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How Spouses Used to Address Each Other: A Historical Pragmatic Approach to the Use of Vocatives in Early Modern English Comedies

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Abstract

Compared with other address terms such as *thou* and *you*, which have been vigorously discussed since Brown and Gilman (1960), vocatives are rather neglected in linguistic research in general. In this paper, I will focus on the use of vocatives between married couples in selected Early Modern English comedies. First, I will investigate sociolinguistic patterns in the usage of vocatives. With this in mind, I will then look at some deviant cases in which the previously observed general patterns are broken, thus foregrounded. In doing so, I aim to illustrate how the playwrights of the Early Modern English period exploit a variety of vocatives both to construct the human networks in their dramatic worlds as well as to create humorous effects. This is made possible by the interface of historical linguistics, pragmatics, stylistics, sociolinguistics as well as corpus linguistics. I combine a quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to observe the roles of vocatives as discourse markers, and also to establish a theoretical model for the study of vocative forms.

Keywords: vocatives, address terms, a corpus-based approach, historical pragmatics, discourse markers.

1. Introduction

To begin with, let us take a look at a dialogue between a married couple in the late seventeenth century, taken from William Congreve's *The Double-Dealer* (1694).

Extract 1

Sir Paul.: Pray **your Ladyship** give me leave to be Angry — I'll rattle him up I Warrant you, I'll firk⁽¹⁾ him with a certiorari⁽²⁾.

Lady Plyant: You firk him, I'll firk him my self ; pray **Sir Paul** hold you Contented. (Congreve 1694: 19, original spelling and my emphasis)

In this extract, the husband uses an honorific term, *your Ladyship*, to address his wife, whilst the wife uses an honorific title and the first name, *Sir Paul*, to address her husband. Consequently, this dialogue sounds rather formal and deferential as a conversation between a husband and a wife from the perspective of the twenty-first century, though the content of the utterance is not necessarily so. From this exchange of address terms, the social status of the speaker and the addressee are discernible. It is quite likely that this couple belong to gentry.

How about the following extract? This is a dialogue between Lady Thrivewell and her nephew George Careless, which is taken from Richard Brome's *A Mad Couple Well Match'd* (1653):

Extract 2

Lady Thrivewell: I hope you will say so, when you have heard all **George**; but by the way your late stock being spent, here are ten peeces towards a supply.

Careless: O **sweet golden Aunt!** (Brome: P D8R, original spelling and my emphasis)

In this dialogue, Lady Thrivewell gives pocket money to her nephew George and he

(1) 'Firk' means 'to urge' (*OED*).

(2) 'Certiorari' refers to a legal document issued from a superior court upon the complaint (*OED*).

receives it by replying 'O sweet golden Aunt'. The two interlocutors sound very informal and friendly, though the aunt is obviously situated higher in their kin and financial relationship. The nephew even sounds merry and playful.

Although I have no intention to claim that everybody will have the same impression and interpretation as I do, I would still like to make an enquiry on how I get this impression about these characters. More precisely, which linguistic items are responsible for my understanding of the interpersonal relationships of the characters?

In the second extract, Lady Thrivewell calls her nephew by his first name *George*, whereas the nephew addresses his aunt by the kinship term with double adjectives as in 'sweet golden Aunt'. This vocative conveys the nephew's joy of getting unexpected pocket money as well as his gratitude. It also contains a tone of flattery to his aunt. All of this pragmatic meaning is emphasised by the use of an exclamation mark (Salmon 1979: 348). This long vocative also indicates his playful character and friendly and flattering attitude, as well as his parasitic relationship with his aunt. His aunt, on the other hand, seems also friendly to him in the sense that she allows him to behave like this. In fact, she pampers him. In other words, this exchange of vocatives expresses the emotional state and attitude of each interlocutor.

Unlike the first extract, I find some similarities between this elaborate form of the nephew's vocative and the one my son often uses when he receives some extra pocket money from his grandmother. Are there any common characteristics in flattering vocatives across time, culture and age? Just by looking at two exchanges of vocatives in context, there emerge numerous socio-pragmatic and socio-historical questions one needs to ask.

I may not be wrong in saying that it is not only the content of the utterances but also vocatives which convey the interpersonal and contextual meanings of the dialogue in question. Short noun phrases as they are, vocatives help illustrate vividly the delicate emotions and attitudes which arise between the speaker and the addressee as well as their status and social roles, not to say of the primary discursive functions to attract attention of the addressee. It is rightly said that vocatives 'always express some relationship or attitude' between the interlocutors (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 775). In this sense,

vocatives can be called discourse markers (Brinton 1996).

What metalinguistic message does a vocative have in an utterance? This is the theme in this paper. How can I capture all these characteristics of vocatives in my analysis? This is my methodological concern in this research. As is exemplified in the extracts above, it is necessary to look at the syntax and semantics of the vocative as well as its socio-pragmatic functions, in order to understand the implication of vocatives as a whole. The knowledge of the contemporary theatrical conventions would also help to understand the dramatic implication and pragmatic meaning of vocatives.

