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## **Horace Walpole and his correspondents : social network analysis in a historical context**

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## **Chapter 5. Social network analysis and the Walpole family<sup>1</sup>**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In this chapter I will analyse the language of Walpole and his family network of correspondents which I will refer to as the Walpole Family Network. In doing so, I draw on the previous work on SNA in a historical context as discussed in chapter 4, and I will focus more specifically on one of the quantification models for network ties, i.e. the classic network strength scale (NSS). Since Walpole's complete correspondence has been published, all of the first-order network contacts for whom linguistic material exists in the form of letters as well as their relationship with Walpole are known. In the current chapter I will consider the correspondence between Walpole and his own family as a specific type of network, and I will pay special attention to the principles behind the quantification of network strength.

### **5.2. Style and social network**

A first step in my analysis of the Walpole Family Network has been to look at the elements which influence style of writing; the quantification of style can be seen as an attempt to decide which contextual factors influence a linguistic utterance, and how to describe these factors. According to Traugott and Romaine (1985), as well as Biber (1991), the style of a certain utterance correlates with a whole set of circumstances. First, the medium of an utterance, or rather the implied orality or literacy of that medium, is of importance for its style. Biber (1991), for example, provides a linguistic analysis of several genres of speech and writing, indicating a correlation along multidimensional lines between typical speech-like and typical literate features in different text types.

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this chapter was published as Henstra (2008).

Secondly, the implied orality or literacy of a medium is influenced amongst other things by the degree to which the participants interact and by the organisation of topics in discourse. What Traugott and Romaine call “contextualized participant interaction” (1985: 14) is typical of oral modes of discourse. In this case the speaker and hearer (or, in the case of historical analysis, the writer and reader) share a context, for example of thought, location or knowledge. Because of contextualised participant interaction, the organisation of discourse in oral modes is different from that of typically literate modes, in that, for example, the organisation of topics is typically less “logical” and the utterances are more “rhapsodic or chunking”, as Traugott and Romaine (1985: 14) put it. Biber notes similar characteristics for personal letters in his detailed linguistic analysis of multiple text genres: “personal letters ... assume a high degree of shared background knowledge between reader and writer” (1991: 71), which is a characteristic this genre has in common with typical speech. Redford (1986), in his literary stylistic study of eighteenth-century familiar letters, notices a similar effect on a more literary level, and in fact describes contextualised participant interaction:

Because of their particular literary and social milieu, the letter-writers under scrutiny ... have several major advantages. The first and most important of these is a feeling of cultural consensus, which allows them to spin a delicately allusive web. Such a web substitutes for the physical presence that fosters intimacy between actor and audience ... [the letters] gain immeasurably in force and subtlety from the network of shared assumptions, attitudes, and acquaintances that pervades them (Redford 1986: 6).

In this way the style of an utterance is also influenced by the relationship between the speaker and hearer during the creation of that utterance: the

context they do or do not share and the degree of interaction that the medium permits.

Thirdly, the relationships between speakers and hearers in a broader sense influence style, and an example of this is the operating of “social group norms” (Traugott and Romaine 1985: 16). According to Traugott and Romaine, “Labov predicts that speakers will show shifts in the direction of what is assumed to be more formal or more standard”, especially in settings that elicit more formal language; but they also note that “[n]ot all speakers show shifts in the direction of what is assumed to be more formal or more standard. In some situations ... there is divergence rather than convergence” (1985: 16). This observation is in line with what one would expect in light of the SNA model. On the one hand, social mobility, and especially upward mobility, is expected to influence language use towards the standard, producing a formal style in more formal situations or more literate modes. On the other hand, within a social network cluster a different norm can be stronger than the pull of the standard language (see e.g. Milroy 1987: 52 and 136–137). There is what Traugott and Romaine call “a plurality of norms” (1985: 17) which influences speakers. It is not only the relationship or shared context between the speaker and hearer during the creation of discourse that is important, but also their “larger ... roles” in society as a whole as well as within their shared social network (Traugott and Romaine 1985: 18).

As discussed so far, style is influenced by the orality or literacy of the mode of discourse in a multidimensional way. Another factor in style which is influenced by social factors is accommodative behaviour. Traugott and Romaine refer to Giles *et al.* (1973), for whom “accommodation is seen as conscious or unconscious modification of speech style by speakers in order to control how they present themselves and are in turn perceived by others”

(1985: 21), and they note that “[t]he Giles framework does not make any connection between setting and participant, though this may clearly have implications for accommodation” (1985: 22). When style is considered as a negotiation between participants in a particular setting, “the speaker is often seen as actively creating styles in accommodation” (1985: 19). However, on a linguistic level this does not necessarily mean that “the speaker is paying conscious attention in all cases” (1985: 29). Self-monitoring and accommodation need not correlate unidimensionally: linguistic accommodation can be either conscious or subconscious, depending on the topic and medium of discourse and the setting in which it is created.

When we consider the following comment by Redford (1986), it becomes clear that it is indeed important to consider conscious attempts at stylistic variation in my analysis of letters produced from within the Walpole Family Network:

[T]he eighteenth-century familiar letter, like the eighteenth-century conversation, is a performance – an ‘act’ in the theatrical sense as well as a ‘speech act’ in the linguistic. Through a variety of techniques, such as masking and impersonation, the letter-writer devises substitutes for gesture, vocal inflection and physical context (Redford 1986: 2).

Language in such letters is influenced not only in style (largely subconsciously) to suit the medium and its orality, the speaker–hearer relationship, and the setting and topic of discourse, but also possibly in a conscious and strategic attempt to mimic something that is not there: speech. The letters are after all produced in a medium that is writing. Rather paradoxically, this evident self-monitoring does not necessarily mean that the language in eighteenth-century personal letters is more literate, but neither does the fact that the letter

writers of the period try to imitate the act of speaking mean that the language is more oral. As Redford puts it: “the truest letter, we might say, is the most feigning” (1986: 7). It is difficult to predict how oral the language of eighteenth-century letters will be, since we only have written sources, which differ in degree of literacy and orality (see also chapter 1). However, of more importance to the letters under investigation in the chapter is the fact that letter writers varied their style of writing under the influence of the identity of the recipient of the letter. The social network position of those participating in written discourse and the strength of their network ties are expected to influence their language from a stylistic point of view.

