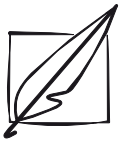


Jan Kochanowski University Press

This is a contribution from *Token*: *A Journal of English Linguistics*
Volume 6/2017.
Edited by John G. Newman, Marina Dossena and Sylwester Łodej.
Guest Editors for volume 6: Minna Nevala and Matylda Włodarczyk.

Social identities in an institutional network: Colonial Office correspondence on the Cape Colony in the early nineteenth century[1]

Matylda Włodarczyk
Adam Mickiewicz University

ABSTRACT

This paper offers a sociopragmatic analysis of the correspondence of the British Colonial Office pertaining to the colonisation of the Cape of Good Hope in the early nineteenth century. This setting poses fascinating questions related to the alignment of letter writers with the institution and the other actors, as well as to the ways in which social/institutional identities are constructed. In these processes, the participants' powers and obligations that are shaped by the institutional grid play a central role. At the same time, the growing professionalisation of the civil service determines linguistic expression in the Colonial Office. The paper provides a close characterisation of its internal dynamics, the power structures and the local grid of governance, as well as the transactional networks in 1796 and in 1827-30. My analysis focuses on the relation between institutional identities and person reference, and shows that Colonial Office correspondence is characterised by unique patterns of self- and addressee-reference, thus corroborating the precedence of local (institutional) factors over other determinants of person reference.

Keywords: early nineteenth-century institutional letters, person reference, historical sociopragmatics, British Colonial Office, Cape Colony.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the power structures and transactional networks in an institutional setting of early nineteenth-century British Colonial Office (henceforth CO), a government agency responsible for colonial policies. It

[1] I would like to thank the insightful reviewers for useful suggestions on the draft. The remaining infelicities are mine.

aims to reconstruct these structures and networks based on the internal correspondence of the officials. As the production and reception of letters is rarely individual, letter exchange is viewed as a specific semi-public domain of interaction (cf. Włodarczyk 2013a). The study focuses on the local and institutional aspects of identity projections that are recoverable from correspondence and poses the following questions: What kind of social and institutional spaces and identities emerge? What kind of relational work is observed in the data? Are interpersonal evaluations relevant to CO correspondence? These questions are addressed in a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the linguistic realisations of person deixis against the background of a theory of social distance as applied to the study into historical correspondence (Nevalainen – Raumolin-Brunberg 1995; Nevala 2004; Palander-Collin 2009a, 2009b and 2009c; Nurmi – Nevala 2010). Moreover, the paper assumes that epistolary interaction of institutional nature involves some conventions and restrictions on linguistic expression that may have been subject to change over time. Sociohistorical and institutional circumstances indicate the 1820s in particular as a time of transformation of the office's correspondence due to a range of regulatory attempts and steps taken by the Secretaries of State, Earl Bathurst and William Horton (Laidlaw 2005: 49, 88). Thus, the linguistic projections of social identities are likely to differ between the end of the eighteenth century and the late 1820s. Therefore, two datasets representing the two historically and institutionally important periods (1796 and 1827-30) were selected for analysis. In 1796 the British administrative rule over the Cape Colony was only taking shape and the institutional and procedural background of the correspondence was transitional and emergent. By the late 1820s, the CO has become a well-established institution and an efficient bureaucratic machine. Hence, the institutional spaces in which identities could be negotiated, may have become more defined and hierarchically segmented. In other words, in 1796 the global, i.e. more socioculturally grounded reference points for relational work would have been adopted (see Włodarczyk 2015: 158-159), while in the course of 30 years local norms may have become more conspicuous. Apart from the change in interaction modes and identity projections, an analysis of person reference demonstrates that institutional factors may have taken precedence over other determinants of person reference (e.g. social distance) in both periods. The study contributes to the understanding of the dependence of person reference on factors such as social (or family) hierarchies, gender and involvement. The results expand on this issue in line with the findings of Vartiainen – Säily – Hakala (2013) who demonstrate

that the complexity of person reference determinants goes beyond the effects of the gender variable and indicate the nature of the sender-recipient relationship as another significant parameter.

The paper is organised in the following way: Section 2 focuses on the theoretical background of social identities in historical linguistics and sociopragmatics, including the interface with person reference. In Section 3, I present a close sociohistorical and institutional contextualisation of the analysed datasets. Then, the collective and mutually sustainable identities in the CO are illustrated with some examples to show the factors that underlie their construction (Section 4). Section 5 is concerned with a qualitative and quantitative analysis of person reference in relation to the institutional identity work in the Colonial Office. Section 6 provides some concluding remarks.

2. Identity in historical linguistics and (socio)pragmatics

Theories of identity have proliferated in social sciences in particular, but as language is indubitably one of the tokens of identity, linguistic research in the area is also vast (see e.g. Tabouret-Keller 1998 for an overview). What different perspectives on identity have in common is the belief in the inherent dynamics and heterogeneity of the notion. Identity at any dimension, individual, communal, social, etc. is viewed as a process emerging in local discourse contexts (Bucholtz – Hall 2003) that performs chiefly a boundary marking function (e.g. *we* vs. *they*). In historical linguistics attempts have been made at reconstructing identities on relational and sociocultural levels in reference to the concepts such as social roles (Pahta et al. 2010) accessed primarily via the vast array of phenomena of person reference and social deixis. Moreover, linguistic manifestations of stance and affect have allowed a pursuit of identities in different historical periods in relation to social status, gender and professional roles (Nurmi – Nevala 2010). On the relational level, a number of sociocultural dimensions have been explored as underpinnings of identification processes and frameworks have been proposed for understanding the interfaces between discourses and identities (Wood 2009), and between individual and group identities.

Most recently, the usually binary focus of historical linguistic study on the macro dimension of the social and the micro dimension of the individual has expanded to cover what may be described as the medial level of small, well-defined communities. Such communities routinely engage in purposeful interaction with an intended, very often material outcome, i.e. professional communities (see Kopaczyk – Jucker 2013). The

CO correspondents, whose identities are of central interest to this paper, may be viewed as one such community. A focus on the transactional networks and their influence on language use constitutes a bridge between the micro and macro contextualisation, i.e. the medial contextual level. This level of analysis has been of particular interest to historical sociopragmatics. Among the central themes of sociopragmatic study are "(1) situated roles and identities, (2) relational notions such as "face" and "face-work", rights and obligations, power, social distance and affect, and (3) attitudes and opinions" (Culpeper 2009: 181). Moreover, Archer (Archer 2017) emphasises that sociopragmatics focuses on what variables are of significance to the contemporary understanding of the status systems of a given period. In a similar vein, Wood (2009: 188) views the concern of historical (socio) pragmatic in how social conditions affect the use of texts and identities of the participants in speech situations, but underlines the focus on communities. Thus in a sociopragmatic perspective we may view social identities not only as essentially related to the contemporary widely applied categories and values (global), but first and foremost to the specific category and value set that is of significance to a given community (local). This is not to claim that communities typically reinvent social spaces against the mainstream social divisions and perceptions, but that there is more to social identities observed locally, and in particular in a workplace or institutional setting, than may emerge from a global picture. In other words, inasmuch as social hierarchies feed into institutional ones, institutional hierarchies will take precedence over social hierarchies as institutions develop, solidify and as the communities involved become increasingly routine-based, exclusive and self-contained.

2.1 Identity in institutional settings

On the micro level of interaction, social identities are negotiated in interpersonal or relational work. This dimension normally involves engaging in the development, maintenance or otherwise shaping the relationships that connect the interlocutors. In workplace contexts, interlocutors are understandably bound by professional relations as part of their institutional identities, but, as research shows, they tend to step in and out of other (i.e. non-professional) social identities and roles at the same time (Kreiner – Hollensbe – Sheep 2006: 1317). Thus identities in the modern workplace are inseparable from individual mosaics of all the social and interpersonal binds. This is to say that the professional, i.e. transactional tasks people

engage in in the workplace are in most cases supported by interpersonal relational work (Bargiela-Chiappini – Harris 1996). Similar conclusions have been made about email correspondence by Bremmer (2006: 421), who shows that institutional identities are no less complex in this domain than in face-to-face interaction. As far as historical written data are concerned, merchant and diplomatic correspondence display similar patterns, with letter writers engaging in professional tasks and friendly interaction in a single letter (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006; Dossena 2010a and 2010b). These findings may be extended to the interactional setting of the CO, whose correspondence is also likely to bring together identities as social and identities as subjective constructs (cf. Tabouret-Keller 1998). The important question that may be raised in relation to this assumption is to what degree the interpersonal relational work plays a role in CO interaction. This paper shows that the role that the subjective and interpersonal play in shaping the institutional spaces of social identities in the CO should not be taken for granted. This is due to a range of contextual factors that call for rethinking the relational/ interpersonal dimension of the recorded interaction (see Section 4 below). It is also feasible to assume that the degree to which the interpersonal dimension of interaction may feature in the analysed setting may be revealed through the patterns of person reference, which is the focus of the next subsection.

2.2 Person reference

The domain of person reference, like all linguistic phenomena, is not randomly variable, but rule-governed and orderly (Enfield – Stivers – Levinson 2007). Although most studies into reference have been conducted within CA[2] and they have focused on first mentions in a stretch of conversation (see Enfield 2012 for an overview), their results point to more general, perhaps universal, mechanisms and may be tested against written historical data (Nevalainen – Raumolin-Brunberg 1995; Nevala 2004; 2009; Palander-Collin 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; Nurmi – Nevala 2010; Włodarczyk 2013b). CA studies show that in the use of person reference, first and foremost, the principle of recognition operates: the form needs to allow unambiguous recognition of the referent. Secondly, there is a preference for minimisation (Sacks – Schegloff 1979)

[2] Data for CA usually cover interaction on low levels of formality among informants who know each other. Hence, the overall question in this study is how relevant their findings may be to written exchange conducted on relatively high levels of formality in the early nineteenth century.

which means that speakers tend to use a single reference form to designate a specific referent. When the two principles are in conflict, the former takes priority over the latter. A form that follows both principles is referred to as a "recognitional reference form" (Stivers – Enfield – Levinson 2007: 11).