Those exchanges of vocatives extracted from Early Modern English gentry comedies obviously differ from what is observed in present-day English conversation in terms of their forms. Did people in the Early Modern English period use more deferential vocative forms than what we use now? Is the first extract particularly deferential because their status is relatively high? Is it the case that married couples exchange more deferential vocatives in the past than at present? Or is this exchange deferential because the type of speech acts they are involved in, in this particular case, are request and command? In other words, do they have to mitigate the force of speech act by deferential vocatives⁽³⁾? Is the second extract particularly exaggerated because it is a theatrical performance of comedy on the stage? Or is it a common practice of the people in the period in question? In other words, were the people in the past more polite than the people now? Those questions are all related to the differences I immediately find in these dialogues. To answer these questions, the knowledge of the historical-cultural background of the play would be inevitable.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the use of vocatives in Early Modern English period in a historical pragmatic perspective, which will hopefully help me answer those questions stated above. I would also like to illustrate how historical pragmatics can interface with sociolinguistics, stylistics, as well as corpus linguistics. Thus my research

(3) I regard deference and politeness as different concepts. As far as vocatives are concerned, there are deferential types of vocatives and familiar types of vocatives in terms of form. Politeness is a pragmatic effect or result created by a certain vocative in a certain context. In short, deferential vocatives do not necessarily imply politeness. It depends on the expected norms and context whether a certain vocative is polite or not.

encompasses several linguistic fields, including historical linguistics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, stylistics and corpus linguistics. A corpus-based approach makes it possible to deal with a large number of texts, and at the same time the theme-specific tagging systems, i.e. the socio-pragmatic tagging system and the vocative-focussed tagging system, enable me to analyse the data qualitatively. In order to analyse data, I have compiled and annotated a corpus of selected Early Modern English gentry comedies.⁽⁴⁾ In my quantitative analysis, I tease out general patterns of vocative use from a sociolinguistic point of view, whilst in my qualitative analysis some examples are examined closely in terms of illocutionary force, plot development and characterisation.

2. Vocatives as discourse markers

2.1 Pragmatic functions of vocatives

I regard vocatives as discourse markers as they have only a little *ideational* meaning, but hold various *interpersonal* and *textual* functions, thus multifunctional⁽⁵⁾. By ideational pragmatic meaning, I refer to the implications which an individual vocative has, as a lexical item or items. For example, 'Careless' in *A Mad Couple Well Match'd* is a careless male character. By textual pragmatic meaning, I refer to the pragmatic meaning inseparably related to the textual property of vocatives on all levels, such as the position in a clause and the frequency of vocatives. Interpersonal pragmatic meaning is closely related to the relationship between the interlocutors.

I present a diagram below to summarise how these three functions can be integrated into the interpretation of vocatives in my research.

2.2 Politeness scale of vocatives

In order to analyse the pragmatic functions of vocatives, I apply Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory. The most significant notion in their theory is *face*,

(4) 'Gentry comedies' are comedies in which most of the main characters are gentlemen and gentlewomen, rather than those from other classes such as nobility or middling groups.

(5) I use Halliday's (1985, 1944) terms here.