Redford mainly stresses the influence of individuals negotiating a speech act at the level of topic and diction:

Instead of assuming interest, great letter-writers create it: details are pruned and inflections calibrated according to the identity and interests of the recipient. The finest familiar letters are always correspondent-specific: they play to a particular audience (1986: 10).

What is more, he notes that in the case of eighteenth-century familiar correspondence the letter “tells us, if we look closely, about its author *and its recipient*” (1986: 12; emphasis added). However, it can be expected that the influence of the negotiation between speaker and hearer reaches further, taking us to the level of syntax and idiom as well. Traugott and Romaine offer the following starting point for a working definition of style, which was already briefly referred to in my discussion of the familiar letter as a text-type in chapter 1:

[Style is] primarily ... a relationship between participants in speech events who, as individuals, negotiate speech acts and thereby create ‘styles’ strategically, but who also

are exemplars of social roles and have relationships in larger social institutions beyond the frame of ... interaction, e.g. networks (1985: 29).

From this definition we see that there is room to interpret social network positions as a stylistic influence at the level of the *individual*. The density of a social network and the relative position of each correspondent within it provide an opportunity for quantifying the influence of the speaker–hearer relationship on style. Redford’s study of Horace Walpole as a man of many voices provides a way to link social network analysis to Traugott and Romaine’s broad stylistic approach to language variation, and, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, my analysis of Horace Walpole’s correspondence, and in particular that of the Walpole Family Network, will serve to illustrate how their approach will function within a sociohistorical linguistic context.

### 5.3. Quantifying social variables

The next step in my analysis of the Walpole Family Network is to attempt a definition of the social variables that were established as being of influence on style and language. Before any predictions on the linguistic influences of interpersonal relationships and network strength in general can be made, a measure is needed to quantify the relationships themselves. Most of the terminology used here has already been discussed in section 4.2. In the present chapter I will only clarify some terms in their context for this particular casestudy. As discussed in chapter 4 above, a NSS measures “network patterns” (Milroy 1987: 139) of individual people involved in discourse and therefore allows us to gauge how well each member is integrated into a particular network. Someone who has ties to many people in the network and is also bound to several of those people in multiple ways (for example as a friend, colleague and neighbour at the same time) is more integrated into the



network than someone who is only tied to one person in a single way. Milroy suggests “key notions of relative multiplexity and density of personal networks” (1987: 141) for which an individual is scored in order to establish a NSS. A network member receives points in a NSS for fulfilling specific requirements which indicate a certain degree of integration in the network. In Table 4.4 and in section 4.3.2. above, I have outlined the indicators of network strength that were used for the Belfast study conducted by Milroy and that were later adopted (and adapted) by Bax (2000) for his study of the Streatham Circle. In the following sections of this chapter I will address examples of the methods that should, according to Sairio (2005: 32), be considered further in the context of historical social network analysis from the viewpoint of the reliability of the model. In doing so, however, I encountered a number of problems with the adaptation of the model to the situation of the Walpole Family Network as well as subsequent complications concerning the interpretation of the results of my analysis. I will proceed to discuss these accordingly.

### *5.3.1. Dynamic network ties*

According to Fitzmaurice, “[i]t may be rare for an interpersonal tie to be perceived in the same way by both of its actors”, a contrast which is “captured in the notions of asymmetry and reciprocity” (2000b: 271), as discussed in 4.3.2. People do not always like each other to an equal extent, and this is expected to have consequences for their language use. Bax (2000) illustrates the notion of asymmetry with the example of the relationship between Mrs Thrale and a certain William Pepys, showing that “Pepys treated her like a friend but she treated him like an acquaintance” (2000: 282). Fitzmaurice suggests that “the recipient of a non-reciprocal tie may actually be the transmitter of social

influence" (2000b: 272). A person who is the recipient of many friendships but does not return them equally to all who like him is likely to be a popular person: he or she might have some close relationships which are reciprocal, but also receives the affection of people who would like to be a part of the 'inner circle' and whose affections are not reciprocated. This need to 'belong' is a basis for the social and linguistic influence recipients of non-reciprocal ties may have on other network members. Perhaps this 'queen bee' is even the central person in a network and a possible early adopter (see 4.2. for a detailed discussion of this term). In Bax's model this is reflected by asymmetrical emotional network scores: in his model the score Mrs Thrale receives from Pepys is higher than the one he receives from her. Thus, Mrs Thrale may have had a social influence on Pepys but also (following the social network model) a linguistic influence. It is therefore of great importance to take notice of asymmetrical and non-reciprocal network ties when conducting an analysis of historical (or any) data with the help of this model.

Furthermore, it is important to be aware of the fact that emotional scores may change over time. Whereas for the year 1779, when Mrs Thrale wrote about Pepys that she regretted "that she continued to treat him 'like a common acquaintance'", Bax assigns Pepys one point for being an acquaintance, while Mrs Thrale receives two points as a friend; by 1780, however, "their relationship was symmetrical" (Bax 2000: 202–3). Fitzmaurice similarly observes that "an individual may change network strength score with a shift from being the recipient of a non-reciprocal tie to gaining recognition as a reciprocal actor" (2000: 271), and mentions the development of the relationship between Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689 – 1762) and Joseph Addison as an example of this effect. When calculating network strength scores one should always focus on a particular period of time in order to be able to

deal with the fact that relationships, both functional and emotional ones, are dynamic. Therefore, in the network strength analysis of the Walpole Family Network I will consider the quantification of the relationships between network contacts by means of a NSS to be a 'snapshot' view of a social network at a particular point in time. This can be either a very short and well-defined period of time in a particularly dynamic relationship, or a longer period which may by its relative stability still be characterised as a discrete one within the relationship, depending on the (biographical) information available. Computing network strength by means of a NSS for two different periods (taking as it were two 'snapshots' of the network at different points in time) and taking into account the changes in the relationships between the network members in those two periods can subsequently serve as a functional tool to test ideas about linguistic influence within social networks. If someone's total (emotional) score within a network greatly increases in a given period, it is possible (following Fitzmaurice 2000b) that his or her linguistic influence has also increased.

