waving your hand, which can be done without actually performing a speech act.

10. differences between those acts that require extra-linguistic institutions for their performance and those that do not. Thus, the speaker (and the hearer) needs to be in a special position within an institution in order to christen, excommunicate or declare guilty, whereas no extralinguistic institutions are needed for many other speech acts to be successful.

11. differences between those acts in which the corresponding illocutionary verb has a performative use and those in which it has not. Thus, whereas *order* and *request* may have performative uses, other illocutionary verbs such as *boast* lack this usage.

12. differences in the style of performance of the illocutionary act. Thus, Searle suggests that the difference between announcing and confiding lays on the style of performance.

As all these dimensions show, differences between illocutionary acts are not always clear-cut, in fact there are "several distinct criss-crossing continua" (Searle 1979: 2). One such case is the boundary between orders and requests.

Speech acts can also be classified into direct and indirect. Direct speech acts contain a direct match between sentence type (declarative, interrogative and imperative) and illocutionary force (asserting/stating, asking/questioning and ordering/requesting). When this match is absent the act is an indirect speech act. Indirect speech acts are defined by Searle as those cases "in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another" (1975: 60). In this way, a request realised by using an imperative is a direct speech act, whereas one realised by means of an interrogative is an indirect speech act[24] (Huang 2007: 109-110). Indirect speech acts have received considerable attention in the literature since the direct/indirect distinction is also related to different levels of politeness (see below). Gordon and Lakoff (1971) and Sadock (1974: 73-95) observe that an indirect request can be mistaken with a different speech act, unless certain so-called 'felicity conditions' are met (see below).[25]

Searle also notices the problem of conventional sentences perceived immediately by the hearer as indirect requests. This is due to a number of factors, such as "mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer" (1975: 60-61). Thus, Searle proposes a list of "sentences 'conventionally' used in the performance of indirect directives," directly linked to

---

[24] The label 'indirect speech act' started to be used by linguists like Sadock (1974) and Searle (1975).

[25] In Gordon and Lakoff's (1971) inferential model, there are 'conversational postulates' leading the hearer to infer that if an interrogative is not a question it may be a request.

Grice's (1996) concept of conventional implicature (cf. Section 1.2.1), which are easily identifiable as such and motivated by politeness. Focusing on those conventional sentences, he exposes a set of facts, such as the lack of imperative force as part of their meaning or their unambiguous illocutionary force (imperative or non-imperative) (1975: 67-70). He further exposes several generalisations accounting for the realisation of indirect requests within Speech Act Theory. Searle's theoretical description proposes a model for a detailed analysis of indirect speech acts.

2.1.2 Felicity conditions

In order for a given speech act to be successful certain conditions have to be met. These are usually referred to as 'felicity conditions.'[26] In this way, Austin's examples E*a-d* above need an adequate context in order for those actions to be performed. Brown and Levinson (1987: 132) define a felicity condition as "one of the real-world conditions that must be met by aspects of the communicative event in order for a particular speech act to come off as intended." Searle's initial explanation of felicity conditions focuses on the act of promising, although he mentions that "in the performance of any illocutionary act, the speaker implies that the preparatory conditions of the act are satisfied" (1969: 65). Accordingly, the analysis is extended to other speech acts such as requests, greetings or warning.

In the case of the act of requesting the following felicity conditions are presupposed:

---

[26] This was first noted by Austin, who remarked that when these felicity conditions do not occur the act cannot be regarded as false, but rather as 'unhappy' (Austin 1962: 11-15).

(i)   Propositional content: future act *A[ction]* of *H[earer]*.

(ii)   Preparatory:

     a. *H* is able to do *A*. *S[peaker]* believes *H* is able to do *A*.

     b. It is not obvious to both *S* and *H* that *H* will do *A* in the normal course of his own accord.

(iii)   Sincerity: *S* wants *H* to do *A*.

(iv)   Essential: Counts as an attempt to get *H* to do *A*. (Searle 1969: 66)

As seen above, Searle includes these and other conditions in order to establish a set of dimensions, and therefore, to classify illocutionary acts accordingly. Focusing now on requests, the propositional content expresses that the goal of the request must take place in the future. The preparatory conditions detailed by Searle highlight two necessary issues, firstly the speaker's ability to do what the request expresses, and secondly, the fact that the request would not presumably occur otherwise. Thus, preparatory conditions are related to the status of speaker and hearer and to their interests in the utterance. The psychological state expressed is equally important, and therefore the fact that speaker's intention is 'sincere' is also necessary for the felicitous realisation of the request. And finally, the essential conditions are related to the illocutionary point of the act, the most important element to identify and classify a speech act. In a request this point or purpose is the attempt to get the hearer to do what is requested.

Among Gordon and Lakoff's (1971) conversational postulates, we find sincerity conditions, described as "principles governing the sincerity of requests" (1971: 64):

   a.   SINCERE(a, REQUEST(a,b,Q)) → WANT(a, Q)

   b.   SINCERE(a, REQUEST(a,b,Q)) → ASSUME(a, CAN(b, Q)

   c.   SINCERE(a, REQUEST(a,b,Q)) → ASSUME(a, WILLING(b, Q))

   d.   SINCERE(a, REQUEST(a,b,Q)) → ASSUME(a, -Q)

These four postulates indicate that the addressee (a) sincerely requests the hearer (b) to carry out the request (Q). Firstly because the addressee wants the hearer to do the request; secondly, the speaker assumes the hearer can do the request; thirdly, the speaker assumes that the hearer will be willing to do the request, and finally, the speaker assumes that the hearer will not do the request without being requested. Gordon and Lakoff (1971) further add a reasonableness condition for each sincerity condition, indicating that "the speaker has a reason for maintaining the sincerity condition" (1971: 67).

Similarly, Brown and Levinson (1987: 132) point out that "for a request to be felicitous (successful), the addressee must be thought potentially able to comply with the request, the requestor must want the things requested, and so on." Hence they include a classification of indirect speech acts by felicity condition valid for requests not only in English, but also in two non-Indo-European languages, namely Tamil (a Dravidian language spoken in India) and Tzeltal (a Mayan language spoken in Mexico) (1987: 137):

- Propositional content condition (H[earer] will do A[ction])
- Preparatory conditions:
    - (i) *H is able to do A*
    - (ii) *Any objects requested exist*
    - (iii) *The action desired has not already been done*

- Sincerity conditions (S[peaker] wants H to do A)[27]

Taking into account the felicity conditions mentioned above, Brown and Levinson (1987: 135) propose the following schema for requests in which they include the optional presence of the courtesy marker *please*. According to these authors, only requests following these felicity conditions would be successful and only those following this schema would be regarded as polite:

$$\text{felicity condition} + \begin{bmatrix} \text{question} \pm \text{subjunctive} \pm \text{possibility operator} \pm please \\ \text{assertion} + \text{negation} \pm \text{subjunctive} \pm \text{possibility operator} \pm \text{tag} \pm please \end{bmatrix}$$

The study of felicity conditions may help us to become aware of how a given society understands different speech acts; therefore, the study of felicity conditions in requests will shed light on the conception of requests in a given society or a given period in time. Felicity conditions offer a structure of requests which enables the examination of their different parts separately. Thus, the requisites for a request to be felicitous may have changed over time in the different periods in the history of English. An analysis of those conditions may help us to understand why an intended request may have not succeeded or may have been interpreted as an order (on felicity conditions of requests in Late Modern English, see Section 4.3 below).

---

[27] S stands for the speaker, H stands for the hearer and A stands for the action.

2.1.3 Applications of Speech Act Theory

The first studies on speech acts were related to abstract issues, placed especially within philosophy and offered examples of invented utterances (e.g. Austin 1962 or Searle 1969). Empirical studies in this theoretical field arrived later, as a second development of the theory. Speech Act Theory has been successfully applied to a number of areas of research, such as illocutionary logic, artificial intelligence, and computational linguistics (cf. Huang 2007: 127), but perhaps the most interesting applications for the present study come from cross-linguistic pragmatics.

The first empirical approaches to Speech Act Theory arise in the eighties and nineties and adopt a cross-linguistic perspective with a special emphasis on language acquisition. Among the most important works we find Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s (1989) edited volume, which studies the speech acts of requests and apologies in several languages. In addition, this important work offers a coding manual for the classification of these two speech acts under the umbrella of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Research Project. This cross-linguistic perspective proved to be very fruitful in the subsequent literature. It is also present in Wierzbicka's (1991) work, which focuses on cross-cultural pragmatics and points out that some problems encountered by second-language students as regards speech act production are due not only to linguistic differences, but also to cultural ones. Also with a cross-cultural approach we find the volume edited by Gass and Neu (1995), in which different speech acts are analysed in several cultural contexts, some of them from an interlanguage perspective. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) edited another interesting volume on interlanguage pragmatics, which includes several papers within the framework of Speech Act Theory. Trosborg (1994) is also significant for the

empirical application of Speech Act Theory, since she analyses how requests, complaints, and apologies are realised by native and non-native speakers of English. Requests are also one of the speech acts analysed by Barron (2003) in her interlanguage pragmatic analysis of the acquisition of speech acts by German students. Similarly, the volume edited by Pütz and Neff-van Aertselaer (2008) deals with interlanguage and intercultural pragmatics, with several articles devoted to interlanguage requests including students with different native languages.

The cross-linguistic approach in pragmatics entails language comparison and therefore it facilitated the shift in scope of pragmatics towards historical studies, and consequently contributed to the development of historical pragmatics as a discipline (see Section 1.2.1).

Elizabeth Traugott was one of the first authors to adopt the historical approach to the study of speech acts in her (1991) article on the etymology of speech act verbs, in which she focuses on semantic aspects of 275 English verbs, among them *agree*, *plead*, *praise*, *suggest* and *warn*. The following years saw the emergence of a number of studies dealing with specific speech acts from a historical perspective, among them Arnovick (1999) and Jucker (2000). More recently, Jucker and Taavitsainen (2008a) edited a volume devoted to the analysis of different speech acts in the history of English. The contributors to this volume explore not only diachronic aspects of speech acts but also point out the methodological difficulties found in this type of study. One of the favourite topics in recent publications is the study of directives (see, for example, the contributions by Del Lungo Camiciotti and Kohnen in Jucker and Taavitsainen 2008a). The analysis of directives provides

interesting new insights at different levels, giving us valuable sociolinguistic knowledge of past societies and helping us to understand changes in politeness.

Speech Act Theory is particularly relevant for the present study on courtesy markers in Late Modern English requests. Requests are classified within the speech act of directives, since in a request the speaker expresses his/her wish for the addressee to do something. In the English language requests are commonly realised through indirect strategies, which present fixed patterns that are immediately identified by the hearer (cf. Section 4.2 on requests strategies). Indirect speech acts are highly conventionalised and so is the use of courtesy markers like *pray* and *please* in indirect requests. In this way, Speech Act Theory, its taxonomies and classifications prove valuable in order to account from a theoretical point of view for the realisation of those speech acts in which courtesy markers like *please* or *pray* have a pragmatic function. Moreover, this theory will be useful to explain the spread of *please* towards other pragmatic functions and to different speech acts. In addition, the analysis of the markers in requests, their functions and the analysis of the replacement can provide sociolinguistic information about the Late Modern English period. This point will be also highlighted in Section 4.3, which will be devoted to the interpretation of requests from an eighteenth century perspective.

2.2. Politeness

2.2.1 Concept of politeness

Closely related to Speech Act Theory is Politeness Theory. Several issues commented on in the previous section such as sincerity conditions or indirectness

involve politeness. The usefulness of both Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory for the present study is clear due to several reasons. First of all because the very word *please* is nowadays almost a synonym of politeness in English. Secondly, the study of particular speech acts like requests or apologies, is unquestionably linked to politeness since, as we have just seen, these speech acts involve particular circumstances, necessary for their successful realisation. Therefore, we need to request things in such a way that our request can be granted, taking into account that the hearer should not be offended and that our social position is not affected by the request. This special social and linguistic care is commonly referred to as 'tact,' 'manners' and 'etiquette,' and has received similar labels in the history of English. Other frequent labels include 'politeness' and 'courtesy.' Even though the idea of politeness has been present throughout history, the concept of politeness has been understood in different ways in the different periods in the history of English. A clear example is the period under study, Late Modern English, in which we observe linguistic changes, such as the replacement of *pray* by *please*. Fitzmaurice observes a shift in the meaning of the terms 'polite' and/or 'politeness' particularly throughout the eighteenth century "from one of 'metropolitan sociability', to that of an absolute standard of prescriptivism and correctness" (1998: 310). Thus, the notion of politeness in the early eighteenth century indicated a "set of social practices regulated by mutual considerateness and cooperation" evolving in the course of the century "to describe more narrowly a mode of behaviour and a variety of language prescribed as correct and appropriate for middle-class speakers" (Fitzmaurice 1998: 313). A clear example of this change can be found in Bailey's dictionary, whereas in the 1730 edition *politeness* is defined as "accomplishedness," in

the 1763 Edinburgh edition the meaning is "elegance of manners; gentility; good-breeding." A remarkably good account of how British eighteenth century society understood politeness is given by Klein (2002: 870-871):

> because the term 'polite' is so idiomatic to the eighteenth century (and so much less apt when applied to the seventeenth or nineteenth century), it can be used as an alternative to the adjective 'eighteenth-century' or, slightly less vacuously, as a way to indicate matters pertaining to a varyingly defined elite.

Good evidence of the importance of politeness for this century can be found in the numerous sections and chapters devoted to this topic in general guide books and etiquette manuals from the Late Modern English period. As Görlach wisely remarks, since "[t]here is no 18th-century equivalent of the concept 'pragmatics', the discipline is partly covered by rhetorics and various guides to appropriate behaviour such as books on letter-writing, conduct books and stylistic manuals" (2001: 130). The following two passages are taken from letter-writing guides, the first one includes a definition of politeness as social behaviour while the second one argues that politeness belongs to people of high social backgrounds, equating it to "good breeding:"

> Politeness is that continual attention which humanity inspires in us, both to please others, and to avoid giving them any offence. (Toussaint 1752: 239)

Refinement in manners, is the only quality which can distinguish you from the lower class of people; as sincerity, benevolence, and many other virtues, are not confined to any particular station in life: though politeness, or what is usually called good breeding, is never possessed but by those whose understandings are cultivated, and their manners formed by the society of polite, well-bred persons. (Murry 1779: 38)

'Politeness' and 'courtesy' often appear as interrelated concepts in Present-day English dictionary definitions. In the entry for *courtesy* (*OED*, s.v. *courtesy* n. 1a) in the *OED*, the term *politeness* is mentioned twice, "[c]ourteous behaviour; courtly elegance and politeness of manners; graceful politeness or considerateness in intercourse with others" whereas the entry for *polite* (*OED*, s.v. *polite* adj. and n. 2c), includes *courteous*, "[c]ourteous, behaving in a manner that is respectful or considerate of others; well-mannered." And, similarly, in the entry for *politeness* (*OED*, s.v. *politeness* 3a), we find *courtesy*, "[c]ourtesy, good manners, behaviour that is respectful or considerate of others."

In spite of the conceptual connection, as a linguistic label 'politeness' prevails when talking for instance of politeness theories. Kasper (1998: 677) refers to the linguistic aspects of politeness in the following terms, which differ somehow from the common notion: "'politeness' as a pragmatic notion refers to ways in which linguistic action is carried out —more specifically, ways in which the relational function in linguistic action is expressed."

2.2.2   Politeness Theory: Brown and Levinson's (1987) approach

Whereas the notion of etiquette goes back to the ancient world in different civilisations (cf. Ehlich 2005), the study of politeness as a theoretical field within linguistics is fairly recent, but has acquired great importance over the last three decades. Politeness is intimately related to the development of pragmatics as a discipline, and in particular with names such as Geoffrey Leech, Robin Lakoff and, especially, Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (cf. Held 2005), working in the seventies and eighties.

One of the authors to deal with politeness was Robin Lakoff in the seventies. It is surprising that Lakoff's proposal, in spite of being a pioneering work, has received so little attention, even though she explains the role of politeness within pragmatics. Lakoff proposes two rules of pragmatic competence: "be clear" and "be polite" (1973: 296), and explains that politeness is more important in conversation than clarity since the speakers prefer "to avoid offense than to achieve clarity" (1973: 297-298). The most influential politeness model is that proposed in Brown and Levinson's (1987) monograph published in the following decade.[28] This work was the first volume to expose a theory of politeness and remains an indispensable reference for the study of politeness even 26 years after its publication. Relating politeness to conversation, we find a third model of politeness, Leech's Politeness Principle, which was expressed by analogy with Grice's Cooperative Principle as a "necessary complement" of the latter in order to rescue it when it cannot provide

---

[28] Brown and Levinson originally exposed their model in 1978 in an essay which was later reedited as a monograph in 1987.

satisfactory explanations (Leech 1983: 80).[29] Lakoff's approach was not as exhaustive and elaborate as those by her successors, and in fact, she does not claim to have established a politeness model. By contrast, Brown and Levinson and Leech developed careful taxonomical approaches meant to be useful in different analyses of politeness.

In what follows we will focus mainly on Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, highlighting some coincidences with Leech's proposal.

Brown and Levinson distinguish three basic factors affecting politeness, namely relative 'power' (that is the power of the speaker over the hearer depending on status difference), social 'distance' (that is the point in a closeness-distance continuum between speaker and hearer depending on their degree of acquaintance, their belonging to different social strata or other social factors) and absolute 'ranking' of imposition in the realisation of a speech act. These sociological factors determine the level of politeness used and are claimed to be valid cross-linguistically (1987: 15). Key in Brown and Levinson's work is the notion of 'face,' which is understood as "individual's self-esteem" (1987: 2). The concept of 'face' is defined as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (1987: 61). This label is taken from the sociologist Erving Goffman, who defined it as "positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (1967: 5). Brown and Levinson develop this concept further and propose face as a two-fold idea consisting of two elements:

---

[29] Thus, the Politeness Principle includes a set of sub-principles related to polite behaviour: the Tact Maxim, the Generosity Maxim, the Approbation Maxim, the Modesty Maxim, the Agreement Maxim and the Sympathy Maxim

(a)   negative face: the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others.

(b)   positive face: the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others. (1987: 62)

Taking into account the notion of face, Brown and Levinson identify the so-called face-threatening acts (FTAs), which have the property of putting the speaker's or the hearer's face at risk. Face-threatening acts are classified primarily according to the kind of face threatened into acts threatening negative face and those threatening positive face. At a second level, acts are classified according to whether it is the addressee's or the speaker's face that is at risk. Requests, the speech act object of the present study, are classified together with orders as an act threatening the addressee's negative face. Related speech acts such as suggestions, advices, reminding, threats, warnings and dares are also members of this group (1987: 65-68).

What all these face-threatening acts have in common is that they express a future act of the hearer, "and in so doing put some pressure on the hearer to do (or refrain from doing) the act" (1987: 65). Note that in this schema orders and requests are grouped together, since in both cases the speaker indicates that he wants the hearer to do or not to do some act.

In addition to this first group, other acts putting the addressee's negative face at risk are offers, promises, and compliments and expressions of positive or negative emotions. Offers and promises "predicate some positive future act of the speaker toward the hearer, and in so doing put some pressure on the hearer to accept or

reject them, and possibly to incur a debt" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 66). Compliments, expressions of envy or admiration and expressions of strong (negative) emotions toward the hearer, in turn, "predicate some desire of the speaker toward the hearer or the hearer's goods, giving the hearer reason to think that he may have to take action to protect the object of the speaker's desire, or give it to the speaker" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 66).

Acts threatening the positive face include expressions of disapproval and contradictions. There are also acts threatening both the positive and the negative face. Examples of these are complaints and interruptions. They differ considerably from the above and are far from the topic of this study. The courtesy markers *please* and *pray* are typically found in requests, but may also appear in complaints and interruptions, especially when they convey an ironic use, as in *Oh please, don't make me laugh*, when someone has told a story which is not funny at all (cf. Sections 4.2 and 9.5.2).

The second distinction established by Brown and Levinson takes into consideration whose face is at risk. In all the acts mentioned above, the face that is threatened is the hearer's. Other acts affect the speaker's face, either his positive face, as in those acts expressing thanks, acceptance of thanks, excuses, and the acceptance of offers, or his negative face. Within the latter group we can count apologies, acceptance of compliments, self-humiliation, and confessions.

Thus, Politeness Theory and Speech Act Theory are intimately related. As will be seen, the boundaries between both theories are of particular relevance to the present study. According to Brown and Levinson's classification, orders and requests are the acts with a higher risk of hearer's face loss, and, therefore, the

politeness strategies used in these acts deserve special attention. In order to account for the realisations of these face-threatening acts, Brown and Levinson propose a set of five possible strategies, which are represented in Figure 5 below. Here different choices for the avoidance of threat are shown. The number assigned to each strategy indicates a hierarchy in the degree of risk of face loss, from the highest degree of risk (1) to the lowest degree of risk (5):

Figure 5. Face-threatening acts: possible strategies to avoid threat

Brown and Levinson (1987: 69)
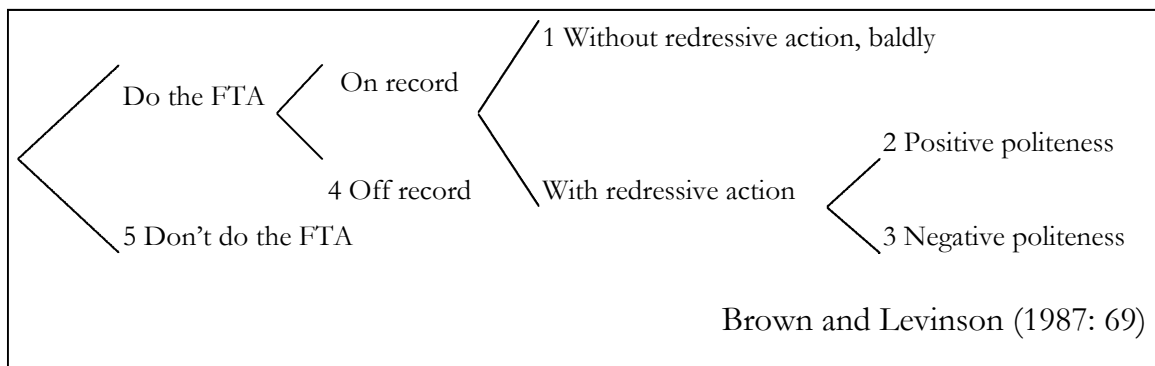
The speaker can choose to do the face-threatening act on record, that is, when his intention is unambiguous. This can be attained by means of different strategies: (1) The face-threatening can be done baldly, in the most direct, unambiguous way. Alternatively, it can be done with a redressive action, which "'gives face' to the addressee" without the intention of threatening the face (1987: 69). The redressive action can be realised (2) by means of **positive politeness** when the stress is on positive face; or, (3) by means of **negative politeness**, when the stress is on negative face. The face-threatening act can also be done off-record (4) when "there is more than one unambiguously attributable intention" and the speaker shows no commitment (1987: 69). Finally, the speaker can avoid the face-threatening act altogether (5).

By choosing positive politeness the speaker shows solidarity, claims 'common ground' and wants to preserve the addressee's positive face. This is achieved by means of strategies such as use of in-group identity markers, intensification of interest to the hearer, avoidance of disagreement, and presupposition of common ground. In this way, "[t]he potential face threat of an act is minimized [...] by the assurance that in general [the] S[peaker] wants at least some of [the] H[earer]'s wants" (1987: 70). By contrast, the selection of negative politeness implies that the speaker wants to preserve the addressee's negative face, showing deference and concern for the speaker's wants, as Brown and Levinson (1987: 70) put it:

> Negative politeness, thus, is essentially avoidance-based, and realizations of negative-politeness strategies consist in assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee's negative face wants and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with the addressee's freedom of action.

Negative politeness strategies include being conventionally indirect, being pessimistic, minimising the imposition or giving deference.

As an illustrative example we can observe the subtle difference between a request and an order following Brown and Levinson's schema. In this way, whereas a request, being both a face-saving and face-threatening act, would generally be analysed as a redressive action, typically by means of negative politeness, an order can be interpreted as a bald-on-record face-threatening act without redressive action, priming efficiency over face.

There is a structural distinction within speech acts which is directly related to Politeness Theory. If we consider the three main sentence types (declarative, interrogative and imperative) and the three illocutionary forces (statement, question and command/request) we can observe a direct correspondence in the case of direct speech acts, while indirect speech acts show an indirect relationship between sentence type and illocutionary force (Yule 1996: 54-55; Huang 2007: 109-110). As mentioned above indirectness is regarded as a typical negative politeness strategy. In fact, the use of indirect speech acts implies a higher level of politeness. The use of indirectness as a strategy reveals the speaker's effort to satisfy the addressee's face wants, and therefore implies a higher degree of politeness, typically negative politeness (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987: 142-144; Huang 2007: 115-116). The distinction between direct and indirect speech acts is important for several speech acts and especially for requests, since we can establish different degrees of indirectness in the realisation of this type of speech act, as well as differences in the use of negative politeness (cf. Section 4.2 on requests).

Many authors point at other relationships between Speech Act Theory and politeness. Thus, Searle discusses politeness in relation to indirect speech acts stating that "[p]oliteness is the most prominent motivation for indirectness in requests" (1979: 49). As shown above, indirectness has been regarded as a universal feature (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987). Blum-Kulka (1987) argues that although both politeness and indirectness are scalar notions, their scales do not necessarily match each other. She finds cross-cultural differences between Hebrew and English regarding the degree of indirectness used in requests, which would contradict the idea of universality. The evolution of indirectness in directive speech acts in the

history of English has been looked at by several authors, who suggest that this scale has undergone important variations at different historical periods (cf. Section 4.2.3; Culpeper and Archer 2008; Kohnen 2011). This would imply that each society gives a different interpretation to the levels of indirectness. Still, even if universality would not apply, the fact that indirectness is directly related to politeness is valid at least in contemporary English.[30]

2.2.3   Politeness theories: Criticism and reception

Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory has certainly been very influential, however, it has also received different critiques as regards its applicability. In particular two issues have been questioned: one has to do with the notion of face, and the other with the claimed universality of their model. Thus, for instance, Watts (2003) mentions several issues which should be revised in the theory, and particularly he questions Brown and Levinson's concept of 'face.' Even if most studies on politeness in the past decades have applied Brown and Levinson's model, it has been suggested that their theory is not a theory of politeness, but rather a theory of facework (Locher and Watts 2005: 10). Locher (2004) and Locher and Watts (2005) understand politeness as an aspect of relational work., that is, "the "work" individuals invest in negotiating relationships with others" (2005: 10). They consider Brown and Levinson's approach is focused exclusively on the mitigation of face-threatening acts, while it ignores other aspects of interaction.

---

[30] There are some exceptions though, since excessive indirectness can be used to convey irony (cf. Watts 2003: 69).

One aspect of the theory which has been repeatedly questioned is the distinction between positive and negative face, and positive and negative politeness strategies (cf. Bravo 1999; Watts 2003: 85-95). Bravo (1999), for instance, considers that social conventions depend on social contexts and should be determined by categories such as autonomy and affiliation. Autonomy is related to what makes the individual different from the group, while affiliation refers to what identifies the individual with the group. According to Bravo, given that these two factors may vary in each culture, they could reflect the concept of face more accurately than the dichotomy between negative and positive face proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Another author who questions Brown and Levinson's notion of positive and negative face is Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2004). This author establishes a distinction between the term 'face flattering acts,' which are linked to positive politeness, and Brown and Levinson's 'face threatening acts,' which are related to negative politeness. According to Kerbrat-Orecchioni, this division provides a wider system for the analysis of politeness strategies in order to reflect more accurately the realisation of some particular speech acts, such as thanking or greeting, in certain societies or to distinguish unequivocally conventionalised indirect requests.

An interesting proposal is that by Watts (2003), who draws a distinction between first-order and second-order (im)politeness. The former comprises how polite or impolite behaviour is perceived by individuals in communicative interaction, whereas second-order politeness is a theoretical term and refers to "'politic social behaviour', or simply 'politic behaviour'" (2003: 30). Second-order politeness would be the axis in a universal theory of politeness. Thus, whereas Brown and Levinson's approach proposes a theoretical framework for second-order

politeness, Watts's discursive method aims to account for first-order (im)politeness. His model is seen as part of a theory of social practice (2003: 261).

What many authors have questioned is not politeness as a universal idea but rather the universality claimed by Brown and Levinson's model, especially when it comes to accounting for politeness phenomena in different cultures and languages (cf. Wierbicka 1991; Meier 1995a, 1995b; Watts 2003; Bravo 2004; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2004). Meier (1995a, 1995b) finds several shortcomings in Brown and Levinson's ethnocentric model and proposes instead a model of repair work based on social interaction. In his view, Brown and Levinson's model is too centralised in the hearer, at the expense of the speaker (1995a: 383). According to Meier, politeness should equate to appropriateness or to appropriate behaviour.

In spite of the criticism received, Brown and Levinson's model has been widely applied to describe politeness in many languages from several perspectives. Different scholars have focused on the cross-cultural differences shown by languages as regards pragmatic issues, and particularly politeness, like the abovementioned volume by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989), Wierzbicka's *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics* (1991) and the more recent volume *Politeness in Europe* (2005), which contains a collection of articles each on a specific issue in a European language. Studies on politeness from a historical perspective applying Brown and Levinson's model have proliferated from a very early date. As mentioned above, the cross-linguistic angle was already present in Brown and Levinson's work since it included not only English, but also two non-Indo-European languages. The shift from cross-linguistic politeness studies towards historical politeness studies did not take long and the model was soon applied to different types of writing such as drama or

fiction. In fact, works on Shakespearean plays were among the first studies applying politeness theories to earlier periods (cf. Brown and Gilman 1989; Kopytko 1993; Rudanko 1993; Magnusson 1999). Although research on historical politeness has received similar criticism to other works using the same model, it has also proved to be a very productive approach, with very interesting results.[31] A great amount of work in politeness from a historical perspective has focused on the study of pronouns and forms of address in earlier periods (cf. Brown and Gilman 1989; Busse 2002), while an interesting line of research which focuses on historical impoliteness has recently opened up (cf. Culpeper 2011). Also of interest for the present study is the possibility to combine research on particular speech acts or particular pragmatic markers with politeness, as will be shown in the following sections.

2.3. Pragmatic Markers

The present section is concerned with pragmatic markers, since *please* and *pray* can be categorised as such. I will first review the terminology used in the literature to refer to pragmatic items (Section 2.3.1), and the characteristics that have been attributed to these markers (Section 2.3.2) and to elements akin to them (Section 2.3.3). Finally, I will deal with how *please* and *pray* have been considered in the catalogues of pragmatic markers (Section 2.3.4).

---

[31] See Nevala (2010) for a summary of criticism. This author defends the applicability of Brown and Levinson's broad model to earlier periods in spite of its shortcomings.

2.3.1 Terminology

Items such as *well*, *now*, *you know*, *I mean*, *so* and *please* have been referred to in the literature by various labels, among them 'pragmatic markers' (Fraser 1996; Andersen 2001; Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen 2011), 'pragmatic particles' (Östman 1995; Beeching 2002), 'discourse signals' (Stenström 1990) 'discourse particles' (Aijmer 2002; Fischer 2006), 'discourse operators' (Redeker 1991), 'discourse connectives' (Blakemore 2002), 'discourse-pragmatic markers' (Company Company 2006b), and 'discourse markers,' the latter being the most widespread term (see e.g. Schiffrin 1988; Jucker and Ziv 1998; Schourup 1999; Müller 2005; Frank-Job 2006; Brinton 2010).

Although 'discourse marker' and 'pragmatic marker' are sometimes used as synonyms (see, e.g. Brinton 1996, 2010), Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999, 2006) employs the labels 'discourse marker' and 'pragmatic marker' to refer to different concepts. For Fraser, discourse markers are a subgroup within the wider category of pragmatic markers. Pragmatic markers are "the linguistically encoded clues which signal the speaker's potential communicative intentions" (1996: 168), their main feature being that they "do not contribute to the propositional content of the sentence but signal different types of messages" (Fraser 1999: 936). In this respect, it seems that *please* could be regarded as a pragmatic marker, since it is used to signal that the message is a request (cf. Blum-Kulka 1985). Fraser provides a detailed, meticulous classification of these items, which I include in Figure 6 below:

Figure 6. Pragmatic markers

Basic markers	**Structural basic markers** (Mood)		
	Lexical basic markers	Performative expressions (e.g. *I promise*, *We invite you*)	
		Pragmatic idioms	Force idioms (e.g. *please*, *perhaps*, *if only*)
			Message idioms (e.g. proverbs, interjections)
	Hybrid basic markers	Declarative-based hybrids	(Tag Questions)
		Interrogative-based hybrids	(e.g. *Can you...?/May I...?/Why not?*)
		Imperative-based hybrids	(e.g. *Talk, or I'll shoot*; *Wash, and I'll dry*)
Commentary markers	(e.g. *stupidly*, *frankly*)		
Parallel markers	(vocatives, speaker displeasure markers —e.g. *damned*, *in God's name*—, solidarity markers —e.g. *My friend*—)		
Discourse markers	(e.g. *After all*, *thus*, *moreover*, *incidentally*, *instead*, *however*)		

Adapted from Fraser (1996)

'Pragmatic marker' is taken by Fraser as a cover term,[32] including four subtypes of markers: 'basic markers,' 'commentary markers,' 'parallel markers' and 'discourse markers.' In consequence, whereas Fraser's set of pragmatic markers is broader than those handled by the majority of authors, the group of discourse markers is very reduced. I find the label 'pragmatic marker' useful as a cover term for different items with a pragmatic function, which fall outside the definitions of traditional word categories and which, consequently, may entail difficulties in their classification, as happens with *pray* and *please* (see below).

Degand and Simon-Vanderbergen (2011: 289) propose a scale for pragmatic markers which goes from non-relational (such as *I think*) to relational (such as

---

[32] For Spanish, Martín Zorraquino and Portolés (1999: 4050-4213) refer to *marcadores del discurso* —discourse markers—. Their classification is similar to Fraser's comprehensive view, although the authors choose *marcador del discurso* 'discourse marker' as a general label rather than *marcador pragmático* 'pragmatic marker.'

French *parce que*) depending on their degree of linking function. In this respect, we could place *please* at the non-relational end, since it lacks a linking function. These authors criticise Fraser's "strict classification" (and definition) of discourse markers since it does not cover the differences as regards their position on the relational scale (2011: 290).

The label 'pragmatic marker' has been used deliberately as a cover term in some edited volumes independently of the labels used by the individual contributors (cf. Andersen and Fretheim 2000; Mosegaard Hansen and Rossari 2005; Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen 2006; Norrick 2009). In addition to 'pragmatic marker' and 'discourse marker,' other related labels have been applied to more restricted sets of items. This is the case of 'conversational routines' (Wierzbicka 1991; Aijmer 1996) for items such as *hello, good morning, I'm sorry, thank you* and *please*, 'modal particles' (Aijmer 1997), for *I think*, or 'comment clauses' (Brinton 2008) for sequences such as *I think*, or *you know*.

In what follows I will use the terms 'pragmatic marker' and 'discourse marker' indistinctively, unless when quoting or referring to individual authors, in which case I will give the term they use.

2.3.2 Characteristics of pragmatic markers

In a detailed study of different authors and approaches to 'discourse markers' (in a narrow sense),[33] Schourup (1999) tries to find the common ground in several definitions, and concludes that, of all the characteristics proposed in the literature,

---

[33] In what follows, I will refer to the labels indicated by each author.

only three can be seen as necessary features of these items. These are 'connectivity,' 'optionality' and 'non-truth-conditionality.'

'Connectivity' refers to the linking function of discourse markers, since they are used "to relate utterances or other discourse units" (Schourup 1999: 230). This is by far the most common feature found in definitions, as can be seen in the survey below:

-   [Discourse markers are] sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk [emphasis removed] (Schiffrin 1988: 31).

-   Discourse markers are used to organize and hold the turn and to mark boundaries in the discourse [emphasis removed] (Stenström 1994: 63).

-   [A discourse marker is] an expression which signals the relationship of the basic message to the foregoing discourse (Fraser 1996: 186).

-   [Discourse markers] are words and expressions which are loosely attached to the clause and facilitate the ongoing interaction (Biber *et al.* 1999: 140).

-   [A discourse marker is] a linguistic expression used to create semantic and/or pragmatic cohesion between different parts of the overall discourse (Watts 2003: 273).

Connectivity is therefore a necessary condition of discourse markers. However, it is not a sufficient one. In fact, connectivity is not exclusive of 'discourse markers,' it is also characteristic of other categories like, for instance, conjunctions.[34]

Another essential property of 'discourse markers' is 'optionality' (see Schourup 1999: 231), in Brinton's words, "[t]he absence of any one of the forms studied renders the discourse neither ungrammatical nor unintelligible" (1996: 267). While necessary, this feature is again not exclusive of discourse markers, as other items like certain types of adverbs (e.g. intensifiers) also show it.

'Non-truth-conditionality' is the last basic feature. According to Schourup, "D[iscourse] M[arkers] are generally thought to contribute nothing to the truth-conditions of the proposition expressed by an utterance" (1999: 232). This characteristic is also pointed at in Levinson's intuitive category of 'discourse deictic items,' since "such words have at least a component of meaning that resist truth-conditional treatment" (1983: 87-88). The notion of 'non-truth-conditionality' is related to the pragmatic meaning of discourse markers, which are said to lack propositional meaning. 'Non-truth conditional meaning' is usually identified with 'procedural meaning' —defined as "procedures indicating the manner in which propositional meaning can be derived from an utterance" (Watts 2003: 276), as opposed to 'conceptual meaning.' Discourse markers lack 'conceptual meaning,' that is, they do not refer to concepts. Fraser suggests "that D[iscourse] M[arker]s [should] be considered as a pragmatic class, so defined because they contribute to

---

[34] Some authors have used the label 'connectives' to refer to a general type of markers with linking functions, including not only discourse markers, but also conjunctions, adverbs and "full sentential frames" (Celle and Huart 2007: 2; cf. also Lenker and Meurman-Solin 2007). This could be related to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) function of conjunction.

the interpretation of an utterance rather than to its propositional content" (Fraser 1999: 946). Although 'non-truth-conditionality' is useful in order to identify 'discourse markers' as a pragmatic category, there is no agreement as to whether 'non-truth conditional meaning' and 'procedural meaning' equate in all cases or not (see Blakemore 2002: 79-ff.). However, not all scholars agree that 'non-truth-conditionality' is an essential property of pragmatic markers. Andersen (2001: 40), for instance, argues that several pragmatic markers do in fact possess conceptual meaning, providing *I mean*, *you know* and *I guess* as illustrative examples. He further explains that the fact that these markers keep their conceptual meaning is related to persistence, one of the principles of grammaticalisation established by Hopper (cf. Section 3.2). Similarly, Aijmer considers that pragmaticalised elements like *I think* can be characterised semantically (1997: 3).

Alongside these three criterial properties of discourse markers, Schourup also includes a number of optional characteristics of these items, among them 'initiality,' 'weak clause association,' 'orality' and 'multicategoriality:'

- 'Initiality' (Schourup 1999: 233): these items have a marked tendency to be placed clause-initially, although there are cases in which the discourse marker can be parenthetical.

- 'Weak clause association' (Schourup 1999: 232-233): discourse markers are not usually regarded as part of the syntactic structure of the clause, and, as such, they also tend to be phonologically independent.

- 'Orality' (Schourup 1999: 234): discourse markers most commonly occur in oral discourse, a feature which is said to be related to their informal

character. This characteristic often implies that they are "stylistically stigmatized" (Brinton 1996: 33, 2010: 286).

– 'Multicategoriality' (Schourup 1999: 234): discourse markers may be referred to as a pragmatic category made up of different parts of speech (i.e. adverbs, conjunctions, interjections). When treated diachronically, they are considered to be a derivation from different word classes (e.g. *now*: adverb > discourse marker). This means that multicategoriality applies in two different ways.

In relation with this last feature there is a controversial issue, namely whether pragmatic markers belong to different word classes or whether they constitute a word class of their own. This topic is often avoided in the literature. Fraser (1996) pays attention to the grammatical status of 'pragmatic markers,' and states that they form a pragmatic class which is made up of items borrowed from proper syntactic categories. In his own words, "[p]ragmatic markers are drawn from all segments of the grammar. Verbs, nouns, and adverbs as well as idioms such as *ok* are all pressed into service as pragmatic markers" (Fraser 1996: 170-1). In a similar way, Schiffrin admits that what she labels 'discourse markers' "could be considered as a set of linguistic expressions comprised of members of word classes as varied as conjunctions […], interjections […], adverbs […], and lexicalised phrases" (2001: 57).

Zwicky (1985) does not propose a proper definition for discourse markers, but he acknowledges that they are independent words forming a class "[o]n the grounds of distribution, prosody, and meaning" (1985: 302). Fraser (2006: 194)

mentions five syntactic categories which feed the group of discourse markers, namely coordinate conjunctions, subordinate conjunctions, prepositions, prepositional phrases and adverbs. Aijmer and Simon-Vanderbergen (2011) include the following among pragmatic markers:

> connectives, modal particles, pragmatic uses of modal adverbs, interjections, routines (*how are you*), feedback signals, vocatives, disjuncts (*frankly*, *fortunately*), pragmatic uses of conjunctions (*and*, *but*), approximators (hedges), reformulation markers (2011: 227).

Similar observations are found in descriptions of languages other than English. According to Martín Zorraquino and Portolés (1999), Spanish discourse markers include several traditional word classes: adverbs, adverbial phrases (*locuciones*), and interjections (1999: 4056). Portolés (2007: 50) provides examples of Spanish discourse markers deriving from conjunctions, adverbs and interjections, as well as nominal or verbal vocatives. Landone (2009: 89), in a monograph on Spanish discourse markers, also mentions the provenance of discourse markers from a varied group of grammatical categories, including adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, performative expressions and prepositional phrases.

Brinton admits that pragmatic markers "are difficult to place within a traditional word class" (1996: 35), and explicitly states that they "do not constitute a formal grammatical class," but rather a functional class (2010: 285-286). With similar words, Aijmer (2002) recognises that they are "difficult to analyse grammatically and their literal meaning is 'overridden' by pragmatic functions involving the speaker's

relationship to the hearer, to the utterance or to the whole text" (Aijmer 2002: 2). This complexity may be a consequence of the feature of 'multicategoriality' itself.

An opposite perspective considers discourse markers as an independent class of words. Biber *et al.* (1999) go further in this view. They propose to include the group of 'inserts' as a new, independent class of words, with several characteristics (see Section 2.3.3) similar to a certain extent to those proposed by Schourup (1999) for discourse markers. They offer a classification of inserts on pragmatic grounds, including a wide range of items such as interjections (e.g. *ugh*, *ooh*), response forms (e.g. *uh huh*, *mhm*), response elicitors (e.g. *okay*, *eh*), greeting and farewells (e.g. *hi*, *goodbye*), hesitators (e.g. *mm*, *uh*), attention signals (e.g. *hey*, *hey you*), discourse markers (e.g. *well*, *right*, *now*), expletives (e.g. *golly*, *my God*) and various polite speech-act formulae (e.g. *please*, *thank you*, *you're welcome*, *sorry*, *pardon*) (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1082-1095). It seems particularly interesting that discourse markers are regarded as mere members of this class while the catalogue is open to an eclectic compilation of words and expressions.

Another property often suggested in the literature as criterial for the classification of discourse markers is multifunctionality (cf. Brinton 1996: 35; Andersen 2001: 64; Schiffrin 2001: 58; Aijmer 2002: 19; Müller 2005: 25; Frank-Job 2006: 367-372; Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen 2011: 228-229). Brinton explains that 'pragmatic markers' can operate on different levels (local and global) with textual and interpersonal functions (1996: 36-39, 2010: 286). Östman (1995) adopts a different perspective arguing that 'pragmatic particles' are multifunctional since "they have potential functions on the different parameters" of Coherence, Politeness and Involvement, as every other word (1995: 104). This property may

also be the result of a grammaticalisation process (Aijmer 2002: 5). Frank-Job (2006: 367-372) mentions three different levels of conversation, namely turn-taking (the basic level), macrostructure (such as references to the structure of a conversation) and superstructure (such as the opening or closing of a conversation). Discourse markers would show different functions on each of these levels. Similarly, Landone (2009: 104-107, 113-ff) proposes a three-fold dimension to account for Spanish discourse markers, which distinguishes (i) a nuclear function (usually referred to as the core meaning), (ii) contextual-conversational functions and (iii) operational levels, both textual (information and formulation) and inferential (argumentative). Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen mention some practical ideas to solve the problems of multifunctionality, they suggest to consider pragmatic markers as instances of homonymy, monosemy or polysemy (often related to the result of grammaticalisation processes, see Section 3.2 below), or to regard them as constructions, that is as "pairings of form and meaning" (2011: 228-229). Fraser adopts the polysemous approach, and therefore considers each discourse marker "to have a *core meaning* of a general nature [...], with various meaning nuances triggered as a function of (i) the core meaning [...], (ii) the interpretations of S2 and S1 [= discourse segments in a sequence, encoding a complete message each], and (iii) the context, linguistic and otherwise (2006: 197) [italics original]."

2.3.3 Other categories related to pragmatic markers

Among related categories in the literature, we find Aijmer's (1996) 'conversational routines.' This label was already used by Coulmas in the eighties, to group those

"conventionalized pre-patterned speech units to be analyzed with regard to the communicative functions they are suited to perform" (1981: 10). Aijmer defines them as "phrases which, as a result of recurrence, have become specialized or 'entrenched' for a discourse function which predominates over or replaces the literal referential meaning" (1996: 11). They include different phrases frequently found in spoken language such as "swear words (*bloody hell*), exclamations (*oh dear*), greetings (*good morning*), polite responses (*thank you*, *I'm sorry*), discourse-organizing formulas of different kinds (*frankly speaking*, *to be brief*) and 'small talk' (*what a nice day*)" (1996: 2). Aijmer distinguishes three main groups, namely formulaic speech acts (e.g. thanking, requesting or greeting), 'connectives' or 'conversational gambits' with discourse-organising functions and 'attitudinal routines' expressing speaker's attitudes.

As mentioned in the previous section, *please* falls into Biber *et al.*'s category of inserts, within the group of 'various polite speech-act formulae.' This group includes "inserts or formulae used in conventional speech acts, such as thanking, apologizing, requesting, and congratulating" (1999: 1093).[35] *Please* is regarded as an 'unanalysed formula.' 'Unanalysed formulae' are defined by their pragmatic function, that is, by their role in "polite or respectful language" (1999: 1047). *Please*, and other 'polite speech-act formulae' are included in the group of 'inserts,' the new class of words proposed by Biber *et al.* (1999: 1082-ff.), together with lexical words (typically members of open classes, like nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) and function words (typically members of close systems, such as pronouns, determiners and adverbs). The main feature of inserts is that they "do not form an integral part of a

---

[35] Curiously enough, *please* is also classified as a discourse marker, a class formed by "inserts [...], such as interjections to express an emotional reaction of the speaker, *please* to appeal to the listener, or *well* to express hesitation, or qualified agreement" (Biber *et al.* 1999: 140).

syntactic structure, but are inserted rather freely in the text" (1999: 55-56). This category proves particularly useful to describe features of the spoken language, since it is formed by interjections, greetings and farewells, discourse markers, attention signals, response elicitors, response forms, hesitators, expletives and the above-mentioned group of various polite speech-act formulae (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1082-1095). Thus, the elements included in the category of inserts range from stand-alone words to other elements like unanalysable formulae which may be formed by more than one word like *thank you* or *excuse me* (1999: 1082-1083). Inserts have the following defining features:

1. They may appear on their own, i.e. not as part of a larger grammatical structure.
2. […] they may appear attached (prosodically, or in the transcription, by absence of punctuation) to a larger structure, which may be a clausal unit or a non-clausal unit.
3. They rarely occur *medially* in a syntactic structure. [emphasis in the original]
4. They are morphologically simple.
5. They are not homonyms of words in other word classes.
6. Semantically, they have no denotative meaning: their use is defined rather by their pragmatic function. (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1082)

The above mentioned features are associated with the "more central members" of the group (1999: 1082). *Please*, however, should be regarded as peripheral, since it lacks some of the characteristics of the class of inserts. For example, it does not show the first feature, since it does not frequently appear on its own. It can only be used on its own when it is used to accept an offer politely —as in *would you like*

another one?— *please!*— or to call someone's attention. Moreover, it does not seem constrained as regards position (second feature), since it may freely occur in initial, final, and middle position (e.g. *Please, come here*; *Come here, please* or *Could you please come here?*). Finally, it does not share the fifth feature, since it is a homonym of the verb *to please*.

Another term available in the literature for pragmatic items is 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices,' usually mentioned with the acronym IFIDs. This label was introduced by Searle (1969) to refer to those items useful to identify "what illocutionary act the speaker is performing in the utterance of the sentence." According to Searle, such devices include "word order, stress, intonation contour, punctuation, the mood of the verb, and the so-called performative verbs" (1969: 30). Nowadays, the term is generally used to designate conventionalised strategies in speech acts, mostly referring to performative structures. Thus, examples include not only performatives, but also other formulaic expressions such as *sorry*, *excuse me*, *thanks* and *please*.

In her (2008) monograph, Brinton deals with a special group of pragmatic markers, namely 'comment clauses,' which she defines as "causal pragmatic markers that undergo grammaticalization, and acquire pragmatic and politeness functions and subjective and intersubjective meanings" (2008: i). The label is taken from Quirk *et al.*, who provide a detailed classification of this type of "parenthetical disjuncts" (1985: §15.53). Stenström (1995), who also takes the term from Quirk *et al.* (1985), identifies *I think*, *I mean*, *you know* and *you see* as the most frequent comment clauses in spoken English, while they are absent from a written corpus like the *Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus*. In spite of their apparent grammatical structure, she

appeals to the necessity of a pragmatic interpretation of comment clauses as a discourse category. General features of comment clauses are suggested by Quirk *et al.* (1985: § 15.53-15.56; cf. also Stenström 1995: 291). Biber *et al.* (1999: 197) include comment clauses as a subtype of finite clauses, pointing out that "they are loosely connected to the main clause, they normally lack an explicit link, and they are usually short and can appear in a variety of positions." They include instances such as *you know*, *I suppose*, *mind you* or *it seems*, which are "usually in the present rather than in the past tense, first or second rather that third person, and comment on a thought rather than the delivery of a wording" (1999: 197). They are peripheral elements in the sentence, which usually hold a discourse function, behaving like discourse markers, such as I *mean* and *you know*, but they may also behave as adverbials, expressing stance, as *I guess* (1999: 969, 982-983). Brinton claims that these items hold the necessary conditions to be included within pragmatic markers, namely "the lack of propositional or referential content, the syntactic moveability, and the optionality," together with the "textual and interpersonal (subjective and intersubjective) functions in discourse" (2008: 18). Comment clauses are relevant to the present study, because the courtesy markers *please* and *pray* have been said to originate in the comment clauses *if you please* and *I pray*.

Another term usually associated to expressions such as *pray*, *please* and longer forms like *I pray* or *if you please* is 'parenthetical' (cf. Chapter 5; Jespersen 1909-1949: vol. V 24.2$_3$; *OED*, s.v. *pray* v.; Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 930; Brinton and Traugott 2005a: 137).[36] According to Trask, a parenthetical is a "word, phrase or

---

[36] It seems remarkable the label used by Bloomfield in this sense to refer to clause-internal *please*: "In a form like *Won't you please come?* the *please* is a *close parenthesis*, without pause-pitch" (1984: 186).

sentence which interrupts a sentence and which bears no syntactic relation to that sentence at the point of the interruption," as the phrase set off by commas in *Lisa was, in the opinion of every one of us, the most desirable woman in England* (Trask 1993: 199). These expressions show similar features to the description of comment clauses above. In fact, comment clauses are included as a type of parentheticals (cf. Dehé and Kavalova 2007: 2-3; Kaltenböck 2007, 2008). Kaltenböck distinguishes up to seventeen categories of parentheticals (2007: 29-31), and proposes a distinction between clausal and non-clausal parentheticals. The latter fall into three main categories: interrogative tags, discourse markers[37] and anacolutha. Kaltenböck proposes three formal criteria for the identification of parentheticals, namely (i) syntactic form, excluding non-clausal parentheticals (and therefore restricting the group to the members following the principle of clausal constituency); (ii) lack of syntactic attachment; and (iii) positional flexibility (which only applies to core members of the group) (2007: 33-45). If we apply Kaltenböck's distinctive features, we could say that the courtesy marker *please* in Present-day English would fail to follow the first criterion, while it matches the last two criteria (even the last one, applied only to central members), whereas longer constructions found in Late Modern English like *I pray (you)* would follow all the criteria. Huddleston and Pullum use the term 'parenthetical' in a similar sense, referring to "expressions which can be appended parenthetically to an anchor clause but which also have a non-parenthetical use in which they take a declarative content clause as complement" (2002: 897). They include examples of the types declarative anchor + declarative

---

[37] According to Kaltenböck, there are possible overlaps between clausal parentheticals and discourse markers, as in the case of *you know* or *I mean* (2007: 45-48).

parenthetical (*I think*, *I believe*), declarative anchor/interrogative anchor + interrogative parenthetical (*wouldn't you say?*/*would you say?*) and interrogative parentheticals with echo-question anchors. Biber *et al.* (1999: 137) provide a different interpretation on parentheticals, they find two different types depending on the medium. First, they mention those typical of writing, "to give additional information which is related to, but not part of, the main message of the clause." They include noun phrases, numeral phrases or independent clauses "marked off typographically," although they admit that the label "can potentially be applied very widely to include stance adverbials [...], detached predicatives [...], discourse markers [...], etc." (1999: 137-138). Second, they include parentheticals as a phenomenon typical of the improvisation of spoken language or what they call the 'limited planning ahead' principle. By parenthetical they understand "a digressive structure (often a clause) which is inserted in the middle of another structure, and which is unintegrated in the sense that it could be omitted without affecting the rest of that structure or its meaning" (1999: 1067-1068). Thus, they do not provide examples of conventionalised structures.

A related term used in the literature is that of 'thetical,' as proposed by Kaltenböck *et al.* (2011). These authors identify a slight conceptual difference between thetical and parenthetical, using the former as a hypernym (2011: 856). Theticals "consist of a word, a phrase, a clause, or even a chunk that does not form any syntactic constituent. But they may as well have a more complex structure involving clause combining" (2011: 857). These elements show several defining features: as regards external structure, they are independent from the utterance as regards syntax and prosody, and they usually show mobility; concerning internal

structure, theticals have "non-restrictive" meaning, and "their internal structure is built on principles of S[entence] G[rammar] but can be elliptic" (2011: 857). Kaltenböck *et al.* (2011: 875-876) distinguish a group of 'formulaic theticals,' which generally are very frequently used "short chunks, morphosyntactically unanalyzable, tend to be positionally flexible and to express functions that are mostly procedural, and they relate to the situation of discourse rather than to sentence syntax" (2011: 875). Among formulaic theticals, which would also include many discourse markers, there is a subgroup of formulae of social exchange, such as *Good Morning*, *hello* and *please*.

The study of pragmatic and discourse markers has proved a productive area of research in different branches of pragmatics, especially valuable in second-language acquisition, and also a common topic in historical studies. In the last decades there has been a proliferation of studies on pragmatic markers within the framework of historical pragmatics, both from a synchronic (focused on earlier periods) and a diachronic point of view. Diachronic studies may account not only for the status of pragmatic markers in earlier periods, but they can also provide explanations of present-day status of different markers, since many of them are the result of grammaticalisation and/or related processes (cf. Brinton 1996; Andersen 2001; Aijmer: 2002), an issue that will be tackled in Chapter 3. Pragmatic markers (and discourse markers) have been studied in languages from different families and in different periods, showing the potential universality of the concept that they designate in spite of the difficulties of their definition.

2.3.4 *Please* and *pray* in inventories of pragmatic markers

Catalogues of discourse/pragmatic markers differ in size and in the range of elements included. A curious, early incorporation of *please* to a similar inventory is found in Bloomfield's 1933 work, which lists *please* together with 'secondary interjections,' or phrases "often of peculiar construction, such as *dear me, goodness me, goodness gracious, goodness sakes alive, oh dear, by golly, you angel, please, thank you, good-bye*" (1984: 176). Probably one of the first authors to include *please* under the label 'discourse marker' was Zwicky (1985). His list of 'discourse markers' comprises the following: *well, hey, okay, oh, yes, like, y'know, no, uh, now, say, why, look, listen,* and *please* together with "the traditional class of exclamatory 'interjections'" (1985: 303). However, this is not the usual practice, since *please* is not generally included in most listings (cf. Schiffrin 1988; Brinton 1996). One exception is Stenström's inventory of 'interactional signals' and 'discourse markers' which does include *please* (1994: 59). Stenström's inventory recognises the following as 'the most common lexical items' serving the functions of 'interactional signals' and 'discourse markers:'

actually	*I think*	*right*
ah	*mhm*	*sort of*
all right	*no*	*sure*
anyway	*now*	Q *tag*
God	*oh*	*that's right*
goodness	*OK*	*yes/yeah*
gosh	*please*	*you know*
I mean	*quite*	*you see*
I see	*really*	*well*

<div align="center">(Stenström 1994: 59)</div>

Although *please* is not included by Stenström as a 'discourse signal,' she includes *thank you*, a form also representative of politeness, within the type 'mainly interactional,' which refers to "items that are primarily used as interactional devices but may be used as clause elements in some environments" (1990: 214-215). Aijmer (2002) incorporates Stenström listing as an example of what she regards as 'discourse particles' (2002: 2), and, therefore, includes *please* in her classification.

Despite the abovementioned cases, *please* is not usually included within discourse markers. Moreover, it is sometimes explicitly excluded from the catalogue. Thus, for example Zwicky's list (see above) is criticised by Schourup, since he considers that several items, such as *no*, *uh* or *please* should not be included nowadays in the inventory of discourse markers (Schourup 1999: 235).

Although a fixed set of items is frequently given in the listings, some authors recognise that other members could be admitted in the group of 'discourse markers' (Schiffrin 1988: 327-328). It is not unusual that scholars broaden the list in later works. This is the case of Brinton, who offers a diachronic perspective of what she calls 'pragmatic markers.' In her (1996) monograph she collects several catalogues presented by different authors and brings them together proposing a complete

inventory (Brinton 1996: 32), in which *please* is not included. However, she does list *please* in her more recent works, calling it a 'discourse marker' (Brinton and Traugott 2005a; Brinton 2010), a 'pragmatic marker' (Brinton 2006), and a 'comment clause,' together with *pray/prithee*, taking into account their historical development from a matrix clause in the case of *pray* and an adverbial clause in the case of *please* (Brinton 2008) (see Section 3.2).

Aijmer (1996) includes both indirect requests and "routine forms" such as *thank you* and *sorry* as conversational routines. Even if she only refers to *please* explicitly as a 'politeness marker' or as a request modifier within fixed patterns of indirect requests (conversational routines), the main features of *please* are similar to those of *thank you* or *sorry*, and, as a result, it seems that *please* could also be regarded as a conversational routine.

According to Fraser —and as shown in Figure 6 above—, *please* belongs to 'basic markers' —that is, it serves to "signal the type of message (the illocutionary force) the speaker intends to convey in the utterance of the segment" (2006: 189)—, in particular, it is a 'pragmatic idiom' —an expression "for which there is no plausible inferential path leading from literal, direct meaning to the accepted basic pragmatic signal" (1996: 174)— and specifically a 'force idiom' —it "signal[s] the intended basic message force" (1996: 174). Within this last group, *please* is given as an example, and Fraser comments on its function, since when it "occurs before an imperative structure, it signals that the speaker intends the utterance to be taken as a request, and only as a request", that is *please* carries the "direct basic force of a request" (Fraser 1996: 174).

In the present study *please* and *pray* will be labelled 'pragmatic markers,' understanding this term in its wider sense, following Fraser, but they will not be considered as 'discourse markers,' assuming its more restricted use (i.e. Fraser 1990). The Spanish equivalent to *please*, *por favor*, is classified by several authors as a 'discourse marker.'[38]

Please and *pray* differ from other items commonly included in inventories of discourse markers, both in their characteristics and function; although *please* shows several features of 'discourse markers' among those suggested by Schourup (cf. Section 2.3.1 above), it is not a proper signal of the discourse since its main use is not to mark boundaries, initiate or change topic, but it rather has a specific pragmatic function in requests. In this respect *please* does not show 'connectivity,' the most important feature of 'discourse markers.' Of the other basic features of 'discourse markers,' *please* matches 'optionality,' since its presence is not absolutely necessary for a request to be understood as such. Moreover, its absence does not cause a sentence to be ungrammatical, but just less polite, impolite or infelicitous. As for the controversial characteristic of 'non-truth-conditionality,' given that *please*

---

[38] Thus, Martín Zorraquino and Portolés (1999) group this form within conversational markers and further as an 'alterity focuser.' *Por favor* would reflect the result of a process of grammaticalisation, as is also the case with *please*. The form *por favor* originates in a predicate adverb (a modifier expressing modality or causality) and its use as a pragmatic marker would have spread in the nineteenth century (cf. Faya Cerqueiro and García Salido 2010). Its function is similar to that of *please* in English, covering polite requests, acceptance of an offer, or protest to what has been said; and it also shows similar restrictions in use, such as the inability to introduce promises (Martín Zorraquino and Portolés 1999: 4189-4190). Landone (2009: 238-241) mentions the problem to classify *por favor* as a discourse marker precisely due to the different range of functions it may convey in Spanish, an aspect shared with other politeness formulae (cf. Section 2.3.1 on 'multifunctionality' of discourse markers).

is usually defined in terms of its main pragmatic function (that is, used in requests, and therefore not defined as a form with descriptive meaning), we can say that *please* meets this property. In this respect, what prevails in *please* is not its conceptual meaning but its procedural meaning (cf. Watts 2003: 180-2, who lists *please* as a 'ritualised expression' in the group of 'expressions of procedural meaning,' together with 'discourse markers' and 'formulaic clause structures').

From the optional features of discourse markers mentioned by Schourup, the only one which is not clearly shown by *please* is 'initiality.' Although *please* is very frequent in clause-initial position, it can freely occur in different positions in the sentence (as in *Could you please send this letter tomorrow?*). The courtesy marker *pray*, by contrast, seems to have shown more restrictions in this respect, since it shows a clear tendency to occur in initial position (cf. Section 4.2). 'Weak clause association' and 'orality' obviously apply to *please*, a common form in everyday speech. And finally, although 'multicategoriality' is a feature of the whole class of discourse markers, it is shared by *please* as far as we can demonstrate that it derives from a member of a word class other than 'discourse/pragmatic marker,' —if we may regard it a word class—, i.e. that of verbs.

Please shows multifunctionality (cf. House 1989, see Section 4.2 below), since together with its mitigating use in requests, it can convey other pragmatic functions such as the expression of irony, annoyance or the acceptance of an offer (as in *Would you like a coke? Please*). Similarly, *pray* may convey a different function in a request, since it can also serve to attract the speaker's attention to the following speech act (see Section 4.2).

It seems that *please* and *pray* should be regarded as pragmatic markers, however it is difficult to ascribe them to a word class. Maybe Stubbs (1983) in an early work on discourse analysis comes to the very point of the matter when he recognises *please* as a member of the category of adverbs, but admits that "traditional grammars cannot deal with *please* at all, since by all syntactic tests it is unique" (Stubbs 1983: 71). We will see in Section 5.2 the difficulties of grammarians when it comes to classifying this item, but the different points of view in the literature do not seem to shed much light. As for its word class, we can consider *please* as an adverb if we follow the idea present in Quirk *et al.* (1985: § 7.46). According to them, when a word cannot be included within any other word class, we may say it is an adverb. If we want to include *please* in one of the word categories offered by traditional grammar, this would be the one.

The preceding paragraphs had focused on the pragmatic features of *please*, since they are easier to be applied to a contemporary form. Nevertheless, given that *pray* had a similar pragmatic function and behaviour to that of *please* in earlier English, most of the features mentioned in relation to Present-day English *please* as a discourse or pragmatic marker would also apply to the courtesy marker *pray* in the Late Modern English period.

3. PROCESSES OF CHANGE: ON THE ORIGIN OF PRAGMATIC MARKERS

3.1. Introduction

In order to account for the development of pragmatic markers, we can take a look at a number of processes of language change which have been proposed in the literature. Diachronic linguistics makes use of several theoretical approaches in order to describe a whole range of processes of language change. Many of these processes apply to pragmatic developments and represent a useful tool to account for the evolution of pragmatic markers. I will devote this chapter to the analysis of different processes of change, relevant for the study of courtesy markers in requests, which will provide deeper knowledge on their emergence and development. In what follows I will pay attention to grammaticalisation, lexicalisation, pragmaticalisation, and related phenomena. Some of these processes are interrelated, and therefore I will take into account how they are defined in the literature and how I will consider them. I will focus particularly on those aspects which are linked to the emergence of pragmatic features, and special attention will be paid to those approaches that relate processes of change to the development of pragmatic markers in general, and to the courtesy markers *pray* and *please* in particular. Finally, I will explain the selection of labels that will be applied in the present study.

3.2. Grammaticalisation

As already mentioned in Section 1.2.3, grammaticalisation studies are nowadays a well-established field of research in historical linguistics, with its own theoretical and empirical basis and methodology. Grammaticalisation studies have evolved over the last decades, and, accordingly, definitions of grammaticalisation have changed over time. Thus, there is a long way from the definition proposed by Kuryłowicz (1965: 69), in which only elements pertaining to the traditional grammar were considered, to the inclusion of pragmatics in contemporary definitions (see Section 1.2.3 above). In fact, as mentioned in Section 1.2.2, historical pragmaticians regard grammaticalisation studies as an important part within diachronic pragmatics.

Some authors have suggested a number of defining features of grammaticalisation, which contribute to its identification. Early proposals were made by Christian Lehmann and Paul J. Hopper. Lehmann (1985, 1995) put forward several synchronic parameters together with their corresponding processes in order to identify grammaticalisation. In 1991, Paul Hopper established some principles met by forms in the initial stages of grammaticalisation. These works meant an important step towards the systematisation of recurring patterns in processes of grammaticalisation.

According to Lehmann (1985: 306, 1995: 122), grammaticalisation reduces the autonomy in an element. Autonomy is measured depending on three aspects: weight (distinction from its class members), cohesion (relation to other elements) and variability (mobility regarding other elements). Lehmann formulated a set of six parameters related to these three features, depending on paradigmatic or syntagmatic factors. Parameters are variable properties shown by elements

undergoing grammaticalisation, but since grammaticalisation involves a gradual change, a specific process can be related to each parameter. These are the paradigmatic parameters (1995: 126-143):

- **Integrity** is the semantic and phonological weight of an element, characterising its distinctiveness. The gradual loss of phonological and semantic substance is called **attrition**.

- **Paradigmaticity** involves the cohesion of an element with other elements in a paradigm. The tendency of grammaticalised forms to paradigmatic integration is labelled **paradigmaticisation**.

- **Paradigmatic variability** entails the speaker's possibility of using a sign instead of other signs or even to omit it. The process affecting the restriction of this variability or the obligatoriness of a sign is **obligatorification**.

The following are the corresponding syntagmatic parameters (1995: 143-160):

- **Structural scope** concerns the structural size of the affected construction. The decrease of structural scope, that is, the shortening of the construction is known as **condensation**.

- **Bondedness** refers to the degree of attachment to other elements syntagmatically related to the sign. An increase in bondedness, as in affixation or cliticisation, is called **coalescence**.

- **Syntagmatic variability** regards the mobility of an element with respect to other elements in a construction. Variability is progressively reduced until the grammaticalising element occupies a fixed slot, a process called **fixation**.

Lehmann's processes refer to advanced stages of grammaticalisation. As grammaticalisation progresses, cohesion parameters increase while those related to weight and variability decrease. In order to identify grammaticalisation at its inception, Hopper (1991: 22) proposes five principles:

- **Layering** refers to the emergence of new layers within a functional domain. One of the examples provided by Hopper regards the different strategies used in English to express the functional domain of future time reference (*will*, *be going to*, present continuous, present simple), which represent several layers (1991: 23).[39]

- **Divergence** indicates that whereas a lexical form may become grammaticalised, its original form may remain as a lexical item. An example would be the development of Latin *habere* in some Romance languages, which developed into a future tense suffix (Lat. *cantare habeo* > Sp. *cantar he* > *cantaré*), while it remained as a lexical verb (1991: 25).

- **Specialisation** involves the gradual narrowing of choices of a form undergoing grammaticalisation. This principle took place, for example, in the selection of nouns used to reinforce negation in the history of French, over

---

[39] The term 'layering' can be also found in the literature to refer to polysemy, that is, the coexistence of new and old meanings of the same sign (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 49).

time several supporting elements, such as *pas*, *point* or *mie* could accompany the negative particle *ne*. *Pas* became the preferred element in this function and turned into a negative particle on its own, which finally led to its obligatorification (1991: 26). The final stage of Hopper's specialisation principle would correspond to Lehmann's obligatorification.

– **Persistence**. According to this principle, when a form is grammaticalised it still keeps some traces of its original lexical meaning, which may have an effect on its distribution. For instance, the predictive future with *will* in English still retains the nuance the idea of volition or intention which was the primary meaning of Old English *willan* (1991: 29).

– **De-categorisation** refers to the loss of typical properties of major categories, such as nouns and verbs, and the acquisition of features of secondary categories. Hopper mentions the example of the noun *thanks* in the expression *thanks to*, in which it loses nominal characteristics when it becomes part of a prepositional phrase, no longer taking determiners or modifiers (1991: 30-31).

Since these proposals were made, there has been a lot of debate in the literature regarding the indispensability of several of these conditions to identify the development of a particular form as a case of grammaticalisation. This is particularly relevant for the evolution of pragmatic markers, as will be discussed below.

From Givon's (1979) proposal of a cline initiating at the discourse level, grammaticalisation clines have been shown to operate at different levels and forms of speech. For instance, as we have just seen, Lehmann's parameters work along

scales from weak to strong grammaticalisation and Hopper's principles are supposed to apply only in the earliest stages of the process. Several continua have been proposed in the literature, suggesting a development from major to minor categories, such as shifts from lexical to auxiliary verbs or Givon's famous cline from discourse > syntax > morphology > morphophonemics > zero. Even though developments in grammaticalisation are taken to proceed in the same direction (unidirectionality hypothesis), changes in grammaticalised items "do not have to move all the way along a cline" (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 131). In relation to the clines proposed, there have been some controversial issues in the literature such as whether grammaticalisation is a unidirectional process or some reversal is possible (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 16-17).