Beyond such forms, speakers need to resort to other types of person reference, not only in cases in which the preferred form fails to achieve recognition (Stivers – Enfield – Levinson 2007: 13), but also if they aim at achieving more than just a reference to a specific person (Stivers 2007). In the latter case, we talk about "marked reference" or "alternative recognitionals" (Schegloff 2007: 500). Research shows, for instance, that first name (FN) is the preferred recognitional form in English when the referent is mentioned for the first time. In order to account for the differences between initial[3] and subsequent referential terms, Schegloff noticed two different patterns: FN for the former and pronominal reference for the latter (1996). In the case of self-reference and direct reference to the addressee, these are indeed achieved by default by means of pronominal forms (Schegloff 1996: 442). The above-mentioned principles apply to the data analysed here in following ways. In the initial reference (i.e. letter opening), a range of respectful terms of address and titles are employed to reflect the institutional and social hierarchies in which the interactants are involved. In the body of letters, in general, first and second person pronouns are the preferred forms of referring to the writer and addressee respectively. In other words, alternative (i.e. non-pronominal) forms of self and second person reference in the body of the letters may be considered as marked and particularly revealing in terms of the deictic and social spaces that they denote, hence they require further analysis (see Section 5.2).

2.3 Social dimensions of person reference

Social differentiation of language is related to the underlying social identifications and may be accessed through terms of address and person reference. Forms of person reference are related to social hierarchies with language tokens such as pronouns, nouns, etc. viewed as double indexicals that identify and locate a speaker within "a culturally specific moral order" (Nevala 2009: 77). Studies into person reference in historical letters (see Mazzon 2010 and Nevala 2010 for overviews; cf. Nevala 2004) have

[3] It is important to bear in mind the two distinct understandings of "initial" here: the first applies to the position in a stretch of discourse, the second to the ordering of referential terms (see Enfield 2012: 446)

mostly taken into account the dimensions of intimacy and social distance as determining their use. For instance, Palander-Collin has shown that in a set of sixteenth- and eighteenth-century English letters, self-mention and pronominal addressee reference are less frequent in letters to social superiors, where the needs of the recipient are in focus, while in the letters to social inferiors the incidence of self-referential terms and addressee reference is higher (Palander-Collin 2009a; cf. Palander-Collin 2009b: 268-69 and 2009c: 112). Moreover, in formal situations writers tend to use alternative nominal terms such as, for instance, indirect addressee inclusion that involves evasion of the second person pronoun (e.g. 'Your Lordship'; Palander-Collin 2009a: 60). In terms of pronoun frequencies, the above patterns are also observed when the intimacy[4] dimension is taken into account. Here, the focus on the writers themselves comes to the fore and surfaces in a higher incidence of self-reference between intimate interactants compared to strangers or formal, e.g. business, relationships. Overall, the use of first and second person pronouns in letters is related to the degree of personal involvement, i.e. the interactive dimension of communication, which manifests itself in referential terms, as well as in the markers of stance, cognitive verbs, contractions, etc. This aspect of communication has been characterised in detail and quantified in the well-known multidimensional analysis (Biber 1988: 89-91) based on PDE data, as well as in relation to historical texts (Biber – Finegan 1997). The model lists second- and first-person pronouns among the grammatical features that define the so-called *involved* dimension of interaction (in contrast to the *informational* production). Biber's analysis covers a broad range of features (23 positive and 5 negative factors in this dimension alone), so it is the co-occurrence of the self- and addressee referential pronouns with other features that characterises involvement. Thus pronouns are just one aspect of the involved dimension, but their role is particularly prominent in correspondence. In historical letters, according to Vartiainen – Säily – Hakala (2013: 252), "personal pronoun use is a multifaceted phenomenon" that is determined by politeness, relative positioning of the participants in communication, the subject matter, as well as by the construction of social identities. The authors focus on gendered styles, but they also demonstrate gender-internal differentiation in pronoun frequencies, thus showing complex patterning of their determinants. In particular, Vartiainen – Säily – Hakala (2013) indicate the role of specific

[4] The intimacy/ familiarity dimension is excluded from the discussion as the reconstruction of the relevant variables for the CO employers is not feasible.

relationships between interactants, demonstrating in this way that factors underlying person reference patters go beyond the conventionally studied parameters of intimacy, social distance or gender. Similarly, in this study I aim to analyse the frequencies in the use of first and second person pronouns in relation to a conventional variable of (institutional) hierarchy to see if the data show consistency in this respect.

At this point, first and second person reference needs to be related to the specific setting of CO correspondence. First of all, the sociocultural background of CO letters implies restraint and the need to refrain from involvement overall (see Section 3 for details). Secondly, the institutional collective front imposes some limitations on relational work and interpersonal evaluation (see Section 4 for details). In relation to these contextualisations of the ways in which social/institutional distance is maintained in the Colonial Office correspondence and to the findings of previous studies into person reference the following hypotheses may be put forward:

1. a) In the letters to institutional superiors, self-reference will be avoided.
   b) In such letters, pronominal second person reference will not be preferred as an unmarked form, rather more distance-marking, socially and institutionally grading terms will be used.
2. a) In the letters to institutional inferiors, self-reference will be more frequent.
   b) In such letters, pronominal second person reference will be more frequent by the nature of the institution whose operation is based on giving and taking orders and due to the need to give space to addressee in order maintain the common front.
3. As the segmentation of institutional space will be more visible in the established institution in 1820s, rather than in the transition phase, the above effects should be more visible in the later dataset (see Section 3 for details).

These hypotheses are tested in Section 5, following the presentation of the sociohistorical context of the two datasets provided in Section 3 and a description of the corporate identities in the CO in Section 4.

3. Sociohistorical context

In the nineteenth century exerting long-distance colonial governance involved the need to coordinate the development of infrastructure,

the legal system and colonial policies, and this resulted in the rise of an information/bureaucratic state. Here, not only writing in general, but information exchange, in particular, became central to exercising control over newly-acquired territories. Hence, among documentary genres and modes of communication, letter exchange embodied the triangle of writing, knowledge and power (Paisley – Reid 2014) in the period. This study focuses specifically on the correspondence pertaining to the establishment of the British rule in the Cape of Good Hope at the turn of the nineteenth century and the subsequent settlement in the late 1820s. In this period, British imperial affairs (beyond Ireland and British India) were conducted via the institution called the Colonial Office. The CO was a government agency established in 1801 together with the War and the Colonial Department in order to administer and control the rapid expansion of the empire (Laidlaw 2005: 41)[5]. The institution was supervised by the Third Secretary of State (acting for War and the Colonies), who was part of the cabinet, and so were the local representatives, i.e. the Governor of the colony, the local staff and institutions. In the official bureaucratic dimension, both centres of power (in Britain and in the colonies) relied on the work of clerks responsible chiefly for the production of correspondence, the filing and record, as well as the coordination of the dispatches. Confidential correspondence aside, research has shown that letters circulated relatively freely within the institution and that internal correspondence was frequently a result of communal effort with the higher officials employing their secretaries, or regular clerks, to produce clean/final copies for dispatch. Similarly, the external letters, i.e. to the citizens in the Cape Colony, may have been drafted by higher officials, but were also mediated by the lower clerks (Włodarczyk 2015). Although the degree of communal composition is impossible to verify in all cases, there is no doubt that correspondence was accessible to the CO staff in general, as producers and addressees, as well as for the purposes of archivisation. Hence, the data constitute a semi-public specialised domain of interaction which hosts multiple institutional, as well as social identities projected by the officials and clerks.

[5] Prior to this, the Home Office managed the colonial affairs, apart from India and the associated territories (Banton 2008: 26). Banton gives details on the appointment of colonial (under)secretaries in the Home Office, and the third secretary in particular, since 1768 (American Department or Colonial Department). Young (1961: 14) gives 1795 for the establishment of a distinct Colonial Office, and the date is followed by some historians (McKenzie 2016: 64). In this paper, the establishment of the CO is understood as its institutionalisation beyond the Third Secretary (appointment of a private secretary, clerks, housekeepers and porters).

3.1 CO data

The government records[6] covering several decades (from February 1793 to April 1831) of the British activity in the Cape Colony were published in a monumental edition prepared by a historian of the colony, George McCall Theal between 1897 and 1905. *Records of the Cape Colony* (henceforth *RCC*) provide a handy primary source on the British educational, legal and cultural policy in the colony and has been used extensively by historians. Theal's work covers a range of public documents, such as proclamations, summaries of court cases and proceedings, financial returns and various reports on the colonial territory. Still, the correspondence of the colonial officials and clerks, i.e. the internal exchange within the Cape Colony, as well as between the local administration and institutions in London, constitutes the greater part of the edition. In this paper I focus mostly on two roughly equal samples of correspondence[7]: from 1796 (*RCC* 1) and from 1827-30 (*RCC* 32, 34 and 35), which I prepared for computational analysis. In terms of the number of the letters, the first sample is much smaller (96 letters) with relatively longer letters, while the second sample contains twice this number (185 letters) of much shorter ones. In the course of time, the circle of CO correspondents has expanded from 11 to 36 letter writers and from 15 to 37 addressees. Overall, the analysed data cover c. 117,000 words, 281 letters from 47 senders to 52 addressees. Table 1 presents the statistics on the data.

Table 1. CO data

Year	Wc.	Letters	Wc. per letter	Senders	Recipients
1796	58,981	96	614	11	15
1827-30	58,218	185	315	36	37
TOTALS	c. 117,000	281		47	52

3.2 Institutional organisation of CO in 1796: First steps in the administration

A letter from a British Admiral in charge of HM fleet at the Cape of Good Hope to a Dutch Admiral Lucas written on August 26th, 1796 signposts the

[6] Records of the predecessors of the Colonial Office are preserved in the National Archives and their facsimiles may be accessed via the State Papers Online database, among others (16th-18th centuries).

[7] For the purpose of qualitative analysis that focuses on the identity spaces in the CO, I also used selected letters from volume 15.