### 5.3.2. *The nature of the sources*

Another problematic factor in the application of the model of social network analysis to situations in the past is the existence of incomplete data. Even though, as explained in chapter 1, the corpus of Horace Walpole's correspondence is far from small, it is nevertheless incomplete. In his introduction to *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with the Walpole Family* (HWC 36: xxx), Lewis states, for example: "The one letter we have to Charles Churchill, Walpole's brother-in-law, shows us how close Walpole was to him and his wife, Lady Mary, to whom for fifty years and more he wrote hundreds of letters". However, these letters are "now all lost" (HWC 36: xvii). Which

letters have been preserved is a product of historical events and mere chance. We cannot ignore the fact that a social network analysis may consequently be influenced by the sample of correspondence that has been preserved. According to Labov (1994): “Historical linguistics can ... be thought of as the art of making the best use of bad data” (see Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 26). However, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg feel that “there is no need to overstress what Labov calls ‘bad data’” and they “would rather place the emphasis on making the best use of the data available”, by “[i]ntegrating information gathered by historians into linguistic research” (2003: 26–7). In other words, as long as one is conscious of the fact that data may be incomplete and as long as one draws on interdisciplinary ways to fill the gaps – for example by using historical sources, modern as well as contemporary ones, other diary and letter collections and biographical information – incomplete data need not be an insoluble problem for sociohistorical linguistic analysis.

In the case of the Walpole Family Network, some of these gaps in information can be filled by references to missing letters in other letters, by biographical information as well as by other writings that have come down to us, such as all the different accounts of the so-called ‘Nicoll affair’ (for a description of which see below; see also HWC 14: 195ff.), which is one of the two focal points in my analysis of this part of the Walpole network. However, it has proved impossible to present a NSS of all the correspondents within Walpole’s family network due to lack of information about some of the correspondents, such as Lady Mary Churchill, mentioned above. For the analysis presented in this chapter I have therefore looked at a small selection of correspondents for which I based myself partly on the number of letters that are presented in the volume called *Horace Walpole’s Correspondence with the Walpole Family* (HWC 36) and partly on biographical and other historical

information which suggests that these informants are of particular interest from the viewpoint of social network analysis.

Bax (2000) raises the subjectivity of available data as another problem, and lists seven methods of assessing the emotional relationship between two network members, numbered according to increasing unreliability. These methods have been discussed in 4.3.2., and for my analysis of the Walpole Family Network I have dealt with information on emotional attachment mainly through methods 3 (A's opinion of B is found in A's letters to B), 4 (A's opinion of B is found in A's letters to C / A's words are reconstructed in C's diary), 6 (Application of the researcher's own subjective feature list to events described in texts / copying another researcher's reasoned classification of A's opinion of B) and 7 (Copying other researchers' classifications of A's opinion of B), due to the nature of the sources that are available to me. The sources primarily consist of letters, biographical essays and information in the footnotes of letters in the Lewis edition. It is not possible to indicate, as Sairio (2005: 33) suggests, "the differences in reliability [of a source] in the points [assigned]" to network members in a study of such a small scope; but it is still important to be aware of the possible unreliability of sources used, especially considering the principle of "verifiability" of the data that was proposed by Milroy (1987: 143) as a criterion for designing the indicators of an adapted NSS. The methodological problems discussed in this section are all taken into account in my analysis of the Walpole Family Network. However, in the process of adapting Bax's NSS for the Walpole family and in its subsequent application to the family network analysed here, some further issues have come to light. I will deal with these below.

### *5.3.3. Family networks and the historical context*

As discussed in 4.3.2., Bax (2000) has adapted the key notions of Milroy's (1987) model for measuring network strength to fit an eighteenth-century closed network cluster consisting of people from the upper middle classes. From the viewpoint of social network analysis, closed network clusters are likely to behave similarly under similar conditions, regardless of the social stratum to which the network members belong (cf. Milroy 1987: 179–81). Bax's NSS criteria for the Streatham Circle should therefore be applicable to Horace Walpole's upper-class family network cluster as well. However, my analysis of the Walpole family focuses on a network cluster consisting solely of family members, and it is to be expected that the nature of the relationships between members in such a network is inherently different from those in a mixed circle consisting of family and friends such as the Streatham Circle (or, as in the case of the work done by Sairio (2008, 2009a and 2009b), of that of the Bluestockings). Therefore, the conditions for measuring the emotional and functional network scores of members of the Walpole Family cluster need to be different from those used by Bax for the Streatham Circle. My consideration has been that the range of functional relationships within a network consisting of only family members is different from that within a mixed circle of family and friends. For example, in the model created by Bax (2000), the correspondents of the Walpole Family Network cluster all fulfil the condition of "being family" (Bax 2000: 282). Thus, in a network consisting of relatives, the condition of being family is no longer distinctive between the network members and is therefore not a significant measure of network strength. Moreover, I believe it to be questionable whether any one of the conditions

which determine the one-to-one functional scores of the network members in Bax's model can be of significance in a family network.

It may be the case, for example, that certain family members fulfil conditions for functional relationships which other family members do not: the condition "having a professional relationship" (Bax 2000: 282) is one which creates an extra link between Sir Robert Walpole the elder (1676–1745) and Horace Walpole, for example. Father and son had a multiple functional relationship when they were both Members of Parliament in the period after Horace's return from his tour of the Continent in 1741 until Sir Robert's death in 1745: they were at this time not only family members but also colleagues, and they therefore would receive a higher one-to-one functional score in Bax's model. What is more, the emotional relationship between Sir Robert Walpole the elder and Horace Walpole is also likely to have been affected by the creation of this multiple functional link. In his introduction to *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with the Walpole Family* (HWC 36), Lewis illustrates the change. Before taking the Grand Tour in 1741, Horace Walpole, being "wholly under the domination of his mother" (HWC 36: i), was not very close to his father, whereas when he returned and took his seat in Parliament, the relationship between the men changed: "Sir Robert's political enemies were closing in on him, yet he had no more loyal supporter in the House than his youngest son", as Lewis puts it (HWC 36: i). According to Lewis, "[f]ather and son discovered each other" (HWC 36: i) when they became colleagues, and they remained close until Walpole the elder's death in 1745. It hardly seems possible to speak of function and emotion separately when dealing with family members. Bax notes a similar effect:

[I]t is possible for two people to have an emotional relationship at a certain point in time without having a

functional relationship as well, but the reverse is impossible. This is because being, say, colleagues (i.e. having a professional relationship) implies that one also thinks of the other person in terms of emotional distance (2000: 281).