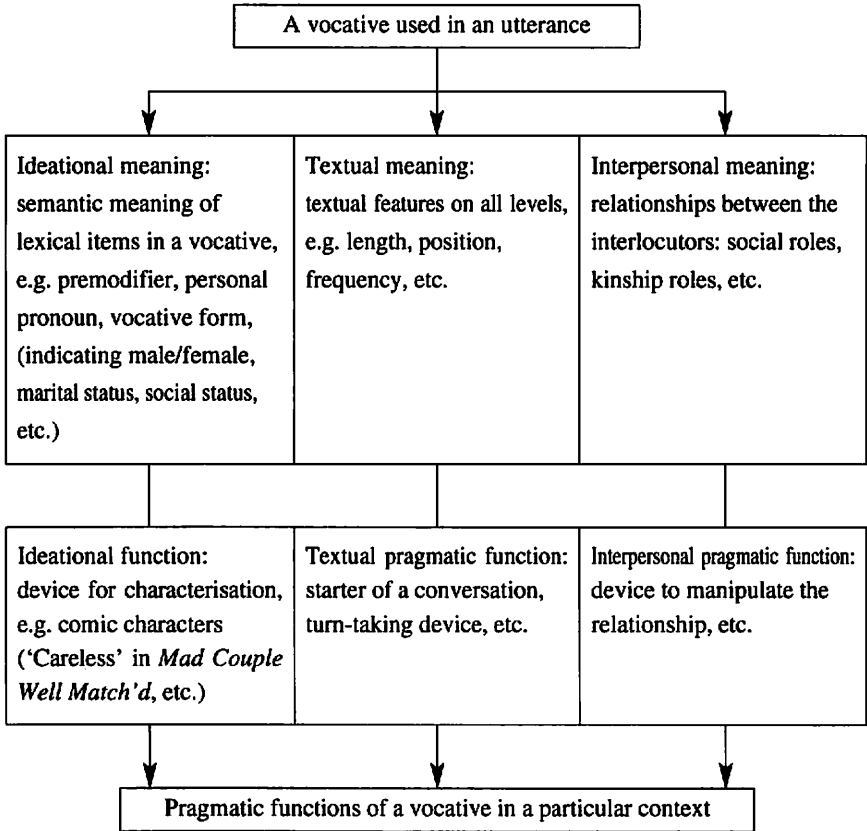


Figure 1. Integrating the pragmatic functions of vocatives

which is people's emotionally invested self-image. Face consists of *positive face* and *negative face*. *Positive face* refers to appreciation by others, whilst *negative face* refers to personal freedom of action. The weightiness of a face-threatening act involves three factors: the relative power and social distance of the interlocutors, and the ranking of impositions. The relative power and social distance factors are closely related to the vocative form, whereas the ranking of impositions is related to the pragmatic force of the utterance. Vocatives, as discourse markers, soften or strengthen the illocutionary force of the utterance.

To analyse vocative forms in terms of politeness, I use a continuum on a sliding scale of values to align vocative forms (Raumolin-Brunberg 1994). I classify vocative forms into two types: the deferential type and familiar type.

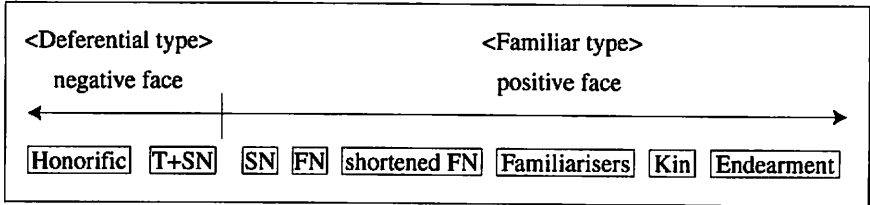


Figure 2. Politeness scale of vocatives

The deferential type oriented to negative face includes *Honorific* and *Title and Surname* (T+SN), whilst the familiar type oriented to positive face includes *Surname* (SN), *First Name* (FN), *shortened First Name* (shortened FN), *Familiarisers*, *Kinship terms* (Kin) and *Endearment*.⁽⁶⁾

2.3 Three-dimensional model of vocatives

Address terms have been discussed vigorously by many linguists since Brown and Gilman (1960). To summarise previous discussions, I would like to refer to Wales (1983). She presents a list of dichotomies of the use of *thou* and *you* in the medieval, which seems relevant in my analysis.

As Figure 3 shows, Wales (1983) maintains that *you* and *thou* or the *V*-form and *T*-form are used according to: i) the interlocutors' relative power relationship (social superiors or social inferiors); ii) their solidarity relationship (formal/neutral or familiar/intimate); iii) their social classes (upper or lower class); iv) an individual situational condition (public or private); and v) the interlocutors' emotional state (respect/admiration or contempt/scorn). It seems that the first three relationships are rather stable and static

(6) In my original classification, I also have *Abusive*, though it is neither shown on this scale nor discussed in this paper. The pragmatic meaning of abusive vocatives is problematic because it totally depends on the context and the relationship of the interlocutors.

<i>You</i> (V-form)		<i>Thou</i> (T-form)
address to social superiors	←————→	address to social inferiors
address to social equals (upper class)	←————→	address to equals (lower class)
address in public	←————→	address in private
formal or neutral address	←————→	familiar or intimate address
respect, admiration	←————→	contempt, scorn

Figure 3. The use of *Thou* and *You* (Based on Wales 1983: 116)

sociolinguistic features, whilst the final two are rather transient and dynamic pragmatic features. I assume that the first set is related to the default form of vocatives, whereas the second set is likely to show some deviant cases which are influenced by the moment-to-moment (ongoing) relationship of the interlocutors in the plot development.

The dichotomies depicted by Wales (1983) do not necessarily correspond to those two seemingly oppositional vocative types, i.e. the deferential type and the familiar type. However, I assume that *thou* corresponds to the familiar type and *you* to the deferential type of vocatives, because such dichotomies as ‘superior or inferior’ and ‘formal/neutral or familiar/intimate’ appear to be relevant factors affecting the choice of vocatives. Reorganising these dichotomies into three groups, I present a working model of vocative forms to allocate each vocative. I put vocatives on a scale of politeness along three axes based on power, solidarity and contextual condition as in Figure 4.

The vertical axis (power) deals with vocatives between equals and non-equals in status and social roles. The horizontal axis (solidarity) refers to vocative use in terms of the distance of the interlocutors’ relationship. The final axis (contextual condition) refers both to the situational condition such as formal or private condition on the one hand, and the emotional condition of the interlocutors such as admiration or contempt on the other. These three axes produce a three-dimensional model of politeness showing vocatives on a scale.