British annexation of the territory from the Dutch East India Company. Following a peaceful takeover a year before this event, the British officials involved in the administering the territories at the Cape of Good Hope entered a period of institutional transition. In terms of the organisation of the administration, the officials at the Cape only received provisional support from London, while the external and internal status of the officers and officials was unclear, as were their administrative competences. Despite the fact that a more solid grid of administrative structure was only emerging, the interdependence of colonial and metropolitan institutions was very strong, with the regulations as to the competence and actions of the officials in the Cape Colony produced in accord with the circumstances. Initially, following the British military expedition to the Cape of Good Hope, General Craig, jointly with Admirals Elphinstone and Pringle, were in charge of the British governance of the Colony. Later Craig was appointed the Colony's first British governor (more specifically, Commandant of the Town and Settlement of the Cape of Good Hope; Theal 1908: 473). At the same time, a military position was introduced to the local government: Commodore John Blankett became Naval Commander.

The hierarchy of power involved governor Craig answer to the king rather than to the Secretary of State, although the governor was engaged in one-way correspondence with the latter only. The correspondence of the British representatives in the new colony showed a strong insistence on approval and acceptance from Britain while little autonomy was attempted. At this stage, there was no defined "professional" line of duty that is distinctive for civil officials as opposed to the military. In this sense, the self-positioning against any "higher" authorities is very strongly marked by two types of ordering: social and military. The emerging institutional grid of power may be viewed as involving three levels: the government in Britain (level 1), the provisional government in the colony (level 2) and the Dutch institutions (level 3) (see Appendix 1). Within each of the tiers, institutions were supervised by the central position in the CO, i.e. that of the Secretary of State in Britain and the Governor in the Cape Colony. Posts of under-secretaries and secretaries, the latter introduced later (and operating for the 1827-30 dataset), involved the supervision of the institutions on the relevant levels. The institutions and their representatives on level 1 supervised the officials and the institutions on the lower level (2), and, indirectly, on level (3).

Despite the clearly military character of the colonial government at this stage, the correspondence is dominated by the figure of Major General

Craig, whose ambitions were peaceful and constructive. Craig, who wrote the greatest number of letters in the analysed sample (see Table 2 and Appendix 2 below), emerges as a humane, thoughtful ruler and skilled strategist, is mostly guided by caution and a realistic judgment of the threats and vulnerability to the British position at the Cape. The chief recipient of Craig's letters was Henry Dundas, Secretary of State for War. The next of Craig's correspondents (in-letters), the War Office in Britain addressed him implicitly on behalf of Henry Dundas, who failed to write a single letter to the Cape Colony in this period, despite the fact that other writers (e.g. Elphinstone) also addressed him directly. The third metropolitan addressee of Craig's was Admiral Evan Nepean, Dundas' protégée, who also represented the highest level of the institutional hierarchy. Correspondents in the colony, i.e. Generals Elphinstone and Pringle, may be placed on a par with governor Craig in the institutional hierarchy, although their role was most profound in the military expedition, not in governance. Also Commodore Blankett is best viewed as equal to the members of the provisional government. At the lowest level the Dutch institutions and the officials representing them may be seen. Here however, we only have incidental correspondence addressed to Craig (Appendix 1 and 2).

Table 2. Letters sent and received by major correspondents (1796)

Major correspondents 1796	Letters sent by	No of recipients	Letters received by	No of senders
Pringle (2)	6	1	1	1
Blankett (2)	7	4	–	–
Craig (2)	43	4	17	5
Elphinstone (2)	20	6	5	5
H. Dundas (1)	–	–	44	2
Nepean (1)	1	1	15	2
War Office (1)	14	3	–	–

Based on the institutional hierarchy outlined above (see Appendix 1 for details), three categories of letters may be distinguished: (1) the letters "up" (from level 1 to level 2, i.e. Dutch institutions to colonial authorities, and from level 2 to level 3, i.e. from the colonial officials to the supervising bodies in Britain), (2) letters "down" (the opposite of letters "up") and (3) equal letters exchanged on each of the levels (in reality the correspondence on level 2, i.e. among the officers who represented Britain in the colony).

3.3 Late 1820s: Internal tensions and external control

Since 1806 the British had employed an active policy on the Cape Colony (Thompson 2001: 54-55). However, their first attempt at permanent colonisation was only made in 1820 with the government plan that involved the transport and allocation of land to c. 4,500 Britons. The arrival of the 1820 settlers and the inadvertent circumstances of the first years of the colonisation engaged the CO in intense external correspondence with the settlers. Towards the end of the third decade of the nineteenth century, however, the initial difficulties were already under control and the administration was more engaged in the internal tensions (Peires 1989: 477-79). The period between 1827-30 was a time of many transitions of power, not only in the local, but also in the metropolitan government with four Secretaries of State and two governors. In the Cape Colony, governor Somerset resigned from the office amid scandal following 12 years of service (1814-1826; cf. McKenzie 2016: 75). Politically and socially, the Colony witnessed tensions related to the slave trade and freedom of the press. The turmoil related to these events induced the government in London to carry out an investigation into the work of the administration, the distribution of funds and the scope of prospective political and administrative reforms in the Cape Colony. To this end a Commission of Eastern Inquiry was founded by the Board of Trade and sent to the Cape of Good Hope (Peires 1989: 496-97). The activity of the Commissioners is visible in their rich correspondence with the officials in Britain and their local representatives (see Table 3 and Appendix 3).

Within the thirty years of British presence, governors of the Cape Colony had developed autocratic powers and the few regulations introduced by the British government in order to impose some control over their actions failed to change the situation (Thompson 2001: 63). In the face of this, the Colonial Office administration in the Cape Colony was a much more autonomous institution than its predecessor in 1796. On the other hand, the central government's attempt at control through the Commission of Eastern Inquiry show that the three-tier internal hierarchy had not changed substantially over time. Institutionally, as historians frequently emphasise (Freund 1989: 344), the British rule relied to a large extent on an extended administrative apparatus characterised by increasing professionalisation as a mode of successful colonial governance. The extension is not only clear in the much greater number of correspondents (clearly due to the higher number of letters), but also in the introduction of representatives for the highest officials in London and in the Colony. The highest institutional position, Secretary of State, was now represented by two under-secretaries (Hay and Horton). One of them,

William Hay, was one of the two most active of all the correspondents in the analysed dataset, followed by governor Bourke. Most letters were directed to Hay, not to the Secretaries (Bathurst, Goderich, Huskisson and Murray). Cape Colony governors also had their own secretaries or representatives of the local government (Plasket and Bird). Table 3 presents the major correspondents with their positions in the institutional grid marked by the level numbers: it will be observed that most letters were exchanged between the highest officials or their representatives in London (level 1) and the highest officials or their representatives in the Cape Colony (level 2). One relatively frequent correspondent represents an institution of Dutch origin (Fiscal Denyssen) positioned at level 3, as a local body supervised by the local British governance. In terms of institutional hierarchy crossing, the letters ('up', 'down' and 'equal') may be described in a manner similar to the correspondence from 1796 (see end of Section 3.2 above).

Table 3. Letters sent and received by major correspondents (1827-30)

Major correspondents 1827-30	Letters sent by	No of recipients	Letters received by	No of senders
Bathurst (1)	–	–	8	2
Bigge (1)	8	2	–	–
Bourke (2)	33	5	33	7
Comm. of Inquiry (1)	18	3	–	–
Courtenay (1)	4	1	7	2
Denyssen (3)	4	2	–	–
Goderich (1)	11	2	22	6
Hay (1)	32	12	63	21
Hill (1)	5	2	6	1
Huskisson (1)	18	1	5	4
Murray (1)	–	–	4	1
Plasket (2)	12	5	11	7
Somerset (2)	4	3	5	4

4. Corporate identities in CO correspondence

CO exchange takes place in a setting which is not only semi-public rather than interpersonal, but also the letters do not constitute one-to-one interaction, either on the level of production and reception, or on the level

of the identities that are projected in them. Moreover, as I would like to argue, pervasive corporate identities (i.e. maintaining the collective "line" or "front" to use Goffman's terms 1956: 54-55) seem to dominate over self-centred needs for building and negotiating individual positions in the institutional hierarchies. In his outline of the dramaturgical theory of human interaction, Goffman frequently refers to the operations of British civil service in the 20th century. These provide an apt analogy to the interactive setting analysed here. In particular, the notion of a *collective representation* (1956: 17) or a *common front* (1956: 53) that is purposefully maintained by institutional teams staging their performance before the audience is of great relevance. Similarly, in the CO communication, the importance of some general concerns, such as the impression management of the institution's reputation, rather than individualistic needs to establish one's own particular position may have prevailed in the Colonial Office correspondence. This may be further supported by the awareness of the publicity of the record[8], and of its persistence in time, which could be understood as a mechanism of internal censorship. If that was the case, not only did some politically sensitive content need to be filtered out[9], but also self-focus needed to be minimised for the sake of a collective front. Researchers who study interpersonal or relational work in interaction underline that in some cultures, especially highly hierarchical Eastern ones "[a]cknowledgement and maintenance of the relative position of others, rather than preservation of an individual's proper territory, governs all social interaction" (Matsumoto 1988: 405; cf. Culpeper 2011 for further references). Clearly, a concept that is foreign to egalitarian and (throughout the Late Modern period) increasingly individualistic British society (Culpeper – Demmen 2011) cannot be uncritically applied to the workings of the CO. Nevertheless, I would like to claim, despite some controversy around the concepts of "collective identities" or "professional identities" (Schnurr – van de Mieroop 2017: 7), that social identities in this institution may be viewed as mutually sustained/

[8] As historians have shown, British colonial affairs involved a dual system of managing official and unofficial information and correspondence in general, and in the Cape Colony (Laidlaw 2005; McKenzie 2016). However, the system was fraught with difficulty and it tended to backfire in many cases. Therefore, due to the disruptive nature of private correspondence of public officials (i.e. information dispersed through interpersonal networks), the system was banned in 1835. Since then colonial officials were only allowed private exchange with the Secretary of State. The early RCC volumes do not contain letters marked as "private", however, such designations may be found in the 1820s.