The fact that the Walpole family members have a family relationship does not imply that they were by definition friends as well, but rather that there is always some form of emotional relationship between them.

Taking the argument a step further, one could say that, even though there may be variation in the one-to-one functional scores of family members within a network cluster, however slight, in essence their functional relationship is uniform: they are family. Therefore variation in functional relationships between family members is more likely to have a demonstrable effect on their one-to-one emotional scores than to be otherwise significant. Furthermore, Milroy notes that “most studies utilising the network concept have in practice found that either density of one or more of the clusters ... or relative multiplexity, offers powerful means of accounting for various behaviours”, and she states that “it is worth noting that both network patterns, and attitudinal factors suggest themselves as a basis for the measurement of degree of integration into the community” (1987: 139-40). Since the Walpole Family Network is a network cluster, I expect that focusing solely on attitudinal factors rather than on both functional and emotional relationships in the analysis of network strength and the integration of network members will be sufficient for making argued claims about linguistic variation.

An important issue to be considered in a social network study of an eighteenth-century family is the historical context of the terms ‘friend’ and ‘family’. Trumbach (1978) gives the following definition of the concept family: “A family might mean either the members of a household, a group of parents



and children, or the descendants of a common ancestor" (1978: 294). In this sense of the word 'family', all the members of the Walpole Family Network cluster indeed fulfil the condition of 'being family'. However, Trumbach also notes that "friendship and kinship were not ... easily distinguished in the eighteenth century" (1978: 64). Moreover, he states:

'Friend' was the most commonly used kinship term; a husband's best friend was his wife, a child's, his parent. But 'friend' was also the most frequently used term of individual social classification ... In short, it is likely that in traditional societies with cognatic kindreds [such as the eighteenth-century British aristocracy], friendship, as understood in its instrumental rather than expressive sense, is the most important social tie ... The difficulty in distinguishing friendship from kinship in eighteenth-century society ought not, therefore, to be taken as an indication of the importance of kinship ties but rather the contrary: the truly significant institution was friendship (1978: 64–5).<sup>2</sup>

This statement reinforces the above-mentioned idea that within a family network cluster the emotional links between people are of a more defining nature for their network integration than the fact that they are family and the functional closeness which is associated with it.

The fact that the Walpole network cluster under scrutiny in this chapter is a family network has consequences for the calculation of the one-to-one emotional scores of the correspondents. As mentioned above, the fact that the correspondents are relatives implies the existence of an emotional relationship between them, regardless of the nature of that emotional relationship; and the emotional connection between two relatives is perhaps even more significant than the family relationship. It is therefore difficult to

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<sup>2</sup> See also Tadmor (2001) for a linguistically based discussion of the terms 'family' and 'friendship' in the eighteenth century.

classify family members according to the definitions used by Bax (2000: 281) as friend, enemy or acquaintance. The alternative approach to this problem offered by Fitzmaurice (2000b) will be of use here: she deals with historical social networks from the viewpoint of coalition formation, which was discussed in 4.3.2 above. Looking at “the different ways in which social (and ultimately linguistic) influence might issue from how individuals align themselves for social, political and economic gain”, she notes that “[f]or periods in which the issue of friendship is a tough one to construct and understand in social terms, it may be more useful to analyse identifiable, apparently strategic alliances of people as coalitions ... which are formed in order to achieve particular goals or to pursue a ... common agenda” (2000b: 266).

#### 5.3.4. *Coalition formation and network strength*

Drawing on the concept of coalition formation as proposed by Fitzmaurice (2000b) may serve as a useful strategy for describing the dynamic nature of the emotional relationships between the Walpoles. For example, when Horace Walpole joined Parliament, not only was a second functional relationship between him and his father formed, but also what could be called coalition formation took place. Lewis states that after Horace Walpole joined Parliament, he “poured out his long suppressed affection for Sir Robert *whose enemies became his enemies* and remained so ever afterwards” (HWC 36: xii, emphasis added). This is in line with Fitzmaurice’s explanation of coalitions, though it must be noted that within the Walpole family, coalitions, being a “set of ties contracted for specific purposes ... for particular, variable periods of time” (Fitzmaurice 2000b: 273), are not necessarily purely “strategic” and “power-based” (2000b: 274), but are rather a by-product of the circumstances which also determine the emotional and functional relationships at a particular time.

In that way, coalition formation can serve to illustrate and illuminate the fact that emotional relationships between family members and members of the Walpole Family Network in particular change over time under the influence of both external and internal factors.