Following the line suggested by Givón, pragmatic weakening has been included as one of the features of grammaticalisation, such as in Heine and Reh (1984), who define grammaticalisation as "an evolution whereby linguistic units lose in semantic complexity, pragmatic significance, syntactic freedom, and phonetic substance, respectively" (1984: 15). Nevertheless, nowadays it is generally assumed that grammaticalisation entails also pragmatic gains. Notably, Traugott (2010) refers to these two conceptions of grammaticalisation as pragmatic loss or 'grammaticalisation as reduction' and pragmatic increase or 'grammaticalisation as expansion.' She suggests that the difference between those conceptions lies on the notion of pragmatics either as part of grammar, or "outside of core grammar or at a different, discourse-pragmatic level" (2010: 98).[40]

---

[40] In this respect, it is also important to mention the concept of 'multicategoriality' as applied to pragmatic markers, which has been discussed in Section 2.3.2 above. Thus, the inclusion of

The relevance of pragmatics for grammaticalisation is also reflected in the work of authors such as Diewald (2002) and Heine (2002), who pay attention to the context in which the grammaticalising item occurs and the pragmatic meanings arising from it. For these two authors, ambiguous contexts, which they term 'critical' and 'bridging' contexts respectively, are the trigger of grammaticalisation. Diewald identifies three stages in the diachronic development of grammatical functions. In Stage I we find 'untypical contexts,' in which no option for interpretation is favoured. After that, Stage II corresponds to the 'critical context,' that is "a highly ambiguous structure which through morphosyntactic complexity gives several options for interpretation, among them the newly grammaticalizing meaning" (2002: 109). Finally, Stage III includes 'isolating contexts' "where only one of the competing interpretations is possible, while the other one is excluded, so that both meanings can be perceived as independent of each other" (2002: 114). Heine (2002) uses the labels 'bridging contexts' and 'switch contexts,' which would roughly correspond to Diewald's critical and isolating contexts respectively. Heine identifies bridging contexts with the Gricean idea of implicature, whose main function is to "trigger an inferential mechanism to the effect that, rather than the source meaning, there is another meaning, the target meaning, that offers a more plausible interpretation of the utterance concerned" (Heine 2002: 98); while switch contexts are those in which the original meaning of the construction has disappeaered. He additionally identifies a fourth stage, 'conventionalisation,' which appears through

---

pragmatic markers as a grammatical category enables the consideration of their evolution from other categories as an instance of grammaticalisation. On the contrary, for scholars who exclude pragmatic markers from grammar, the development of pragmatic markers illustrates a different process, namely pragmaticalisation (cf. Section 3.4).

frequency and enables the conventionalised meaning to be used in new contexts. These concepts are relevant to understand the triggering situation that leads to grammaticalisation.

The idea that pragmatics plays an essential role in grammaticalisation has been in the air for some time. As Thompson and Mulac (1991: 325) indicate, "grammaticalization involves not just the reanalysis of lexical material as grammatical material, but also the reanalysis of a discourse pattern as a structural pattern." Traugott and König argue that grammaticalisation brings about "strengthening of the expression of speaker involvement" (1991: 191). These authors assume that "pragmatic meanings are acquired later than non-pragmatic (or propositional) ones" (1991: 192). Traugott (1988, 1989) proposed three semantic-pragmatic tendencies, slightly changed in Traugott and König (1991: 208-209):

- Semantic-pragmatic Tendency I

  Meanings based in the external described situation > meanings based in the internal (evaluative/perceptual/cognitive) situation

- Semantic-pragmatic Tendency II

  Meanings based in the external or internal situation > meanings based in the textual situation

- Semantic-pragmatic Tendency III

  Meanings tend to become increasingly situated in the speaker's belief-state/attitude toward the situation

These tendencies may overlap. According to Traugott and König, Tendencies I and II are metaphorically motivated, whereas Tendency III is metonymically motivated. Metaphor and metonymy are behind many instances of grammaticalisation and they are studied as processes of change by different authors (cf. Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer 1991). Hopper and Traugott (2003) regard metaphoric processes as pragmatic, rather than semantic and they suggest that metaphor takes place in early stages of grammaticalisation. Conceptual metonymy is also involved in language change, and may play an important role in grammaticalisation (2003: 84-88). These two processes of semantic change are linked to the two main mechanisms of morphosyntactic change: metonymy is related to reanalysis, metaphor is linked to analogy (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 93; Traugott and Dasher 2002: 27-29). Whereas Tendency I includes changes from concrete to abstract meanings, Tendency II considers the development of both connective and metalinguistic meanings. In Tendency III, the dominant one, there is an increase in subjectivity (i.e. subjectification), which is linked to metonymy. Subjectification, which refers to an increase in the speaker's perspective or representation, has often been studied within grammaticalisation, although it is not limited to this process (see Section 3.6 below). Therefore, these three tendencies point at the importance of the pragmatic inferencing in the development of semantic change.

Traugott and Dasher (2002: 40, 187, 281) expose several paths of directionality in semantic change (already present in Traugott's previous works) and, in particular, they pay attention to the pathways in the development of discourse markers following the semantic-pragmatic tendencies shown above:

- content > content/procedural > procedural
- scope within proposition > scope over proposition > scope over discourse
- non-subjective > subjective > intersubjective

The development of pragmatic markers has been extensively studied within the framework of grammaticalisation by authors like Elizabeth Traugott, and, especially Laurel Brinton. Traugott (1997: 1) proposes the following cline for the diachronic development of discourse markers:

clause-internal adverbial > sentence adverbial > discourse particle

Traugott suggests that adverbials following this cline move from a clause-internal position where they have narrow scope to other positions increasing their scope. When the sentence adverbial "has the appropriate semantics and pragmatics [it] may acquire new pragmatic functions and polysemies that give it the potential to become a D[iscourse] M[arker]" (1997: 13). Hopper and Traugott (2003) advocate for the inclusion of certain pragmatic features as part of grammar since "discourse markers like clause-initial *in fact* and *indeed* are members of grammatical categories because they are operators on discourses and serve grammatical functions akin to topic and focus" (2003: 37).

Even though pragmatics was already present in grammaticalisation theory, it was not until the publication of Brinton's (1996) monograph that we find complaints about the little attention received by the development of pragmatic markers in the literature on grammaticalisation. Her work on the grammaticalisation

of pragmatic markers started to fill that gap and made an important contribution to both grammaticalisation studies and historical pragmatics. Like Traugott, Brinton proposes to broaden the notion of grammaticalisation in order to include the development of pragmatic markers. She indicates that pragmatic markers do not follow some of the features typically associated to grammaticalisation, such as condensation and paradigmaticisation, which does not apply unless the concept of (grammatical) category is broadened in order to include pragmatic categories. Other phenomena such as phonological attrition or coalescence do not always occur in the development of pragmatic markers, but Brinton argues that other typical examples of grammaticalisation lack these properties and they are still included as valid instances of the process (1996: 273-274, 2010: 302). Nevertheless, she points at typical processes of grammaticalisation undergone by the pragmatic markers which she analyses, such as decategorialisation, change from open to close word classes, freezing or ossification, semantic attrition, shift from propositional to pragmatic or procedural meaning, conventionalisation of invited inferences or conversational implicatures, subjectification, divergence, layering and persistence (Brinton 2005: 291-293, 2007b: 62). Traugott also remarks the presence and the lack of some of these typical processes in the development of the discourse markers *indeed*, *in fact*, *besides*. Thus, she notices decategorialisation, bonding within the phrase, phonological reduction, generalisation of meaning and increase in pragmatic function, but she explicitly rejects syntactic increase in scope and disjunction in the grammaticalisation of these discourse markers (Traugott 1997: 14). Besides, in a later work, Traugott observes the violation of increased bonding in the evolution of *indeed* and *anyway* (2003b: 642). Similarly, Tabor and Traugott consider that adverbs

with discourse marker functions "show all the hallmarks of grammaticalization other than structural scope and variability reduction" (1998: 255). Among critics to the application of grammaticalisation to the development of pragmatic markers, we find those who favour the application of the label 'pragmaticalisation' to the development of pragmatic elements (cf. Section 3.4).

A different opinion is held by Wischer (2000), who proposes two different types of grammaticalisation, namely subtype I and subtype II. Subtype I follows the traditional definition of grammaticalisation, referring to "the transformation of free syntactic units into highly constrained grammatical morphemes, which operate on the level of the proposition" (2000: 356). By contrast, subtype II accounts for development towards pragmatics, since it "operates on the textual or discourse level and concerns the development of textual or discourse markers" (2000: 356).[41] The second subtype is identified with Aijmer's (1997, 2002) concept of pragmaticalisation, which will be explained in due course (Section 3.4). Wischer observes the lack of some parameters in the second subtype, namely paradigmaticisation, obligatorification and coalescence (2000: 356-357).

Brinton (2007a: 47) states that previous work on diachronic aspects of pragmatic markers has focused on the study of forms which have developed from adverbial sources. Brinton (2006, 2007a, 2008) proposes a group of patterns leading to pragmatic markers. She identifies three "prototypical pathways" of development:

---

[41] These concepts are similar to Traugott's (2010) idea of grammaticalisation as reduction (Wisher's subtype I) and as expansion (Wisher's subtype II).

- adverb/preposition > conjunction > pragmatic marker (2008: 27)

This pathway was already proposed by Traugott (1982) describing the evolution of *why*. Other pragmatic markers following a similar development are *so* and *now* in modern English or *hwæt* and *þa* in Old English.

- clause-internal adverb > sentence adverb > pragmatic marker (2008: 31)

A pathway already found in Traugott (1997) to trace the development of *indeed*, *in fact* and *besides*. This path has been followed by many other markers such as *actually*, *anyway*, *only*, *whilom* or *anon*.

- matrix clause > parenthetical disjunct > pragmatic marker (2008: 35)

Although Traugott had already looked at the first two patterns, the third one had not received enough attention in the literature. Brinton (2007a, 2008) elaborated on the origin of "clausal pragmatic markers" since they can develop from different sources. Thus, Brinton (2008, 2010) identifies several subtypes depending on their syntactic development:

  - matrix declarative with first-person subject (2008: 37). As noted by Brinton (2007a), the verb is generally in the present tense. This path is followed by different pragmatic markers such as *I pray you/thee > pray*, *I say > say*, *I mean, I'm afraid* (cf. Mazzon 2012) or *I'm sorry*. Other pragmatic markers, already discussed in the literature, such as *I think* or *methinks*, could also have followed this path.

  - matrix declarative with second- or third-person subject (2008: 41). Some pragmatic markers following this pattern include *you know*, *(as) you see* and *God forbid*.

127

- imperative matrix clause > indeterminate structure > parenthetical discourse marker (2010: 301). Brinton (2001a) exemplifies this type with *look*-forms, such as *look you*. We may find it in other sensory verbs like *see, listen* o*r mind*. Exhortative *let's* seems to have followed the same path (2008: 41). This pattern is also present in other languages (cf. Waltereit 2002 on Italian *guarda*; Pons Bordería 1998 on *oye* and *oiga*; Company Company 2006a on *dale*, 2008 on *ándale*).

- adverbial/relative clause (2008: 43). This group includes, according to Brinton, the pathways of pragmatic markers, such as *if you please > please*, *as I guess > I guess* or *as you know > you know*.

- other types (2008: 46). Brinton includes here the development of nominal relative-type clausal pragmatic markers, such as *what's more* and first-person subject + verb, which is "originally followed by a non-clausal element" such as *I expect*.

Once a form has been grammaticalised, as happens with the pragmatic markers mentioned above, it can develop new pragmatic functions due to the autonomy gained in the grammaticalisation process (cf. Bybee 2003: 618). One such case is *I don't know* in colloquial American English, which, being frequently used in certain contexts, adopts a new discourse function, while its original meaning is still present as an answer to a question. As Traugott indicates, new pragmatic meanings may arise in certain contexts, in fact, grammaticalisation needs what Heine (2002) and Diewald (2002) call 'bridging' and 'critical contexts' to occur (see above), and this happens when "a formerly ambiguous string is used in a new context that strongly

favors or allows only the meaning that was originally pragmatically implied, not the original meaning" (Traugott 2010: 102).

3.3. Lexicalisation

Lexicalisation has been understood in the literature in various ways, denoting different and even opposing concepts (cf. Brinton 2002; Brinton and Traugott 2005a, 2005b). Brinton and Traugott (2005a: 32) proposed a definition in which different approaches can be represented, identifying lexicalisation as "the process by which new items that are considered 'lexical' (in terms of the theory in question) come into being." Brinton (2002: 71-73) offers a good account on the use of this label in the literature, identifying up to nine different interpretations:

1. Adoption into the lexicon.

2. Falling outside the production rules of grammar

3. Ordinary processes of word-formation

4. Grammatical word (category) > lexical word (category)

5. Syntactic construction > lexeme

6. Bound morpheme > lexeme

7. Independent morphemes > monomorphemic form

8. Idiomaticisation

9. Semanticisation

Brinton (2002) opts for the fourth definition above. Brinton and Traugott (2005a) group these nine different interpretations into four different blocks:

1. Word-formation processes (including the following: compounding, derivation, conversion, clipping and ellipsis, blending, back formation, initialism/acronym, loan translation, coinage/root creation, metalinguistic citation)

2. Institutionalisation. It takes place when a form is "accepted by part or all the speech community" (Brinton and Traugott 2005a: 45)

3. Fusion (including developments from syntagm > lexeme, from complex > simple lexeme, demorphologisation and phonogenesis, idiomaticisation and demotivation)

4. Increase in autonomy

Brinton and Traugott (2005a: 104-110 and 2005b: 5-6) observe a number of differences and similarities between grammaticalisation and lexicalisation. Thus, they recognise a set of features which are shared by both processes. For instance, both processes imply an increase in fusion and coalescence; both involve idiomaticisation;[42] both are unidirectional and gradual, and both show metaphorisation and metonymisation. As for the differences, grammaticalisation seems to be more complex, since it entails reanalysis, decategorialisation, bleaching and subjectification, and brings about an increase in productivity; it also involves a

---

[42] For definitions of this term see Section 3.5 below.

shift towards paradigmatisation or obligatorification; it is frequency-related and its changes occur in different languages and periods.

These authors offer the following definition of lexicalisation:

> Lexicalization is the change whereby in certain linguistic contexts speakers use a syntactic construction or word formation as a new contentful form with formal and semantic properties that are not completely derivable or predictable from the constituents of the construction or the word formation pattern. Over time there may be further loss of internal constituency and the item may become more lexical. (2005a: 96)

Taking into account the summary of definitions in Brinton (2002) and Brinton and Traugott (2005a), we do not generally find references in the literature relating lexicalisation to the development of pragmatic features. There are some exceptions though, one of them is Wischer (2000). According to her, *methinks* has undergone both lexicalisation and grammaticalisation. As opposed to *I think*, which has only been grammaticalised, according to Wischer, *methinks* is first lexicalised (syntactic lexicalisation) and then, grammaticalised following Wischer's subtype II, which affects the development of textual or discourse markers (see Section 3.2). The development of pragmatic markers has been accounted for as lexicalisation by several authors, for example Aijmer (1996) in connection with *thank you* and *sorry*, and Krug (1998), who suggests the development of *innit* from *is it not?* is an example of lexicalisation (cf. Brinton 2005: 281 or Brinton and Traugott 2005a: 67).

3.4.   Pragmaticalisation

Another process of change mentioned in the literature on pragmatic markers is pragmaticalisation. The term was coined by Erman and Kotsinas (1993), who applied it to the development of Swedish *bara* ('only, exclusively, no more than') and English *you know*. While for these authors grammaticalisation is defined as the "creation of grammatical forms, functioning mainly sentence internally," when the creation of "discourse markers mainly serving as text-structuring devices at different levels of discourse" is involved, the process is named 'pragmaticalisation' (Erman and Kotsinas 1993: 79). Thus, pragmaticalisation is defined as the "development of words and phrases from lexical items to pragmatic markers" (1993: 76). The difference between grammaticalisation and pragmaticalisation lies in the resulting product, whether this is "at the referential or the conversational level" (1993: 80). Aijmer (1997) makes an important contribution for the development of the concept of pragmaticalisation. Following Erman and Kotsinas, she undertakes an analysis of the English modal particle *I think* in which she proposes theoretical basis for the distinctiveness of pragmaticalisation. Both Erman and Kotsinas (1993) and Aijmer (1997) justify the distinction between pragmaticalisation and grammaticalisation on account of the vagueness of the latter concept. Thus, for instance, Aijmer states that "[g]rammaticalization is a broad and fuzzy concept which enables us to describe any kind of syntactic or semantic/pragmatic change or variation" (1997: 6). She argues that grammaticalisation is "concerned with the derivation of grammatical forms and constructions (mood, aspect, tense, etc.) from words and lexicalized structures" (1997: 2), such as the development of modal auxiliaries from lexical verbs. By contrast, the acquisition of pragmatics by a lexical item, as in the development

towards a discourse marker, should be regarded as an example of pragmaticalisation. In Aijmer's view, pragmaticalisation is a complement to grammaticalisation. She proposes two different paths of development for the two processes:

- Lexical form > Grammatical construction > 'Grammaticalisation'
- Lexical form > Pragmatic expression > 'Pragmaticalisation'

Thus, a lexical form may acquire pragmatic meanings in a similar process as when it is grammaticalised. Like Aijmer, Erman and Kotsinas (1993: 79) defend the view that a lexical item can develop directly into a pragmatic item without undergoing grammaticalisation. Aijmer (2002: 23) explains that "pragmatic functions are derived from a propositional meaning via certain paths and on the basis of pragmatic principles." However, in her view, pragmaticalisation affects not only pragmatics but also syntax, semantics and prosody (Aijmer 1997: 2). In fact, pragmaticalisation shares some features with grammaticalisation. Aijmer (1997: 6) discusses "four processes which are typically involved in both grammaticalization and pragmaticalization: specialization, layering, divergence and renewal." Specialisation regards the narrowing of lexical choice due to an increase in the frequency of some forms or structures. Layering indicates that new forms or strategies surface to serve a function, but old ones do not disappear. According to divergence, the original lexical form stays as an autonomous lexical item. Renewal refers to the creation of new forms, synonymous with the grammaticalised or pragmaticalised form.

Aijmer (2002: 19) also mentions the principle of persistence, in her view, "there is a transparent relationship between form and function in the history of

discourse particles." As can be seen, the characteristics mentioned in Aijmer (1997, 2002) reflect Hopper's (1991) principles of grammaticalisation (cf. Section 3.2) almost exactly. She detects the above processes in the development of *I think* into a pragmatic marker, proposing the following cline of pragmaticalisation: *I think that-*clause > *I think* (initial) > *I think* (final). This happens in a sequence like the following: *I think that Bill is at home > I think Bill is at home > Bill is at home, I think*. In an initial stage the verb is not part of the message, it rather points at "the speaker's attitude to the utterance." Thompson and Mulac (1991: 324-325) confirm the same principles (and a similar cline) in the development of the parenthetical *I think*, arguing instead in favour of grammaticalisation. There is evidence in the literature for *that* deletion (cf. Thompson and Mulac 1991: 320), thus, *I think* becomes a weakened form of the verb losing its status as a main clause and subsequently turns into a "mobile discourse marker" (Aijmer 1997: 7-9). Aijmer remarks that polysemy is desirable for pragmaticalisation to the same extent Hopper and Traugott (2003) propose it as desirable for grammaticalisation. Thus, she finds two main functions of the expression: *I think*, as in *Bill is at home, I think*, is expressive and indicates speaker's emotions whereas *I think that*, as in *I think that Bill is at home*, is more likely to express an objective and informative statement about the speaker's beliefs. Taking into account both synchronic and diachronic aspects, Aijmer suggests different transitions in the pragmaticalisation cline of *I think*. (1997: 11-14). As is the case with grammaticalisation, pragmaticalisation is also a gradable concept, and similarly changes can stop at any stage of the cline. Other discourse markers that have been pragmaticalised according to Aijmer are *you know* and *I see*, since they also "involve the speaker's attitude to the hearer" (1997: 2). In her conclusions, Aijmer

points out that "cross-linguistic data can throw light on the processes of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization" (1997: 39).

Another definition of pragmaticalisation is proposed by Raumolin-Brunberg's (1996: 167), who identifies within this process "linguistic developments leading to the creation of new conventionalized pragmatic elements in language." For this author the only difference between 'pragmatization'[43] and grammaticalisation lies in the fact that the former "does not involve any change in the grammatical character of the element." She exemplifies this process of change through a set of forms of address functioning as opening formulae in letters, such as *dear sir* or *my honoured Lady*. Raumolin-Brunberg argues that while they have become pragmatic elements, they still preserve their status as noun phrases. Contrary to Aijmer, Raumolin-Brunberg insists on the difference between the two concepts.[44]

Another author who uses the term pragmaticalisation is Watts (2003), who regards as such the evolution of items like *you know* or *goodbye*. His definition of the term, however, differs slightly from the one proposed by Erman and Kotsinas or Aijmer. Watts understands pragmaticalisation in the following terms:

> the process by which the propositional content of linguistic expressions
> is bleached to such an extent that they no longer contribute to the truth
> value of a proposition but begin to function as markers indicating
> procedural meaning in verbal interaction. (Watts 2003: 276)

---

[43] Raumolin-Brunberg (1996) uses this label, rather than pragmaticalisation.

[44] Raumolin-Brunberg acknowledges Aijmer for the usefulness of the term, even though she uses it in a slightly different sense.

Expressions which, according to Watts, have undergone pragmaticalisation are labelled "expressions of procedural meaning" (2003: 180). They include non-linguistic utterances, discourse markers and ritualised expressions like *please* (2003: 182). In Watts' opinion (2003: 187) the development of *please* from *if it please you* is a clear case of pragmaticalisation, and he goes on to suggest that the process is not yet completed (2003: 187).

The term pragmaticalisation is also used by Frank-Job (2006: 361), who defines it as "the process by which a syntagma or word form, in a given context, changes its propositional meaning in favor of an essentially metacommunicative, discourse interactional meaning." She identifies some formal features in the successful pragmaticalisation of discourse markers, namely (i) high frequency of the items, which often brings about (ii) phonetic reduction; (iii) syntactic isolation of the pragmaticalised forms; (iv) co-occurrence of the pragmaticalised form and its non-pragmaticalised source in contiguity; and finally, (v) in a deletion test the absence of discourse markers does not alter the content of the sentence (2006: 364-367). Some of these features are defining in the pragmaticalisation process of discourse markers, in the restricted sense (cf. Fraser 1999), and may not be valid for the development of other pragmatic items.

Frank-Job's (2006) concept of pragmaticalisation is taken as a basis by Claridge and Arnovick (2010). They define pragmaticalisation as:

the process by which a lexico-grammatical sequence or word form, in a given context, loses its propositional meaning in favour of an essentially metacommunicative, discourse interactional meaning and/or (an already

pragmatic element) continues to develop further pragmatic functions or forms. (Claridge and Arnovick 2010: 187)

These authors understand pragmatics in a broad sense, comprising "patterns of interaction in specific social situations and within particular cultural systems" (2010: 166). Therefore, they explore the different developmental paths of an ample range of pragmatic items —not only discourse markers—, including the politeness marker *pray (you)/prithee*, the discourse marker *well*, the swearing and interjections *Jesus!* and *gee!*, the hedge *as it were*, and the conversational formulae *goodbye* and *bless you*.[45] Among the group of polite expressions they distinguish Present-day English *please*, *thanks* and *sorry*, which "serve to smooth interaction and are mostly evolved from propositional material" (2010: 167-168). As regards the pragmatic marker *pray*, Claridge and Arnovick base their analysis on Akimoto's (2000) study of this courtesy marker. While following the features identified by Akimoto in the development of *pray*, unlike Akimoto, they do not regard it as a case of grammaticalisation but rather as a typical example of pragmaticalisation (2010: 170-171).

On the basis of the analysis of a number of pragmatic markers, Claridge and Arnovick list the characteristics of pragmaticalisation (2010: 179-182). They identify a general tendency from propositional to textual/discourse oriented or interpersonal meanings, semantic bleaching, pragmatic strengthening, persistence of original meanings, subjectification and intersubjectification, syntactic (and semantic) changes, decategorialisation, homonymy or divergence, and acquisition of optionality.

---

[45] Claridge and Arnovick (2010: 167) also mention "pragmatic/discourse markers, hedges, interjections, swearing expressions, politeness markers and conversational/textual routines."

Following mainly Erman and Kotsinas (1993) and Aijmer (1997), some scholars have adopted the label pragmaticalisation to refer to the development of pragmatic features. Thus, Jucker (2002) refers to the developments of discourse markers such as *marry* (> *by the Virgin Mary*), *o/oh*, *pray/prithee* (> *I pray you/thee*), *well* and *why* as cases of pragmaticalisation, in which subjectification (see Section 3.6 below) is also present. Günthner and Mutz (2004) find this label useful in order to account for the emergence of discourse-pragmatic functions of certain conjunctions and adverbs in German (*obwohl* 'although' and *wobei* 'whereby'), and of modifying suffixes in Italian (*-ino*, *-etto*, *-uccio*, etc.). They adopt this label given that, in their view, the traditional concept of grammaticalisation is not broad enough to cover the development of pragmatic markers. Dostie (2004) applies the term pragmaticalisation to the evolution of different verb forms into discourse markers, and especially to a group of French discourse markers arising from an imperative source, such as *écoute*, *regarde*, *voyons*, *tiens* or *disons*. She recognises pragmaticalisation when "une unité migre vers la zone pragmatique" (2004: 29). Watts' (2003) concept of pragmaticalisation is also applied in the literature. In fact, Blas Arroyo (2011) analyses the development of Spanish multifunctional pragmatic marker *muy bien* following Watts' definition.

In addition to pragmaticalisation, a related process has been identified by Arnovick (1999: 116-117), who proposes the notion of 'discursisation' and argues that this process is relevant in the development of *goodbye* from *God be with you* and in the development of promises. In both cases a new discourse function emerges from an illocutionary function. Since in these two examples the source forms already had a pragmatic function, they would not match Aijmer's (1999: 117) definition of

pragmaticalisation. Claridge and Arnovick (2010: 183-185) point at the necessity of this label to distinguish a new pragmaticalisation in items that have already undergone a previous pragmaticalisation, and include also *bless you* as an example of this development. Discursisation refers to the "illocutionary 'smoothing' and subsequent highlighting of discourse function" undergone, for instance, by *goodbye*. Arnovick recognises that this closing formula has undergone subjectification, pragmatic strengthening and an increase in politeness. She uses also others labels to refer to the same phenomenon, such as "grammaticalization of pragmatics" after Faarlund (1985: 386), "grammaticalization of pragmatics within discourse" (Arnovick 1999: 140) and "pragmatic grammaticalization" (1999: 141). Arnovick (1999: 140-143) observes different mechanisms that "yield pragmatic strengthenings," such as subjectification, the above mentioned discursisation, secularisation —the disappearance of religious meaning, clear in swearing vocabulary or in the case of *goodbye*— and de-institutionalisation.[46] Claridge and Arnovick (2010) give particular importance to processed-institutionalisation in discursisation.

In spite of these proposals, many authors do not see the need to distinguish between grammaticalisation and pragmaticalisation and argue that the former should be regarded instead as a subtype of the latter and not as a distinct process (Brinton 2007b: 64, 2010: 305; Diewald 2011: 384). In fact, Traugott (1995: 4-5) explains that the concept of pragmaticalisation would "presuppose a theory of grammar that does not include pragmatics," contrary to what different scholars defend in their theory

---

[46] Institutional contexts affect pragmatic developments present in polite formulae as in *bless you* used when someone sneezes, once the institutional blessing is no longer necessary, the formula is devoid of the original meaning.

of grammaticalisation (see Section 3.2 above). Furthermore, Traugott (2007: 150-152) argues that pragmaticalisation "is unnecessary as a separate type of change" since following Aijmer's concept "some degree of pragmaticalization will be found in any change involving function as well as form, including the development of standard examples of grammaticalization."

Over the last few years there has been an increasing amount of research on the grammaticalisation of pragmatic items. Given that the process is similar to the evolution of grammatical items, the label grammaticalisation was used and still preferred. Therefore the scope of grammar is broadened in order to comprise pragmatic items which had never been included in traditional grammar. Diewald (2010) criticises the lack of proper definitions of grammar in works on grammaticalisation, something that could avoid the fuzziness between pragmaticalisation and grammaticalisation (cf. Section 3.2).[47] Diewald (2011) clarifies that pragmaticalisation is a dispensable term and, if used, it should not be considered in the same hierarchical status as grammaticalisation, but rather as a subtype of the latter. She proposes that "the pragmatic functions of discourse markers/particles are genuine grammatical functions which are indispensable for the organization and structuring of spoken dialogic discourse" (Diewald 2006: 405; see also 2011: 383-385).

Claridge and Arnovick (2010) criticise Traugott's (2003b) broad concept of grammar, and accordingly reject the idea present in Brinton (1996, 2001a, 2005, 2006, 2007a, 2007b), Traugott (1997, 2003b) and Diewald (2010, 2011), which

---

[47] Rather than avoiding a proper definition of the concept of grammar in these works, the reason for not including it may be simply related to the readership of specialised linguistic research, who are familiar with traditional grammar, its terminology and components.

includes pragmatic markers within grammar, and, consequently, regards their final outcome as the result of grammaticalisation. Claridge and Arnovick admit that grammaticalisation and pragmaticalisation share some features, although some characteristics of grammaticalisation are not identified in the development of many pragmatic markers, namely obligatoriness, paradigmaticisation, scope condensation and fixed syntactic positions. Furthermore, what is more relevant for them, "some of the processes seem to be actually better suited to pragmaticalisation than to grammaticalisation," namely (inter)subjectification and pragmatic strengthening (2010: 185-186). Waltereit (2006) also maintains that grammaticalisation does not account for the development of pragmatic elements. In fact, in his study of a number of Italian discourse markers, such as *diciamo*, Waltereit only identifies one of Lehmann's processes, namely attrition.

Whereas some authors use grammaticalisation and pragmaticalisation interchangeably (cf. Kaltenböck 2008), a more general view of the term is found in Beeching (2006), who recognises pragmaticalisation in "all cases of language change," along with other formal changes of grammaticalisation. She describes pragmaticalisation as "the manner in which words, used in context, shift in meaning or attract a new semiotic, become habituated in that usage and are propagated because of the new fashion or prestige which is attached to them" (Beeching 2006: 54). Beeching (2010) defends the independence of pragmaticalisation from grammaticalisation in a study on the different degrees of pragmaticalisation reached by the same markers in Canadian French and the French spoken in France:

pragmaticalisation — the recruitment of (referential) M1 [= the original meaning] for conversational and interactional purposes — and the pragmatic ambiguity, lexical polysemy and semantic change allied to that shift (to M2 [= the new coded meaning of a lexeme]) — is independent of grammaticalisation in its strictest sense (Beeching 2010: 144).

3.5. Idiomaticisation

In addition to the above-mentioned processes of change, there is one more process which may be relevant to the development of pragmatic markers. Brinton (2005, 2007b) discusses idiomaticisation, which she describes as "the loss of semantic compositionality, a process of semantic change from literal to figurative or metaphorical meaning" (2005: 281). The main features of idiomaticised expressions include lexical and syntactic fixing and semantic bleaching (Brinton 2007b: 67). Akimoto describes idiomaticisation as "the process of finding the pattern and assigning a new meaning which cannot be deduced from its constituents" (1995: 588; Brinton and Akimoto 1999: 13). Brinton and Traugott (2005a: 54-57) point at the difficulties present in the identification of an "idiom," and lists among its main features "semantic opacicity," "grammatical deficiency" and "lack of substitutability." In their catalogue of idioms, Brinton and Akimoto (1999: 1) mention verbs followed by noun phrases (e.g. *give an answer*), verbs followed by a particle (e.g. *drink up*), complex prepositions, adverbs, adjectival, adverbial or prepositional phrases. In the latter they list *thanks to*, a politeness expression which has undergone both idiomatisation and grammaticalisation (1999: 18).

Some scholars identify idiomaticisation with lexicalisation (Chafe 1998: 113; Wischer 2000; Lehmann 2002: 404), in fact, as we have seen above, idiomaticisation

is the eighth interpretation of lexicalisation found by Brinton (2002) in the literature. Others argue they are different processes and they do not always take place together (Aijmer 1996: 10-11). Brinton and Traugott (2005a) regard idiomaticisation as a process present in many cases of both grammaticalisation and lexicalisation. Thus, idiomaticisation is present in grammaticalised or lexicalised expressions which have lost lexical variability like idioms. This would be the case of most pragmatic markers. Brinton classifies the pragmatic marker *I mean* as an idiomaticised expression (2007b: 67). As happens with other processes of change, idiomaticisation is also seen as a gradable concept, in fact for Brinton the pragmatic marker *I say* would only be partially idiomaticised (2005: 294).

Another author who makes use of the term idiomatisation is Chafe, who relates it to lexicalisation. He defines it as "a process of lexicalization whereby a certain collocation of ideas coalesces into a single idea" (Chafe 1998: 113). According to Chafe, grammaticalisation differs from idiomaticisation since it involves bleaching and whereas the former creates a new orientation, the latter creates a new idea (2002: 404-407).

Aijmer identifies idiomaticisation when "the meaning of the phrase cannot be derived compositionally from the meanings of its constituents" (1996: 144). She remarks that conventional indirect requests including *please* are examples of idiomaticisation, especially those which "create problems if they are analysed in grammar," as in *Can you please pass the salt?* (1996: 144).

3.6. Subjectification and intersubjectification

Other processes of change usually mentioned in the literature in relation to the development of pragmatic markers, are subjectification and intersubjectification. Benveniste defined subjectivity as "the capacity of the speaker to posit himself as 'subject'" (1971: 224) or as "the attitude of the speaker with respect to the statement he is making" (1971: 229). Furthermore, intersubjectivity is the necessary element in communication exchange between speaker and addressee (Benveniste 1971: 230).[48]

Subjectivity and subjectification have been studied in different languages, especially in connection with three areas, namely perspective, expression of affect and modality (Finegan 1995: 4-5). Subjectivity can be exploited in different ways, typically including deixis, modality or marking of discourse strategies (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 22), but it can also be present through morphology, intonation or word order (Finegan 1995: 3). Thus, subjectivity has been a topic of research in different fields, such as conversational analysis, scientific or literary discourses, but most interestingly for the present study, it has been studied in relation to processes of grammaticalisation, lexicalisation, and more recently pragmaticalisation.

Finegan (1995: 1) links 'subjectivity' to "the expression of the self and the representation of a speaker's (or, more generally, a locutionary agent's) perspective or point of view in discourse," whereas 'subjectification' "refers to the structures and strategies that languages evolve in the linguistic realisation of subjectivity or to the relevant processes of linguistic evolution themselves." Thus, subjectification is a diachronic process, which implies an increase of elements involving speaker attitude.

---

[48] Earlier approaches to these concepts are detailed by Traugott and Dasher (2002) and López-Couso (2010).

We can find two main different conceptions of subjectivity in the literature, mainly represented by Ronald W. Langacker and Elizabeth Traugott, the former with a synchronic approach and the latter with a diachronic perspective (cf. Finegan 1995: 3; López-Couso 2010). Although both authors see subjectification as a gradable concept and linked somehow to grammaticalisation, they admit the other's usage being different from their own (cf. Traugott 1995: 32; Langacker 2006: 17-18). On the one hand, Langacker (1990: 17) understands subjectification in a narrow sense as an increase in subjectivity, which he defines as "the realignment of some relationship from the objective axis to the subjective axis." He admits that subjectification is a crucial element in some instances of grammaticalisation, such as spatial motion becoming subjective motion, the future sense of *go*, the development of English modals or the grammaticalisation of possessive verbs as markers of aspect. On the other hand, Traugott (1995: 31) regards subjectification as "a pragmatic-semantic process whereby 'meanings become increasingly based in the speaker's subjective belief state/attitude toward the proposition.'" Traugott's perspective attaches great importance to the interaction between speaker and hearer, as a necessary context for this type of linguistic change. Although sometimes Langacker's and Traugott's views may overlap, in other cases what is subjective for Traugott may be both subjective and objective for Langacker (cf. López-Couso 2010: 145-147). In this respect, De Smet and Verstraete (2006) explore these two different frameworks, observing Langacker's cline going from explicit to implicit speaker-reference —the latter being subjective—, whereas Traugott's goes from non-speaker-related to speaker-related —the latter being subjective—. According to De Smet and Verstraete (2006), Traugott's perspective follows the classic view of

subjectification, found in Benveniste. In fact, most of the work on grammaticalisation follows her model. De Smet and Verstraete (2006: 365) recognise that subjectivity takes place when "a particular element or construction requires reference to the speaker in its interpretation." They observe the necessity of a distinction into three types of subjectivity. Thus, "pragmatic subjectivity is a matter of the speaker's use of a linguistic sign," and "semantic subjectivity is a matter of its meaning, further subdivided into ideational and interpersonal aspects of meaning, each with its own formal reflections" (2006: 387).

Hopper and Traugott (2003: 92) discuss some examples of increased subjectivity, such as the developments of *be going to* and epistemic modals, within metonymic processes. Traugott and Dasher (2002: 29) consider that conceptual metonymy should account for both subjectification and intersubjectification. They admit that subjectification can be regarded as a type of metonymy, also important in grammaticalisation. Traugott and Dasher argue that subjectification takes place in communication as the result of speaker and addressee's interactions, since the speaker needs to be informative and the addressee needs to make inferences. They define subjectification in relation to metonymy as "the metonymically based process by which [speakers/writers] recruit meanings that function to convey information to do the work of communication: to express and to regulate beliefs, attitudes, etc." (2002: 31). For Traugott and Dasher, subjectification is essential in language since it is "the most pervasive type of semantic change identified to date" (2002: 30).

Brinton and Traugott (2005a) consider subjectification as a characteristic feature of grammaticalisation (although it can be found outside grammaticalisation as well), but in their view it is not typical of lexicalisation, since this process involves

"concrete, referential meanings" (2005a: 29 and 108-109). Traugott focuses on the diachronic aspects of subjectification and relates this process to grammaticalisation (1989, 1995, 1996). Traugott (1995) explores the development of structures undergoing grammaticalisation in which subjectification is also involved. Several of them are particularly relevant for the present study because they involve discourse markers which lost verbal properties, such as *let us*, *let alone* and *I think*. *I think* developed a discourse particle function out of a clause and Traugott foresees the eventual possibility of leaving out the subject pronoun —just as in *if you please* > *please*— since the subject loses referential properties and becomes the starting-point of a perspective. Traugott's examples of subjectification involve a shift from "subject of the clause" to "subject of the utterance" although not always involving a change in syntactic change, they do involve "alignment to speaker's perspective" (1995: 38-39).

Subjectification takes place in the earlier stages of grammaticalisation, in fact, as we have seen above (Section 3.2), Traugott identifies subjectification as the main development in the semantic-pragmatic tendency III, "meanings tend to become increasingly situated in the speaker's belief-state/attitude toward the situation" (Traugott and König 1991: 209). She argues that subjectification may be "characteristic of all domains of grammaticalisation." Traugott claims that meaning change is unidirectional and subjectification as a major factor in those developments is also regarded as unidirectional, especially in the early stages (Traugott 1995: 45-49). Subjectification and grammaticalisation are, nevertheless, independent processes. A different view is put forward by Company Company, who proposes

that subjectification can be considered as a subtype of grammaticalisation, "often achieving the status of lexicalization" (2006b: 101).

Unidirectionality, a typical feature in grammaticalisation, also applies to the increase in subjectivity. The following cline is proposed to describe the development of different features involving semantic change, such as discourse markers (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 187, Traugott 2003a: 134):

non-subjective > subjective > intersubjective

Intersubjectivity is presented as the speaker's attention to the addressee, and this depends on the speaker's perspective (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 22). Therefore, Traugott claims that this change is an example of unidirectionality, since intersubjectification, which is an extension of subjectification and not a separate mechanism (2003a: 134), "arises out and depends crucially on subjectification" and cannot occur otherwise (2003a: 124). Subjectification and intersubjectification are part of most grammaticalisation processes and both are suggested as universal phenomena.

A clear example of intersubjectivity is found in the selection of personal pronouns in different languages, one such case is the English inclusive *we* used by caretakers to show empathy (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 91). Fitzmaurice (2004) refers to 'intersubjectivity' as "the speaker's projection of subjectivity to the addressee." In a more elaborated fashion she explains:

> In pragmatic terms, intersubjectivity has to do with the representation of speaker stance as addressee stance, and thus involves the transformation of propositional meaning from new information to presuppositional meaning. (Fitzmaurice 2004: 429)

Fitzmaurice (2004: 432-433, 445) goes one step further proposing a new element in the development of the subjectivity cline:

subjective > intersubjective > interactive

This cline accounts for the development of complement clauses into discourse markers or comment clauses. One such example is the subjective expression *I see*, which has an intersubjective counterpart *you see* leading to a discourse marker *you see* or *see* with interactive function. Previously acquired functions are not lost, in fact Fitzmaurice notices "these expressions accumulate functions, with the subjective being a precondition for the development of the intersubjective and interactive functions" (2004: 445). She finds that interactive functions in markers such as *you know*, *you see* and *you say* have developed quite recently in the history of English, appearing together with subjective and intersubjective functions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (2004: 428).

Different authors have claimed that subjectification takes place in the development of pragmatic markers. For instance, Traugott and Dasher (2002) identify both subjectification and intersubjectification in the development of *let's*, in which intersubjectivity is present from the beginning. Further examples are *actually*, *in fact* and *well*, which show it in later stages. Fitzmaurice (2004) analyses the

development of the stance markers *you know*, *you see* and *you say* into discourse markers from this perspective. Brinton (2007b) mentions a set of functions developed by *I mean*, among which we find a subjective one showing speaker attitude and an intersubjective one with interpersonal meaning. Fischer (2007: Chapter 6) focuses on different pragmatic elements undergoing subjectification, such as sentence adverbs or parentheticals. Arnovick (1999) identifies subjectification in pragmatic markers with politeness functions such as *bless you* and *goodbye* and in the development of English common curse. As mentioned above (cf. Section 3.4), Claridge and Arnovick (2010) defend subjectification as a process which is more suitable for pragmaticalisation than for grammaticalisation, and therefore more typical in the development of pragmatic features. For other languages, Company Company (2006b) observes this process in the development of Spanish pragmatic valorative markers *dale!*, *dizque*, *tate!*, *ándale!*, *sepa!*, all of them originated in verbs with general meanings. This semantic feature would have facilitated the acquisition of subjective meanings. Company Company (2004: 44) justifies the changes from non-subjective to subjective in the deictic features of the verbal category, which the speaker may modify and enrich depending on the context.

Although in most of the literature both grammaticalisation and subjectification seem to follow similar paths, some differences are observed in their unidirectionality clines. Company Company (2006b: 101) proposes in subjectification a "diachronic path, from syntax to discourse," which affects the acquisition of "discourse and metadiscourse functions" rather than a grammatical function. This means an increase in syntactic scope, as opposed to

grammaticalisation, which illustrates a restriction in scope. She also notices the lack of both obligatorification and generalisation in subjectivised forms (2006b: 100-101). Similarly Fischer (2007) notices that whereas grammaticalisation brings about reduction in scope, subjectification entails an increase in scope, one of Lehmann's syntagmatic parameters. She observes this phenomenon in the development of different elements in the discourse-pragmatic cline, such as epistemic modals or sentence adverbs and pragmatic markers (2007: 274-312).[49] Taking into account Traugott's (1997: 1) cline from clause-internal adverbial > sentence adverbial > discourse particle, Fischer (2007: 280-2, 296-297) insists on the difference between sentence adverbials and pragmatic markers, which, in her view, does not lie on scope but rather on position and on the syntax and semantics of the source concept. In addition to sentence adverbs, Fischer distinguishes a non-adverbial type of pragmatic marker in parentheticals like *I think* or *you know*. She shows that in their developments from adjuncts there is change in scope only when the sentence adverbial increases its scope over the following speech-act and, eventually, it starts to be used as pragmatic marker (2007: 290-291). In Fischer's view, parentheticals like English *I think* are instances of subjectification, but not of grammaticalisation, since, according to her, they are 'formulaic tokens' and therefore follow lexicalisation (2007: 311). She rejects the idea of the parenthetical developing out of a complex clause, since, for her, both developments are independent. She considers a sentence adverb like *instead* is better analysed as "a case of lexicalization involving

---

[49] Both Company Company (2006b) and Fischer understand grammaticalisation as reduction, as opposed to Traugott's view of grammaticalisation as expansion (cf. Section 3.2).

semantic specialization or narrowing than a case of grammaticalization involving pragmatic inferencing followed by bleaching" (2007: 279).

More specifically related to the topic of this study, the developments of *pray* and *please* have been regarded as instances of both subjectification and intersubjectification. In this line, Traugott and Dasher (2002: 258) consider that subjectification takes place at the beginning of the development in both markers, when the speaker holds a privileged position in the negotiation of discourse. The subsequent loss of pronouns —*I pray (you) > pray*; *if you please > please*— led in both cases to the representation of the addressee's "conceptualized image-needs" only through the pragmatic marker, thus involving intersubjectification. Traugott (2003a: 130) observes that *pray* shows unidirectional trajectories both in the development from subjectification to intersubjectification and in the shift in the orientation towards the addressee. Also Jucker (2002: 227) includes the developments of *pray* and *prithee* as instances of subjectification, following Traugott. Claridge and Arnovick (2010: 179-180) describe the process of pragmaticalisation of *pray/prithee* as a development from fully propositional meaning to interpersonal meaning, and as an interpersonal item, it shows an increase both in subjectivity and intersubjectivity. In the same volume, López-Couso (2010: 137) mentions *please* and *pray/prithee* as examples of pragmatic markers which acquired (inter)subjective meanings in their development from matrix clauses.

3.7. Other processes

In addition to the phenomena already discussed I will consider briefly other concepts related to language change found in the literature which are linked to the development of pragmatic items. Some of the following processes have already been mentioned as defining features of major processes, such as grammaticalisation or lexicalisation. One of them is 'routinisation,' a process of a pragmatic nature (Brinton and Traugott 2005a: 142), defined by Hopper, after Haiman (1991), as "the fading of existential-situational meaning that occurs when any action is constantly repeated until it becomes routine" (1998: 159). The label is taken up again by Haiman (1998: 158), who uses it "to signify the extension of a form or other behavior *beyond the area where it was originally motivated by external pressures*" (italics original). Thus, routinisation "subsumes both analogy and the creation of grammatical categories." Aijmer (1996) uses a related concept, 'conversational routines,' as a close synonym of discourse markers. Rossari and Cojocariu (2008) use both 'routine' and 'routinisation' to refer to the loss of illocutionary force undergone by French constructions of the type '*la cause/la raison/la preuve* + utterance' originated in a question-answer pair, and discount both grammaticalisation and pragmaticalisation in their developments. Traugott and Dasher (2002: 257) mention the "obvious routinization with meaning at the propositional level to a pragmatic marker with functions at the sociodiscourse level" in the developments of *pray* and *please*. Busse (2002: 212) refers to the "routinization of a discourse function" when *prithee*, in spite of including a *T*-pronoun, is also used with the pronoun *you*.

Haiman (1994) uses another label for a related notion, namely 'ritualisation,' which refers to a concept taken from ethology and anthropology and supposed to

take place in both human and non-human behaviour. Haiman applies ritualisation as a cover term to refer to different types of changes, among them language change, "brought about through routine repetition" (1994: 3). One of the concepts included within ritualisation is habituation, that is, "a decline in the tendency to respond to stimuli that have become familiar due to repeated or persistent exposure" (1994: 7). Haiman proposes grammaticalisation as the linguistic analogue of habituation. A similar term is found in Watts (2003), who refers to the result of linguistic change in some expressions of politeness and proposes the label 'formulaic, ritualised utterances.' These include terms of address, formulaic expressions such as *thank you* or *excuse me* or ritualised expressions such as *bye* (2003: 169). Watts defines them in the following terms:

> highly conventionalised utterances, containing linguistic expressions that are used in ritualised forms of verbal interaction and have been reduced from fully grammatical structures to the status of extra-sentential markers of polite behaviour. They have little or no internal syntactico-semantic structure. (Watts 2003: 168)

A different process suggested in the literature is 'institutionalisation,' a concept of sociolinguistic nature, which according to Brinton and Traugott takes place when "a new form [...] come[s] to be conventionalized as part of the accepted vocabulary of a community" (2005a: 45-47). The concept is pointed out by Brinton and Traugott (2005a: 45) as the third interpretation of lexicalisation in the literature; in fact, it has been traditionally associated to lexicalisation (cf. Bauer 1983; Claridge 2000; Hohenhaus 2005). Bauer (1983: 48) applies this notion when a new lexeme "starts

to be accepted by other speakers as a known lexical item," whereas Hohenhaus (2005: 359) defines it as "the stage in the life of a word at (or from) the transitional point between the status of ex-nonce-formation-turned-neologism [...] and that of a generally available vocabulary item." According to Hohenhaus the concept invoked by this term depends also on how we understand the term 'institution,' which may range "from couples and micro-group settings via intermediately-sized groups of jargon speakers to 'the' speech community at large" (2005: 361). De-institutionalisation refers to the opposed phenomenon, that is, when a word ceases to be used and dies out (2005: 362). Watts (2003) employs also the term 'institutionalisation' in relation to politeness, more specifically in connection with what he calls 'politic behaviour.' He admits that "most forms of social interaction have become institutionalised" (2003: 20), including not only public social activities, but also familiar types of social activity, those taking place in a close circle of friends or chance meetings between acquaintances or non-acquaintances (2003: 29). Thus, repeated social interaction may affect linguistic behaviour, and by extension politeness.

Another term used by Aijmer (1997: 8), together with pragmaticalisation, is 'parentheticalization,' which she uses to account for the process of change developed by the epistemic parenthetical *I think*. This label had been previously applied to the fixation of subject-verb parentheticals as self-explaining words (cf. Horn 1978). Since, in most contexts both *pray* and *please* as courtesy markers have derived towards a clear parenthetical status, the term parentheticalisation could also be applied to their development.

3.8. Concluding remarks

Taking into account the different processes analysed here and their interpretations, we may consider several of the above-mentioned theoretical concepts are adequate to depict the development of pragmatic elements. Some of these approaches are linked to pragmatics and especially to the development of pragmatic markers in general, and courtesy markers in particular. More specifically, both *pray* and *please* have been referred to in the literature as examples of different processes. Thus, we have just seen that some authors have accounted for *pray* and *please* in terms of grammaticalisation (cf. Akimoto, Brinton, Busse or Traugott and Dasher), while others have opted for pragmaticalisation (cf. Jucker, Watts or Claridge and Arnovick). Subjectification and intersubjectification are mentioned by Traugott and Dasher to refer to the development of both markers. I will discuss these approaches in detail in Chapter 7, taking into account the development of the courtesy markers *please* and *pray* in the corpora included in the present study.

I will consider grammaticalisation in its broader sense, following Traugott (1988, 1989, 1997, 2003b, 2010) and Brinton (1996, 2005, 2007b, 2008, 2010) and taking into account generally both Lehmann's parameters and Hopper's principles. Although the theoretical grounds of pragmaticalisation, as understood by Erman and Kotsinas, Aijmer, and Claridge and Arnovick, among others, match the development of pragmatic features, the need for a new label is still debatable. I agree with the view that the concept of pragmaticalisation could be presented as a subtype of grammaticalisation, and not as a different process (cf. Diewald 2011). The development of expressions gaining pragmatic functions will be observed mainly under the umbrella of grammaticalisation, but other processes will be considered in

order to account for all the peculiarities shown by the request markers *please* and *pray*

from the Late Modern English period onwards (cf. Section 9.4).

II. A FUNCTION-TO-FORM APPROACH

4. REQUESTS: SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC ASPECTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter offers an approach to the speech act of requests from a function-to-form perspective. I will explain how the pragmatic markers *please* and *pray* have been analysed within requests, and how this specific speech act has been regarded in the literature (Section 4.2). Section 4.3 proposes an introductory function-to-form approach to the speech act of requests in the eighteenth century, which will help to understand how modern concepts were interpreted in the Late Modern English period. Attention will be paid to descriptions in grammars and dictionaries (Section 4.3.1), and to model letters from letter-writing manuals (Section 4.3.2).

4.2. Requests: Pragmatic markers and politeness issues

We have seen that *please* can be regarded as a 'pragmatic marker,' and still within the field of pragmatics, *please* and its equivalents (i.e. *pray*) are often referred to in the literature as 'courtesy or politeness markers' (cf. Quirk *et al.* 1985; Akimoto 2000; Watts 2003; Claridge and Arnovick 2010). In Present-day English *please* is mainly used to make a request more polite or to mitigate the effect or the abruptness of a command, and so its politeness function is evident. Stubbs (1983: 71-72) notes that the only function of *please* "is as a marker of politeness or mitigation." Watts refers to *please* as "the most obvious politeness marker in English" (2003: 183) and we

usually identify its mere presence in an utterance with the speaker's intention of being polite. Therefore, both 'politeness marker' and 'courtesy marker' seem adequate labels for *please* and either one or the other could be used as a general term. As mentioned in the introduction, in the present study, I will use 'courtesy marker', the term chosen by Quirk *et al.* (1985: § 8.90).

The main function of the courtesy markers analysed in the present study is realised in requests. As we have already seen, a request is a speech act in which the speaker demands something (politely) from the addressee, and hence it is also a face-threatening act. In Márquez Reiter's words (2000: 35), "[r]equests are a good example of speech acts which imply an intrusion on the addressee's territory, thus limiting the freedom of action and threatening his/her negative face."

The presence of the courtesy marker *please* in a request usually serves to reduce the threat to the addressee's negative face and to indicate the speaker's willingness to soften the imposition and to be polite. As will be shown in Section 5.2, some Present-day English grammars refer to the function of *please* in requests, for instance Biber *et al.* (1999: 1093) regard *please* as a request 'propitiator.' House (1989), however, considers that the label 'politeness marker' is not appropriate for *please* (1989: 114) because in her view *please* is multifunctional, that is, it can serve either to mitigate the force of a command or to reinforce it, and therefore it could serve both to mark politeness and the lack of it (cf. Section 9.5.2). According to Blum-Kulka (1985), *please* can "soften the imposition involved in giving direct commands," but it "can also be used emphatically to underly [*sic*] the coerciveness of a request" (1985: 219). Following this idea, House points out that since *please*

does not always indicate more politeness, it should be regarded instead as a 'requestive marker' (1989: 114), and she further explains:

> The label *politeness marker* as a designation for *please* or *bitte* is therefore indiscriminate and inappropriate. This marker is essentially a *requestive* marker which takes on different values in requestive values in requestive discourse behaviour according to situation and requestive strategy variables. (House 1989: 114)

According to House (1989), the most appropriate label for *please* is 'requestive marker' since it is a disambiguating element in requests. In the entry for *please* as adverb and interjection in the *OED* (*OED*, s.v. *please* adv. and int.), also a clear distinction is established between both uses, the adverb expresses politeness and the interjection expresses other functions, among them anger and disagreement, which are closer to impoliteness (cf. Wichmann 2004, 2005). Even if the main function of *please* is that within requests, Wichmann (2005: 248) notices the existence of a range of uses in this pragmatic marker, depending on intonation and pitch. Thus, *please* can be interpreted "as an urgent plea, an emphatic demand, an expression of scorn and ridicule and a stern rebuke." The multifunctionality of *please* seems to be present in its equivalents in other languages as well. This is the case of German *bitte*, as reported by House (1989), and Spanish *por favor*, as shown above (cf. Landone 2009).

Leech (1983: 194) also refers to the function of *please* in "polite requests" and points out that the insertion of *please* medially in a sentence turns this sentence into a request. Leech considers that the possible occurrence of *please* in medial position in

the question *Can you close the window?* (his example 28a), that is, *Can you please close the window?* (his example 28c) "is treated as a sign of its underlying status as a request" (1983: 194).

Blum-Kulka's (1985) study includes a questionnaire of request patterns which was presented to a group of several native speakers of English and Hebrew, who had to decide whether the sentence was a question, a request or could be both. In almost all cases (92%), English native speakers identified sentences carrying *please* as unambiguous requests. According to Blum-Kulka (1985), *please* is a speech-act modifier (and 'politeness marker') that serves to indicate the pragmatic force of a request. She defines 'internal request modifiers' as "linguistic elements the presence of which is not a necessary condition for the utterance to carry the pragmatic force of a request" (1985: 216). This author also pays attention to the multifuntionality of *please*, since it may serve both to "modify social impact" and to "indicate requestive pragmatic force." Moreover, in its social function it can "upgrade or downgrade the impact" of the request (Blum-Kulka 1985: 213).

Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) have developed a coding manual of requests and apologies within the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP), which has served as a useful tool in most cross-linguistic studies on requests and apologies to date. They provide a classification of requests strategies depending on their level of directness, taking into account the data provided by informants of different languages:

Direct	Mood derivable
	Performatives
	Hedged performatives
	Obligation statements
	Want statements
Conventionally indirect	Suggestory formulae
	Query preparatory
Non-conventionally direct	Strong hints
	Mild hints

Adapted from Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989: 18)

Most of the direct strategies follow Brown and Levinson's first politeness strategies (cf. Section 2.2.2), that is, either the face-threatening act is done baldly, without redressive action, or it shows redressive action and positive politeness. Conventionally indirect strategies have been chosen as the most polite strategies in the realisation of requests in the different languages studied. Indirectness is mentioned by many authors as one of the indicators of politeness, typically representing negative politeness (cf. Leech's 1983 and Brown and Levinson's 1987 models in Section 2.2.2). Conventional indirectness is also mentioned by Brown and Levinson (1987: 70) as a strategy to show respect, deference and care for the speaker's face wants without leaving him options, since there is no alternative interpretation to the request. Following Leech's (1983) pragmatic scales, whereas the pragmatic scale of indirectness corresponds to maximum politeness, the optionality scale differs somehow since the amount of choice is reduced. Non-conventionally

direct strategies, in turn, correspond to Brown and Levinson's fourth strategy, doing the request "off record," and taking less face threatening risks. Different authors point at the use of *please* as a mitigating device, since it is commonly found in conventional indirect requests (cf. Lakoff 1973: 295, Searle 1975: 60-61, Brown and Levinson's 1987: 70, House 1989). However, it seems to be even more frequent with direct strategies, such as imperatives (Aijmer 1996: 166).

4.2.1 Parts of a request

Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) have individuated up to three different elements that can be present in the realisation of a request, the essential part of the speech act being the Head Act:

1. Alerter (attention getters and terms of address)
2. Head Act (the proper request sequence)
3. Supportive Move(s) (before or after Head Act):

These three elements are clearly illustrated in the following request:

Alerter	Head Act	Supportive Move
Excuse me,	could you help me with my suitcase?	It's rather heavy

As can be seen, the Alerter makes the speaker aware of the proximity of a request, attracting his attention. The Head Act is the request proper and the Supportive

Move serves to mitigate the pragmatic force of the request providing an explanation or justification of the speaker's necessity to perform it. The Head Act can be internally modified by downgraders or upgraders. Downgraders serve to mitigate the face-threatening act of the request. They can be syntactic, as, for instance *can/could* questions, or lexical, as is the case of *please* —also a 'politeness marker' (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989). It is necessary to emphasise that all the elements in a request are equally relevant for politeness, since, as Brown and Levinson notice, "politeness is *implicated* by the semantic structure of the whole utterance, not communicated by 'markers' or 'mitigators' in a simple signalling fashion which can be quantified" (1987: 22) [italics original].

In addition to the important study carried out by Blum-Kulka *et al.*, the speech act of requests has been widely studied by other authors from a cross-linguistic and interlanguage pragmatic perspective (cf. Wierbicka 1991; Trosborg 1994; Márquez Reiter 2000; Alcón Soler *et al.* 2005, among others). Similarly to Blum-Kulka *et al.*, Alcón Soler *et al.* (2005) also divide requests into head act and "peripheral modification devices," which can be external or internal. As regards the functions of *please*, they classify it as an "external modification device" rather than an "internal lexical modifier" (2005: 26). With this classification the authors attempt a new methodology based on socio-pragmatic grounds, rather than on grammar and syntax (2005: 17). They distinguish a particular feature of *please*, since it "is the only modifying device, either internal or external, which can substitute a whole utterance." *Please* can be used at the beginning, at the end or "in a embedded position, similar to most of the *downtoners* (i.e. a type of internal modification device)" (2005: 27). Ballesteros Martín (2002) classifies *please* as a courtesy

expression among phrasal and lexical downtoners. In his view *please* is an optional element added to the request in order to seek for cooperation. His contrastive study shows that Spanish possesses a wider range of expressions as compared to English, which allows for a bigger set of nuances.

4.2.2 Main request markers: Restrictions in use

Some authors have noticed several constraints in the use of *please* in requests at the pragmatic and syntactic level. *Please* seems to be more common in situations in which the social imposition is not too high, and/or when it is likely that the request will be accepted (House 1989; Wichmann 2004, 2005). In fact, Wichmann observes that "*please* only occurs in situations where the imposition is either minimal or socially sanctioned", that is, "only when there is very little 'face-work' to be done" (2004: 1544), whereas "[i]n situations where the imposition is greater and/or the rights and obligations of the participants are not self-evident, *please* does not occur" (2004: 1523). Thus, the occurrence of *please* in contexts where negative face is not at risk and the fact that its use is more common in direct strategies would imply that these requests are mainly addressed to equals or at least to those with similar status as regards relative power and social distance (cf. Section 9.5). Another restriction in the use of *please* in requests has to do with the types of request that admit its presence. House (1989) observes that *please* is common with explicit, direct strategies (i.e. performatives: imperatives) or with conventionally indirect strategies (i.e. query preparatory: *could*, *can*, etc.) but it does not occur in non-conventionally indirect

strategies (hints). Sadock also points to the restrictions of *please* in hints, what he labels 'indirect requests,' such as **Isn't it too cold in here, please?* (1974: 90).

As regards word-order, Sadock (1974) observes that even though *please* can be found pre- or post-sententially with imperatives, it is not possible for it to occur with "sentences that have imperative form but do not have the force of requests," such as **Take one more step, please, and I'll shoot* or **Have a merry Christmas, please* (1974: 89). In an analysis of directives obtained through different methods, Ervin-Tripp (1976) finds some differences in the function of *please* depending on sentence position. She mentions that initial position *please* loses requestive value and adds an extra-nuance as an attention-getter and as an apology for the interruption (while maintaining its function of signaling the following directive). In medial or final position this form develops its function proper, "limited to obvious directives, including conventional or routinized hints and requests" (1976: 48). Wichmann (2005) analyses *please* in naturally occurring data in British English, and notices that the pragmatic marker in final position is part of an indirect request in most instances, while in initial position *please* is part of a mitigated command in most occasions (2005: 235). Sato (2008), in a study of *please* in American and New Zealand English, reports some interesting findings as regards the position of *please* in the sentence and its pragmatic force in each position. In her corpus, *please* appears not only in requests, but also in several directive speech acts, such as demands, commands and pleas. Thus, it shows both politeness and directive properties at various degrees. She takes *please* as "a directive for taking action," since a verbal or non-verbal response comes afterwards (2008: 1271). In Sato's study, *please* in initial-position appears more commonly with directives, showing speaker's stance. In

medial position the variety of pragmatic functions is wider, ranging from commands to conventional requests. *Please* in final position corresponds to task-oriented and formal requests, and they "evince[s] the strong interconnectedness between a social situation and the language use" (2008: 1275). New Zealand English seems to favour final-position *please*, whereas American English shows a more even distribution between the different positions. According to Sato, these differences may reflect cultural aspects of both societies: while New Zealanders would focus on "social refinement and formal courteousness," Americans would also give importance to "the affective stance of the individual and the proactive linguistic choice available to the speaker" (2008: 1276). In this respect, it is interesting to mention Biber *et al.*'s data on the use of *please* in conversation. They note that *please* is used twice as much in British English than in American English, which could point at a more marked negative politeness culture in Britain. By contrast, it happens the other way round with more positive politeness markers, such as *thank you* or *thank you very much*, which are used twice as much in American English. They find these figures "tempting to see cultural differences behind the AmE speakers' greater use of expressions of thanks *(thank you* especially), and BrE speakers' greater use of 'negative' or redressive politeness in the use of *sorry* and *please*" (cf. 1999: 1098-1099).

Different authors have also dealt with the functions of the predecessor of *please*, the courtesy marker *pray*. Busse (2002) catalogues the functions displayed by both *pray* and *prithee* in Shakespearean plays. According to him, these forms are "usually prefixed to exclamatory sentences, polite requests and optatives, and may be used in mild swearing, but can also express consent" (2002: 198). Brown and Gilman (1989) notice a slight difference in function between *pray* and *prithee* in

Shakespeare. While (*I*) *pray you* is a deferential form, they associate *prithee* with positive politeness strategies, since it co-occurs with "terms of friendship, affection, and intimacy" (1989: 183-184). After looking at the titles and honorifics accompanying both forms, Busse disagrees with their view and argues in favour of a "certain overlap between the forms and their functions" (2002: 194-197). In Fitzmaurice's study of Early Modern English familiar letters, which includes full-length letters of the period, we find a sentence introduced by *pray* in a 1664 letter (*but pray, Madam, mistake me not, for I do not Admire the Words, but the Sense, Reason, and Wit* […]). Fitzmaurice observes that in this sentence the "admonition 'pray' is conventional and formulaic, and as such seems less sincere than its omission would be." Thus, the presence of this courtesy marker makes the "locution […] polite rather than sincere in its formulaic structure" (2002: 193-194).

4.2.3 The speech act of requests from a diachronic perspective

Over the last few years, several authors have started to pay attention to requests from a function-to-form approach. Regarding requests strategies in earlier periods in the history of English, Kohnen (2008a) points out that conventionally indirect strategies are usually absent from Old English texts, even though a certain degree of indirectness can be observed in some directive constructions in Old English, such as *ic wille* and *ic wolde* (see Kohnen 2011). These indirect utterances, however, do not seem to correspond to any politeness pattern. He also suggests that negative politeness did not play a major role in that period and, consequently, the choice of directives does not depend on face-work (2008a). This would confirm other

hypotheses which place the shift in politeness from positive to negative strategies in later periods (cf. Jucker 2011).

Although there are no studies on requests in Middle English, we do find an interesting analysis of petitions in medieval times which compares Anglo-Norman, the dialect of French spoken in England in the Middle English period, and Italian corpora (Held 2010). Held shows that Anglo-Norman petitions were formulated using two main strategies:

i. *Supplier tres humblement pitousement QUE **Plaise/plaisir** soit a* (address)

[literally: beg very humbly piously THAT you please/please be to (address)]

ii. ***Prier** (requerir) especialment se vus **plest**/de vostre **pleisir**/ke vous veuillez/ke vous deyngnet/or verb+FUT*

[literally: Pray (require) especially if you pleased/of your pleasure/that you will/that you deign/or verb+FUT]

As can be noticed in bold type, the first strategy includes the French verb *please* in the introduction of the petition, while the second pattern includes *pray* as the performative verb, and some forms related to *please* again in the second part of the petition. In medieval societies petitions were addressed to those in higher ranks, and therefore speaker's humiliation, rather than polite behaviour, was "the chief virtue of petitions" (Held 2010: 210-212). Held notices the lack of indirectness and negative politeness in Anglo-Norman petitions, since they include explicit performatives and other direct expressions. The presence of the verbs *pray* and *please*

already in Anglo-Norman petitions could have exerted a certain influence on their selection and conventionalisation in English as requests strategies.

Requests in Early Modern English are the focus of work by Sönmez (2005) and Culpeper and Archer (2008). Sönmez (2005) analyses request expressions in family letters in the seventeenth century, using the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler* and other collections. She selects both unmarked requests and conventional indirect requests formulated most commonly with verbs such as *beseech*, *beg*, *please*, *entreat*, *pray* and *desire*. In the period covered by her study, five decades from 1623 to 1660, direct strategies (i.e. Brown and Levinson's 1987 'bald-on-record', see Section 2.2.2 above) constitute the most frequent way of formulating a request. She also shows that the set of request verbs and strategies used by seniors addressing their juniors is less varied than those used by juniors to address seniors and those used between equals. Thus, Sönmez finds out a correlation between certain expressions and social relations, since generational deference is a determining factor in the choice of requests expressing a higher or lower degree of deference.

Another study dealing with the Early Modern period is Culpeper and Archer (2008), which offers a theoretical and methodological approach to this speech act in Early Modern English trial proceedings and play-texts. While in the various studies carried out by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) for different languages, conventional indirectness was the most common requests strategy, Culpeper and Archer (2008) show that this was not the case in earlier periods of English. In fact, in line with Sömnez's findings, they demonstrate that direct strategies, such as impositives, were the most common way to express a request in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries. Therefore, at least in the Early Modern English period there is no direct correlation between indirectness and politeness. In their view, it is not possible to apply cross-linguistic research methods, such as those used by Blum-Kulka *et al.* to historical periods. Culpeper and Archer provide a different insight on requests showing that in the period they examine there was no need for mitigation or modification.

A main difficulty in the study of requests lies on the identification of non-conventionally direct strategies, since hints, as understood from a modern perspective, cannot be extrapolated to historical contexts.[50] In this connection, Kohnen (2004: 239-240) introduces the concept of 'pragmatic false friend' for those speech acts which may be misunderstood when interpreted from a present-day perspective, according to modern usage (cf. also Culpeper and Archer 2008: 58).

Taking into account previous research (and especially Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989) Culpeper and Archer suggest in their study that Head Acts in requests can vary according to the following set of factors (2008: 48-50):

- directness
- perspective:
    - o hearer-oriented viewpoint
    - o speaker-oriented viewpoint
    - o inclusive viewpoint
    - o impersonal viewpoint
- presence/absence of internal modification

---

[50] Culpeper and Archer (2008) show that Labov's "historical paradox," that is the fact that we cannot know to what extent present and past are different, does not hold by demonstrating that a speech act could be understood differently in different periods.

- o lexical/phrasal devices
- o syntactic devices

They find the concept of Head Act problematic and difficult to apply to language which is not controlled by the linguist, and especially to earlier periods. These authors highlight the importance of other elements in the requests, and particularly of supportive moves. Culpeper and Archer (2008) prefer the label 'pre-support move' to that of 'alerter' proposed by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989), a category in which they include *pray*.[51] In their view, *pray* is not yet fully grammaticalised since it typically occurs in initial position, as opposed to Present-day English *please*, which can occur in different slots (cf. also Archer 2010: 388). In addition to *pray*, they include two other types of support moves, namely vocatives (e.g. *madam*) and grounders (which perform an explanatory function expressing the reason for the request, e.g. *Make haste. He'll overtake us before we get in*). The latter are commonly found as post-support moves in their data (Culpeper and Archer 2008: 74-76).

Culpeper and Archer identify a number of strategies that fit in Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s three main groups of request strategies (according to their directness scale): direct, conventionally indirect and hints. Nevertheless, as seen above, impositives are the most frequent strategy in Culpeper and Archer's study, while in Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s (1989) study conventional indirect requests, the ones identified with a higher degree of politeness, were the most frequent ones in all the languages analysed. According to Culpeper and Archer, it seems "likely that the lack of distance associated with impositives, particularly imperatives, has neutral or even positive

---

[51] As will be shown in Chapter 7, *pray* can be found in requests in functions other than that of courtesy marker.

value" (2008: 76). Conventional indirect requests were used mainly by powerful people or intimates of high status. Thus, contrary to other studies (Brown and Levinson 1987, Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989), they find that more power relative to others correlates with greater directness.