[9] Consider for instance "hostile attentions of Parliament and the opposition press" (McKenzie 2016: 76) that the earliest British administrations faced.

sustainable. This means that the maintenance of the positions of others and the maintenance of individual positions or institutional hierarchies are at least of equal importance, while the former may sometimes take precedence over the latter. Below, I illustrate this point with some examples.

Throughout the military phase of the occupation (1795-96), British authorities in London supervised the expedition through the War Office, from which orders and instructions to the generals performing both military and administrative duties were coming. Interestingly, the order-giving role of this body was accompanied by profuse expressions of approval and praise for the officers (1):

(1) It is **with the most lively satisfaction** however that, in adverting to these occurrences, I feel myself called upon, in obedience to the King's Commands, to signify to you His Majesty's **full and perfect approbation** of your **judicious and spirited conduct** on this occasion, and of the **zeal and exertion** manifested by all the Officers and Men under your command. His Majesty's confidential Servants are **perfectly satisfied** with the **propriety of your determination** (…). His Majesty **highly approves** of your proceeding (…) (War Office to General Alured Clarke, Jan 16th 1796; *RCC* 1: 311-312)

Another letter of the same date addressed to Admiral Elphinstone (*RCC* 1: 312) contains a similar expression of praise in almost the same wording. Rather than maintaining their own position of authority, the War Office did not refrain from approval and commendations even if the orders it issued ran contrary to the wishes of the officers in the Cape of Good Hope. For instance, in response to a plan of an expedition to Mauritius proposed by two generals operating in the colony, the War Office sent a lengthy justification of a refusal (c. 650 words), employing not only a range of elaborate hedges and remarkable understatements ("incompatible with", "I think", "without much easiness"), but also including enthusiastic expressions of praise for the fact that the generals had changed their minds (before the approval of the project could have been delivered from London) – see (2):

(2) It would be incompatible with my ideas of public duty and inconsistent with the spirit of candour which I think it essential to maintain in all my official communications, to allow you to suppose for a moment that I could receive an intimation of this project, however **ably supported** by the arguments of your Dispatch, without much uneasiness, and

> it was consequently a **satisfaction** to me to find by your subsequent Letter of the 3rd of August, that you had been determined by the circumstances therein mentioned to send the Troops to their original destination [and not to Mauritius, MW]. (…) I therefore, both on public and private grounds, **sincerely congratulate** you on your having relinquished a project which, on the principles I have stated, no success in my opinion would have justified. (War Office to General Craig, Nov 20th 1796, *RCC* 1: 488)

In 1796 the War Office routinely applied strategies of approval and verbal rewards in their supervision of the officers in the Cape of Good Hope (even if the orders it gave suggested otherwise). Example 3 below implies that praise may have given way to some criticism three decades later, even in letters from institutional inferiors to superiors. However, a focus on the recipient, rather than on the self, may still have prevailed. In 1827, a colonial official addressing his superordinate with criticism seems preoccupied with the addressee's rather than his own territory. In the letter below (3), Richard Plasket (secretary to the local government) failed to authorise an appointment made by his superior, William Hay (under-secretary of state; see also Appendix 1 on the institutional power structure). The reprimand and refusal dominate the brief letter (fewer than 200 words) and involve a comprehensive justification. It opens as a conventionalised apology, so that the developing criticism cannot be predicted. This may add to the overall effect of the rejection of a proposed candidate, but may very well be seen as a strong, albeit an extraordinary mitigation. Apart from "Your provincial judge", which might be an instance of a marked, so-called indefinite usage of the second person pronoun to express contempt (cf. Busse 2002: 6), Plasket employs addressee reference very sparingly, while building a common front with the addressee by means of the first person plural pronoun and self-reference. Also, terms such as "Council", "the Council", "the new system" contain references to the institutions which both the writer and the addressee align with. On the contrary, the opponents, i.e. "the Commissioners" are placed at the distal end of the interactional space, as are "law officers". The refusal closes with an ironic remark directed chiefly at the competences of the third party (the central theme of the letter), which only mildly hints at the mistake made by the addressee. Here the *we* vs. *they* juxtaposition is also clear: "the little Scotch Colony" is not only conceptually far removed from the writer's (and addressee's) central position, but also geographically distant from the headquarters of the local British government represented by Plasket (3).

(3) **I am sorry** you have proposed to put Sir John Truter **in Council**. I do not think he is by any means a popular man in the Colony, and **the Council** will then have two Chief Justices and three Military men. I think **the Commissioners** have overwhelmed **us** with law officers. **We** shall have an excess of justice with an excess of expenditure. **Your very provincial judge** for Albany is not **I fear** calculated to give eclat to **the new system** with the settlers. **I wish you** had sent him to the little Scotch Colony on the Baviaan's River, where he would have been more at home. (Plasket to Hay, Oct 20th 1827; *RCC* 34: 37-38)

As the examples above suggest, projections of the collective front, rather than individualised self-presentation, characterise the correspondence of the Colonial Office at the turn of the eighteenth century and in the 1820s. In terms of the relational work, the praise that characterises Examples 1 and 2 above cannot be viewed as interpersonal, as it involves a routine of rewarding officers following a military campaign similar to rituals of decoration. This suggests that interpersonal evaluation, or personal involvement in general are not central to the internal correspondence of the CO and that this aspect does feature prominently in the construction of CO identities.

Mutual trust and institutional loyalty are another aspect of corporate identities that transpire from CO correspondence; so is sensitivity to public sphere due to constant exposure to public and social evaluations. Previous work on the internal CO exchange (Włodarczyk 2013a) and a case study into external correspondence (Włodarczyk 2015) has revealed that these concerns govern the expression of stance understood as linguistic manifestation of (subjective) attitudes. In the overall highly routinised, controlled, but elaborate and indirect forms of communication, stance is very often constructed against "higher authority" – see (4)[10]. For example, the letter writers build the credibility of such an authority through general references to social and moral ideals and virtues, e.g. "ideas of public duty", "spirit of candour" in (2) above. As (4) illustrates, ordinary communication occurs between social equals, in which the highest official of the CO (Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, 1812-1827) addresses the highest colonial official, the Governor of the Cape Colony, Lord Charles Somerset. Bathurst writes on behalf of an official in the Navy and presents a case of a colonial official, Bird, who has failed to follow some courtroom procedures

[10] Indirectness in exercising authority is common in CO letters, not least in external exchanges, as previous analyses have shown, and especially in the case of refusals (see Włodarczyk 2015: 164-165, 167 for more examples).

within the sanction of the Admiralty. Bathurst's own part in the entire case becomes clear in the last four lines, where he formulates a request ("I have in consequence to desire …"). Here, meeting the request involves Bathurst's authority to be transferred to Somerset, with an emphasis on the latter's delegation of the completion of the task ("your Lordship would be pleased to **cause a communication to be** immediately **made** to Mr. Bird"; emphasis added). Clearly, the ultimate addressee of the directive is the said Mr. Bird who is called to provide an explanation of his behaviour. Thus, at both ends of the exchange, we see the dynamic nature of power and authority which is distributed variously among the officials on different levels of the institutional hierarchy, but is rather reluctantly picked up by the writer, despite their high institutional position. This indicates that responsibility-shedding or sharing are a significant part of communication within the CO, while alignment with the institution is not necessarily direct, but may be mediated via a third party. In the exchange between the same officials presented below (4), this is a well-justified and skillful way of managing control over someone who is a social equal, but an institutional inferior, without compromising their status (McKenzie 2016: 78).

(4) My Lord, – I do myself the honour to transmit to your Lordship a copy of a letter which I have received from the Treasurer of His Majesty's Navy, desiring to know whether Mr. William Wilberforce Bird continues to officiate in the office of Customs at the Cape of Good Hope, and stating that Mr. Bird has not only withheld from officers and seamen of His Majesty's ships prize proceeds to a considerable amount, but that he likewise contumaciously refuses to give appearances to sundry Processes issued against him from the High Court of Admiralty, and duly served upon him more than three years since. Connected with this subject, I also enclose copies of papers which have been transmitted to this department by desire of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty complaining of the conduct of Mr. Bird in withholding prize money from seamen of His Majesty's Service, and I have in consequence to desire your Lordship would be pleased to cause a communication to be immediately made to Mr. Bird directing him to furnish a Report on circumstances which appear to require the fullest explanation. I have &c. (Earl Bathurst to Lord Charles Somerset, Aug 10th 1822; *RCC* 15: 14)

Overall, the social identities emerging from the CO correspondence are negotiated both against internal dynamics of hierarchies and power and

against externally applicable social norms and expectations of communication, as well as in reference to a more universal code of conduct for the upper social classes. In most general terms, this code could be described as the contemporary ideology of politeness (Taavitsainen – Jucker 2010: 164).

5. Person reference in 1796 vs. 1827-30

In relation to the discussion of person reference provided in Section 2.2 above, Sections 5.1 and 5.2 tackle the social dimensions in an analysis of marked (i.e. non-pronominal) terms of address. A quantitative analysis of the conventional pronominal modes in the analysed sets of data follows (Sections 5.3 and 5.4): it is devoted to testing the three hypotheses presented above (Section 2.3).

5.1 Nominal address: Forms and functions

Table 4. Direct address in the opening formulae

Direct opening address	1796	%(of letters)	1827-30	% (of letters)
Sir	89	94%	140	76%
My Lord	1	1%	38	20.5%
Gentlemen	5	5%	4	2%
Other	–	–	3	1.5%
	95	100%	185	100%

As Table 4 shows, 'Sir' is the most common direct initial address in both datasets. In 1796, 94% of the letters started with this polite noun, including one case of 'Dear Sir' and one case of 'Honourable Sir'. Only 5 letters employed the less formal 'Gentlemen'. 'My Lord' was used once. In 1827-30, the range of initial address terms was broader and less consistent. 'Sir' accounts for the opening address in 76% of the letters, followed by 'My Lord' (c. 20%). The remaining terms include 'Gentlemen' (5 letters). In two letters no initial address is employed, which may be seen as one of the genre conventions of the petition next to the 3rd person reference to the addressee. In a number of cases, 'Sir' is modified by an adjective, or a possessive pronoun and an adjective (Dear Sir – 4; My dear Sir – 16) and in one case a surname is modified in this way ('My Dear Hay').