On the basis of this model, I present a few hypotheses on the choice of vocative forms. As the interlocutor goes up the hierarchical power axis, the politeness scale moves towards negative face, whereas it turns to positive face if the interlocutor goes down. Thus my first set of hypotheses: (I a) if the addressee is in a relatively higher

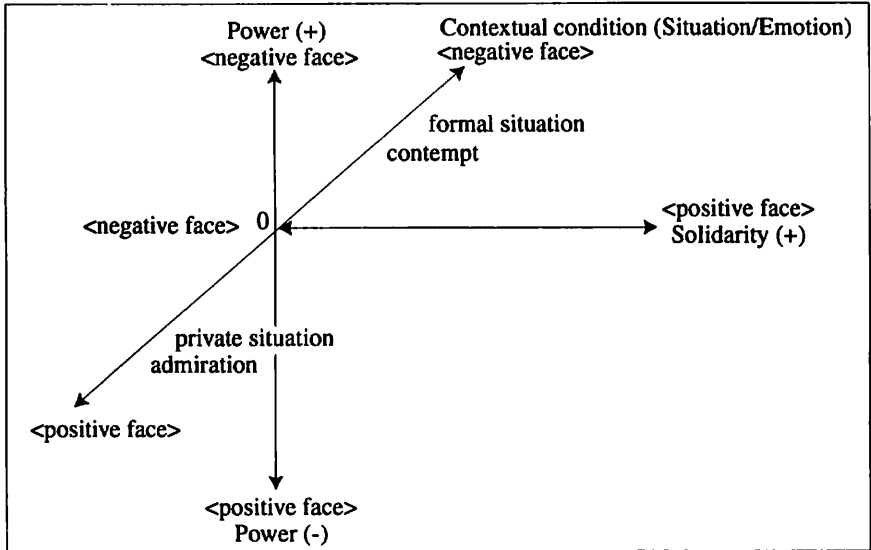


Figure 4. Three-dimensional model showing vocatives on a scale

position than the speaker, the speaker has to or is expected to use the deferential type to address the addressee. On the other hand, (I b) if the addressee is in a relatively lower position than the speaker, the speaker is entitled to use a familiar type to address the addressee.

Along the horizontal solidarity axis, when the relationship becomes closer, the degree of positive politeness increases, whilst it turns negative when the relationship becomes more distant.⁽⁷⁾ Thus my second set of hypothesis: (II a) the people in relatively close relationships use the familiar type of vocative, (II b) whereas those in distant relationships use the deferential type of vocatives to address their addressees.

The third axis is context dependent. Thus my third set of hypotheses: (III a) in a formal situation, the politeness scale moves towards negative face, thus people are expected to use the deferential type, (III b) whilst in an informal situation people are

(7) I assume that the solidarity relationship cannot become below zero: strangers are those who have no solidarity.

expected to use the familiar type of vocatives. The emotional situation, on the other hand, seems more complicated and is dependent on the specific context as well as on the individual characters and the plot development⁽⁸⁾. Thus this requires minute examination. I present my fourth set of hypotheses: (IV a) the speakers use the familiar type when they admire and/or respect the addressees, (IV b) but they choose the deferential type when they hate and/or scorn the addressees⁽⁹⁾. This axis of emotional expressivity is closely related to the individual situation and the character, and the vocatives of endearment and abusive vocatives are involved. This is an interesting stylistic and pragmatic question, but needs to be explored more thoroughly. Thus I leave this topic to another paper and only discuss it briefly in my qualitative analysis later.

3. Data and methodology

3.1 Data

My data comes from my own data set, the “Vocative Focussed Socio-Pragmatic Corpus”, which consists of 12 extracts from plays written between 1640 and 1760 (see Table 1 below). Each extract has approximately 10,000 words; the corpus contains about 120,000 words. My corpus comes from a larger corpus called the “Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760” compiled by Merja Kytö (Uppsala University) and Jonathan Culpeper (Lancaster University).

3.2 Methodology

I have two tagging systems. There are about 2,100 vocatives in my corpus, each of which is annotated according to these two tagging systems. The first is for socio-pragmatic tagging (Aracher and Culpeper, forthcoming), which identifies the interlocutors, including information about each interlocutor in terms of sex, role(s), status, age and so on. The

(8) Although I present a three-dimensional model of politeness scale, we do not always need all these three axes to interpret and explain the pragmatic functions of vocatives.

(9) To be precise, it is not possible to generalise the use of vocatives when vocatives are used to express emotions, especially between close friends and also in ironical and/or comic utterances.

Period 3: 1640-1679			
1647	<i>The Covntrie Girle</i>	T.B.	10,179 words
1653	<i>A Mad Couple Well Match'd</i>	Richard Brome	10,572 words
1675	<i>The Country-Wife</i>	William Wycherley	10,351 words
1676	<i>The Man of Mode</i>	George Etherege	10,251 words
Period 4: 1680-1719			
1694	<i>The Double-Dealer</i>	William Congreve	10,236 words
1696	<i>The Lost Lover; or, the Jealous Husband</i>	Mrs. Manley	10,533 words
1707	<i>The Beaux Stratagem</i>	George Farquhar	10,023 words
1719	<i>Chit-Chat</i>	Thomas Killigrew	10,067 words
Period 5: 1720-1760			
1723	<i>The Conscious Lovers</i>	Sir Richard Steel	9,596 words
1735	<i>The Mother-in-Law</i>	James Miller	10,182 words
1747	<i>The Suspicious Husband</i>	Benjamin Hoadly	13,083 words
1757	<i>The Male Coquette</i>	David Garrick	11,203 words