The speech act of requests has also been studied from a historical perspective by Del Lungo Camiciotti (2008), who undertakes a qualitative and quantitative analysis in a corpus of nineteenth-century commercial letters. Performatives are the preferred request strategies in her data, while indirect strategies, the preferred strategy in Present-day English, are not so frequently attested. Following the modulation approach, proposed by Sbisà (2001), which measures the 'degrees of strength' of a speech act taking into account mitigation and reinforcement phenomena, Del Lungo Camiciotti distinguishes different degrees in the illocutionary force of speech acts. Thus, in Del Lungo Camiciotti's study, instead of indirectness, modulation is used as a mitigation strategy: downgrading for directives and upgrading for commissives. This author relates the use of straightforward strategies to the non-institutional context of business relations, in which participants negotiate both commercial activities and acquaintance.

The nineteenth century is also the period studied by Culpeper and Demmen (2011), who regard this century, and especially the Victorian Age (1837-1901) as the perfect reflection of Brown and Levinson's politeness model, and in particular of their idea of negative face. Culpeper and Demmen show that the Victorian period illustrates the development of ideologies concerning positive values related to the individual. Among the several issues leading to an individualistic culture, Culpeper and Demmen mention the increasing secularisation, the rise of Protestantism, the

social and geographical mobility, the industrialisation, and the rise of individualism as a positive notion (cf. Section 1.5). The importance given to public life in the eighteenth century shifted to private and family life in the nineteenth century, a scenario which is related to the concept of negative face politeness. Culpeper and Demmen (2011) date the emergence of conventional indirect requests oriented towards the speaker (*can you*/*could you*) precisely in the nineteenth century. These ability-oriented requests were not attested in Culpeper and Archer's (2008) study on Early Modern English, which by contrast showed strategies taking into account the addressee's volition or permission requests, that is, strategies characteristic of positive politeness cultures. In turn, requests performed via ability questions are suggestive of a negative politeness culture. Culpeper and Demmen (2011: 75) relate the conventionalisation of these non-imposition negative politeness strategies to the concern for people's individual abilities, and eventually to the above-mentioned social and cultural changes.

Several authors have suggested that an important change in politeness took place in English after the sixteenth century (cf. Kopytko 1995; Busse 2002; Jacobsson 2002; Traugott and Dasher 2002). Kopytko (1995), in his study of several Shakespearean tragedies and comedies, observes a predominance of positive politeness strategies in Elizabethan English, that is, strategies that indicate there is minimum social distance between hearer and speaker. In several speech acts, like requests, which are typically realised through negative politeness strategies, there is an imposition on the addressee, and therefore the speaker uses different devices to mitigate the imposition, e.g. showing deference, being pessimistic, etc. (see Section 2.2). On this basis, however, Kopytko suggests there must have been a change from

a positive politeness culture towards a negative politeness culture in Britain after the sixteenth century (1995: 532). This shift would explain a number of pragmatic phenomena that took place in the history of English, such as the development of apologies (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2008b) and the history of greetings Grzega (2008) (cf. Section 5.6). As Busse explains, polite requests of the type "Speaker sincerely wants hearer to do X," which would include *pray* forms, were replaced by those of the type "Speaker asks hearer whether hearer is willing, sees fit, or is pleased to do X," which would include *please*, after the Elizabethan period (2002: 210).

However, some scholars have also identified the opposite tendency, that is, a shift from negative to positive politeness. Jucker (2011), for instance, provides a broad outline of the tendencies of polite behaviour in the history of English. Jucker builds on Kohnen's prior studies and points at two major forces related to politeness and facework in the Old English period: the importance of loyalty in tribal networks on the one hand, and Christian values on the other. The use of directives in this period would not be related to a lack of politeness, but rather to the relevance of the above-mentioned values at the time. According to Jucker, the Middle English period witnessed the influence of French not only on well-known linguistic areas, but also on politeness strategies. He mentions two main contributions: the introduction of the concept of *curteisie* and the *ye/thou* distinctions. These issues would have affected speakers' choices in considering their interlocutor. This setting would lead to a negative politeness trend, noticeable in the later part of the Middle English period. By contrast, as already mentioned, Early Modern English is characterised by positive politeness (cf. Brown and Gilman 1989; Jacobsson 2002;

Kopytko 1993, 1995). Consequently, it should be assumed that a transformation took place after this period pointing towards Present-day English negative politeness culture. This shift must have taken place essentially during the Late Modern English period.

4.3. The speech act of requests in Late Modern English: A function-to-form analysis

This section is a brief approximation to the function-to-form study of requests in the Late Modern English period, especially in the eighteenth century. This approach can be regarded as ethnographic, following Taavitsainen and Jucker (2007, 2008b), since it provides an insight on how eighteenth century society understood this speech act and the contexts in which it was used.

The eighteenth century offers good evidence for the study of the speech act of requests or, as they were more commonly referred to in this century, entreaties. The eighteenth century is usually portrayed as the era when politeness emerged as a social factor affecting British society as a whole (Klein 2002). Language awareness became an important issue and this is reflected in the popularity of grammars, dictionaries and usage books covering different aspects of language (Görlach 2001). The flourishing of grammars can mainly be put down to two factors. On the one hand the lack of an English academy, and on the other, social mobility, which caused that middle classes looked for "social resources" to guide them on a whole range of topics, and on language use in particular, since the correct use of language served as a means to move up in society (Fitzmaurice 1998).

Thus, in order to examine the speech act of requests from an eighteenth century perspective it is important to take a look at grammars, dictionaries and other usage books. References to requests can be found in descriptions of imperatives, where requests are often compared to orders. Since the focus of my research are courtesy markers found in Late Modern English requests, I deal here with two main issues, namely (i) the terminology found in the eighteenth century concerning this speech act; and (ii) the description of different features such as felicity conditions in eighteenth century reference works, comparing them to the descriptions found in modern pragmatics textbooks. For this purpose, I draw on material from the *ECCO* database, especially grammars. When relevant, I have also used dictionaries and other reference works which can sometimes provide interesting details on the speech act of requests.

4.3.1 Requests in dictionaries and grammars

The initial step was to look at the different terms available in the eighteenth century in the semantic field of requests. For this purpose, the *ECCO* search tool was used in several dictionaries in order to spot cross-references. Among the various eighteenth century synonyms of the word *request* we can find the following: *entreaty* or *intreaty*, *request*, *petition*, *praye*, and *supplication*. In some contexts *favour*, *kindness* or *grace* also refer to what is requested (or granted). In some dictionaries, we also find *boon* although the instances provided reflect an already archaic value. The hypernyms were probably *request* or *entreaty/intreaty* (the latter especially at the beginning of the

century), whereas other terms would add some extra nuance. Related verbs are *beg*, *beseech*, *bid*, *entreat/intreat* and *supplicate*.

The next step was to focus on eighteenth century grammars, looking for those different synonyms and other related words, such as *command* or *imperative*. In fact, requests are commonly compared to orders since they both appear in the imperative mood, as happens in modern pragmatics textbooks (cf. Section 2.2). Although pragmatics as a discipline emerged in the twentieth century (cf. Section 1.2.1), eighteenth century works, such as grammars, and letter-writing manuals describe certain pragmatics aspects, such as issues regarding politeness and descriptions of various speech acts (cf. Görlach 2001: 130). Consider the following examples, in which several grammars describe the uses of the imperative, and both requests and orders are mentioned as possible speech acts realised by this mood:

[T]he Imperative Mood, in this Tense of it, **commands**, permits, admonishes; prays, supplicates or **petitions**: Instances of this will every where occur, and are easily distinguish'd one from another, without any particular distribution. (White 1761: 256-257)

The *imperative* is used for ***commanding***, exhorting, **requesting**, or permitting; (Coote 1788: 85)

Asking to perform or undergo any thing, either by way of **command**, **entreaty**, or otherwise, is expressed by the *imperative* mode. (Fogg 1792-1796: 142) [italics original; bold mine]

The relationship between the speech acts of commands and requests is also present in modern classifications. In fact, as seen above (cf. 2.2.2), in Brown and Levinson

(1987: 66) orders and requests are grouped together as one type of intrinsic face-threatening acts, threatening the hearer's negative face:

(i) Those acts that predicate some future act A of H[earer], and in so doing put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) the act A:

   a) orders and requests (S[peaker] indicates that he wants H to do, or refrain from doing, some act A)

Other aspects present in modern pragmatics can be traced back to eighteenth century grammars. One such case is the consideration of felicity conditions. As seen above (Section 2.1.2), felicity conditions for requests are detailed in a similar way in Searle (1969: 66) and Brown and Levinson (1987: 137), including a reference to the future in the propositional content of the speech act, some preparatory conditions, and sincerity conditions necessary for the request to take place successfully. Thus, Searle (1969: 66) mentions the following conditions: (i) Propositional content: future act A of H; (ii) Preparatory: a) *H* is able to do *A*, b) *S* believes *H* is able to do *A*, and c) It is not obvious to both *S* and *H* that *H* will do *A* in the normal course of his own accord; (iii) Sincerity: *S* wants *H* to do *A*; and (iv) Essential: Counts as an attempt to get *H* to do *A* (see Section 2.1.2 above). Similarly, Brown and Levinson (1987: 137) propose the following conditions for requests: (i) Propositional content condition (H will do A); (ii) Preparatory conditions: a) *H is able to do A*, b) *Any objects requested exist*, and c) *The action desired has not already been done*; and (iii) Sincerity conditions (S wants H to do A).

The following passages from eighteenth century grammars include several comments on requests, which can be compared to what later came to be known as the felicity conditions of this speech act. Both passages compare the speech acts of commanding and requesting including different preparatory conditions. In the first extract, the 'essential conditions,' that is the point or purpose of the act, are identical for orders and requests, thus "both equally signify what the speaker would have to be, or to be done, or to be granted." One of the features to perform a request (or an entreaty) is that the speaker is not in a position to impose (or oblige), as opposed to orders (or commands). The difference here lies in the concept of relative power (one of the factors affecting politeness in Brown and Levinson's model) between the participants:

> An **entreaty**, or prayer, is expressed by the forms of this mood [=imperative], as well as a **command**. For an entreaty agrees with a command in this, that both equally signify what the speaker would have to be, or to be done, or to be granted. But **the persons to whom commands are given**, are supposed to be **such as the speaker can compel, or oblige to fulfill his injunctions**; whereas, **the persons to whom entreaties are used, are supposed to be such as the speaker cannot compel, or oblige** "*to be*" or "*do*," what he signifies he would have "*to be*" or "*to be done*." (Ward 1765: 191)

> In all **commands or entreaties**, **the state commanded, or entreated, must be contingent;** *i.e.* **capable of being**, or not being, as the command or entreaty expresses it. For **it is to no purpose to use commands or entreaties concerning states which are not capable of being**, or not being, as the commands or entreaties express them, and

that at the pleasure of the object entreated or commanded. (Ward 1765: 202) [italics original; bold mine]

The second extract exposes a necessary condition both for commands and entreaties, namely that the action requested or ordered is feasible, "capable of being, or not being, as the command or entreaty expresses it." This idea corresponds accurately to the first 'preparatory condition' in Searle's and Brown and Levinson's felicity conditions for requests: the hearer is able to do the action requested.

The following two passages include explicit references to the fact that the action requested must necessary occur in the future (cf. Searle's 1969 'propositional content;' Brown and Levinson's 1987 'propositional content condition'):

The third sort of *willing* is, **when what we *will* depends on a Person of whom we may obtain it, signifying to him the *Desire* we have that he *will* do it**. This is the *Motion* we have when we *command* or *pray*. 'Tis to mark this *Motion*, that the Mood call'd *Imperative* was invented: It has no first Person, especially in the *Singular*, because one cannot properly *command* ones-self; not the third in several Languages, because we don't properly *command* any but those, to whom we Address and Speak. And because the ***Command* or *Desire*** in this Mood, **has always regard to the *Future***, it thence happens that the *Imperative* and *Future* are often taken one for another, (Brightland, 1711: 103)

But ***Intreating* and *Commanding*** (which are the Essence of the *Requisitive* Mode) **have a necessary respect to the *Future* only**. For indeed what have they to do with the present or the past, the natures of which are immutable and necessary? (Harris 1751: 154-156) [italics original; bold mine]

As can be inferred from these selections from eighteenth-century grammars, many of the ideas expressed in modern pragmatics text-books related to the felicity conditions of speech acts are already present in careful reflections from the Late Modern English period.

4.3.2   Requests in (model) letters

Among the usage manuals which were so popular in the eighteenth century we can mention letter-writer guides. Letter-writer guides were a productive genre in the Late Modern English period, and provide interesting information about pragmatic aspects in the eighteenth century (Görlach 2001: 130). In these manuals, letters are classified according to text-type, and the roles of addresser and addressee are well established. Letters of request —and, by extension, requests— are described with some detail in several of these manuals. The following extract contains a good example of the eighteenth-century idea of a request, which may affect any social class:

> Letters of Request are those, wherein some Favour is asked of a Friend, either for one's Self or for another. They take Place in all States and Conditions; no Person being of such elevated Rank and Authority, as not to want the Assistance of another, or at least not to have an Occasion to intercede for some of his Friends. *(The art of letter-writing,* London, 1762: 24)

The same letter manual distinguishes the two types of requests: 'direct and open' and 'indirect and oblique' (cf. negative and positive politeness strategies in requests

in Section 4.2.3 above). The use of direct strategies is adopted for minor favours, while more indirect strategies are needed when it is possible that the request is not granted, and therefore the writer's negative face is more at risk:

> There are two sorts of Request, one direct and open, the other indirect and oblique. The first is used in regard to a Thing which is manifestly honest to be asked, and in the Place of a good friend. [...]
> We have Recourse to the second, when the Thing we ask is not very becoming, or when we are not assured of the good Will of him we make Application to. *(The art of letter-writing,* London, 1762: 24)

Requests making use of highly indirect strategies are the most common type in letter-writing manuals. The following passage includes instructions on how to write indirect requests. Note here that there is a mention to what is being asked ("some more than ordinary Favour") and to the addressee ("a Friend, Parent, or Superior"). The rest of the extract highlights the style that should be used, "in a more familiar Style, from a Petition, or Letters Petitory," focusing on the indirectness necessary in this sort of letter, since it "must be penn'd in plain and obliging Language:"

> VII. Now there are Letters somewhat different from those I have mentioned, which are properly called **Letters of *Entreaty***; and the Intent of these is to request some more than ordinary Favour from a Friend, Parent, or Superior, and ought not much to differ, tho' they may be compiled in a more familiar Style, from a Petition, or Letters Petitory, and yet may indeed be directed as well on the Behalf of your Friend as your self, in requesting any thing that is honest or reasonable, but must be penn'd in plain and obliging Language; and tho' in an humble Strain,

yet not forgetting to extoll the Bounty, good Nature, and Commiseration of the Party to whom you write; and moreover, to urge the Necessity of your Request, and the Advantage you or your Friend are, in all Probability, like to gain by it, if granted, *etc.* (Hill, John, *The young secretary's guide*, 20th edition, London, 1719: 6-7)

By looking at the range of synonyms available for the speech act of requests in this period, we can identify in letter-writing manuals different titles which make reference to letters of request, among them:

– Letters of Prayer or Supplication (*The art of letter-writing* 1762: 63)
– Letters that pray and tend to obtain some Favour, may be considered as a Kind of Request or Petition (*The art of letter-writing* 1762: 63)
– Letter to desire favours (*Polite epistolary correspondence*, 1748)
– A Letter of Entreaty to ask a Favour (Hill, John, *The young secretary's guide*, 20th edition. London, 1719)
– A Letter by the way of Petition to a Friend (Goodman, Thomas, *The experienc'd secretary*, London, 1707)

The use of indirect strategies seems a recurrent pattern in letters of request. It is remarkable that in model letters we very rarely find courtesy markers like *please* or *pray*, while other politeness expressions including the verb *please* are frequent. The following letter is taken from "A Letter of Entreaty to ask a Favour" (Hill, John, *The young secretary's guide*, 20th edition. London, 1719: 95):

Sir,

By your reiterated Favours and frequent Promises of Kindness, I am emboldened once more to press and intrude upon your good Nature with a farther Request, the Purport of which is, That you would be pleased to send me by this Bearer the Sum of Twenty Pounds: Though indeed I cannot, considering the frequent Obligations you have laid upon me, ask it without a Blush; however my Necessity compels me to it, and all I can say for my self is, That besides my denominating you the best of Friends, I must make it my Business to inform my self how I may in some measure gratifie you for the Benefits I have received, and ever remain, *Sir, your most obliged Servant.*

This letter clearly illustrates how the main parts of the request are organised. The opening address term functions as an alerter of the speech act. With single underlining, an introductory pre-supportive move is used, in order to prepare the ground for the ensuing request. In the head act proper, shown in a box, the writer expresses the object of the letter, a request for 20 pounds. Aware that his own face is at risk, he makes use of the *be pleased to* construction (see Section 6.4.2 below), further supported by the modal *would*, in an attempt to clarify that granting the request is the addressee's choice. Following the head act, the writer uses two supportive moves in order to diminish the effect of face-threatening exposure after expressing the requested object. The first supportive move, underlined with dots, is the writer's justification to dare to ask such a favour ("my Necessity compels me to it"), whereas the second one, an extremely long supportive move, with double underlining, is a promise of gratitude, linked to the closing formula. In this way, mitigation strategies are more evident and more copious in the supportive moves than in the head act proper.

Consider now the following example, which belongs to "A Letter of Intreaty from a son to a father" (Hill, John, *The young secretary's guide*, 20th edition. London, 1719: 15):

> Ever Honoured Father,
>
> I send this Letter as an humble Suiter on my behalf (though I must confess, no Merit in me, did not your tender Affections plead my Cause, could ever have deserved the least part of what I have already receiv'd, to entreat you to procure me those necessary Clothes and Books of which, being in need thereof) I gave you an Account the last time I had the Happiness to lay my self at your Feet, and offer you my Tribute of Duty and Thankfulness: Which indeed is all the poor Return my tender Years are as yet capable to make, for the many Favours of Love that you have from time to time heaped upon me: and, honoured Sir, if this my Request may move you to fulfil it, I would farther entreat you to let me have them by the first Opportunity of sending, that they may the sooner redound to my Credit, and to my Advancement in Learning. But however, submitting to your Discretion in this and all other Things, I shall rest satisfy'd, and subscribe my self, as in Duty I am bound, *Your most Obedient Son*.

Again the opening term serves as an alerter of the request, in this case "Ever Honoured Father" shows a highly marked tone of negative politeness when addressing a father. The head act proper, inside the box, is followed by a concatenation of relative clauses, using grateful and humble language in order to make the addressee feel in a position of considerably higher relative power. A second request is introduced again by an alerter, "and, honoured Sir," followed by another presupportive move (underlined), which precedes the new head act proper,

in the second box. This is followed by two supportive moves, the first one, underlined with dots, functions as a justification and the second one, with double underlining works as a promise of gratitude. This could be regarded as a multiple head-act, examples of which have also been identified by Culpeper and Archer (2008) in trials and drama.

As can be observed in the examples above, most of the indirectness and the negative politeness load is not carried by the head act proper but rather by the supportive moves, which contain a marked apologetic language and more redressive constructions (cf. Culpeper and Archer 2008: 70ff). As mentioned above, Culpeper and Archer (2008) do not agree with Blum-Kulka *et al*.'s (1989) category of alerters, and prefer the label 'pre-support moves' to refer to those elements, since they also serve to modify the requestive force of the speech act (2008: 73). This distinction seems useful here to refer to initial supportive moves in letters, since their function its determinant in the mitigation of the request. However, I find Blum-Kulka *et al*.'s (1989) distinction of vocatives as a type of alerter useful. Vocatives differ from supportive moves as regards function: even though they can mark social distance, their main purpose is to introduce the speech act. The first post-supportive moves in the letters illustrated above serve as a justification or explanation of the requests and could be associated with Culpeper and Archer's concept of grounder, also frequent in their data as a post-support move. The language used in the letters above can be interpreted by the modern reader as an example of 'overpoliteness' (cf. Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2011), that is, there are far more politeness expressions than present-day norms would require, the language of these model letters is full of

excessive negative politeness strategies. Nevertheless, this was probably what Late Modern English norms required for epistolary language.

The use of negative politeness strategies in eighteenth-century letter-writing manuals is further evidence of the prevalence of a negative politeness culture in this period (cf. Section 4.2.3). As we have seen, references to requests can be found in eighteenth-century works, especially in grammars, which offer detailed descriptions of this speech act. Similarly, good instances of requests can be found in letter manuals. Letters of request are a very useful tool to exemplify the different parts of a request. However, it is particularly remarkable that these letters do not 'provide' many examples of courtesy markers. This could be related to the fact that letters of request tend to make use of indirect request strategies and courtesy markers are more likely to be found in more direct types of letters, such as business letters (cf. Del Lungo Camiciotti 2008). This issue will be further discussed in our form-to-function approach (cf. Section 9.5).

III. A FORM-TO-FUNCTION APPROACH

5. *PLEASE* AND *PRAY* IN THE LITERATURE

5.1. Introduction

The present chapter is concerned with the courtesy markers *please* and *pray* as defined and described in the literature. I will provide a detailed account of the treatment of *please* mainly in Present-day English grammars and of both markers in Present-day English dictionaries. Reference works of previous stages will also be considered in order to depict how these request markers were perceived in Late Modern English. I will pay attention to different references in the literature which take into consideration the origin and development of *please* and the shift from *pray*, the former default courtesy marker in requests, to Present-day English *please*.

5.2. *Please* in standard reference grammars

Before we start with the description of *please* in the most relevant Present-day English reference grammars, it is necessary to observe that *pray* is not mentioned in any of these grammars as a courtesy marker, making it clear that this pragmatic function is not in use any longer. Proceeding in chronological order, Quirk *et al.* (1985: §8.90-91) consider the form *please* as a subjunct, that is, one of the four types of adverbial that they distinguish (together with adjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts). Subjuncts are adverbials whose main characteristic is their "subordinate role [...] in comparison with other clause elements." Within subjuncts, they classify *please* in the

group of "courtesy subjuncts," elements with a subordinate role that "may apply to the whole clause in which the subjunct operates" (1985: §8.88). For these authors, "courtesy subjuncts are chiefly realized by a small group of adverbs used in rather formulaic expressions of politeness and propriety" (1985: §8.90). *Please* is classified together with other adverbs like *kindly*, *cordially* and *graciously* (cf. *Take a seat* please, *Will you* kindly *take your seats?*), although they point out that *please* is somewhat special in two main respects. Firstly, it is irregular in form, as it is not derived from an adjective by means of the typical adverb-forming suffix *–ly* like other markers such as *kindly* and *cordially*. This has to do with its origin, as Quirk *et al.* point out in a note:

> The subjunct *please* is sharply different from the other items discussed above because of course it still retains some connection with the impersonal verb phrase ('it pleases N') from which it is historically derived and which is reflected in more formal expansions:
>
> Come this way, *if you please.* [where *you* is historically the object]
> I shall now call my last witness, *if it please your Lordship.*
>
> (Quirk *et al.* 1985: §8.91 note [a])

Quirk *et al.* (1985: §8.91) admit that the second example above, an expression in legal contexts, is "a very formal and largely archaic way of indicating respect for a person addressed." They recognise a similar use of third-person involvement "as a brief prayer in fervent wishes," such as *please God*, with the meaning 'if it pleases God.'

The second aspect in which *please* differs substantially from other courtesy subjuncts is that, while the latter can also function as adjuncts, as *kindly* in (1) below, *please* cannot serve such a function.

(1) She spoke kindly to the new students.

Like Quirk *et al.* (1985), Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 570) classify *please* together with *about*, *but*, *nor*, *however*, *perhaps* or *therefore* into the group of adverbs (Chapter 6: 'Adjectives and adverbs') "not formed by –*ly* suffixation," which do not admit modifiers or complements. *Please* is also included, alongside *but*, *ever*, *not*, *perhaps*, *quite* or *therefore*, in the group of "[o]ther lexically simple adverb lexemes," characterised by being "morphologically simple but not homonymous with adjectives." Some but not all of these 'adverbs' are listed in both groups. Several of the forms cited may belong as well to other word classes such as conjunctions (*but*) or prepositions (*about*). Interestingly, Huddleston and Pullum add a comment on the origin of the form *please* when they say that it is a verb that "has been reanalysed as an adverb in *Please don't tell anyone* or *Wait here a moment, please*, where it is functioning as adjunct" (2002: 570). Even though in the Cambridge Grammar *please* is regarded as an adjunct, Huddleston and Pullum do not deal with it in the chapter devoted to this type of adverbial (Chapter 8). This is striking since they have appropriate categories that could match the main features of *please*, among them 18: 'Speech act-related adjuncts' (2002: 773). In this group, they include (i) 'manner adjuncts' used when describing a given speech act (i.e. *frankly* in *Frankly, it was a waste of time*); (ii) those referring to "purpose, reason, concession and condition;" (iii) "[a]djuncts referring

to felicity conditions of the speech act" (i.e. the *since* clause in *Since you're so clever, what's the square root of 58,564?*) and (iv) 'metalinguistic adjuncts' (i.e. *metaphorically* (*speaking*) or *literally*). In spite of the fact that *please* is not included in the chapter devoted to adjuncts, Chapter 15: 'Coordination and supplementation,' when they are dealing with '[a]symmetric constructions: *and*,' and referring to example 35 i: *Be an angel and make me a coffee*, they say that *Be an angel and* has "a role comparable to an **adjunct** like *kindly* or *please*" [my bold] (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 1303).

The category 'adjunct' in Huddleston and Pullum (2002) coincides roughly with that of 'adverbial' in Quirk *et al.* (1985). As mentioned above, Quirk *et al.* (1985: §8.24) distinguish four types of adverbials: adjuncts —having a role similar to other clausal elements, such as subject, object and complement, subjuncts —having a 'minor' role with respect to other clausal elements, disjuncts and conjuncts —both show a 'superordinate' role and are relatively detached from other clause elements. All these but the last type could be included in the group of 'adjuncts' in Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 663-784).

Biber *et al.* (1999) offer a different classification from the other two reference grammars. Here *please* is not included in the group of adverbs, but it is regarded as an 'unanalysed formula.' 'Unanalysed formulae' are defined by their pragmatic function, that is, by their role in "polite or respectful language" (1999: 1047). As shown in Section 2.3.3, *please*, together with other 'polite speech-act formulae' is part of Biber *et al.*'s new word-class of 'inserts,' a useful category in which they classify a range of words and expressions according to their pragmatic and politeness functions. Among different groups of syntactic non-clausal units, Biber *et al.* provide the example of 'Condensed directives,' such as *No crying*, in which the force of a

command is present without an imperative verb. In other examples of condensed directives including *please*, such as *Down! Down the stairs please!*, "the directive force of the utterance is marked, and somewhat softened, by the use of the politeness insert *please*" (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1101-1102).

Even though the three reference grammars mentioned above differ as to the syntactic function they assign to *please* and even to the word class to which *please* is ascribed, there is a general agreement concerning its use. Quirk *et al.* (1985: §8.90) remark that "when courtesy subjuncts appear in questions, the questions constitute a **request**" [my bold]. Similarly, for Biber *et al.* (1999: 1047) these formulae are used in "polite or respectful language in exchanges such as **requests**, greetings, offers and apologies" [my bold]. And further, under the label 'Various polite speech-act formulae,' there is an example of *please* inside a conversation when someone answers *Yes please* to an offer. They add between brackets that "**please** is a request 'propitiator'" (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1093). I find this is a very accurate and simple definition, paying attention only to the pragmatic function or the role of this word.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002) also mention the role of *please* in requests. The most interesting comments on the use of *please* are found in Chapter 10 which deals with 'Clause type and illocutionary force.' According to Huddleston and Pullum, *please* is a "non-propositional marker of illocutionary force" that "serves to indicate that I am making a **request**" [my bold], but it "does not express any part of [the] propositional content," since it does not affect the truth or falsity of the request (2002: 861). It is important to remark that *please* has no influence on the content of the sentence, an idea also expressed in Biber *et al.* (1999: 1082) as feature 6 of Inserts. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) also regard *please* as one of the "various

ways in which the 'asking' force is signalled," together with *kindly*, the tag *will you* or the 'performative parenthetical' *I beg you* or even *just*. The example for *please* is *Please help me tidy up* (2002: 930). These forms are grouped in epigraph b) 'Requests, pleas, entreaties,' under the more general title 'Imperatives as directives.' *Please* is referred to as an 'illocutionary modifier' together with *kindly* (2002: 939). Therefore, in this grammar we find similar ideas to those found in Biber *et al.* (1999) and Quirk *et al.* (1985). Given that 'asking force' is a way of referring to the speech act of requests, it is clear that these three grammars pay attention mainly to the function and use of the word. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) add some labels that might be helpful for the description of *please*, some of them belonging to pragmatics. In fact, Chapter 10 is almost devoted to the explanation of terms and divisions taking the pragmatic approach carefully into consideration. Even if Huddleston and Pullum's contribution seems worth mentioning, we cannot forget that there are some contradictions in their ascribing of *please* to the category of adjuncts.

The point of view shown by Biber *et al.* (1999) in their grammar is the most appealing to me, since their description focuses on use. In their detailed analysis of the characteristics of the class of 'inserts,' they do not put them together as a hotchpotch, but rather they provide a list of properties which are common to all the members of the category. What they call 'inserts' are in a borderline situation between grammar, understood in the traditional way, and pragmatics. Furthermore, these authors allow different words to enter this group due only to their pragmatic function. The courtesy marker *please* is quite a unique word and we may be able to find some similarities with other words paying attention to its function, use and historical development, if we intend to group them together under the same label.

In fact, there is no agreement in these three reference grammars about the definitions of the category which to *please* belongs or the members that can be included into this group. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the specific characteristics of courtesy markers in order to provide an accurate classification, especially as regards their pragmatic function and special syntactic behaviour.

5.3. *Please* and *pray* in dictionaries

The problems to define the courtesy markers *please* and *pray* are also present in dictionaries. An interesting illustration of this is found in the *OED*, which has changed the entry for *please* substantially over time. In the second edition of the dictionary, released in 1989, the courtesy marker *please* is included in the entry for the verb *please*, more specifically in the subentry for **please!**, in which we are told that it can be classified as "imperative or optative." As for the meaning, "[w]hen parenthetical, or without construction, *please* is = may it please you, if it please you, if you please […] [b]ut when followed by an infinitive, it is = Be pleased." (s.v. *please*, v. 6c). The on-line edition releases new updates four times a year, and since the June 2006 quarterly update, there is a new separate entry for *please* as an adverb and interjection. Similarly, the second edition (1989) of this dictionary included within the entry of *pray* as a verb several forms "used parenthetically to add instance or deference to a question or request," as among them *I pray you (thee)*, *pray you*, *pray thee*, *I pray* or even only "contracted to *pray*" (s.v. *pray*, v. 8 a-d). In March 2007, however, a new entry for *pray* as an adverb was added. Although pragmatic labels are not mentioned in the dictionary, the fact that both *please* and *pray* as pragmatic markers

are distinguished from their source verbs suggests a change in the conception and confection of the *OED*. In the case of *please*, recent updates have provided instances of *please* as a courtesy marker from the late eighteenth century, antedating first uses 150 years as compared with those in the first edition.

Even though it is generally agreed that *please*, being a pragmatic marker, cannot be modified by any other element in the sentence, the *OED* includes in a recent update the expression *pretty please* (s.v. *pretty* adj., n., and int. S2), whose first example dates back to 1888. This colloquial form has a function similar to *please*, "used in emphatically polite or imploring request." Although the *British National Corpus* (*BNC*) contains only three instances of this expression, it is commonly heard in colloquial contexts and often followed by modifiers like *with a cherry on top* or *with sugar on top*, as in (2) below, the last entry in the *OED*, taken from the film *Pulp Fiction*:

(2) I need you guys to act fast if you want to get out of this. So pretty **please**, with sugar on top, clean the fuckin' car. (1994, s.v. *pretty* adj., n., and int. S2, *pretty please* adv.)[52]

It is interesting the note which the *OED* includes here to compare this structure to German *bitte schön* (literally 'please beautiful/pretty'), which functions both as a response to *thank you* in German and as emphatic polite request marker. The on-line edition of the *OED* has other entries providing information about *please* and its functions, such as *puh-leeze* or *RSVP*. *Puh-leeze* is a colloquial form, originally found

---

[52] For reasons of convenience, *please* and *pray* will be highlighted in bold type in all the examples.

in American English in the twenties, written with different spellings "representing an emphatic pronunciation of *please*" (s.v. *puh-leeze*, *adv.* and *int.*). This entry was included in June 2008 quarterly update with the same functions of *please*, both as adverb and interjection. *RSVP* is a French acronym from '*Répondez s'il vous plaît*' which means 'please reply.' It is documented in English from the first half of the nineteenth century onwards, probably copied from the use in French correspondence, but only included in the *OED* in 2008. This acronym is used as an interjection especially "on an invitation card or at the end of a written invitation as a request for a response" (s.v. *RSVP int.* and *v.*).

The *OED* offers an interesting distinction between the usages of *please* as an adverb and as an interjection. We can observe that whereas examples of the adverb *please*, which are attested earlier, seem to appear only to express politeness or to emphasise a polite context, as in (3), usages of the interjection, first attested at the beginning of the twentieth century, may reflect just the opposite. They are accompanied by the interjection *oh* in all the examples included in the *OED* with this function in order to stress speaker's disagreement or annoyance, as in (4):

(3) '**Please** sir, missis has made tea,' said a middle-aged female servant, bobbing into the room (1836, *OED*, s.v. *please* adv.)

(4) 'Did you get together because you liked each other or you couldn't find anyone else to play with?' Oh **please**! not again. (1981, *OED*, s.v. *please* int.)

Now, we are going to take a close look at the entries of *please* and *pray* in different contemporary monolingual dictionaries, paying attention to how these words are

classified and how their pragmatic functions as courtesy markers are described. To start with, it is surprisingly remarkable that all the dictionaries selected here, some of them addressed to English learners, also include the function of *pray* in requests.

In the Collins *English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (= *CEDAL*) we find a section on Pragmatics (xxii) in which there is a type of division of central aspects that can be useful for the purposes of the dictionary: attitudes, emphasis, feelings, formulae, politeness and vagueness. If we consider the entry for *please* we find some of these labels in the margins beside the definitions, in particular 'politeness' and 'formulae.' Since in the same entry we find *please* as a verb, I quote just the meanings which represent the courtesy marker, omitting the examples:

1. You say **please** when you are politely asking or inviting someone to do something. […]
2. You say **please** when you accept something politely. […]
3. You can say **please** to indicate that you want someone to stop doing something or stop speaking. You would say this if, for example, what they are doing or saying makes you angry or upset. […]
4. You can say **please** in order to attract someone's attention politely. Children in particular say '**please**' to attract the attention of a teacher or other adult. [mainly BRIT]. […] (*CEDAL* s.v. *please*)

It is worth noting that, as was also the case with grammars, in dictionaries the emphasis is on the use of *please* rather than on its meaning. Thus, the four definitions above represent roughly the possibilities we have for the use of *please* as a courtesy marker in Present-day English. The first one clearly reflects the fact of asking something politely, that is, again the same idea of request. As for the word

category assigned to the form *please*, we find 'adverb' for 1 and 2, and 'convention' for 3 and 4. This dictionary does not go beyond these labels and this is clear in the definition as well, in which by using the introductory forms *You say* and *You can say* avoids a clear decision on the word class to which *please* belongs.

In the same entry we find the following definitions for the phrase *if you please* —examples are again omitted:

8. **If you please** is sometimes used as a very polite and formal way of attracting someone's attention or of asking them to do something. […]

9. You can say **if you please** to indicate that a situation surprises or annoys you, or is difficult to believe. […] (*CEDAL* s.v. *please*)

The first of these definitions suggests a meaning very close to *please* but with more emphasis on politeness and level of formality. The first one is taken as 'convention,' whereas the second one is considered a 'phrase.' We may wonder whether these uses of *if you please* could already be present in earlier stages when both forms were used, sometimes even in similar contexts.

Furthermore, this dictionary identifies two uses of *pray* as adverb:

3. **Pray** is used when asking a question in a rather unfriendly way or in an angry but calm way.

4. **Pray** was used to add politeness to a command. (*CEDAL* s.v. *pray*)

The label 'old-fashioned' is included next to both definitions, although only the second one is implied as being obsolete (cf. "was used" vs. "is used").[53] An interesting nuance suggested in the first definition points at *pray* as a courtesy marker in requests in which the speaker wants to make explicit his anger or unfriendliness. As in the definitions of *please* above, the focus here is again on the use of the courtesy marker in requests.

Consider now the entry for *please* (polite request) in the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*, which, unlike other dictionaries, establishes a distinction between *please* as an exclamation and the verb *please* by placing them in different entries:

exclamation used in order to make a request more polite, or in order to add force to a request or demand • *Could I have two cups of coffee and a tea, please?* • *"Please can I have an ice cream?" said the girl.* • *Please, David, put the knife down.* • *Oh, please. Do shut up!* • *"May I see your passports, please (fml* **if you please***)?" said the customs officer.* • (Br.) Please is also used esp. by children to a teacher or other adult in order to get their attention: *Please Miss, I know the answer!* Please is also used when accepting something politely or enthusiastically: *"More potatoes?" "Please."* o *"May I bring my husband?" "Please do."* o (esp. Br.) *"Oh, yes please," shouted the children, when I suggested a trip to the zoo.* (s.v. *please*)

This definition, slightly more traditional, is also simpler. The function of *please* is clearly to make a request. We have *if you please* as a more formal version of *please* that

---

[53] A quick search for *pray* (0.68) and *if you please* (0.89) in the *BNC* reveals that the frequencies of both items are extremely low as compared to that of *please* (131.15) in Present-day English, but they are still attested.

can be used in the same context. The dictionary defines the form as an 'exclamation' without any further complication. On page xviii it is stated that "some exclamations are used in particular situations, for example to greet someone (*hi*), make a request (*please*) or agree to something (*okay*)," i.e. the dictionary refers here to pragmatic functions. The main characteristic of exclamations is that they are "used especially in informal speech to show strong feelings such as surprise (*wow*), anger (*damn*), disgust (*ugh*) and pain (*ouch*)." This grouping is different from the others we have seen so far, with different members and probably the most marginal lexical category that could possibly be given to *please*, comparing it to exclamations like *wow* or *ugh*. It is interesting, nevertheless, that *pray* is classified as an adverb and not as an exclamation even though its function is similar to that of *please*. In this dictionary *pray* is qualified as "literary or old use," and is defined as "a formal and emphatic way of saying 'please'" (s.v. *pray* adv.).

The *Oxford Dictionary of English* classifies both *please* and *pray* as adverbs in their function in requests. Thus, they mention the main functions of *please* (i) "used in polite requests or questions;" (ii) "to add urgency and emotion to a request;" (iii) "in polite or emphatic acceptance of an offer;" and (iv) "to ask someone to stop doing something of which the speaker disapproves" (s.v. *please* adv.). The adverb *pray* is regarded as formal or archaic. It can be "used as a preface to polite requests or instructions" or "as a way of adding ironic or sarcastic emphasis to a question" (s.v. *pray* adv.).

The Collins *English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* classifies *please* as an adverb and sentence modifier, whereas the archaic form *pray*, with a similar function, is regarded as an interjection.

In general, we find the same terminological problem in grammars and dictionaries. The difficulties to classify courtesy markers such as *please* and *pray* are present in most dictionaries which assign these items to different parts of speech or word classes, namely exclamation, adverb and interjection, in some cases the category to which *please* and *pray* are assigned differs in one and the same dictionary. These description problems have to do with the pragmatic features of these items, since the definitions lay an emphasis on their uses or functions. The reason for this problem is explained in the defining feature 6 of Inserts, in which, as we have already seen, it is pointed out that these forms lack a "denotative meaning: their use is defined rather by their pragmatic function" (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1082).

5.4. *Please* and *pray* in Late Modern English reference works

Entries for both *please* and *pray* in most eighteenth-century dictionaries define them only as verbs, only providing instances of their verbal status. An interesting exception is found in Johnson's dictionary (1755-56), which, in the fourth meaning of the entry of *please* admits a peculiarity of this word, which is not exactly a verbal use: "[t]o be pleased. To like. A word of **ceremony**" [my bold] (s.v. *please* v. 4). Thus, it seems that in the mid-eighteenth century Johnson recognises a pragmatic function of *please*. Even more remarkably, the entry of *pray* as a verb points out the pragmatic use of this word: "I PRAY; that this *I pray you to tell me*, is a slightly **ceremonious** form of introducing a question" [my bold]. This dictionary admits the use of the marker *pray* alone and provides some examples of "only *pray* elliptically" (s.v. *pray* v.). These observations are followed almost literally by Sheridan (1780),

whose last meaning of *please* is exactly the same (s.v. *please* v.), whereas in the entry for *pray* we find "I Pray, or, Pray, singly, is a slightly ceremonious form of introducing a question" (s.v. *pray* v.). Thus, the label 'ceremonious' indicates that both forms were used to signal politeness, in fact one of the meanings of *ceremony* in the *OED* is "a usage of courtesy, politeness, or civility" (s.v. *ceremony* n. 2). In the case of *pray*, these two dictionaries highlight the fact that this word is used to introduce a question, a common form of a request. It is also worthy of mention that Johnson includes a separate entry for *prithee*, which, as can be seen, provides a normative definition of the item: "a familiar **corruption** of *pray thee*, or *I pray thee*, which some of the tragick writers have injudiciously used" [my bold] (s.v. *prithee*; cf. Section 5.5.2 below). The same evaluation is found in Sheridan's dictionary.

In eighteenth century grammars we do not find many comments regarding *pray* or *please*, although some references to the latter are made to exemplify impersonal verbs. As Tieken (2009: 78) suggests, "[b]ecause of their prescriptive function, normative grammars would be unlikely to present accurate analyses of contemporary usage." Therefore, we should not expect any explicit mention of the pragmatic usage of the courtesy markers. A clear exception is found in this passage taken from Bayly's (1772) grammar, in which the different verbal moods are discussed:

> It may not be *indicative* and *imperative*, but *subjoined* with an uncertainty, a doubt, wish, request —as, *if the Sun set—it is necessary that it set—perhaps it may set—I wish it may* or *may it set*— **please** or **pray give**— This is speaking in the Subjunctive, Potential, Optative. (Bayly 1772: 34) [italics original; bold mine]

Thus, both *pray* and *please* are seen as verb forms in the subjunctive mood followed by an infinitive verb. But, the most interesting aspect is that a grammar writer was aware in the 1770s of the similarities of both courtesy markers and that they could be used interchangeably in the same context. Anselm Bayly was a clergyman, born in Gloucestershire and educated in Oxford. He was familiar with Latin, Greek and Hebrew, writing on some aspects of those languages (cf. *ODNB*). Therefore, given his acquaintance with linguistic issues and the fact that he had been in contact with western and central English dialects, his observation on both courtesy markers acquires special relevance because it comes from a reliable and authoritative source. A different comment on *pray*, related this time to word-order, is found in Corbet's 1784 *Concise System*: "Lastly, *Syntax* teaches us to range or place our Words in a *proper Order*, as *Pray, Sir, dine with me To-day*; not *Dine with me To-day, pray, Sir*" (Corbet 1784: viii). Thus, Corbet observes that *pray* used to occur in initial position preceding a request, whereas medial position was rebuked. This had also been previously pointed out by Johnson in his dictionary.

These allusions to the courtesy markers *pray* and *please* in eighteenth century reference works are exceptional. As is well known, eighteenth century grammarians used to follow Latin grammar in their classifications, adapting Latin paradigms to English, and therefore we cannot expect mentions of pragmatic features. Nevertheless, the hints provided by Bayly and Johnson indicate that probably through the second half of the eighteenth century both *pray* and *please* were frequent in common speech and were used in similar contexts.

5.5. Origin and development of *please* and *pray*

5.5.1 The courtesy marker *please*

We have seen so far that some authors justify the peculiar characteristics of *please* by referring back to the history of the word. The verb *please* was first introduced into English in the fourteenth century through Anglo-Norman and Middle French *plaisir* (*OED*, s.v. *please* v.), a form derived from Latin *placēre*, 'to be pleasing or agreeable.' In fact, in Present-day French, the conditional expressions *s'il vous plaît* (literally 'if it you please'), the counterpart of *please* in French, which dates back to the second half of the twelfth century, still keeps a form of this verb. The *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* attests a conditional construction with a slightly different word-order, namely *si plaisir lui (etc.) est*, meaning also 'if he (etc.) wishes, pleases' and literally 'if pleasure he is.' An instance of this conditional form is shown in (5):

(5) (*Ipom* BFR 3015) Ke nuls ne pusse a chambre aler … Ffors sul mei, **si pleisir vus est**. (c.1180, *AND*, s.v. *plaisir*)

The first *OED* entry for the verb *please* in English dates back to 1350 (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 1 and 3), whereas its first usages as a courtesy marker are only found in the eighteenth century. As mentioned above, the *OED3* establishes a difference in the classification of *please* between adverb and interjection. Example (6) below is the first quoted example for the adverb *please* in the *OED*, an entry in which *please* is defined according to its function, since they remark that it is "[u]sed in polite request or agreement, or to add a polite emphasis or urgency: kindly, if you please"

(*OED*, s.v. *please* adv. and int.). It belongs to a merchant's letter, which dates back to 1771:

   (6) **Please** send the inclosed to the Port office. (1771)[54]

The example in (7) shows the first instance included in the *OED* as an interjection, "[e]xpressing incredulity or exasperation: 'for goodness' sake', 'come off it'," a function documented more than one century later than the previous one (*OED*, s.v. *please* adv. and int.):

   (7) 'I see, I see. And now you have gone over to the enemy.' 'Oh, **please**—! If my father was alive, I am sure he would vote Radical again now that Ireland is all right.' (1908)

As stated by Traugott (2000) and Akimoto (2000), *please* came to replace the former courtesy markers constituted by complex constructions using the verb *pray*, such as *I pray you* (cf. Section 7.5), and the marker *pray* itself, which is also a loanword from Old French. This replacement took place, according to Akimoto, in the nineteenth century (2000: 79).

     In her 1995 article, Allen (1995a: 298) mentions an example from Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, a novel published in 1814, as the first instance of the courtesy marker *please*:

---

[54] The *Oxford Dictionary of American Usage and Style* shows in a separate entry for *enclosed please find*, that this common expression in "commercial and legal correspondence" is perceived as archaic already in the late nineteenth century (*ODAUS* s.v. *enclosed please find*).

(8) The Thrush is gone out of harbour, **please**, sir… (from Allen 1995a, her example (45))

There is no agreement among scholars as to the origin of the courtesy marker *please*. The *OED* proposes three different origins (s.v. *please* adv. and int.):

- "as a request for the attention or indulgence of the hearer, prob. originally short for *please you (your honour,* etc.);"
- "but subsequently understood as short for *if you please;*"
- "as a request for action, in immediate proximity to a verb in the imperative, probably shortened from the imperative or optative *please* followed by the *to-infinitive.*"

As for the last option, the examples of different verb forms of *please* followed by *to-*infinitive provided date from the fifteenth century, such as (9), to the late twentieth century (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 4b):

(9) I was wel **plesed**..To se the botoun fair and swote So freshe spronge out of the rote. (*a*1425)

Examples of imperative *please* followed by a *to*-infinitive, as (10) below, were "used chiefly to introduce a respectful request." This use with *to*-infinitive is now regional, but it was frequently used in Late Modern English (cf. Section 7.4.2). The *OED* identifies this intransitive construction as originally Scottish which, either imperative

or optative, could also be followed by "bare infinitive, *that*-clause, or *and* followed by imperative" (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 6d).

      (10)   **Please** to procure mee weights, scales, blow panns and sifters. (1688)

The *OED* provides a plausible explanation of the relationship between this construction with *to*-infinitive and the first instances of the courtesy marker *please* followed by a verb form:

> Examples with bare infinitive complement are now usually analysed as *please* adv. followed by an imperative. This change probably dates from the development of the adverb, which may stand at the beginning of a clause modifying a main verb in the imperative. (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 6d)

According to Gold (2006), the construction *please to* is still productive nowadays in some varieties of English, such as Jamaican English, and is still found, even if residual, in British and American English.

      Although the *OED* mentions this imperative form as one of the possible origins of the courtesy marker *please*, this option has not been considered as a plausible source in the literature. The second choice, namely the reduction of *if you please*, has usually been taken for granted. If we pay attention to the heading for *if you please* (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 6c) we find the following:

if (also **†and**) **you please**:

(*a*) Used as a courteous qualification to a polite request, or as an acceptance of an offer, etc.: if it be your will or pleasure, with your permission, if you like.

(*b*) Used sarcastically to express surprise and indignation at something unreasonable (as if asking leave to report such a thing).

The first instance of this structure in the *OED* dates back to the sixteenth century, and appears next to *I pray you*, both conveying a high degree of politeness:

(11)   But tary I pray you all if ye **please**. (*c*1563, *OED*, s.v. *please* v. 6c)

Conditional forms like *if you please* and *if it please you* may well have been then a calque from the French expression *s'il vous plaît*, which is a conditional construction itself. Consequently, the expression would have kept in English more or less the same meaning it had in French. The fact that this conditional construction in French conveys exactly the same meaning of the courtesy marker *please* in Present-day English makes the conditional forms *if you please* and *if it please you* plausible as the direct origin of *please*, and therefore worthy of consideration, especially because "[w]hen the verb *please* was borrowed from French, it was borrowed in essentially the French patterns, adapted to English syntax" (Allen 1995b: 300).

Chen (1998) applies the label 'addressee-satisfaction conditionals' to constructions like *if it please you*, *if it like you*, *if you will*, *if you list* and their variants, paying attention to the development of these expressions, which he regards as cases of degrammaticalisation. According to Chen, these constructions have lost their "sense of conditionality" (1998: 26) and this would be the reason for the subsequent

loss of the conditional marking elements. In his view, when those elements in the conditional constructions (other than *please*) are omitted "the bare *please* will be used in effect as an interjection expressing politeness" (Chen 1998: 27).[55] As regards the function of *please* forms, he remarks that "when used in making a request or accepting an offer […] *if it please you* and its variants had the potential of being reduced to a bare *please*" (Chen 1998: 27). The idea expressed here for the origin of the courtesy marker *please* has to do with a derivation from a conditional expression leaving out certain elements.

Different authors, such as for instance, Traugott and Dasher (2002), suggest that the origin of the courtesy marker lies in constructions like *if you please*. Similarly, Brinton (2006, 2007a, 2008, 2010) sees in *if you please* the source of the marker and offers this development as an example from an 'adverbial clause' towards a 'pragmatic parenthetical.' The same idea is also present in Brinton and Traugott (2005a: 137) (cf. Chapter 3).

As mentioned above, Quirk *et al.* (1985) consider the "subjunct *please*" to be "historically derived" from "the impersonal verb phrase ('it pleases N')." They add that this "is reflected in more formal expansions" like *if you please*, "where *you* is historically the object" (Quirk *et al.* 1985: § 8.91). They do not state a direct derivation from *if you please*, but rather from an impersonal form, like *(if) it please you*. They state that the pronoun *you* is the object, an idea expressed as well in the *OED*, where it is indicated that "*you* may have been originally dative" (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 6b). The same idea is also found in the Oxford *Dictionary of English Etymology* (s.v. *please*). Using the evidence provided by the *OED*, Busse (1999: 495-496), suggests

---

[55] Note that Chen (1998) also uses the label 'interjection' to refer to *please*.

the development of *please* can be regarded as a case of grammaticalisation, which would have followed several steps:[56]

1) †please it you (= may it please you) → 2) †please you → 3) please!

(Busse 1999: 496)

Therefore, unlike other authors, Busse does not posit an evolution from a conditional structure. He notices a shift in the meaning of the marker from the reinterpretation of the impersonal constructions in steps 1) and 2) towards that of 'be pleased.'

According to Allen (1995a), the courtesy marker *please* derives from what she labels the UNPROP construction (short for 'unexpressed proposition,' cf. 6.2.3 below). In forms like *as you please, when you please* or *if you please* a proposition, complement of the verb *to please*, is intended but not expressed. This is also the case in forms like *if it please you* or *please you* (see Chapter 6 for constructions with *please*). This author observes that "[i]t seems likely that this usage of *please* originated from an UNPROP construction which was reduced by leaving out both the subject and the object" (Allen 1995a: 298). This can be considered again a suggestion for the origin of *please* from a conditional construction, but not necessarily, since the UNPROP construction includes expressions without conditional elements, like *please you*, the other possibility given in the *OED* (*OED*, s.v. *please* adv. and int.).

---

[56] See Chapter 3 for the different processes of change mentioned in the literature in relation to pragmatic markers, and more specifically to the development of *pray* and *please*.

The idea of reduction is also present in Biber *et al.* (1999). When referring to the category of Inserts, these authors suggest that "[s]uch conversational routines are historically derived by ellipsis from the more elaborated expressions" (1999: 1047). Although the statement affects other forms too, in the case of *please* we may understand a possible origin from the conditional forms *if you please* and *if it please you* or even from a form such as *please you*.

Brown and Gilman (1989) pay attention to several phrases used in indirect requests in Shakespeare's tragedies and make a detailed analysis of different expressions, including forms of *pray* or *please*, such as *Pray you* or *So please your Majesty*. They add an interesting remark:

> It is, incidentally, interesting that the modern parent's magic word *please* did not exist in the 17th century, but such forms as *If it please you* and *May it please you* did, and it is from these phrases, which had the same magical function, that the word in isolation derives (Millward, personal communication). (Brown and Gilman 1989: 182)

The quotation points also to the conditional *if it please you* as the ancestor of *please* "in isolation," but also to the modal expression *may it please you*. Brown and Gilman observe that *please* did not exist in Elizabethan English. In fact, Shakespearean examples in the *OED* include longer expressions such as *please it your Maiestie* or *Wil't please your worship* (s.v. *please* v).

Watts (2003) also finds that "*please* is still recognisable as a descendant of the clause *if it please you*." This author comments on the development of *please* as a clear case of pragmaticalisation, with loss of verbal status, suggesting that the process is

not completed yet (2003: 187) (cf. Sections 3.2 and 3.4 on grammaticalisation and pragmaticalisation).

Forms like *please you*, *so please you*, *please your honour*, *please God*, etc. are, according to the *OED*, impersonal forms in which *it* is not the subject, "with a proposition expressed by an infinitive or *that*-clause or understood," and "the person in the 'experiencer' role as object" (cf. Allen's UNPROP construction). These expressions would have a modal denotation, meaning "may it (so) be agreeable to you" (s.v. *please* v. 3).

When dealing with "sentences in which there is no subject expressed," Jespersen refers to the verbs that "have passed from the so-called impersonal construction with a personal subject to the construction with a personal subject," such as *think* or *need* (1909-1949: vol. III 11.8$_1$). It is worth having a look at what he says about certain forms with *please*:

> The subjunctive *please* is often used without a subject in the older language: *so please you*, *so please your honour*, *please God*, *an(d) please your Majesty*, etc. in Elizabethan authors; Swift T 43 An please your worships. But in the modern continuation of this usage *if you please* the popular speech instinct naturally takes *you* (the original dative) as the subject (in nominative). (Jespersen 1909-1949: vol. III 11.8$_1$)

There are two interesting ideas here: first, *please* is interpreted as a verb in the subjunctive in all these constructions with no hesitation; second, the proposed "modern continuation" of these forms is *if you please* —and not viceversa, not *please* alone as a parenthetical. Jespersen points at the reanalysis of an original object as a

subject in this construction (cf. Section 6.3). Similarly, references to the origin of *please* are also found in Poustma (1904-1916), another grammar of the first half of the twentieth century. He indicates that *if you please* "is often shortened to *please*, especially in requests, and in deprecating expressions of dissatisfaction" (1904-1916: 108).

In Part V of his grammar, Jespersen provides some examples in which he is not always certain whether *please* should be regarded as a verb or as a different word class. In 17.3$_6$ *please* is considered a verb "of comparatively vague meaning" in the sentence *Will you please to come in?* (1909-1949: vol. V 17.3$_6$). There is a similar example in 24.2$_3$ (vol. V): *But please your honour go into the lodge.* In both cases "*please* may be imperative or subjunctive" and in the second example "*your honour* object or subject, *go* imperative or infinitive." Right afterwards, he gives other examples, adding that "some of them [are] with parenthetical *please*." We may find a couple of them which are clearly parenthetical, but we do not know whether he would consider for instance *you will also please take it on my word to-day* as a verb or as a case of parenthetical *please*. This instance would be ambiguous since we can consider that the modal *will* affects *please* if we regard it as a verb form or that *please* is a parenthetical marker and therefore *will* affects the verb *take*. It is tempting to consider these cases as a missing link in the development of the Present-day English parenthetical *please*. In 21.5$_4$(v. V), when talking about condition in subordination, he points that "*And = if* is especially frequent before *please*" as we have seen in the examples in his quotations above or as in *and please your Worship* (1909-1949: vol. V 21.5$_4$). This implies that those constructions beginning with *and*, like *and please you*, would also be conditional structures. This form with conditional meaning "appears

occasionally in the dramatists in the early modern period, especially before *it*, as *an't please you*, *an't were*, etc." (*OED*, s.v. *an* conj. and n.). In relation to these expressions, Poustma observes that although *an* as a conditional conjunction disappeared by the end of the eighteenth century, it survived in expressions such as *An't please your Honour* or *An you please*, particularly in the language of servants (1904-1916: 473).

We find some references to the verb *please* in Rissanen (1999: 249-252) in the section devoted to impersonal verbs. Rissanen pays attention to the expressions in which *please* is not clearly used as a verb or at least in those cases in which it looks like something else. He mentions "subjectless phrases" like "combinations with *please*, such as *so please you*, *please God*, etc." that have had a longer life than other subjectless constructions that became "obsolete by the end of the seventeenth century" (1999: 251). This author does not specify the date any further but we realise that some of those expressions are still used nowadays. In relation to the impersonal use of *please* the *OED* explains that it was "[f]ormerly usual in deferential phrases of address or request, as *and (an, if) it please (to) you, will it please you (your honour, etc.)*" (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 3).

To summarise, the possible origins suggested in the literature for the courtesy marker *please* are the conditional constructions *if you please* and *if it please you*, and also *please you*, suggested in the *OED* as the source for *please* with the function of "a request for the attention or indulgence of the hearer" (s.v. *please* adv. and int.). All these forms —the three of them UNPROP constructions in Allen's terms— are syntactically close to the French counterpart of *please*, *s'il vous plaît*. The derivation from an imperative construction followed by a *to*-infinitive, the third choice in the

OED, originally with the function of "a request for action," does not seem to be treated elsewhere in the literature (s.v. *please* adv. and int.).

5.5.2   *Pray*: The direct antecedent of *please*

As we have already pointed out, *please* as a courtesy marker replaces *pray* and different expressions containing the verb *pray*, like *(I) pray you*, *(I) pray thee* and *prithee*. According to the *OED*, *pray* was first introduced into English in the thirteenth century from Anglo-Norman *praer* and *preer* and Anglo-Norman and Old French *preier*, forms derived from post-classical Latin *precāre* ('to entreat, pray') (*OED*, s.v. *pray* v.). The *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* includes instances of the verb *pray* meaning 'to ask (for),' 'to entreat, beg,' and 'to pray (to)' from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (*AND* s.v. *prier*[1]). Different phrases with verbal *pray*, like *I pray you (thee)*, *pray you*, *pray thee*, *prithee*, *I pray* and *pray* are "used to add urgency, solicitation, or deference to a question or request," while the first entries with this use date back to the fourteenth century (*OED*, s.v. *pray* v. P1 b), as in (12) below:

(12)   Þenk in þin herte, i **preie** þe, Off þe wrong and þe vilte. (c1330)

First uses of *pray* on its own, functioning as an adverb, are found in the early seventeenth century, as in (13) below, the earliest instance in the *OED* (s.v. *pray* adv.). Sönmez (2005: 16) finds early instances of *pray* alone in family letters from 1629, the 1630s and the 1640s. According to Sömnez, this use seems to have been adopted earlier by women.

(13)   **Pray** doe it over again. (*a*1600)

As regards the syntactic behaviour of *pray*, Jespersen observes the special conditions of the verb following the expression *I pray you*, since "we may sometimes take the base as an imperative or an infinitive" (1909-1949: vol. V 24.2$_4$), as happens with the first examples of *please* followed by a verb form (cf. previous section).

In the sixteenth century *prithee*, derived from *pray thee*, emerged as a new courtesy marker and started to be used with a similar function meaning "'I pray thee', 'I beg of you'; please" (*OED*, s.v. *prithee* int.), as in (14) below:

(14)   **Prethee** sweete king letts ride somwhether and it be but to showe ourselues. (?*c*1560)

It seems that this marker has been commonly used as one word, in fact its use with the first-person pronoun, *I prithee*, is considered rare. Even if the *OED* contains a few instances from the late twentieth century, they admit that the inclusion of *prithee* "in some modern instances [is] used humorously or to convey ironic politeness" (*OED*, s.v. *prithee* int.). Sönmez (2005: 17) places the disappearance of *prithee* during the seventeenth century, together with the loss of the pronoun *thou*. Denison (1999: 106) points at the eighteenth century, although in this period it was already used for literary purposes, or as a dialectal feature (cf. Ihalainen 1994: 229). The disappearance of *thou* seems to be related to the avoidance of a Quaker 'shibboleth' (Busse 2002: 206), although Sönmez points out that "it could not be a shibboleth if

it were not already rarer in other speakers" (2005: 17). According to Busse, *prithee* seems to fit chronologically as the continuation of *(I) pray thee*, since *prithee* is present in the later Shakespearean plays, when the full construction decays in use (2002: 193-194).

Akimoto (2000) points out that the form *pray* became more frequent in the seventeenth century, showing a decline in its frequency in the nineteenth century. *Pray* as a courtesy marker replaced the native form *biddan* (Traugott 2000: 1), a form cognate to the Present-day German courtesy marker *bitte*, the counterpart of *please* in modern German. The general meaning of *biddan* was 'to ask pressingly, beg, entreat, pray' (*OED*, s.v. *bid* v. 7) and, according to Traugott (2000), it could have a parenthetical use similar to *pray* —*ic bidde*— as in (15) and (16), extracted from the *DOEC*:

(15)　　　　[ÆLS (Sebastian) 0019 (57)] Ne awurpe ge **ic bidde** eowerne beorhtan sige for wifa swæsnyssum oððe for cyldra tearum.

(16)　　　　[ÆLS (Sebastian) 0026 (78)] Geþafiað **ic bidde** þisum gebroþrum nu, þæt hi þas witu forbugan and beo ge embe þæt ylce.

The verb *biddan* had a high frequency in Old and Middle English, as shown by López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2006: 35), who indicate that the most important function of this verb is found in requests, although its use in orders was also possible. Kohnen (2011) shows examples of the verb *biddan* with directive constructions such as *ic wille* or *ic wolde* in Old English, which are relatively frequent in his corpus. Even though Kohnen mentions how other authors point at the

politeness conveyed by those requestive expressions, he does not link them to politeness, but rather to a functional indirectness (cf. Section 4.2.3).

It is worthy of note that courtesy markers in requests tend to wear down and experiment a need to be reinforced; eventually they are replaced by new markers and sometimes become obsolete. We may wonder why English has adopted two loanwords of French origin, namely *pray* and *please*, in order to reinforce the politeness expressed in requests introduced by verbs such as *bid* (Old English *biddan*), while German keeps both the marker *bitte* in requests and the verb *bitten* meaning 'to ask, to beg, to request.' The necessity for these replacements may be related to a change towards negative politeness (cf. Section 2.2). In fact, a common positive politeness marker such as *thanks* is a native form still in use in English, but also in other Germanic languages, since cognate forms of this marker are easily recognisable (i.e. Danish *tak*, Dutch *dank*, German *danke*, Icelandic *takk*, Norwegian *takk* and Swedish *tack*).[57]

Pray has been regarded as an instance of different processes of change. Whereas Traugott (2000), Akimoto (2000) and Busse (1999, 2002) consider the development of *pray* and *prithee* as cases of grammaticalisation, Jucker considers both *pray* and *prithee* as discourse markers undergoing pragmaticalisation. For Brinton (2006, 2007a) *pray* is an example of development from a "matrix clause" to a

---

[57] The use of cognates in related languages for some pragmatic functions can also be tracked in sign language. Thus, there are clear similarities between American and British English signs for *please*, both with the open hand, palm facing in, whereas in other Germanic languages, such as German, Swedish or Norwegian, they slide the hand down the face. This can be observed in multilingual sign language sites, such as www.spreadthesign.com.

"pragmatic marker," comparable in this sense to *I think*, *I say* or *I am afraid*, all of them "clausal pragmatic markers" (cf. Chapter 3 and Section 9.4).

5.6. Reasons for the replacement of *pray* by *please*

We may wonder why *please* came to replace *pray* as the default courtesy marker used in requests, particularly since *pray* was a form still available at the end of the nineteenth century. Akimoto (2000: 80) proposes up to three reasons for the replacement:

> Firstly, a new form is dynamic, new to the ear, and more expressive. Secondly, *pray*, because of its religious connotations, may have been narrowed down in its context of use, and finally a long vowel in *please* may have been more effective in the sense of 'earnest appeal.'

Akimoto's first reason has to do with the way in which words wear out and have to be replaced, a very common tendency with expressive items such as taboo words or intensifiers (cf. Trask 1996: 39; Campbell 1998: 263-265 on taboo replacement; Bolinger 1972: 18 for a classical reference on the "fevered invention" of intensifiers), and, as mentioned above, also with courtesy markers. A request is similar to a euphemism since it mitigates the effect of an order as a face-threatening-act (similar to a taboo) removing the tone of sharpness. Speakers may perceive that words involved in politeness implications lose this mitigating force when they are too frequently used and may feel the need to reinforce or replace them. This would explain the need for a change. The religious connotations of the verb *pray* may have

influenced the decrease of its use as a courtesy marker. Besides, *please* was available at the right time and was a good candidate to replace *pray* since it was borrowed from a form that conveyed the same function in French. The last reason for the replacement of *pray* by *please* would be a mere phonetic one, since it is easy to put the emphasis on the long vowel /i:/. It is difficult to predict the lifetime of the use of *please*, but at the moment there is no other candidate in view, and this form, having only one syllable, cannot be further reduced (see examples of *pray* from the corpora in Section 7.5).

Kryk-Kastovsky (1998) provides additional explanations for the decay of *pray*. She indicates that "socio-political reasons rather than purely linguistic ones" were behind the change of *pray* to *please*, as among them "the secularization of public life at the end of the nineteenth century that made *pray* obsolete as carrying too much religious connotation" (1998: 52). She supports her claims on the basis of historical evidence on the detachment from religion by the end of the nineteenth century. As mentioned above (cf. Section 1.5), The idea of secularisation in the Victorian age is also supported by Culpeper and Demmen (2011), who consider this increase in secularisation as one of the factors leading to several changes in individualistic culture and in politeness (cf. Section 4.2.3).

As seen in Section 4.2.3, Kopytko suggests that there must have been a change from a positive politeness culture towards a negative politeness culture in Britain after the sixteenth century (1995: 532). Busse (1999) takes into consideration this shift in order to justify the change from *pray* to *please*. In this way, and as indicated by Traugott and Dasher (2002: 257), whereas *I pray you* —from which *pray*

is supposed to derive— focuses on the speaker, *if you please* and other forms of *please* focus on the addressee. Busse (2002) observes this shift by Shakeapeare's time:

> at least in colloquial speech a shift in polite requests has taken place from requests that assert the sincerity of the speaker (*I pray you*) to those that question the willingness of the listener to perform the request (*please*). (Busse 2002: 212)

Other authors follow the idea of a shift in politeness to justify some developments in the history of English. Thus, Jacobsson (2002) mentions the same tendency in Early Modern English thanking in an analysis of gratitude expressions. Jucker and Taavitsainen (2008b) observe a similar phenomenon in the development of apologies in the history of English. There is a change in the formulation of apologies, since in earlier periods they were less routinised, and not fully detached, while present-day apologies are realised through a limited set of Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs). The change of formulae reveals a development of focus from the addressee towards the speaker. Thus, whereas in the Renaissance period apologisers asked for generosity and forgiveness (i.e. *pardon, excuse*), in Present-day English data offenders just show remorse (i.e. *I'm sorry*).

A similar change can be traced in the history of greetings in English. Grzega (2008) recognises several patterns that have been renovated in the history of English. Thus, whereas in Old English there were few linguistic forms at hand, mainly attention getters and wishes for well-being, in Middle English there was a greater variety of formulae, such as wishes for a good time and inquiries about one's well-being. He identifies several factors related to the need for innovation in the

formulation of greetings from Old English to Present-day English (Grzega 2008: 190): (i) flattery motive, (ii) desire for vivid expressions, and (iii) avoidance of excessive length. Some of these factors could be extrapolated to the shift in the formulation of requests. Apart from possible changes in request strategy patterns, we can see the renewal from *biddan* to *pray* and that from *pray* to *please*. In can be the case that these changes are triggered by the "desire for vivid expressions" and the "flattery motive," especially in the formulation of requests since speakers need to innovate when the most frequent marker becomes "too normal" (cf. Grzega 2008: 190).

As noted above (Section 5.3), with the evidence given in the *OED*, Busse (1999: 495-496) suggests that the developments of *please* and *pray* are similar, since both may have been instances of grammaticalisation (cf. Chapter 3). He compares *pray* and *please* processes in the following way:

1) †please it you (= may it please you) → 2) †please you → 3) please!

1) †I pray you/thee → 2) †pray you/thee → 3) prithee/pray!

(from Busse 1999: 496)

Traugott and Dasher (2002: 257) also regard the evolution of both *pray* and *please* as parallel developments. Although, according to them, *please* does not derive from an explicit performative,[58] like *I pray you* or *ic bidde* (Traugott 2000: 4), both forms show a change from "a construction with meaning at the propositional level to a

---

[58] A performative —or 'explicit performative'— is an utterance of a speech act "whose highest clause has a first-person singular subject and a verb in the simple present that conveys the intended force of the utterance" (Sadock 1974: 9).

pragmatic marker with functions at the sociodiscourse level" (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 257).

Taking into account the abovementioned references to the origin of *please*, we can summarise the different reasons suggested in the literature as triggers for the replacement of *pray* by *please*, grouping them according to different areas of knowledge:

i. Phonetics:

– long vowel in *please*, /iː/, indicates "earnest appeal" (Akimoto 2000)

ii. Semantics:

– religious sense in *pray* (Akimoto 2000; Kryk-Kastovsky 1998)

iii. A semantic-pragmatic reason:

– "a new form is dynamic, new to the ear, and more expressive" (Akimoto 2000)

iv. Socio-political reasons:

– secularisation in the nineteenth century (Kryk-Kastovsky 1998)

v. Politeness:

– shift in politeness after the sixteenth century from a positive politeness culture to a negative politeness culture (Kopytko 1993, 1995)

– *I pray you* focuses on the speaker whereas *if you please* focuses on the addressee (Busse 1999, 2002; Traugott and Dasher 2002)

– importance of the addressee's willingness (Traugott and Dasher 2002 Busse 1999, 2002)

The relevance of the reasons mentioned in the literature will be discussed in Chapter 9. Some other factors that could have played a role will be considered, such as the fact that the same verb conveyed the same function in French or a potential specialisation of *pray* with a different pragmatic function, namely as an attention getter.