Table 5. Most common terms of address

Address term	1796				1827-30			
	Function							
	ALL	Direct (opening)	Direct (body)	Reference	ALL	Direct (opening)	Direct (body)	Reference
Sir	198	89 (45%)	85 (43%)	24 (12%)	183	140 (76.5%)	–	43 (23.5%)
Lord	34	1	–	33	135	34	4	97
Lords	–	–	–	–	28	–	–	28
Gentlemen	18	5	9	6	17	4	–	13
Lordship	32	–	6%	94%	191	–	120 (63%)	71 (37%)
Excellency	18	–	–	100%	21	–	–	100%
Mr.	41	–	–	100%	278	–	–	100%
Commissioners	29	–	–	100%	90	–	–	100%

When it comes to the letter body, terms of address occur in two basic functions: as direct address (including vocatives, like in the salutation), and as references to denote a particular person. As Table 5 above shows, 'Sir' in 1796 and 'Mr.' and 'Lordship' in 1827-30 are the most common nominal terms of address. In 1796, the dominance of 'Sir' is clear: no other term is used with similar frequencies and the remaining items do not exceed one third of the occurrences of 'Sir'. Moreover, the two datasets reveal a striking discrepancy in the functions of 'Sir' in letter body. In the first dataset, direct address, vocative 'Sir', is nearly as frequent as it is in salutations (43% to 45% of all occurrences), while in the second set there is not even a single example of this function in the letter body. A closer look at vocative 'Sir' in 1796 shows that it is restricted to the letters from Craig to Dundas, with two exceptions in the letters from Elphinstone and Blankett, both addressed to Dundas. The use of 'Sir' in this "conversational" manner might be viewed as Craig's idiosyncrasy in relation to this specific correspondent. Alternatively, the use of 'Sir' could be related to the fact that Craig, Elphinstone and Blankett were military men, so the instruction-taking context of the relationship (like that

of a classroom) may have been influenced by conventions of face-to-face interaction in the army[11] – see 5 and 6:

(5) I have already had opportunity **Sir**, particularly in my letter of the 22nd September, of giving my opinion upon the sentiments of the Inhabitants of the Colony in General, relative to us (…) (Craig to Dundas, March 8th 1796; *RCC* 1: 336)

(6) I do myself the honour to enclose You an Embarkation Return of these Regiments, as likewise a monthly return of the Troops remaining under my Command, in the latter you will doubtless **Sir**, perceive a considerable augmentation in our sick which has lately taken place (…) (Craig to Dundas, November 11th 1796; *RCC* 1: 486)

In 1827-30, 'Sir' is used predominantly in the salutation (76.5% of items) with the remaining items serving the purely referential function. In this set of data, direct nominal address (albeit not in the 'vocative' form) in the body is realised by the term 'your Lordship' (120 occurrences, next to 53 modifications by 'his' and 18 by 'their'). Terms such as 'Mr', 'Excellency' or 'Commissioners' do not have direct addressive functions or vocative form in any of the datasets.

Table 6. Lexeme 'lord' in referential function (1827-30)

1827	Occurrences	Genitives	Patterns	Occurrences	Patterns	Occurrences
(ALL) Lordship	191	57	(ALL ref) Lord	135	Lords	28
your lordship	120	38	Lord+SN	59	Lords Commissioners	21
his lordship	53	14	Lord+FN+SN	31	My Lords Commissioners	1
their lordships	18	5	Lord+title	5	My Lords	7
			Lord+FN	1		
			noble lord	1		

[11] Unfortunately, I have so far not come across studies into terms of address in military contexts in Late Modern Britain.

In the 1827-30 data, address based on the lexeme 'lord' is frequent (163 occurrences of 'Lord' and 191 of 'Lordship'). Table 6 below shows a variety of patterns and some examples for 1827-30.

5.2 Discussion

Terms of address in letter salutations noticed in 1827-30 are relatively more diverse than in 1796, which may be related to differences in the numbers of letters that the two datasets include. Alternatively, the use of the modifications of 'Sir' and the relative frequency of 'My Lord' indicates a transformed system of institutional power where less formal and more intimate initial address forms are used. Similarly, in the letter body, the increase in the use of 'Mr.', a relaxed and less formal term used outside of aristocratic circles (Görlach 1999: 41) is staggering (41 to 278). These findings may also be related to the social component of address systems over the first three decades of the nineteenth century. As British society moved slowly towards a more egalitarian organisation, the significance of marking social distance may have been gradually diminishing, even in the case of highly conventionalised formulae that characterised correspondence. However, we also need to note an increase in the use of referential 'Lord' (135 instances in 1827-30 vs. 34 in 1796). Most instances show the 'Lord' +FN+SN pattern (69, i.e. 51%). The second most frequent pattern, 'Lord'+SN (59, i.e. 44%) reflects the fact that the actors carried hereditary titles (as opposed to the military titles which predominated in 1796) that have become the preferred forms of reference (e.g. Lord/Viscount Goderich, who was Prime Minister between August 1827 and January 1828). The use of the so-called indirect addressee inclusion in the form of 'Lordship' preceded by a possessive pronoun, i.e. an honorific that is predominantly used by inferiors to social superiors (cf. Palander-Collin 2009a: 60), has grown significantly over time. Moreover, 'his Lordship', a variation of this form which may represent the addressee as a third party, did not occur in 1796, with 'your lordship' only occurring in 3 out of 32 cases of 'lordship'. The form 'their Lordships' (30 out of 32, including 5 genitives) that accounted for the vast majority of occurrences in 1796 was thus a plural reference and was not only infrequent compared to the second dataset, but seems not to have been conventionalised. Both 'Lord' and 'Lordship' indicate that despite the parallel social changes that would support the use of less distant terms, the institutional hierarchies have solidified compared to 1796 and a greater emphasis was placed on marking distance, in particular when referring to institutional superiors.

The significant share of 'lordship' in the 1827-30 data also indicates the expanded system of hierarchical contact procedures (i.e. local officials do not address the top official directly, but via their representatives; and the other way round, the representatives work as mouthpieces for the highest officials), whereby references to higher authorities (as third parties) are frequent and letter writers address and respond to letters on their behalf. It is interesting to notice that in terms of writers and addressees of the letters, 'Your lordship' has a restricted distribution. Predominantly, it is found in the letters to the recipients who are highest in the institutional hierarchy, Bathurst and Goderich. This strongly deferential honorific is employed when writing to superiors and is paralleled by 'you' evasion. 38 out of 120 cases of 'Your Lordship' are attributive, i.e. involve a genitive marking of a feature, or an action of the referent, rather than mentioning them directly. In four cases, 'My Lord' alternates with 'Your Lordship' (letters from Somerset, Donkin and Bishop of Calcutta to Goderich). However, Goderich himself also uses the term in the letters to his institutional subordinates. Another addressee of 'your Lordship' is Lord Charles Somerset, the colony's governor, in the letters from both Goderich and Hay, his institutional superiors. However, it is likely that Somerset's high social position combined with his lengthy service at the Cape Colony had determined reciprocal use of the honorific.

The findings presented above show two somewhat contradictory developments. First of all, a broader range of terms of address, modified salutations and an increase in the use of Mr. could be indicative of some social developments which were external to the Colonial Office, i.e. incipient transformation to a more egalitarian society. Contrary to this, an increase in the use of deferential terms, in particular the lexemes with 'lord' and indirect addressee inclusion in particular[12], underline tendencies for marking rather than reducing (social) distance. In line with the suggestion made above that local norms of behaviour may override some global tendencies, the emphasis on marking distance may be viewed as an internal development that reflects very specific institutional power relations. More general social changes are thus reflected in the data to a certain extent, while at the same time institutional power grids manifest themselves in opposition to external developments.

[12] This is not surprising if we take into account the fact that most letters address superiors, hence indirect addressee inclusion, rather than a straightforward 'you', becomes a natural choice. Interestingly, however, this tendency is visible only for the later dataset, indicating once more the institutional network of hierarchies that had solidified between 1796 and 1827-30.

5.3 Pronominal terms of address: Distance crossing

Table 7. Letters and word counts by institutional distance crossing

Distance crossing	1796	%	w. count	1827	%	w. count
up	63	65%	42,357	111	60%	41,507
down	24	25%	12,925	71	38%	15,256
equal	8	10%	3,699	3	2%	1,455
Totals	95	100%	58,981	185	100%	58,218

In addressing letters within the institutional power grids, writers cross the social and institutional spaces that separate them from their addressees (see Appendix 1 on the CO hierarchy and Sections 3.2. and 3.3 above on the details of institutional relations connecting the correspondents). In terms of the direction of distance crossing, letters upwards the hierarchy dominate in the analysed datasets (Table 7). As the letters to institutional superiors were so numerous, the results obtained for this set may be more representative than for the letters to institutional inferiors. However, in terms of word counts the letters 'up' and 'down' the institutional hierarchy taken as sets do not vary much, hence the respective sets ('up' vs. 'down') may be compared at the two points in time. Table 8 presents the overall as well as social distance differentiated frequencies of personal pronouns[13] in both datasets. As the normalised numbers (per 1,000 words) show, overall the frequencies of the first person singular pronoun are similar (25 vs. 27). Nor is there any striking difference between the occurrences of the second person pronoun (9 vs. 11). The frequency of third person singular pronouns (mostly 'he') has increased remarkably (9 to 18) over time. There is some difference in the frequency of the first person plural pronoun, with an increase from 4.6 to 8 occurrences per 1,000 words. Similarly, the use of the third person plural pronoun (9 in 1796 vs. 6 in 1827), has decreased considerably over time. Both observations may be related to the different historical contexts of the institution and its organisation at the two points in time. As far as the third person plural pronouns are concerned, the relative "outside" world orientation of the 1796 data in the historical context of the conquest and the significance of the inhabitants of the colony ('the others') explains their relatively high frequencies. In the 1820s, correspondence was about the internal affairs of the colony, rather than its connections with the outside world. The first

[13] The results include all the relevant inflected and reflexive forms.

person plural pronoun, whose frequency increases over time, may in turn be related to the participation of collective correspondents (e.g. commissioners of inquiry) in the 1827-30 dataset and to the emergence of a collective institutional representation that was more likely to characterise a mature institution. The changes in the use of the third person singular pronoun, which increased considerably over time, contrary to the development observed for 'they', is less readily associated with the sociohistorical context; it probably indicates more references to third parties in the 1820s. More analysis is provided below to shed some light on this issue.