Table 1. Vocative-focussed socio-pragmatic corpus

second tagging system is a vocative tagging system (Shiina, forthcoming), which distinguishes eight linguistic properties of each vocative such as the form, position in the clause and length. In addition to these tags, I also look at the length of each vocative in my statistical treatment. There are at least twenty-one tags for each vocative in all (6 socio-pragmatic tags for the speaker, 6 socio-pragmatic tags for the addressee, 8 vocative tags and 1 statistical tag). The two tagging systems are summarised in the following table:

Socio-pragmatic tagging system
a. the identification number of the interlocutors (speaker and addressee)
b. the ID numbers of the interlocutors
c. the sex of the interlocutors
d. the roles of the interlocutors:
i) activity roles

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) kinship roles iii) social roles iv) dramatic roles <p>e. the status of the interlocutors</p> <p>f. the age of each interlocutor</p>
Vocative tagging system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the presence/absence of the vocative in the utterance b. the pronoun used in the vocative c. the premodifier used in the vocative d. the vocative form e. the position of each vocative in the clause f. the number of words preceding the vocative in the clause g. the number of words following the vocative in the clause h. the address term used in the utterance (you and/or thou)
Statistical treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the number of words in the vocative

Table 2. Tagging systems

4. Quantitative analysis

4.1 Diachronic change in the use of vocatives

I will start with the quantitative analysis. First, I would like to see the diachronic change. Let us compare the vocative use in the Early Modern English drama with that in the present-day English conversation. The present data is taken from Leech (1999).

As Table 3 shows, there is a drastic change between the two periods, a major shift from the deferential type to the familiar type in a few centuries. However, these two sets of data cannot be compared in the strict sense of the word, since the genre and size of the corpora are different. In order to see the diachronic change between the Early Modern English period and present-day English, I must either compile another corpus consisting of an equivalent number of contemporary English comedies or collect some

Vocative types	Vocative forms	Early Modern English (1640-1760)	Present-day British English
Familiar type	Endearment	60 (3%)	9 (5%)
	Kinship Term	185 (9%)	37 (21%)
	Familiariser	43 (2%)	8 (4%)
	Shortened First Name	44 (2%)	29 (16%)
	First Name	163 (8%)	88 (49%)
	Surname only	154 (7%)	—
Deferential type	Title + Surname	243 (11%)	0 (0%)
	Honorific	1043 (48%)	1 (1%)
	Others	227 (10%)	8 (4%)
	Total	2,162 (100%)	180 (100%)

Notes: i) The cells with more than 10 % are shaded.

ii) The figures in the cells are raw numbers.

Table 3. Proportional use of vocative forms in present-day English and Early Modern English

authentic conversational data of the Early Modern English period. Needless to say, the former is the only possible solution, and this reveals the limitation of linguistic research which deals with any historical data. As I have no access to a corpus of contemporary English comedies at present, a comparison of the usage of vocatives in two corpora, if possible at all, should be taken only as a guide. However, this comparison gives us an indication of the direction in which the usage of vocatives is moving, i.e. from the deferential type to the familiar type.

4.2 General patterns in the use of vocatives

4.2.1 Vocative exchange between a husband and a wife

Are there any general patterns to be discerned in the use of vocatives? Here I focus on how the vocative form changes along the three axes. For example, I would like to look at the vocative exchange between married couples. Table 4 shows how the husband and wife exchange vocatives in the nobility, gentry and middling groups.

In the nobility category, the wife uses the deferential type, more specifically, only

relationship	status	Familiar type					Deferential type	
		endear	kin	familiar	short FN	full FN	T+SN	Honor
husband → wife	nobility	2						1
wife → husband		1						21
husband → wife	gentry	10	2			1	8	13
wife → husband		19	2				11	14
husband → wife	middling groups	2	5	10	3			4
wife → husband			5	8		5	1	

Notes: "husband → wife": vocatives used by the husbands to address their wives.

Table 4. Vocative exchange between husbands and wives

honorifics to address her husband. In the gentry category, the couple use both the deferential and familiar types, but their preference is for the deferential type. Unlike the nobility, the gentry use the title plus surname as well as honorifics. In the middling groups vocative use moves towards the familiar type. To summarise, between the husband and wife, there is a status difference in the use of vocatives in that people of higher status prefer the deferential type and those of lower status prefer the familiar type.