IV. TAXONOMY, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.   CLASSIFICATION OF STRUCTURES WITH *PLEASE*

6.1.   Introduction

The present chapter provides a classification of the ample range of structures featuring *please* in the Late Modern English period (Sections 6.2 and 6.4). This taxonomy allows me to depict the development of the request marker from the eighteenth century onwards. Furthermore, I will also deal with the semantic evolution of *please* over time (Section 6.3), with the change from 'please' to 'be pleased.' Note, however, that constructions including *pray* will not considered in the present chapter. The reason for this exclusion is that the courtesy marker *pray* shows a high degree of grammaticalisation in Late Modern English, the period covered by this study. Therefore, the variation of structures with *pray* with this pragmatic force in requests is minimal (see Chapter 3, Section 5.5, and Section 9.4 for details on its grammaticalisation).

6.2.   *Please* as a verb of experience

The verb *please* can be classified as a verb of experience (or experiencer verb, cf. Allen 1995b), that is, a verb which denotes an emotion or a psychological state (cf. Möhlig-Falke 2012: 209). Verbs of experience include, for instance, *like*, *desire*, *serve*, *help*, *thank* and *please*. These verbs are characterised by taking two arguments, understanding as such "any participant required by the verb" (Allen 1995b: 67). The

first argument is the so-called Experiencer, which refers to the semantic role usually "played by the human argument" in verbs of experience. There may be slight nuances in the expression of this role, but Allen recognises the usefulness of the label Experiencer (1995b: 67), as a cover term. The second argument of verbs of experience expresses the trigger of the emotion, which is referred to as the Cause with some verbs and the Theme with others (Allen 1995b: 67).

Verbs of experience generally have a peculiar syntactic behaviour, as they very commonly occur in so-called impersonal constructions —a label used to refer to a syntactic construction in which there is no element inflected for the nominative or functioning as the subject, with the exception of dummy *it*, and the verb is in the third person singular, as in (17). Other subjectless constructions with non-nominative Experiencers are also regarded as impersonal constructions, as in (18), in which the Experiencer is inflected for the dative:

(17)   sythe *it hathe lyked* hym to sende vs suche a chaunce, we muste...be glade of
         his visitacion. (from Rissanen 1999: 251, his example (337))

(18)   siþþan *gelicade* eallum folcum þaet (from Elmer 1981: 107, his example (61))

In fact, these verbs have been so closely associated with this construction that they are often referred to as 'impersonal verbs' (see Méndez-Naya and López-Couso 1997). The verb *please*, which was borrowed into English from Anglo-Norman and Middle French in the fourteenth century (see *OED*, s.v. *please* v., cf. Section 5.5.1), is a verb of experience and, as such, on the semantic level, it typically takes an Experiencer and a Cause, as we have already mentioned. According to Möhlig-Falke

(2012: 219-220), *please* was a personal verb, even though it developed an impersonal use in the mid-fourteenth century.

Cynthia Allen has described in her research the syntactic structures relevant for *please* (Allen 1995a and b). According to Allen, the semantic structure formed by an Experiencer, a verb and a Cause can be realised by three different syntactic structures which she labels the 2NP construction, the PROP construction and the UNPROP construction.[59] These three constructions will be discussed in turn in the subsections below.

6.2.1   The 2NP construction

This construction contains two noun phrases functioning as Experiencer and Cause respectively. With the verb *please*, the Experiencer is always the object as in (19) below:

(19)   The plan **pleased** the children (from Allen 1995a: 276, her example (1))

          CAUSE   EXPERIENCER

Moreover, Allen points out that with *please* "nominative Experiencers were never possible in the 2NP construction" (1995b: 98, note). In this respect, the verb *please* behaves in a different way from its native counterpart *like*, which in earlier English appeared in the 2NP construction, but with an Experiencer object (underlined), as in (20), in which it is inflected for the dative case:

---

[59] The UNPROP is labelled NO PROP in Allen (1995b).

(20)   gif hit ne licað <u>þam</u>   <u>mode</u>

　　　 if   it   not pleases the(Dat) mind(Dat)

'If it does not please the mind' or 'If the mind does not like it' (from Allen 1995a:

282,   her example (10))

However, in Present-day English we find the verb *like* in constructions such as that

in (21), in which the Experiencer is the subject (underlined):

(21)　　　 <u>Mary</u> likes Italian cuisine.

　　　 EXPERIENCER   CAUSE

While the objects of many impersonal verbs, such as *like* or *think*, were commonly

reanalysed as subjects (*OED*, s.v. *like* v.[1] 1a; s.v. *think* v.[2] 13d), "*please* never, in its

entire history, revealed the slightest hint of a tendency to assign its Experiencer to

the role of subject in the 2NP construction. The Experiencer was always the object"

(Allen 1995b: 256-257). Noun phrases in the 2NP construction can be nominal, as

in (22), or pronominal, as in (23). In both sentences Experiencers are underlined:

(22)　　　 The film pleased <u>audiences</u>.

(23)　　　 the Priests took me into their House, and treated me very kindly, making

　　　 me sing, and discourse of the Science of Musick, in which I **pleas'd** <u>'em</u> so well,

　　　 (the Priests of Apollo being all great Musicians) that they were willing to take me in

　　　 as a Probationer, (*ECF*, **P1**, Barker, J., *Exilius*, Vol. 2, Book 1 (p.181))[60]

---

[60] Examples taken from Chadwyck-Healey databases will detail the collection in italics (whether
Eighteenth-Century Fiction or *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*), the period (P) in the fiction material in bold
type, and the full reference to the novel.

6.2.2 The PROP construction

The main characteristic of this construction is that the argument Cause is conveyed by a proposition which is explicitly mentioned. Syntactically, this proposition can be realised by a finite clause, as in (24), or an infinitival clause, as in (25)[61] (Allen 1995b: 68):

(24)   and, if it should **please** Heaven that thou shouldst prove successful, retire with him, and thy daughter Victoria, far from Venice; (*NCF*, **P2**, Dacre, C., *Zofloya*, Vol. I., Chap. III. (p.50))

(25)   <u>You</u>'l **please** to leave the Old Leases with Mr Birchall as you have the Counterparts at Home. (*CLECP*, ?1772, Peter Heapy)[62]

As Allen points out (1995a, b), *please* can occur in two different subtypes of this construction, which are distinguished according to the syntactic function of the Experiencer: the Experiencer subject construction (cf. Elmer 1981: 109, who regards this as a personal construction; see also Rissanen 1999: 249) and the Experiencer object construction. The Experiencer subject construction is illustrated in (25) above and in (26) and (27) below, in which the subject has been underlined:

(26)   "but before we go any farther, will <u>you</u> **please** to tell me of what Belinda you are talking?" (*NCF*, **P2**, Edgeworth, M., *Belinda*, Vol. I., Chapter IX (p.246))

---

[61] For the conventions used in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*, see van Bergen and Denison (2007).

[62] Line-breaks are omitted in the examples from the epistolary corpus.

(27)   If <u>Heaven</u> had **pleased** that this Princess and my Brother had been so fortunate to have been joined in Marriage, all Mankind must have said, that there had then been met the two most excellent, beautiful and accomplished Persons that could have been found in Europe, (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *The Power of Love*, Part 1, Main Text (p.27))[63]

Imperative forms of *please* with a clausal clause, as in (28) below, should be included in this group as well. In imperative forms the Experiencer is not usually expressed, but it is obvious that imperatives are addressed to the second person:[64]

(28)   He spoke in a way so unlike what I should have expected from a Hammersmith waterman, that I stared at him, as I answered, **"Please** to hold her a little; I want to look about me a bit." (*NCF*, **P3**, Morris, W., *News from Nowhere*, Chapter II. (p.6))

The construction with an Experiencer object requires the presence of a dummy *it* in subject position. Elmer (1981: 109) refers to this structure as the *it*-construction, and, similarly, Rissanen (1999: 249) also refers to the presence of the dummy *it* as

---

[63] The Experiencer *Heaven* in this example, as in example (24) above, is a reference to God.

[64] In examples similar to the one in (28), such as *Please you to give me freedom?* or *please you visit her*, Jespersen points out that "we have probably either a subjunctive, or else an infinitive with *will it* or *may it* omitted by prosiopesis" (1909-49: vol. VI 16.8₉). In these examples he is not sure about the exact nature of *please* but he seems to regard it as a verb form. He does not make any distinction between the form followed by a *to*-infinitive and the form without a *to*-infinitive, which could be closer to the parenthetical use, in fact he states that "*please* generally has an infinitive with *to*" (1909-49: vol. VI 24.2₃).

the non-experiencer subject. This type can be found with both infinitival, as in (29), and finite clauses, as in (30). In both examples the Experiencer is underlined:

(29)   It **pleases** <u>me</u> to see you working so hard (from Allen 1995a: 295)

(30)   However, as it **pleased** <u>God</u> that the Wind continued fair at S. E. and by E. we found that N. W. by W. which was right afore it, was as good a Course for us as any we could go, and thus we went on. (*ECF*, **P1**, Defoe, D., *Captain Singleton*, Main Text (p.59))

The PROP construction presents a third subtype which is found with impersonal verbs but not with *please*. This is referred to as Type S by Elmer (1981) and its main feature is that it "has a non-nominative Experiencer […] and no formal subject" (Allen 1995b: 86), as in (31):

(31)   hem shamede to seie þis openli (from Elmer 1981: 85, his example (4))

Rissanen discusses this construction, which lacks "an expressed subject, with the participants of the action (agent, patient, means, source) expressed in other ways in the sentence" (1999: 250), and points out that the general development of impersonal verbs in English has been from this type to that with an animate Experiencer in subject position. He adds later that "*please* shows a tendency towards *it*," that is, towards the *it*-construction, in the Early Modern English period (1999: 251; cf. also Möhlig-Falke 2012: 221). Figure 7, from Elmer (1981) illustrates the differences between *please* and *like* in the PROP construction. According to Elmer,

please did not follow the Type S pattern at any time, while this construction is attested with the verb *like* only until the sixteenth century (Elmer 1981: 109):

Figure 7. *Please* and *like* in PROP construction

	14c.	15c.	16c.	17c.	18c.	19c.
Type S	x	x	x	-	-	-
It (= Experiencer Object)	xo	xo	xo	o	o	o
Personal (= Experiencer Subject)	x	xo	xo	xo	xo	xo

x: *liken*; o: *plesen*

From Elmer (1981: 109)

6.2.3 The UNPROP construction

In this pattern the only expressed argument is the Experiencer, while the Cause is left unexpressed. UNPROP is short for 'unexpressed proposition,' as Allen puts it, "a proposition is understood but not expressed" (Allen 1995b: 98 note), that is, it can be recovered from the context. In an example like (32) below, the infinitival clause *to do* can be inferred from the context. Allen pays special attention to this type since she aims to explain the reason why with some verbs only the Experiencer is expressed in this construction (Allen 1995a: 276).

(32)   You can do as you **please** (from Allen 1995a: 276)

As was the case with the PROP construction, two different types of the UNPROP construction can be identified depending on the syntactic role of the Experiencer: those with a subject Experiencer and those with an object Experiencer.

Within the constructions with a subject Experiencer (E) with the verb *please*, I will pay attention to three main groups, which are introduced by *as*, *if* or a *wh-word*:

- *as E please(s)*. As is well known, *as* may introduce a clause of manner or of comparison (*OED*, s.v. *as* adv. and conj.). Here I will follow Allen in considering both types of *as*-clause together. (32) above illustrates manner, while in (33) *as* introduces a comparative clause:

(33)   I can stay as late as I **please** (from Allen 1995a: 276, her example (3.a))

- *if E please(s)*. In this group I will include cases introduced by a conditional conjunction. The Experiencer subject can be pronominal, as in (34), or nominal, as in (35). This construction occurs very frequently parenthetically, as can be seen in these two examples.

(34)   O my liege, pardon me, if you **please** (from Allen 1995a: 289, her example (21))

(35)   he told him, that he had gotten a Book from the Portuguese when they left Columbo; and, if his Master **pleased**, he would sell it him. (*ECF*, **P1**, Defoe, D., *Captain Singleton*, Main Text (p.298))

- *when E please(s)*. Allen refers to constructions in this group as "variable clauses." In this group she includes examples introduced by a *wh*-word — with the exception of *whether*— as in (36), as well as other elements, such

as noun phrases or prepositional phrases, that behave in the same way as adverbials or *wh*-words, as in (37):

(36)   I may say so when I **please** (from Allen 1995b: 283, her example (13))

(37)   Lady Delacour commissioned miss Portman to go to any price she **pleased**.

(*NCF*, **P2**, Edgeworth, M., *Belinda*, Vol. I., Chapter XII. (p.366))

As mentioned above, the UNPROP construction may also occur with an object Experiencer. Here, I will pay special attention to two main types that behave essentially as parentheticals. The *OED* regards these constructions as impersonal forms, "the real subject being a following infinitive or clause, expressed or understood" (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 3). The first one is:

- *(and) please E.* In this group examples such as (38) are included, in which the only role expressed is that of an object Experiencer.

(38)   "It is as snug a place as heart can desire, **please** you, Ma'am," answered John, visibly gratified; (*NCF*, **P2**, Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume II., Chap. XXII. (p.213))

According to Jespersen (1909-49: vol. III 11.8$_1$), in (38) and similar examples, including *so please you, so please your honour, please God* or *an(d) please your Majesty*, *please* is a verb in the subjunctive without subject.

    In the second subtype, the *please*-clause is introduced by *if*, and the subject position is filled by the dummy pronoun *it*:

- *if it please E*. Compare (39):

(39)   I will try and do something, Dorian, if it would **please** you. But you must come and sit to me yourself again. (*NCF*, **P3**, Wilde, O., *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Chapter IX. (p.165))

The following table includes a summary of the different structures in which the verb *please* occurs:

Table 1. Structures with *please* in Allen (1995a, 1995b)

2NP construction

PROP construction	Subject Experiencer	
	Object Experiencer	
UNPROP construction	Subject Experiencer	*as E please(s)*
		if E please(s)
		when E please(s)
	Object Experiencer	*(and) please E*
		if it please E

6.3. Semantic and syntactic change affecting the verb *please*

As mentioned above, *please* has a native counterpart, the verb *like*. Although they are not exact synonyms, the Old English verb *lician* is usually translated as 'please.' In Old English there was a close synonym of these two verbs, namely the verb *cwemen*, which disappeared with the entrance of *please* into English. *Like* and *please* share some semantic properties, in fact Elmer (1981: 113) points out that "the use of *plesen*

corresponds directly to the intransitive use of *liken*," but they have a different syntactic behaviour, since with *please* the Cause is the subject whereas *like* presents object Causes. Allen (1995a: 282) recognises that the verb *like* had an impact on the verb *please* in the introduction of nominative Experiencers in the UNPROP construction, an influence that would entail a semantic change from the meaning 'please' to the passive meaning 'be pleased.' The relationship between *please* and *like* is shown as well in the literature in relation to the conditional constructions. In this way, Jespersen (1909-1949) reflects about this issue on several occasions. The verb *please* is compared to *like*, since "with *please* we have the same shifting as with *like*" (1909-1949: vol. III 11.2$_1$). He alludes to the constructions *if you like* and *if you please*, in which, in his view, the former morphosyntactic structure "dative (plural) + 3rd person singular subjunctive" is reanalysed as "nominative (singular or plural) + 2nd person (singular or plural) indicative" (1909-1949: vol. III 11.2$_1$). The *OED* includes a comment on this in the subentry for *please* meaning 'to be pleased, to like.' This subentry has been changed in a quarterly update and it has now adopted Allen's (1995b) perspective:

> The development of the 'inverted' use of *please* in branch II. [= with a person as subject: to be satisfied, to desire, to like] is noteworthy: it is probably not due to confusion resulting from the loss of case distinctions, but is more plausibly explained as resulting from the reassignment of the sentence element expressing the 'experiencer' role to the subject function (compare the development of the partly synonymous verb *like* v.1, which, however, did not develop passive uses parallel to sense 4 [= transitive (in passive], but developed the 'inverted'

use more extensively). See further C. L. Allen *Case Marking & Reanalysis* (1995) vii.

According to the second edition of the *OED*, this inverted use was first observed in Scottish writers. It seems reasonable to suggest that the reanalysis of object as subject in the case of *like* may have influenced a similar development with *please*, as well as the establishment of the other constructions.

6.4. Other constructions in Late Modern English

In addition to the three constructions detailed by Allen (1995a, 1995b), three further patterns should be added to the previous classification in order to account for all the examples found in the corpora under analysis: these are what I have labelled 'the 1NP construction,' the *be pleased to* pattern, and, finally, the form *please*, when it occurs as a courtesy marker.

6.4.1 1NP construction

In this pattern only one of the arguments of the verb *please* (typically the Cause and typically the subject) is expressed. This pattern does not correspond to any of the three constructions mentioned by Allen, although she clearly refers to it when she says "I have not listed the frames […] in which one of the arguments is not expressed" (Allen 1995b: 136). In the 1NP construction the argument expressed usually takes the form of a noun phrase. The other argument, usually the Experiencer, is left unexpressed either because it is unimportant, because it is

generic (cf. ex. (40)) or because it can be easily gathered from the context, as in (41), in which the Experiencer may be *him* in agreement with the previous sentence:

(40)   'tis impossible a Woman can charm without a good Mouth. Yet, answer'd Lovemore, I have seen very great Beauties **please**, as the common Witticism speaks, in spight of their Teeth: (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *The Adventures of Rivella*, Main Text (p.9))

(41)   If he chance to commend a dish he has tasted at a friend's house---Yes, every body's things are good but her's---she can never **please**---he had better always dine abroad, if nothing is fit to be eaten at home. (*NCF*, **P2**, More, H., *Coelebs In Search of a Wife*, Vol. I., Chap. X. (p.128))

Occasionally the unexpressed role is the Cause, as in (42):

(42)   Stauracius cou'd indeed command an Army, which is not always to face an Enemy (because unless the Generals **please**, they are not always expos'd, and often abide in the Center); (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *Memoirs of Europe*, Book 2, Main Text (p.202))

This construction differs from Allen's UNPROP construction in that we cannot trace back an unexpressed proposition.

6.4.2 *Be pleased to* forms

The form *pleased* can be either a participial adjective, as in (43) below, in which the adjective *pleased* is modified by the adverb *very*, which can only be used with adjectives,

(43)　　　"Papa was not very **pleased** with Aunt Dunes---it was no fault on either side, only a misunderstanding," said Judith. (*NCF*, **P3**, Baring-Gould, S., *In The Roar Of The Sea*, Vol. I., Chapter VIII. (p.102))

or a true verb from, when used as a participle, as in (44):

(44)　　　MARLOW No, No. (musing) I have **pleased** my father, however, by coming down, and I'll to-morrow please myself by returning. (**Drama**, Goldsmith, Oliver. 1773. *She stoops to conquer*)

The three main reference grammars of contemporary English admit there are ambiguous cases of participial adjectives in which it is not possible to distinguish between the verbal or the participial character of the element (cf. Quirk *et al.* 1985: § 7.16, Biber *et al.* 1999: 530, Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 1436). This distinction is even more problematic when it comes to analysing earlier stages in the development of the language, as some of the criteria do not quite hold (e.g. *much*, which in Present-day English can only modify verbs, could intensify adjectives and adverbs in earlier English (*OED*, s.v. *much* adj., adv., pron., and n. B1c)). Therefore, I have included in this group examples with the structure (Subject) + *to be pleased* form + *to-*

infinitive clause, as in (45) below. In such examples *be pleased* can sometimes be interpreted as the passive of *please* (i.e. *pleased* would be a participle) or as a predicative construction (with the participial adjective *pleased*). These examples always have an Experiencer subject.

(45)   The Duke was **pleased** to find that she took an interest in his favourite hobby, and presented her with a copy of the work. (*NCF*, **P3**, Coleridge, M. E., *The King with Two Faces*, Chapter XXXIII (p. 261))

These forms may be interesting from the point of view of use and meaning, especially taking into account that some of the examples present an imperative form, as in (46):

(46)   To make short the Entertainment, be **pleas'd** to imagine all that could be said by a young Lover, (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *Memoirs of Europe*, Book 3, Main Text, (p. 355))

The meaning of *be pleased* would have changed from 'to be gratified or satisfied' to 'to have the will or desire; to have the inclination or disposition; (also) to think proper, choose, or be so obliging as to do something' (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 4). Thus, the politeness function conveyed by this expression seems of interest for the present study.

6.4.3 Courtesy marker *please*

In this group I include those cases in which *please* is a parenthetical courtesy marker and no longer behaves as a verb but can be regarded as an adverb. The courtesy marker *please* differs from the verb in that it does not have any argument either expressed or recoverable from the context. Two groups of examples are further distinguished:

- *please* occurring on its own, as a clear parenthetical, usually placed right after or right before a pause, as in (47):

(47)   'What sort of lady, **please**? A lady of the ballet?' 'Oh no!' Alan cried, giving a little start of horror. 'Quite different from that. A real lady.' (*NCF*, **P3**, Allen, G., *The Woman Who Did*, Chapter VIII (p.94))

- pre-verbal *please*, as in (48). As we shall see below, most of the earliest examples of *please* which can be interpreted as courtesy markers are cases in which *please* is followed by a verb form. Given that *please* in initial position is not followed by any punctuation mark, which could be indicative of an intonational pause, such examples are ambiguous to a certain extent. Thus, those verbal constructions placed after *please* could have been interpreted as bare infinitive forms depending on the verb *please*, which would indicate that the whole construction was a PROP construction. However, an alternative analysis would regard those verbs as imperative forms, placed right after the parenthetical courtesy marker

—and consequently non-verbal— *please*. All the examples following these features, as in (48), will be included in this group, since they seem to reflect the courtesy marker as it typically behaves in Present-day English.[65]

(48)   so to hide my confusion I said, **"Please** take me ashore now: I want to get my breakfast.**"** (*NCF*, **P3**, Morris, W., *News from Nowhere*, Chapter II. (p.9))

6.5.   Summary of the constructions

Table 2 below summarises the different structural patters that have been identified for *please* in the selection of corpora included in the present study:[66]

---

[65] Such an ambiguity can be also observed in instances of *I think* in initial position contexts when followed by a zero clause, as in *I think you're supposed to stay* (cf. Brinton 2008: 5). Such examples can be interpreted as the pragmatic marker *I think*, or as matrix clauses. For the emergence of pragmatic marker *I think* see Section 3.4.

[66] Repeated instances have been renumbered.

Table 2. Range of patterns in which *please* is available in the selected corpora

2NP	(49) he may **please** us both (**Drama**, Goldsmith. 1773. *She stoops to conquer*)

nominal or pronominal Experiencer and Cause

PROP Exp. Subject	(50) will you **please** to tell me of what Belinda you are talking?

PROP Exp. Object	(51) It **pleased** Providence to take away her mother (archer_3-1 \1720pitt.f3b)

an explicit proposition

UNPROP Exp. Subject	(52) You can do as you **please**

UNPROP Exp. Object	(53) An't **please** your Worship, I shall be well content (*ECF*, Sheridan. 1775. *St. Patrick's Day or The Scheming Lieutenant.*)

an "unexpressed proposition"

1NP	(54) I have seen very great Beauties **please**,

only one argument expressed

Be pleased to forms	(55) The Duke was **pleased** to find that she took an interest in his favourite hobby

Courtesy marker	(56) 'What sort of lady, **please**?

7. DATA ANALYSIS

7.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I deal with the data gathered in all the corpora analysed for the present study. In the following section, 7.2, I start by offering a general picture of the main request markers in a multi-genre corpus, namely *ARCHER*. Following the data obtained, I focus on material from three genre-specific corpora in order to compare the results. Thus, in Section 7.3 I detail overall distributions of examples of both *pray* and *please*. In Section 7.4, I present raw numbers and normalised frequencies of the different constructions with *please* in those corpora. Similarly, in Section 7.5 data regarding figures of *pray* in the corpora are presented. Section 7.6 offers a summary of *pray* and *please* distribution in the different corpora, paying attention to genre variation.[67]

7.2. Preliminary study: Multi-genre analysis in *ARCHER*

In the present section I will show a preliminary analysis done in *ARCHER*, which takes into consideration not only the courtesy markers *please* and *pray*, but also the parenthetical form *if you please* in the period 1850-1959. Both British and American

---

[67] Normalised frequencies have been calculated for every 100,000 words in all the corpora, unless indicated otherwise. As the result has been calculated to two decimal places, when the third decimal after the point was equal or inferior to 5, the second decimal was maintained, whereas when the third decimal was equal to 6 or superior, 0.01 was added to round the number.

English varieties are regarded, although no distinction is made between them in the analysis due to the small number of instances yielded. Nevertheless, a further chronological division of the material into decades seemed necessary in order to account for the diachronic evolution of the different courtesy markers in this period. The inclusion of *if you please* here obeys to the fact that several sources in the literature point at this structure as the ultimate origin of the courtesy marker *please* (cf. Section 5.5.1). Since *ARCHER* enables a multi-genre approach, this introductory section will serve as a means to explain the selection of periods and genres for a more detailed analysis of the courtesy markers under consideration. As regards periods, even though there have been found earlier instances of *please* as a courtesy marker in the second half of the eighteenth century, for the analysis of *ARCHER* I have only included 1850-1959. *ARCHER* yields only one eighteenth-century instance, shown in (57). It goes back to 1791 and is found in fiction. We have to wait until 1847 to find further examples of *please* in the *ARCHER* material:

(57)   but you look pale, ma'mselle, are you ill?"] ["No,"] said Adeline, in a tremulous accent, and scarcely able to support himself; ["**please** proceed."] (*ARCHER*, 1791radc.f4b)

This early fiction example was particularly unexpected, especially in comparison to the data obtained in all the other corpora analysed. Direct access to the file in *ARCHER* shows that the transcriber inserted an interesting comment in angle brackets, which is ignored by *WordSmith* search tools: ["please <pray> proceed."]. Access to other editions reveals an attempt by the transcriber to modernise the form

pray, or simply a mistake of the original marker *pray* for the one that should be in brackets: *please*.

Moreover, some genres are underrepresented in the first half of the nineteenth century in *ARCHER*, in particular letters, which show a considerably smaller number of words as compared to other genres. This has been one of the main reasons for this time selection, since this limitation may bias the data. Excluding example (57), parenthetical *please* is not present in *ARCHER*'s eighteenth century data. Raw numbers for the three items (*pray*, *please* and *if you please*) in the period under analysis in this corpus are extremely low (101 instances in all), but will nevertheless allow us to disclose general tendencies, which will be checked against genre-focused corpora in the following sections. I will pay attention to three main issues, namely (i) the frequency of the three items in order to pinpoint the time at which present-day usage of *pray* and *if you please* began, (ii) the text-types favouring their selection, (iii) as well as to some differences as regards their pragmatic functions.

In (58) and (59), we find some similar instances of *pray* and *please*. These illustrative examples include both markers occurring with the same imperative verb and dating back to the same decade. The first one is taken from a letter and the second one from drama. It is nevertheless surprising that old-fashioned *pray* is still used in letters as late as the second half of the century, since correspondence has a high degree of speechlikeness and thus, usually reflects a more advanced stage of the language, even if formulaic language is kept in several parts of the letter (cf. Sections 1.4.1.1 on letters and 4.3.2 on requests in letters). In this case the author is George Eliot, who was 50 at the time. The second example featuring *please* is taken from

Caste by Robertson. It is similarly surprising that the character using *please* is a middle-aged lady from the Victorian aristocracy, who does not match a profile of innovation:

(58)   **Pray** remember me with indulgence -- all of you -- and believe me, dear Mrs. Trollope, Yours most truly M. E. Lewes. (*ARCHER*, 1869elot.x6b)

(59)   Do you still see the Countess and Lady Florence? HAWTREE: Yes. MARQUISE: **Please** remember me to them (*ARCHER*, 1867robe.d6b)

In the following instance *pray* and *if you please* appear close to each other, used by the same character:

(60)   "Monsieur, **pray** confine yourself to the point." The Italian's hands flung themselves out in a gesture of apology. "A thousand pardons." "Tell me, **if you please**, your exact movements last night from dinner onwards." (*ARCHER*, 1934chri.f7b)

In (60), we find the last instance in *ARCHER* of the expression *if you please*, and one of the last ones including *pray*. It is taken from Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*. The character who uses these pragmatic markers is Hercule Poirot, the French-speaking Belgian detective, who is depicted as an example of extremely good manners. Poirot typically uses *pray* as a request courtesy marker, which was probably already felt as archaic at the time. He makes also use of the conditional *if you please*, probably in order to highlight the options given to the addressee, appealing to the addressee's willingness to answer, and therefore showing his respect for the

addressee's negative face. The use of these pragmatic features, together with some French expressions that Poirot often incorporates into his discourse, are linguistic strategies conveying negative politeness and therefore showing empathy. All these linguistic features contribute to make him the epitome of negative politeness.

Conditional expressions, such as *if you please*, may mark certain nuances and degrees in politeness. Within this group two other conditional expressions are included, such as *if that may please you*, *if it please your Lordship*, in which the Experiencer realises the object function (cf. Chapter 6 on the range of patterns available for *please*). These two expressions were recorded in drama, and in them the negative politeness is even reinforced by the presence of the modal verb *may* or the honorific *your Lordship*.

Alongside its primary function as a courtesy or politeness marker in requests, *pray* and its variants can also function as an "attention getter," following Blum-Kulka *et al*.'s (1989) terminology for the first element of a request, the alerter. In almost all the cases, the attention getter precedes a question:

(61)   Where can Mr. Golightly be? **Pray**, sir, are you acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Golightly? (*ARCHER*, 1889madd.d6b)

(62)   {=M HATHORNE.} Nay, I will make no such jest of my office of magistrate as to put this woman's gear on my shoulders. I doubt if there be aught in it. **Prithee**, Widow Hutchins, when did this torment first come upon the young woman? (*ARCHER*, 1893wilk.d6a)

The pragmatic function of *pray* displayed in the examples seems closer to a polite interruption, similar to Present-day English *excuse me* or *sorry*, and as the examples show, it is often accompanied by a vocative. The questions following *pray* tend to be requests for information, rather than proper requests, and it would generally be difficult to classify them as directive speech acts, since the speaker does not want the hearer to perform any further action. Thus, this function can be distinguished on both syntactic and pragmatic grounds. Five out of the 26 instances of *pray* in the selected period are alerters, including the only example containing *prithee*.[68] In this corpus alerters occur only in fiction and drama, not in letters, which could point at a feature more typical of the spoken language (cf. Section 7.5).

Figure 8. Normalised frequencies of markers in *ARCHER*
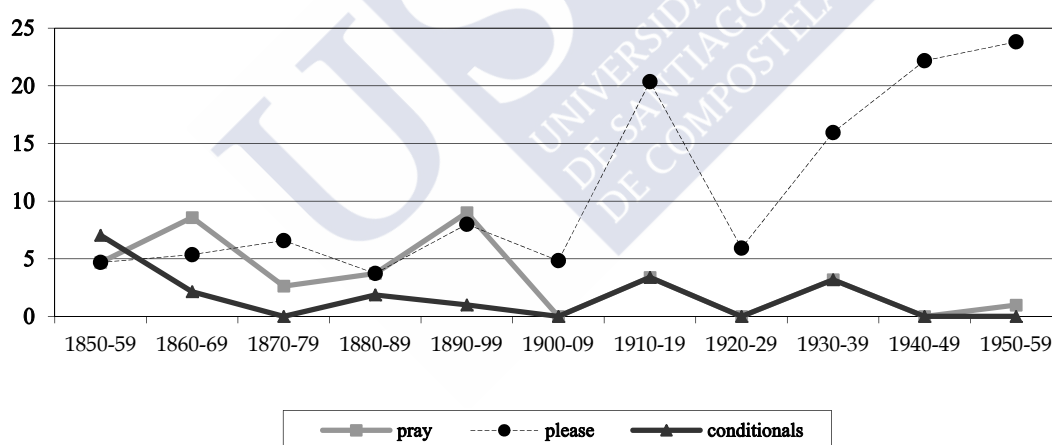
Although normalised frequencies are used (per 100,000 words), we may observe in Figure 8 several peaks, which are mainly due to smaller number of words in some decades, and also in some genres. Despite this, the overall distribution of the markers shows general tendencies. First of all, *pray* is the preferred marker until the

---

[68] Dates of examples as alerters: *pray*: 1873; 1889; 1895; 1917; *prithee*: 1893.

beginning of the twentieth century, when it experiences a dramatic drop and falls into disuse. It is then that *please* takes over. As regards *if you please*, we can see that it shows a very low frequency throughout the period studied, but it is the most common marker in the first decade (1850-59). Nevertheless, this polite expression shows a lower frequency in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The analysis of the data for the courtesy markers observed in *ARCHER* confirms
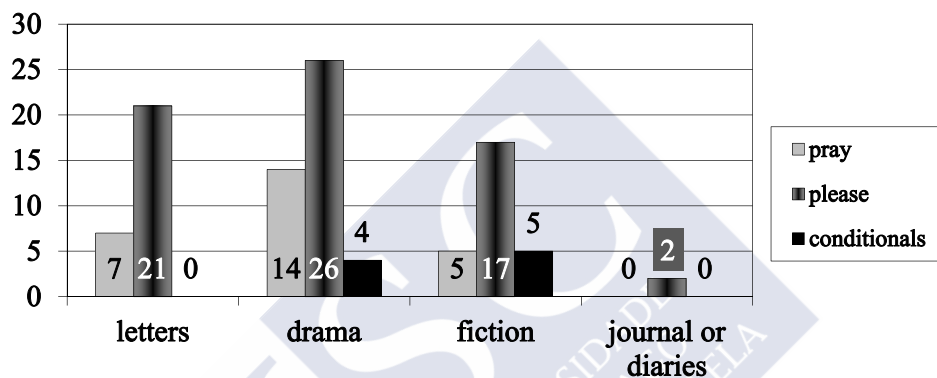
Figure 9. Raw numbers in *ARCHER*

that there are evident genre differences. Of the nine different genres in the corpus, only four have examples of the courtesy markers under consideration, namely letters, drama, fiction and journals or diaries, as seen in Figure 9 above. As should be expected, only those genres in which a certain kind of interaction takes place contain these pragmatic markers. We find the highest figures in drama, followed by letters and fiction, while figures in journal or diaries are extremely low. There are two remarkable aspects as regards the data from letters, it is worth mentioning that *if you please* does not appear in this text-type at all, and that the last occurrence of *pray* in this genre goes back to 1882. This finding would indicate that it is letters that

represent a more advanced stage of the language, while drama and fiction would be more conservative.

The following figures show a contrast between the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. Although these periods are not exactly identical —the second period includes one extra decade—, when we compare the stages before and after the turn of the century, we can observe interesting differences:

Figure 10. Raw numbers in *ARCHER* distributed by genres (1850-1899)
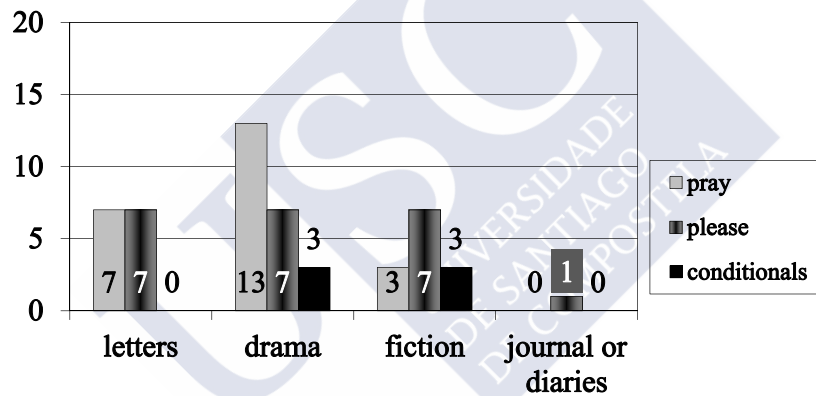
Figure 11. Raw numbers in *ARCHER* distributed by genres (1900-1959)
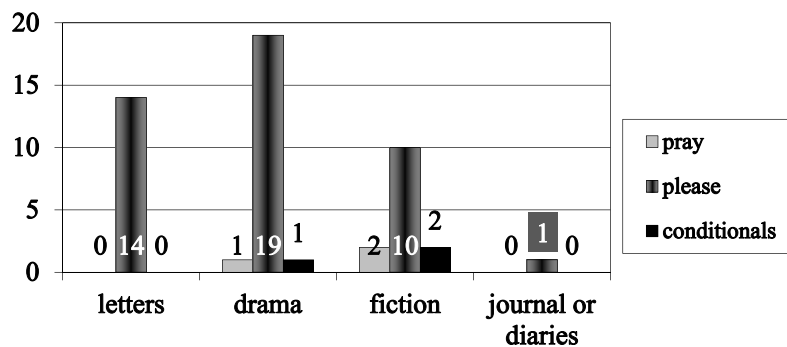
First of all, the remarkable differences in the use of *please*, which is the main marker in Figure 10, and becomes the only choice in letters. There is also a contrast between *pray* in the two figures, whereas its use is frequent, especially in drama and letters in the second half of the nineteenth century, it is rare in the twentieth century.

From this analysis we may draw some conclusions. We have seen that while *please* takes over in the twentieth century, *if you please* has a low frequency throughout the period. In the opposite tendency to *please*, *pray* was still common in the second half of the nineteenth century, and its decay in use must have taken place towards the end of the century. This means that the competition between *pray* and *please* takes place mainly in the nineteenth century.

The analysis of the data in *ARCHER* justifies the selection of further corpora for the present study and explains why attention is focused only on genres in which interaction is present, namely drama, letters and fiction (fictional dialogue). We could classify the genres above as the most involved ones in *ARCHER*, according to Biber's (1988) dimension "Informational vs. Involved Production" (see Section 1.4 above). Taking the overall figures of courtesy markers in requests, we can classify these genres in a scale from more to less involved production: first, drama, second, letters, and third, fiction, drama being the genre which shows the most involved production. In fact, we could quantify here the degree of interaction present in each genre according to our request markers. The findings in *ARCHER* will be contrasted to larger and more focused corpora in the following sections.

7.3. Overall distribution of data in the corpora

The following sections will be concerned with the total number of examples found in the three single-genre corpora under study. It should be noted that data concerning *pray* focus on the instances of this form as a pragmatic marker. However, as regards *please*, in addition to examples of the pragmatic marker, all the different patterns including verbal *please* have also been considered in order to analyse all the range of structures that could have led to the development of the courtesy marker.

7.3.1 Overall distribution of *please* and *pray* in *Chadwyck-Healey* databases

In the data from *Chadwyck-Healey* databases I have found 1,155 examples of *please* corresponding to all the patterns described in the previous chapter, 161 as a pragmatic marker, and 304 examples of the pragmatic marker *pray*.[69] The distribution of the examples in every period and the total numbers of each construction are shown in Figure 12 below (see Section 1.4.2.2 for total number of words):

---

[69] Raw figures of *pray* in Section 7.3 include also those of *prithee*.

Figure 12. Distribution of examples in *Chadwyck-Healey* databases
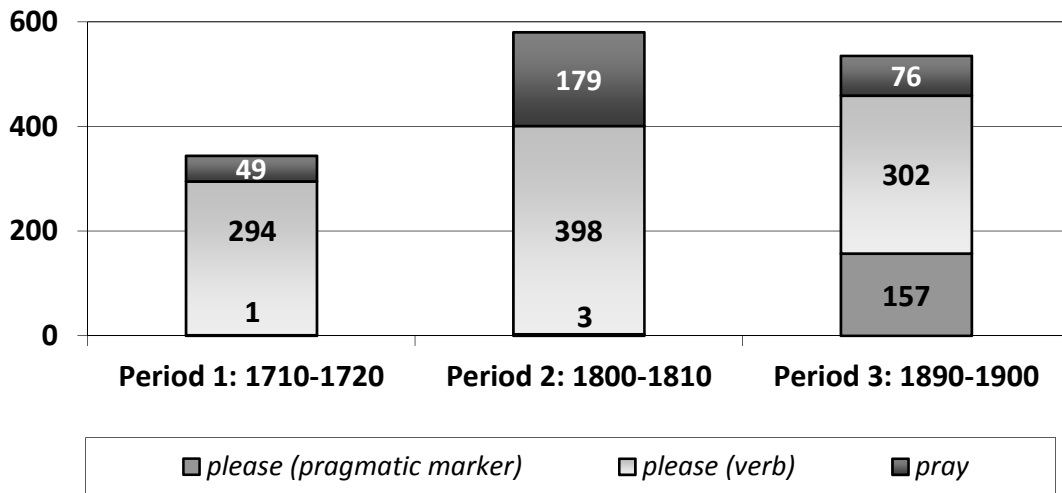
7.3.2 Overall distribution in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*

As for the data from the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*, I have found 364 examples of the different forms of *please* in this collection corresponding to the constructions described in the previous chapter, out of which five correspond to the pragmatic marker, and 140 examples of *pray*. The distribution of examples in this corpus is as shown in Figure 13 below:

Figure 13. Distribution of data in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*
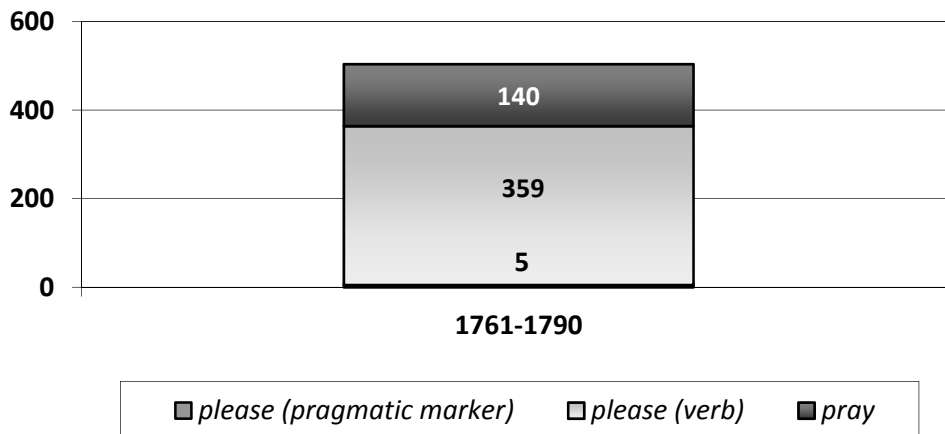
7.3.3   Overall distribution in the drama section of *A Corpus of Irish English*

Although this corpus covers a longer period, namely from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, no examples of *please* and *pray* have been found in the sixteenth century, either as courtesy markers or as verb forms, and only a few instances are represented in the seventeenth century, as will be shown in the following sections. Data for *please* amount to 184 examples, 48 in the role of pragmatic marker, whereas there are 161 instances of the pragmatic marker *pray* in the corpus, as shown in Figure 14:

Figure 14. Distribution of examples in *A Corpus of Irish English* (drama)
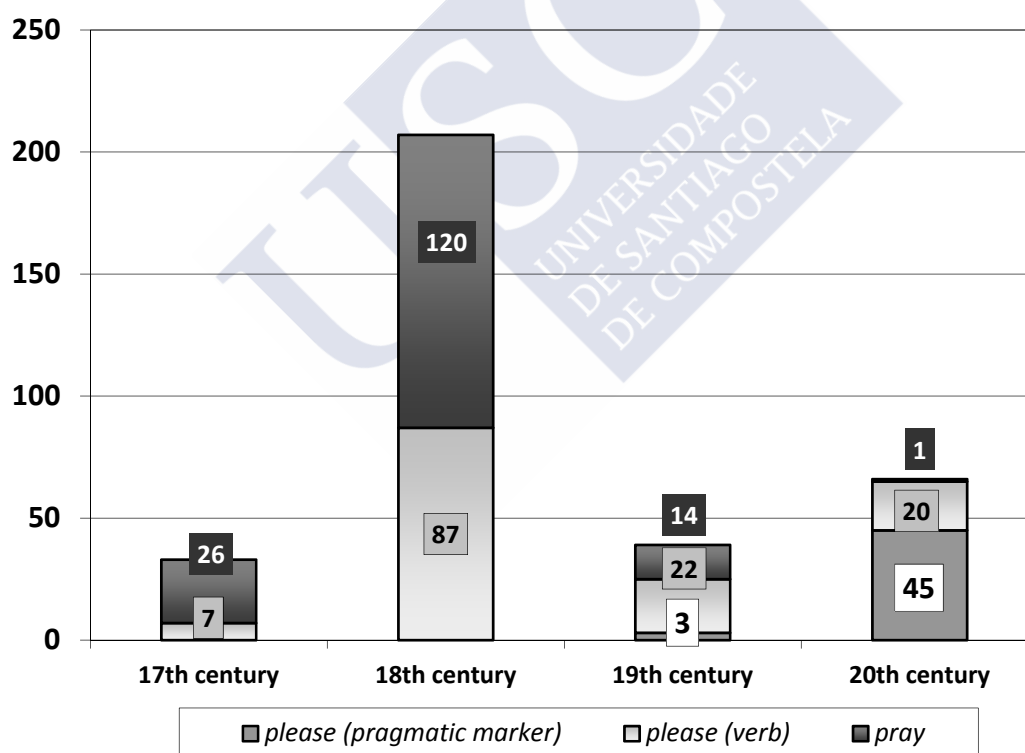
7.4.   Constructions with *please* in the data

In the following sections, all the different patterns described in Chapter 6 will be analysed in order to account for the instances found in each corpus. Thus, every

type of structure including *please* will be detailed providing the figures in the different periods. I will pay attention to the most important forms of each construction and their evolution. The three main genres which yielded results in the data from *ARCHER* are represented. The tables for each of the constructions include the normalised frequencies on the left and the raw numbers on the right side in every cell. The different types are discussed after each of the tables, comparing the data from the different corpora. Some explanations are added in order to highlight remarkable differences among text-types or some other data worthy of attention.

7.4.1   2NP construction

2NP structures obey the following pattern: Subject NP (Cause) + *please* + Object NP (Experiencer), in which the verb *please* means "to be agreeable to; to gratify, satisfy, delight" (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 2a). As noted by Allen (1995b: 98), and as pointed out above (cf. Section 6.2.1), the 2NP construction always contains object Experiencers, as it still does in Present-day English. Among all the examples gathered with this structure there are nominal and pronominal Experiencers and Causes. For instance, in (63) and (64) both the Experiencers (*her* and *me*) and the Causes (*I* and *you*) are pronominal:

(63)   I had the good Luck, I don't know why I call it so, but, in short, I **pleas'd** her, without desiring it, (doubtless any young Fellow, of a promising Constitution, might have done the same) because my Eyes and Heart were already directed to

one of her Daughters. (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *Memoirs of Europe*, Book 2, Main Text (p.261))

(64)   HARDCASTLE I tell you, Sir, you don't **please** me; so I desire you'll leave my house. (**Drama**, Goldsmith, Oliver. 1773. *She stoops to conquer*)

In (65) the subject noun phrase that conveys the role of the Cause is a long element, and in (66) it is the Experiencer the semantic role conveyed by a heavy noun phrase:

(65)   his kindness and handsome conduct the other morning certainly **pleased** you; (*NCF*, **P2**, Edgeworth, M., *Belinda*, Vol. II., Chapter XIV. (p.38))

(66)   and in the uniting of them Colney is interested, because it would have so **pleased** the woman of the loyal heart no longer beating. (*NCF*, **P3**, Meredith, G., *One of Our Conquerors*, Vol. III., Chapter XIV. (p.307))

Table 3. Distribution of examples in 2NP construction

	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	8.82/57	5.63/77	6.13/106
Letters: 1761-1790[70]	3.03/9		
	18th century	**19th century**	**20th century**
Drama	20.6/25	7.11/7	0.41/1

We see in Table 3 that this construction is well represented in every period. As regards the fiction corpus, although there is a slight decrease in use in Period 2, the construction shows a stable frequency in the novels. This pattern shows a lower frequency in the epistolary corpus with respect to any of the periods in the fiction

[70] Note that 'Letters' from the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* are placed chronologically between Periods 1 and 2 from the fiction corpus (cf. Sections 1.4.2.2 and 1.4.2.4).

corpus but the pattern is still the same, with pronominal elements, as in (67), or both nominal Experiencer and Cause, as in (68):

(67)   I have meerly to oblige 'em, (knowing their odd dispositions,) sacrificed my Land, when it woud be more proper to go into theirs, and still nothing will **please** them, (*CLECP*, 1771, John Dickenson)

(68)   Dear Sir I have your letter of the 15 Inst, I hope the horse w'd get well to Lyme, & **please** miss Legh, he is a very Stought good Horse, and very Suitable for the purpose he is intended for — (*CLECP*, 1788 [filed as 1789], Richard Hole)

The sharp decrease of this construction in the drama corpus, both as regards raw numbers and frequencies, is certainly striking. Even if this corpus covers a longer period, this tendency may reflect only a genre bias, since this structure provides descriptions of present or future feelings, often in polite contexts, and has an evident involved tone, rather than informational. As a consequence, it may be more likely to be used in long passages in novels and letters than in drama texts, which, due to the limitations of stage performance, require more immediacy, and therefore information generally primes over description (cf. Biber's 1988 Dimension 1 in Section 1.3.1).

7.4.2 PROP construction

The basic patterns followed by PROP constructions are the following: NP (Experiencer) + *please* + *to*/*that* clause (Cause); dummy *it* + *please* + NP (Experiencer) + *to*/*that* clause (Cause). Both subjects and objects can convey the

269

argument of Experiencer in this structure. The verb *please* is followed by a proposition which functions as the Cause, in most cases a *to*-infinitive clause (cf. Section 6.2.2). The general meaning of *please* in this structure is equivalent to "to seem good to one; to be one's will or pleasure" (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 3), although there is a great variation of meanings depending on Experiencer, clause type and verb tense. Sometimes, the sense is that of the passive, "be pleased."

Table 4. Distribution of examples in PROP construction

	Type	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	**PROP (total)**	**7.74/50**	**1.83/25**	**2.89/50**
	Experiencer Subject	4.95/32	0.80/11	1.73/30
	Experiencer Object	2.79/18	1.02/14	1.16/20
Letters: 1761-1790	**PROP (total)**	75.39/224		
	Exp. Subject	74.38/221		
	Exp. Object	0.67/2		
	No Experiencer	0.34/1		
		18th century	19th century	20th century
Drama	**PROP (total)**	**6.59/8**	-	**0.41/1**
	Exp. Subject	6.59/8	-	-
	Exp. Object	-	-	0.41/1

This construction is available in the three periods of the fiction corpus, as we can see in Table 4, but with important differences as regards its frequency of use. It was much more frequent in Period 1 than in the other two periods, and after a considerable decrease in use in Period 2, Period 3 shows a slight increase with respect to the previous period.

The PROP construction seems to be highly productive in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*, with a normalised frequency of 75.39. It is significantly the most numerous pattern with *please* in this corpus, and it is six times more frequent than in the novels and in drama taking the three periods together. The frequency of the PROP construction in letters calls for an explanation. In my opinion, this high frequency may obey to the politeness functions that we observe in the examples, since letters are even more prone than novels to contain expressions which involve some kind of request from the writer to the addressee, and, in fact, requests and other directive speech acts were very common in personal and commercial correspondence (cf. Chapter 8). This is the case in (69), in which the writer shows deference and respect to the addressee. Similar patterns are also common in fiction. Thus, the word *Request* is explicitly mentioned in (70), which constitutes an indirect example of this speech act. In the same way, in (71) the verb *please* is used to introduce a request, and, at the same time, to attenuate its illocutionary force.

(69)   The above is all the Goods that was sent into the Country that was ordred by Mʳ Hammond, any other particular that you **please** to want I will Informe you; (*CLECP*, 1789, P Richardson, Smith and Knowles)

(70)   Her only Request was, that he would **please** to remember her with some Compassion, (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *Memoirs of Europe*, Book 2, Main Text (p.153))

(71)   Will it **please** you to see this poor piece of clay, for which you have ventured your soul, faded to an object of horror? (*NCF*, **P2**, Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume III, Chap. XXXIII. (p.261))

In novels this construction shows variation as regards the choice of the syntactic role of the Experiencer. Thus, Experiencer subjects, as in (70) prevail in Periods 1 and 3, and in fact they are used almost twice as much as Experiencer objects in Period 1. Instead, in Period 2 Experiencer objects, as in (71), are preferred. As a general tendency, it seems that Experiencer subjects in this construction show a decrease across time. The difference between the use of Experiencer subject and Experiencer object is even more evident in the epistolary corpus, the Experiencer subject, as in (69) above, is much more common in this corpus and shows a strikingly higher frequency than in any period of the fiction corpus.

According to the figures in *A Corpus of Irish English*, the PROP pattern seems to have been highly infrequent in drama from the nineteenth century onwards, a low frequency which is also reflected in the nineteenth century data from novels. In fact, instances from the drama corpus with Experiencer subject are recorded only in the eighteenth century, whereas there is only one example with Experiencer object from the twentieth century, in which the Experiencer is God, as shown in (72) below:

(72)   here she is to-day, goin' to be married to a young man lookin' as if he'd be fit to commensurate in any position in life it ud **please** God to call him! (**Drama**, O'Casey, Sean. 1924. *Juno and the Paycock*)

As mentioned in Section 6.2.2 above, the main feature of the PROP construction is that the argument Cause is a proposition. In the *Chadwyck-Healey* data this proposition may take the form of a *to*-infinitive clause, as in (70) or (71) above, or a *that*-clause, as in (27), repeated for convenience here as (73), with an Experiencer

subject, and (74), with an Experiencer object. It should be noted, however, that *that*-clauses are not very frequent in this construction, as only seven examples were recorded in all three periods.

(73)   If Heaven had **pleased** that this Princess and my Brother had been so fortunate to have been joined in Marriage, all Mankind must have said, that there had then been met the two most excellent, beautiful and accomplished Persons that could have been found in Europe, (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *The Power of Love*, Part 1, Main Text (p.27))

(74)   It **pleases** me that he should be my faithful subject. (*NCF*, **P3**, Coleridge, M. E. (Mary Elizabeth), *The King with Two Faces*, Chapter XIX (p. 127))

In (73), *Heaven* is a reference to God,[71] and in a similar way, the only two instances in which the Experiencer is expressed by the object in the epistolary data are explicit references to God, as in (75):

(75)   If it pleases **God** so to grant it in a Week or Ten Days I propose Returning to London about the 12th of next Mon^th^ (*CLECP*, 1772,   W. Burchal)

There is a variant of the construction with Experiencer subject pattern in which the verb *please* is inflected for the imperative, and the Experiencer is left unexpressed.

---

[71] Even though the great majority of Experiencers referring to God hold an object function, there are some exceptions, as in (73). A similar example is also found in Period 1 in the fiction corpus: *the Land was as well prepared to be our Scourge, as the Sea, when Heaven, who directs the Circumstances of Things,* **pleases** *to appoint it to be so.* (*ECF*, **P1**, Defoe's *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, p. 203). Here Heaven is the antecedent of the relative pronoun *who*, also a subject in the relative clause and the subject of the verb *pleases*.

This is illustrated in (76), where the unexpressed Experiencer is the second person to whom the form is addressed. Therefore, the imperative form is not available with Experiencer objects.

(76)   "I send you something that has come by post this afternoon. **Please** to bring it with you when you meet me at eight o'clock---if you still care to do so." (*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *The Odd Women*, Vol. III., V. (p.140))

In this structure an imperative form of the verb *please* is followed by a *to*-infinitive clause. It is interesting from the point of view of use and meaning, since this use offers a politeness nuance, similar to that of the parenthetical courtesy marker (cf. Section 6.4.3). Table 5 below shows the evolution of both imperative and non-imperative forms. The use of non-imperative constructions in the novels decreases considerably in Periods 2 and 3 with respect to Period 1. On the contrary, imperative forms come into use only in Period 2 and increase in Period 3. The epistolary corpus shows an incredibly high frequency of imperative forms as compared to the other corpora. In this respect, examples from the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* are particularly revealing, given the similarity of this construction to the modern courtesy marker *please*. The high frequency of imperative forms may have to do with text-type, since this structure is used as a politeness device in requests. Requests are obviously more common when there is direct interaction, as in letters, in which the writer establishes direct contact with the addressee.

Table 5. PROP construction with Experiencer Subject

Novels	Type	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
	non-imperative	4.95/32	0.58/8	0.46/8
	imperative	-	0.22/3	1.27/22
Letters: 1761-1790	non-imperative	27.26/81		
	imperative	47.12/140		
		18th century	19th century	20th century
Drama	non-imperative	5.76/7	-	-
	imperative	0.82/1	-	-

The PROP construction with Experiencer subject is present in drama only in the eighteenth century, a finding that is in line with the decreasing tendency found in novels with non-imperative forms. From the evidence drawn from the corpora, it seems that this pattern, which is no longer found in Present-day Standard English, may have fallen in disuse by the end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth (cf. Section 9.2.2). The meaning of examples (77) and (78) below would not undergo any variation if we replaced the imperative *please* and the following particle *to* with a simple courtesy marker *please* (cf. *Please help me…* or *please look…*), and, similarly, their pragmatic function would remain the same:

(77)   His gray hair streamed on the wind, as he held out the tattered remains of a hat, and said, "**Please** to help me Lady.---I am very poor." (*NCF*, **P2**, Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume I., Chap. XV. (p.299))

(78)   **please** to look ~~over~~ on the other side of this sheet — (*CLECP*, 1788, Nathan Hatton)

On some occasions the verb *please* and the following *to*-infinitive are separated by

intervening material, as in (79), which shows the adverb *never*:

(79) "Oh, Daisy? You mean Miss Mutlar. I don't know whether she is well or not, but **please** never to mention her name again in my presence." (*NCF*, **P3**, Grossmith, G. and W. Grossmith, *The Diary of a Nobody*, Chapter X. (p.138))

The availability of this pattern in late eighteenth-century letters, and in novels from Period 2 onwards and its increase in Period 3 may have been a relevant factor for the rise and evolution of the parenthetical courtesy marker itself (see Section 9.3).

In addition to cases of the PROP construction in which the verb *please* is in the imperative, we also find requests in which it is modified by a modal verb, mostly by modal *will*. In the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* 46 examples (out of 81) contain either the full form *will*, or different contracted forms, as in (80) with the contracted form *Youle*. Similarly, in the corpus of Irish drama five out of seven examples of the PROP construction show the modal *will*, as in (81). *Will* can be considered a 'syntactic downgrader' in Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s (1989) classification of mitigators within the speech act of requests. Requests with modal *will* show a greater degree of respect and deference towards the addressee since they take into consideration his/her willingness (cf. Section 9.2.4.1):

(80) Youle **please** to Consider that if you Indict Wm. Knowles and he Gets discharged that you will have your own Costs to pay and you must begin anew. (*CLECP*, 1775, B Bower)

(81) You hear that you are dead, Maishter; fere vil you **please** to be buried? (**Drama**, Farquhar, George. 1702/1703. *The Twin Rivals*)

A third variant of the PROP construction entails conditionals, as in (82). Conditionals may provide an additional nuance to the degree of politeness expressed by the construction, since they take into account the addressee's compliance. The only example of this structure in the whole corpus of drama is shown in (82) below, and it addresses a second person:

(82)   SERVANT. Sir, my Lady's dressing. Here's Company, **if you please** to walk in, in the meantime. (**Drama**, Congreve, William. 1700. *The Way of the World*)

In spite of the low frequency of this form in drama (0.82), as shown in Table 6, PROP conditionals are more frequent in letters.

Table 6. Conditional forms in the PROP construction (letters)

FORMS	*if you please*	*if E please(s)*	*if please*
FIGURES	23/7.74	7/2.36	1/0.34

The most common of these conditional expressions is the plain form *if you please* addressing a second person, as in (82) above and (83). The group *if E please(s)* includes those examples in which the pronoun in the role of Experiencer subject is other than *you* and/or the verb is inflected, as in (84):

(83)   He proposes very honorably, if You **please** to order Your Agents to receive what dividend Tomlinsons effects will pay (*CLECP*, 1788, William Crosbie)

(84)   As Disley School is now Vacant, I shou'd be very Glad to succeed M^r. Drinkwater there, If M^r. Legh **pleas'd** to Accept me, (*CLECP*, 1772, James Swindells)

The only example of the PROP construction in which the Experiencer is not expressed is also a conditional construction, (85):

(85)   Good Sir I Desire you will be So Good as to a_Blege me this time as the $^\wedge^{fest}^\wedge$ quarter is up the 12th of June if **plese** to Send 40 pound in Bills and 10 pound in Cash you will a_Blige me (*CLECP*, 1789, John Ducketh)

This fragment of a letter lacks punctuation, but from a modern perspective it seems that *if plese* is the beginning of the protasis in the conditional, whereas *you will a_Blige me* constitutes the apodosis. The Experiencer omitted here would be the addressee of the letter (*if you please*).

Data from the novels differ slightly. As we can observe in Table 7, PROP conditionals are found only in Periods 1 and 2, and in Period 2 only Experiencer Objects are found.

Table 7. Conditional forms in the PROP construction (novels)

FORMS	Experiencer Subject		Experiencer Object
	if you (would) please	*if E please(s/d)/etc*	*if it please(s)/etc E*
P1: 1710-1720	0.31/2	0.73/10	0.17/3
P2:1800-1810	-	-	0.17/3

Most Experiencer subjects in the novels are pronominal, and *he* is the most common pronoun, with seven instances, as in (86). By contrast, all the Experiencer Objects in both periods are references to God, as in (87):

(86)   and if he **pleased** to send for it, it should be very honestly delivered to his Men (*ECF*, **P1**, Defoe, D., *Captain Singleton*, Main Text (p. 24))

(87)   "I've seen him in his own castle---I've seen him---and if it **pleases** God this minute to take me to himself, I would die with pleasure." (*NCF*, **P2**, Edgeworth, M., *Ennui*, Chapter III. (p. 76))

Therefore, while in the epistolary collection the preferred Experiencer in the conditional forms of the PROP construction is the second person pronoun, and the conditional functions as a syntactic downgrader in the request, in the novels the request function is not always present. This is clearly the case in references to God, as in (87) above, where the speaker expresses a wish or desire for the future. In fact, in novels there is a greater variety of Experiencers and the range of verb forms is also wider.

7.4.3 UNPROP construction

UNPROP structures follow one of these patterns: Subject NP (Experiencer) *please* / *please* Object NP (Experiencer). In both cases the Experiencer is the only argument expressed, and the main difference with the PROP construction is that in UNPROPs the proposition is unexpressed, although it is implicit (cf. Section 6.2.3).

There is a wide range of meanings in this pattern, since many of the structures are fixed, but in general they are similar to the PROP construction.

Table 8. Distribution of examples in UNPROP construction

	Type	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	**UNPROP (total)**	**15.79/102**	**16.37/225**	**6.13/106**
	Exp. Subject	13.62/88	12.13/167	4.92/85
	Exp. Object	2.01/13	4.24/58	1.21/21
Letters: 1761-1790	**UNPROP (total)**	**14.14/42**		
	Exp. Subject	12.79/38		
	Exp. Object	1.35/4		
		17th century	18th century	19th century	20th century
Drama	**UNPROP (total)**	**87/7**	**38.7/47**	**8.12/8**	**2.86/7**
	Exp. Subject	-	29.64/36	6.09/6	2.04/5
	Exp. Object	87/7	9.06/11	2.03/2	0.82/2

As regards novels, the UNPROP construction is the most numerous construction with *please* in Periods 1 and 2. In Period 3 it is still frequent, as we can see in Table 8 Experiencer subjects are more frequently used than Experiencer Objects in the three periods. There is a general decrease in use, except for the Experiencer Object forms, which reach their peak in Period 2. This construction is less frequent in the epistolary corpus than in Periods 1 and 2 of the fiction data. Nevertheless, the frequencies of the Experiencer subject are quite close in this corpus to those in Period 2, that is just a few decades later (cf. 12.64 vs. 12.79). The UNPROP examples containing Experiencer Objects are fewer and their frequency would be

closer to Period 3 (cf. 1.21 vs. 1.35). In drama, the UNPROP construction is extremely frequent, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While seventeenth-century UNPROPs are used only with object Experiencers, subject Experiencers are more common in the eighteenth century, with a higher frequency than in any other period or text-type (29.64). Thus, subject Experiencers are the preferred choice from the eighteenth century onwards in all the corpora.

7.4.3.1 UNPROP with Experiencer Subject

As seen in Section 6.2.3, UNPROP construction with a subject Experiencer can be divided into three main groups, namely *as E please(s)*, *if E please(s)* and *when E please(s)*. Table 9 shows their distribution in the material:

Table 9. UNPROP construction with Experiencer Subject

	Type	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	*as E please(s)*	3.25/21	3.95/54	1.97/34
	if E please(s)	2.79/18	2.63/36	2.02/35
	when E please(s)	7.74/50	5.55/76	0.93/16
Letters: 1761-1790	*as E please(s)*	1.68/5		
	if E please(s)	6.73/20		
	when E please(s)	4.37/13		
		18th century	19th century	20th century
Drama	*as E please(s)*	9.06/11	2.03/2	0.41/1
	if E please(s)	19.76/24	4.06/4	1.63/4
	when E please(s)	0.82/1	-	-

as E please(s)

This construction is found in all the periods from the different corpora. As mentioned in Section 6.2.3, there are examples of this type both in manner clauses, as in (88), and in comparative clauses, as in (89). We notice a peak in use in the second period of the *Chadwyck-Healey* collection, while in drama there is a constant decrease. As can be observed in the examples, different pronouns are found with their corresponding inflected verb:

(88)   Because says he, there were no Bonds to restrain him, he was on that acct. at Liberty to act as he **pleased**. (*CLECP*, 1783, John Dickenson)

(89)   "You may be as credulous as you **please**, Mr. Clifford," I answered. (*NCF*, **P2**, Moore, J., *Mordaunt*, Vol. I., Letter XXIII. (p.292))

if E please(s)

This pattern is interesting since it is clearly parenthetical in most cases, and thus close in use to the courtesy marker *please*. The frequency of this form decreases gradually in the fiction corpus (from 2.79 to 2.02), and shows a considerably higher frequency in the epistolary corpus, which can be probably due to the common use of this expression in requests. As already mentioned (cf. Chapter 4), directives are a very frequent speech act in personal letters, where the writer usually demands something politely from the addressee (cf. also Chapter 8). Drama shows the highest frequency of this conditional structure including different Experiencers in the eighteenth century (19.76) and a progressive decrease until the twentieth century

(1.63). A close analysis of the different forms realising the function of object yields interesting results:

Table 10. *if E please(s)*: Type of Experiencer

	EXPERIENCER	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	nominal	0.93/6	0.07/1	-
	pronoun other than *you*[72]	1.70/11	0.51/7	0.17/3
	You	0.15/1	2.05/28	1.85/32
Letters: 1761-1790	nominal	0.67/2		
	pronoun other than *you*	0.34/1		
	You	5.72/17		
		18th century	19th century	20th century
Drama	nominal	-	-	-
	pronoun other than *you*	2.47/3	-	-
	You	17.29/21	4.06/4	1.63/4

As the table shows, nominal Experiencers are only found in the first periods of the fiction corpus and in the letters. They are completely absent from the drama corpus. It is worthy of note that in all the examples from the fiction corpus the noun is part of an honorific title addressing a second person, as, for instance *your Lordship(s)* (see example (90)), *your ladyship*, *his Master*, *his Majesty* and *your Excellency*, that is, polite forms of address using a title of high rank (cf. *OED*, s.v. *your* 2c, s.v. *majesty* 2). In letters, by contrast, the nominal Experiencers may also represent a third person, as in (91):

---

[72] This group includes one instance of *thou*.

(90)   but if both your Lordships **please**, I will return to the Story where I left last

Night: (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *Memoirs of Europe*, Book 3, Main Text

(p.316))

(91)   J cou'd wish to Exchange my Life for my Wife's Life in the Cottage call'd

Orme's in Lowton if M^r. Legh **pleases**, (*CLECP*, 1790, James Leigh)

While nominal Experiencers are scarce, pronominal Experiencers, as in (92) and

(93), are available in the three periods of the fiction corpus, as well as in the

correspondence and in the plays. It should be noted that pronouns other than *you*

show a clear decrease in novels and they are only found in the eighteenth century in

drama. (92) illustrates the use of the archaic second person pronoun *thou*, while (93)

is an example of the third person singular.

(92)   but art thou so at Liberty, that thou mayest go away, if thou **pleasest**, to

thine own Countrymen? (*ECF*, **P1**, Defoe, D., *Captain Singleton*, Main Text (p.278))

(93)   and if he **pleases**; I think the said Proprietors, should be obliged to make,

and forever hereafter Repair; all Carriage and other Bridges, and Roads, (*CLECP*,

1790, Henry Porter)

Over time the *if E please* pattern comes to be associated with the second person

pronoun *you*. The choice of the pronoun *you* reaches a higher frequency in use in

Periods 2 and 3 in the fiction corpus, especially in Period 2 (2.05). In drama, this

pattern shows the highest frequency in the eighteenth century (17.29), and it

progressively decreases in the following centuries, confirming the decreasing

tendency shown in novels towards the end of the nineteenth century. Eighteenth-

century letters show a high frequency of the form *if you please* (5.72), although considerably lower than the eighteenth-century drama material. High frequencies in the epistolary corpus and, especially, in drama may obey to the features of these text-types, and especially they can be related to the degree of interaction between speaker/writer and hearer/reader, since, as noted before, this expression conveys a politeness function even in Present-day English (cf. Section 9.2.1). These figures are interesting, since the fixation of this form with the pronoun *you* coincides in time with the establishment of the courtesy marker *please*, as we will see below. The preference for the second-person pronoun in detriment of other pronouns and nominal expressions favours the conventionalisation and idiomaticisation of the expression *if you please* as a parenthetical courtesy marker in requests. In the examples below the parenthetical clause *if you please* is clearly used as a courtesy marker:

(94)   "Your lordship may declare off, if you **please**," said I; (*NCF*, **P2**, Moore, J., *Mordaunt*, Vol. I., Letter XXIII. (p.294))

(95)   "If you **please**, miss," said Jump, "there's been two gen'lemen here, as said they was come from Mrs. Trevisa, (*NCF*, **P3**, Baring-Gould, S., *In The Roar Of The Sea*, Vol. II., Chapter XXIII. (p.45))

(96)   I am Very Certain yt my wife is ye only Idental person (if you **pleas**) for she is ye Oldest Liveing Legatee (*CLECP*, 1781, Oliver Kay)

These instances of *if you please* show slight differences as regards its pragmatic function and position. First of all, regarding position, in (94) the expression is placed clause-finally, whereas in (95) it is clause-initial, and in (96) it is bracketed in middle

position as a clear parenthetical. The instance in (94) is a request marker with a redressive function on the conventional indirect request realised through a suggestory formula, in Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s (1989) terms. In (95) the function seems closer to an attention getter, that is, an element used to get the addressee's attention (see Section 4.2.1 on this label). In (96), it is likely that the writer is excusing himself for daring to give an opinion, and the meaning of *if you please* here would be similar to *if you don't mind (me saying so)*, or as the *OED* suggests "as if asking leave to report such a thing" (s.v. *please* v. 6c).