Table 8. Counts and normalised (per. 1,000 words) frequencies of personal pronouns in the datasets[14]

Person	1796 raw	1796 norm.	1796 up raw	1796 up norm.	1796 down raw	1796 down norm.
1 sg.	1652	27	1320	31	261	20
1st pl.	276	4.6	246	6	24	2
2nd	544	9	202	5	292	23
3rd sg.	522	9	505	12	149	11.5
3rd pl.	896	15	692	16	167	13
Person	1827-30 raw	1827 norm.	1827 up raw	1827 up norm.	1827 down raw	1827 down norm.
1 sg.	1479	25	1201	29	256	17
1st pl.	498	8	451	11	44	3
2nd	658	11	318	8	333	22
3rd sg.	1035	18	708	17	325	21
3rd pl.	346	6	265	6	75	5

The graph below presents pronoun frequencies normalised (per 1,000 words) and distributed according to the institutional power factor (inferior to superior – 'up'; superior to inferior –'down') and the direction of the institutional distance crossing by the correspondents.

[14] Proportional tests confirm statitistical significance for the distributions of almost all pronouns in 1796 vs. 1827-30. H0 (p values <0.05) was not confirmed only for the third person singular pronoun in the 1796 set. I would like to thank my colleague, Professor Piotr Jabkowski for running the tests.

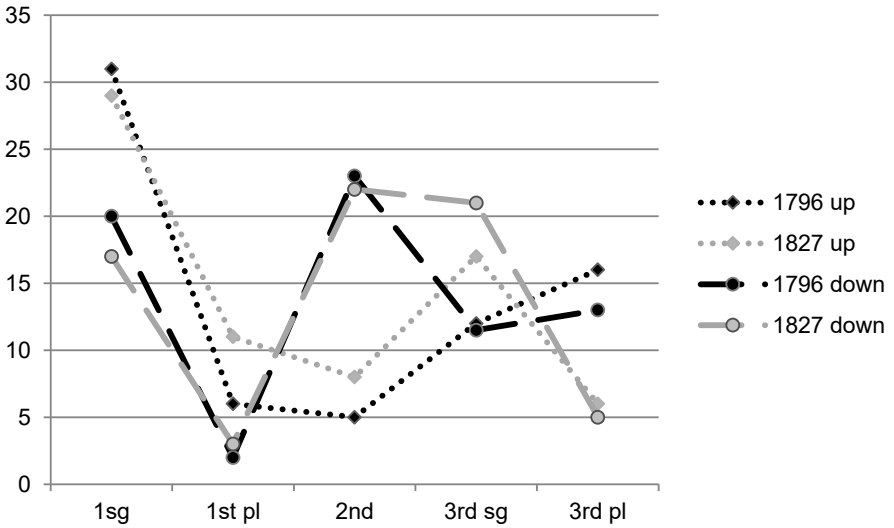


Figure 1. Normalised pronoun frequencies and distance crossing

5.4 Discussion

Frequencies of the first person singular pronoun[15] are higher in the letters from institutional inferiors to superiors (letters 'up') at both points in time ('I' – 31 and 29 occurrences respectively; per 1,000 words). The same frequencies are lower in the letters from institutional superiors, i.e. letters 'down' ('I' – 20 and 17). In this set, a slight frequency increase is observed over time. As far as the second person pronoun is concerned, the letters from inferiors to superiors (letters 'up') show considerably lower frequencies at both points in time ('you' – 5 and 8 occurrences per 1,000 respectively) while letters to inferiors ('down') show strikingly high frequencies (23 and 22 occurrences per 1,000 words), roughly double the average frequencies of 'you' overall. While they remain relatively infrequent, a slight increase in the use of the second person pronoun is observed in the letters 'up' (5 to 8), while in the letters 'up' its incidence is stable.

Regarding the hypotheses presented in Section 2.3 above the findings corroborate some of the assumptions, in particular with respect to the second

[15] Cf. Włodarczyk (2013b: 218-219, Tables 4 and 5) for normalised self-reference results in various historical correspondence sets. These range from 22 to over 60 occurrences per 1,000 words.

person pronoun (Hypothesis 1b and 2b). Indeed, in the letters 'up', lower frequencies of 'you' have been observed. Diachronically, the occurrence of this pronoun in letters to social superiors has increased, which may be related to the social changes in early nineteenth-century Britain mentioned above. In letters 'down', as predicted both by previous research and by the institution's reliance on the giving and receiving of instructions, frequencies of 'you' were relatively high and stable over time. The patterns of use of the first person singular pronoun, however, have surprisingly not been confirmed (see Hypothesis 1a and 1b). Although in the letters 'up', the frequencies of 'I' do not depart considerably from the average frequencies (all letters – 27 in 1796 and 25 in 1827-30 vs. 31 and 29 respectively in the letters 'up'), still they score relatively high. Moreover, in both data sets an increase by four occurrences per 1,000 words is observed over time in the letters to social superiors. In the letters 'down' contrary to the hypothesis (2a), self-reference was relatively infrequent (20 and 17 occurrences per 1,000 words), lower than average (27 and 25) and considerably lower than in the letters 'up' (31 and 29). To sum up, Hypotheses 1(a) and 2(a) were not corroborated, Hypotheses 1(b) and 2(b) were confirmed, consequently Hypothesis 3 only holds for second person pronouns.

6. Conclusions

This study set out to characterise social spaces in an institutional network of the British Colonial Office in the early nineteenth century. In the analyses presented above, relational work through which such spaces may be inferred was illustrated in a number of examples. Based on previous studies into institutional correspondence in the early nineteenth century, it was suggested that the interpersonal/relational dimension may not be easily inferred due to the semi-public nature of the data, and that the transactional nature of the letters may overshadow this aspect of communication. The examples have shown that interactants in the CO relied strongly on the need for the maintenance of a representational audience-orientated institutional line that underlined the relevant decision-making hierarchies. They also suggested that interpersonal evaluation, or personal involvement in general, do not seem to characterise the internal correspondence of the CO.

The issue of the degree of personal involvement was approached through the analysis of the linguistic realisations of person deixis against the background of a theory of social distance as applied to historical correspon-

dence (Nevala 2004; Palander-Collin 2009a, 2009b and 2009c; Nurmi – Nevala 2010). The most striking result pertains to the frequencies of use of the first person pronoun. These show that the differentiation along the institutional hierarchies produces effects that run contrary to those reported in previous studies and to the predictions formulated on the basis of such studies. Institutional inferiors do not avoid self-reference in the letters 'up', and its incidence is similar to the frequencies of 'I' in personal correspondence (cf. Palander-Collin 2009c: 112). Institutional superiors do not use more, but considerably fewer self-referential pronouns in letters 'down'. Why do frequencies of 'I' in letters 'up' strikingly exceed those found in letters 'down'? Why do these relatively low frequencies decrease even further over time? I would like to offer a twofold explanation for these findings. First of all, the institutional distance in the CO is gradable and the majority of letters only cross one level of the hierarchy (Appendix 1). In connection to this, distance crossing is not considerable at all times, so its effects on pronominal patterns may not be visible. Secondly, letters 'up' tend to have a reporting/informational function pertaining in particular to the activities of the writers following previous instructions from institutional superiors. For this reason, the letters 'up' remain self-focused as they respond to the instructions issued in letters 'down'. The instructions, in turn, are visible in the high incidence of second person pronouns in the letters down (in line with hypothesis 2b). Having received specific instructions, inferior writers feel obliged to provide a comprehensive and detailed report and to underline their engagement in the tasks, or to provide detailed explanations of their own role and participation in the processes and events that they describe. Building their own self-image in front of superior addressees is thus essential, and institutional space is dominated by self-reference not for one's own sake, but in connection to the instructions, expectations, duties and responsibilities explicitly or implicitly communicated or imposed by their social superiors.

The relatively low frequencies of the first person singular pronoun in the letters to social inferiors are striking in light of Hypothesis 2a. These are most likely related to the fact that instruction giving in the CO is mediated via representatives of highest officials who report on their decisions and actions. Although the mediators remain institutionally superior to their addressees as if by extension (of the prerogatives of the officials on whose behalf they write), they will not be in a position to overuse self-reference because they are not direct sources of the messages that they convey. This fact also sheds some light on the relatively high frequency of the third person singular pronouns and their increase over time. Third person singular pronouns are

more frequent in the letters 'down' (highest officials are presented as third parties) than on average and in the letters 'up'. In both sets of letters their use reflects the mediation and "indirectness"[16] of communication procedures in the Colonial Office: in correspondence on somebody's behalf, the source of the message, be it up or down the institutional hierarchy will be referred to as third party. The increase in the third person singular pronoun over time may in turn be ascribed to the growing role of institutional mediation between the low and high officials of the CO.

In the institutional correspondence analysed above, many patterns were observed which are both in line with the findings in the literature and some that run contrary to these. As far as the latter are concerned, the unexpected tendencies must have been determined by the specific sociocultural and institutional factors that determined the communication in the CO. Overall, CO correspondence emerges as a local domain characterised by unique patterns of self- and addressee reference corroborating the precedence of institutional factors over individual ones. Moreover, my study has demonstrated that a male-only upper class institutional setting, where social distance is relatively hard to assess, or participants are social equals, poses a range of fascinating questions related to the alignment with the institution and the other actors, as well as to the ways in which multifaceted social/institutional identities are constructed in correspondence. In these processes the participants' rights and obligations as well as their relative positioning in the institutional grid play a central role. At the same time, the insistence on the values of genteel society characteristic for Late Modern Britain and the growing professionalisation of the civil service shape linguistic expression in the Colonial Office.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge some limitations of the surviving data related to the institutional procedures that regulated communication of the officials and clerks. As historians have shown, British colonial affairs involved a dual system of managing official and unofficial information and correspondence in general, and in the Cape Colony (Laidlaw 2005; McKenzie 2016). The private and confidential layer of this system is not retrievable through official record, neither are the "real" workings of diplomacy, which mostly progresses through face-to-face encounters and spoken interaction.