When we view the one-to-one emotional scores as a dynamic aggregate of attitudinal factors, functional components and sometimes consciously engaged strategic alliances, it becomes clear that it is more promising to use a scale ranging from immediacy to distance for analysis of the Walpole Family Network cluster, as suggested by Sairio (2005: 23), rather than Bax's absolute categories of friend, acquaintance and enemy. An example of an event within the Walpole family which led to coalition formation and which may serve to illustrate the consequences of this for the one-to-one emotional scores of those involved is the so-called 'Nicoll affair', named after the object of the quarrel, a young woman called Margaret Nicoll (see HWC 14: 195ff.). The affair may be summarised as follows. Horace Walpole attempted to broker a match between Margaret Nicoll, a wealthy young lady, and his nephew, George Walpole, 3rd Earl of Orford (1730–1791). In his account of the affair Walpole claimed that he was thwarted in the attempt by his uncle, Horatio Walpole, Lord Walpole of Wolterton (1678–1757). We thus have to do with a coalition here that tried to secure the marriage, consisting of Horace Walpole and his friend John Chute. It is not clear from the sources whether Horatio was actually against the match and consciously strove to prevent it, but this is what Horace felt was happening. Horatio Walpole indeed formed a coalition against Horace Walpole and John Chute, together with Miss Nicoll's temporary guardian, a certain Mr Capper. Together they were extremely displeased with the accusations of treachery that Horace Walpole expressed in his letters to

them, as they felt that they had done nothing to deserve them, as can be read in this letter from Horatio Walpole:

*Dear Sir,*

*I am so far from having any scheme for Miss Nicol's continuing at Mr Capper's, that as he was with me this morning, I told him that having reason to think that those who had the greatest concern for the young lady and have the greatest credit with her had no inclination to it, I would not desire him to take that great charge upon himself, at which he was extremely pleased saying that nothing but a regard for our family would have induced him to be at all concerned at first, although he and his family are very well satisfied with the young lady's behaviour, yet it is a matter of too great a nicety and consequence for him to be trusted with, and therefore, dear Horace, your honour in this respect will be very safe, and thank God I shall have nothing more to say to it directly or indirectly. There seems something mysterious in this affair that I do not comprehend, nor am I at all curious to unriddle, it being no business of mine any otherwise than still to repeat that if you and Mr Chute continue to be of the same opinion and as zealous for Lord Orford's marrying Miss Nicol as you appeared at first, I think it may be happily effected, and I earnestly entreat you to put it [out] of your own and your friend's head as if I have ever had any scheme or view to have Mr Capper guardian to the young lady, and what has fallen from me was only as a common friend to promote that honourable design in which I thought we were all agreed and to which I still wish well.*

*I am,*

*Most affectionately yours*

*H. WALPOLE*

(Horace Walpole Sr to HW, 21 June 1751, HWC 14:216)

Walpole, however, is quite certain that the opposite is true, and dismisses Horatio's letter in no uncertain terms in this reply:

*Sir,*

*You need not give yourself the trouble to have the letters copied, or to send them back, for to me they are mere waste paper. Whether I am desirous Lord Orford should marry Miss Nicholl or not (though I pressed their meeting at your house which you*

*would have declined, and you know you said it would be better to stay till she was settled somewhere) I do not think fit to justify to you; I shall to the world in the most public manner. You told me we had quarrelled formerly and you believed it would come to that again—you know whether I ever sought a reconciliation, or whether it was possible for any man ever to show more indifference to another's friendship than I have always done for yours: after taxing me with not promoting Lord Orford's welfare by any means in y power, there are no terms on which I should not disdain your friendship.*

*I am Sir, for the last time of my life, your humble servant*

HOR. WALPOLE

(HW to Horace Walpole Sr, 22 June 1751, HWC 14: 205-06, printed in Horace Walpole's Narrative of the Nicoll affair)

At the time of the affair, June 1751, it is likely that the bonds between the coalition partners became stronger, and consequently the distances between the different coalitions are emotionally as well as linguistically greater than before and after the period of coalition formation. The one-to-one emotional scores of Horace Walpole and his uncle Horatio are expected to be lower during the existence of their respective coalitions than at any other time. Their relationship was emotionally more “distant”, to use the term adopted by Sairio (2005), and from a social network point of view this is expected to have linguistic consequences.

The possibility of using the notion of coalition formation as a factor in network tie strength is also supported by Trumbach's comment that, “though the continuity and power of an individual family might be maintained through patrilineal and primogenitural practices, aristocrats nonetheless found that in their political alliances, friendship was far more important than kinship” (1978: 2). Furthermore, Tadmor notes that “affective friendship relations were increasingly tied with instrumental and occupational relationships” (2001: 177) in the eighteenth century. Among members of the upper classes, friendship (or

emotional closeness), in its affective as well as instrumental sense, was the decisive factor in the strength of network ties, even between family members. I also note the relationship between coalition formation and CAT (Bax 2002). The latter theory may aid the interpretation of dyadic ties within the network in such a case. Coalition formation may thus serve as a useful means to indicate the degree of closeness or distance between network contacts.

#### **5.4. Linguistic analysis and the limitations of the model**

##### *5.4.1. Scoring the network*

I conducted a network strength analysis of the Walpole Family Network cluster for the year 1751, during the Nicoll affair, and the period immediately after 1772, which is of special interest in order to determine the relationship between Horace's brother Edward Walpole (1706–84), Edward's illegitimate daughter Maria Walpole, later Lady Waldegrave and Duchess of Gloucester (1736–1807), and Horace Walpole himself, because at that time Maria Walpole was estranged from her father because of her scandalous marriage to the Duke of Gloucester<sup>3</sup>. Walpole was not so much a supporter of this union, but remained a loyal friend and ally to his niece. The results of the analysis have been presented in Table 5.1. In this table the network scores are to be interpreted as a scale in which a positive number indicates relative closeness and a negative number relative distance; in calculating the scores I adopted the method developed by Bax (2000: 282) as discussed in 4.2.2. above, which I adapted to suit the purposes of the present analysis pertaining to a family

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<sup>3</sup> In 1759 Maria Walpole married the second Earl Waldegrave. He died after only four years of marriage, and in 1766 Maria secretly married the Duke of Gloucester. He was twenty years younger than she was, and the marriage was only publicly announced in 1772. For sake of clarity I will refer to her as Maria Walpole throughout the text.

network (see 5.3.3.). Thus, in this case-study network contact A is scored according to network contact B's view of him or her in the following manner:

- if B's relationship with A is very close, A receives 2 points from B
- if B's relationship with A is moderately close, A receives 1 point from B
- if B's relationship with A is neutral, A receives 0 points from B
- if B's relationship with A is moderately distant, A receives -1 point from B
- and if B's relationship with A is very distant, A receives -2 points from B.