The expression *if E please(s)* undergoes fixation not only in the category realising the Experiencer, but also in the verb form, as shown in Table 11 below:

Table 11. Verb forms in *if E please(s)*

	FORMS	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	base form	0.46/3	2.05/28	1.97/34
	inflected for the past	2.01/13	0.51/7	0.06/1
	other inflections	0.31/2	0.07/1	-

	FORMS			
Letters: 1761-1790	base form	5.72/17		
	inflected for the past	-		
	other inflections	1.01/3		

		18th century	19th century	20th century
Drama	base form	17.29/21	-	-
	inflected for the past	0.82/1	-	-
	other inflections	1.65/2	4.06/4	1.63/4

Whereas we only find three instances of the base form *please* in Period 1 in novels, in Periods 2 and 3 this is the most frequent choice. The decrease in use of forms of

preterite *please* seems also remarkable: from a frequency of 2.01 in Period 1 to 0.06 in Period 3. In Periods 1 and 2 there are also examples with other inflections for the present indicative (*pleasest* in Period 1 and *pleases* in both Period 1 and Period 2), as in example (92) above, an instance from the beginning of the eighteenth century, which is the only example of the form *pleasest* in this construction. The verbal ending *-est* accompanies *thou*, the T-pronoun which was lost from the language at the beginning of Late Modern English, in fact, it would have disappeared by the end of the eighteenth century (Denison 1999: 106).

In earlier English the subjunctive was the preferred form in conditional clauses "indicating hypothetical or rejected condition" (Rissanen 1999: 308). With the second person there is no longer a distinction between indicative and subjunctive, but the third person still has different forms. There is only one example of a third person singular subject with *please* marked for the subjunctive in the other two periods, given as (97) below:

(97)   the reader, knowing something of the characters of these two persons, may conjecture, if he **please**, what sort of scenes ensued daily between them; (*NCF*, **P3**, Baring-Gould, S., *In The Roar Of The Sea*, Vol. III., Chapter LIV. (p.248))

In the epistolary corpus the instances of the pronoun *you* take the expected base form of *please*, whereas the three instances of inflected *please* reflect third person endings for the indicative in correspondence to the three Experiencers other than *you*. Similarly, in eighteenth century plays, non-inflected *please* is the only form which accompanies pronoun *you*. Two instances with third person pronouns include

inflected forms for the third-person singular present indicative, while the remaining one is inflected for the preterite.

when E please(s) and similar constructions

There is a clear decrease in the use of these forms in the novels (from 7.74 in Period 1 to 0.87 in Period 3). This pattern shows a notable frequency in letters (4.37), while in drama there is only one instance found in the whole corpus in the eighteenth century (0.82). We find examples of these constructions introduced by *wh*-words, as in (98) or (99), or longer elements, as in (100):

(98)   "You may have as much more whenever you **please**." continued he, "for the gentleman who bought it wants a companion painted." (*NCF*, **P2**, Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume I., Chap. X. (p.163))

(99)   if the time don't shute you desire you'l Give hus a line and will wate of you when you **please** (*CLECP*, 1774, John Lee)

(100)   to Madam the Governess, he kept his Thoughts to himself, and suffer'd her to run what lengths of Impertinence she **pleas'd** upon their future Happiness and present Affairs, (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *Memoirs of Europe*, Book 2, Main Text (p.160))

7.4.3.2 UNPROP with Experiencer Object

Let us now turn to the other subtype within the UNPROP construction, namely the Experiencer Object, as in the expression *if it please you*. The distribution of the different structures in the three genres is shown in Table 12 below:

Table 12. UNPROP construction with Experiencer Object

	Type	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	*(and) please E*	0.46/3	4.02/55	0.58/10
	if it please E	-	0.15/2	0.29/5
	other	0.58/10	0.07/1	0.35/6
Letters: 1761-1790	*(and) please E*	0.34/1		
	if (it) please E	1.01/3		

		17th century	18th century	19th century	20th century
Drama	*(and) please E*	87/7	9.06/11	2.03/2	0.82/2
	if it please E	-	-	-	-
	other	-	-	-	-

As for the use of Experiencer Objects in the UNPROP construction, their frequency in use is very low in the three corpora, with the exception of *(and) please E* forms in drama and in Period 2 in novels. Examples of *(and) please E* do not have a dummy pronoun *it* in subject position and may have conditional sense.

(and) please E

The different Experiencer objects of this construction are quite fixed (cf. Table 13). In fact, we find mainly honorific titles like *your Highness* and *your honour*, as we can see in (101) and (102). Expressions with honorific titles are quite conventionalised, they behave as parentheticals and convey a politeness function, as we have seen with *if you please* forms above. These expressions transmit a surplus of negative politeness from a speaker in a clear inferior position, as noted by the narrator in (102), who identifies the usage of those expressions as "the most abject language, and the most humble tone and posture:"

(101)   What will become of us, Doctor? said the Duke, we shall all be undone at

Frankfort au Main. Why so, **please** your Highness? says the Doctor, (*ECF*, **P1**,

Defoe, D., *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, Part 1, Main Text (p.41))

(102)   In speaking to them, however, they always used the most abject language,

and the most humble tone and posture---"**Please** your honour,---and **please** your

honour's honour," they knew must be repeated as a charm at the beginning and end

of every equivocating, exculpatory, or supplicatory sentence--- (*NCF*, **P2**,

Edgeworth, M., *Castle Rackrent*, (p.28))

We also find explicit references to God, as in (103), (104), and (105) below:

(103)   "I would save myself; and I will, **please** God," said he, (*NCF*, **P2**, Porter, J.,

The Scottish Chiefs, Vol. V., Chap. VIII. (p.204))

(104)   Mr Dickenson set off for Manches^r: this morning before you Messenger

arrived. He will be at home (**please** God) on Satturday Even^g. (*CLECP*, ?1774, S

Dickenson)

(105)   PRISONER C] Here you are. […] but maybe you won't be long after us,

and you going home. PRISONER C [Kerry accent] I will, **please God**. It will be

summer-time and where I come from is lovely when the sun is shining. (**Drama**,

Behan, Brendan. 1954. *The Quare Fellow*)

In the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* object Experiencers are not very

common, there are only two instances in the PROP construction and four in the

UNPROP construction, as indicated in Table 12. All these instances are references

to God, as in (104) above. Examples from nineteenth and twentieth century drama

also include *God* as the only Experiencer, as in (105). References to God differ from honorific Experiencers in that they refer to a third person. Although the *OED* does not comment on this use independently, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* records this expression as an idiom, "used to say that you very much hope or wish that [something] will happen" (s.v. *please* v., cf. also Quirk *et al.* 1985: §8.91). Therefore, *please God* does not function as a courtesy marker in requests, as is the case with *please* or *if you please*. Spanish expressions *si Dios quiere*, *quiera Dios* and archaic *plega a Dios* —literally 'please God'— are also used to show a strong wish or hope, although some other formulae with God may also introduce the idea of supplication or request, such as *así Dios te dé la Gloria* —literally 'so God gives you glory'—, *Dios te guarde* —literally 'God keeps you safe'— and *por Dios* —literally 'by God'— (*DRAE* s.v. *dios*, cf. Ballesteros Martín 2002).

Expressions including references to God as the Experiencer are present in all the corpora. In novels they show a similar low frequency of use in periods 2 and 3, with 0.51 and 0.52 respectively. The only instance of the form *(and) please E* in the epistolary corpus is an example of *(and) please God* (cf. example (104)). The *(and) please E* construction is restricted to *please God* also in nineteenth and twentieth-century drama. As mentioned above, the form *please God* has a different character from the other *please* parenthetical, since it is used to express a strong wish, rather than a request, as in (106) and (107):

(106)   Oh, **please** God we live till Monday morning, we'll set the slater to mend the roof of the house (*NCF*, **P2**, Edgeworth, M., *Castle Rackrent*, Glossary. (p.xi))

(107)   BESSIE (from upper window) Yous are all nicely shanghaied now! Sorra

mend th' lasses that have been kissin' an' cuddlin' their boys into th' sheddin' of blood!... Fillin' their minds with fairy tales that had no beginnin', but, **please** God, 'll have a bloody quick endin'!... (**Drama**, O'Casey, Sean. 1926. *The Plough and the Stars*)

The material also yields a slightly different expression with the UNPROP construction. This is illustrated in (108), and is mentioned in the *OED* (s.v. *please* v. 3). Here we find a noun phrase that has nothing to do with honorific titles or references to God, namely *please the pigs*. This example lacks the tone of politeness shown by other *please* expressions. According to the *OED* (s.v. *pig* n. III. 11d), it is considered to be a "proverbial phrase" whose meaning is 'if circumstances permit' or 'if all's well.'

(108)   I will do my duty, **please** the pigs. Would you mind---just another drop? (*NCF*, **P3**, Baring-Gould, S., *In The Roar Of The Sea*, Vol. I, Chapter XIII. (p.176))

Table 13. Distribution of *(and) please E* forms

	Type		P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	*please you*		-	0.22/3	-
	please God or similar		-	0.51/7	0.52/9
	please + title	*your Highness*	0.15/1	0.07/1	-
		your honour	-	3.07/42	-
		your majesty	0.31/2	-	-
	Others	*please the pigs*	-	0.07/1	0.06/1

Letters: 1761-1790	*please God* or similar	0.34/1

	Type	17th century	18th century	19th century	20th century
Drama	*please you/ye*	12.43/1	2.47/3	-	-
	please God or similar	-	-	2.03/2	0.82/2
	please + title — *your worship*	-	2.47/3	-	-
	your honour	-	3.29/4	-	-
	your ladyship	-	0.82/1	-	-
	your majesty	37.28/3	-	-	-
	your grace	24.86/2	-	-	-
	Others — *your sweet face*	12.43/1	-	-	-

if it please E

We only find examples of the form *if it please you* in Periods 2 and 3 in novels and in the letters. This form, unlike *(and) please you*, always presents a dummy pronoun *it* in subject position, as in (109), (110) and (110). The choice of object is shown in Table 14 below, which again shows quite fixed Experiencers (either a pronoun or *God*). As we can see, the references to God are parenthetical clauses expressing a wish, similar to the expression *please God*:

(109)   and they that saw the diamonds spoke very handsomely of them, but thought it a pity they were not bestowed, if it had so **pleased** God, upon a lady who would have become them better. (*NCF*, **P2**, Edgeworth, M., *Castle Rackrent* (p.59))

(110)   I %thank you for yʳ kind Mention of my Good Mother, I hear she is so well as to ride out a little, so I hope she will do again in time, I %dont wish to spare her yet a %while if it **please** God — (*CLECP*, 1772, W Burchal)

(111)   so, Lupin, my boy, let us change the subject. I will, if it **please** you, try and

be interested in your new hat adventure." (*NCF*, **P3**, Grossmith, G. and W. Grossmith, *The Diary of a Nobody*, Chapter XXI. (p.262))

Table 14. *(if) it please E* **forms**

	Type	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	*if it please God*	-	0.15/2	-
	if it please you	-	-	0.17/3
	if it please + other pronoun	-	-	0.15/2
Letters: 1761-1790	*if (it) please God*	1.01/3		

In addition, the earlier fictional material and letters only yield examples of the expression *if it please God*, which like *please God* does not convey politeness, but a strong desire, as in (112).

(112)   I am come over here to drink these, Waters, altho' I hope I have not much occasion for them, but by this means, if it **please** God I should ever have occasion to come into this Country again on the same errand, I hope I shall be some sort of a Judge myself, (*CLECP*, 1774, Henry Porter)

7.4.4   1NP construction

The pattern followed by 1NP constructions is the following: NP *please*. In most cases the argument expressed is the Cause and generally a Subject (cf. Section 6.4.1). As opposed to UNPROPs, in 1NP structures there is no unexpressed proposition

depending on the verb *please*. The general meaning of the verb in this construction is "to be satisfied, to desire, to like" (*OED*, s.v. *please* 6).

Table 15. Distribution of the 1NP construction

Novels	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
	1.39/9	1.75/24	0.64/11
Letters: 1761-1790	6.73/20		
Drama	18th century	19th century	20th century
	2.47/3	1.01/1	2.04/5

As we can see in Table 15, the frequency of this construction is higher in the letters than in the other two corpora. The frequencies in drama and fiction do not point to any particular tendency. The fact that letters contain more instances of this pattern may be due to the fact that Experiencers may be elided when they are obvious or not necessary, and letters from the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* are sometimes very direct and avoid unnecessary data or comments. We find examples like (40), repeated here as (113), and (114) below in which the only expressed argument is the Cause. The Experiencer may be unexpressed because it is unimportant or generic.

> (113)   'tis impossible a Woman can charm without a good Mouth. Yet, answer'd Lovemore, I have seen very great Beauties **please**, as the common Witticism speaks, in spight of their Teeth: (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *The Adventures of Rivella*, Main Text (p.9))

> (114)   I note its Contents & am Glad to hear the last Teas **Pleasd**, (*CLECP*, 1788, James Hammond)

Two of the examples in Period 1 and another two in the epistolary corpus are somewhat different since the argument expressed is not the Cause, but seems to be the Experiencer, as in (42), repeated here as (115), an example gathered from a descriptive narration of events, and (116), another similar example:

(115)   Stauracius cou'd indeed command an Army, which is not always to face an Enemy (because unless the Generals **please**, they are not always expos'd, and often abide in the Center); (*ECF*, **P1**, Manley, M. de la Rivière, *Memoirs of Europe*, Book 2, Main Text (p.202))

(116)   that myself & other Jnhabitants here request he will nominate for New Trustees some of our Town ^& Landowners thereof^ with his Nepw. T. Legh Esqr., as they are most likely to appoint a ^usefull^ Master to **please** the Inhabitants at large — (*CLECP*, 1789, James Leigh)

7.4.5   *Be pleased to* pattern

Be pleased to examples conform to the pattern: NP + *to be* + *pleased* + *to*-infinitive. Any tense of the verb *to be* can be found, and in imperatives the noun phrase is generally absent. The basic meanings of this form, followed by an infinitive clause, are "Originally: to be gratified or satisfied. Subsequently: to have the will or desire; to have the inclination or disposition; (also) to think proper, choose, or be so obliging as *to* do something" (*OED*, s.v. *please* 4b).

Table 16. Distribution of *be pleased to* forms

	Type	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	**TOTAL**	**11.76/76**	**3.51/48**	**1.68/29**
	non-imperative	9.29/60	3.43/47	1.62/28
	imperative	2.48/16	0.07/1	0.06/1
Letters: 1761-1790	**TOTAL**	**21.54/64**		
	non-imperative	17.16/51		
	imperative	4.37/13		
		18th century	19th century	20th century
Drama	**TOTAL**	**3.29/4**	**6.09/6**	**2.45/6**
	non-imperative	3.29/4	6.09/6	2.45/6
	imperative	-	-	-

As seen in Table 16, the use of the *be pleased to* pattern decreases considerably from period to period in the fiction corpus. The decrease in the frequency of imperative forms in Periods 2 and 3 is particularly striking. This pattern is very frequent in letters, while in drama it appears only in non-imperative instances and its overall frequency is low, with the exception of a peak reached in the nineteenth century. This fact may have to do again with text-type, since many instances of this construction are used in direct requests, which are more likely to appear in letters with business or commerce purposes, such as those in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*, than in fiction. Some examples, however, are similar to (117) and (118), in which *pleased* does not form part of a directive speech act, but it rather helps to describe someone else's feelings within a conversation. However, those that seem more interesting are instances inflected for the imperative, as (119), in which the whole structure functions as a politeness marker in a courteous interruption:

(117)   Women are **pleased** to see their favourite in the place of prominence---as long as Fortune swims him unbuffeted, (*NCF*, **P3**, Meredith, G., *One of Our Conquerors*, Vol. II., Chapter V. (p.124))

(118)   Tho you are **pleased** to say, that the piece of Land on which Mr. Jacsons wheel stands is of no Value — (*CLECP*, 1785, John Junior Dickenson)

(119)   Then be **pleas'd** to know, Madam, (continu'd she) that you are not Daughter to Flavia and Camillus (*ECF*, **P1**, Barker, J., *Exilius*, Vol. 2, Book 1 (p. 176))

Imperative forms of *be pleased to* are interesting because they are typically used in requests, and convey politeness functions as downtoners of the illocutionary force. Whereas Periods 2 and 3 of the fiction corpus contain just one instance each of the imperative form, we find a higher frequency of imperatives in letters. This is probably due to the pragmatic function, since the meaning and uses of these expressions are close to those of the parenthetical courtesy marker *please*. In the instances below the *be pleased to* constructions clearly serve politeness functions as mitigating devices in requests:

(120)   & when You have done Yours in Cheshire, be **pleased** to order the man to come over to me, & he shall do ours to Buxton &c — . (*CLECP*, 1773, John Dickenson)

(121)   and be surprised that I should have written a line on the subject: be **pleased** however to recollect, that in your late letters, while you complain of the brevity of mine, you add, that you excuse me from… (*NCF*, **P2**, Moore, J., *Mordaunt*, Vol. I., Letter III. (p.29))

(122)   'what I have to say is very serious to me; and be **pleased** to be humorous

after I am gone!' (*NCF*, **P3**, Stevenson, R. L., *Weir of Hermiston*, Chapter IV (p.97))

Among the non-imperative examples of this pattern, examples containing the modal *will* are also worthy of note. They are equivalent to imperative forms, but, add a certain degree of politeness or deference to the addressee by means of this syntactic downgrader. The novels offer a low frequency of *will* in this pattern, there are only two instances in each period. In drama the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries contain only one instance each, while it is totally absent from twentieth-century data. Examples with *will* are very frequent in the epistolary corpus, in which 19 out of 51 examples (6.39) contain either the full form *will* or a contracted form, as in (123), which seems to be a mild directive rather than a proper request (cf. Section 4.2). Again, the features of this epistolary corpus may be the reason for these differences:

(123)   you'll be **pleased** to be speedy in point of getting the money, as Gwillym

informs me he has never paid him sixpence for the Horses he bought from him

(*CLECP*, undated, Thomas [Peter] Legh)

7.4.6   Parenthetical courtesy marker *please*

Please as a courtesy marker is mainly "used in polite request or agreement, or to add a polite emphasis or urgency" (*OED*, s.v. *please* adv. and int. A). *Please* behaves as a pragmatic marker, with no verbal properties (cf. Section 6.4.3), and as such it is

recognised in dictionaries and reference works by its pragmatic function, rather than by the primary meaning of the verb *please* (cf. Chapter 5).

Table 17. Distribution of the courtesy marker *please* in the material

	Type	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Novels	**TOTAL**	-	**0.22/3**	**9.08/157**
	other position	-	0.15/2	4.98/86
	pre-verbal	-	0.07/1	4.11/71
	if please	0.15/1		
Letters: 1761-1790	**TOTAL**	**1.68/5**		
	other position	-		
	pre-verbal	1.68/5		
		18th century	19th century	20th century
Drama	**TOTAL**	**-**	**3.05/3**	**18.39/45**
	other position	-	2.03/2	14.31/35
	pre-verbal	-	1.01/1	2.45/10

In the fiction material, there are no examples of the parenthetical courtesy marker *please* in Period 1. The first examples recorded in the novels go back to Period 2. Similarly, eighteenth-century drama does not yield any instance and only three tokens are found in the nineteenth-century data. By contrast, eighteenth-century letters already contain five examples of the courtesy marker *please*. Instances from the novels are reproduced below as (124) and (125). If we take into account that Period 2 goes from 1800 to 1810, this date would agree with the earliest example given by Allen (from Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, a novel published in 1814, see Section 5.5.1 above). Example (124) is also extracted from a fragment of a novel by

Jane Austen, dated "not earlier than 1803," as the Editorial note points out, and published "in Memoir 1871." Brunton's novel, to which example (125) belongs, was first published in 1810. In both examples *please* is followed by a vocative, stressing the fact of calling the addressee's attention. The pragmatic function of *please* in these examples comes close to an attention getter. Nevertheless, the requestive function is already present in both cases, since the first one includes an indirect request for information in an embedded question, while in the second instance *please* is followed by a directive (cf. Sections 2.1.1 and 4.2).

(124)   while Tom Musgrave was chattering to Elizth, till they were interrupted by Nanny's approach, who half opening the door & putting in her head, said **"Please** Ma'am, Master wants to know why he be'nt to have his dinner."** (*NCF*, **P2**, Austen, J., *The Watsons* [in, *The Works of Jane Austen*], Fragment (p.346))[73]

(125)   Mrs De Courcy, somewhat alarmed, desired that the servant might come in. **"Please**, Madam," said he, "let me know where I may find Miss Montreville. (*NCF*, **P2**, Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume III, Chap. XXXII. (p.222-223))

The other example in Period 2 included in this group is quite a different one and deserves special consideration (cf. Section 6.4.3):

(126)   So you'll **please** pay me the two hundred pounds which he owed to Mr John Dykes. (*NCF*, **P2**, Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume III, Chap. XXIX. (p.118))

---

[73] Access to the digitalised manuscript proves that the editors have respected punctuation marks. The comma after *Please Ma'am* is, in fact, present in the original (cf. http://www.janeausten.ac.uk).

From a Present-day English perspective, *please* could be interpreted as another case of the courtesy marker, and therefore a non-verbal form. In this way we may consider that the modal *'ll* modifies only the main verb *pay*, as in *you**'ll pay** me, please*. But at this early stage *please* can also be regarded as a form of the verb followed by an infinitival form that has left out the particle *to*, that is, a PROP construction (cf. comments in Section 9.2.3). Pre-verbal *please* is not generally followed by punctuation marks, not even in Present-day English where punctuation can be assumed to reflect intonation, since this request pattern is not characterised by a pause following *please*.[74] In fact, *please* does not appear between commas or other signs of punctuation in any one of the 71 examples in which it occurs in pre-verbal position. Therefore, lack of punctuation does not help to indicate in the example above whether or not *please* is still a lexical verb accompanied by the modal *will*, as in *you**'ll please** (to) pay me*. The reanalysis of structures of this kind may have influenced the development of the courtesy marker *please*. Examples as (126) are grouped as 'pre-verbal' in Table 17 and many of them may show a certain degree of ambiguity, especially at an early stage. Examples classified as 'other,' like (124) and (125) above, are always unambiguous courtesy markers.

The first possible instance of courtesy marker *please* in the epistolary corpus dates back to 1771, and is similar to the one in (126):

---

[74] Note that in Present-day English there is frequently no comma after *please* in these expressions. "In initial position [*please* is realised] with high level tone followed by a falling contour." The falling tone, placed at the end of the command serves to mark the closure of a speaker-turn (Wichmann 2004: 1543, 2005). As noted by different authors, it is common for many English parentheticals to be prosodically integrated (Dehé and Kavalova 2007: 14; Dehé 2007: 270-274; Kaltenböck *et al.* 2011: 859).

(127)   You'll **please** be %so good to Let me know p~ return post when the Lease

will be %ready (*CLECP*, 1771, Jeffery Hart)

Two out of the five examples in the letters contain a form of *will*. The first example

without *will*, in (128), dates back to 1788:

(128)   (**Please** see over) (*CLECP*, 1788, James Hammond)

The example in (128) is the first instance of modern *please* followed by an imperative

verb form in the three corpora, although the lack of punctuation after *please* enables

again a different interpretation: the example could also be regarded as a PROP

construction of *please* inflected for the imperative and followed by a bare infinitive

form. Probably these examples still reflect a medium stage in the development

towards the genuine courtesy marker.

In Period 3, instances of the courtesy marker *please* in positions other than

pre-verbal are more common than those in which it is followed by a verb form; as

for the pragmatic functions of the parenthetical courtesy marker *please* in Late

Modern English, we generally find the same uses as in Present-day English, for

instance those of accepting an offer politely, as in (129), giving emphasis to a polite

question, as in (130), mitigating the effect of an order, as in (131), or making a

request more polite, as in (132):

(129)   'You'll have some supper with us, Mr. Milvain?' 'I think I will, **please**.'

(*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *New Grub Street*, Vol. I., Chapter VI (p.129))

(130)   'What sort of lady, **please**? A lady of the ballet?' 'Oh no!' Alan cried, giving

303

a little start of horror. 'Quite different from that. A real lady.' (*NCF*, **P3**, Allen, G., *The Woman Who Did*, Chapter VIII (p.94)) (example (47) repeated here for convenience)

(131)   'Come!' said he, 'I'll have a Curaçoa; and a light, **please**.' She served the liqueur from one of the lovely bottles, (*NCF*, **P3**, Hardy, T., *Jude The Obscure*, Part Third, III.-viii. (p.224))

(132)   "Will you light me a taper, **please**? I want to seal it." (*NCF*, **P3**, Coleridge, M. E., *The King with Two Faces*, Chapter XXIX (p.235))

When *please* occurs in preverbal position, it may be followed by an imperative, either negative, as in example (133), or affirmative, as in (134):

(133)   "You do pardon me, Miss Nunn?" "**Please** don't be foolish. I will thank you to let my hand go." (*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *The Odd Women*, Vol. II, III. (p.63))

(134)   I said: "If you like to stay, Mr. Fosselton, for our usual crust---pray do." He replied: "Oh! thanks; but **please** call me Burwin-Fosselton. It is a double name. (*NCF*, **P3**, Grossmith, G. and W. Grossmith, *The Diary of a Nobody*, Chapter XI. (p.142))

Note in (134) the presence of *pray*, the former courtesy marker which gave way to *please*. *Pray* is used by an older city character, whereas the character using *please* is a young man, who also uses *pray* at a different point (cf. comments in page 309). The example shows that by the end of the nineteenth century both *pray* and *please* could be used in the same context and followed by an imperative form. It seems also remarkable that while in (134) an alternative analysis as a PROP structure with bare

infinitive is still possible, this is not the case with (133), where *please* can only be interpreted as a courtesy marker followed by a negative imperative.

In addition to *please*, the material yielded one example of *if please*, which is given as (135). This conditional structure is again parenthetical, the only conditional parenthetical in Period 1 without subject and object, and it seems to be as well a courtesy marker, similar in function to parentheticals *if you please* and *if you don't mind*. Although this structure could be classified as an UNPROP, the lack of an Experiencer would make it difficult to know whether it derives from a complex construction with an object (*if it please you*) or a subject Experiencer (*if you please*).

(135)   I shall trust to your Wisdom and Goodness, to deliver me out of this Dilemma; but at present, if **please**, we will go in, (*ECF*, **P1**, Barker, J., *Exilius*, Vol. 1, Book 1 (p.23))

The only three examples of the courtesy marker *please* from *A Corpus of Irish English* in the nineteenth century belong to the end of the century. Example (136) below is the earliest instance found in drama. The request following *please* seems to be a non-conventionally direct strategy, in Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s (1989) classification, and more specifically a mild hint, while *please* is more typical in direct and conventionally indirect strategies (cf. Section 4.2 on requests):

(136)   SERGEANT (saluting) **Please**, sir, there's a mad dog, sir, a-sitting at the back door, and he has bit four of our men awful. CONN Tatthers was obliged to perform his painful duty. CLAIRE Call off the dog, Conn. Moya, open the back door. (**Drama**, Boucicault, Dion. 1875. *The Shaughraun*)

Five examples of *please* from the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* are not included in the classification. They have been disregarded for the tally for different reasons. Two of them lack enough context due to a piece of torn paper or unclear handwriting, while other two, (137) and (138) below, seem to ignore standard syntactic rules. The syntax is limited, the expressions present a formulaic status and they were probably conventionalised in eighteenth century letters:

(137) Herewith you receive a Bill in Smith Payne & Smiths £17 for two years rent for Whaley Mill due to Petr. Legh Esqr. Mich. mass day last the receipt whereof **please** — to me knowledge in course. (*CLECP*, 1782, John Philips)

(138) The above are agreeable to an order recd. from Mr. Grimshaw forwarded this day P~ Canal to Manchester — which {*} the same soon safe with You &tc **please** — & am for P. S. &C very Respectfully Dr. Sir Y~ most obt. Servt: (*CLECP*, ?1785, Ralph Nickson)

In (137), the structure is probably a 1NP, with *the receipt* as the Cause and an unexpressed Experiencer. The syntax here is limited probably due to the business-like language. In (138), *please* is preceded by *etc*, which suggests it is a kind of formula. There is a sign or letter missing in the sequence, which could have provided an explanation to the whole context.

The fifth example, recorded here as (139), is slightly different from the examples above. It contains the form *pleased*, but it cannot be a participle nor a preterite form of the verb:

(139) wou'd be Infinitely Obliged to You if you wou'd **Pleased** be so Good as to

> Leave ye. Marriage Settlement Deed, between My Father in law and Mother in Law which was Lodged in Uncle Peter Gaskell's Hands, (*CLECP*, 1775, William Chatterton (of Marple))

It seems that *pleased* may have been simply a mistake for *please* due to the careless writing employed sometimes in letters. Letters are not meant to be published, in that sense they differ from fiction, since novels, for instance, would go through a process of proof-reading and this kind of mistake would have been corrected.

7.5. Instances of *pray* in the corpora

As already mentioned (see Section 5.5.2), *pray* was the direct predecessor of the courtesy marker *please*. Deeper attention to this courtesy marker, especially in the period when the replacement took place, may help to understand the emergence of *please*.

In the corpora analysed there are instances of several request markers close to each other, this fact reveals the coexistence of the courtesy marker *pray* with different forms of *please* and the necessity to reinforce politeness nuances. Different forms of the verbs *please* and *pray* as pragmatic markers are attested in nearby contexts. In the following instances the courtesy marker *pray* occurs close to forms and structures with *please*, such as *if you please* in (140). In (140) *pray* is followed by a negative imperative form in the same way *please* usually is in Present-day English (cf. Example (133) with *please*). In (141) Captain Crawley uses *pray* inquiring authoritatively a nurse, whereas the nurse, an inferior character addresses him using *please your honour*. Here *pray* indicates that the speaker is calling someone's attention

right after a question. We also find instances of *pray* occurring next to *please to* used by the same author, as in (142):

(140)   "Oh, Ma'am, if that is all, **pray** dont let me retard your raptures. You may go to-morrow, or to-night Ma'am, if you **please**. (*NCF*, **P2**, Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume III, Chap. XXXI (p.190))

(141)   What business have you here **pray**, and who are you or what are you?" "**Please** you honour, I was his nurse formerly, (*NCF*, **P2**, Edgeworth, M., *Ennui*, Chapter I (p.32))

(142)   I beg the favor of an answer when it suits you, w^ch: **please** to direct to me to the care of M^r: Burchal, at whose house I write this. **Pray** make my respects to M^r: Gibert (*CLECP*, 1770, Thomas Hayward)

Example (142) contains three polite requests containing different expressions marking the request: the performative *I beg the favor of* and the negative politeness downgrader *when it suits you*, the imperative PROP construction *please to*, and the courtesy marker *pray*. It shows the variety of politeness expressions available at the moment and it is very likely that it also shows a pragmatic need for new forms to indicate more politeness or to express politeness more explicitly, through reinforcement or change.

Some examples of the courtesy marker *pray* in the different corpora include also the form *please* used in a similar way. These examples would support the idea that both choices were available during a period of time with similar uses, as in (134), repeated here as (143) for convenience:

(143)   I said: "If you like to stay, Mr. Fosselton, for our usual crust---**pray** do." He

replied: "Oh! thanks; but **please** call me Burwin-Fosselton. It is a double name.

(*NCF*, **P3**, Grossmith, G. and W. Grossmith, *The Diary of a Nobody*, Chapter XI.

(p.142))

Example (143) is probably one of the clearest examples, since both markers appear

in the same syntactic structure —both are followed by an imperative form— and

have the same pragmatic function. The character using *pray* is Mr. Charles Pooter, a

middle-class and middle-age man from the city. Burwin-Fosselton, the one using

please, is a young comedian. While Burwin-Fosselton uses the politeness marker

thanks, the intervention by Mr. Pooter denotes a certain tone of negative politeness

since he uses another courtesy marker, namely the conditional expression *if you like*,

which is, according to Chen (1998) an 'addressee-satisfaction conditional,' together

with *if you please* (see Section 5.5.1). This passage suggests that age was a determining

factor in the selection of courtesy marker in requests in the second half of the

nineteenth century (cf. sociolinguistic analysis in Section 8.2). As regards specific

dates for the shift from *pray* to *please*, Akimoto (2000: 76) points at "a notable

decline in the use of *pray* in the nineteenth century" that eventually led to its

disappearance. We can see in this example, though, that *pray* was still available in the

last decade of the nineteenth century in the same syntactic structure and with the

same pragmatic value as *please*.

Example (144) is particularly interesting, since the verb inflected for the

imperative after *pray* is *be pleased* followed by a *to*-infinitive.

(144)   Sir, says he, I find you are in some Disorder in your Thoughts at my Talk, **pray** be **pleas'd** to go which Way you think fit, (*ECF*, **P1**, Defoe, D., *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (p.256))

Examples using several markers together are good evidence of how politeness may contradict Grice's Maxim of Quantity, especially when negative politeness is at hand. Thus, the addition of request markers does not add to the information, but rather minimises the cost to the addressee by giving more choices to a refusal. Text searches in the *OED* yielded two examples of *I pray be pleased* followed by a *to*-infinitive clause, one dating from 1640 —*I pray be pleased to send mee a pocket prayer-book* (*OED*, s.v. *pocket* n. 14a)— and the other one from 1642 —*I pray be pleased to make me partaker of some forraigne news, …*(*OED*, s.v. *square* n. 6b)—, in which there two different politeness markers are used to reinforce the request. Similar examples are also found in eighteenth-century letter-writing manuals (cf. examples (173)-(174)). Example (144), which dates back to the second decade of the eighteenth century, suggests that *pray* had already started to lose strength, since it needed to be reinforced with a more expressive marker. In fact, this is one of the reasons that Akimoto (2000: 80) gives for the replacement of *pray* by *please* (see Section 5.6 on *pray*).

According to Traugott (2000), in instances like (145) below, *pray* is a 'clause-initial parenthetical,' in this case an ambiguous courtesy marker followed either by an imperative or a bare infinitive. As Traugott explains, when clause-initial *I pray you*/*I pray thee*/*I pray* precedes an imperative, the construction can be mistaken with a

performative main clause,[75] while the "parenthetical status is unambiguous when it occurs clause-internally or clause-finally" (Traugott 2000: 5). This example is similar to the ambiguous instances of the courtesy marker *please* as regards syntactic behaviour:

(145)   **pray** deliver the Inclos'd to Mrs Keck (*CLECP*, 1772, W Burchal)

Traugott provides the following example, which, according to her, introduces an imperative and "might be parenthetical" (Traugott 2000: 5):

(146)   I pray yow telle me what was wreton vnder the mares fote (from Traugott 2000: 5, her example (14 b))

The fact that *pray* shared a similar syntactic behaviour with *please*, and that it could also be ambiguous in a similar context, may have facilitated the incorporation of *please* to its role as a parenthetical courtesy marker in pre-verbal position.

The existence of these examples makes it necessary to establish a brief comparison between both markers in the corpora. Akimoto (2000) pays attention to *pray* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and his corpus contains also different genres, namely letters, drama and novels. Table 18 below offers Akimoto's data with frequencies calculated per 100,000 words in order to make them comparable to the data in the present study:

---

[75] Compare with the development of pragmatic marker *I think* from a matrix clause (Section 3.4).

Table 18. Frequencies of *pray* parenthetical in Akimoto (2000)

	18th century	19th century
plays	113.48/101	15/15
novels	21/21	11.81/13
letters	17.24/10	8.62/5
total	53.04/131	12.31/33

Akimoto's data for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries include two novels, namely Richardson's *Pamela* (1740-41) and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813); several plays by two authors, Farquhar's *The Remiting Officer and Other Plays* (1706) and Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays* (1893-1895); and letters from *The Oxford Book of Letters* (1535-1985). His corpus is interesting for the diachronic variation and the genres selected, which are similar to the ones selected for the present study. We observe a notable decrease in the use of *pray* from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century in all the genres as a whole, although the most striking data are found in the plays, which witness a dramatic shift in the frequency of *pray*: from 113.48 to 15. The difference may be due to the dates of the plays, since the eighteenth century ones date back to the beginning of the century, whereas the nineteenth century ones are from the end of the century, thus, they are almost two hundred years apart.

Akimoto's data also show interesting differences between the three genres. The plays offer the highest frequency of *pray*, followed by the novels whereas the lowest frequency of this courtesy marker is found in the letters. Although we do not know the exact dating of the letters within each century in order to compare Akimoto's data to the findings in the present study, it seems plausible that drama shows the highest frequencies of elements which occur in interaction, at least *a*

priori. Even if correspondence usually reflects actual speech better than other genres, drama records mainly dialogical interventions, while fiction and letters contain a considerable amount of descriptions.

In the following sections, I will discuss the data for *pray* in my material. In all the corpora examples of *pray* are restricted to its use as a pragmatic marker, and, therefore, do not include those in which it is a verb used in its religious sense. In addition to *pray*, the tables also include information on the courtesy markers *please* and *if you please*, so that the data are comparable to those from the preliminary study with *ARCHER* (Section 7.2).

7.5.1   *Pray* in the *Chadwyck-Healey* data

The courtesy marker *pray* is well represented in all the periods selected from *Chadwyck-Healey* databases. Table 19 below offers a comparison of overall figures including parenthetical reduced forms of *pray* and *please* and the parenthetical *if you please*, the three most common courtesy markers in requests in the Late Modern English period:

Table 19. Parenthetical forms (*Chadwyck-Healey*)

TYPES	P1: 1710-1720	P2: 1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
pray	6.19/40	12.42/170	3.7/64
if you please	0.15/1	1.90/26	1,85/32
please	0	0.22/3	9.08/157

As can be seen in the table, the frequency in use of *if you please* remains fairly stable in the nineteenth century. The peak in the frequency of *pray* in Period 2, at the

beginning of the nineteenth century, is followed by a notable decrease by the end of the century. Note that my corpus yields a frequency of *pray* in Period 2 similar to the he one reported by Akimoto for in his nineteenth century material (cf. 11.81 vs. 12.42).

There is a sharp contrast between the frequencies in use of *pray* and *please*. The data show how the situation reverses from the beginning to the end of the century in the use of the markers, more evident in Figure 15 below:

Figure 15. Main parenthetical markers in requests (*Chadwyck-Healey*)
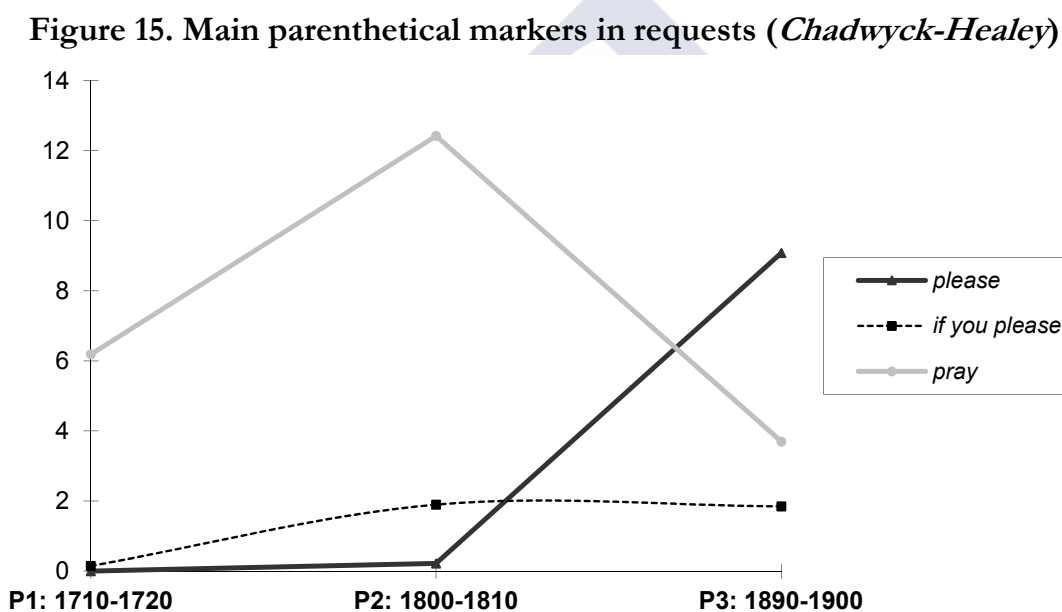
Even though *pray* is no longer the favoured form, it continues to be used at least until the end of the nineteenth century as a pragmatic element in requests, both as a courtesy marker, as in (147), and as an attention getter, "alert[ing] the Hearer's attention to the ensuing speech act," in this case a request (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989: 277), as in (148):

(147) **'Pray** forgive me!' he murmured humbly, leaning forwards towards the girl with eyes which deprecated her displeasure. (*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *New Grub Street*, Vol. III., Chapter XXXIII (p.228))

(148) And **pray,** how in the name of wonder did you do that? Upon my word, you will deserve the thanks of the Preventive men. (*NCF*, **P3**, Baring-Gould, S., *In The Roar Of The Sea*, Vol. I., Chapter VII. (p.87))

Both uses of *pray* can be found in requests, *pray* as a courtesy marker (together with the other forms, like *I pray you*, etc.) is used parenthetically to convey politeness, it often occurs pre-verbally and is used to mitigate the illocutionary force of a directive. When used as an attention getter it often precedes a question, generally a request for information. In many instances a vocative follows this pragmatic marker, which is usually followed by a comma, as opposed to the general use of the courtesy marker. Overall figures of *pray* as an attention getter represent in this corpus the 42% of the total data of *pray* when it occurs on its own.

Table 20. *Pray* variation in the *Chadwyck-Healey* data

TYPES		P1: 1710-1720	P2: 1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
pray	courtesy marker	4.33/28	7.31/100	2.6/45
	attention getter	1.86/12	5.12/70	1.1/19
prithee	courtesy marker	0.62/4	0.07/1	-
	attention getter	0.31/2	-	-
(I) pray you/thee/ye/ I pray	courtesy marker	0.46/3	0.51/7	0.69/12
	attention getter	-	0.07/1	-

As shown in Section 5.5.2, in Early Moden English, and to some extent also in Late Modern English, there were different phrases containing the verb *pray*, such as *I pray you/thee*, the grammaticalised courtesy marker *prithee*, and other variants lacking either subject or object pronouns. These forms were used mainly as pragmatic markers in requests. The material from the fiction corpus contains examples not only from parenthetical *pray* alone, but also from *prithee* and different forms containing *pray*, such as *(I) pray you, I pray thee/ye* or *I pray*, which are less frequent, as shown in Table 20. Instances of the group of different forms containing *pray*, as in (149), show an increase in use in Period 3, whereas *prithee* is not very common in this text-type. Both expressions can be used as courtesy marker mitigating the effect of a directive, as *I pray you* in (149) or as an attention getter, as *prithee* in (150):

(149)   only, **I pray you**, do not take offence at what I have said (*NCF*, **P3**, Baring-Gould, S., *In The Roar Of The Sea*, Vol. I., Chapter VII. (p.86))

(150)   Will. Atkins, said I, **prithee** what Education had you? What was your Father? (*ECF*, **P1**, Defoe, D., *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, Main Text (p.161))

Examples containing *pray* with T-pronouns and *prithee* could have been already felt as old-fashioned in Late Modern English. Sönmez (2005: 17) dates the loss of the second person pronoun *thou* in the seventeenth century, and Denison (1999: 106) refers to occasional uses in the eighteenth century, which were probably marginal or dialectal (Ihalainen 1994: 229). The demise of *prithee* was a consequence of the loss of the T-pronoun.

7.5.2 *Pray* in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*

Only five instances of courtesy marker *please* (1.68) and a low frequency of parenthetical *if you please* (5.72) make *pray* into the favourite parenthetical courtesy marker in this corpus, even if imperative *please to* constructions are slightly more frequent (47.12) than the pragmatic marker *pray*. I have excluded 29 examples of *pray* occurring in the correspondence of three different writers because in them it seems that *pay* instead of *pray* is intended: *pray my compliments* (occurring in 25 examples);[76] *pray my respects* (occurring in three examples) and *pray my duty* (occurring in one example). *To pay one's respects* is "to show polite attention or deference (*to* a person) by presenting oneself or by making a call" (*OED*, s.v. *respect* n. P7).

In the data gathered from the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* the distinction between the two pragmatic functions of the marker *pray*, namely the proper courtesy marker and the attention getter, reveals a lower proportion of the latter as compared to the data from the novels, as shown in Table 21 below.

Table 21. *Pray* variation in late eighteenth-century letters

FORMS	FIGURES
***Pray* (courtesy marker)**	33.66/100
***Pray* (attention getter)**	12.45/37
I pray God	0.67/2
Pray* (courtesy marker) + *will	0.34/1

---

[76] *Pray my compliments* could also be an abbreviation of *Pray make my compliments*, which could have acquired formulaic status in letters (cf. example (151)).

Whereas *prithee* and complex structures are not attested in the material, as shown in Table 21,[77] *pray* shows a high frequency in this corpus. If we take together the frequencies of the courtesy marker and the attention getter and compare them to Akimoto's data from eighteenth century letters, the difference is quite remarkable (cf. 17.24 vs. 46.11). This fact could perhaps be related to the time of composition of the letters included in Akimoto's corpus, since this information is not provided. There are examples of the courtesy markers *pray* and *please to*, the two most frequent request strategies in this corpus, with similar constructions, as in (151) and (152):

(151)   **Pray** make my Comp^{ts}: to Good m^{rs}: Orford (*CLECP*, 1774, Richard Hole)

(152)   **Please** to make my Comp^{ts} to Mr Legh (*CLECP*, 1774, J. Hulley)

These examples could make us think about a possible influence of *pray* on the final development of *please*, since *pray* was common in initial position and before an imperative. This fact could have contributed to the loss of the infinitival marker *to* following *please*, and therefore, to the reanalysis of the verb *please* as a courtesy marker (see Section 9.3 below).

In addition to the function of *pray* as a perfect equivalent of nowadays *please*, that is, as a request marker, *pray* as an attention getter also shows a high frequency in

---

[77] A closer look at the data reveals no instances of verbal *pray* in this corpus. Examples of *pray* in its religious sense, or inflected forms (i.e. *prays* or *prayed*) are absent from this epistolary collection. Maybe this fact has to do with the text-type, since private letters, and especially letters which are often restricted to business affairs, may show a greater reluctance towards blessing and praying formulae or any description of religious character. The only exceptions are two references to God, used as formulaic wishes: *The great Catastrophy, I find, has at last happend. I **pray** God, to support poor Miss Legh, wch I make no doubt he will* (*CLECP*, ?1787, R Hall).

the epistolary corpus. In all cases *pray* precedes a question, in which the writer demands further information (cf. page 312), as in (153) and (154) below:

(153)   **pray** what must we do with them. (*CLECP*, 1774, Harry Richardson)

(154)   **Pray** was such a neighbour to be ill used? (*CLECP*, 1780, John Dickenson)

An interesting case in the letter corpus is example (155) below, in which *pray* is placed medially in a sentence including modal *will*. The use of *pray* here seems close to that of modern *please*, and is similar to first examples of courtesy marker *please* with *will* attested in this epistolary corpus (cf. example (127)). Note that the courtesy marker is modified by modal *will* as a syntactic downgrader, and precedes a lexical downgrader such as *be so obliging to*. Negative politeness seems necessary to show the writer's feelings preceding the account of bad news (*her mother is very bad indeed*):

(155)   — You will **pray** be so obliging to inform your Dairy Maid her mother is very bad indeed; but she is proper care taken of — (*CLECP*, 1788, Edward Ackers)

The variability of *pray* forms found in *Chadwyck-Healey* collections contrasts with the exclusive use of *pray* on its own in this corpus. This would suggest that letters represent a more advanced state of the language and closeness to oral language. These letters were produced in the northern area (cf. Section 1.4.2.4) and, therefore, the data could indicate that some changes were first initiated in this region and then spread southwards (cf. Section 9.2.3).

7.5.3 **Pray** in **A Corpus of Irish English** (drama)

The diachronic character of *A Corpus of Irish English* enables the comparison of courtesy markers *pray*, *please* and parenthetical *if you please* in drama, as can be observed in Table 22 and Figure 16 below:

Table 22. Parenthetical forms (Irish drama)

TYPES	18th century	19th century	20th century
pray	86.45/105	14.21/14	0.41/1
if you please	17.29/21	4.06/4	1.63/4
please	0	3.05/3	18.39/45

Figure 16. Main parenthetical markers in requests (drama)
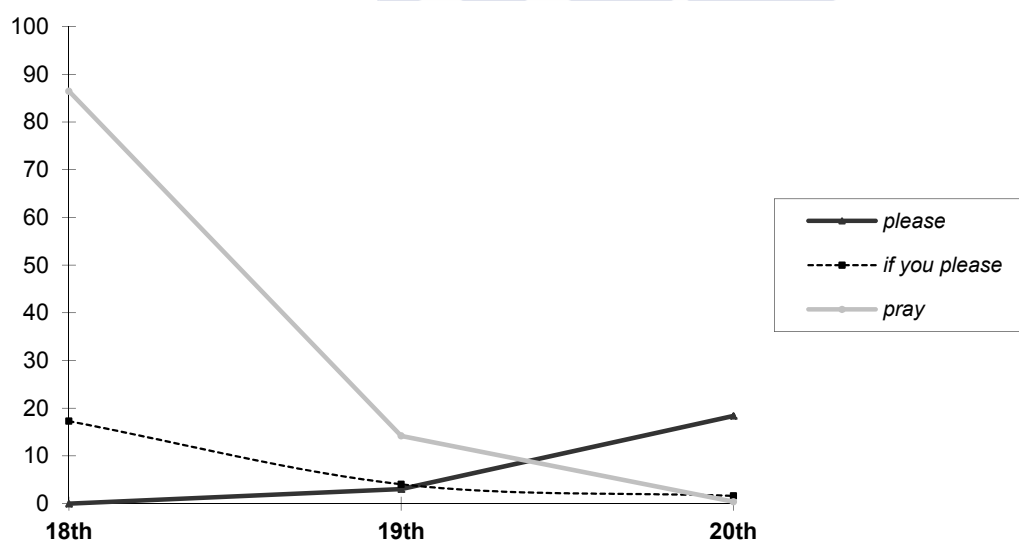
Data from drama show some differences as compared to the other corpora. Both *pray* and *if you please* have remarkably high frequencies in the eighteenth-century data, whereas figures from the nineteenth century are similar to those found in Period 2 in the fiction corpus. In spite of the disparity shown in the eighteenth century material, the shift in the preferred courtesy marker in requests from *pray* to *please* is

similarly placed at some point during the nineteenth century. In the preliminary analysis carried out in *ARCHER*, in drama *pray* is also the most frequent courtesy marker in requests during the second-half of the nineteenth-century, followed by the courtesy marker *please*, which is more common than the parenthetical *if you please* in this period. However, already in the twentieth century *pray* almost disappears from all the genres, including drama (cf. Section 7.2).

Examples from drama evidence a higher frequency of *pray* (in both functions as courtesy marker and attention getter) than in the other genres analysed. This difference is particularly noticeable in the eighteenth-century data, since *pray* is almost twice as frequent in drama (86.45) as in letters (46.10), for example, and several times more frequent than in Periods 1 (6.19) and 2 (12.42) in novels. In the eighteenth century the most common pragmatic function of *pray* when occurring on its own is that of attention getter, as can be noticed in Table 23 below. This does not occur in any other period or text-type:

Table 23. *Pray* variation in drama (*A Corpus of Irish English*)

TYPES		17th century	18th century	19th century	20th century
Pray	courtesy marker	-	42.81/52	14.21/14	0.41/1
	attention getter	24.86/2	43.63/53	-	-
I pray/(I) pray thee	courtesy marker	37.28/3	0.82/1	-	-
	attention getter	24.86/2	1.65/2	-	-
(I) prithee	courtesy marker	211.28/17	8.23/10	-	-
	attention getter	24.86/2	1.65/2	-	-

This corpus also shows an extraordinary high frequency of *prithee*, which is much more frequent than any other forms with *pray*, especially in the seventeenth century, although this period cannot be compared to other genres. Although the reduced number of words corresponding to the seventeenth century may be responsible for such high frequencies, it is undeniable that this century shows a great variety of forms, and therefore indicates that *pray* was not yet fixed in the seventeenth century. The high frequency (and proportion) of the attention getter may be taken to reflect the fact that this function is more typical in the language of immediacy than the request marker, and therefore directly linked to a high degree of interaction expected in plays.

Even though this corpus does not provide many examples of co-occurrence between *pray* and *please*, we still find some interesting cases in which the same character uses both markers. This is the case of Gwendolen and Algernon, both characters in Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), as we can see in examples (156)-(158) below. In (157) and (158), Algernon is addressing the same character with a different marker in each instance, and in both cases before a directive:

(156)   CECILY [Severely] Cake or bread and butter? GWENDOLEN [In a bored manner] Bread and butter, **please**. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays. (**Drama**, Wilde, Oscar. 1895. *The Importance of Being Earnest*)

(157)   GWENDOLEN **Pray** don't talk to me about the weather, Mr. Worthing. Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else. And that makes me so nervous. (**Drama**, Wilde, Oscar. 1895. *The Importance of Being Earnest*)

(158)   ALGERNON Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in Heaven - [JACK puts out his hand to take a sandwich. ALGERNON at once interferes] **Please** don't touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. (**Drama**, Wilde, Oscar. 1895. *The Importance of Being Earnest*)

(159)   JACK Well, produce my cigarette case first. ALGERNON Here it is. [Hands cigarette case] Now produce your explanation, and **pray** make it improbable. (**Drama**, Wilde, Oscar. 1895. *The Importance of Being Earnest*)

In the twentieth century the only character using *pray*, Miss Gilchrist in Behan's *The Hostage* (1959), makes also use of *please*, as we can observe in examples (160) and (161):

(160)   MEG How dare you? When I was ill I lay prostituted on that carpet. Men of good taste have complicated me on it. Away, you scruff hound, and thump your craw with the other hippocrites. MISS GILCHRIST **Pray** do not insult my religiosity. (**Drama**, Behan, Brendan. 1959. *The Hostage*)

(161)   MULLEADY I can't, MISS GILCHRIST I haven't paid my rent. MISS GILCHRIST I will pray for you, Eustace. My shoes, **please**. MULLEADY [fetching her shoes] Will you come back, Miss Gilchrist? (**Drama**, Behan, Brendan. 1959. *The Hostage*)

These instances exemplify the coexistence of both markers in the nineteenth and even in the twentieth century. The features of drama and the depiction of characters provide some nuances in the particular uses of these politeness expressions. In this way, characters using *please* in the nineteenth century are young, modern people: a

young gentleman, Algernon, and a young lady, Gwendolen. On the contrary, Miss Gilchrist in the second half of the twentieth century represents a profound and old-fashioned religiosity.

7.6. Genre variation

In the different corpora analysed, we may notice some similarities between figures in some genres as regards certain groups of structures. Thus, frequencies of PROP constructions or conditional UNPROP constructions are more similar in novels and letters as compared to drama. The special characteristics of plays, written to be performed, could condition the use of some expressions. Larger structures would probably be avoided, and, therefore, stylistic features may cause a reduction of more indirect strategies, and, in particular, those related to negative politeness, which are often more elaborated.

As regards instances from novels, it should be noted that all the structures mentioned, with the exception of the courtesy marker *please*, may not necessarily be found in dialogue, but rather in the descriptive part of fiction, although as can be observed in the selection of examples included, this is not generally the case and most of them occur in interaction. There are examples occurring in the narration, and not in the dialogue, (cf. (27)), while we also find instances from reported speech (cf. (35)).

Dialogue usually occupies a central role in novels, but in addition to dialogical interaction among characters, some of the novels selected for this study include a good amount of letters as part of their texts. As is well known, in Late

Modern English, and especially in the eighteenth century, the epistolary novel was very productive (cf. Section 1.4.1.1). Take, for instance *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, which includes passages such as those in (162) and (163). Example (162) is the beginning of a letter, using *please* twice in highly formulaic business language. Example (163) constitutes the closing of the same letter, with *pray*, probably to further downgrade the illocutionary force of a higher imposition:

(162)   "Dear Sirs, "Herewith **please** receive invoice of goods sent by Great Northern Railway. Same are to be delivered at Carfax, near Purfleet, immediately on receipt at goods station King's Cross. The house is at present empty, but enclosed **please** find keys, all of which are labelled. (*NCF*, **P3**, Stoker, B., *Dracula*, Chapter XIV. (p.98-99))

(163)   "**Pray** do not take us as exceeding the bounds of business courtesy in pressing you in all ways to use the utmost expedition. "We are, dear Sirs, "Faithfully yours, (*NCF*, **P3**, Stoker, B., *Dracula*, Chapter XIV. (p.99))

Differences in drama as compared to the figures from the other corpora may also reflect a bias in the material from *A Corpus of Irish English*. Thus, in the eighteenth century six out of ten plays belong to the first two decades of this century and the latest dates back to 1777 (cf. Appendix 2). As we can infer from the analysis of the data, the second half of the eighteenth century was the period when probably most of the changes regarding shifts in some structures with the verb *please* started to take place, as clearly shown in the epistolary collection from 1761-1790. An even more relevant bias is shown by data from the nineteenth century since no plays from the first half are included and, in fact, the earliest one in this century dates back to 1860.

The first decades in the nineteenth century were probably the time when the interchangeability of markers and the consolidation of *please* were most noticeable, but data from this period are underrepresented.

The following figures trace the frequencies of the courtesy markers *pray* and *please* in Late Modern English in the three genres which have been looked at. Figure 17 offers the evolution in novels, Figure 18 includes these courtesy markers in letters, in the periods covered by the *Corpus of Late-Eighteenth Century Prose* and *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*, and Figure 19 represents their frequencies in drama:

Figure 17. *Please* and *pray* in novels
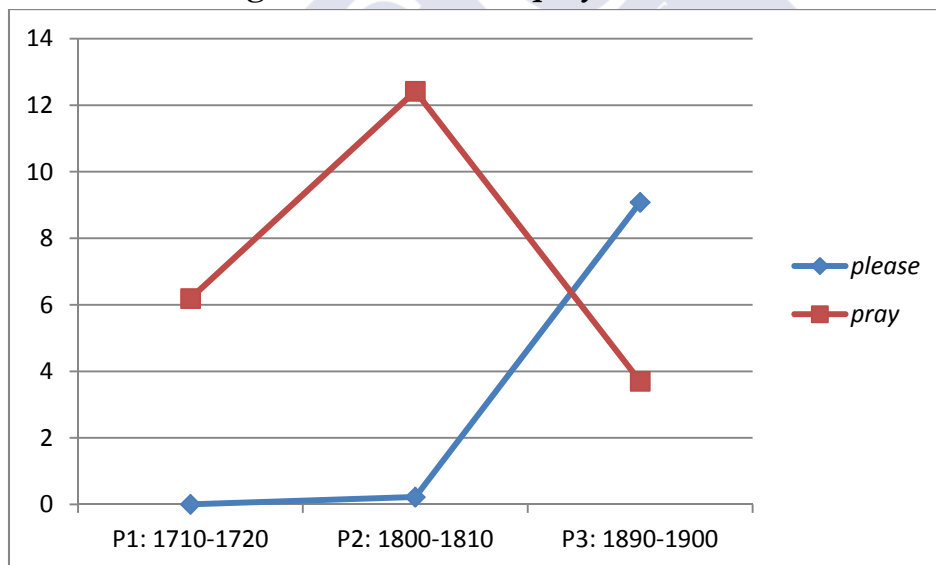
Figure 18. *Please* and *pray* in letters
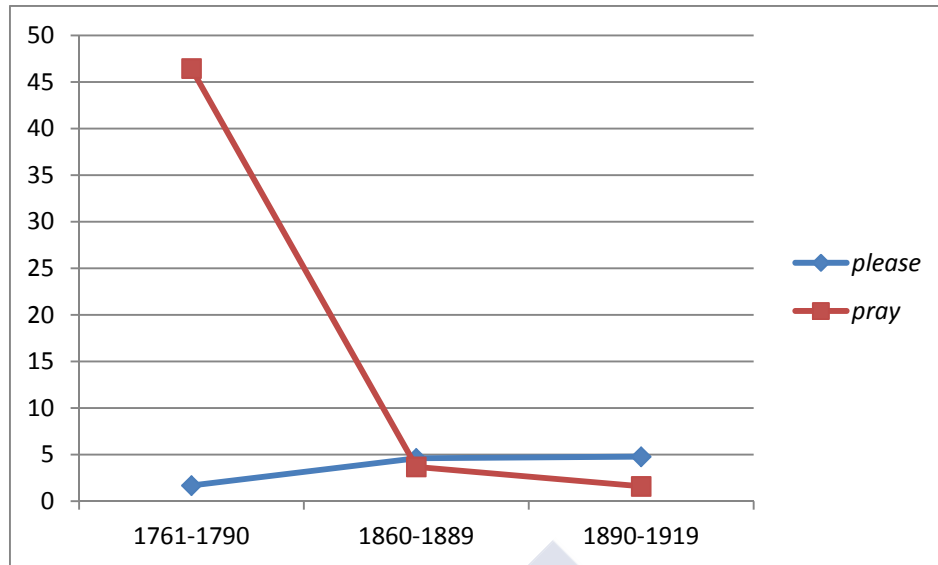
Figure 19. *Please* and *pray* in drama
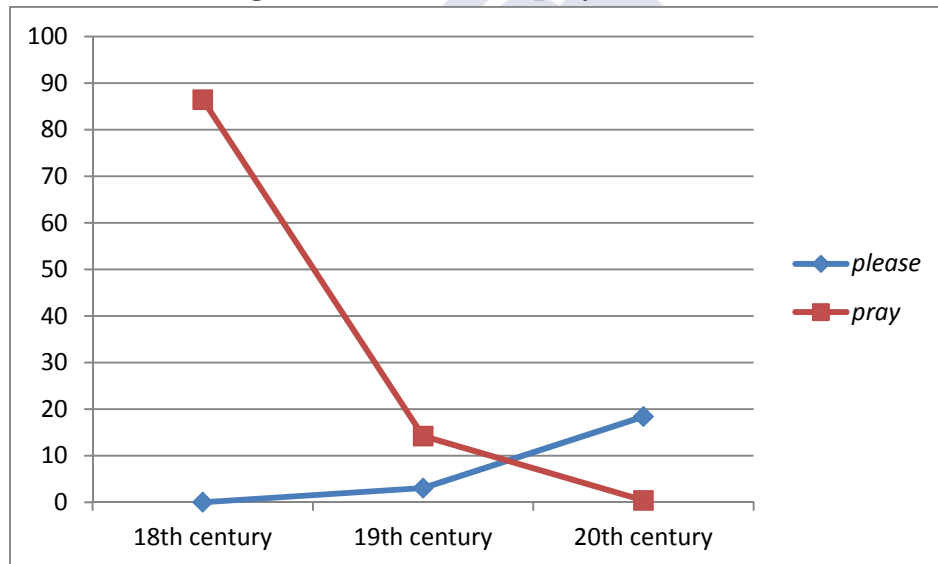
The most salient genre differences affect eighteenth-century figures. In that century, data from letters and, especially, from drama show extraordinarily high frequencies of *pray* (46.45 and 86.45). The explanation in the case of letters may have to do with the high use of requests in the *Corpus of Late-Eighteenth Century Prose* due to the commercial purposes of writers and addressees (cf. 8.2). In the case of drama, they may be related to the bias mentioned above, which would justify also the high

frequency of *if you please*, as compared to the other genres. These frequencies of *pray* contrast considerably with the frequency in novels at the beginning of the eighteenth century (6.19), which is doubled almost one century later (12.42). The frequency of *pray* in this second period of novels is more similar to that shown in nineteenth-century plays (14.21). The second period included for letters is placed already at the end of the nineteenth century, and the frequency of *pray* (3.68) is almost identical to that in novels from the last decade of the nineteenth century (3.7). Therefore, apart from the eighteenth century, there is seems to be a certain agreement in the frequencies of *pray* in the different genres.

In the eighteenth century *please* is only found in the epistolary corpus, with a low frequency (1.68). In the nineteenth-century data from *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*, it shows a similar frequency in the two periods (4.6 and 4.77). Nineteenth-century frequencies are low in drama (3.05), and even lower in data from novels from the first decade of the century (0.22). Both figures contrast with the high frequencies of *pray* in the same periods. This tendency is reverted in novels from the last decade of the nineteenth century, when *please* (9.08) is three times as frequent as *pray*, and in drama data from the twentieth century, which include a high frequency of *please* (18.39), while *pray* is only testimonial (0.41). These frequencies are already representative of contemporary English usage. According to the tendencies in the data, twentieth-century letters would lie behind fiction and drama as regards the presence of these pragmatic markers. This could be contrasted to Biber's (1988) analysis of variation across genres in Present-day English, a study in which discourse particles are more frequent in letters than in fiction (cf. Section 1.3.1).

7.7. Summary

This chapter has provided a detailed account of the different structures available for both *pray* and *please* in three main genres during the Late Modern English period, namely novels, drama and letters. Some patterns and structures using the verb *please* prove to be very productive in this period, and they show similar pragmatic function as modern courtesy marker *please*. All the data analysed suggest the coexistence of *pray* and *please* during a long period, at least from the second part of the eighteenth-century until the first decades of the twentieth century.

8. STUDIES IN THE EPISTOLARY GENRE

As seen in the previous chapter, eighteenth-century letters include very useful material for the present study, in that they show a more advanced stage in the language as regards the use of courtesy markers in requests. Moreover, the language used is close to Österreicher's (1997) and Koch's (1999) area of communicative immediacy, which typically includes a high level of emotionality, personal and familiar language, dialogue and cooperation. Similarly, letters are among the genres with a higher presence of discourse markers (Biber 1988: 246), and are placed towards the involved and interactional end in Biber's (1988) Dimension 1, which measures Informational vs. Involved Production (cf. Section 1.4). The following sections will offer two detailed analyses of the epistolary genre by using two different collections which may contribute to the better understanding of the behaviour of *pray* and *please* in Late Modern English, providing richer insights into the possibilities offered by the corpora used. The next section, 8.1, studies different patterns of polite request markers in letter-writing manuals in order to determine the set of structures used in the eighteenth century and their possible impact on real letters. In 8.2, a sociolinguistic analysis is presented to identify possible variation in the use of courtesy markers in requests in collections going from the second half of the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth century.

8.1. Request markers in eighteenth century letter-writing manuals

This section will explore the possible influence of letter-writing manuals on the production of actual letters, focusing on the use of different structures including *please* and *pray* in the eighteenth century (cf. Faya Cerqueiro 2011). The results of the analysis in the manuals will be checked against data from the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*. As mentioned in Section 1.4.2.4.3, 48 letter-writing manuals from *ECCO* database were included, distributed in three periods during the eighteenth century: seven in 1700-1733, 23 in 1734-1767 and 18 in 1768-1800 (the complete list of works included can be found in Appendix 3). Figure 20 below shows the distribution of works throughout the century:

Figure 20. Figures of letter-writing guides in the eighteenth century
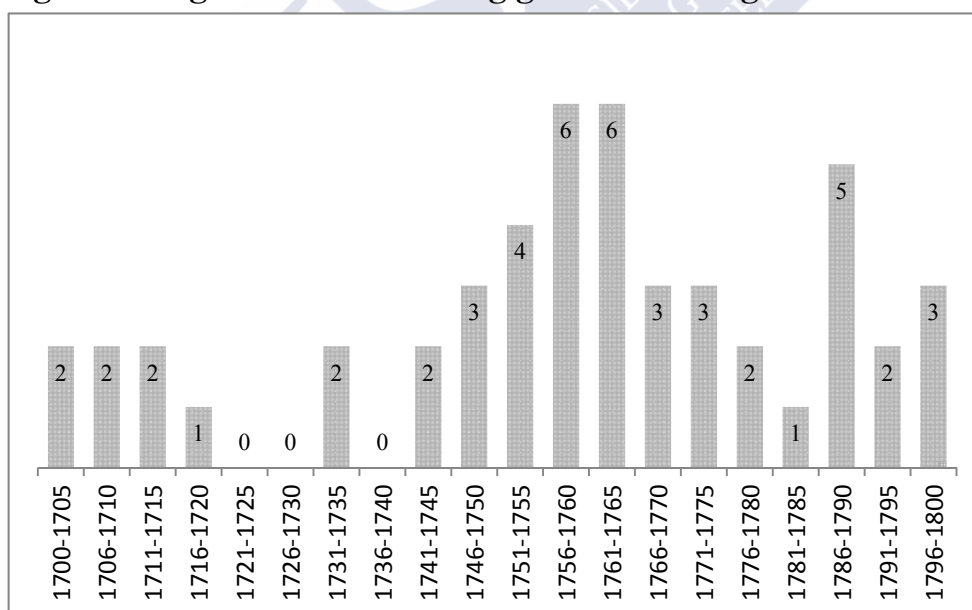
8.1.1 *Please* and *pray* structures in letter-writing manuals

For this particular study, a selection of structures was considered, focusing on those which may have played an important role as request markers in eighteenth century

letter-manuals. I have included similar or even identical examples when they take place in different books, excluding from the study those examples found in the books but which do not belong to letters, but rather to dialogues, songs, wills or narrative accounts.