[16] Cf. also metacomments like the following one: "I desire that it may be distinctly made known to the Civil Servants of the Cape Government, that it is not competent for them to address themselves directly to me or to my office, without the sanction or cognizance of the Governor, or of the Officer administering the Government of the Colony" (RCC 34: 268; Huskisson to Bourke, December 1827).

As a result, it is more likely that in the emerging information state, where writing and power are closely linked, the written record was central to announcing decisions and the control of information transmission, but unlikely to have been central to the decision-making process itself. Taken that the "private and confidential" exchange remains outside the data we are looking at, we are dealing with a highly sterile setting of identity projections filtered through the need for reputation management and confidentiality constraints, as well as being limited in content. Therefore, the set of institutional correspondence under scrutiny only provides a very restricted access to the patterns of communication in more general terms, even within the realm of the institution. However, we may assume that, as much as the underhand transactions conducted within the private networks of the key decision-makers remain obscure to us and continue the tradition of the oral and informal side of diplomacy, the institutional representations that persevere essentially reflect the resulting politics and policies to some extent. These written representations are governed by their own dynamics and diachronic developments and as such constitute a fruitful research ground.

APPENDIX 1

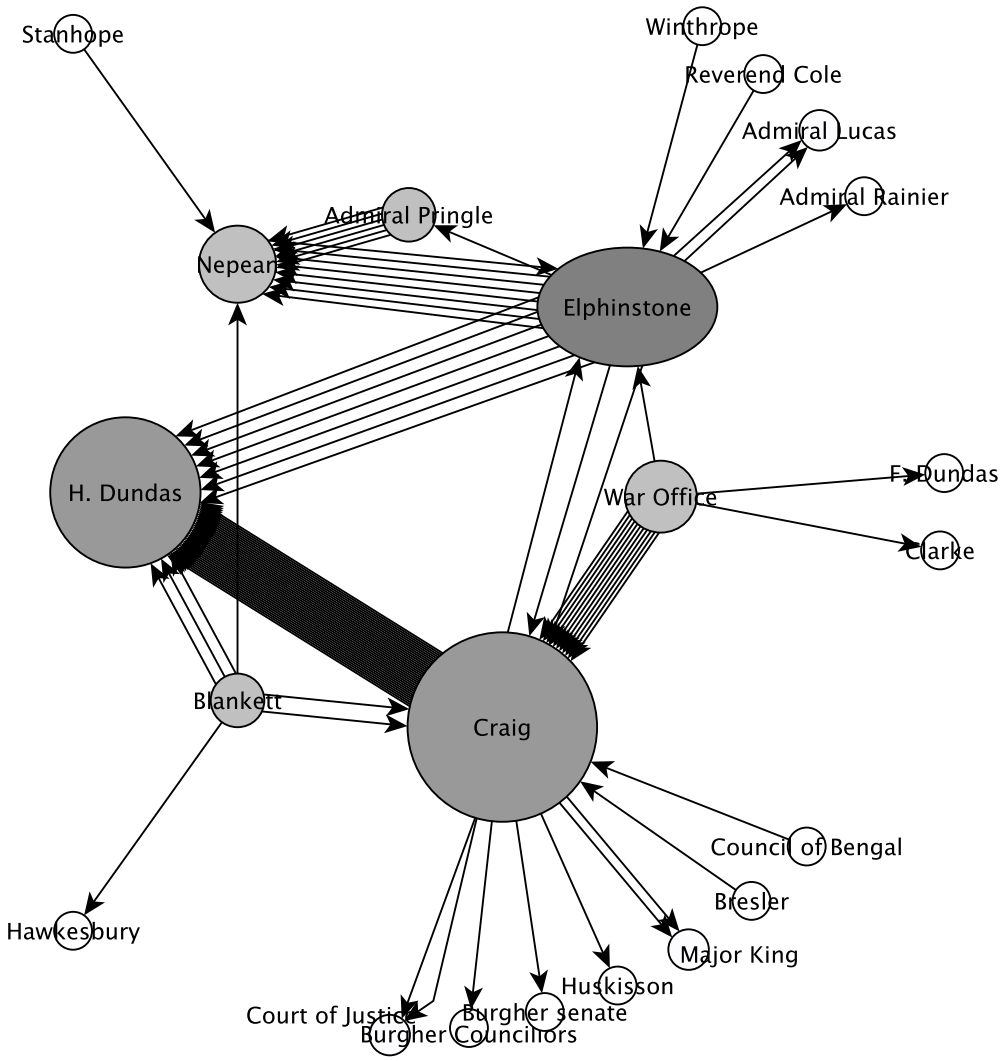
Metropolitan and local power structures and major correspondents in CO (1796 and 1827-30)

Hierarchy	Location	Position	1776	1827-30
LEVEL 1	London	(Third) Secretary of State for War and the Colonies	Henry Dundas (First Secretary for War)	Earl Henry Bathurst (1812- April 1827)
				Viscount Goderich (30 April 1827- Sep 1827)
				William Huskisson (Sep 1827-May 1828)
				Sir George Murray (30 May 1828- Nov 1830)
		Under-Secretary of State for War and the Colonies	–	R.W. Hay (1825-36)
		Parliamentary (Deputy) Under-Secretary	–	Wilmot Horton (1821-28)

LEVEL 1	London	Institutions	War Office Evan Nepean (Under-Secretary)	Treasury William Hill (1826-28)
			–	Agent for the Government of the Cape of Good Hope R.P. Courtenay
	London & Cape Colony		–	Commissioners of Inquiry John Thomas Bigge William Blair William Coolebroke
LEVEL 2	Cape Colony	Commanders of the British Forces (Sep 1795-Nov 1795)	Vice Admiral Sir George Keith Elphinstone	–
			General Alured Clarke (Commander- -in-Chief of India)	–
			Admiral Thomas Pringle	–
			Major General Craig	–
		Governor	Major General Craig (1795-97)	Lord Charles Henry Somerset (1814-26)
			Major General Francis Dundas (1798-1803)	Major General Richard Bourke (1826-28)
		Chief Secretary to Government in the Cape Colony	–	Richard Plasket
			–	Christopher Bird (1822-1824)
LEVEL 3	Cape Colony	Institutions	Fiscal	Daniel Denyssen
			Landdrost of Albany	Major Dundas
			Dutch institutions	Court of Justice
				Burgher Councillors
				Burgher Senate
				Landrost (Bresler)
				East India Company
(LEVEL 4)	Cape Colony	Citizens (the Dutch and the 1820 settlers)		

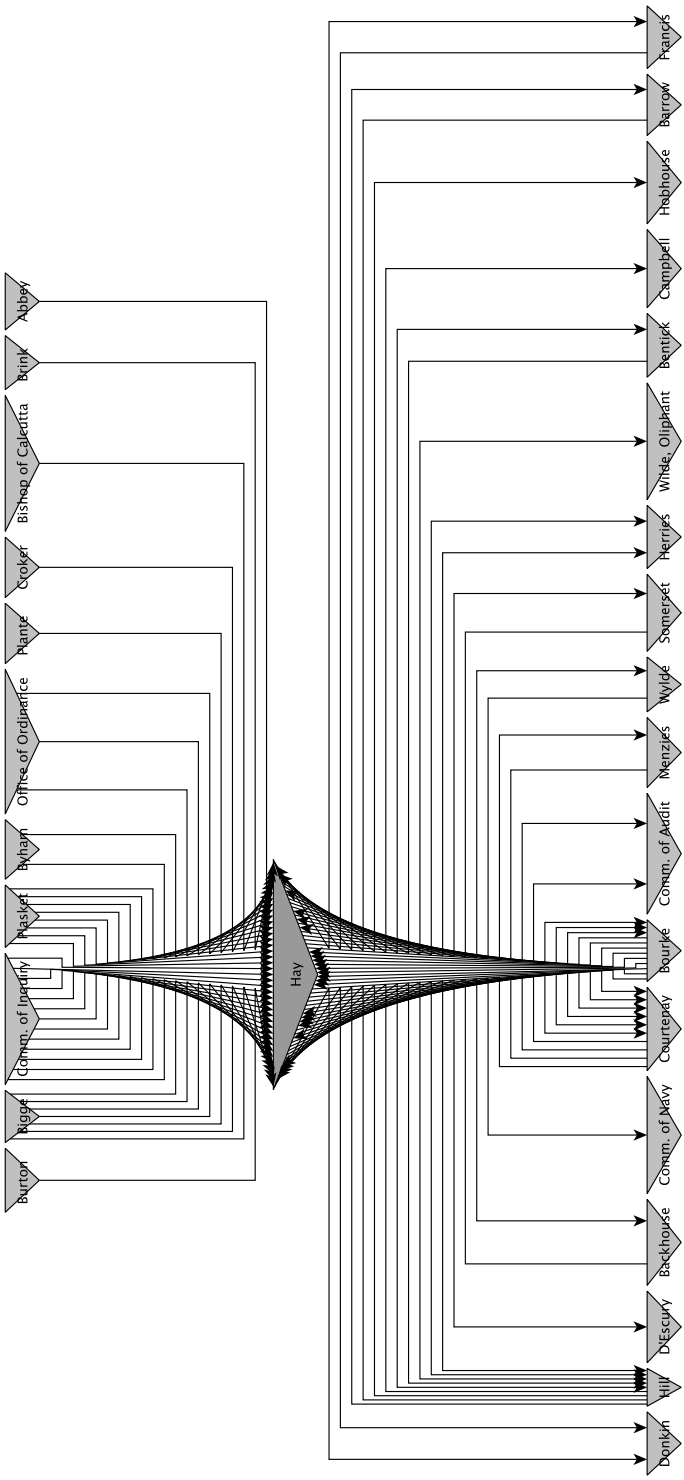
APPENDIX 2

Correspondents in 1796



APPENDIX 3

The circle of Hay' correspondents in 1827-30



REFERENCES

Sources

State Papers Online database (16th-18th centuries), http://gale.cengage.co.uk/state-papers-online-15091714.aspx, accessed December 2016

Theal, G.M.
1897-1905 *Records of the Cape Colony (1793-1869). Volumes 1-36*. London: Public Record Office.