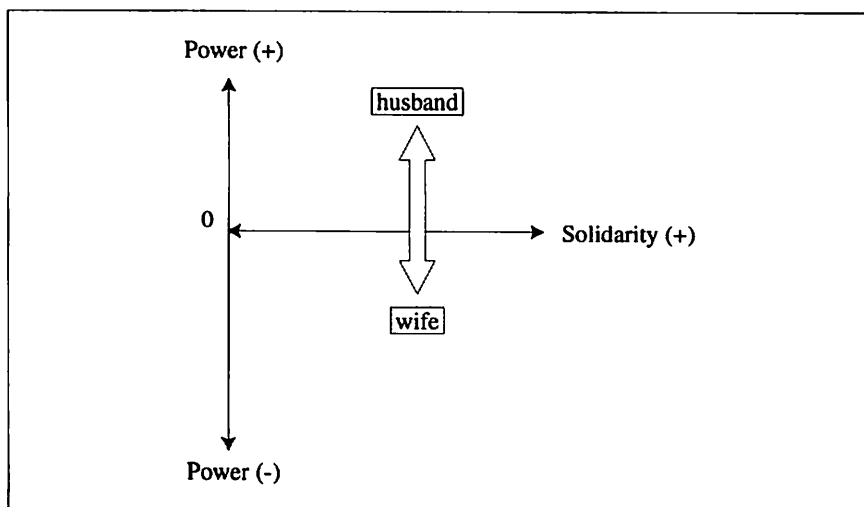


Figure 5. Husband and wife on the two axes

This corresponds with the results shown in Brown and Gilman (1960): *thou* is used by socially equal people of lower status, whilst *you* is used by equals of higher status.

As Figure 5 shows, the wife is in a conflicting position in that the power semantics suggest she use the deferential type to her husband whereas the solidarity semantics indicate just the opposite. How does the wife resolve this conflict? As the vocatives in my corpus show (see appendix), one of the solutions is to use premodifiers of endearment such as *dear* as in 'Dear Mr. Strickland', 'my dear Lord' and 'good dear my Lord', and make vocatives more familiar. The husband, on the other hand, also uses premodifiers of endearment such as *dear* and *poor* as well as the first person possessive pronoun *my* as in 'my Dear' and 'my Love' to mitigate the hierarchical relationship they have. On both sides, these additional items of endearment seem to emphasise their solidarity, even though they are in a hierarchical power relationship.¹⁰ It is worth noting that in the Early Modern English period, people used kinship terms such as *husband* and *wife* as vocatives, but these are no longer used in present-day English.

5. Qualitative analysis

5.1 Social network and vocatives

Now let us move on to the qualitative analysis. I am going to take some examples from Brome's *A Mad Couple Well Match'd* (1653). I would like to focus on the relationship between Thomas Saleware, the owner of a drapery shop, and his wife, Alicia Saleware.

In an extract from my corpus, the default form of vocative used by Alicia to address her husband is the first name in full, whilst the shortened first name is used by Thomas to address his wife Alicia. He also uses vocatives of endearment. Thomas Saleware normally calls his wife 'Ally', and '(my) sweet Ally' as well as 'sweet heart' and 'Love'. Alicia Saleware, on the other hand, usually addresses her husband as

(10) This is parallel to the solution shown in Brown and Gilman (1960). They present a few similar cases of contradictory relationships such as the one between parents and children, and also the one between elder and younger siblings. In both cases, they are both in the hierarchical power relationship as well as in the solidarity relationship. In such a case, the T-form of solidarity is used reciprocally.

'Thomas'.

I regard the default forms as static sociolinguistic phenomena, and the vocative shifts as dynamic pragmatic phenomena. The shift of vocatives from the default form to other forms is interesting pragmatically, because that is the moment at which the interpersonal relationship is most likely to be reconstructed and renegotiated either for better or for worse. This is also the moment at which the third axis of contextual condition, either of formality or emotional expressivity, comes into effect.

5.2 Vocatives in context

In the previous section, I have shown the default forms of vocatives used between Alicia Saleware and Thomas Saleware. With this in mind, I would like to discuss here how vocatives between Alicia Saleware and Thomas Saleware change in the following scene of conflict, because the vocative exchange between this couple seem to be different from the expected pattern.

5.3 Dialogue between a husband and a wife

The next extract is a dialogue between Alicia and her husband, Thomas.

Extract 3

[Thomas Saleware returns home to find Alicia and a young male customer, Bellamy, engaged in friendly talk. Thomas flatters Bellamy but Bellamy does not respond to it as Thomas expects him to. Immediately after Bellamy leaves, Thomas blames Bellamy for his lack of manners and wit. Alicia then says:]

- 1 [Alicia] **Thomas** your hopes are vaine, **Thomas** in seating mee here to
- 2 overreach, or underreach any body. I am weary of this Mechanick course
- 3 **Thomas**; and of this courser habit, as I have told you divers and sundry
- 4 times **Thomas**, and indeed of you **Thomas** that confine me to't, but the
- 5 bound must obey.
- 6 [Saleware] Never the sooner for a hasty word, I hope **sweete Ally**.
- ...
- 7 [Saleware] Troth, and I'le call thee friend, and I prethee, let that be our
- 8 familiar and common compellation: friend it will sound daintily, especially