In the following graphs we can observe the percentages of the main requests markers *please* or *pray*. The marker *pray* was pretty fixed in this period, but we can still find some variation, with instances of *prithee* and *I pray you* especially in what some letter manuals refer to as 'ancient letters.' I have considered different expressions with the verb *please*, and especially those which may have influenced the development of the courtesy marker, while other fixed expressions such as *(if) (it) may it please your Majesty/Grace*, usually found in explanations on how to address letters, have been excluded from the graph. The reason for this exclusion is their highly formulaic character throughout several periods, which makes it unlikely that they had an impact on the development of parenthetical *please* (cf. Section 9.2.1). Figures 21-23 represent the percentages of the different constructions throughout the eighteenth century:

Figure 21. Polite request structures in letter-writing manuals (1700-1733)
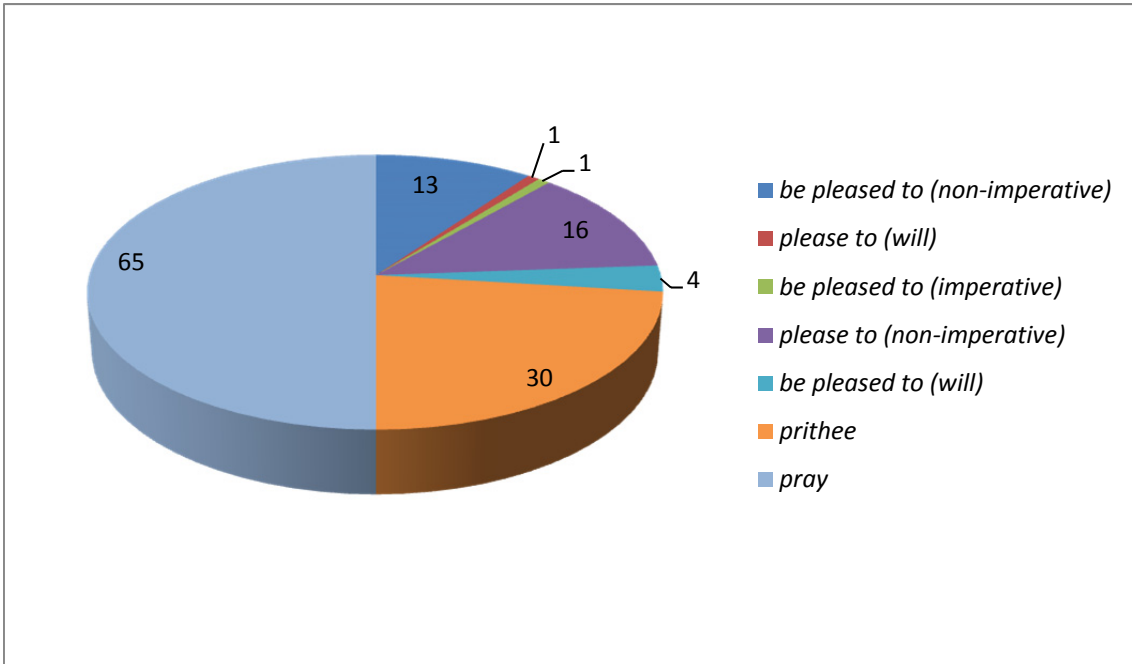
Figure 22. Polite request structures in letter-writing manuals (1734-1767)
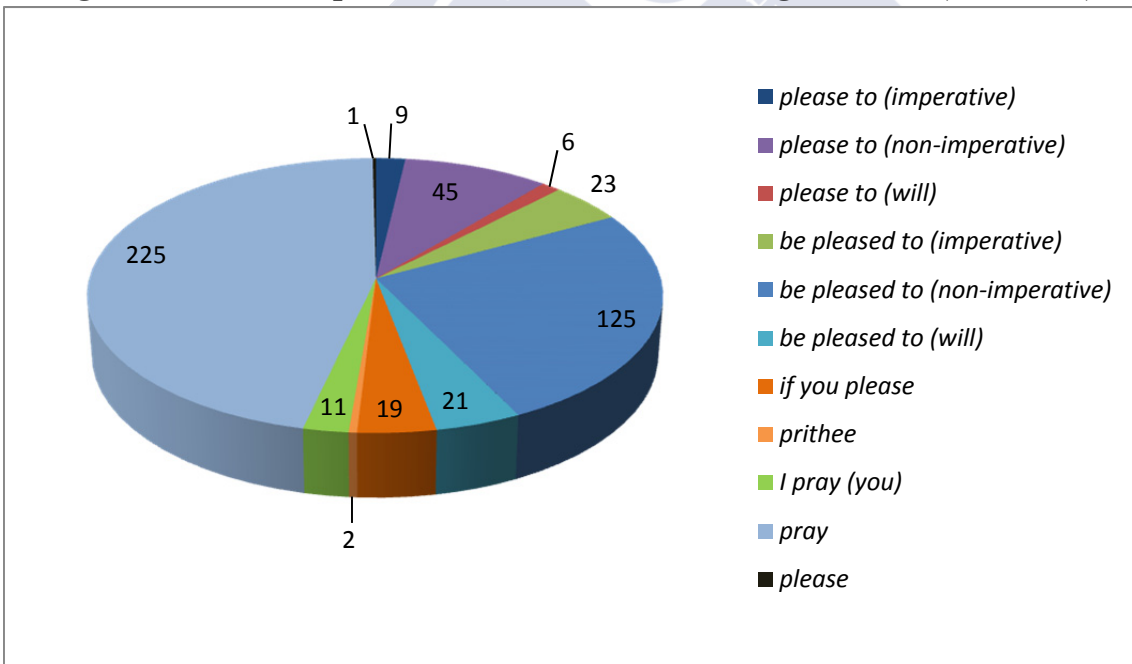
Figure 23. Polite request structures in letter-writing manuals (1768-1800)
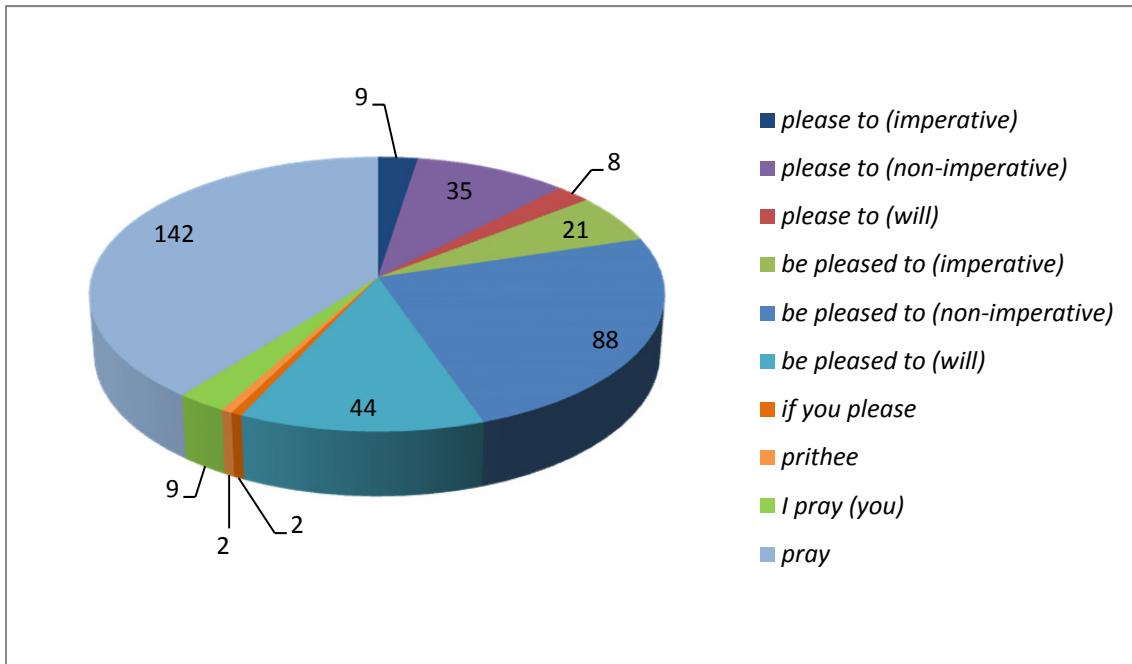
As we can notice in the three graphs, the most salient request marker all along the eighteenth century in the letter-manual corpus is *pray*, with almost half of the instances found in the first two periods (48% and 47% respectively), and with a slight decrease in the last part of the century (38%). *Pray* can be found in two main functions, either as an attention getter preceding a question, often accompanied by vocatives, as in example (164), from a gentleman's reply to a prior letter, or as a downtoner preceding an imperative verb form, as in (165), addressed from a brother to a sister. Both letters deal with "love and marriage:"

(164)   But **pray**, madam, is it any great fault to write a love-letter in a serious strain? (1787, *The accomplish'd letter-writer*, p. 90)

(165)   **Pray** give my due Respects to all Friends, particularly to honest Mr. *S. T.* and so in a hopeful Expectation of finding you all well at my Arrival, (1735, *The instructor: or, young man's best companion*, p. 64)

Imperative *be pleased* followed by a *to*-infinitive represent only 1% in the first period and 5 % and 6% in the second and third periods of the century respectively, whereas imperative *please to* is absent from the first period and only represents 2% and 3% of the total data in the remaining periods. Imperatives very commonly appear in letters on business-related topics or in bills of exchange. Very often these letters are only a few lines long, usually sent to acknowledge a payment or the receipt of goods, and probably due to their brevity they constitute a good example of conventionalised language. Examples (166) and (167) are found in this context:

(166)   Sir, you may take my Word with the greatest Safety, that I will pay you as I have mentioned; and if you have any particular Cause for insisting on it sooner, **be pleased to** let me know that I must pay it, and I will endeavour to borrow the Money; (1779, *The accomplished letter-writer; or, universal correspondent,* p. 86)

(167)   **Please** to advise the receipt of the same by return of post, and if any material variation has happened in any of the articles of trade between us, inform me of the particulars, for my future conduct. (1790, *The new and complete British letter-writer,* p. 64)

The material analysed yields several instances of the structures *be pleased to* and *please to* with *will* functioning as a syntactic downgrader. Instances of *be pleased to* with modal *will* represent 3% and 4% of the total instances in the first and second period, with a notable increase to 12% in the third one. Likewise, instances of *please to* with modal *will* move from 1% in the first and second parts of the century to 2% in the third period. Example (168) is taken from a letter "sent to a Gentleman in way of Petition," whereas example (169) is a lady's answer to a former letter sent by a

gentleman "with a Present of Tickets for a Concert." Thus, in both cases the writers use a language characterised by negative politeness and the modal *will* serves to emphasise the appeal for the addressee's willingness. Note in (168) the presence of the verb *hope* as a lexical downgrader introducing the head act of the request:

(168)   I know, Sir, that it lies in your power to stand my Friend in this Business, and I hope you **will be pleased to** think me capable of what I make my Request to you for, being Brought up and Educated under my father in the same way: (1701, *Wits academy: or, the muses delight*, p. 96)

(169)   Sir, You **will please to** accept my most respectful acknowledgement of the honour you do me by your very obliging letter, and the polite manner in which you offer me the tickets for the concert on Friday evening next. (1790, *The new and complete British letter-writer*, p. 160)

Example (170) constitutes the earliest instance I have found in any text-type of the courtesy marker *please* in its modern usage. The additional information about the context explains who are the writer and the addressee: "a Tradesman at *Hull* writes to his Correspondent at *London*." It is particularly interesting that on the following page there is another instance of the imperative *please to*, in example (171), in which "a Merchant writes to his Factor at Lisbon". Both instances are found in business-related correspondence:

(170)   If have not insured, **please** omit the same till hear farther; (1756, *The complete letter-writer: or, new and polite English secretary*, p. 6)

(171)   **Please to** send, per first Ship, 150 Chests best Seville, and 200 Pipes best

Lisbon, white. (1756, *The complete letter-writer: or, new and polite English secretary*, p. 7)

The manual criticises different aspects in the letter in which (170) is included, whereas the letter containing (171) is regarded as a much better example of a business letter. About the author of the first one, the manual suggests that "[t]here is nothing in all this Letter though appearing to have the Face of a considerable Dealer." The intended message is also questioned in the following terms: "By such a way of Writing, no Orders can be binding to him that gives them, or to him they are given to." By contrast, the second letter is praised, including a revealing comment on the use of *please to*, as opposed to *please* in the previous letter, as an expression granting the request and leaving choices to the addressee: "Here is the Order to send a Cargo, with a *please to send*; So the Factor may let it alone, if he does not please" [italics original]. The intended benefit of the speech act is more likely to be obtained in the second letter, since "Orders ought to be plain and explicit; and he ought to have assured him, that, on his drawing on him, his Bills should be *honoured*, that is, accepted, and paid." In addition, some professionals should use a better style, namely "Country Tradesmen, Citizens, and Shop keepers, whose Business is Plainness and mere Trade" (1756: 6-7). These comments suggest that pre-verbal *please* was probably felt as a phenomenon of lower classes in the eighteenth century, but that it was indeed in use.

Another relevant aspect is the fact that the writer of the first letter is placed "at *Hull*." We do not know whether this model letter was actually based on a real letter, or if this location was selected by the guide's author in order to depict northern speech. In any case, it seems interesting that the only example of the

courtesy marker *please* available in the whole corpus of letter-writing manuals is located in the north east region, since many early instances in the fiction corpus are also connected to Scotland or to the north of England, either through the authors' background or through the portrayal of a given character (cf. Section 9.2.3).

The similarity of pragmatic roles played by both *pray* and *please* is reflected in their occurrence in nearby contexts, as if using one or the other were merely a question of taste, maybe of stylistic choice, in the eighteenth century. Example (172) is taken from a business letter "from a Merchant to his Factor," in which we find the imperative form of *please*, together with the courtesy marker *pray*, both used by the same writer as courtesy markers preceding a direct request. This would reflect the fact that both expressions were used interchangeably as formulaic request markers at least in the second half of the eighteenth century:

(172)   With Convenience, **please to** buy 10 Hhds. of White Biscuit, and 49 Barrels of Beef, and send them by the first Vessel to Jamaica, consigned to Mr. *Thomas Gunston*, for my Accompt: **Pray** engage your Victualler to get the Beef carefully salted and barrelled, considering the climate to which it is sent. I am, Sir. Your Friend and Servant, *Richard Jackson* (1779, *The accomplished letter-writer; or, universal correspondent*, p. 83)

Similarly, *pray* occurs quite close to imperative *be pleased to* (cf. example (144)). In example (173), a son's answer to a former letter, which is classified within a miscellaneous set "fitted for Business, as well as Recreation and Delight," *pray* precedes the imperative form, thus creating a structure with a highly formulaic

character and with a highly marked negative politeness. In example (173), taken from "A Letter from a Son to his Father," *please* and *pray* appear coordinated showing again the interchangeability of both markers in requests. Example (174) is found under the group "by eminent Persons" from Dr. Swift to Lord Polingbroke. This instance shows several mitigating devices of the request to give more options to the addressee. First of all, the courtesy marker *pray* is used as an attention getter in the request, then the expression *please to* is mitigated with the modal *will*:

(173)   **Pray be pleas'd to** accept of my ill Writing at present, and I doubt not but in a short time I shall mend my hand and write better though as yet I have had but little time allowed me, to learn to write. (1701, *Wits academy: or, the muses delight*, p. 54)

(174)   **Pray** give my love to my sister, and **be pleased to** accept of my duty to yourself, (1800, *The complete young man's companion* , p. 32)

(175)   **Pray**, **will** you **please to** take your pen, and blot me out that political maxim from whatever book it is in, (1773, *The court letter writer*, p. 196)

There are a good number of instances of non-imperative *please to* in the collection, this structure could also have some mitigation effect on a request when addressed to a second-person, as in example (176), in which we find an answer letter to a former invitation "to a Party of Pleasure" or (176), which is addressed to an "intimate Acquaintance, to borrow money:"

(176)   Sir, The compliments you are **pleased to** pass demand my thanks; the invitation to be of the agreeable party does me honour, and I should have been

unhappy in missing an opportunity, which I am persuaded will afford me infinite

pleasure and satisfaction. (1790, *The new and complete British letter-writer,* p. 127)

(177)   I have immediate occasion; but will repay it again whenever you **please to**

make a demand. (1759, *The entertaining correspondent; or, newest and most compleat polite*

letter writer, p. 213)

The conditional parenthetical *if you please* is not found in the material corresponding

to the first part of the eighteenth century, whereas it represents a 4% of the data in

the second period, decreasing to 1% in the last one. In example (178) below it is

found in a letter entitled "From a Wholesale Dealer who had made an unexpected

Demand. In answer." The pragmatic function of *if you please* here is, according to the

OED, "a courteous qualification to a polite request" (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 6c). It

seems a polite interruption to the proper request, close in meaning to 'if you don't

mind:'

(178)   However, there is so much seeming Frankness and Sincerity in your Letter,

that I shall desire Leave first to ask you whether you have any Dealings with an

Ususrer in the *Minories*, and, **if you please**, what is his Name. (1755, *Familiar letters*

on various subjects of business and amusement, p. 108)

Figure 24 below represents the data found in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century*

Prose (cf. Faya Cerqueiro 2007). If we compare the data above from the manuals

with the data extracted from an epistolary corpus of the second half of the century,

we may find remarkable differences. First of all, the percentage attributed to the

pragmatic marker *pray* is considerably reduced (32%), showing the following step in

the decay already traceable in the manuals, whereas instances of the imperative construction *please to* almost equal those of *pray* (31%). Examples of imperative *be pleased to* are slightly reduced (3%) as compared with the data in the second and third periods in the manuals. We already find some instances of modern *please* in this corpus, which still represent a very low proportion (1%). The data from letter writing manuals show a previous stage of language when compared with the data from the epistolary corpus. Therefore, the popularity of letter-writing manuals does not seem to have played a major role in the development of *please* as a courtesy marker.

Figure 24. Polite request structures in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* (1761-1790)
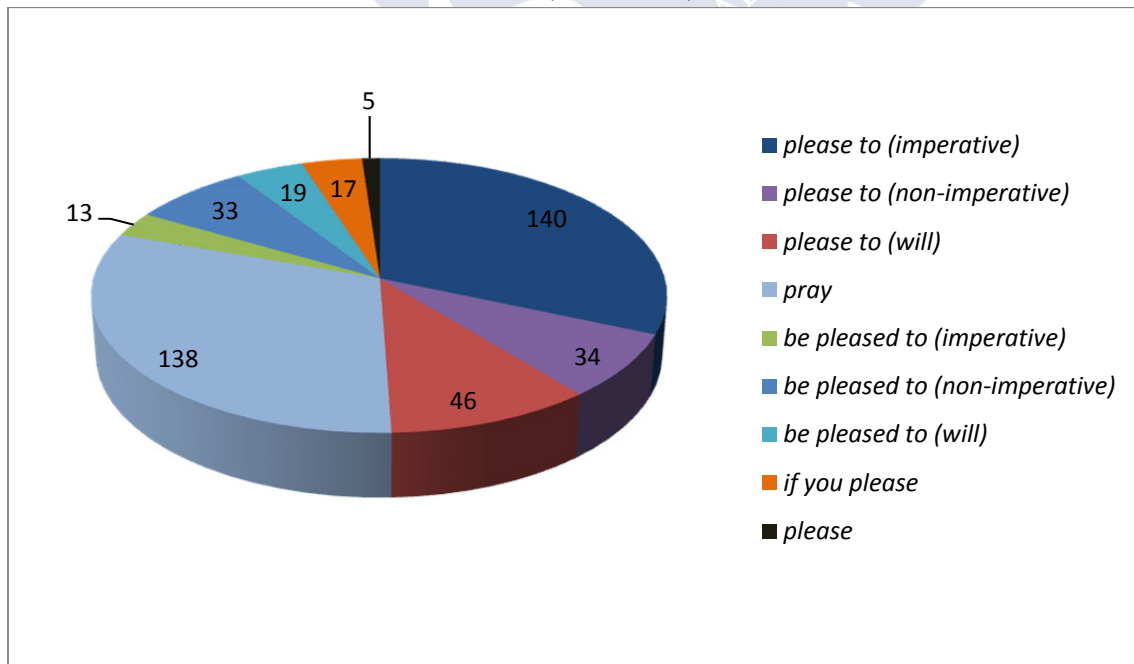
Figure 25 below offers a comparison between the evolutions undergone by the different patterns identified in eighteenth-century letter-writing manuals and their presence in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*:

Figure 25. Letter-writing manuals vs. *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*
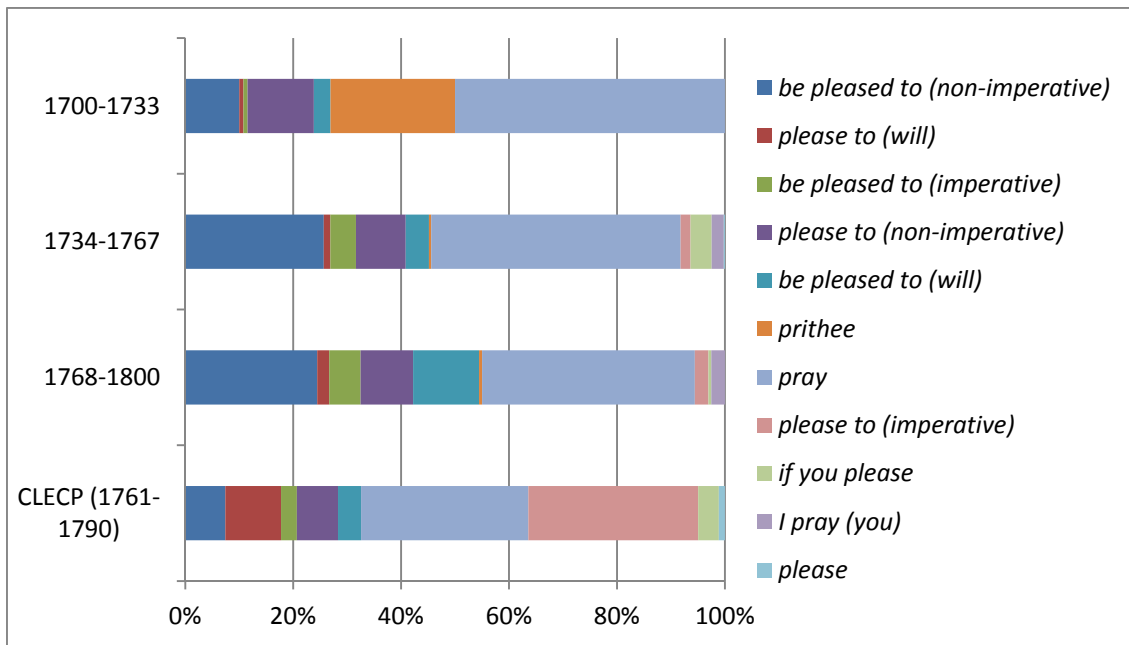
As can be observed in the figures, in letter-writing manuals from the eighteenth century, *pray* was still the favourite courtesy marker in requests, while different forms of *please* with a formulaic character were also becoming very common in letters. This text-type yields an example which antedates the earliest instance provided by the *OED*, in a letter with business-like purposes. The presence of different structures of *please* in similar contexts offers a clue as regards the conventionalisation of language in formulaic business language, and it is not strange that the first example of the courtesy marker *please* is found in this type of letter and in a manual with an instructive aim.

As seen in Section 4.3.2, in the eighteenth century letters of request proper make use of very indirect strategies in which *please* or *pray* are generally infrequent. Nevertheless, business letters make use of more direct strategies, as in examples (170)-(172), in which negative face is not at risk. The request is "manifestly honest to be asked" (*The art of letter-writing*, 1762: 24), and it is almost certain that it will be

granted. Del Lungo Camiciotti (2008) finds performatives as the preferred strategies in requests from a corpus of nineteenth-century commercial letters. She relates the use of straightforward strategies to the non-institutional context of business relations, in which participants negotiate both commercial activities and acquaintance. This point matches Wichmann's (2004) idea about a certain tendency in Present-day English to use *please* when the object of the request is granted for the speaker (cf. also House 1989), and also Aijmer's (1996) findings on the high frequency of *please* with imperatives or directive strategies in general in Present-day English. This would also explain the high frequency of the imperative *please to* construction in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*. The use of direct strategies in business correspondence is conventionalised and, therefore, understood as polite. In fact, among other features of business-related letters we can identify highly formulaic language, with texts usually shorter than in letters on other topics. Business letters usually have a higher degree of directness than, for instance, family letters, which generally show a marked degree of indirectness. We could hypothesise that this type of request, using direct strategies, asking for things which do not mean a great level of imposition on the addressee, should also be a common feature of everyday language in the spoken medium (and therefore difficult to be collected in a corpus). If direct requests of this kind were actually highly frequent in eighteenth-century spoken language, they could have had an impact on the emergence and development of *please* in those contexts.

However, even if letter-writing manuals were very popular in the eighteenth century they do not prove to be very influential in the development of the courtesy marker *please*, since the contrast between the collection of eighteenth-century letter

manuals and the corpus of letters from the second half of the century clearly reveals a much more advanced stage of the language in real letters than in model ones. The decay of *pray* and the increase in the use of imperative *please* constructions are the two main changes in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*, in which we can observe the beginning of a shift in the default request marker in requests. The effect of these manuals on real language, if any, would have been the use of already old-fashioned requests strategies for a longer period of time, essentially in written production, and a consequent delay in the selection of more innovative strategies, already available in the spoken language, such as the courtesy marker *please*.

Further research on this topic could explore whether the variation of courtesy markers obeys to any sociolinguistic variable, such as gender, social position of writer or addressee, or letter topic. Similarly, plagiarism detecting tools could be used to measure the degree of conventionalisation of epistolary language in the eighteenth century.

8.2. Sociolinguistic analysis in *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* (1860-1919)

Even though *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* is quite small in size, there is relevant background information about the writers and addressees of this epistolary collection, which enables the analysis of the material from a sociolinguistic approach. The corpus contains letters and diaries, and as could be expected, the pragmatic markers under analysis appear only in letters. Although the number of instances is very low, the kind of information provided makes it possible to extract

interesting conclusions. The overall distribution of requests markers in the whole period is as follows:

Table 24. Distribution of request markers in *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*[78]

Marker	function	instances	1860-1889	1890-1919	no. of users
please	courtesy marker	18	10	8	6
	attention getter?	1	0	1	1
pray	courtesy marker	11	8	3	3
prithee	courtesy marker	5	5	0	1
if you please	courtesy marker	1	0	1	1

If we observe the overall instances, *please* is the most numerous marker in the corpus, but *pray* is still quite common. In fact, in the period 1860-1889 the figures do not differ that much (10 vs. 8), while in the period 1890-1919 we witness a clear decrease in the figures of *pray* (8 vs. 3). This indicates that the competition between the two markers took place all through the nineteenth century and that *pray* had not been completely abandoned at the beginning of the twentieth century. The main function recorded for all the pragmatic markers analysed in this epistolary corpus is that of courtesy marker in requests. The only exception is found in example (181) below, which could be regarded as an instance of attention getter (see below).

---

[78] Although frequencies are not used in *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*, raw numbers for totals and overall frequencies would be the same here, since the corpus size (100,000 words approximately) equals the standard for normalised frequencies used elsewhere in the present study with different corpora.

Let us now focus on the distribution analysis of both writers and addressees. In Table 25 below the informants are placed chronologically by date of birth. The table shows the request markers they use:

Table 25. Authors by date of birth and request marker(s) used

Author	Date of birth	marker(s) used
Lady Russel	1815	*pray* (2)
John Richard Green	1837	*pray* (6); *please* (1)
Lord John Amberley	1842	*please* (4)
Sidney Webb	1859	*pray* (3); *please* (1)
Ernest Dowson	1867	*please* (5); *prithee* (5)
Rachel Russel	1868	*please* (1)
Gertrude Bell	1868	*please* (6); *if you please* (1); *please* (alerter?) (1)

Four writers make use of only one of the markers. Thus, Lady Russel —the oldest informant— uses *pray* twice, whereas her son, Lord Amberley, and her granddaughter, Rachel Russel, use only *please*. This is also the case of Gertrude Bell. On the other hand, we find three authors using more than one marker. These are John Richard Green, Sidney Webb and Ernest Dowson. The case of Ernest Dowson deserves special attention since he is the only informant who uses *prithee* (see below). As for the other two informants *please* is used only once and *pray* is more common in both cases. As regards the addressees of the letters, there are no differences in the selection of the marker depending on this factor. The three informants using more than one marker always address the same person, whereas those using only one marker —more than once— address different people, so the selection of the marker does not seem to depend on the addressee.

In the case of the Amberleys, Lady Russel addresses her son, Lord Amberley, and her daughter-in-law with *pray* whereas the next generation (Lord Amberley and his daughter Rachel) uses *please*, as in (179) below:

(179)   I shall let you know tomorrow. **Please** don't telegraph. Yours ever affly. (1874, Lord Amberley to mother-in-law)

Lord Amberley was Prime Minister John Russel's son, and an MP himself. Consequently, Viscount Amberley was a representative and remarkable member of politics, aristocracy and upper classes in the Victorian period. The fact that this informant uses only the new form *please* suggests that the courtesy marker had spread to all ranks of society. In most of the examples recorded in this corpus *please* functions as a courtesy marker, as in (179) above, in which the request is expressed with an imperative form. *Please* is placed at the beginning of the utterance, its typical position with imperatives. Only Gertrude Bell uses *please* in middle position in the request. In this case, the request does not surface as an imperative, but as a question introduced by the modal *would*, as in (180) below:

(180)   Oh would you **please** send me a pair of plain tortoiseshell combs. (1917, Gertrude Bell to stepmother)

The only remarkable exception in the use of *please* is another instance by Gertrude Bell in which *please* in initial position seems to introduce a question, probably a request.

(181)   BAGDAD, May 3rd, 1917. .... **Please** will Mother have sent to me by post six pairs of thin white thread stockings, and the same of brown - rather dark brown. (1917, Gertrude Bell to father)

Although *please* as a courtesy marker in initial position is typically followed by an imperative (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 471), in this case it occupies the typical position of an attention getter. This use is similar to instances of *pray* as an attention getter found in the other main epistolary corpus analysed, the *Corpus of Late-Eighteenth Century Prose*. Nevertheless, *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* does not contain any instances of *pray* with this use, which, conversely, is not found with *please* in the *Corpus of Late-Eighteenth Century Prose*. In all the instances in this corpus *pray* functions as a courtesy marker followed by a request in the imperative, as in (182) below:

(182)   the action of bowels he was glad of, as giving a hope that the attack may have been caused by indigestion, torpid liver, or some such cause – wch wd. be a very great relief - **Pray** make the doctor investigate this well – (1873, Lady Russel to daughter-in-law Kate)

The conditional courtesy marker *if you please* appears only once in the corpus. This expression, still available in Present-day English, has always shown a lower frequency with respect to other markers in requests (cf. Section 7.4.3.1). *If you please* presents a higher degree of deference towards the addressee, as is clear in (183):

(183)   May I ask you to oblige very kindly with 4 shirts? '(\Crˆpe de chine\)' **if you please**, 2 ivory and two pink. I enclose some advertisements of Harrods which

look nice, specially the cross one. (1917, Gertrude Bell to stepmother)

In this instance negative politeness is increased by the co-occurrence of several politeness strategies. On the one hand we find a syntactic downgrader, namely an interrogative introduced by modal *may* (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989: 281). On the other hand the question contains two lexical downgraders: the verb *oblige*, 'to bind or make indebted [...] by conferring a benefit or kindness' (*OED*, s.v. *oblige* 6.a.), and the adverbial phrase *very kindly* functioning as a downtoner (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989: 283-284).

Among the markers used in this corpus we also find the old-fashioned form *prithee*. Although the *OED* gives some nineteenth and twentieth-century examples of this courtesy marker, it is worth noting that not a single example was recorded in the *Corpus of Late-Eighteenth Century Prose*, a relatively large epistolary collection (c. 300,000 words) from the period 1760-1790 (cf. Section 1.4.2.4). Therefore, the fact that this courtesy marker is still used in late nineteenth-century letters deserves special consideration.

Only one writer makes use of *prithee*, namely Ernest Dowson. Dowson was born in 1867, which makes him one of the youngest contributors to the corpus, and at the same time an odd user of the form, since he also uses modern *please*. Instances of *prithee* occur only in letters from 1889 and 1890 and in all five cases in letters addressed to the same person, Arthur Moore. Ernest Dowson was a poet associated to the Decadent movement and Arthur Moore was a friend and collaborator of his, with whom correspondence was customary (*ODNB*). The Decadent movement took place during the late nineteenth century, influenced by French artists and in

direct connection with Aestheticism. One of the illustrious members of this movement was Oscar Wilde (Baugh 1967: 1475-1484). The Decadents contributed to several genres, especially poetry, and their style was characterised by an excessive "taste for artificiality" (Weir 1995: 61). Akimoto comments on the use of *I pray thee* by Wilde in the nineteenth century as a "conscious use of archaism" (2000: 76). *Thou* had already disappeared in the eighteenth century (Denison 1999: 106), and these forms of *pray* had fallen into disuse after the decay in use of the pronoun (cf. observations by Busse 2002 and Sönmez 2005 in Section 5.5.2).

According to Akimoto, *prithee* seems to have been common from the seventeenth century onwards, and have fallen into disuse by the nineteenth century (2000: 77). However, its usage was probably regarded as archaic in common language already in the late eighteenth century since the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* yields no instances, as mentioned above. The last entry for *prithee* in the *OED* dates back to 1994, although "[i]n some modern instances [may be] used humorously or to convey ironic politeness" (*OED*, s.v. *prithee*). Akimoto finds several instances in the eighteenth century (however, none of them occurs in private letters, which are supposed to reflect the spoken language more closely) and does not report on any more after that date.

The deliberately archaic use of the marker in Dowson's private correspondence could perfectly be a sign of irony or even pedantry from the poet towards another writer with whom the level of intimacy was high. It is worth noting that in one of the letters containing *prithee* we also find the archaic use of other forms of T pronouns, as in (184) below:

(184)   What news of **thee**, **thou** unconscionable? [...] Write speedily to inform me thereof or give an account of your silence. Yes: (\la grippe\) has gripped me & I stay here wrapped in tarpaulin jackets, consuming handkerchiefs by the score & reading all the trash the Woodford Cirng Library contains. I **prithee** write. (1889, Ernest Dowson to Arthur Moore)

Therefore this use of *prithee* in the late nineteenth century could even be related to the author's membership to a particular literary movement, as was the case of Wilde's archaic use of *I pray thee.*

In spite of the low number of instances found in the corpus, we can sketch general tendencies. *Please* was the most common courtesy marker in requests in the late nineteenth century, although the use of *pray* was still notably frequent with the older generations. Servants, rural immigrants and other members of lower classes in direct contact with upper-class children, such as nursemaids, could have influenced the generational shift in the unmarked courtesy marker in requests. This corpus includes data from upper-classes only, and it is very likely that the shift from *pray* to *please* was already established in other ranks in society. Taking as a starting-point the first instances of *please* as a courtesy marker from the late eighteenth century, data from *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* would indicate that the consolidation of *please* as the default marker took place more than one century later.

8.3. Summary

Given the properties of the epistolary genre, two additional studies were included in this chapter in order to provide more details on possible external influences and on

possible differences between users of the old form *pray* and users of *please*. Even if letter-writing manuals were extremely popular in the eighteenth century, their role on the spread of *please* seems irrelevant. Nevertheless, the presence of several forms in model letters confirms other tendencies found in real ones. As regards differences between writers/speakers using *pray* and those using *please*, age seems to be the most important factor, especially in upper-classes, evincing a clear generational change in the nineteenth-century, although instances found in all the corpora analysed point also at some class differences.

9. DISCUSSION

9.1. Introduction

Taking into consideration the theoretical approaches exposed, the data gathered, and the analysis carried out in the preceding chapters, this chapter will review the different possible sources leading to the courtesy marker *please* and the different structures and factors playing a role in the shift from *pray* to *please* (Section 9.2). A hypothesis for the emergence of *please* will be presented in Section 9.3. The development of this courtesy marker, together with the development of *pray*, will be tackled from a grammaticalisation perspective in Section 9.4. Finally, Section 9.5 will summarise some aspects related to politeness which can be observed in the change from *pray* to *please* as the preferred courtesy marker in requests.

9.2. Analysis of possible sources for the origin of the courtesy marker *please*

In the present section I will pay attention to different forms and structures containing *please* which may have been relevant in the emergence of the courtesy marker *please*. In fact, some of them have been proposed as the source of Present-day English *please*. Two main groups will be distinguished, namely parenthetical constructions (Section 9.2.1) and imperatives (Section 9.2.2). Some observations on the parenthetical courtesy marker *please* will be presented in Section 9.2.3. Other linguistic factors playing a role in the emergence and development of *please* will be

considered (Section 9.2.4).

9.2.1 Parenthetical *please* constructions

Chapter 5 included a summary of the views on the origin of the courtesy marker *please* as reflected in the literature. As stated in Section 5.5, most authors point at a possible derivation from a conditional clause like *if it please you* or *if you please* in an UNPROP construction. According to this hypothesis, both *please* and the conditional construction in which it appears would have been borrowed from French. The introduction of the verb *please* took place in Middle English from Middle French and Anglo-Norman *plaiser/plaisir*, whose modern continuation *plaire* is present in the courtesy marker still used in Present-day French requests, *s'il vous plaît*, which is itself a conditional form.[79]

As noted above (see Section 5.5.1) the *OED* (s.v. *please* adv. and int.) points at three possibilities as the origin of the marker, two of them being conditional parenthetical structures, namely *please you* and *if you please*. *Please you* is apparently derived from the form *if it please you*, which seems to be a calque from the French counterpart of *please*, *s'il vous plaît*, as is also the case with the conditional *if you please*. We have seen that some authors assume a direct evolution of *please* from a conditional form (Quirk *et al.* 1985; Brown and Gilman 1989; Traugott and Dasher 2002; Watts 2003; Brinton and Traugott 2005; Brinton 2006, 2007a, 2008, 2010), which would have lost the conditional subordinator and the pronominal elements,

---

[79] Similar conditional forms are found in other languages with the same requestive function, this is the case of Catalan *sisplau*, a grammaticalised form originated in *si us plau*, literally 'if it pleases you' (Alturo and Chodorowska-Pilch 2009).

giving rise to the form *please* on its own (Chen 1998; Biber *et al.* 1999). Therefore, I will focus on the following parenthetical structures: *if E please(s)*, *(and) please E* and *if it please E*. These three expressions have conditional forms and can be classified as UNPROP constructions (see Section 6.2.3), either with an Experiencer subject, as *if E please(s)*, or with an object Experiencer, as *(and) please E* and *if it please E* (see Section 7.4.3.2). The *OED* (s.v. *please* v. 3) refers to these and similar expressions as 'deferential phrases of address or request.' These parenthetical constructions have a formulaic character, which is clear by the restriction in the type of Experiencers they may occur with (see Table 13 and Table 14).

The parenthetical form *if E please(s)* undergoes a progressive but slow decrease in use (cf. Table 10). There is though a slight difference between its frequency in Period 1, 2.79, and its frequency in Period 3, 2.02. The frequency of this construction in the epistolary corpus is considerably higher than in any period of the fiction corpus (6.73), and extremely high in eighteenth-century drama (19.76) with a notable decrease in the following centuries (4.06 and 1.63 each). This may be related to the characteristics of the genre itself, since these parenthetical structures with pragmatic function are supposed to be more common in a genre closer to the oral language (cf. Section 1.4.1). In fact, similarly, the courtesy marker *pray* shows an extraordinary high frequency in drama in the same century (cf. Section 7.5.3). The expression *if you please* acquires a formulaic character over time, as the range of Experiencers available becomes more and more restricted. In fact, nominal forms in Periods 1 and 2 in novels are represented only by honorifics. Already in Period 2, mainly pronouns fulfil this role, as in (185):

(185)   Well, Captain, said I, and what Plunder have ye got? Enough to make me a

Captain, Sir, says he, if you **please**, and a Troop ready raised too; (*ECF*, **P1**, Defoe,

D., *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, Part 1, Main Text (p.74))

The restriction to second-person personal pronoun is also visible in the epistolary

corpus. Here, the form with the pronoun *you*, as in (186), shows the highest

frequency, whereas the other instances contain a pronominal Experiencer, and two

nominal Experiencers.

(186)   Sir I am left Alone and am in a poor Destressed Condition which is all

Oweing to my self, I Beg you will lett me have a fue Coals if you **please**. (*CLECP*,

1789, John Richardson)

In the *Chadwyck-Healey* corpus, in drama and in the letters, the construction *if you*

please is a formulaic marker of politeness in the different periods. Nevertheless,

whereas pronouns other than *you* prevail in Period 1 in the novels (11 examples vs.

only one example with *you*), this pronoun becomes practically the only choice

available in Periods 2 and 3 and in the letters. Similarly, and as could be expected,

nineteenth and twentieth-century drama yield mainly examples in which the

Experiencer is the pronoun *you*.

As expected, the fixation of this construction is reached both by the

restriction in Experiencer choices and by the process towards bare verb forms of

please. In spite of one example inflected for the past in Period 3, it seems that by the

end of the nineteenth century the construction *if you please* was already used as a

formulaic parenthetical marker.

As we have seen in the data from the preliminary study in *ARCHER*, fiction and drama are the only genres that include this conditional parenthetical in the period 1850-1960, which is absent from the letters in *ARCHER*. Nevertheless, in the eighteenth-century epistolary corpus analysed the frequency shown by *if you please* is higher than in the novels. This conditional construction shows a low and irregular percentage throughout the eighteenth century in letter-writing manuals, it is not present in the first part, but reaches a 4% in the second and decreases to 1% in the last third of the century (cf. Section 8.1). Another difference with respect to the preliminary analysis is the strikingly high frequency of this construction in *A Corpus of Irish English* drama, but, as noticed above, the presence of the courtesy marker *pray* in the same period is even higher. When we deal with historical data, drama can be seen as a good approximation to the spoken language. In fact, as noted by Rissanen (1986: 98), features from earlier periods which are frequent in recorded speech are expected to have been frequent also in the spoken language of the time. Thus, it could be the case that parentheticals *if you please* and *pray* were more a feature of spoken language, whereas other expressions such as the imperative constructions, which are more frequent in letters, were more typical of writing. Instances (187) and (188) show the parenthetical *if you please* used as a courtesy marker. In both contexts a certain degree of negative politeness is present (use of modal verbs, presence of titles and epithets when referring to other characters):

(187)   AIMWELL Has the lady been any other way useful in her generation?

         BONIFACE Yes, sir, she has a daughter by Sir Charles, the finest woman in all our

country, and the greatest fortune. She has a son too by her first husband, Squire Sullen, who married a fine lady from London t'other day. **If you please**, sir, we'll drink his health? (**Drama**, Farquhar, George. 1707. *The Beaux' Stratagem*)

(188)   HARDCASTLE Ha! ha! ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that - but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? A glass of wine, Sir, **if you please** (to DIGGORY) (**Drama**, Goldsmith, Oliver. 1773. *She stoops to conquer*)

If you please is not at all constrained as regards its position in the sentence, as it may occupy different slots (cf. Section 9.2.4.2). Thus, in (187) it is in initial position, while in (188) it occurs in final position. This fact makes this conditional parenthetical a less likely source for the courtesy marker *please* than the imperative, since the earliest examples of the courtesy marker *please* occur more commonly in initial position, a position typical of imperatives (cf. Section 9.2.4.2, Faya Cerqueiro 2009: 32-33). In addition, we do not observe the coexistence of *please* and *if you please* in drama until the nineteenth century was well advanced, when the courtesy marker *please* was already the preferred marker in the other corpora analysed. If the conditional *if you please* were the source of the courtesy marker *please*, we would expect that both markers co-occur in this text-type when *please* was emerging.

As to the second parenthetical, *(and) please E*, we have seen that there is a great variation of Experiencer noun phrases in novels and drama (cf. Table 13). In the *Chadwyck-Healey* corpus the peak in use of *(and) please E* forms is reached in the decade 1800-1810, with a high use of these forms with titles, like *please your honour*, a

form that we find only in eighteenth-century drama, and in the second period in novels with similar frequencies (3.29 and 3.07), as in (189):

(189)   "Which tree, **please** your honor?" I made bold to say.---"Any tree at all that's good to burn, (said Sir Condy); send off smart, and get one down and the fires lighted before my lady gets up to breakfast, or the house will be too hot to hold us." (Edgeworth, M., *Castle Rackrent*, Continuation of the Memoris (p.94))

As happens with other structures (i.e. *pray* and *prithee*, cf. Section 7.5.3), drama frequencies are remarkably high in the seventeenth century, even if the number of instances is small. Nevertheless, this corpus shows a greater variation as regards the Experiencer, a fact which can be related to the variety of characters included in the plays, since most Experiencer noun phrases in seventeenth and eighteenth-century data are realised by honorific titles, as in (190):

(190)   Den. But tey vere leeke to daunsh naked, ant **pleash** ty mayesty; for te villanous vild Irish sheas haue casht away all ter fine cloysh, as many ash cosht a towsand cowes, and garranes, I varrant tee. (**Drama**, Jonson, Ben. 1613 /1616. *The Irish Masque*)

The low number of examples of this construction with a pronominal Experiencer is remarkable, only found in Period 2. In this respect, *(and) please E* differs starkly from *if it pleases*, which was restricted to pronominal Experiencers in Periods 2 and 3. Similarly to what happens with *if E please(s)* forms, we find honorific titles addressing a second person. However, with *if E please(s)* patterns pronouns are the only choice

in Period 3 and the titles are mainly found in Period 1, while with *(and) please you*, in Period 2 honorific titles are the most common Experiencers with a considerably high frequency. In Period 3, as well as in the letters, the only choice for the Experiencer is a reference to God, but these expressions do not address a second person or mark a question or request. The figures in the epistolary corpus do not differ much from the fiction data, since the *(and) please God* construction is close to Periods 2 and 3 in the novels (0.51 and 0.52 vs. 0.67)

To summarise, *(and) please E* is only recorded with some frequency in Period 2 of the fiction corpus in the collocation *please your honour*. Although the structure is also available in the letters and in the fiction of the late nineteenth century, it is only found in expressions like *please God* or *please the pigs* (cf. example (108)), which do not convey politeness.

The ample range of Experiencers found in *(and) please E*, and the fact that noun phrases containing honorific titles prevail,[80] could suggest that these UNPROP constructions were infrequent in everyday language among most speakers, and especially among those from lower classes. In fact, they are absent from eighteenth-century letters written mainly among equals. Therefore, taking into consideration the features of *(and) please E* shown, and especially the fixation of *please God* as a formulaic expression in recent periods, this structure is highly unlikely to have contributed to the emergence of the courtesy marker *please*.

As seen in Section 7.4.3.2 (cf. Table 9), the UNPROP construction *(if) it please E* is very infrequent in the material analysed, actually it is only recorded in the

---

[80] The use of honorifics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as its later decline highlights the stratification of society in earlier periods.

fiction and the epistolary corpora. The corpora do not provide any example from drama. Paying attention to the different realisations of the Experiencer, reflected in Table 14, we can observe that the most recent material (Period 3 in fiction) only yields examples of the second person pronoun *you*, as in (191):

(191)   "Then write now, my young friend," he said, laying a heavy hand on my shoulder; "write to our friend and to any other; and say, if it will **please** you, that you shall stay with me until a month from now." (*NCF*, **P3**, Stoker, B., *Dracula*, Chapter III. (p.32))

.

As pointed out in Section 7.4.3.2, structures with object Experiencers show a low frequency in the epistolary corpus, both in the PROP and in the UNPROP constructions. The only Experiencers available for the parenthetical structures *(and) please E* and *if it please E* in the corpus of eighteenth century letters are explicit references to God, which do not show any pragmatic function in requests. The lack of instances with other nominal or pronominal Experiencers in the *Corpus of Late-Eighteenth Century Prose* may have to do with the excessive formality and negative politeness conveyed by those expressions in the eighteenth century.

9.2.2 Imperative forms with *please*

9.2.2.1 *Please to*

In addition to conditional parenthetical constructions, the *OED* (s.v. *please* adv. and int.) offers another possibility as the ultimate source for *please*, and suggests that the

current form of the courtesy marker was "probably shortened from the imperative or optative *please* followed by the *to*-infinitive" (cf. Section 5.5.1). However, this structure has generally been overlooked in the literature, even though, as seen in the previous chapter, it seems likely that it played a determinant role in the emergence of the courtesy marker. This imperative form of *please* in the PROP construction conveys at the same time the illocutionary force of the directive speech act and the tone of politeness carried out in the semantics of the verb, as in (192) and (193):

(192)   'Do you wish Lizzie still to come?' 'No. **Please** to pay her wages and dismiss her. (*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *New Grub Street*, Vol. II., Chapter XVII (p.128))

(193)   BONIFACE **Please** to bespeak something else. I have everything in the house. (**Drama**, Farquhar, George. 1707. *The Beaux' Stratagem*)

Example (193) is the only instance of this type included in the drama corpus. This construction is not very frequent in the novels either. Imperative PROP constructions increase over time (cf. Table 5). Whereas in Period 1 there are no instances of this construction, the frequency in Period 3 is 1.27. The epistolary corpus, however, shows a particularly high frequency of this construction, which is by far the most common structure with *please* in this corpus (47.12), even more frequent than courtesy marker *pray*. This construction is important since the possible deletion of *to* in the PROP pattern could influence the origin of the pragmatic marker. Thus, from a modern perspective, *please* followed by a *to*-infinitive is a verb, while when a base form follows it is a courtesy marker. The 1989 edition of the *OED* included examples "followed by an infinitive" like *Please then to take my place* in

the subentry for *please!* together with the "parenthetical," as in *Please, may I go out?* (s.v. *please* v. 6c), although this equivalence is no longer available in the on-line edition.

Jespersen (1909-1949: vol. V 24.2₃) points at the infinitive with *to* that "generally" follows *please*, with examples like *Will you please to come in?* or *Please not to interrupt*. He also provides examples like *please you walke in with me* or *Don't please exaggerate* together, as he considers "some of them with parenthetical *please*" but without specifying which ones. The description of these structures side by side may not be a coincidence, since they are really close in meaning and use. Compare examples (194) and (195) used with the same verb and in novels by the same author:

(194)   Dora's conceit, **please** to remember, is, to begin with, only a little less than my own, and you will make her unendurable. (*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *New Grub Street*, Vol. III., Chapter XXXIII (p.229))

(195)   "**Please** remember me kindly to Mrs. Rolfe." (*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *The Whirlpool*, Part The Second, Chapter X (p.252))

The pragmatic function in both cases is the same, that is they are used to soften the illocutionary force of a request, and we could say that the tone of politeness is certainly similar irrespective whether *please* is followed by a *to*-infinitive or by a bare form (cf. also Gold 2006: 115). Whereas the first instance occurs in fictional dialogue, the example in (195) is part of a letter. Note that it includes another politeness marker, the lexical downgrader *kindly*.

The epistolary corpus also yields similar examples depicting the coexistence, since (196) and (197) are extracted from two different letters written by the same author in the same year. In both examples the verb used is the same:

(196)   **Please** to return the Apointment Sign'd to Yr %ob %Sert I: Hodson *CLECP*, (1775, I. Hodson)

(197)   you'l **please** return the apointment that I may destroy it — (*CLECP*, 1775, I. Hodson)

In (195) and (197), *please* is ambiguous, since it can be a courtesy marker or a verb form. In (195) *please* could be a marker followed by an imperative, as would be the case in Present-day English, or as a verb form followed by a bare infinitive. In (197) it may be interpreted either as a parenthetical courtesy marker or as a form of the verb *please* preceded by the modal *will* and followed by an infinitive without *to*.

The PROP pattern was productive mainly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and it probably experienced a peak in the second half of the eighteenth century, the period covered by the epistolary corpus, but which is underrepresented in the drama collection (cf. Section 7.4.2). The decrease in the use of PROP constructions was a general tendency in the nineteenth century. This structure was probably felt as archaic and was completely abandoned in the early twentieth century.[81] The fall into disuse of *please* + *to*-infinitive can be shown through a simple string search for "please to" in the *BNC*, which includes 68 instances, whereas many of them correspond to the parenthetical marker in sentence middle position, there

---

[81] Except for Jamaican English (cf. Gold 1986 and 2006), in which this form is still productive. Gold (1986, 2006) provides several instances of imperative *please to* constructions which he heard.

are at least 18 clear examples of imperative *please to*, a very low figure as compared to the total of 12,804 examples in a lemma query for *please* as an adverb. In his study of the *please* + *to*-infinitive construction, Gold (2006) provides an interesting quotation from the beginning of the twentieth century. This passage clearly reflects how old-fashioned the imperative PROP construction was perceived by speakers at the dawn of the twentieth century, but it also suggests that pre-verbal *please* could be interpreted as a verb form:

> Please To or Please? The imperative "please" may or may not be followed by "to" before an infinitive. Milton's "Heavenly stranger, please to taste these bounties" is of course more formal, less colloquial, than our everyday "Please taste this." – *Ladies Home Journal*, October 1901 (Gold 2006: 108).

This passage illustrating early twentieth-century usage contrasts with the comments in favour of *please to* included in a 1756 letter-writing guide, and more specifically in a business letter. This manual reflects the similarity of these two forms, since next to a letter including imperative *please to*, we find a similar sample letter with the first attestation of the courtesy marker *please*. The praise of *please to* in this letter-writing manual suggests the rejection of the new form of *please* followed by a bare infinitive (cf. Section 8.1.1). The dates of these two quotations could establish both the appearance of *please* in non-standard language (mid-eighteenth century) and its complete integration into the standard (end of the nineteenth century). The fact that similar examples with *please* followed both by bare and *to*-infinitives could occur at the same time, with the same verb, in a similar context, and in texts written by the

same person may reveal an intermediate stage towards the development of *please* as a courtesy marker. We could even assume a process of evolution as in (198). When the following infinitive loses its *to*, it can be reanalysed as an imperative, and then *please* would no longer be considered as a verb, but as a courtesy marker. *Please* could have started sentences of this type, with *please* in initial position, as would correspond to the imperative, and then be made extensive to other positions:

(198)   imperative *please* + *to*-inf. > imperative *please* + Ø inf. > courtesy marker

please

The increase of this pattern over time could have been decisive for the emergence of *please* as a courtesy marker, and, similarly, the eventual drop of this PROP construction could have determined the consolidation of *please*.

9.2.2.2 *Be pleased to*

This pattern is absent from drama, but is represented in both the fiction and the correspondence material. It shows a higher frequency in letters (4.37) than in any period from novels. As seen in the study of structures in eighteenth-century letter-writing manuals, *be pleased to* imperatives are more common than *please to* imperatives throughout the century, probably showing an older stage of the language than real letters (cf. Section 8.1). In the novels the tendency in PROP imperatives is reverted in the frequency of the imperative form of the *be pleased to* construction. Thus, in Period 1 the frequency is 2.48, whereas in periods 2 and 3 frequencies are 0.07 and

0.06 respectively, with one example each (cf. Table 16). The contrast between *be pleased to* and *please to* in the novels is more obvious in Figure 26:

Figure 26. *Be pleased to* vs. *please to* imperatives in the fiction corpus
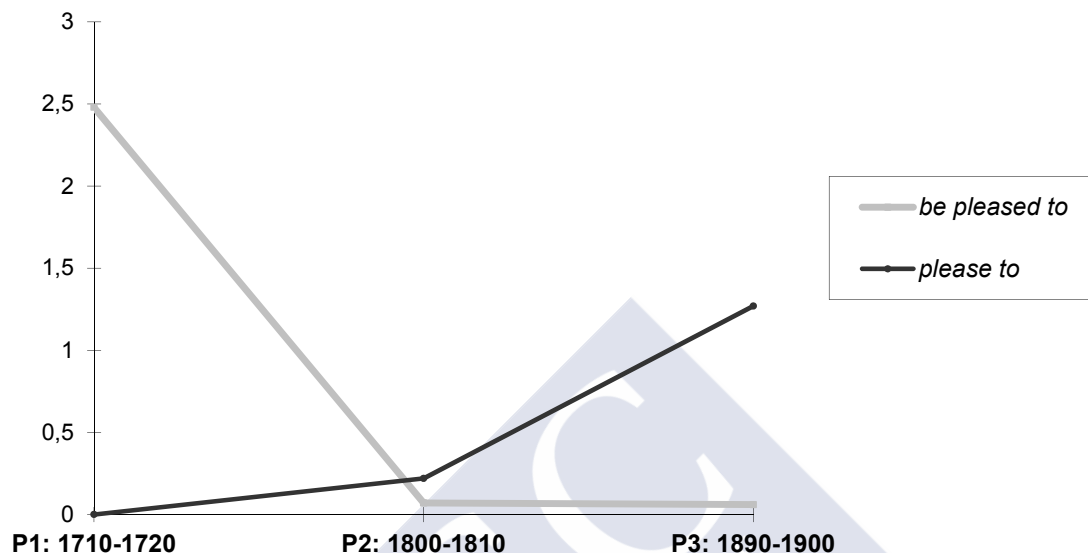
It could well be the case that the decrease of one of these imperative forms and the increase of the other one are interrelated. We can compare examples (199) and (200), in which we find the same verb following *please* imperative forms, and both of them in contexts with politeness implications. Both examples could be reworded as *please give (…)*:

(199)   Why then, Sir, says he, be **pleased** to give me Leave to lay down a few Propositions as the Foundation of what I have to say, (*ECF*, **P1**, Defoe, D., *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, Main Text (p.135))

(200)   'Then **please** to give my name, and ask if Mrs. Yule can see me.' (*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *New Grub Street*, Vol. II., Chapter XX (p.181))

We find again similar examples in the epistolary corpus, in which *be pleased to* and *please to* precede the same verb, as in (201) and (202):

(201)   Be **pleas,d** to forward Mrs. Leghs Letters as soon as Convenient, (Tymothy Rumboll, 1770)

(202)   P:S: **Please** to forward the two small parcels as directed (Henry Porter, 1781)

Both in the fiction and in the letters corpus, the pragmatic function of both structures seems identical: they are used to soften the directness and immediacy of an imperative through the politeness implied in the verb *please*. *Be pleased to* examples may represent a previous stage in the development towards the courtesy marker. *Be pleased to* could have developed into *please to* after the weakening of the syllable-final /d/ in *pleased*. Cruttenden (1994:149) notes that in words like *raised* the final /d/ may be devoiced. When followed by *to*, as in *be pleased to*, such devoicing is even more likely. Thus, *please* could be reinterpreted as an infinitive instead of a past participle, with the subsequent loss of *be* (cf. Tieken and Faya Cerqueiro 2007). This development would have started during the eighteenth century, since both Period 2 and Period 3 in the novels include only one instance each of imperative *be pleased to*, and the shift seems to be quite advanced in the epistolary corpus, where *please to* shows a notably higher frequency (47.12) than *be pleased to* (4.37). This development also entailed a semantic change so that *please* would have assumed the meaning 'be pleased.' The *OED* (s.v. *please* v. 4 and 6b) observes that intransitive *please* takes on the sense of the transitive passive *to be pleased*, which is still kept in formulae such as

pleased to meet you. The meaning of this passive construction carries out some politeness nuances: 'to have the will or desire; to have the inclination or disposition; (also) to think proper, choose, or be so obliging as to do something' (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 4). Therefore, the first step in the development towards parenthetical *please* could have been:

(203)   *be pleased to > be please(d) to > please to*

The development of *be pleased to* towards other forms would have affected not only phonology and semantics, but also pragmatics, since the interpretation of the newer constructions as less obliging and more neutral as regards politeness would have contributed to the obsolescence of the *be pleased to* form.

9.2.3   Parenthetical *please*

There are some obvious genre differences in the figures for courtesy marker *please*. Taking into consideration only data from the novels we could think that this form emerges and consolidates in less than a century. As already shown (cf. Table 17), its frequency goes from 0 in the decade 1710-1720 to 9.08 in the decade 1890-1900. The figures from the drama corpus point even to a later development, since there are only three instances (with an overall frequency of 3.05) in the entire nineteenth century material, and a rise in frequency in the twentieth century (18.39).

The data extracted from the epistolary collection may help us fix the emergence of the courtesy marker *please* with more accuracy. In the letter corpus *please* followed by a verb form, as in (204), started to be used already in the

eighteenth century, albeit with a very low frequency (1.68). This text-type is very useful to track early attestations of the form, since the courtesy marker *please* is first documented in a letter-writing manual from 1756, as shown in Section 8.1, and the first instance provided by the *OED*, from 1771, is also taken from a letter (cf. Example (6)). All of these early instances appear in letters with commercial purposes (cf. Section 7.4.6):

(204)   **Please** Remembar mee to my Ant and All my Cosins and My Uncall Iohn And wethar hee Received the Lettar with the Bill in and a nothar since as I have had no Answer since (*CLECP*, 1789, John Mercer)

(204) is one of the five instances of the courtesy marker *please* recorded in the epistolary corpus, and the informant, John Mercer, is the informant in two out of these five instances. The spelling here could suggest that this author could be an uneducated person or someone with a low level of instruction, given that there are several features which are not adapted to the standard, probably reflecting pronunciation.[82] Similarly, other early instances of *please* in this corpus show non-standard spellings (cf. van Bergen and Denison 2007), and this could point at a change from below, that is *please* could have originated in the lower classes, with a later spread to the upper classes (see Tieken and Faya Cerqueiro 2007).

As for the instances of *please* when it is not immediately followed by a verb

---

[82] Although there were two models of spelling, one used for printing, and another one used for private writing, it seems that this letter, as happens with many of the letters included in this epistolary collection, does not follow the private spelling conventions of upper classes (cf. Tieken 1998).

form, they are clear non-verbal examples of the courtesy marker, as in (205). *Please* can no longer be ascribed to the verb category, as it no longer has a subject, an object or any other marker of a subordinating construction, such as conditional conjunctions.

(205)   Tell me, **please**, what is amiss: you know I want to learn from you. (*NCF*, **P3**, Morris, W., *News from Nowhere*, Chapter III. (p.18))

It is likely that this form is the result of an evolution from other structures. Examples followed by a verb form are the most interesting ones since they can be ambiguous in one respect: depending on whether the following verb form is regarded as an imperative or as an infinitive without *to*, as was explained in Section 9.2.2.1 above. Examples of *please* followed by a verb form are already attested in the late eighteenth century (cf. Table 17). Since the letters are placed chronologically just before the second period of the fiction corpus, in which three early examples of the courtesy marker *please* are found, the five instances of pre-verbal *please* in the epistolary corpus could reflect the development of this pragmatic marker at its inception.

As we have seen in Section 7.4.6, the first authors using parenthetical *please* in novels were two female authors, Jane Austen and Mary Brunton. However, we cannot speculate with a change started by women, since the five instances of the courtesy marker *please* in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* are realised by four informants, three of them are men, and we only know the initial of the other one.

In relation to the geographical origin of the courtesy marker *please*, several

authors including the courtesy marker *please* in their novels have a northern or Irish background, like Allen, Brunton, Coleridge, Gissing, or Moore (*ODNB*, see Tieken and Faya Cerqueiro 2007). The *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century English* is inscribed in the project "The English language of the north-west in the late Modern English period," and although the origin of the informants is not specified —we know the letters are addressed to Richard Orford, from Cheshire—, it is likely that they come from the north. Putting all these pieces together, we could speculate that the courtesy marker *please* would have originated in the north and then spread southwards (cf. Tieken and Faya Cerqueiro 2007). One of the earlier users of *please*, Mary Brunton, was Scottish.[83] The instances of *please* included in her novel *Self-Control* deserve special attention. In example (206) *pray, Madam* is used by Laura, a captain's daughter, whereas in example (125), repeated below as (207), *please, Madam* is used by "old John," a servant. In both cases they are addressing the same character, Mrs De Courcy:

(206)   "Miss Montreville," said Lady Pelham, with an aspect of vinegar, "we all wait your pleasure." "**Pray**, Madam," answered Laura, "do not let me detain you a moment; I shall easily dispose of myself." (*NCF*, **P2**, Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume III, CHAP. XXVIII. (p.99))

(207)   Mrs De Courcy, somewhat alarmed, desired that the servant might come in. "**Please**, Madam," said he, "let me know where I may find Miss Montreville. (*NCF*, **P2**, Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume III, Chap. XXXII. (p.222-223))

---

[83] In the same line, the *OED* refers to the Scottish origin of the intransitive construction (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 6d; cf. Section 5.5.1).

This means that in two examples taken from the same novel by Burton, and depicting a similar communicative context, a servant uses *please* while a young lady of a higher status uses *pray*. The coexistence of the two courtesy markers is found in more sources, showing their occurrence in similar situations, or used by the same character, for example in drama in the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth (cf. Section 7.5.3). The similarity of the function conveyed by both markers also shows the accuracy with which *please* covers the pragmatic scope of *pray*.

Example (126), repeated here as (208), is the only example of pre-verbal *please* found in novels from the first decade of the nineteenth century. It is again taken from Brunton's *Self-Control*. Here the speaker is a man who comes to ask Laura to pay her father's debt. He is described by the narrator as one of the "[t]wo coarse robust-looking men, apparently of the lower rank," and from Scotland, as the author herself:

(208)   So you'll **please** pay me the two hundred pounds which he owed to Mr John Dykes. (*NCF*, **P2**, Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume III, Chap. XXIX. (p.118))

These examples could be adduced as evidence in support of the hypothesis that the courtesy marker *please* entails a change from below, which originates in the north and spreads southwards. The evidence from *The complete letter-writer* seems to point in the same direction. In this manual the style in the letter including *please omit* is criticised, whereas the letter using *please to send* is regarded as a much better model. Moreover, the writer who uses *please omit* in *The complete letter-writer* is placed in Hull,

in north-eastern England (cf. Section 8.1). The use of pre-verbal *please* could have been perceived as a deformation of *please to* and only lower classes would use it in the eighteenth century and in the first part of the nineteenth. Already in the second part of the century, we observe higher-rank informants using this form, such as those in *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* (cf. Section 8.2).

Figure 27 below shows the evolution of the different parenthetical markers with *please* in the novels. We observe that the most salient change in frequency is that of *please*, a change that takes place essentially during the nineteenth century. Among the other parenthetical forms, *if it please E* shows a very low frequency in the three periods and its changes do not seem relevant. *If E please(s)* undergoes a slow decrease in use from period to period. The form *(and) please E*, when addressing a second person, reaches its peak in Period 2, but its frequencies in the first period is remarkably low, and it disappears in Period 3.[84]

Figure 27. *Please* parenthetical markers (novels)

---
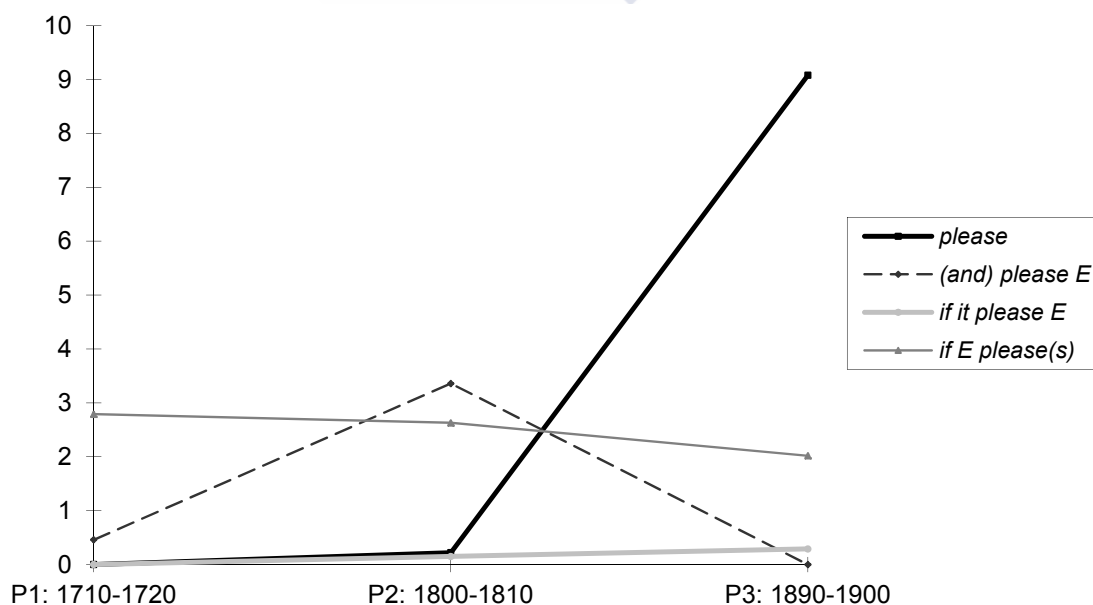
[84] Note *please God* and *please the pigs* are excluded here.

Figure 28 below shows the frequencies of the parenthetical constructions available in the drama section of *A Corpus of Irish English*. As mentioned above, the *if it please E* construction is not attested in any century in this corpus. The form *(and) please E* shows an extremely high frequency in the seventeenth century, and is still found in the eighteenth century, but it is not attested after that period. The conditional structure *if E please(s)* shows a decreasing tendency in this corpus, with a peak in the eighteenth century.[85] The frequency of parenthetical *please* in nineteenth-century drama is particularly low, as opposed to the other text-types and also contradicting the tendencies found in the preliminary analysis in *ARCHER*. Nevertheless, figures in the twentieth century show *please* as the default courtesy marker in requests.

Figure 28. *Please* parenthetical markers (drama)
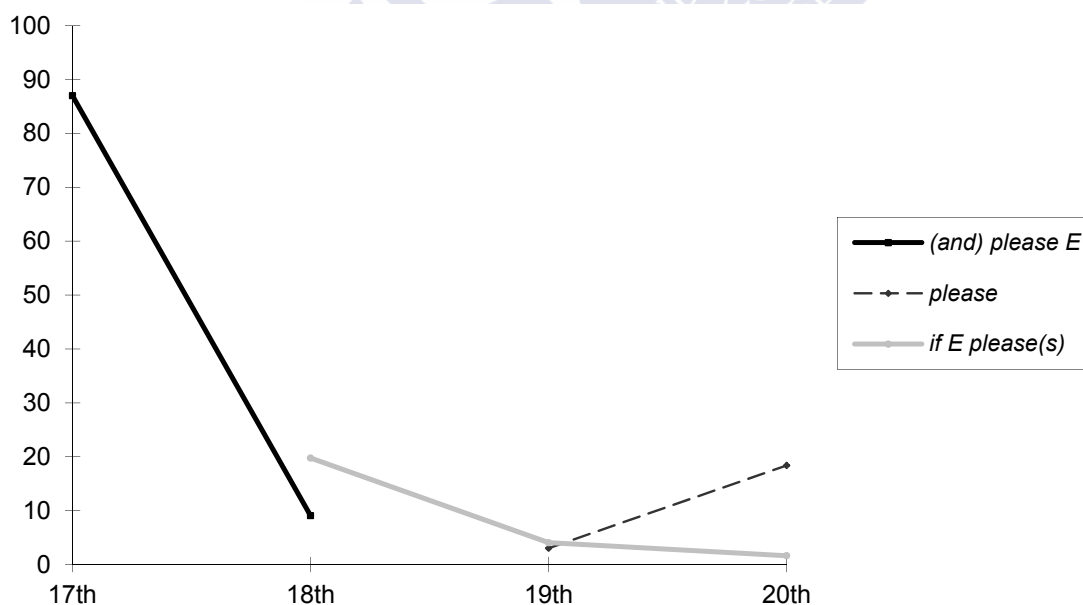
As we have seen in the different corpora, Experiencer noun phrases available in the parenthetical structures with the verb *please* have a highly fixed nature and refer only

---

[85] An even more noticeable peak is observed in the courtesy marker *pray* in the same period (cf. Section 7.5.3), a fact that could point at text-type or stylistic reasons behind these frequencies.

to the addressee, revealing a communicative use in polite requests as parenthetical courtesy markers. Both the decrease in use and the fixation of these three structures towards formulaic status coincides in time with the emergence and establishment of the marker *please*. The mobility of the parenthetical *if you please* within the sentence could have influenced the development of *please* towards different positions (cf. Section 9.2.4.2).

9.2.4   Internal influences on the development of *please*

This section will review other linguistic factors that could also have had some influence on the development of the courtesy marker *please*, both from a syntactic and a pragmatic perspective. Thus, in the following paragraphs attention will be paid to instances of *please* in which *will* is also used (Section 9.2.4.1), to the position of *please* in the sentence in nineteenth-century data (Section 9.2.4.2), and to the courtesy marker *pray* (Section 9.2.4.3).