As discussed in 5.3.4. above (see also Milroy 2002: 549), the total emotional involvement score is an aggregate of the individual attitudes of the correspondents towards each other, in which case a higher number indicates deeper integration of the individual into the network. Question marks in the two rightmost columns in the table indicate a gap in the NSS that is due to a lack of information about the relationship between the two network contacts at the time. If there are gaps in the scores which contact A receives from the other contacts, a question mark is added to the total emotional involvement score to indicate uncertainty about this aggregate score. Subsequently, the existence of gaps negatively influences the possibility of interpreting a total involvement score in order to be able to assess the role of the network member in macro-level linguistic developments. A dash indicates that there was no relationship between the network contacts involved at the time of the NSS, in this case caused by the fact that Horatio Walpole the elder died in 1757. By means of the model adopted here it is possible to offer a hypothesis on the dynamics of language use within the Walpole family.

The first thing that becomes apparent from Table 5.1. below is that there are many gaps in the data, which lead to a high degree of uncertainty in most of the total network strength scores. There is in this case also a clear division between the data available for two distinct groups of family members, caused by the two separate family affairs which dominate the analysis of the social network presented here. In the previously discussed Nicoll affair of 1751, Horatio Walpole the elder, George Walpole and Horace Walpole take centre stage, whereas Edward Walpole and his daughter Maria Walpole play no part. However, in 1772 Horatio Walpole the elder had already died and only two letters between George Walpole and Horace Walpole written after 1772 have come down to us, whereas Edward, Horace and Maria carried out a lively correspondence during these years.

The lack of sources for some correspondents complicates the completion of the NSS for all family members in both periods. There are, for example, no extant letters in the current edition of Horace Walpole's correspondence between Horace Walpole and Maria Walpole from before 1772, and no mention is made of their position in the Nicoll affair in the bibliographical notes either, so it is impossible to provide their relationships with the other family members with scores of emotional distance or immediacy for the year 1751 pertaining to the Nicoll affair. We can, however, be quite certain from other sources that there was emotional closeness between Horace Walpole and Maria Walpole in 1751, and can consequently score their relationship with reference to this information.

In 1751, Maria Walpole was fifteen years old and not yet married to Lord Waldegrave. She was one of the illegitimate daughters of Horace's elder brother Edward by a seamstress named Dorothy Clement. According to the entry on her husband in the *ODNB*, "Maria grew up with her sisters and



brothers at her father's houses at Englefield Green, Surrey, and in London; they were treated by their father's family as if they were legitimate" (*ODNB s.v.* William Henry, prince).

Contact A	Contact B	Emotional involvement scores for June 1751	Emotional involvement scores after 1772
<b>Edward Walpole</b>	Maria Walpole	1	1
	Horatio Walpole the Elder	?	-
	George Walpole	?	?
	Horace Walpole	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2?</b>	<b>2?</b>
<b>Maria Walpole</b>	Edward Walpole	1	1
	Horatio Walpole the Elder	?	-
	George Walpole	?	?
	Horace Walpole	2	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3?</b>	<b>3?</b>
<b>Horatio Walpole the Elder</b>	Edward Walpole	?	-
	Maria Walpole	?	-
	George Walpole	0	-
	Horace Walpole	-2	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>-2?</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>George Walpole</b>	Edward Walpole	?	?
	Maria Walpole	?	?
	Horatio Walpole the Elder	0	-
	Horace Walpole	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1?</b>	<b>1?</b>
<b>Horace Walpole</b>	Edward Walpole	1	1
	Maria Walpole	2	2
	Horatio Walpole the Elder	-2	-
	George Walpole	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

Table 5.1. A quantification of the relationships between Horace Walpole's correspondents: the one-to-one and the total emotional involvement scores for June 1751 and the years after 1772

Horace Walpole certainly recognised Edward's daughters as Walpoles when he rejoiced in their favourable marriages. He even fancied himself having had a hand in the match between Maria Walpole and Lord Waldegrave (see HWC 36: xiv). According to Lewis, Maria was "her Uncle Horace's favourite" (HWC 36: xiv); and even though Edward and Horace did not get along very well at that time, in an otherwise "violent letter" from 1745, "Edward acknowledged from the first Horace's unflagging kindness to his four illegitimate children" (HWC 36: xiii). Horace Walpole can be expected to have been emotionally very close to his young niece in 1751, because he is seen to act as a father to her and her sisters, perhaps even more so than their own father. The attachment was mutual, according to Lewis:

We see him in the letters [Edward's daughters] wrote their Aunt Jane Clement and her niece Anne after Dorothy Clement died. In them Uncle Horace is the wise, affectionate counsellor and delightful companion. These letters ... show how beloved Uncle Horace was (HWC 36: xiii).

Determining the relationship between Maria Walpole and her father in 1751 is more complicated. There is no evidence in the sources for conscious dissociation or any altercation between Edward and his daughter in 1751, which would have led to lower emotional involvement scores than they have received in this instance, and which would indicate possible linguistic dissociation – that is to say a linguistic divergence from each other, rather than linguistic convergence through closeness. However, there is no evidence that suggests particular closeness either. From Lewis's introduction we may conclude that Edward was pleased with the fact that Horace treated his daughters so well, and therefore that he himself cared for their well-being. However, Lewis notes that "when the children were ill [Horace Walpole] took

them to Strawberry Hill from their father's casually run houses" (HWC 36: xiii), which suggests that Uncle Horace was perhaps closer even to Edward's daughters than Edward was himself. He therefore receives a higher emotional involvement score from Maria and vice versa than Edward Walpole does.

For Horace and Edward Walpole the year 1751 might be called a turning point in their relationship. Letters between the two men in the mid-1740s concentrate on what Lewis calls "a row about money" (Lewis 1978: 34). The disagreement culminates in an unsent letter written by Horace Walpole to Edward in 1745, which is a sneering and biting, albeit rather witty, reply to a letter in which Edward accused Horace of many accounts of injustice against him (see HWC 36: 14–15). Horace's refutations of his brother's claims (printed in italics in the quotation that follows) in the letter (that was, however, never sent) show clearly that the brothers were at that time not very close:

To give myself an additional credit and weight in Parliament. *You might have left out additional .... Or how you happened to imagine I was not to be consulted. I will ask you another question, how you happen to imagine it was necessary for me to consult you? ... Good nature, which I think and say you possess in a great degree. Dear brother, I wish I could think the same of you* (Walpole to Sir Edward Walpole, ca. 16 May 1745 OS, HWC 36: 17).