- 9 when you shalt appeare too gallant to be my wife.
- 10 [Al.] Then let it be so **friend**.
- 11 [Sal.] Intruth it shall, and I am very much taken with it. **Friend** I have found a
- 12 Customer to day that will take off my rich parcell of broad Bed-lace, that my
- 13 Lord Paylate bespoke, and left on my hands, for lack of money.
- 14 [Al.] I have sold it already **friend**, with other Laces at a good rate.
- 15 [Sal.] And all for ready money **friend**?
- 16 [Al.] Yes, **friend**, a hundred pounds, and somewhat more.
- 17 [Sal.] Who would be, or who could live without such a friend, in such a shop?
- 18 This money comes so pat for a present occasion, to stop a gap. It has stopt a
- 19 gap already **friend**.
- 20 [Al.] I have dispos'd of the money, the odd hundred pound for apparrell,
- 21 **friend**, and other accommodations for my selfe.
- 22 [Sal.] Never the sooner for a hasty word I hope **friend**.
- 23 [Al.] I have done it **friend**, whereby to appeare more Courtly, and Ladilike as
- 24 you say, to gaine you more custome to your Shop.
- 25 [Sal.] Uuch **friend** – Is it so?
- 26 [Al.] And **friend** you must not be angry, or thinke much of it, if you respect
- 27 your profit **friend**.
- 28 [Al.] Then **friend**, let your shop be your own care for the rest of this day, I
- 29 have some business abroad.
- 30 [Sal.] Whither **sweet friend**?
- 31 [Al.] Is that a friendly question?
- 32 [Sal.] I am corrected **friend**, but will you not take a Man to wait upon you?
- 33 [Al.] To watch me, shall I? and give you account of my actions? was that
- 34 spoke like a friend?
- 35 [Sal.] I am agen corrected **friend**. ...(Brome, pp. C7R-C7V, original spelling and my emphasis)

After Thomas blames Bellamy's lack of manners, Alicia begins a counter attack by using the first name vocative *Thomas* repeatedly. Notice that both the husband and wife are using the default forms, i.e. the husband uses a shortened first name with a premodifier of endearment, and the wife uses the first name in full. Thus the assumed hierarchy seems to be maintained. Although the norm is maintained in terms of vocative forms, the frequency exceeds the norm. The average frequency of vocative use in this extract is 48%, i.e. there are forty-eight vocatives in one hundred utterances.¹¹ But between Alicia and Thomas the frequency is over 85%, foregrounding these utterances. Alicia's

repetitive use of vocatives controls the dialogue allows her to keep her turn, and leaves no room for her husband to talk.

On lines 1-2, there are two vocatives in one sentence. This high frequency indicates Alicia's anger. Between lines 2 and 5, there are three objects of the phrase, 'I am weary of', in a row as follows:

I am weary

- (1) of this Mechanick course **Thomas**;
- (2) and of this course habit, as I have told you divers and sundry times **Thomas**,
- (3) and indeed of you **Thomas**

Alicia's resentment grows and when she says 'of you Thomas' on line 4, her resentment reaches a climax. Although the first name vocative is a familiar vocative (and the default form here), *Thomas* is used rather aggressively in this dialogue, again indication of Alicia's anger.

The wife is verbally abusing her husband by what she says, and this verbal abuse is supported by the offensive use of vocatives. On lines 7-9, the husband proposes to use a new vocative, *friend*, which he thinks is sophisticated. This is a common practice of Thomas' since he is a social climber and always tries to imitate the manners of the gentry. But this newly introduced vocative is again abused by his wife. She tells her husband to keep a certain distance from her and not to interfere with her privacy if he wants to be in good terms with her as a friend. People without kinship might become closer by calling each other friend, but not a married couple⁰². By the introduction of friend, the vertical power relationship expected to exist in the relationship of a married couple is converted to a horizontal, equal relationship between friends.

On lines 20-21 and 23-24, Alicia asserts that she has already spent all of the money

- (11) The term 'utterance' has a special meaning in my study. I use it to refer to one segment of a particular character's speech that is directed to another character. The segments do not always correspond with the lines of text, hence one line can be counted as two utterances if the speaker talks to two people separately in that line.
- (12) In my corpus, there is another instance in which non-friends, in fact, strangers decide to call each other 'friend'. In this example, a guest to an inn, a man in higher status, proposes a new address term, *friend*, to show his friendliness and goodwill to a man working in an inn, i.e. a man in lower status. Here, the man in lower status is very proud of this newly given address term.

on clothes and other things. However, the familiariser, *friend*, prevents Thomas from making any further queries. Alicia starts her utterances with 'And friend' on line 26, and 'Then friend' on line 28, which are followed by her orders to her husband: 'You must not be angry' (line 26) and 'let your shop be your own care for the rest of this day' (line 28). On lines 26-27, Alicia's utterance is sandwiched between two vocatives. This repetitive use of *friend* at the beginning and also at the end of two utterances is effective in silencing her husband. The illocutionary force of her utterances or orders is strengthened by this seemingly friendly vocative.

Notice on line 30, Thomas tries to familiarise this new vocative by adding a premodifier of endearment, *sweet*, but in vain. When her husband asks sensitive questions, the wife responds to his questions not by answering but by asking questions: 'Is that a friendly question?' (line 31) and 'was that spoke like a friend?' (lines 33-34). These are rhetorical questions, that is, they are questions in form, but orders by implication. They both imply the strong order 'don't ask me questions if you want to be my friend'. Every time the husband asks a question, he has to apologize to her for invading her privacy. In this verbal battle, Alicia battles, then triumphs and goes out to see her lover Bellamy. The relationship is manipulated and even destroyed by a cluster of repeated vocatives and the tactful shift of vocative use on the wife's side. This is also an example in which the values on the axis of situational and emotional conditions affect the implication of the familiar type of vocatives. Again, the playwright exploits vocatives to highlight the power relationship between 'a mad couple', as the title suggests, as well as a conventional comic character of a shrew or a nagging wife, to produce comic effects.