9.2.4.1   Use of *will* in the examples

In addition to imperative constructions, the courtesy marker *please* could have received an important influence from other structures, and especially from those constructions including modal *will* in the same sentence. In fact, we observe that the presence of *will* (or its contracted form) is also noticeable with *be pleased to* and especially with *please to* in PROP constructions. The frequencies of these structures vary considerably in the different genres. Table 26 includes frequencies of *will* in

non-imperative *be pleased to* and *please to* constructions, as well as with the courtesy marker *please*.

Table 26. Presence of *will* with non-imperative forms in the fiction corpus

FORMS	P1: 1710-1720	P2:1800-1810	P3: 1890-1900
Be pleased to	2 (out of 60)/0.31	2 (out of 6)/0.15	2 (out of 28)/0.11
please to	0 (out of 32)	4 (out of 8)/0.29	5 (out of 8)/0.29
please	-	1 (out of 3)/0.07	15 (out of 157)/0.87

Even if raw numbers are low in the different constructions, we notice a slight decrease in the frequency of *will* in connection with *be pleased to* in the three periods. There are no examples of *will* with *please to* in Period 1, and then the frequency remains stable, while there is a slight increase and in the courtesy marker *please* with *will* from the beginning to the end of the nineteenth century. Politeness nuances are present in the different types, as can be observed in the following examples. The level of negative politeness and indirectness is high, and in instances like (209) the speech act is not even a request but a polite suggestion:

(209)   I introduced Lupin, saying: "You will be **pleased** to find we have our dear boy at home!" (*NCF*, **P3**, Grossmith, G. and W. Grossmith, *The Diary of a Nobody*, Chapter VI (p. 90))

(210)   "Will you **please** to give me your cousin's letter?" she said coldly.(*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *The Odd Women*, Vol. III., V. (p.156))

(211)   'Miss Bridehead is upstairs,' she said. 'And will you **please** walk up to her?' (*NCF*, **P3**, Hardy, T., 1840-1928 / Jude The Obscure, Part Third, III.-v. (p.194))

Table 27 below shows the presence of *will* in different non-imperative constructions, compared to the total number of forms in letters from the second half of the eighteenth century. While in this corpus *will* is more frequent with *please to*, eighteenth-century letter-writing manuals show a higher percentage of *will* in *be pleased to* constructions than in *please to*, as happens with imperatives in the first period of novels (cf. Section 8.1).

Table 27. Presence of *will* with non-imperative forms in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*

FORMS	FIGURES
Be pleased to	19 (out of 51)/6.39
please to	46 (out of 81)/15.48
please	2 (out of 5)/0.67

In this epistolary corpus, we find instances of the *please to* and *be pleased to* constructions with modal *will*, as in (212) and (213) below, by the same author:

(212)   so that you**'l be pleased to** give him the Meeting early that morn[g]. (*CLECP*, 1773, Walter Kerfoot)

(213)   P.S. The purchase money you **will please to** insert in the Deed, as J have not the exact Sum. (*CLECP*, 1772, Walter Kerfoot)

In this corpus, *will* is also found in two eighteenth-century instances of pre-verbal *please*, as in (197) above, or (123), repeated here as (127), which is the earliest example attested in letters:

(214)   You'll **please** be %so good to Let me know p~ return post when the Lease

will be %ready (*CLECP*, 1771, Jeffery Hart)

The coexistence of forms of *will* with *be pleased to* and *please to* patterns, as well as with *please* followed by a bare infinitive, is similar to that found in imperatives. Table 28 below shows the occurrence of *will* with the three structures under consideration in drama. Drama shows a few instances of all the patterns including *will*.[86] Particularly interesting is the frequency of *please to* with *will* in the eighteenth century (4.12), which would be close to the figures in letters:

Table 28. Presence of *will* in non-imperative forms in *A Corpus of Irish English* (drama)

FORMS	18th century	19th century	20th century
Be pleased to	1 (out of 4)/0.82	1 (out of 6)/1.01	0 (out of 6)
please to	5 (out of 7)/4.12	-	-
please	-	0 (out of 3)	3 (out of 45)/1.23

The eventual drop of particle *to* in *please to* PROP constructions would have also affected examples with *will*, in which verbal *please* would have been reanalysed as a courtesy marker, as happens with imperatives. The developments proposed in (198) and (203) above would be valid for structures including non-imperative forms with presence of *will*, both in the *be pleased to* construction and in the PROP constructions, as in (215) and (216) in the letters, or (217) and (218) in drama:

---

[86] Note, however, that *be pleased to* patterns are not attested in imperative constructions and only one example is found in the PROP construction.

(215)   These few Questions you will be **pleased** to answer, (*CLECP*, 1775, John

Garton)

(216)   You'll **please** to favor me with your Answr as soon as possible, (*CLECP*,

1774, William Fallows)

(217)   MRS. SULLEN My head aches consumedly. MRS. SULLEN Will you be

pleased, my dear, to drink tea with us this morning? It may do your head good.

(**Drama**, Farquhar, George. 1707. *The Beaux' Stratagem*)

(218)   MRS. SULLEN Will you **please** to dress and go to church with me?

(**Drama**, Farquhar, George. 1707. *The Beaux' Stratagem*)

Thus, *will* may occur in instances of requests using more direct strategies, such as

those in (215) and (216) or in indirect requests, such as those in (217) and (218).

These examples could have played a role in the development of the courtesy marker,

since the presence of the syntactic downgrader *will* may constitute an appeal for

willingness in the request, and at the same time a mitigator of the requestive force.[87]

9.2.4.2 Position of the courtesy marker *please* in the nineteenth century

The position of *please* in those instances in which it is regarded as a courtesy marker

may be relevant to support the hypothesis that imperative constructions is its major

source. We have seen that in Present-day English the courtesy marker *please* can be

used in initial, final or medial position. If we pay attention to the position of *please* in

the nineteenth century, when it was at an incipient stage, we find instances of these

---

[87] It is interesting to remember here the similar use of the Old English directive speech-act verb *biddan* with the directive constructions *ic wille* and *ic wolde*, which Kohnen (2011) interprets as direct requests (cf. Section 4.2.3).

three possibilities. In final position *please* is unambiguously a courtesy marker and no more explanations are needed, as in (219). However, clause initial *please¸* as in (220), and medial *please*, as in (221), when followed by a bare form of the verb can be regarded either as forms of the verb *please*, as adverbs (courtesy markers).

(219)   'Ask him to come up, Mrs. Thompson, **please**.' (*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *New Grub Street*, Vol. II., Chapter XX (p.196))

(220)   'I don't like to break those great seals; they look so serious. **Please** open it for me!' (*NCF*, **P3**, Hardy, T., *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Vol. II, Phase The Fourth, XXXIV (p.182))

(221)   Will you **please** send the note lying beside this to my mother. (*NCF*, **P3**, Hardy, T., *The Well-Beloved*, Part Third, III.-vi. (p.302))

Table 29 below shows the distribution of positions in the different genres at different periods of the nineteenth century:

Table 29. Position of the courtesy marker *please*

		initial	medial	final	Total cases
Novels	**P2: 1800–1810**	0.15/2	0.07/1	-	**0.22/3**
	P3: 1890–1900	5.79/100	1.21/21	2.08/36	**9.08/157**
Letters	**1860–1899**	15.25/9	-	-	**15.25/9**
Drama	**19th century**	2.03/2	-	1.01/1	**3.05/3**

As reflected in Table 29, initial position is by far the most frequent option for the courtesy marker *please* in the nineteenth-century material analysed. This is the

position in which imperative forms usually occur. Pre-verbal *please* at the beginning of an utterance is not generally followed by a comma, and we do not usually find any other intervening material between *please* and the following verb (with the exception of two cases in which *just* and *still* occur between *please* and the verb form). This fact suggests that early instances could be ambiguous, as explained above (cf. Sections 7.4.6 and 9.2.3). The importance of these examples lies in speakers' interpretation in the nineteenth century, since they could have some doubts in their consideration of the new form. In fact, the comment shown in Section 9.2.2.1 above, extracted from a 1901 journal (included in Gold 2006), reports the use of pre-verbal *please* as an imperative verb at the inception of the twentieth century.

The last decade of the century in novels offers more variation than the other genres and periods, with examples of the courtesy marker in all three positions, as in examples (219)-(221) above. In drama there are only three instances of the courtesy marker *please* in the nineteenth century, two of them in initial position, as in (222), and one in final position:

(222)   SERGEANT (saluting) **Please**, sir, there's a mad dog, sir, a-sitting at the
          back door, and he has bit four of our men awful. (Drama, Boucicault, Dion. 1875.
          The Shaughraun)

In the nineteenth-century letters from *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*, all the examples of *please* occur in initial position. Eight (out of nine) instances precede an imperative, as in (223) below. The remaining instance is a verbless sentence.

(223)   I want to go home very much; so **please** send the Williamses all away &
have the house cleansed. (1872, Lord Amberley to wife Kate)

These figures should be compared to similar present-day data in order to check whether there is any difference in frequency of use in the possible positions. In any case, the data seem to indicate that *please* originated in a position typical of an imperative form, that is, the initial position. In our data medial position *please* occurs mainly in questions, a typical form used in offers and requests, but its frequency is very low in this century. This position is also identified in eighteenth-century letters in sentences with *will*. In Present-day English *please* is very common with conventional indirect questions. In fact the pattern *could you* ranks second after the imperative in *please* requests, and just before permission requests, such as *can I, may I, could I* (Aijmer 1996: 166; for cultural differences behind these patterns see Sato 2008).[88] The data from the corpora analysed suggest that final position became available at a later stage, which would support the hypothesis that the courtesy marker originates from an imperative verb form, rather than from a conditional clause, like *if you please* — which is not so constrained as imperative constructions as regards position. Nevertheless, the mobility displayed by the UNPROP construction *if you please* already in the eighteenth century could have favoured the eventual spread of *please* to different positions. Probably by the time in which final position was reached, *please* was already an unambiguous courtesy marker.

---

[88] The emergence of conventionalised ability requests, such as *can you* or *could you* is placed by Culpeper and Demmen (2011) in the nineteenth century (cf. Section 4.2.3).

Table 30. Position of the parenthetical *if you please* in the nineteenth century

		initial	medial	final	Total cases
Novels	**P2: 1800-1810**	-	1.32/18	0.58/8	**1.90/26**
	P3: 1890-1900	0.29/5	1.04/18	0.52/9	**1.85/32**
Drama	**19th century**	1.02/1	1.02/1	2.03/2	**4.06/4**

The parenthetical clause *if you please* is not recorded in the epistolary corpus in the nineteenth century, and only four instances are found in drama, as shown in Table 30. Both novels and drama illustrate the variation of this conditional parenthetical as regards position choice, although medial and final position are the most common options for this pragmatic marker. The first (and only) instance in initial position in the drama collection dates back to 1864, while it is not attested at the beginning of the century, in Period 2, in the novels. The lack of instances of *if you please* occupying the initial slot in the sentence at the beginning of the century, and their low frequency by the end of the century would provide further support to disregard *if you please* as a likely source of the courtesy marker *please*.

9.2.4.3 The courtesy marker *pray*

Pray as the direct predecessor of *please* may also have played a role in its development. In the fiction data *pray* reaches its peak in use in Period 2 and shows a considerable decline in Period 3, whereas we observe the emergence of the courtesy marker *please* in Period 2 and its highest frequency in Period 3. The very decline of *pray* may have left *please* as the only choice available. In the epistolary corpus we observe that the frequencies for *pray* and for the imperative *please to* are quite similar

in the late eighteenth century (46.11 vs. 47.12), which indicates that while *pray* was still the preferred marker in requests, a new structure with a similar pragmatic use had become just as popular.

As regards position, it has been already mentioned that *pray* was frequently used in sentence-initial position and followed by a bare verb form, the most common position and context in which we find first examples of *please*. *Pray* could have had a certain influence on the development of *please* and on the deletion of the following particle *to*, since it makes sense that *please* could have followed the same pattern of a form carrying the same pragmatic force.

The disappearance of the courtesy marker *pray* may be related to the increasing specialisation of the homonymous verb, which moved from covering different meanings of the type 'to ask something earnestly/politely' to 'to ask something to God.' This specialisation is also present in the related vocabulary from the same lexical family, which has an unequivocal religious sense (cf. *prayer*, compounds of the types *praying* + noun/*pray* + noun). Whereas in other politeness formulae the religious connotation is no longer evident (cf. *goodbye*), the courtesy marker *pray* was still identical to the verb. Increasing secularisation (as suggested by Kryk-Kastovsky 1998), or simply the preference to avoid a form with such religious associations, could have determined the fate of *pray* in favour of *please*.

As we have seen in Section 5.6, Busse (1999, 2002) points at a shift towards negative politeness in order to justify the replacement of *pray* by *please*. The change of politeness applies to these requests markers, since whereas *I pray you* focuses on the speaker, *be pleased to* and *please to* assume there is an imposition on the addressee and appeal to his or her compliance (cf. Busse 2002: 212).

The coexistence of both *pray* and *please* is attested in different sources throughout the Late Modern English period. Already in the eighteenth century, we find a comment in Bayly's (1772) grammar, analysing "please or pray give" as subjunctive forms followed by a verb (cf. Section 5.4). The fact that this comment is included in an English grammar provides an authoritative source not only for the simultaneous existence of both markers, but also for their pragmatic synonymy. The data from the corpora analysed reveal that *pray* is the default courtesy marker in the eighteenth century (even though in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* we find some early instances of the emerging marker *please* (cf. Section 7.4.6).

The coexistence of both *pray* and *please* is observed in the nineteenth-century material analysed. The decades selected for study in the fiction corpus show that in this genre both markers were used throughout the nineteenth-century. In the first decades only a few examples of *please* are found, as opposed to the high frequency of *pray*, while by the end of the century *please* is preferred over *pray*. Particularly interesting are the data from *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*, since this collection reflects a generational change, even if it also includes some informants using both markers. This collection shows that *please* is the most frequent request marker from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. In drama, in which the coexistence of *pray* and *please* is not as evident as in the other corpora, we still find some characters using both markers in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century material. It seems likely that when *pray* started to be perceived as old-fashioned and typical of an older generation, younger speakers would favour the new form *please*, and, therefore, the shift was inevitable.

The function of *pray* as an attention getter is more noticeable in the

eighteenth-century section of the drama corpus than in letters or fiction from any period. In fact, drama data from this century reveal a higher percentage of attention getters than courtesy markers with *pray* in *A Corpus of Irish English*. A possible specialisation of *pray* in this function, which is attested in all the genres in the eighteenth century, could have also affected the eventual preference for *please* as a courtesy marker.

9.3. The emergence of the courtesy marker *please*

We have seen that suggestions in the literature point at a derivation of the courtesy marker *please* from a conditional clause. Nevertheless, the data examined in the present study do not provide any clear evidence in favour of this hypothesis, while are suggestive of a derivation from imperative structures. In fact, there are ambiguous cases (cf. examples (195) or (197)) which can be understood as possible intermediate stages in the development from imperative constructions to the courtesy marker *please*. However, there are no intermediate stages which could justify an origin from other complex constructions.

One of the options suggested in the literature (cf. *OED*, s.v. *please* v.; Brown and Gilman 1989; Watts 2003) points at a development from an UNPROP construction with Experiencer object: *if it please you > please you > please*. This conditional structure seems a possible source with *please you* as an intermediate stage, but, as seen above, its frequency is low. Moreover, the material does not yield many instances of *if please E*, with elision of the dummy subject *it*. There is only one instance with that construction in which the Experiencer is God. We do find forms

like *and please you*, in which *and* may function as a conditional conjunction, but the Experiencer is again a reference to God.

If we assume that *please* derives from any of these constructions, we may wonder why other elements are elided. In this respect, Akimoto (2000: 80) gives an explanation for the deletion of *you* from *I pray you*, stating that this "is possible because the second person is always the target of address and becomes unnecessary in the imperative; it is clear in the context." This hypothesis seems coherent, but the extremely low figures of UNPROP constructions with Experiencer Objects and the fixedness of the Experiencer (constraint to God and honorifics) make it a highly unlikely source. In the three periods of the fiction data we only find three instances of the *(and) please E* construction with the pronoun *you*, and the three of them in Period 2. Similarly, in drama we only find one example in the seventeenth century and three in the eighteenth century with a T-pronoun. All the other instances in these two centuries include honorific titles or similar Experiencers. In this genre the nineteenth and twentieth centuries contain two instances of *please God* each. This Experiencer is also observed in the eighteenth-century epistolary corpus, which does not contain any instance of this structure with a pronominal Experiencer. This construction, as we have seen in Table 14, is used basically with Experiencers referring to God, or with honorific titles in earlier periods, and it would seem somewhat strange that Experiencers of this kind could be easily elided.

As said above, *if you please > please* is proposed by many authors as the most likely development of the courtesy marker, but this developmental path presents some problems. First of all, what has been just mentioned for the deletion of elements could also be applied to *if you please*. There is only one instance of

UNPROP *if please* attested in all the corpora analysed, found in a novel from the beginning of the eighteenth century, which does not offer any other connection of continuity towards the courtesy marker:

(224)   I shall trust to your Wisdom and Goodness, to deliver me out of this Dilemma; but at present, if **please**, we will go in, (*ECF*, **P1**, Barker, J., *Exilius*, Vol. 1, Book 1 (p.23)) (example (135), repeated here for convenience)

This structure gets fixed as regards both the Experiencer and the verb, and becomes a formulaic parenthetical used in more formal contexts than *please*, a use kept in Present-day English (cf. Section 5.3). Its fixed nature is already clear by the end of the eighteenth century, and this fact makes *if you please* an unlikely source to develop into *please* without any intermediate step. In addition, parenthetical *please* would have moved into final positions as a later step, whereas parenthetical structures like *if you please* could have freedom of movement in the sentence (cf. Section 9.2.4.2).

The earliest instances in which we find pre-verbal *please* reflect contexts in which the UNPROP construction *please to* was used, thus, *you'll please pay me* could have been written as *you'll please to pay me*, whereas in those contexts, it would be difficult to replace *please* with *if you please* (* *you'll if you please pay me*) (cf. bridging or critical contexts in next section). *If you please* would only replace *please* when it occurs in clearly parenthetical instances, which are attested later.

Although the different UNPROP complex structures with *please*, especially the conditional constructions, look appealing as the ultimate origin of the courtesy

marker *please*, there is no clear evidence in the data analysed in the present study supporting this idea.

Taking into consideration all the data under analysis, it seems that the Present-day English courtesy marker *please* is the outcome of different changes undergone by several constructions with verbal *please*, which took place during the Late Modern English period. Even though the data from the present study suggest that the most likely source of the courtesy marker *please* is to be found in a PROP construction, UNPROP parenthetical constructions like *if E please(s)*, *if it please E* or *(and) please E*, may have played a minor role in the development of the courtesy marker *please*, since many of the changes undergone by all these constructions (e.g. fixation in the Experiencer and the verb form) occurred roughly when *please* was emerging. The fixation of all these constructions with the verb *please* could have contributed to the establishment of the courtesy marker *please* as the preferred marker in requests. In addition to imperative *be pleased to* and *please to* patterns, examples containing *will* may have also been important, since they are frequently used in the corpora in pre-verbal contexts, and they usually take politeness connotations of deference towards the addressee. In addition, the courtesy marker *pray* served as a model for the emergence of *please* in pre-verbal and sentence-initial contexts, and could have influenced the deletion of the particle *to*. Moreover, the progressive decline of *pray* could have contributed to the rise of a new form. The semantic shift of the verb *please*, which acquired the passive meaning 'to be pleased' would also have affected the developments of PROP structures.

Despite the fact that different constructions may have contributed to the emergence of *please* as a courtesy marker, the data point at imperative forms as the

major source for *please*. In view of this, I would propose the following developmental path, as in (225):

(225) imp. *be pleased* + *to*-inf. > imp. *be please(d)* + *to*-inf. > imp. *please* + *to*-inf. > imperative *please* + Ø inf. > courtesy marker *please* + imperative verb

9.4. *Please* and *pray* as instances of grammaticalisation

In the present section I will detail the typical features of grammaticalisation (and related processes) which can be found in the developments of both *pray* and *please*. Different scholars have suggested that their development constitutes a case of grammaticalisation. The older courtesy marker in requests analysed here, *pray*, is studied by Akimoto from this perspective. Akimoto (2000) focuses on the evolution of *pray*, *prithee* and their different forms from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and identifies Hopper's (1991) five principles of grammaticalisation in the development of *pray* (2000: 78-80).

Busse (1999, 2002) examines the occurrence of *pray* and *prithee* and their variants in Shakespeare as well as the pronouns used with each marker, considering both the presence/absence of the subject (*I*) and the inclusion of T or V object pronouns *(thee/you)*. He shows that these markers were already grammaticalised by Shakespeare's time, and that *pray* constructions had already acquired adverb-like qualities, since they no longer behave as main clauses: the verbal qualities of *pray* are lost and the expression may occupy different positions within the clause. He proposes the following path for the development of both markers: †*I pray you/thee* > †*pray you/thee* > *prithee/pray*! (1999: 496). Thus, according to Busse, both *pray* and

prithee have undergone recategorisation, semantic bleaching and pragmatic strengthening, while *prithee* also shows phonetic reduction. He also suggests that differences in politeness and discourse functions may have conditioned the evolution of both *pray* and *prithee*, and that the shift from positive to negative politeness suggested by Kopytko (1993, 1995) for Elizabethan English may have played a role in the replacement of *pray* by *please*. Following Kopytko (1993), and, on the basis of the data offered by the *OED*, Busse considers that *please* has also undergone grammaticalisation. He proposes the following steps in its development: †*please it you* (= may it please you) > †*please you* > *please*! (Busse 1999: 496).

Culpeper and Archer (2008: 74-76), nevertheless (cf. Section 4.2.2), consider that *pray* was not yet fully grammaticalised in Early Modern English, since it typically occurred as a pre-support move, usually in initial position. In this respect, *pray* and *prithee* differ from *please*, which may occupy different slots within the sentence. This fixedness as regards word-order is further supported by Corbet's comment on the syntactic properties of *pray*, "*Syntax* teaches us to range or place our Words in a *proper Order*, as *Pray, Sir, dine with me To-day*; not *Dine with me To-day, pray, Sir*" (Corbet 1784: viii) (cf. Section 5.4).

Traugott and Dasher (2002) take a similar stand on the developments of both pragmatics markers *pray* and *please*, although grammaticalisation is not explicitly mentioned. They consider that *pray* developed from a main clause performative expression (*I pray you*) into a parenthetical expression and finally into a pragmatic marker with social deictic function (2002: 252-255). As regards *please*, Traugott and Dasher explain that it could have originated in a expression such as *if you please*, in which the Experiencer occupies a subject position, both this Experiencer and the

conditional conjunction would have been left out and the expression would have developed into the social deictic (2002: 255-258).

Brinton (2006, 2007a, 2008, 2010) also appeals to grammaticalisation for the developments of *pray* and *please*. She observes that the matrix clause *I pray (you)* could be followed by different complement clauses at the earlier stages. Progressively, the set of complement clauses was reduced, the object omitted and eventually also the subject. Thus, the matrix clause, after an intermediate stage between matrix clause and parenthetical, became a pragmatic marker (cf. Section 3.2). Brinton follows Allen's (1995a) explanations on the development of impersonal and personal constructions with *please* (*if it please you* and *if you please*) in the seventeenth century. She points at an adverbial clause with a nominative Experiencer, namely *if you please*, as the possible source of *please*, which would have replaced *pray* by the beginning of the twentieth century.

As mentioned above, Akimoto (2000: 78) identifies Hopper's (1991) five principles of grammaticalisation in the development of *pray*. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the same principles are mentioned in the literature as defining features of pragmaticalisation (Aijmer 1997, 2002), and, in fact, Claridge and Arnovick (2010) base their description of *pray* in terms of pragmaticalisation on Akimoto's claims. As regards layering, Akimoto (2000) mentions forms such as *I pray you*, *I pray thee* or *I pray*, which were used contemporaneously. This variation is reflected in the following examples extracted from the same play of *A Corpus of Irish English*, in (226) the form used is *I pray*, in (227) *I pray thee*, in (228) *pray* alone, and in (229) the courtesy marker *prithee* is used:

(226)   Hip. Well, sir, I **pray** lets see you Master Scholler. (**Drama**, Dekker, Thomas. 1605/1630. *The Honest Whore Part II*)

(227)   Bryan. Come I **pray** dee, wut come sweet face? Goe. (**Drama**, Dekker, Thomas. 1605/1630. *The Honest Whore Part II*)

(228)   Cand. What's that he saies, **pray'** Gentlemen? (**Drama**, Dekker, Thomas. 1605/1630. *The Honest Whore Part II*)

(229)   Bryan. I faat, I doubt my pate shall be knocked: but so crees sa me, for your shakes, I will runne to any Linnen Draper in hell, come **preddy**. (**Drama**, Dekker, Thomas. 1605/1630. *The Honest Whore Part II*)

Akimoto (2000) also mentions the principle of divergence, which is observable in the development of the courtesy marker *pray*, since alongside the courtesy marker, the verb *pray* is also found. Examples of the verb *pray* are excluded from the data in our study. One example is (230), in which the religious sense of the verb is clear:

(230)   DORINDA Morrow, my dear sister, are you for church this morning? MRS. SULLEN Anywhere to **pray**, for heaven alone can help me. (**Drama**, Farquhar, George. 1707. *The Beaux' Stratagem.*)

Concerning specialisation, Akimoto lists other forms such as *I entreat you*, which could have developed along a similar path, but notes that only *I pray you* specialised as a courtesy marker in requests. As we have seen in Section 4.3.1, Late Modern English used several verbs with meanings related to 'request' in the speech act of requests, most of which were used performatively. Examples include *I beg*, *I beseech* or *I entreat* (cf. Akimoto 2000; Sönmez 2005). The core lexical meaning of the verb

pray, 'to ask earnestly,' is shared with most of these requestive verbs. Among all the forms available, only *pray* was grammaticalised as a courtesy marker, thus undergoing Hopper's (1991) principle of specialisation. Nevertheless, in eighteenth-century letters some examples of the performative *beg* can be found without an explicit subject, in a PROP construction, similar to the pattern found with *please*, as in (231). Note that in (232) *beg* is found in final position, which clearly indicates that it is a parenthetical:

(231)   **Beg** now mᵣ Grimsʷ, to send my Goose to London when convenient to him. (*CLECP*, 1783, John Amson)

(232)   **Please** to send me a ansʳ. to the Inclosd by first as We shall not go before Wensday fail not I **Beg** (*CLECP*, ?1790, Thomas Gaskell)

Note that example (232) also includes the imperative of *please* in a PROP construction, showing again the formulaic character of business epistolary language. Instances with *beg* are very frequent in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*, but this verb was used in an ample range of expressions, such as *beg pardon*, *beg excuse*, *beg leave* (*OED*, s.v. *beg* v. 3a), and did not developed as a parenthetical courtesy marker.

According to Akimoto, persistence is also observed in the courtesy marker *pray*, which "still retains part of the original meaning of the verb in the sense of supplication" (2000: 78). The requestive value of the verb is even more obvious in the full construction *I pray you*, as in (233):

(233)   I have now all responsibility for Jamie on my head, and I have to do what

my conscience tells me I should do; only, I **pray** you, do not take offence at what I have said." (*NCF*, **P3**, Baring-Gould, Sabine, *In The Roar Of The Sea*, Vol. I., Chapter VII. (p.86))

Furthermore, the courtesy marker *pray* undergoes de-categorialisation. Akimoto observes that over time *pray* loses its verbal features and behaves more as an interjection since it loses its verbal properties. This is also visible in *prithee*, which underwent further de-categorialisation from *I pray thee* to become an "interjectional marker" (2000: 78).

Hopper's principles, which are generally identified at the beginning of the process of grammaticalisation can also be found in the development of *please*. Taking into consideration all the data presented in this study and the diachronic development of *please* described so far, it seems that *please* is a prototypical example of this process of change. As regards layering, the development of the courtesy marker *please* illustrates layering in the two conceptions of the term. On the one hand, we identify the emergence of layers within the functional domain (cf. Hopper 1991: 23) of courtesy markers in requests. In fact, *pray* and *please* coexist from the late eighteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century, a period when both markers, the old and the new form, were available with exactly the same function, as in (234) and (235). In addition to the courtesy marker *pray*, the whole range of forms including the verb *please*, and especially *be pleased to* and *please to*, were used in similar contexts with the same pragmatic function as the courtesy marker *please*, as in (236) and (237), taken from family and business letters.

(234)   **Pray** let me know in a Line, whether you are better or worse, whether I am honest or a Knave, and whether I shall live or die. (1765?, *The British letter-writer,* p. 112)

(235)   **Please** let me know whether I may see you. (*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *The Odd Women*, Vol. I., VIII. (p.214))

(236)   If you have any particular cause for insisting on it sooner, be **pleased** to let me know, and I will endeavour to borrow the money; (1782?, *Every man his own letter-writer*, p. 19)

(237)   Monday the 16th Ins^t:, is the day appointed for another meeting at Prescot, to sign the articles &c; which I hope will be convenient for you to attend. if it is not, **please** to let me know; (*CLECP*, 1778, Thomas Penwick)

On the other hand, layering can be understood as the coexistence of new and old meanings and uses of a form (cf. Hopper and Traugott 2003: 49). In this sense, the verb *please* and the courtesy marker *please* have been available in English since the emergence of the latter. This coexistence is also related to the principle of divergence, since whereas the form *please* became a pragmatic marker, the verb *please* is still kept as an autonomous lexical item in different syntactic structures, such as 2NP, 1NP or PROP constructions (cf. Chapters 6 and 7).

Concerning specialisation, we have seen that different forms of *pray* and *please* coexisted for a few centuries, but gradually the choice of forms narrowed down, until *please* became the only courtesy marker in request. The inclusion of *please* is almost compulsory in some contexts from a pragmatic perspective, although not morpho-syntactically as in obligatorification (Lehmann's process). In fact, the presence of *please* makes an answer easily identified as a request (Blum-Kulka 1985),

a property which is no longer available for other forms, unless providing an exaggerated and marked tone of negative politeness or even irony. This is the case of the deliberately old-fashioned use of *prithee* by Ernest Dowson in the late nineteenth century, which had stylistic purposes and was probably intended to have some camaraderie effects on the reader (cf. Section 8.2).

The principle of persistence is also shown by this form, since the original lexical meaning of the verb *please* 'to have the will or desire' (*OED*, s.v. *please* v. 4b) may have restricted the functions of *please* as a courtesy marker to the field of requests. In a previous step, the adoption of the passive meaning 'be pleased' by the verb *please* could have contributed to the semantics and pragmatics of *please*. This value is clearer in pre-verbal instances, such as (238), which is an obvious appeal to the hearer. The head act of the request could be paraphrased as *will you have the will to thank her*:

(238)   I have a long letter from Beatrice - will you **please** thank her for it if you're seeing her... (1917, Gertrude Bell to father)

The development of the verb *please* towards the homonymous pragmatic marker also illustrates another of Hopper's parameters, namely de-categorisation, in this case it entails the change from a major class (verb) to a minor class (adverb/pragmatic marker). The courtesy marker *please* lacks verbal properties, it loses all the morphological and syntactic properties of verbs, that is, it does no longer show inflectional properties, it cannot take subjects, objects or complements, and the form becomes fossilised. As regards semantics, the form *please* loses its

descriptive meaning (i.e. 'to be agreeable to') and develops procedural meaning when it is understood as part of a polite request.

The development of the courtesy markers *pray* and *please* also show the parameters and processes proposed by Lehmann's (1995), which will be checked against their development, with more emphasis on *please* since its emergence and development can be traced in the period covered in the present study (cf. Section 3.2). Among paradigmatic parameters, the first process is attrition, which relates to the loss of integrity, both phonological and semantic. The semantic change of *please* goes from 'please' to 'be pleased' (cf. Section 6.3), and this shift in meaning would be accompanied by phonological loss. Thus, in the development from *be pleased to* > *please to*, proposed in the present study as the major source of the courtesy marker, the verb *to be* is dropped. Moreover, the final plosive of the participle is also lost, thus making it possible for the verb to be reinterpreted as either a bare form or as an imperative. In the stage *please to* > *please*, the particle *to* is lost, and this loss enables the reanalysis of the verb as a courtesy marker. The whole process reduces the semantic weight of the initial construction, reducing also its descriptive meaning. Therefore, if the developmental path proposed in this study is correct (see proposal in (225)), the grammaticalisation of the courtesy marker *please* illustrates attrition.[89] In the case of the courtesy marker *pray*, we observe a similar semantic loss in its development from the verb *to pray*, while phonological attrition is clearly present in the development from *I pray thee* to *prithee*, which shows univerbation.

---

[89] Within this process, the property of phonological attrition is questioned in the literature as necessary for a form to be regarded as a case of grammaticalisation (cf. Brinton 1996: 273).

The second of Lehmann's parameters is paradigmaticity and its related process is paradigmaticisation. Although this process of integration into a paradigm is usually disregarded in the literature as a typical feature in the development of pragmatic markers (cf. Brinton 1996; Wischer 2000), as long as we think of pragmatic or courtesy markers as members of a word-class, such as Biber *et al.*'s (1999) 'inserts,' *please* and *pray* would show this quality.

The process affecting the parameter of paradigmatic variability is obligatorification, another feature questioned in the literature as defining of grammaticalisation (Wischer 2000). As mentioned above, *please* may be necessary in certain contexts to understand a question as a request or to mitigate the illocutionary force of an order. The choice of forms available during the Late Modern English period which offer the speaker paradigmatic variability was progressively reduced until *please* became the only unmarked courtesy marker in polite requests. Since its omission could affect the pragmatic value of an utterance, we may refer to a certain degree of obligatorification in its process, which would not be reached until the twentieth century, when *please* becomes almost the only choice for the speaker (cf. examples (234)-(237) above). This status was probably not reached by *pray* due to the paradigmatic variability in the whole Late Modern English period.

As regards the syntagmatic parameters, the first parameter deals with structural scope, and its related process is condensation. This parameter is not typically associated with the development of pragmatic markers (cf. Brinton 1996; Traugott 1997; Tabor and Traugott 1998), which show an increase in scope, since once grammaticalised these forms can affect more complex constituents. In pre-verbal position, the courtesy marker *please* would affect exactly the same constituents

as the verb in the PROP construction did (*Would you please tell me?/Would you please to tell me)*, but once it moves to different positions, especially sentence-initially or sentence-finally, it may affect requests with even more complex head-acts. No reduction in scope is shown by the courtesy marker *pray* in the Late Modern English period either.

The parameter of bondedness, and its consequent process of coalescence is also a problematic feature of grammaticalisation. It has often been questioned in the literature and, generally, not identified in the development of pragmatic markers (Brinton 1996; Traugott 1997; Wisher 2000). Far from showing any tendency to coalescence, *please* is a prominent prosodic element in requests (cf. Wichmann 2004, 2005) and it may be used as a stand-alone word in certain contexts, such as the acceptance of an offer (cf. example (247) below). Although absent from the grammaticalisation paths of *please* and *pray*, coalescence is observed in the development of *prithee* from *I pray thee*, as noticed by Claridge and Arnovick (2010).

Finally, the last parameter proposed by Lehmann (1995) is syntagmatic variability. The variability of an item is progressively reduced, until a form reaches fixation. While *pray* in some corpora is attested in initial position only, as in the *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* (cf. Section 7.5.2), in the case of *please*, fixation as regards word-order would be only a tendency in the initial stages of grammaticalisation, when *please* usually occupies a slot as a clause-initial element, or more accurately a pre-verbal position. However, as is the case with other pragmatic markers, *please* shows increased mobility within the sentence, even though its presence affects the meaning of the whole head act regardless of its position.

Thus, the development of *please* (and *pray*) fails to show some allegedly properties of grammaticalisation, which are not found in the developmental paths of other pragmatic markers either. Therefore, Lehmann's syntagmatic parameters, namely condensation, fixation and coalescence are not identified in the development of the courtesy marker *please*.

In addition to these typical features in the grammaticalisation of pragmatic markers, Brinton (2005: 291-293, 2007b: 62) mentions conventionalisation of conversational implicatures. In this respect, Blum-Kulka (1985) shows that the presence of *please* makes a question to be understood as a request (cf. also Sadock 1974; Geukens 1978; Leech 1983). Following this approach, Aijmer (1996: 144) mentions indirect requests with *please* as instances of conventionalisation, and, in fact, dictionaries include its function as a request mitigator.

As noted in Section 3.2, grammaticalisation requires the existence of bridging and critical contexts (cf. Diewald 2002; Heine 2002; Traugott 2010). Let us observe now examples (170) and (171), repeated below as (239) and (240), from the same letter-writing manual in consecutive pages:

(239)   If have not insured, **please** omit the same till hear farther; (1756, *The complete letter-writer: or, new and polite English secretary*, p.6)

(240)   **Please to** send, per first Ship, 150 Chests best Seville, and 200 Pipes best Lisbon, white. (1756, *The complete letter-writer: or, new and polite English secretary*, p.7)

It is very likely that (239) represents a bridging or critical context, in which the form could be interpreted as a verb or as a pragmatic marker. The earliest instances of

please found in the eighteenth century correspond to similar contexts, which favour a later reinterpretation of *please* as a courtesy marker. Once the form in reanalysed, *please* can move from former ambiguous strings, as in (239), to new, non-ambiguous contexts, as in (241):

(241)   SUSIE For the future, during the period you are patients here, I am to be addressed as "Nurse Monican", and not as "Susie". Remember that, the pair of you, **please**. (**Drama**, O'Casey, Sean. 1928. *The Silver Tassie*)

The development proposed here matches Brinton's (2007a, 2008, 2010) description of some clausal pragmatic markers, namely those pragmatic markers which originate in a matrix clause, and more specifically, one showing a 'second-person imperative' (imperative matrix clause > indeterminate structure > parenthetical discourse marker), since it is likely that the most prominent sources are the imperative constructions *be pleased to* and *please to*. As already mentioned (cf. Section 3.2), imperatives are the origin of other pragmatic markers in English, such as in *look*, *see* and *listen*, all of them sensory verbs with attention-getter functions, which retain the original imperative nuance. Another example of a pragmatic marker originating in an imperative is *mind/mind you* (Brinton 2007a: 57) as in *We was still hard up, mind you* (1987, *OED*, s.v. *mind* v. 12b). Again, this form seems to keep also an attention-getter function on the hearer. As mentioned in Section 3.2, there are examples in the literature of pragmatic markers deriving from imperative verb constructions in other languages, such as Italian *guarda* (Waltereit 2002) or Spanish *oye/oiga* (Pons Bordería 1998) and *dale* (Company Company 2006a). Dostie (2004) identifies the same

pattern in French discourse markers *écoute*, *regarde*, *voyons*, *tiens* or *disons*, all of them originated in imperatives, and understood as instances of pragmaticalisation by this author (cf. Section 3.4).

Subjectification, a process commonly associated to grammaticalisation, is observed in the developments of *pray* and *please* as courtesy markers in requests. These pragmatic items help the speaker to mark the illocutionary force of the directive speech act, and to determine its intended illocutionary strength. However, the use of *please* and *pray* as pragmatic markers is closely related to the hearer, since these forms can only take place in the social exchange. *Please* as a request marker occurs when the speaker shows deference and respect towards the hearer, taking into account his willingness to perform the requested act. Thus, the courtesy marker illustrates both subjectification and intersubjectification, processes which are clearly present in both requestive and non-requestive uses of *please*. In the latter the speaker expresses his attitudes and feelings, and what he says affects the addressee's feelings and opinions as well (cf. example (249) below). In this way, when the illocutionary force is not related to politeness, *please* is an attitude marker. Ironic uses[90] may reflect a further step of grammaticalisation (and subjectification), since they are only found once the form is conventionalised as a request marker. This happens to *please* in the corpora analysed only in the twentieth century, whereas there are no instances of *pray* with such a pragmatic value, probably because it fell into disuse before reaching such a step in the grammaticalisation process, or maybe its semantic connotations did not facilitate this function (cf. Section 9.5).

---

[90] Note the irony in this instance extracted from the *OED*, which belongs to Rushdie's *Ground beneath her Feet* (1999): What, they should let the kids decide what they put on the air? *Please* (*OED* s.v. *please* adv. and int.).

As already noted (Chapter 3), the difference between pragmaticalisation and the grammaticalisation of pragmatic markers has to do mainly with how broadly the concept of grammar is interpreted by the scholar, but the characteristics identified in both processes remain roughly the same. Therefore, in a more restricted view of grammar, the label pragmaticalisation could be used to define the developments of *please* or *pray* as courtesy markers, although, in my opinion, such a distinction does not seem necessary to account for the peculiarities of these pragmatic items. The label 'discursisation,' used by Arnovick (1999) and Claridge and Arnovick (2010) could also be applied to *please* since it originates in *please to*, an expression that already conveyed an illocutionary function in requests, and we identify in its development subjectification, pragmatic strengthening and an increase in politeness (cf. Section 3.4). Another process which could also be applied to the courtesy markers *pray* and *please* is parentheticalisation, since both forms came to be used parenthetically, especially when they moved beyond pre-verbal positions.

Please and *pray* are not generally regarded as instances of lexicalisation, however we do find some exceptions. Geukens (1978) reviews the possibilities of the use of *please*, its position in the sentence and its primary function in requests. Appealing to the meaning of this courtesy marker, which can be paraphrased by *if you don't mind*, *if you like*, *if it pleases you* or *if you please* in interrogative requests, he proposes that "it is necessary to consider *please* as a lexicalization of a conditional sentence" (1978: 268). Another author who invokes the notion of lexicalisation is Norrick (1979), who refers to *sorry*, *pardon͵ thanks* or *please* as lexicalised formulae, all of them derived from longer structures. Norrick observes a relationship between semantics and pragmatics in those formulae, which keep their primary meaning

when used pragmatically. Thus, each of these forms is "lexicalised by speakers [...] in terms of its pragmatic function," in the case of *please* that of "being polite in the context of requests" (1979: 675-676). Brinton and Traugott (2005a: 136-140) reject the idea of phrasal and non-phrasal discourse markers, such as *I think*, *please* or *indeed*, as examples of lexicalisation, arguing in turn in favour of grammaticalisation, since, according to them, their developments clearly correspond to most of the changes usually co-occurring with this process, which is related to their wide concept of grammar.

Rather than lexicalisation (in Brinton and Traugott's 2005 sense), a process of conversion can be identified in some contexts in the courtesy marker *please*, since it is common to listen to expressions such as "pleases and thank-yous" when people are talking about politeness. We may find it already in the late nineteenth century, as in (242) below. The acquisition of plural marking reflects the entrance of these courtesy markers into the category of nouns, with the general meaning of 'polite expressions.' These nominalisations are only possible when these expressions are completely conventionalised, and have already undergone full grammaticalisation. In the data included in the present study, we also find an instance with *may* which seems a conventionalised polite formula, included in (243), although it is not very common in any of the Late Modern English corpora analysed, this instance may suggest a higher frequency in earlier periods. The *OED* includes a similar hyphenated example from a novel by Mark Twain, in (244), which is not attested in our data:

(242)   I think that here in England we deprive ourselves of pleasure by avoiding symbols and signs of feeling; even '**pleases**' and 'thank-yous,' and greetings and words of suitable civility and motions of endearment often seem much, (Lewis, Arthur W., 1899, *London Fairy Tales*, p. 89)

(243)   'And I do colour up so hot, walking into church late, and all the people staring round,' said Marian, 'that I hardly cool down again till we get into the **That-it-may-please-Thees**.' (*NCF*, **P3**, Hardy, T., *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Vol. II, Phase The Third, XXIII (p.22))

(244)   With never a by-your-leave or **so-please-it-you**, or anything of the sort. (1881, *OED*, s.v. *please* v. 3b)

## 9.5.   The shift from *pray* to *please*: Politeness implications

The main pragmatic function analysed in the present study, that is, the unmarked courtesy marker in requests, has undergone renewal twice in the history of English. First, *pray* replaced the native form *biddan* in expressions such as Old English *ic bidde*, and later *pray* was replaced by *please*. The fact that both loanwords of French origin came to convey this pragmatic function is undoubtedly related to the negative politeness of requests and to the associations of the French language with the expression of courtesy and manners, not only in the Middle English period (cf. Jucker 2011), when *pray* was introduced into English, but also in the eighteenth century. During the eighteenth century, there was an ample range of forms and structures used as conventionalised polite expressions in requests, and it was in this period when some speakers would have started to use the new form *please*.

Some of the examples adduced in the present study suggest a change from below, or at least they indicate that the use of *please* in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was perceived as a lower-class phenomenon. Nevertheless, the data collected for this study comprise similar examples of *pray* and the variety of structures including *please* during most of the Late Modern English period. They are a good indication that both *pray* and *please* were used interchangeably as courtesy markers in requests probably from the second half of the eighteenth century until well advanced the nineteenth century. Thus, *pray* was competing not only against the adverb *please*, but also against all the range of expressions with *please* as a verb. The different forms of *please* matching the same pragmatic function would have included *be pleased to* during the eighteenth century, and *please to* from the second half of the eighteenth century until probably the middle of the nineteenth century.[91] Evidence of this pragmatic synonymy is that several authors or characters use both markers in similar contexts, without any intended pragmatic difference. It seems as well that a distinction was already felt by the late nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth century, when speakers started to regard *pray* as an old-fashioned form. Figure 29 below represents the timelines of the main forms available in Late Modern English, based on data from the present study. Black areas indicate the periods when those forms were in normal use, whereas grey and thinner areas suggest both the emergence of the forms and their decay periods:

---

[91] As shown in several instances in our study (cf. example (96)), *if you please* is not always a perfect pragmatic synonym of the courtesy marker *please*.

Figure 29. Main request markers in Late Modern English
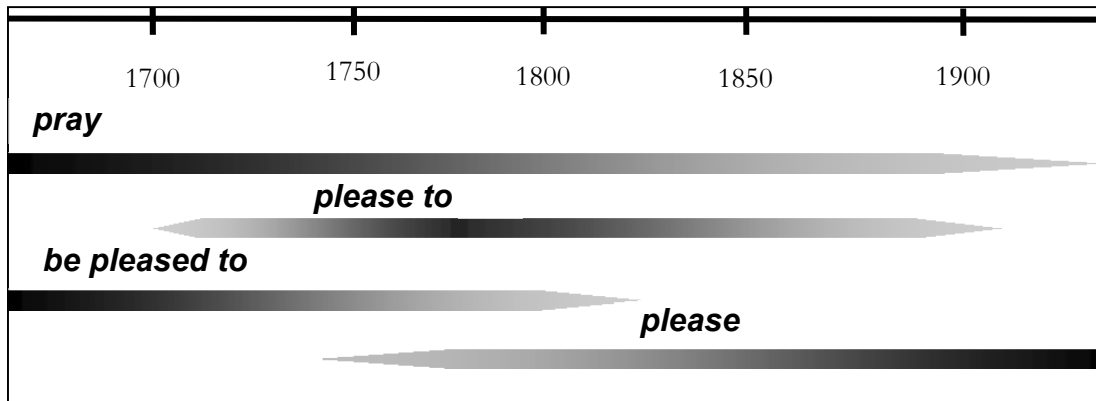
Although we may say that these forms were pragmatic synonyms, there might have been a stylistic nuance in each of them to be perceived as excessively polite at a given point in time. Progressively, *be pleased to* expressions would show a higher degree of negative politeness than the newer form *please to*, which would be eventually identified with a more marked politeness nuance than the proper courtesy marker *please*. At the same time, a similar progress would happen to *pray*, which would have been associated with older generations. At a given point in time, *be pleased to*, *please to* and *pray* forms would have worn down, probably due to their excessive negative politeness. The loss of illocutionary force of these forms is also noticed in examples in which they are placed next to each other, to reinforce the intended polite requests, we may find *pray* together with imperatives *be pleased to* or *please to*, or with any of these PROP forms in a sentence including *will* already in the eighteenth century (cf. examples (144) and (173)-(175)).

Even though the process of grammaticalisation of *please* involves pragmatic strengthening, *please* has lost some of the negative politeness burden which was originally carried out by the earlier formulae. This is observed in its plain use in the

most informal contexts nowadays and the preference to use it when the requested object does not entail a great imposition on the addressee (cf. Aijmer 1996; Wichmann 2004, 2005). The use of the form *please to* in business exchanges in Late Modern English epistolary language among equals seems to indicate a certain tendency of this courtesy marker to occur or not depending on the status or position of the speaker and hearer, one of the dimensions of variation in speech acts proposed by Searle (1979) (cf. Section 2.1.1).

9.5.1 Conventionalisation of *please* as a request marker

As shown in different politeness models (cf. Leech 1983; Brown and Levinson 1987), indirectness seems to be a major issue in politeness. Nevertheless, *please* seems to be more frequent in direct strategies, and especially with imperatives. In fact, this form would have emerged in contexts with a high degree of directness, which did not interfere to mark a tone of politeness adequate to each situation. Therefore, instead of indirectness, the addressee's willingness seems to be a major concern for the speaker to express politeness in the speech act of requests. This is not only expressed through the common presence of *will* in many structures, but it is also present in the meaning of the verb *please* as 'to have the will or desire,' which has been kept in the courtesy marker (cf. Hopper's 1991 principle of persistence). As seen in Section 4.3, in eighteenth-century letters indirectness was more frequent in support moves than in the head act expressing the request proper, where *please* strategies would be more likely to occur. In letters among equals, such as business letters, directness was the norm, and this would explain the high frequency of *please*

in those contexts in which politeness was necessary to appeal to the good will of the addressee (cf. Section 8.1).

If we are right that the primary source of the courtesy marker *please* is an imperative, this would be highly representative of the historical evolution of politeness in English. Since impositive strategies were the most common type of directive speech acts, *please* would have gone all the way from an impositive strategy to become the most representative word in English negative politeness, the default courtesy marker in requests. Nevertheless, the illocutionary force of the imperative is lost with the semantic-pragmatic value of *please*, which leaves options to the hearer.

As noted in Section 4.2.3, there is a tendency in eighteenth-century Britain towards a negative politeness culture. In this context, we may understand the data analysed in that period as a cultural reflection. We find that there is a need to reinforce politeness in the speech act of requests through an ample set of courtesy markers and expressions available to the speaker. Nevertheless, it is only in the nineteenth century, that the choice narrows down, and towards the end of this century we find a specialisation of *please* as the main request marker in polite requests. Probably its specialisation in speech acts in which the object requested did not represent a great imposition on the addressee and its consequent conventionalisation would match the social and cultural background described by Culpeper and Demmen (2011), who mention an increasing concern for the individual in the nineteenth century, a period when ability requests were also conventionalised. For these authors, this century represents perfectly Brown and Levinson's model of politeness.

Linguistic changes reflecting cultural aspects related to politeness, such as the loss of T-pronouns, had contributed to the democratisation of society. We could similarly consider that the adoption of a lower-class expression such as *please* is representative of the initial fading away of a stratified society. It is no longer the speaker who demands politely, but the hearer who is pleased to grant the request, something that will possibly be more likely among equals. The use of *please* as a courtesy marker in minor requests and its pragmatic use in other contexts in which it does not imply politeness, may probably be related to its spread in all ranks of society.

9.5.2 Functions of *please* outside requests

In addition to its main functions as a courtesy marker in requests, *please* can also be used as an impoliteness marker. Different authors have noticed some contexts in which it realises these functions (cf. Aijmer 1996; Wichmann 2004, 2005), which are also observed in the *OED*. "Impoliteness" is often conveyed through ironic uses of the courtesy marker (cf. Watts 2003, on the use of exaggerated politeness to convey irony). This does not seem to be the case with *pray*, at least the corpora analysed do not yield any example in which *pray* could be interpreted as an impoliteness marker. The impoliteness function of *please* developed later than its main politeness use, it is dated in the *OED* at the beginning of the twentieth century (1908) and coexists with the canonical politeness usage from then onwards. Similar impoliteness functions are also observed in the Spanish equivalent of *please*, *por favor* (cf. Landone 2009). Similarly, a related sarcastic use of *if you please* "express[es] surprise and indignation

at something unreasonable" from the beginning of the nineteenth century (*OED*, s.v. *please* 6c).

In the case of *pray* our data show two distinct pragmatic functions, namely as an attention getter[92] and as a courtesy marker, both of them in requests. In fact, it seems clear that the unmarked function of *pray*, as a pragmatic marker of politeness, took place in a request (or entreaty) and a different function, such as impoliteness or irony, if possible at all, would only be perceived through the intonation. This is shown in example (245) below, in which the author needs to clarify that the intonation marks "less of entreaty than of command" (underlined):

(245)   when his progress was arrested by a group occupying the whole breadth of the pavement, and he heard a female voice, which, though unusually musical, had in it <u>less of entreaty than of command</u>, say, "**Pray**, Sir, allow us to pass." (*NCF*, **P2** Brunton, M., *Self-Control*, Volume I, Chap. X. (p.150))

By contrast, we find a wider range of pragmatic functions conveyed by *please*, which go beyond the speech act of requests. *Please* as a pragmatic marker spread to different speech acts, such as advice, apologies and excuses, complaints, and interruptions. These speech acts are different from requests as regards politeness. Requests as speech acts mainly threaten the speaker's negative face, as happens with the speech act of advice, which may also threat the hearer's face. In complaints and interruptions, by contrast, it is both the speaker's negative and positive face that are

---

[92] Note that *please* does not seem to have adopted this use as a main function, but still can be found in some instances (cf. (124) and (125)).

at risk.[93] Excuses, in turn, may offend the speaker's negative face, while apologies may threaten his positive face (Brown and Levinson 1987: 65-68). These secondary pragmatic values could only develop once *please* had consolidated its position as the main polite request marker. The use of *please* in apologies is noted by Fraser (1981), and seems to be related to the request function, since an apology may be embedded in a request to accept the apology (*please accept my apology for...*), a request for forgiveness (*please excuse me for...*) or an offer for redress (*please let me pay for the damages*) (Fraser 1981: 263). Requests for forgiveness would fall within the speech act of excuses, but nevertheless they are related to requests proper, as in (246). The use of these structures seems to be highly conventionalised nowadays, and therefore the illocutionary force of excuses and apologies is considerably reduced in these sentences.

(246)   'Why ever are you sitting in your overcoat, Mr. Biffen?' were her first words when she entered. 'Please excuse me, Mrs. Reardon. It happens to be more convenient this evening.' (*NCF*, **P3**, Gissing, G., *New Grub Street*, Vol. I., Chapter X (p.270))

Apologies and excuses are classified as expressives, since they serve to communicate the speaker's psychological state when implicitly showing regret. Another pragmatic function of *please* expressing politeness is the acceptance of offers. Thus, we may

---

[93] According to Wichmann (2005: 248), "some examples of 'rudeness' cited in the literature derive from a mismatch between the implied nonoptionality and the perception of relative power among the participants."

find instances of *please* as a brief answer to accept an offer, as in (247), probably derived from uses such as the one included in (248):

(247)   {=m PAUL} Here you are, Mr. Linscott. Lulu? {=f LULU} **Please**. {=m PAUL} You've been looking a little startled, Mrs. Linscott every time I call her by her first name. I should have told you it was by request. (*ARCHER*, 1954park.d8a)

(248)   ['The line is busy, Sir,'] chanted the operator. ['Will I keep the call in?'] ['Yes, **please**,'] said Bond, relieved that the hunchback was still in his office and that now he would be able to say truthfully that he had tried to get through earlier. (*ARCHER*, 1956flem.f8b)

In some contexts, like (248), in which *Yes, please* is used to accept an offer, the discourse structure is conventionalised in such a way that the offer constitutes always the first member of an adjacency pair, and the positive polite answer with *please* is always the second member. Wichmann (2005: 239-240) observes that in "elliptical responses with *please*," as in (247), the intonation is essential to grant the intended meaning.[94]

   In the speech acts of complaints and interruptions *please* conveys a different pragmatic function since its use is not linked to politeness. Its presence to mark interruptions and complaints, such as in (249), was probably originated in contexts such as in (250):

---

[94] Wichmann (2005) explores how different intonations for isolated *please* in British English serve to express speaker's attitude.

417

(249)   BEHR-BLEIBTREAU: [I prefer to use the word determination. It's] JACK

PATTERSON: [Oh, **please**.] DICK: [Jack, let the man finish his sentence, will

you? (*ARCHER*, 1970elki.f8a)

(250)   {=f MADGIE:} I'm MAD about her already! {=m YOUNG MAN:} Mad

about her! I'm crazy about her! {=f ROSE} Oh **please**, please don't... . {=m

PORPHORY:} What? {=f ROSE:} Mock her! (*ARCHER*, 1944bagn.d7b)

As we have already pointed out (cf. Section 2.1 and 4.2), there are several

differences regarding the speech acts in which *please* participates. Using Searle's

(1979) first dimensions of variation in speech acts, we may be able to understand

some of the differences between requests and complaints. First of all, they belong to

two different general categories, in fact requests and orders are examples of

directives, whereas, complaints are grouped either as assertives or representatives

(cf. Searle 1979: 12-13) or as expressives (cf. Trosborg 1994: 311; Searle and

Vanderbeken 1985: 191). As regards their illocutionary points (or essential

conditions), complaints, as assertives, express the speaker's commitment to what he

regards as the truth, and, as expressives, state his feelings, whereas requests express

the speaker's commitment to a future action. Complaints show a direction of fit

words-to-world, and therefore describe how the speaker perceives reality, and

requests, being world-to-words, start a change through words. The psychological

state expressed in each of them is different and is identified with the sincerity

conditions of the speech act. This is probably the most relevant dimension in order

to distinguish the functions of *please*. In requests, the speaker expresses his desire

that the hearer does something, whereas in complaints he generally expresses belief

(as an assertive), but also annoyance or disapproval. In those cases in which Present-day English *please* is used to mean 'displeasure,' intonation is crucial to emphasise this pragmatic value (cf. Wichmann 2004). The dividing line between these two speech acts may be fuzzy sometimes, as happens in complaints about the temperature in a room, which may be meant to be understood as requests (and more specifically as hints) for someone to open/close a window.

The use of *please* has also been noted in imperative constructions within the speech act of advice (Campo Martínez 2012). According to Campo Martínez (2012: 121-122), since the hearer may perceive a certain degree of imposition in advising, the speaker needs mitigation in order to show that he wants a benefit for the addressee. *Please* is a good means to reduce imposition in advice since it is its main function in requests. Thus, prototypical instances of persuasion and advising include patterns such as *please think about...* (2012: 123-124).

The range of pragmatic functions reflects a higher degree of grammaticalisation of *please* as compared to *pray*, probably due to the early fall in disuse of the latter. Precisely because of this reason, *pray* could convey other stylistic functions. The usage of some markers and constructions, such as *prithee* in the entire Late Modern English period, and *pray* by the end of the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, when their frequencies in use had already started to decay, could be intentionally meant to be felt as archaic by the addressee. This was clearly the case of *prithee* in Ernest Dowson's letters from the late nineteenth century, which include *prithee* as a courtesy marker in requests when it had already been in disuse for a long time (cf. Section 8.2).

10. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present piece of research has been devoted to the study of requests in the Late Modern English period, with special emphasis on courtesy markers, the replacement of *pray* by *please*, and the origin and development of the latter. The research methodology carried out here can be classified within the field of historical pragmatics as a form-to-function approach.

Chapter 1 introduces the aims and scope of this study, together with the methodology and the corpora selected. Thus, this piece of research is at the cross-roads of pragmatics, corpus linguistics, historical linguistics and grammaticalisation studies. It also introduces the material on which the study is based, featuring those text-types where request markers are more likely to appear: mainly letters, novels and drama.

Chapter 2 deals with Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory, which provide useful categorisations for the description of requests and courtesy markers. This chapter also includes a characterisation of pragmatic markers, terminological issues associated with them, and argues for the inclusion of *pray* and *please* within this category.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the theoretical framework of grammaticalisation studies and related processes of linguistic change, and details how these models are useful to account for the development of pragmatic markers in general, and for the development of courtesy markers *pray* and *please* in particular.

A descriptive account of requests in the literature is included in Chapter 4. This chapter proposes a function-to-form approach to the speech act of requests in Late Modern English. First, it includes a summary of different studies dealing with this speech act in English from a diachronic perspective. Then, it offers an approach as to how requests were understood in the eighteenth century based on evidence drawn from the *ECCO* databases.

Chapter 5 reviews the treatment of *pray* and *please* in the literature, including Present-day English and Late Modern English accounts in dictionaries, grammars and other reference works. Different hypotheses for the origin of *please* and for the substitution of the markers are also included, as well as reasons for the replacement of *pray* by *please* as proposed by several authors.

Chapter 6 examines the different constructions in which the verb *please* appears in the different corpora analysed, detailing its syntactic behaviour and the range of syntactic patterns identified for each construction.

Chapter 7 is devoted to the data analysis. A preliminary study of the multi-genre corpus *ARCHER* justifies the selection of single-genre corpora illustrating the text-types letters, drama and fiction for further analysis. In these corpora all the syntactic patterns identified in Chapter 6 are studied in detail. The chapter also provides the data for *pray* in the different corpora, comparing it to *please*.

Chapter 8 includes two special studies on *please* and *pray* in the epistolary genre: one based on eighteenth-century letter-writing manuals, which explores whether or not these manuals had an impact in the establishment of *please* as the default courtesy marker in requests; the second one is a sociolinguistic analysis

which explores variation in the use of these courtesy markers in requests in the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Chapter 9 offers an insight into some of the figures shown in Chapter 7, paying special attention to the constructions which may have been the origin of the modern courtesy marker *please*. Thus, parenthetical structures with the verb *please* and imperatives are re-examined and some other factors which may have been influential in the emergence of the courtesy marker *please* are taken into consideration. The processes of change of *pray* and *please* are analysed under the umbrellas of grammaticalisation studies and politeness theoretical frameworks.

Here follow the main findings that emerge from the study of the corpora:

1. The pragmatic features analysed are only found in text-types in which some sort of interaction is present. Among the nine genres included in *ARCHER*, only drama, letters, and fiction show these courtesy markers in requests.

2. The emergence of the courtesy marker *please* and its consolidation in the English language took place essentially within the nineteenth century. Its emergence can probably be dated in the second half of the eighteenth century, although it only started to gain some frequency at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The form consolidates in roughly one century, as it appears to be fixed in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

3. Other parenthetical courtesy markers containing the verb *please* (e.g. *if you please* or *if it please you*) tend to fixation, especially as regards the Experiencer, which is usually restricted to second person pronouns or, in the case of noun phrases, to honorific titles (*your honour*, *your majesty*, etc.). Therefore, *if you please* and other complex courtesy markers with the verb *please* acquired a

formulaic status probably in the eighteenth century. The fixation of these constructions, above all conditional structures, together with the fixation of their Experiencer and verb (i.e. *please*, not *pleases*, *pleased*, etc.), runs parallel to the establishment of the courtesy marker *please* itself and may have played a role in its emergence and evolution.

4. Imperative constructions in which *please* is followed by a bare or a *to-*infinitive have probably played a major role in the evolution of *please*. *Be pleased to* and *please to* coexisted with bare *please*. Some contemporary sources suggest the relationship between *please to* and pre-verbal *please*. Thus, a clear preference for the former in eighteenth-century standard language would turn into its consideration as an old-fashioned form by the end of nineteenth century. The construction would have followed this evolution: *be pleased to* (imperative) > *please to* (imperative) > *please* (verb) + bare infinitive > *please* (courtesy marker) + imperative.

5. As regards position, the earliest examples of the courtesy marker *please* in the nineteenth century are found in initial position, that is, the typical position for imperatives, while final position was a later development. This supports the developmental path depicted in (4) above, while seems to discount parenthetical conditional constructions, more mobile within the sentence, as the primary source for *please*.

6. Coexistence of *please* and *pray* is attested in different sources from the second half of the eighteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century. The data show that these forms were perfect pragmatic synonyms, although variation suggests: (i) the association of *please* to lower-class speech until

probably the first half of the nineteenth-century; and (ii) the general adoption of the innovative marker *please*, and the consequent archaism associated to *pray*, already in the second half of the nineteenth century.

7. The decline in the use of *pray* makes *please* into the unmarked courtesy marker in requests. Moreover, *pray* was commonly used in initial position followed by a bare verb form (i.e. *Pray come*), exactly the same pattern that *please* adopts after the deletion of the particle *to* (e.g. *Please to come > Please come*). It is therefore likely that *pray* had a certain influence on that pattern, especially on the pre-verbal position and the deletion of *to*.

8. Evidence from fiction and from letter-writing manuals suggests that *please* probably started to be used by lower classes in the mid-eighteenth century, and that the phenomenon was initiated in the north of England or in Scotland, then spreading southwards. The adoption of the new form by the upper classes, and especially by the younger generations throughout the nineteenth century would have determined its establishment as the default courtesy marker in requests. By the end of that century other courtesy markers with the verb *please* (*if you please* and the like) and the courtesy marker *pray* had already acquired an old-fashioned tone.

9. The courtesy marker *please* shows a higher degree of grammaticalisation than the one observed in the courtesy marker *pray*. Both markers seem to show patterns already attested in other grammaticalised pragmatic markers. The degree of grammaticalisation shown by *please* enabled this form to spread to other speech acts, and to convey not only politeness functions (apologies and excuses) but also to indicate impoliteness (complaints and interruptions).

The present study opens up a number of possibilities for further research. Here follow some questions that could be approached:

- The present study could be made extensive to other courtesy markers in the English language in order to examine their emergence and development. A comparison between negative and positive politeness markers or forms of native and foreign origin could yield revealing information on the politeness tendencies of different periods. It would be appealing to study when these processes took place and how similar or how different they are from those of *pray* and *please*.

- It would be interesting to compare the data gathered here against other dialogical corpora, such as court-room proceedings or debates, which can contain higher frequencies of courtesy markers, and, therefore, provide more precise information on the steps followed by *pray* and *please* during the Late Modern English period.

- Research could also focus on courtesy markers in other languages, since some forms that fulfil the same pragmatic function in different languages are cognates. The dates of emergence of courtesy markers in requests and the sources of form fulfilling this function could also suggest politeness tendencies in other languages.

REFERENCES

Aijmer, Karin. 1996. *Conversational Routines in English: Convention and Creativity.* London: Pearson Education (Longman).

Aijmer, Karin, 1997. "*I think* – an English modal particle." In Toril Swan and Olaf Jansen Westvik (eds.). *Modality in Germanic Languages: Historical and Comparative Perspectives.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 1-47.

Aijmer, Karin. 2002. *English Discourse Particles.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Aijmer, Karin and Anne-Marie Simon-Vandenbergen (eds.). 2006. *Pragmatic Markers in Contrast.* Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Aijmer, Karin and Anne-Marie Simon-Vandenbergen. 2011. "Pragmatic markers." In Jan Zienkowski, Jan-Ola Östman and Jef Verschueren (eds.). *Discursive Pragmatics.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company: 223-247.

Akimoto, Minoji. 2000. "The grammaticalization of the verb 'pray'." In Olga Fischer, Anette Rosenbach and Dieter Stein (eds.). *Pathways of Change. Grammaticalization in English.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company: 67-84.

Alcón Soler, Eva, Pilar Safont Jordá and Alicia Martínez-Flor. 2005. "Towards a typology of modifiers for the speech act of requesting: A socio-pragmatic approach." *RAEL: Revista Electrónica de Lingüística Aplicada* 4: 1-35.

Allen, Cynthia L. 1995a. "On doing as you please." In Andreas H. Jucker (ed.). *Historical Pragmatics.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 275-308.

Allen, Cynthia. L. 1995b. *Case Marking and Reanalysis. Grammatical Relations from Old to Early Modern English.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Alturo, Núria and Marianna Chodorowska-Pilch. 2009. "La gramaticalització de "sisplau"." *Els Marges* 88: 15-38.

Andersen, Gisle. 2001. *Pragmatic Markers and Sociolinguistic Variation: A Relevance-theoretic Approach to the Language of Adolescents.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Andersen, Gisle and Thorstein Fretheim (eds.). 2000. *Pragmatic Markers and Propositional Attitude*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

AND= Anglo-Norman Dictionary. 1977-1992. Stone, Louise W. and William Rothwell. London: Modern Humanities Research Association in conjunction with the Anglo-Norman Text Society.

Anon. 1756. *The Complete Letter-Writer: Or, New and Polite English Secretary*. 2nd edition. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Anon. 1765?. *The British Letter-Writer: Or Letter-Writer's Complete Instructor*. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Archer, Dawn. 2010. "Speech acts." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 379-417.

Arnovick, Leslie. 1999. *Diachronic Pragmatics: Seven Case Studies in English Illocutionary Development*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Austin, John Langshaw. 1975 [1962]. *How to Do Things with Words*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Axelsson, Karin. 2009. "Research on fiction dialogue: Problems and possible solutions." In Andreas H. Jucker, Daniel Schreier, Marianne Hundt (eds.). *Corpora: Pragmatics and Discourse: Papers from the 29th International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora (ICAME 29), Ascona, Switzerland, 14-18 May 2008*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi. 189-201.

Bailey, Nathan. 1730. *Dictionarium Britannicum*. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Ballesteros Martín, Francisco José 2002. "Mecanismos de atenuación en español e inglés: Implicaciones pragmáticas en la cortesía." *Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación* 11: 1-21.

REFERENCES

Barron, Anne. 2003. *Acquisition in Interlanguage Pragmatics: Learning how to do Things with Words in a Study Abroad Context*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Bauer, Laurie. 1983. *English Word-Formation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baugh, Albert C. 1967. *A Literary History of England*. London and Henley: Routledge and Keagan Paul.

Bayly, Anselm. 1772. *A Plain and Complete Grammar of the English Language*. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Beal, Joan. 2004. *English in Modern Times: 1700-1945*. London: Hodder Arnold Publication.

Becker, Marvin B. 1994. *The Emergence of Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century: A Privileged Moment in the History of England, Scotland, and France*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Beeching, Kate. 2002. *Gender, Politeness and Pragmatic Particles in French*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Beeching, Kate. 2006. "Synchronic and diachronic variation: The how and why of sociolinguistic corpora." In Andrew Wilson, Dawn Archer and Paul Rayson (eds.). *Corpus Linguistics around the World*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi. 49-61.

Beeching, Kate. 2010. "Semantic change: Evidence from false friends." *Languages in Contrast* 10 (2): 139–165.

Benveniste, Emile. 1971. "Subjectivity in language" In *Problems in General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek. Reprint. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press. 223-230.

Biber, Douglas. 1988. *Variation across Speech and Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, Douglas, Ulla Connor and Thomas A. Upton. 2007. *Discourse on the Move: Using Corpus Analysis to describe Discourse Structure*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Biber, Douglas and Edward Finegan. 1997. "Diachronic relations among speech-based and written registers in English." In Terttu Nevalainen and Leena Kahlas-Tarkka (eds.). *To Explain the Present: Studies in the Changing English Language in Honour of Matti Rissanen.* Helsinki: Société Néophilologique. 253-275.