By 1751, however, things had changed. As we can see from the following letter from 1774 from Edward Walpole to Horace Walpole, later in life the relationship improved greatly:

*Dear Horace*

*I have not yet thankd you by letter or in person, which I have very sincerely done in every other shape, for your great goodness to Mr Bishop; amply manifested in the extraordinary Condescension and benevolence of the Marquise du Deffand towards him. I did not indeed take notice of it before, as he was appointed to the Stage; and I imagined I should have some instance of his success to recount to you when I should*

*acknowledge your kindness to me. I find since, that He exhibits himself this month <sup>and</sup> by a letter from another friend of mine now at Paris, I hear that he meets with uncommon encouragement and approbation among the people of the profession.*

*If in your Correspondence with Mad<sup>me</sup> Du Deffand she should mention any thing about him worth my knowing I dare say you will favour me with a line. And when he returns to England I shall hope for your protection for him.*

*I am most Affect=  
=ionately Yours Ed: Walpole*

*P.S. I beg when you write that you will desire the Marquise to accept my <sup>best</sup> respects and <sup>to</sup> believe that I have the deepest sense of her great benevo=lence and Condescention = she was so ex=ceedingly attentive to your request, that she orderd her carriage and ~~xxxx~~ took him to Mons. Pontdeveulle's.= I have no words to thank her in for so very gracious and so efficacious an Act of Patronage as that [...]*

(Extracts from Edward Walpole to Walpole, 16 July 1774, HWC vol 36: 106-07)<sup>4</sup>

In this letter Edward Walpole, Horace Walpole's brother, thanks Horace for his help in obtaining a suitable position for a certain Mr Bishop. In comparison to Walpole's letter to Horace Mann which we saw in section 3.2., the tone of voice in this correspondence is much more formal and subdued, and most of all less humorous. The letter is an autograph manuscript, probably written without a prior draft version: the post script section (shortened here) is longer than the body of the letter, and both letter and post script contain several insertions and deletions. We see no great degree of emotional closeness in the letter (the language used is quite formulaic). Horace seems to have undertaken

<sup>4</sup> The text reproduced here was taken from HWC 36: 106-07, but adapted in that the transcription reflects the spelling and punctuation of the manuscript source as found in the digital edition of HWC.

a task for the benefit of a friend of Edward's, which also indicates some degree of closeness, though no great closeness specifically. Unfortunately we do not have Horace's reply to his brother's letter. The next extant letter in the correspondence is from the year 1777, and in this letter Walpole conveys his worries about the quality of care that is received by their cousin, George the third Earl of Orford, who was at that time mentally unstable and taken into care at Eriswell. This does show that the brothers at that time still had a common interest or goal: the well-being of their cousin and the upholding of the Walpole Estate.

Biographical accounts also describe an event in 1751 in which the brothers formed what may be called a coalition in the terms of Fitzmaurice (2000b). According to Lewis, "Horace proved he was a good brother ... when a gang charged Edward with sodomitical assault. Horace took the stand as a witness for the defense and helped to convict the conspirators" (Lewis 1978: 35; cf. Mowl 1996: 177–178). Edward and Horace were clearly in some sort of coalition in 1751, though there is no indication in the sources that were available to me that they were more than moderately close. The relationship between Edward and Horace was well on its way to becoming closer than before in the year of the court case, but it was not yet as close as it might have been. It is thus possible to score all correspondents in relation to Horace Walpole for 1751 and the two groups of family members within their respective situations as well, though not in relation to each other, which leaves a number of gaps in the NSS.

In the years after 1772, the period of my second snapshot, the focal point of the Walpole Family Network analysis is the lively correspondence between Horace Walpole, Edward Walpole and Maria Walpole, by that time Duchess of Gloucester. After her scandalous second marriage in 1766

to the Duke of Gloucester (1743–1805), a man “who was seven years her junior and who had fallen in love with her when he was only twenty” (HWC 36: xv), Maria was very much in the public eye. Uncle Horace “continued to give her admirable advice and the support she badly needed and did not get from her father” (HWC 36: xv) after the public announcement of the marriage in 1772, which also suggests a greater closeness between Horace Walpole and Maria Walpole than between father and daughter. Correspondence after that time often concentrates on the well-being of family members and other affairs of home and family. Horace Walpole showed, time and time again, a very loving disposition and a great amount of care towards his nieces and nephews, which can be perceived as a factor in all his relationships with his younger family members that is relatively stable through time. Apparently Horace cared greatly for many members of the younger generation of his family, even regardless of his relationship with their parents at the time. Horace Walpole, the childless bachelor, took on the role of surrogate father and close friend to several of his nephews, nieces and cousins.

What is also interesting to see from the NSS presented in Table 5.1. is that Maria Walpole has received the highest total emotional involvement score for both periods. In the second period Horace Walpole’s score is symmetrical with hers, even though his score in the first period is one of the lower total scores. This would suggest that Maria Walpole is the central network contact in this cluster, and thus a potential early adopter and norm-enforcer. Subsequently, the network strength analysis suggests that Lady Maria’s language is likely to have been an example for the others in the network, the followers in other words. The network contact with the lowest score is Horatio Walpole the elder, with a score of minus 2 points. This would suggest that he is the peripheral network contact who may have been in a position to introduce

linguistic change into the network cluster: he is thus in the position of having been a linguistic innovator. However, there are several complications that must be taken into consideration and due to which one cannot take the results of the network strength analysis at face value.