There are several interpretations of the meaning of *friend*. First, a married couple have their own idiosyncratic ways of addressing each other, which might sound strange to outsiders. These special intimate and/or private vocatives are normally unknown to others because people do not tend to use them when a third party is present. Richard Brome, the playwright of *A Mad Couple Well Match'd*, might have used such a rare and strange vocative as *friend* to depict a funny married couple of a nagging wife and a proud but vain husband. Second, this strange vocative may be related to the peculiar

use of vocatives and address terms by the Quakers, who are supposed to call each other 'friend' and/or 'brother'¹³. If so, the playwright must have adopted this strange custom to mock the Quakers, who began to appear at the time when this play was published. However, if I assume that this play was written a few years before its publication (Spove 1979), it seems uncertain whether the playwright knew of the religious practices of the Quakers when he wrote it. Thirdly, there is a historical-cultural interpretation. Queen Henrietta Maria is said to have practised Platonic love in her court, which was well known to the people of London and to theatre-goers. The strange use of *friend* in *A Mad Couple Well Match'd* is most likely to be an echo of the practice of Platonic love.¹⁴ If this interpretation is correct, 'friend' is used to mimic and mock Queen Henrietta's courtly or religious practice. The audience in the Early Modern English period must have noticed this immediately and enjoyed this joke vocative together with other fixed Latin phrases of Thomas', which reflect his strong interest in becoming a gentleman.

In this example, I have explained interpersonal pragmatic functions in a particular scene where the vocative shifts from the default forms to deviant forms, and changes the characters' relationship. I have also discussed the textual pragmatic functions played by the position and frequency of the vocative. Interestingly, the use of a familiariser does not necessarily mean that a relationship becomes closer and more friendly. On the contrary, the shift from the norm makes the whole utterance aggressive. I have found that deviant or unexpected vocatives help to enhance comic effects in the plot development, and so contribute to characterisation in the play.

6. Conclusion

Now that the default vocative form is the first name in the English speaking world as Leech (1999) shows, it is difficult to see the hierarchical and solidarity relationships

(13) The Quakers also use 'thou' to address each other like Thomas, here (line 7) (Brown and Gilman 1960).

(14) Spove (1979), for instance, supports this interpretation of *friend* as a mockery of Queen Henrietta's practice of Platonic love in her court.

between people in the use of vocatives. But this has not always been so. In the Early Modern English period, class, status and social roles seem to be realised more clearly in vocatives. The playwrights of the Early Modern English gentry comedies were aware of it and exploited a variety of vocatives as a linguistic device to construct human relationships in the dramatic world as well as to manipulate them as the plot proceeds. Especially in comedies, vocatives fluctuate around comic characters and help to enhance comic effects. From a linguistic point of view—a tiny item as it is—a vocative is a useful linguistic tool to analyse drama texts in terms of pragmatics and stylistics. My systematic and comprehensive tagging systems enable me to extract some interesting features of the use of a variety of vocatives by the playwright. In my future research, I would like to focus on vocatives used by people in different kinds of relationships, such as strangers-acquaintances-friends, as well as people in socially different roles such as master/mistress-servant/maid, and see how these different social roles are constructed by a variety of vocatives in the gentry comedies of the Early Modern English period.

Source texts (taken from the *Corpus of English Dialogue 1560-1760*)

Brome, R. (1653) *A Mad Couple Well Match'd*.

Congreve, W. (1694) *The Dougle-Dealer*.

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Appendix. Vocatives used between married couples

	Nobility		Gentry		Middling groups	
	husband > wife	wife > husband	husband > wife	wife > husband	husband > wife	wife > husband
endearment	my Dear	my Dear	Dear Dearest my Dear my Dearest my Love my Life <i>my dear, dear of honour</i>	Dear poor Dear my Dear Love my Love my Soul my Life	Love sweet heart	
kinship			Wife Mrs. Wife	Husband	Wife poor wife	Husband dear Husband
familiarisers					friend sweet friend	friend
shortened FN (=sFN)					sFN Sweete sFN my sweet sFN	
first name (=FN)			My FN			FN
title + surname (surname=SN) (Sir + FN)			Mistris SN Mrs. SN my Lady SN	Mr. SN Dear Mr. SN Sir FN		Mr. SN
honorific	Madam	my Lord my dear Lord Good my Lord good dear my Lord	Mistris Madam Ladyship poor Madam your Ladyship my Lady	Sir Your Honour <i>my dear, dear of Honour</i>	Mistriss/ Mistress gentlewoman	
others (other forms, abusive, expletive vocative, problematic cases)	<i>ingrateful Monster</i>		dear Bud poor Innocent Wretch my poor Rogue	child man Bud Dear Bud Fool Worm you jear <i>you disobedient headstrong</i> Brute Fool <i>Thou, poor, pitiful creature</i>		