Biber, Douglas, Edward Finegan and Dwight Atkinson. 1994. "ARCHER and its challenges: Compiling and exploring a representative corpus of historical English registers." In Udo Fries, Gunnel Tottie and Peter Schneider (eds.). *Creating and Using English Language Corpora: Papers from the Fourteenth International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora, Zürich 1993.* Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi. 1-14.

Biber, Douglas, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey Leech, Susan Conrad and Edward Finegan. 1999. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English.* London: Longman.

Blakemore, Diane. 2002. *Relevance and Linguistic Meaning: The Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse Markers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blas Arroyo, José Luis. 2011. "From politeness to discourse marking: The process of pragmaticalization of *muy bien* in vernacular Spanish." *Journal of Pragmatics* 43: 855-874.

Bloomfield, Leonard. 1984. *Language.* Reprint. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. 1985. "Modifiers as indicating devices: The case of requests." *Theoretical Linguistics* 12 (2/3): 213-229.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. 1987. "Indirectness and politeness in requests: Same or different?" *Journal of Pragmatics* 11: 131-146.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana, Julianne House and Gabrielle Kasper (eds.). 1989. *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies.* Norwood: N.J. Ablex.

Bolinger, Dwight. 1972. *Degree Words.* The Hague and Paris: Mouton de Gruyter.

Bravo, Diana. 1999. "¿Imagen 'positiva' vs. imagen 'negativa'? Pragmática socio-cultural y componentes de *face.*" *ORALIA* 1: 155-184.

REFERENCES

Bravo, Diana. 2004. "Tensión entre universalidad y relatividad en las teorías de la cortesía." In Diana Bravo and Emilio Antonio Briz Gómez (eds.). *Pragmática sociocultural: Estudios sobre el discurso de cortesía en español.* Barcelona: Ariel. 15-38.

Brightland, John. 1711. *A Grammar of the English Tongue.* 2nd edition. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online.* Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Brinton, Laurel. 1996. *Pragmatic Markers in English: Grammaticalization and Discourse Functions.* Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Brinton, Laurel. 2001a. "From matrix clause to pragmatic marker: The history of *look*-forms." *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 2 (2): 177-199.

Brinton, Laurel. 2001b. "Historical discourse analysis." In Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen and Heidi E. Hamilton (eds.). *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis.* Oxford: Blackwell. 138-60.

Brinton, Laurel. 2002. "Grammaticalization versus lexicalization reconsidered: On the 'late' use of temporal adverbs." In Teresa Fanego *et al.* (eds.) *English Historical Syntax and Morphology: Selected Papers from 11 ICEHL.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 67-97.

Brinton, Laurel. 2005. "Processes underlying the development of pragmatic markers: The case of *(I) say.*" In Skaffari, Janne, Matti Peikola, Ruth Carroll, Risto Hiltunen and Brita Wårvik (eds.). *Opening Windows on Texts and Discourses of the Past.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 279-299.

Brinton, Laurel. 2006. "Pathways in the development of pragmatic markers in English." In Ans van Kemenade and Bettelou Los (eds.). *The Handbook of the History of English.* London: Blackwell. 307-334.

Brinton, Laurel. 2007a. "*What's more*: The development of pragmatic markers in the modern period." In Javier Pérez-Guerra *et al.* (eds.). *'Of Varying Language and Opposing Creed': New Insights into Late Modern English.* Bern, etc.: Peter Lang. 47-75.

Brinton, Laurel. 2007b. "The development of *I mean*: Implications for the study of historical pragmatics". In Susan Fitzmaurice and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.).

Methods in Historical Pragmatics. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 37-79.

Brinton, Laurel. 2008. *The Comment Clause in English: Syntactic Origins and Pragmatic Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brinton, Laurel. 2010. "Discourse markers." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 285-314.

Brinton, Laurel and Minoji Akimoto. 1999. *Collocational and Idiomatic Aspects of Composite Predicates in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Brinton, Laurel and Elizabeth Closs Traugott. 2005a. *Lexicalization and Language Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brinton, Laurel and Elizabeth Closs Traugott. 2005b. "Lexicalization and grammaticalization all over again." In Joe Salmons, Joseph C. Salmons, Shannon Dubenion-Smith (eds.). *Historical Linguistics 2005: Selected Papers from the 17th International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Madison, Wisconsin, 31 July-5 August 2005*. 3-19.

Brown, Penelope and Stephen C. Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, Roger and Albert Gilman. 1989. "Politeness theory and Shakespeare's four major tragedies." *Language in Society* 18: 159-212.

Busse, Ulrich. 1999. "'Prithee now, say you will, and go about it.' *Prithee* vs. *pray you* as discourse markers in the Shakespeare corpus". In Fritz-Wilhelm Neumann and Sabine Schilling (eds.). *Anglistentag 1998, Erfurt: Proceedings*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. 485-500.

Busse, Ulrich. 2002. *Linguistic Variation in the Shakespeare Corpus. Morpho-syntactic Variability of Second Person Pronouns*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Bybee, Joan. 2003. "Mechanisms of change in grammaticalization: The role of frequency." In Brian D. Joseph and Richard D. Janda (eds.). *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell. 602-623.

REFERENCES

Cambridge International Dictionary of English. Paul Procter (editor-in-chief). 1995. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Campbell, Lyle. 1998. *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Campbell, Lyle and Richard Janda. 2001. "Introduction: Conceptions of grammaticalization and their problems." *Language Sciences* 23: 93-112.

Campo Martínez, Laura del. 2012. "A constructional account of advising: Construal operations and social conventions." *ATLANTIS Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies* 34 (1): 115-132.

CEDAL = Collins *English Dictionary for Advanced Learners.* Sinclair, John. (ed.). 2001. 3rd edition. Glasgow: HarperCollins.

Celle, Agnes and Ruth Huart. 2007. "Connectives as discourse landmarks: Introduction" In Agnes Celle and Ruth Huart (eds.). *Connectives as Discourse Landmarks.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 1-11.

Chafe, Wallace. 1998. "How a historical linguist and a native speaker understand a complex morphology." In Monika S. Schmid, Jennifer R. Austin, Dieter Stein (eds.). *Historical Linguistics: Selected Papers from the 13th International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Dusseldorf, 10-17 August 1997.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 101-116.

Chafe, Wallace. 2002. "Putting grammaticalization in its place." In Ilse Wischer and Gabriele Diewald (eds.). *New Reflections on Grammaticalization: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Grammaticalization, 17-19 June 1999, at Potsdam University, Germany.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 395-412.

Chen, Guohua. 1998. "The degrammaticalization of addressee-satisfaction conditionals in Early Modern English." In Jacek Fisiak and Marcin Krygier (eds.). *Advances in English Historical Linguistics.* Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 23-32.

Claridge, Claudia. 2000. *Multi-Word Verbs in Early Modern English: A Corpus-Based Study.* Amsterdam: Rodopi.

433

Claridge, Claudia and Leslie Arnovick. 2010. "Pragmaticalisation and Discursisation." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 165-192.

Company Company, Concepción. 2004. "¿Gramaticalización o desgramaticalización? El reanálisis y subjetivación de verbos como marcadores discursivos en la historia del español." *Revista de Filología Española* 84 (1): 29-66.

Company Company, Concepción. 2006a. "Zero in syntax, ten in pragmatics: Subjectification as syntactic cancellation." In Angeliki Athanasiadou, Costas Canakis and Bert Cornillie (eds.). *Subjectification: Various Paths to Subjectivity*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 375-398.

Company Company, Concepción. 2006b. "Subjectification of verbs into discourse markers: Semantic-pragmatic change only?" *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 20: 97-121.

Company Company, Concepción. 2008. "The directionality of grammaticalization in Spanish." *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 9 (2): 200-224.

Coote, Charles. 1788. *Elements of the Grammar of the English Language*. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Corbet, John, of Shrewsbury. 1784. *Concise System of English Grammar*. Shrewsbury. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Coulmas, Florian. 1981. "Introduction: Conversational routine." In Florian Coulmas (ed.). *Conversational Routine: Explorations in Standardized Communication Situations and Prepatterned Speech*. Mouton de Gruyter: The Hague. 1-17.

Cruttenden, Alan. 1994. *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*. 5th edition. London and New York: Arnold.

Culpeper, Jonathan. 2005. *History of English*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Culpeper, Jonathan. 2011. *Impoliteness: Using Language to Cause Offence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Culpeper, Jonathan and Dawn Archer. 2008. "Requests and directness in Early Modern English trial proceedings and play-texts, 1640-1760." In Andreas H.

Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 45-84.

Culpeper, Jonathan and Jane Demmen. 2011. "Nineteenth-century English politeness: Negative politeness, conventional indirect requests and the rise of the individual self." *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 12 (1/2): 49-81.

Culpeper, Jonathan and Merja Kytö. 1999. "Modifying pragmatic force hedges in Early Modern English dialogues." In Andreas H. Jucker, Franz Lebsanft and Gerd Fritz (eds.). *Historical Dialogue Analysis*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 293-312.

De Smet, Hendrik. 2005. "A corpus of Late Modern English." *ICAME Journal* 29: 69-82.

De Smet, Hendrik and Jean-Christophe Verstraete. 2006. "Coming to terms with subjectivity." *Cognitive Linguistics* 17 (3): 365-392.

Degand, Liesbeth and Anne-Marie Simon-Vanderbergen. 2011. "Introduction: Grammaticalization and (inter)subjectification of discourse markers." *Linguistics* 49 (2): 287-294.

Del Lungo Camiciotti, Gabriella. 2008. "Two polite speech acts from a diachronic perspective: Aspects of the realisation of requesting and undertaking commitments in the nineteenth-century commercial community." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 115-131.

Dehé, Nicole. 2007. "The relation between syntactic and prosodic parenthesis." In Nicole Dehé and Yordanka Kavalova (eds.). *Parentheticals*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 261-284.

Dehé, Nicole and Yordanka Kavalova. 2007. "Parentheticals: An introduction." In Nicole Dehé and Yordanka Kavalova (eds.). *Parentheticals*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 1-22.

Denison, David. 1994. "A corpus of late Modern English prose." In Merja Kytö, Matti Rissanen and Susan Wright (eds.). *Corpora Across the Centuries*. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi. 7-16.

Denison, David. 1998. "Syntax." In Suzanne Romaine (ed.). *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume IV: 1776-present.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 92-329.

Diewald, Gabriele. 2002. "A model for relevant types of contexts in grammaticalization." In Ilse Wischer and Gabriele Diewald (eds.). *New Reflections on Grammaticalization.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 103-120.

Diewald, Gabriele. 2006. "Discourse and modal particles as grammatical elements." In Kerstin Fischer (ed.). *Approaches to Discourse Particles.* Oxford: Elsevier. 403-425.

Diewald, Gabriele. 2010. "On some problem areas in grammaticalization studies." In Ekaterini Stathi, Elke Gehweiler and Ekkehard König (eds.). *Grammaticalization: Current Views and Issues.* 17-50.

Diewald, Gabriele. 2011. "Pragmaticalization (defined) as grammaticalization of discourse functions." *Linguistics* 49 (2): 365-390.

Dossena, Marina and Charles Jones. 2003. "Introduction." In Marina Dossena and Charles Jones (eds.). *Insights into Late Modern English.* Bern, etc.: Peter Lang. 7-17.

Dostie, Gaétane. 2004. *Pragmaticalisation et Marqueurs Discursifs: Analyse Sémantique et Traitement Lexicographique.* Brussels: De Boeck and Duculot.

DRAE = Real Academia Española. *Diccionario de la Lengua Española.* On-line edition. <http://www.rae.es/rae.html>.

Ehlich, Konrad. 2005. "On the historicity of politeness." In Richard Watts, Sachiko Ide and Konrad Ehlich (eds.). *Politeness in Language.* Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 71-107.

Elmer, Willy. 1981. *Diachronic Grammar: The History of Old and Middle English Subjectless Constructions.* Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Erman, Britt and Ulla-Britt Kotsinas. 1993. "Pragmaticalization: The case of *ba'* and *you know.*" *Studier i modern språkvetenskap* 10: 76-93.

Ervin-Trip, Susan. 1976. "Is Sybil there? The structure of some American English directives." *Language in Society* 5 (1): 25-66.

REFERENCES

Faarlund, Jan Terje. 1985. "Pragmatics in diachronic syntax." *Studies in Language* 9 (3): 363-393.

Faya Cerqueiro, Fátima. 2007. "The courtesy markers *pray* and *please* in the late 18th century: Evidence from the Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose." In María Losada Friend, Pilar Ron Vaz, Sonia Hernández Santano and Jorge Casanova (eds.). *Proceedings of the 30th International AEDEAN Conference.* Huelva: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Huelva.

Faya Cerqueiro, Fátima. 2009. "*Please* in nineteenth-century English: Origin and position of a courtesy marker." In Carlos Prado-Alonso *et al.* (eds.). *New Trends and Methodologies in Applied English Language Research. Diachronic, Diatopic and Contrastive Studies.* Bern, etc.: Peter Lang. 25-36.

Faya Cerqueiro, Fátima. 2011. "Letter-writing manuals and the evolution of request markers in the eighteenth century." *Revista de Lenguas para Fines Específicos* 17: 295-318.

Faya Cerqueiro, Fátima and Marcos García Salido. 2010. "Estudio diacrónico y contrastivo de dos marcadores pragmáticos: *Please* y *por favor*." In Pablo Cano López, Soraya Cortiñas Ansoar, Beatriz Dieste Quiroga, Isabel Fernández López and Luz Zas Varela (eds.). *Actas del XXXIX Simposio Internacional de la Sociedad Española de Lingüística (SEL), 1-4 Febrero, 2010.* Santiago de Compostela: Servizo de Publicacións da Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.

Faya Cerqueiro, Fátima and Zaida Vila Carneiro. Forthcoming. "Análisis pragmático del marcador *hola* en el teatro de Calderón de la Barca." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*.

Finegan, Edward. 1995. "Subjectivity and subjectivisation: An introduction." In Dieter stein and Susan Wright (eds.). *Subjectivity and Subjectivisation: Linguistic Perspectives.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1-15.

Fischer, Kerstin (ed.). 2006. *Approaches to Discourse Particles.* Oxford: Elsevier.

Fischer, Olga. 2007. *Morphosyntactic Change: Functional and Formal Perspectives.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fitzmaurice, Susan M. 1998. "The commerce of language in the pursuit of politeness in eighteenth-century England." *English Studies* 79 (4): 309-328.

Fitzmaurice, Susan M. 2000. "Like talking on paper? The pragmatics of courtship and the eighteenth-century familiar letter." *Language Sciences* 22: 359-383.

Fitzmaurice, Susan M. 2002. *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English: A Pragmatic Approach*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Fitzmaurice, Susan M. 2004. "Subjectivity, intersubjectivity and the historical construction of interlocutor stance: From stance markers to discourse markers." *Discourse Studies* 6 (4): 427-448.

Fitzmaurice, Susan M. 2010. "Literary discourse." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 679-704.

Fitzmaurice, Susan M. and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). 2007. *Methods in Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Fogg, Peter Walkden. 1792-1796. *Elementa Anglicana*. Stockport. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Fordyce, David. 1790?. *The New and Complete British Letter-Writer*. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Frank-Job, Barbara. 2006. "A dynamic-interactional approach to discourse markers." In Kerstin Fischer (ed.). *Approaches to Discourse Particles*. Oxford: Elsevier. 359-374.

Fraser, Bruce. 1981. "On apologizing." In Florian Coulmas (ed.). *Conversational Routine: Explorations in Standardized Communication Situations and Prepatterned Speech*. The Hague: Mouton de Gruyter. 259-271.

Fraser, Bruce. 1990. "An approach to discourse markers". *Journal of Pragmatics* 14: 383-395.

Fraser, Bruce. 1996. "Pragmatic markers." *Pragmatics* 6: 167-190.

Fraser, Bruce. 1999. "What are discourse markers?" *Journal of Pragmatics* 31: 931-952.

Fraser, Bruce. 2006. "Towards a theory of discourse markers." In Kerstin Fischer (ed.). *Approaches to Discourse Particles*. Oxford: Elsevier. 189-204.

REFERENCES

Gass, Susan M. and Joyce Neu (eds.). 1995. *Speech Acts across Cultures: Challenges to Communication in a Second Language*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Geukens, Steven K.J. 1978. "The distinction between direct and indirect speech acts: Towards a surface appraoch." *Journal of Pragmatics* 2: 261-276.

Givón, Talmy. 1971. "Historical syntax and synchronic morphology: An archaeologist's field trip." *Chicago Linguistic Society* 7 (1): 394-415.

Goffman, Erving. 1967. *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-face Behavior*. New York: Doubleday Anchor.

Gold, David L. 1986. "Imperative *Please to*." *American Speech* 61 (4): 377-378.

Gold, David L. 2006. "A little-noticed English construction: Subjectless imperative *please to* + infinitive." *Neophilologus* 90: 107-117.

Gordon, David and George Lakoff. 1971. "Conversational postulates." In *Papers from the Seventh Regional Meeting. Chicago Linguistic Society. April 16-18, 1971*. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society. 63-84.

Görlach, Manfred. 1999. *Nineteenth-Century England: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Görlach, Manfred. 2001. *Eighteenth-Century English*. Heidelberg: Winter.

Grice, Herbert Paul. 1961. "The causal theory of perception." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society (Supplementary volume)* 35: 121-153.

Grice, Herbert Paul. 1996 [1975]. "Logic and conversation." In Heimir Geirsson and Michael Losonsky (eds.). *Readings in Language and Mind*. Reprint. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell. 121-133.

Grzega, Joachim. 2008. "*Hāl, Hail, Hello, Hi*: Greetings in English language history." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 165-193.

Günthner, Susanne and Katrin Mutz. 2004. "Grammaticalization vs. pragmaticalization? The development of pragmatic markers in German and Italian." In Walter Bisang, Nikolaus Himmelmann, Björn Wiemer (eds.). *What Makes Grammaticalization?: A Look from Its Fringes and Its Components*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 77-108.

Haiman, John. 1991. "Motivation, repetition, and emancipation: The bureaucratization of language." In H. Christoph Wolfart (ed.). *Linguistic Studies Presented to John L. Finlay: Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics*. Memoir 8. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba. 45-69.

Haiman, John. 1994. "Ritualization and the development of language." In William Pagliuca (ed.). *Perspectives on Grammaticalization*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 3-28.

Haiman, John. 1998. *Talk is Cheap: Sarcasm, Alienation, and the Evolution of Language*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Halliday, Michael A.K. and Ruqaiya Hasan. 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.

Harris, James. 1751. *Hermes: Or, a Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Language and Universal Grammar*. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Heine, Bernd. 2002. "On the role of context in grammaticalization." In Ilse Wischer and Gabriele Diewald (eds.). *New Reflections on Grammaticalization*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 83-101.

Heine, Bernd. 2003. "Grammaticalization." In Brian D. Joseph and Richard D. Janda (eds.). *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell. 575-601.

Heine, Bernd, Ulrike Claudi, and Friederike Hünnemeyer. 1991. *Grammaticalization: A Conceptual Framework*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Heine, Bernd, and Mechthild Reh. 1984. *Grammaticalization and Reanalysis in African Languages*. Hamburg: Buske.

Held, Gudrun. 2005. "Politeness in linguistic research." In Richard Watts, Sachiko Ide and Konrad Ehlich (eds.). *Politeness in Language*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 131-153.

Held, Gudrun. 2010. "*Supplica la mia parvidade*… Petitions in medieval society – a matter of ritualized or first reflexive politeness?" *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 11 (2): 194-218.

Hickey, Leo and Miranda Stewart (eds.). 2005. *Politeness in Europe*. Clevedon (United Kingdom): Multilingual Matters.

REFERENCES

Hickey, Raymond. 1994. "A Corpus of Irish English." In Merja Kytö, Matti Rissanen and Susan Wright (eds.). *Corpora across the centuries*. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi. 23-32.

Hickey, Raymond. 2003. *Corpus Presenter: Software for Language Analysis with a Manual and* A Corpus of Irish English *as Sample Data*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Hohenhaus, Peter. 2005. "Lexicalization and institutionalization." In Pavol Štekauer and Rochelle Lieber (eds.). *Handbook of Word-Formation*. Dordrecht: Springer. 353-373.

Hopper, Paul. 1991. "On some principles of grammaticization." In Elizabeth C. Traugott and Bernd Heine (eds.). *Approaches to grammaticalization*, vol. 1. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 17-35.

Hopper, Paul. 1998. "Emergent grammar." In Michael Tomasello (ed.). *The New Psychology of Language*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 155-175.

Hopper, Paul and Elizabeth Closs Traugott. 2003. *Grammaticalization*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Horn, Laurence R. 1978. "Some aspects of negation." In Joseph Greenberg, Charles A. Ferguson and Edith A. Moravcsik. (eds.). *Universals of Human Language Vol. 4: Syntax*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 127-210.

House, Juliane. 1989. "Politeness in English and German: The functions of *please* and *bitte*." In Shoshana Blum-Kulka, Julianne House and Gabrielle Kasper (eds.). *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. Norwood: N.J. Ablex. 96-119.

Huang, Yan. 2007. *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Huddleston, Rodney and Geoffrey K. Pullum. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ihalainen, Ossi. 1994. "The dialects of England since 1776." In Robert Burchfield (ed.). *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume V: English Language in Britain and Overseas. Origins and Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 197-274.

Jacobs, Andreas and Andreas H. Jucker. 1995. "The historical perspective in pragmatics." In Andreas H. Jucker (ed.). *Historical Pragmatics. Pragmatic*

Developments in the History of English. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 1-33.

Jacobsson, Mattias. 2002. "*Thank you* and *thanks* in Early Modern English." *ICAME Journal* 26: 63-80.

Jespersen, Otto. 1909-49. *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Johnson, Samuel. 1755-56. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. 2nd edition. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Jucker, Andreas H. 1994. "The feasibility of historical pragmatics." *Journal of Pragmatics* 22 (5): 533-536.

Jucker, Andreas H. (ed.). 1995. *Historical Pragmatics. Pragmatic Developments in the History of English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Jucker, Andreas H. 1998. "Historical pragmatics: An interdisciplinary approach." In Raimund Borgmeier, Herbert Grabes and Andreas H. Jucker (eds.). *Anglistentag 1997. Giessen. Proceedings.* Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. 3-7.

Jucker, Andreas H. 2000. "English historical pragmatics: Problems of data and methodology." In Gabriella di Martino and Maria Lima (eds.). *English Diachronic Pragmatics*. Napoli: CUEN. 17-55.

Jucker, Andreas H. 2002. "Discourse markers in Early Modern English." In Richard Watts and Peter Trudgill (eds.). *Alternative Histories of English*. London and New York: Routledge. 210-230.

Jucker, Andreas H. 2004. "Contrastive analysis across time: Issues in historical dialogue analysis." In Dominique Willems, Bart Defrancq, Timothy Colleman and Dirk Noël (eds.). *Contrastive Analysis in Language. Identifying Linguistic Units of Comparison*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 197-212.

Jucker, Andreas H. 2006. "Historical pragmatics." In Keith Brown (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Elsevier. 329-331.

Jucker, Andreas H. 2011. "Positive and negative face as descriptive categories in the history of English." *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 12 (1/2): 178-197.

REFERENCES

Jucker, Andreas H., Franz Lebsanft and Gerd Fritz (eds.). 1999. *Historical Dialogue Analysis*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Jucker, Andreas H., Gerold Schneider, Irma Taavitsainen and Barb Breustedt. 2008. "Fishing for compliments: Precision and recall in corpus-linguistic compliment research." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 273-294.

Jucker, Andreas H. and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). 2008a. *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Jucker, Andreas H. and Irma Taavitsainen. 2008b. "Apologies in the history of English: Routinized and lexicalized expressions of responsibility and regret." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 229-244.

Jucker, Andreas H. and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). 2010. *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Jucker, Andreas H. and Yael Ziv. 1998. *Discourse markers: Descriptions and theory*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Kaltenböck, Gunther. 2007. "Spoken parenthetical clauses in English: A taxonomy." In Nicole Dehé and Yordanka Kavalova (eds.). *Parentheticals*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 25-52.

Kaltenböck, Gunther. 2008. "Prosody and function of English comment clauses." *Folia Linguistica* 42 (1): 83-134.

Kaltenböck, Gunther, Bernd Heine and Tania Kuteva. 2011. "On thetical grammar." *Studies in Language* 35 (4): 852-897.

Kasper, Gabriele. 1998. "Politeness." In Jacob Mey (ed.). *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*. Oxford: Elsevier. 677-687.

Kasper, Gabriele and Shoshana Blum-Kulka (eds.). 1993. *Interlanguage Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Catherine. 2004. "¿Es universal la cortesía?" In Diana Bravo and Emilio Antonio Briz Gómez (eds.). *Pragmática sociocultural: Estudios sobre el discurso de cortesía en español*. Barcelona: Ariel. 39-53.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Catherine. 2011. "From good manners to facework: Politeness variations and constants in France, from the classic age to today." *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 12 (1/2): 133-155.

Klein, Lawrence E. 2002. "Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century." *The Historical Journal* 45 (4): 869-898.

Koch, Peter. 1999. "Court records and cartoons: Reflections of spontaneous dialogue in early Romance texts." In Andreas H. Jucker, Franz Lebsanft and Gerd Fritz (eds.) *Historical Dialogue Analysis*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 399-429.

Koester, Almut. 2010. "Building small specialised corpora." In Anne O'Keeffe and Michael McCarthy (eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics*. Oxford: Routledge. 66-79.

Kohnen, Thomas. 2002. "Towards a history of English directives." In Andreas Fischer, Gunnel Tottie and Hans Martin Lehmann (eds.). *Text Types and Corpora: Studies in Honour of Udo Fries*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag. 165-175.

Kohnen, Thomas. 2004. "Methodological problems in corpus-based historical pragmatics. The case of English directives." In Karin Aijmer (ed.). *Advances in Corpus Linguistics: Papers from the 23rd International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora (ICAME 23), Göteborg 22-26 May 2002*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi. 237-247.

Kohnen, Thomas. 2007. "Text types and the methodology of diachronic speech act analysis." In Susan M. Fitzmaurice and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Methods in Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 139-166.

Kohnen, Thomas. 2008a. "Directives in Old English: Beyond politeness?" In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 27-44.

Kohnen, Thomas. 2008b. "Tracing directives through text and time: Towards a methodology for a corpus-based diachronic speech-act analysis." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 295-310.

REFERENCES

Kohnen, Thomas. 2009. "Historical corpus pragmatics: Focus on speech acts and texts." In Andreas H. Jucker, Daniel Schreier, Marianne Hundt (eds.). *Corpora: Pragmatics and Discourse.* Amsterdam: Rodopi. 13-36.

Kohnen, Thomas. 2011. "Understanding Anglo-Saxon "politeness": Directive constructions with *ic wille/ic wolde.*" *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 12 (1/2): 230-254.

Kopytko, Roman. 1993. *Polite Discourse in Shakespeare's English.* Poznan: Adam Mickiewicz University Press.

Kopytko, Roman. 1995. "Linguistic Politeness Strategies in Shakespeare's Plays." In Andreas H. Jucker, (ed.). *Historical Pragmatics.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins: 515-540.

Krug, Manfred. 1998. "British English is developing a new discourse marker, *innit*? A study in lexicalisation based on social, regional and stylistic variation." *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 23 (2): 145-197.

Kryk-Kastovsky, Barbara. 1998. "Pragmatic particles in Early Modern English court trials." In Raimund Borgmeier, Herbert Grabes and Andreas H. Jucker (eds.). *Anglistentag 1997. Giessen. Proceedings.* Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. 47-56.

Kurylowicz, Jerzy. 1965. "The evolution of grammatical categories." *Diogenes* 55: 55-71.

Labov, William. 1994. *Principles of Linguistic Change: Internal Factors.* Malden, Massachusetts and Oxford: Blackwell.

Lakoff, Robin. 1973. "The logic of politeness; or, minding your p's and q's." In Claudia Corum, T. Cedric Smith-Stark and Ann Weiser. *Papers from the Ninth Regional Meeting Chicago Linguistic Society. April 13-15, 1973.* Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society. 292-305.

Landone, Elena. 2009. *Los Marcadores del Discurso y Cortesía Verbal en Español.* Bern, etc.: Peter Lang.

Langacker, Ronald W. 1990. "Subjectification." *Cognitive Linguistics* 1 (1): 5-38.

Langacker, Ronald W. 2006. "Subjectification, grammaticization, and conceptual archetypes." In Angeliki Athanasiadou, Costas Canakis and Bert Cornillie (eds.). *Subjectification: Various Paths to Subjectivity.* 17-40.

Langford, Paul. 1984. "The eighteenth century (1688-1789)." In Kenneth O. Morgan (ed.). *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 352-418.

Langford, Paul. 1989. *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1723-1783*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lass, Roger. 1999. "Introduction." In Roger Lass (ed.). *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Vol. III: 1476-1776*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1-12.

Leech, Geoffrey. 1983. *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.

Lehmann. Christian. 1985. "Grammaticalization: Synchronic variation and diachronic change." *Lingua e Stile* 20 (3): 303-318.

Lehmann, Christian. 1995. *Thoughts on Grammaticalization*. Munich and Newcastle: Lincom Europa.

Lehmann, Christian. 2002. "New reflections on grammaticalization and lexicalization." In Ilse Wischer and Gabriele Diewald (eds.). *New Reflections on Grammaticalization*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 1-18.

Lenker, Ursula and Anneli Meurman-Solin (eds.). 2007. *Connectives in the History of English: Selected Papers from 13th ICEHL, Vienna, 23-28 August 2004*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Levinson, Stephen C. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Locher, Miriam A. 2004. *Power and Politeness in Action: Disagreements in Oral Communication*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Locher, Miriam A. and Richard J. Watts. 2005. "Politeness theory and relational work." *Journal of Politeness Research* 1: 9-33.

López-Couso, María José. 2010. "Subjectification and intersubjectification." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 127-163.

López-Couso, María José and Belén Méndez-Naya. 2006. "Complement selection in Early English dependent desires: A look at commands and requests." *Estudios Ingleses de la Universidad Complutense* 14: 33-53.

REFERENCES

Magnusson, Lynne. 1999. *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Malinowski, Bronisław. 1923. "The problems of meaning in primitive languages." Supplement to Charles Kay Odgen and Ivor Armstrong Richards. *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 296-336.

Márquez Reiter, Rosina. 2000. *Linguistic Politeness in Britain and Uruguay: A Contrastive Study of Requests and Apologies*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Martín Zorraquino, María Antonia and José Portolés Lázaro. 1999. "Los marcadores del discurso." In Ignacio Bosque and Violeta Demonte Barretto (eds.). *Gramática Descriptiva de la Lengua Española*. RAE. Madrid: Espasa Calpe. 4051-4213.

Matthew, H. C. G. 1984. "The liberal age (1851-1914)." In Kenneth O. Morgan (ed.). *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 463-522.

Mazzon, Gabriella. 2009. *Interactive Dialogue Sequences in Middle English Drama*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Mazzon, Gabriella. 2012. "*I'm afraid I'll have to stop now… Your time is up, I'm afraid.* Corpus studies and the development of attitudinal markers." In Carla Suhr and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Developing Corpus Methodology for Historical Pragmatics*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki. Available online: <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/journal/volumes/11/mazzon/>.

McEnery, Tony, Yukio Tono and Richard Zhonghua Xiao. 2006. *Corpus Based Language Studies. An Advanced Resource Book*. London: Francis and Taylor.

Meier, A.J. 1995a. "Passages of politeness." *Journal of Pragmatics* 24: 381-392.

Meier, A.J. 1995b. "Defining politeness: Universality in appropriateness." *Language Sciences* 17 (4): 345-356.

Meillet, Antoine. 1912. "L'evolution des formes grammaticales." *Scientia* 12: 384-400.

Méndez-Naya, Belén and María José López-Couso. 1997. "What is really meant by *impersonal*? On *impersonal* and related terms." *ATLANTIS Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies* 19 (2): 185-192.

Möhlig-Falke, Ruth. 2012. *The Early English Impersonal Construction*. Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press.

Morrill, John. 1984. "The Stuarts (1603-1688)." In Kenneth O. Morgan (ed.). *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 286-351.

Morris, Charles. 1938. "Foundations of the Theory of Signs." In Otto Neurath, Rudolf Carnap and Charles Morris (eds.). *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*. vol. 1 no. 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mosegaard Hansen, Maj-Britt and Corinne Rossari (eds.). 2005. *The Evolution of Pragmatic Markers: Special issue of Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 6 (2).

Murry, Ann. 1779. *Mentoria. Or, the Young Ladies Instructor, in Familiar Conversations on Moral and Entertaining Subjects*. Dublin. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Müller, Simone. 2005. *Discourse Markers in Native and Non-Native English Discourse*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Nevala, Minna. 2010. "Politeness." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 419-450.

Nevalainen, Terttu. 1999. "Making the best use of "bad" data: Evidence for sociolinguistic variation in Early Modern English." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 100: 499-533.

Norrick, Neal. 1979. "The lexicalization of pragmatic functions." *Linguistics* 17: 671-685.

Norrick, Neal (ed.). 2009. *Pragmatic Markers: Special Issue of Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (5).

ODAUS = The Oxford Dictionary of American Usage and Style. Bryan A. Garner. 2000. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press.

OED = Oxford English Dictionary. 1884-1933. James A.H. Murray, Henry Bradley, William A. Craigie and Charles T. Onions (eds.); Supplement. 1972-1986. Robert W. Burchfield (ed.); 2nd edition. 1989. John A. Simpson and Edmund S.C. Weiner (eds.); Additions Series, 1993-1997. John A. Simpson, Edmund S.C. Weiner and Michael Proffitt (eds.); 3rd edition (in progress) *OED* Online, March 2000-, John A. Simpson. (ed.). <www.oed.com>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

REFERENCES

Österreicher, Wulf. 1997. "Types of orality in text." In Egbert J. Bakker and Ahuvia Kahane (eds.). *Written Voices, Spoke signs, Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Harvard: Harvard University Press. 190-214.

Östman, Jan-Ola. 1995. "Pragmatic particles twenty years after." In Brita Wårvik, Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen and Risto Hiltunen (eds.). *Organization in Discourse. Proceedings from the Turku Conference*. Turku: University of Turku. 95-108.

Oxford Dictionary of English. 2005. Soanes, Catherine and Stevenson Angus (eds.). Revised edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Palander-Collin, Minna. 2010. "Correspondence." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 651-677.

Pérez-Guerra, Javier, Dolores González-Álvarez, Jorge L. Bueno-Alonso and Esperanza Rama-Martínez. 2007. 'Of varying language and opposing creed': *Five first* details are *being depicted.* In Javier Pérez-Guerra, Dolores González-Álvarez, Jorge L. Bueno-Alonso and Esperanza Rama-Martínez (eds.). *'Of Varying Language and Opposing Creed': New Insights into Late Modern English*. Bern, etc.: Peter Lang. 11-24.

Pons Bordería. 1998. "Los apelativos *oye* y *mira* o los límites de la conexión." In Mª Antonia Martín Zorraquino and Estrella Montolío (eds.). *Marcadores discursivos: Teoría y práctica*. Madrid: Arco. 213-228.

Portolés Lázaro, José. 2007. *Marcadores del discurso*. 4th edition. Barcelona: Ariel.

Poustma, Hendrik. 1904-1916. *A Grammar of Late Modern English*. Groningen: P. Noordhoff.

Pütz, Martin and JoAnne Neff-van Aertselaer. 2008. *Developing Contrastive Pragmatics: Interlanguage and Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartvik. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.

Raumolin-Brunberg, Helena. 1996. "Forms of address in early English correspondence." In Terttu Nevalainen and Helena Raumolin-Brunberg (eds.). *Sociolinguistics and Language History: Studies Based on the Corpus of Early English Correspondence*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 167-181.

Redeker, Gisela. 1991. "Linguistic markers of discourse structure" (Review of Schiffrin, Deborah. *Discourse Markers*.) *Linguistics* 29 (6): 1139-1172.

Rissanen, Matti. 1986. "Variation and the study of English historical syntax." In David Sankoff (ed.). *Diversity and diachrony*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 97-110.

Rissanen, Matti. 1989. "Three problems connected with the use of diachronic corpora." *ICAME Journal* 13: 16-19.

Rissanen, Matti. 1999. "Syntax." In Roger Lass (ed.). *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Vol. III: 1476-1776*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 187-331.

Rissanen, Matti. 2000. "The world of English historical corpora: From Cædmon to the computer age." *Journal of English Linguistics* 28: 7-20.

Rossari, Corinne and Corina Cojocariu. 2008. "Constructions of the type *la cause/la raison/la preuve* + utterance: Grammaticalization, pragmaticalization, or something else?" *Journal of Pragmatics* 40: 1435-1454.

Rudanko, Johannes. 1993. *Pragmatic Approaches to Shakespeare: Essays on Othello, Coriolanus and Timon of Athens*. Lanham, New York and London: University Press of America.

Sadock, Jerrold M. 1974. *Towards a Linguistic Theory of Speech Acts*. New York: Academic Press.

Sato, Shie. 2008 . "Use of 'please' in American and New Zealand English." *Journal of Pragmatics* 40: 1249-1278.

Sbisà, Marina. 2001. "Illocutionary force and degrees of strength in language use." *Journal of Pragmatics* 33: 1791-1814.

Schiffrin, Deborah. 1988. *Discourse Markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schiffrin, Deborah. 2001. "Discourse markers: Language, meaning and context." In Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, Heidi Ehernberger Hamilton (eds.). *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Malden: Blackwell. 54-75.

Schourup, Lawrence. 1999. "Discourse markers." *Lingua* 107: 227-265.

Scott, Mike. 1999/2004. *WordSmith Tools versions 3 and 4*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

REFERENCES

Searle, John. 1969. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Searle, John. 1975. "Indirect speech acts." In Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan (eds.). *Syntax and Semantics Vol. 3, Speech Acts*. New York: Academic Press Inc. 59-82.

Searle, John. 1979. *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Searle, John R. and Daniel Vanderveken. 1985. *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sell, Roger (ed.). 1991. *Literary Pragmatics*. London: Routledge.

Sheridan, Thomas. 1780. *A General Dictionary of the English Language*. London, 2 vols. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Sönmez, Margaret J-M. 2005. "A study of request markers in English family letters from 1623 to 1660." *European Journal of English Studies* 9 (1): 9-19.

Sperber, Dan and Deirdre Wilson. 1986. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Stein, Dieter. 1985. "Perspectives on historical pragmatics." *Folia Linguistica Historica* 6 (1): 347-355.

Stenström, Anna-Brita. 1990. "What is the role of discourse signals in sentence grammar." In Jan Aarts and Willem Meijs (eds.). *Theory and Practice in Corpus Linguistics*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 213-229.

Stenström, Anna-Brita. 1994. *An Introduction to Spoken Interaction*. London and New York: Longman.

Stenström, Anna-Brita. 1995. "Some remarks on comment clauses." In Bas Aarts, Charles F. Meyer (eds.). *The verb in Contemporary English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 290-301.

Stubbs, Michael. 1983. *Discourse Analysis. The Sociolinguistic Analysis of Natural Language*. London: Blackwell.

Taavitsainen, Irma and Susan M. Fitzmaurice. 2007. "Historical pragmatics: What it is and how to do it." In Susan M. Fitzmaurice and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.).

Methods in Historical Pragmatics. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 11-36.

Taavitsainen, Irma and Andreas H. Jucker. 2007. "Speech act verbs and speech acts in the history of English." In Susan M. Fitzmaurice and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Methods in Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 107-138.

Taavitsainen, Irma and Andreas H. Jucker. 2008a. "Speech acts now and then: Towards a pragmatic history of English." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 1-23.

Taavitsainen, Irma and Andreas H. Jucker. 2008b. "'Methinks you seem more beautiful than ever': Compliments and gender in the history of English." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 195-228.

Taavitsainen, Irma and Andreas H. Jucker. 2010. "Trends and developments in historical pragmatics." In Jucker, Andreas H. and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 3-30.

Tabor, Whitney and Elizabeth Closs Traugott. 1998. "Structural scope expansion and grammaticalization." In Anna Giacalone Ramat and Paul J. Hopper (eds.). *The Limits of Grammaticalization*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 229-272.

Tavor Bannet, Eve. 2005. *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1680-1820*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thompson, Sandra A. and Anthony Mulac. 1991. "A quantitative perspective on the grammaticization of epistemic parentheticals in English." In Elizabeth Closs Traugott and Bernd Heine. (eds.). *Approaches to grammaticalization*, vol. 2. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 313-329.

Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Ingrid. 1998. "Standardization of English spelling: The eighteenth-century printers' contribution." In Jacek Fisiak and Marcin Krygier (eds.). *English Historical Linguistics 1996*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 457-470.

REFERENCES

Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Ingrid. 2009. *An Introduction to Late Modern English.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Ingrid and Fátima Faya Cerqueiro. 2007. "Saying *please* in Late Modern English." In Javier Pérez-Guerra *et al.* (eds.). *'Of Varying Language and Opposing Creed': New Insights into Late Modern English.* Bern, etc.: Peter Lang. 421-444.

Tognini-Bonelli, Elena. 2001. *Corpus Linguistics at Work.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Toussaint, François-Vincent. 1752. *Manners. Translated from the French.* 2nd ed. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online.* Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Trask, Robert Lawrence. 1993. *A Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics.* London: Routledge.

Trask, Robert Lawrence. 1996. *Historical Linguistics.* London: Arnold.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 1982. "From propositional to textual and expressive meanings: Some semantic-pragmatic aspects of grammaticalization." In Winfred P. Lehmann and Yakov Malkiel (eds.). *Perspectives on Historical Linguistics.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company- 245-271.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 1988. "Pragmatic strengthening and grammaticalization." *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society.* 406-416.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 1989. "On the rise of epistemic meanings in English: An example of subjectification in semantic change." *Language* 57: 33-65.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 1991. "Speech act verbs: A historical perspective." In Linda R. Waugh and Steven Rudy (eds.). *New Vistas in Grammar: Invariance and Variation.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 387-406.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 1995. "Subjectification in grammaticalisation." In Dieter Stein and Susan Wright (eds.). *Subjectivity and Subjectivisation: Linguistic Perspectives.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 31-54.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 1996. "Subjectification and the development of epistemic meaning: The case of *promise* and *threaten.*" In Toril Swan and Olaf Jansen

Westvik (eds.). *Modality in Germanic Languages*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 185-210.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 1997. "The role of the development of discourse markers in a theory of grammaticalization." Paper presented at ICHL XII, Manchester 1995, Version of 11/97. *Papers available On-line.* <http://www.stanford.edu/~traugott/papers/discourse.pdf>

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2000. "*Promise* and *Pray*-Parentheticals." Eleventh International Conference on English Historical Linguistics (ICEHL XI), Santiago de Compostela, September 2000. In *Elizabeth C. Traugott. Papers Available On-line.* Last updated 2 March 2002. Ed. Elizabeth C. Traugott. Stanford University. 28 July 2004 <http://www.stanford.edu/~traugott/ect-papersonline.html>

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2002. "From etymology to historical pragmatics." In Donka Minkova and Robert Stockwell (eds.). *Studies in the History of the English Language*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 19-49.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2003a. "From subjectification to intersubjectification." In Raymond Hickey (ed.). *Motives for Language Change.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 124-139.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2003b. "Constructions in grammaticalization." In Brian D. Joseph and Richard D. Janda (eds.). *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell. 624-647.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2004. "Historical pragmatics." In Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward (eds.). *Handbook of Pragmatics*. Oxford: Blackwell. 538-561.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2007. "Discussion article: Discourse markers, modal particles, and contrastive analysis, synchronic and diachronic." *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* 6: 139-157.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2010. "Grammaticalization." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 97-126.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs and Richard B. Dasher. 2002. *Regularity in Semantic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs and Ekkehard König. 1991. "The semantics-pragmatics of grammaticalization revisited." In Elizabeth Closs Traugott and Bernd Heine (eds.). *Approaches to grammaticalization*, vol. 1. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 189-218.

Trosborg, Anna. 1994. *Interlanguage Pragmatics: Requests, Complaints and Apologies*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Valkonen, Petteri. 2008. "Showing a little promise: Identifying and retrieving explicit illocutionary acts from a corpus of written prose." In Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.). *Speech Acts in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 247-272.

van Bergen, Linda and David Denison. 2007. "A Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose" In Joan C. Beal, Karen P. Corrigan and Hermann Moisl (eds.). *Creating and Digitizing Language Corpora*, *vol. 2*, *Diachronic corpora*. Basingtroke: Palgrave Macmillan. 228-246.

Verschueren, Jef. 1999. *Understanding Pragmatics*. London: Arnold.

Wallace, James. 1782?. *Every Man his Own Letter-Writer*. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Waltereit, Richard. 2002. "Imperatives, interruption in conversation, and the rise of discourse markers: A study of Italian *guarda*." *Linguistics* 40 (5): 987–1010.

Waltereit, Richard. 2006. "The rise of discourse markers in Italian: A specific type of language change." In Kerstin Fischer (ed.). *Approaches to Discourse Particles*. Oxford: Elsevier. 61-76.

Ward, William. 1765. *An Essay on Grammar: As it may be Applied to the English Language*. London: printed for Robert Horsfield. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Watts, Richard. 2003. *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weir, David. 1995. *Decadence and the Making of Modernism*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

White, James, of Cecil Street, Strand. 1761. *The English Verb*. London. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

Wichmann, Anne. 2004. "The intonation of *Please*-requests: A corpus-based study." *Journal of Pragmatics* 36: 1521-1549.

Wichmann, Anne. 2005. "*Please*: From courtesy to appeal: The role of intonation in the expression of attitudinal meaning." *English Language and Linguistics* 9 (2): 229-253.

Wierzbicka, Anna. 1991. *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction.* Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Wischer, Ilse. 2000. "Grammaticalization versus lexicalization: '*Methinks*' there is some confusion." In Olga Fischer, Anette Rosenbach, Dieter Stein (eds.). *Pathways of Change: Grammaticalization in English.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 355-370.

Yáñez-Bouza, Nuria. 2011. "ARCHER past and present (1990-2010)." *ICAME Journal* 35: 205-236.

Yule, George. 1996. *Pragmatics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zwicky, Arnold M. 1985. "Clitics and particles." *Language* 61 (2): 283-305.

Corpora and databases

ARCHER = A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers 3.1. 1990-1993/2002/2007/2010. Compiled under the supervision of Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan at Northern Arizona University, University of Southern California, University of Freiburg, University of Heidelberg, University of Helsinki, Uppsala University, University of Michigan, University of Manchester, Lancaster University, University of Bamberg, University of Zurich, University of Trier, University of Salford, and University of Santiago de Compostela.

BNC = The British National Corpus, version 2 (BNC World). 2001. Distributed by Oxford University Computing Services on behalf of the BNC Consortium. <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>

Brown Corpus = A Standard Corpus of Present-Day Edited American English, for use with Digital Computers. 1964, 1971, 1979. Compiled by W. Nelson Francis and Henry Kučera. Brown University. Providence, Rhode Island.

REFERENCES

CLECP = Denison, David (dir.) and Linda van Bergen (ed.). 2003. *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*. University of Manchester Faculty of Arts and John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

Corpus of Early English Medical Writing. Compiled by Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta. *Middle English Medical Texts*. 2005. John Benjamins; *Early Modern English Medical Texts*. 2010. John Benjamins.

Corpus of English Novels. Compiled by Hendrik De Smet. Department of Linguistics, University of Leuven. <https://perswww.kuleuven.be/~u0044428/cen.htm>

The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (Extended Version). 2006. Compiled by Hendrik De Smet. Department of Linguistics, University of Leuven. <https://perswww.kuleuven.be/~u0044428/>

Denison, David (ed.). 1994. *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*. University of Manchester: Department of English and American Studies, formerly Department of English Language and Literature. (Text of *The Letters of Ernest Dowson*: Associated University Presses, NJ, USA).

DOEC = Healey, Antonette di Paolo (ed.). 2004. *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*. Toronto: University of Toronto.

ECCO = *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

ECF = *Eighteenth-Century Fiction. 1996. Electronic Book Technologies Inc./Chadwyck-Healey. Cambridge.*

Helsinki Corpus of English Texts. Compiled by Matti Rissanen. 1991. Department of Modern Languages, University of Helsinki.

Hickey, Raymond. 2003. *Corpus Presenter: Software for Language Analysis with a Manual and A Corpus of Irish English as Sample Data*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

LOB = *Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen Corpus*. 1970-1978. Compiled by Geoffrey Leech, Lancaster University, Stig Johansson, University of Oslo (project leaders), and Knut Hofland, University of Bergen.

London Lund Corpus of Spoken English. 1975. Compiled by Jan Svartvik, University College London.

NCF = Nineteenth-Century Fiction. 1999-2000. Electronic Book Technologies Inc./Chadwyck-Healey. Cambridge.

ODNB = Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. H. Collin G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.). On-line version. <www.oxforddnb.com>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

NCF = Nineteenth-Century Fiction. 1999-2000. Electronic Book Technologies Inc./Chadwyck-Healey. Cambridge.

APPENDIX 1. NOVELS INCLUDED IN THE CORPUS STUDY

Extracted from the *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*:

Period 1: 1710-1720

Barker, Jane. 1719. *Bosvil and Galesia.*

Barker, Jane. 1719. *Exilius.*

Defoe, Daniel. 1720. *Captain Singleton.*

Defoe, Daniel. 1719. *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.*

Defoe, Daniel. 1720. *Memoirs of a Cavalier.*

Defoe, Daniel. 1719. *Robinson Crusoe.*

Manley, Mary de la Rivière. 1714. *The Adventures of Rivella.*

Manley, Mary de la Rivière. 1710. *Memoirs of Europe.*

Manley, Mary de la Rivière. 1720. *The Power of Love.*

Extracted from the *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*:

Period 2: 1800-1810

Austen, Jane. c1803. *The Watsons* [in *The Works of Jane Austen*] .

Brunton, Mary.1810. *Self-Control.*

Dacre, Charlotte. 1806. *Zofloya.*

Edgeworth, Maria. 1801. *Belinda.*

Edgeworth, Maria. 1800. *Castle Rackrent.*

Edgeworth, Maria. 1809. *Ennui.*

Godwin, William. 1805. *Fleetwood: Or, The New Man of Feeling.*

Moore, John. 1800. *Mordaunt.*

More, Hannah. 1809. *Coelebs in Search of a Wife.*

Morgan, Lady Sydney. 1806. *The Wild Irish Girl.*

Opie, Amelia Alderson. 1804. *Adeline Mowbray.*

Porter, Jane. 1810. *The Scottish Chiefs.*

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. 1810. *Zastrozzi.*

Period 3: 1890-1900

Allen, Grant. 1895. *The Woman Who Did.*

Baring-Gould, Sabine. 1892. *In the Roar of the Sea.*

Coleridge, Mary Elizabeth. 1897. *The King with Two Faces.*

Doyle, Arthur Conan, Sir. 1890. *The Sign of Four.*

Gissing, George. 1891. *New Grub Street.*

Gissing, George. 1893. *The Odd Women.*

Gissing, George. 1897. *The Whirlpool.*

Grossmith, George, and Weedon Grossmith. 1892. *The Diary of a Nobody.*

Hardy, Thomas. 1894-5. *Jude the Obscure.*

Hardy, Thomas. 1891. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.*

Hardy, Thomas. 1892 *The Well-Beloved.*

Meredith, George. 1890-1891. *One of our Conquerors.*

Moore, George. 1894. *Esther Waters.*

Morris, William. 1890. *News from Nowhere.*

Somerville, Edith Oenone and Martin Ross. 1894. *The Real Charlotte.*

Stevenson, Robert Louis. 1892. *The Beach of Falesa.*

Stevenson, Robert Louis. 1896. *Weir of Hermiston.*

Stoker, Bram. 1897. *Dracula.*

Ward, Humphry, Mrs. 1895. *The Story of Bessie Costrell.*

Wells, Herbert George. 1895. *The Time Machine.*

Wilde, Oscar. 1891. *The Picture of Dorian Gray.*

APPENDIX 2. PLAYS INCLUDED IN *A CORPUS OF IRISH ENGLISH*

Sixteenth century:

Captain Thomas Stukeley. 1596/1605.

Shakespeare, William. 1599/1623. *Henry V.*

Sir John Oldcastle. 1599/1600.

Seventeenth century:

Cuffe, Maurice. 1642. *The Siege of Ballyally Castle.*

Dekker, Thomas. 1599/1600. *Old Fortunatus.*

Dekker, Thomas. 1605/1630. *The Honest Whore Part II.*

Head, Richard. 1663. *Hic et Ubique.*

Jonson, Ben. 1613 /1616. *The Irish Masque.*

Randolph, Thomas. c. 1630 / 1651. *Hey for Honesty.*

Shadwell, Thomas. 1681/1682. *The Lancashire Witches.*

The Welsh Embassador. 1623.

Eighteenth century:

Breval, John Durant. 1718. *The Play is the Plot.*

Centlivre, Susanna. 1715. *A Wife Well Managed.*

Congreve, William. 1700. *The Way of the World.*

Farquhar, George. 1702/1703. *The Twin Rivals.*

Farquhar, George. 1707. *The Beaux' Stratagem.*

Goldsmith, Oliver. 1773. *She stoops to conquer.*

Michelburne, John. 1705. *Ireland Preserved.*

Sheridan, Richard Brinsley. 1775. *St. Patrick's Day or The Scheming Lieutenant.*

Sheridan, Richard Brinsley. 1777. *The School for Scandal.*

Sheridan, Thomas. 1740/1754. *The Brave Irishman.*

Nineteenth century:

Boucicault, Dion. 1860. *The Colleen Bawn.*

Boucicault, Dion. 1864. *Arragh na Pogue.*

Boucicault, Dion. 1875. *The Shaughraun.*

*Gregory, Lady Augusta. 1904. *Spreading the News.*

*Gregory, Lady Augusta. 1907. *The Workhouse Ward.*

*Gregory, Lady Augusta. 1917/1922. *Hanrahan's Oath.*

*Gregory, Lady Augusta. 1926. *On the Racecourse.*

Wilde, Oscar. 1895. *The Importance of Being Earnest.*

Yeats, William Butler. 1899. *The Countess Cathleen.*

Yeats, William Butler. 1902. *Cathleen Ni Houlihan.*

*Note: These novels by Gregory, which do not correspond chronologically to the nineteenth century, were excluded from word counts used for normalised frequencies since searches did not yield any positive result.

Twentieth century:

Behan, Brendan. 1954. *The Quare Fellow*

Behan, Brendan. 1959. *The Hostage.*

O'Casey, Sean. 1923. *The Shadow of a Gunman.*

O'Casey, Sean. 1924. *Juno and the Paycock.*

O'Casey, Sean. 1926. *The Plough and the Stars.*

O'Casey, Sean. 1928. *The Silver Tassie.*

 Shaw, George Bernard. 1904. *John Bull's Other Island.*

Synge, John Millington. 1903. *In the Shadow of the Glen.*

Synge, John Millington. 1904. *Riders to the Sea.*

Synge, John Millington. 1905. *The Well of the Saints.*

Synge, John Millington. 1907. *The Playboy of the Western World.*

Synge, John Millington. 1909. *The Tinker's Wedding.*

Synge, John Millington. 1910. *Deirdre of the Sorrows.*

APPENDIX 3. EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LETTER-WRITING MANUALS INCLUDED IN THE CORPUS STUDY, EXTRACTED FROM *ECCO*

In chronological order

Hicks, William. 1701. *Wits academy: or, the muses delight. Being the newest academy of complements. Consisting of merry dialogues upon various occasions, ... With a perfect collection of all the newest and best songs and catches, ...* The eighth edition, with additions. London.

G. F., gent. 1705?. *The secretary's guide: in four parts. ...* London.

Gildon, Charles. 1706. *The post-boy robb'd of his mail: or, the pacquet broke open. Consisting of letters of love and gallantry, and all miscellaneous subjects: ... The second edition. With the addition of many new and ingenious letters, never before published.* London.

Goodman, Thomas. 1707. *The experienc'd secretary: or, citizen and countryman's companion. In two parts. Part I. Containing the most curious art of inditing familiar ...* London.

Scougal, Henry. 1714. *The compleat English secretary, and newest academy of complements. Containing the true art of indicting letters, suitable to the capacity of ...* London.

Anon. 1715?. *Wit's cabinet: a companion for gentlemen and ladies. In which is contain'd, I. The interpretation of dreams, according to Artimedorus, and other ...* London.

Hill, John. 1719. *The young secretary's guide: or, a speedy help to learning. In two parts. ...* The twentieth edition. LondonAnon. 1748. *Polite epistolary correspondence. A collection of letters, on the most instructive and entertaining subjects. ... To which are prefix'd, two ...* London.

Fisher, George, accomptant. 1735?. *The instructor: or, young man's best companion: ... To which is added, the family's best companion, ...* London.

Richardson, Samuel. 1741. *Letters written to and for particular friends, on the most important occasions. Directing not only the requisite style and forms to be observed ...* London.

Anon. 1745. *An useful and entertaining collection of letters upon various subjects; several now first published from their original manuscripts, by the most ...* London.

Haywood, Eliza Fowler. 1749-50. *Epistles for the ladies.* London. (2 vols.).

Anon. 1755. *A select collection of original letters; written by the most eminent persons, on various entertaining subjects, and on many important occasions:* ... London,. (2 vols.).

Hallifax, Charles. 1755. *Familiar letters on various subjects of business and amusement. Written in a natural, easy manner; and publish'd, principally, for the service of* ... The third edition, revised and corrected. London.

Johnson, Mary. 1755. *Madam Johnson's present; or, the best instructions for young women, in useful and universal knowledge. With a summary of the late Marriage Act,* ... London.

Anon. 1756. *The complete letter-writer: or, new and polite English secretary. Containing directions for writing letters on all occasions,* ... *To which is* ... The second edition. London.

Newbery, John. 1756. *Letters on the most common, as well as important, occasions in life, by Cicero,* ... *and other writers* ... *with many original letters and cards,* ... London.

Dilworth, W. H. 1758. *The familiar letter-writer; or, young secretary's complete instructor. Containing a great variety of letters on friendship, duty,* ... *business,* ... London.

Johnson, Samuel. 1758. *A compleat introduction to the art of writing letters; universally adapted to all classes and conditions of life;* ... London.

Gignoux, John. 1759. *Epistolary correspondence made pleasant and familiar: calculated chiefly for the improvement of youth. Containing sixty letters in the English* ... London.

Tavernier, John. 1759. *The entertaining correspondent; or, newest and most compleat polite letter writer. In three parts.* ... *To which is prefixed, a large introduction,* ... Berwick.

Anon. 1761. *The polite instructor; or, youth's museum.* London.

Anon. 1762. *The art of letter-writing, divided into two parts. The first, containing rules and directions for writing letters on all sorts of subjects:* ... London.

Tavernier, John. 1762. *The newest and most compleat polite familiar letter-writer. On the most important concerns in life, both with regard to love and business;* ... Berwick.

Seymour, George. 1763. *The instructive letter-writer, and entertaining companion: containing letters on the most interesting subjects,* ... London.

Anon. 1763. *The ladies complete letter-writer; teaching the art of inditing letters* ... *Being a collection of letters, written by ladies,* ... London.

Anon. 1765?. *The British letter-writer: or letter-writer's complete instructor; containing a course of letters on the most useful, important, instructive, and* ... London.

Woolgar, William. 1766. *Youth's faithful monitor: or, the young man's best companion. Containing a compendious English grammar, ... Reading and writing made easy, with ...* The third edition. Improved, enlarged and corrected by John Wright. London.

Anon. 1770?. *The lover's instructor; or, the whole art of courtship. Containing I. The most ingenious letters, ... II. Love-epistles in verse, ...* London.

Cooke, Thomas, Rev., A.B. 1770?. *The universal letter-writer; or, new art of polite correspondence. Containing ... letters on the most important, instructive, and entertaining ...* London.

Du Bois, Dorothea. 1771. *The lady's polite secretary, or new female letter writer. Containing an elegant variety of interesting and instructive letters, ... To which are ...* London.

Anon. 1773. *The court letter writer; or the complete English secretary for town and country. Containing variety of original familiar letters on all manner ...* London.

Anon. 1775?. *The new letter writer; or, the art of correspondence. Containing letters on the most important subjects, ... composed by writers eminent for ...* Whitehaven.

Anon. 1779. *The accomplished letter-writer; or, universal correspondent.*

Johnson, Charles. 1779. *The complete art of writing letters. Adapted to all classes and conditions of life. Designed not only to finish the education of youth in general; ...* London.

Wallace, James, D.D. 1782?. *Every man his own letter-writer: or, the new and complete art of letter-writing made plain and familiar to every capacity. Containing a ...* London.

Anon. 1787. *The accomplish'd letter-writer: or the young gentlemen and ladies' polite guide to an epistolary correspondence in business, friendship, love, and marriage. ...* Newcastle upon Tyne.

Anon. 1788. *The new complete letter-writer: or, the art of correspondence. Containing letters on the most important subjects, viz. business, ... Composed by ...* London.

Fordyce, David. 1790?. *The new and complete British letter-writer; or, young secretary's instructor in polite modern letter-writing. ...* London.

Cooke, Thomas, Rev., A.B. 1790?. *The new and complete universal letter-writer; or, young secretary's instructor. Containing ... original, instructive and entertaining letters, ...* London.

Hogg, Henry. 1790?. *The new and complete universal letter-writer or, whole art of polite correspondence. Containing a great variety of plain, easy, entertaining, and ...* London.

Anon. 1794. *Models of letters, for the use of schools and private students. Being an epitome of the large octavo volume, entitled, Elegant epistles: ...* London.

Anon. 1795?. *The complete art of writing love letters; or, the lover's best instructor. ...* London.

Anon. 1796. *The correspondent, a selection of letters, from the best authors; together with some originals, adapted to all the periods and occasions of life: ...* London. (2 vols.).

Anon. 1800. *The complete young man's companion; or, Self instructer: being an introduction to all the various branches of useful learning and knowledge. ...* Manchester.

Resumen en español

La presente tesis doctoral se centra en el estudio de los principales marcadores de cortesía utilizados en peticiones en Inglés Moderno Tardío, un periodo que abarca los siglos XVIII y XIX en sentido amplio. Al principio de este periodo, *pray*, una forma de origen francés, era el marcador de cortesía preferido en peticiones. *Pray* sustituía la función pragmática realizada por una expresión nativa, el paréntetico *ic bidde*, forma cognada con el marcador de cortesía *bitte* en alemán contemporáneo, usado aún con una función similar. Durante el periodo de Inglés Moderno Tardío *pray* empezó a caer en desuso, mientras que la nueva forma *please* ganaba terreno con la misma función. *Please* también proviene del francés, y de hecho, en francés el principal marcador en peticiones, la construcción condicional *s'il vous plaît*, aún incluye una forma cognada de *please*. En este estudio se analiza cómo el marcador pragmático *please* reemplaza por completo a la forma *pray* en menos de dos siglos. Se presta atención a los aspectos detrás de este proceso de cambio lingüístico. Asimismo, se analizan las diferentes construcciones que dieron lugar a *please* y las vinculaciones que tiene esta sustitución tan reciente en la historia de la lengua inglesa con la cortesía lingüística.

En cuanto a la distribución del trabajo, en el Capítulo 1, se presentan los objetivos del trabajo: (1) describir los marcadores *pray* y *please* como los principales marcadores de cortesía en peticiones en Inglés Moderno Tardío, y cómo la coexistencia de ambos llevó a la desaparición de *pray* a favor de *please*; (2) llevar a cabo un análisis contrastivo de los marcadores pragmáticos *pray* y *please*, haciendo especial énfasis en el origen y evolución del segundo. De este modo se presta

atención (i) a las características pragmáticas que facilitaron que *please* se convirtiese en el marcador preferido en peticiones y (ii) al tipo de proceso que tiene lugar en su evolución. También se delimitan los marcos teóricos en los que se encuadra, la lingüística de corpus, la pragmática histórica y los estudios de gramaticalización. Dentro de la pragmática histórica el presente se estudio se define como de tipo forma-función[95], ya que analiza la evoluciones de marcadores de cortesía, atendiendo a su función pragmática. Asimismo, se hace una valoración de las limitaciones que presenta un estudio de estas características, al analizar elementos pragmáticos típicos del lenguaje oral es estadios anteriores de la lengua. Al tratarse de un estudio basado en textos de diferentes corpus, se proporciona información sobre esta metodología, y sobre los distintos corpus y colecciones incluidas. Este capítulo también incluye información sobre el periodo histórico que abarca el estudio, ya que la perspectiva sociocultural puede ayudar a comprender los cambios lingüísticos que se producen en un momento determinado.

El siguiente bloque de contenidos agrupa la descripción de los marcos teóricos. Además de la metodología relativa a la lingüística de corpus, se han usado otros marcos teóricos en este trabajo. Así, el Capítulo 2 se centra en distintos enfoques pragmáticos, y más en concreto se hace hincapié en las teorías sobre la cortesía lingüística, la teoría de los actos de habla y en estudios y clasificaciones de los marcadores pragmáticos.

Algunos procesos de cambio lingüístico son esenciales para explicar el cambio de *pray* a *please*. De este modo, en el Capítulo 3 se expone como la teoría de

---

[95] Jacobs y Jucker (1995) dividen la pragmática histórica en pragmafilología y pragmática diacrónica y esta, a su vez, en el estudio de tipo forma-función y de tipo función-forma, dependiendo del punto de partida adoptado como enfoque principal en la investigación.

la gramaticalización sirve para describir los orígenes y evoluciones de estos marcadores pragmáticos. También se examinan otras propuestas, relacionadas con la gramaticalización, como la pragmaticalización, la lexicalización y la subjetivización, entre otras.

Ya que los marcadores de cortesía que se analizan en esta tesis doctoral desempeñan su función pragmática esencialmente en peticiones, el Capítulo 4 ofrece un estudio de tipo función-forma sobre el acto de habla de las peticiones. Además de una revisión bibliográfica sobre las peticiones, desde un punto de vista sincrónico y diacrónico, se lleva a cabo un estudio sobre este acto de habla en el siglo XVIII, teniendo en cuenta distintas fuentes de la época, como diccionarios, gramáticas, manuales de cartas y otras obras de referencia extraídas de la base de datos *ECCO* (*Eighteenth Century Collections Online*).

La sección siguiente adopta el enfoque complementario, y así, el Capítulo 5 trata los marcadores pragmáticos *pray* y *please* desde una perspectiva de forma-función. Se parte de detalladas descripciones sobre *pray* y *please*, que abarcan no sólo una perspectiva actual sobre estas formas pragmáticas en inglés contemporáneo en las principales obras de referencia. Se ofrece también una visión diacrónica, teniendo en cuenta obras de referencia y consulta del periodo de Inglés Moderno Tardío, que sirven para proporcionar información específica sobre cómo se interpretaban los principales marcadores de cortesía en peticiones en cada época. Basándonos en reflexiones de varios autores, se han tenido en cuenta distintas razones que justifiquen la sustitución de marcador, incluyendo tanto evidencia de carácter estrictamente lingüístico (fonética, semántica y pragmática), como aspectos socio-políticos.

El Capítulo 6 presenta una clasificación detallada de las estructuras en las que aparece en verbo *please* en Inglés Moderno Tardío. Se parte de las formas propuestas en Allen (1995a, 1995b): 2NP, PROP y UNPROP, y se añaden patrones hallados en los corpus analizados: 1NP, el parentético *please* y la estructura *be pleased to*. El verbo *please* está considerado un verbo de experiencia, y así las distintas construcciones de este verbo presentan diferencias en las funciones sintácticas de experimentador y causa. La diferenciación detallada de tipos y subtipos en estas estructuras facilita el posterior recuento de los datos.

En el Capítulo 7 se lleva a cabo el análisis de datos. En primer lugar se incluye un análisis preliminar en el corpus *ARCHER* (*A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers*), el cual muestra que los únicos géneros en los que se encuentran los marcadores pragmáticos *pray* y *please* son ficción, teatro y cartas. A raíz de los resultados en *ARCHER*, se tienen en cuenta otros corpus para llevar a cabo análisis más concretos. En cuanto a la ficción, dos bases de datos de Chadwyck Healey proporcionan la información necesaria, en concreto *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (1700-1780) y *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (1782-1903). La sección de teatro en *A Corpus of Irish English* constituye el corpus seleccionado para el estudio de este género. Por último, se analiza un corpus epistolar de finales del siglo XVIII, el *Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose* (1761-1790). Todas las estructuras que se revisan en el Capítulo 6 son estudiadas en estos corpus. Se añaden frecuencias normalizadas a los datos extraídos de las distintas colecciones de textos para llevar a cabo un análisis contrastivo tanto a nivel diacrónico como en los distintos géneros.

Dado que las cartas resultan de gran interés al recoger los primeros ejemplos del marcador de cortesía *please* en el siglo XVIII, el Capítulo 8 agrupa dos estudios

adicionales en textos de género epistolar. En primer lugar, se extrajo una selección de manuales de cartas de la base de datos *ECCO* para proporcionar más información sobre *pray* y *please* en este tipo de texto en el siglo XVIII. Un segundo estudio incluye un enfoque sociolingüístico de los marcadores pragmáticos en peticiones en un corpus más tardío, *A Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* (1860-1919), que ofrece gran variedad de datos sobre los informantes y su contexto, lo que nos ayuda a identificar qué perfiles sociales usaban uno u otro marcador.

El Capítulo 9 presenta una discusión de los datos más relevantes expuestos en los capítulos anteriores, teniendo en cuenta los marcos teóricos que delimitan el estudio. Así, se tienen en cuenta las diferentes estructuras disponibles en Inglés Moderno Tardío para exponer cómo ha sido la evolución que ha dado lugar a *please*. También se presentan otros factores de carácter lingüístico que pueden haber influido en dicha evolución, así como factores sociolingüísticos y geográficos que pueden haber condicionado la selección de marcador. Se repasa la evolución de los marcadores *pray* y *please* como ejemplos de un proceso de gramaticalización. También se tienen en cuenta aspectos de cortesía lingüística que han podido influir en la selección de *please* como marcador de cortesía en peticiones, y se repasan distintas funciones pragmáticas en otros actos de habla que *please* ha desarrollado en la historia reciente de la lengua inglesa.

Se han explorado varias hipótesis sobre el origen del marcador de cortesía *please*. Aunque distintos estudiosos apuntan a un origen en la estructura condicional *if you please* como fuente de *please*, los distintos análisis de datos llevados a cabo en el presente trabajo apuntan a una estructura de imperativo como la forma que dio lugar a la palabra más común en la cortesía inglesa. El proceso de gramaticalización

de *please* habría seguido los siguientes pasos: *Be pleased to > please to > please* (verbo) > *please* (marcador de cortesía). De este modo, se habría originado en una claúsula principal y no en una forma ya paréntetica. La gramaticalización de *please* sigue patrones similares a los que se pueden identificar en el desarrollo de otros marcadores pragmáticos, no sólo en lengua inglesa, sino también a nivel interlingüístico.