Special studies

Archer, D.
2017 "Context and historical (socio-)pragmatics 20 years on". In: M. Włodarczyk – I. Taavitsainen (eds.) *Historical (socio)pragmatics.* Special issue of *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 18 (2), 315-336.

Banton, M.
2008 *Administering the Empire, 1801-1968: A Guide to the Records of the Colonial Office in the National Archives of the UK*. London: Institute of Historical Research/The National Archives of the UK.

Bargiela-Chappini, F. – S.J. Harris
1996 "Requests and status in business correspondence", *Journal of Pragmatics* 26 (5), 635-662.

Biber, D.
1988 *Variation across Speech and Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, D. – E. Finegan
1997 "Diachronic relations among speech-based and written registers in English". In: T. Nevalainen – L. Kahlas-Tarkka (eds.) *To Explain the Present: Studies in the Changing English Language in Honour of Matti Rissanen*. Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 253-275.

Bremner, S.
2006 "Politeness, power, and activity systems: Written requests and multiple audiences in an institutional setting", *Written Communication* 23, 397-423. DOI: 10.1177/0741088306293707

Bucholtz, M. – K. Hall
2003 "Language and identity". In: A. Duranti (ed.) *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. London: Wiley Blackwell, 369-394.

Busse, U.
2002 *Linguistic Variation in the Shakespeare Corpus*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Culpeper, J.
2009 "Introduction". In: J. Culpeper (ed.) *Historical Sociopragmatics*. Special Issue of *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 10 (2), 179-186.
2011 "Politeness and impoliteness". In: K. Aijmer – G. Andersen (eds.) *Sociopragmatics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 391-436.
Culpeper, J. – J. 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.
Dossena, M.
2010a "'We beg to suggest': Features of legal English in Late Modern English business letters". In: N. Brownlees – G. Del Lungo Camiciotti – J. Denton (eds.) *The Language of Public and Private Discourse in a Historical Perspective*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 46-64.
2010b "Building trust through (self-)appraisal in nineteenth-century business correspondence". In: P. Pahta et al. (eds.) *Social Roles and Language Practices in Late Modern English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 191-209.
DOI: 10.1075/pbns.195.09dos
Enfield, N.J.
2012 "Reference in conversation". In: J. Sidnell – T. Stivers (eds.) *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 433-454.
DOI:10.1002/9781118325001.
Freund, W.M.
1989 "The Cape under the transitional governments, 1795-1814". In: R. Elphick – H. Giliomee (eds.) *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 324-357.
Goffman, E.
1956 *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh.
Görlach, M.
1999 *English in Nineteenth-Century England: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kopaczyk, J. – A.H. Jucker (eds.)
2013 *Communities of Practice in the History of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
Kreiner, G. E – E.C. Hollensbe – M.L. Sheep
2006 "On the edge of identity: Boundary dynamics at the interface of individual and organizational identities", *Human Relations* 59 (10), 1315-1341.
Laidlaw, Z.
2005 *Colonial Connections 1815-1845: Patronage, the Information Revolution and the Colonial Government*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Matsumoto, Y.
1988 "Reexamination of the universality of face: Politeness phenomena in Japanese", *Journal of Pragmatics* 12 (4), 403-426.
Mazzon, G.
2010 "Terms of address". In: A.H. Jucker – I. Taavitsainen (eds.) *Historical pragmatics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 351-376.
McKenzie, K.
2016 *Imperial Underworld: An Escaped Convict and the Transformation of the Empire.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Nevala, M.
2004 *Address in Early English Correspondence: Its Forms and Socio-Pragmatic Functions*. Helsinki: Société Néophilologique.
2009 "Altering distance and defining authority: Person reference in Late Modern English". In: J. Culpeper (ed.) *Historical Sociopragmatics.* Special Issue of *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 10 (2), 238-259.
2010 "Politeness". In: A.H. Jucker – I. Taavitsainen (eds.) *Historical pragmatics*. *Pragmatic Developments in the History of English*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 419-450.
Nevalainen, T. – H. Raumolin-Brunberg.
1995 "Constraints on politeness: The pragmatics of address formulae in Early English correspondence". In: A. Jucker (ed.) *Historical Pragmatics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 541-601.
Nurmi, A. – M. Nevala
2010 "The social space of an eighteenth-century governess: Modality and reference in the private letters and journals of Agnes Porter". In: P. Pahta et al. (eds.) *Social Roles and Language Practices in Late Modern English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 163-89.
Pahta, P. et al.
2010 "Language practices in the construction of social roles in Late Modern English". In: P. Pahta et al. (eds.) *Social Roles and Language Practices in Late Modern English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1-27.
Paisley, F. – K. Reid
2014 "Introduction". In: F. Paisley – K. Reid (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Colonialism: Writing the Empire from Below.* New York: Routledge, 1-25.
Palander-Collin, M.
2009a "Patterns of interaction: Self-mention and addressee inclusion in the letters of Nathaniel Bacon and his correspondents". In: A. Nurmi – M. Nevala – M. Palander-Collin (eds.) *The Language of Daily Life in England (1400-1800*). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 53-74.
2009b "Variation and change in patterns of self-reference in early English correspondence". In: J. Culpeper (ed.) *Historical Sociopragmatics*. Special Issue of *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 10 (2), 260-285.
2009c "Self-reference and mental processes in early English personal correspondence: A corpus approach to changing patterns of interaction". In: A.H. Jucker – D. Schreier – M. Hundt (eds.) *Corpora:*

Pragmatics and Discourse: Papers from the 29th International Conference on English language Research on Computerised Corpora (ICAME 29). Ascona, Switzerland, 14-18 May 2008, 105-126. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Peires, J.
1989 "The British and the Cape: 1814-1834". In: R. Elphick – H. Giliomee (eds.) *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 472-518.

Sacks, H. – E.A. Schegloff
1979 "Two preferences in the organization of reference to persons in conversation and their interaction". In: G. Psathas (ed.) *Everyday Language: Studies in Ethnomethodology*. New York: Irvington, 15-21.

Schegloff, E.A.
1996 "Some practices of referring to persons in talk-in-interaction: A partial sketch of a systematics". In: B. Fox (ed.) *Studies in Anaphora*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 437-485.
2007 "Conveying who you are: The presentation of self, strictly speaking". In: N.J. Enfield – T. Stivers (eds.) *Person Reference in Interaction: Linguistic, Cultural and Social Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 123-148.

Schnurr, S. – D. van de Mieroop
2017 "Introduction: A kaleidoscopic view of identity struggles at work". In: D. van de Mieroop – S. Schnurr (eds.) *Identity Struggles. Evidence from Workplaces around the World*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1-18.

Stivers, T.
2007 "Alternative recognitionals in person reference". In: N.J. Enfield – T. Stivers (eds.) *Person Reference in Interaction: Linguistic, Cultural and Social Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 73-96.

Stivers, T. – N.J. Enfield – S.C. Levinson
2007 "Person reference in interaction". In: N.J. Enfield – T. Stivers (eds.) *Person Reference in Interaction: Linguistic, Cultural and Social Perspectives* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-20.

Taavitsainen, I. – A.H. Jucker
2010 "Expressive speech acts and politeness in eighteenth-century English". In: R. Hickey (ed.) *Eighteenth-Century English: Ideology and Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 159-181. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511781643.010

Tabouret-Keller, A.
1998 "Language and identity". In: F. Coulmas (ed) *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Blackwell Publishing. *Blackwell Reference Online*, http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?, accessed December 2007.

Theal, G.M.
1908 *History of South Africa since September 1795*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thompson, L.M.
2001 *A History of South Africa*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Tieken-Boon van Ostade, I.
2006 "Edward Pearson Esq.: The language of an 18th century secretary". In: M. Dossena – S. Fitzmaurice (eds.) *Business and Official Correspondence: Historical Investigations*. Berlin: Peter Lang, 129-151.
Vartiainen, T. – T. Säily – M. Hakala
2013 "Variation in pronoun frequencies in early English letters: Gender-based or relationship-based?" In: J. Tyrkkö – O. Timofeeva – M. Salenius (eds.) *Ex Philologia Lux: Essays in Honour of Leena Kahlas-Tarkka*. Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 233-255, https://helda.helsinki.fi//bitstream/handle/10138/155183/vartiainen_et_al_2013.pdf?sequence=1, accessed September 2017.
Włodarczyk, M.
2013a "British Colonial Office correspondence on the Cape Colony (1820-1821): Metatextual keywords vs. analytic categories". In: M. Włodarczyk (ed.). Special Issue of *Poznań Studies in Contemporary Linguistics* 49 (3), 399-428.
2013b "Self-reference and ego involvement in the 1820 Settler petition as a leaking genre". In: M.J. van der Wal – G. Rutten (eds.) *Touching the Past. Studies in the Historical Sociolinguistics of Ego-Documents*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 201-224.
2015 "Nineteenth-century institutional (im)politeness: Responses of the Colonial Office to letters from William Parker, 1820 settler". In: M. Dossena (ed.) *Transatlantic Perspectives on Late Modern English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 153-177.
Wood, J.L.
2009 "Structures and expectations: A systematic analysis of Margaret Paston's formulaic and expressive language", *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 10 (2), 187-214.
Young, D.M.
1961 *The Colonial Office in the Early Nineteenth Century*. London: Longmans.

Address: Matylda Włodarczyk, Adam Mickiewicz University, Faculty of English, Al. Niepodległości 4, 61-874 Poznań (Poland).

ORCID code: orcid.org/0000-0002-9173-2463.