Firstly, there are gaps in the analysis of the relationships of both Maria Walpole and Horatio Walpole, so that their total emotional involvement scores are less reliable than those for Horace Walpole, who has received scores from all four network members. In fact, Horace Walpole is the only network member to receive emotional involvement scores from more than two of the correspondents. This is not surprising when we take the nature of the sources into account: Bax's preferred method for reconstructing network contacts' opinions of each other is from diaries (cf. Bax 2000: 284–5) or otherwise from letters between the network contacts involved. However, all our information has come from Horace Walpole's collection of letters and from biographical information which focuses on him. It is less likely that we will find information about George Walpole's view on his relationship with, for example, Horatio Walpole the elder or with any other member of the Walpole family other than Horace Walpole in those sources, since generally no letters between the other members of the Walpole family are included in the correspondence. Therefore, most of our information – inevitably – comes from sources that Bax (2000) deems less reliable. The total emotional involvement scores for the family members other than Horace Walpole will therefore always be less reliable than those for him.

It is not only the problem of incomplete data or lack of reliable information which complicates the interpretation of the emotional involvement scores at the level of the network, however. The low emotional involvement score which suggests that Horatio Walpole the elder is a marginal

network contact and a possible linguistic innovator is caused entirely by his dissociation from Horace Walpole in the opposing coalitions which they formed in the Nicoll affair. The total network scores of both men are greatly affected by the affair. The fact that they consciously dissociated from each other and were emotionally very distant in this way indirectly means that neither of these men can be regarded as central network contacts. The negative effect of their personal and reciprocal dissociation has in this model perhaps too much influence on the reflection of their position within the network as a whole as expressed in their total emotional involvement scores, since not all network members that have been scored in the NSS were personally involved in this particular event. It is therefore difficult to use the outcome of the NSS for the Walpole family to hypothesise about the arrival and spread of linguistic change and the treatment of the norm on the level of network structure.

Furthermore, the NSS in this case does not take into account the fact that Maria Walpole was a woman, which may have been a factor of great significance in her ability to influence the other network members. Milroy notes that the influence of gender on language use in the Belfast area is in some cases comparatively smaller than the influence of the degree of integration into a social network:

Using the concept of statistical significance, it is possible as we have seen to designate some linguistic elements as *sex markers*, in the sense that men and women use them at significantly different levels. Others appear to function as *network markers* in the sense that they correlate significantly with the network patterns of the individual. Sometimes a linguistic element may be associated with both variables, sometimes only one of them, and sometimes it is linked significantly to these variables in only one age group (Milroy 1987: 192).



In pre-industrialised eighteenth-century England, however, the differences between the social positions of men and women were on the whole considerably greater than during the second half of the twentieth century, when Milroy did her research. This inequality was noted by Tiekens-Boon van Oostade (2000b: 298) concerning the relationship between Richardson and Sarah Fielding (as quoted in section 4.3.3).

Therefore a NSS in the eighteenth century should take gender more strongly into account as a potentially negative factor when calculating possible linguistic influence. A linguistic analysis of the language of the people concerned may bear this out. An analysis of linguistic features may show, for instance, that Walpole's niece Maria Walpole was indeed an early adopter and that Horatio Walpole the elder was an innovator, as is suggested by the current results, or it may confirm intuitions (contrary to what the results of network analysis indicate) about the influence of gender on relative network positions and the capability of leading and introducing change and, more importantly, of influencing the language use of the other (male) network members.

In the above discussion I have shown that the nature of the sources and of the network itself limit the extent to which it is at this time possible to reliably predict processes of linguistic change at a macro-level in the network. A network strength analysis with many gaps, such as that for the Walpole Family Network, may nevertheless yield results that are promising for the prediction of linguistic influence at a micro-level. If we look at the emotional involvement scores at an individual level, it is possible to work towards a hypothesis about language variation and accommodation at the level of the individual. In the light of what Fitzmaurice (2000b: 272) has noted about asymmetry in relationships being linked to 'social influence', asymmetry in network scores between network members is a possible indicator of the fact

that linguistic influence may have occurred. In the Walpole Family Network the only two correspondents with an asymmetrical relationship are Horace Walpole and George Walpole. The fact that Horace feels closer to George than George does to Horace would suggest that George Walpole may have had a social and linguistic influence on Horace Walpole, following Fitzmaurice's view on asymmetrical ties and the direction of social and linguistic influence. Another case of asymmetry can be found in the scores that Edward Walpole and Horace Walpole receive from Maria Walpole. The fact that Maria was emotionally closer to Horace Walpole than to her father, Edward, suggests that she may have been more likely to follow Horace's linguistic norm than that of her father. Analysis of the language of George Walpole, Maria Walpole, Edward Walpole and Horace Walpole should be able to show the direction of any linguistic influence that may have occurred.

The effect of symmetrical emotional involvement scores on the language of the individual members of the Walpole network is also to be reckoned with. Bax (2002: 11) states, on the subject of Communication Accommodation Theory which he applies in his study of the language of Hester Lynch Thrale and Samuel Johnson (see 4.3.2 above): "As increasing behavioural similarity is likely to increase ... a person's attractiveness and interpersonal involvement in the eyes of the recipient, one of the model's central predictions is that convergence reflects the need for social approval". The convergence of linguistic choices between two correspondents can in that way be said to reflect the desire of one correspondent to be 'approved' of by another. This statement is in line with Fitzmaurice's (2000b) ideas of social and linguistic influence when emotional involvement scores are asymmetrical. However, when two network contacts are very close to each other (and therefore their individual emotional involvement scores are symmetrically high), the

convergence can be said to be reciprocal: the network contacts are expected to accommodate to each other. This was, for instance, found by Tiekens-Boon van Ostade and Bax (2002) for Johnson and Mrs Thrale. Conversely, when network contacts receive a low score (or, more precisely, a negative one), it is to be expected that linguistic divergence will take place. For the Walpole network the ideas on linguistic influence as described by Bax (2002) suggest that it is likely that Horace Walpole and Horatio Walpole the elder would linguistically diverge in June 1751, as was already predicted from their places in opposing coalitions (following Fitzmaurice 2000b). Maria Walpole and Horace Walpole, on the other hand, are expected to converge linguistically in the communication between the two of them in 1751 and more so in the years after 1772 (see Table 5.1.).

However, as can be seen from Table 5.2. below, which contains an overview of the corpus used for the analysis in this chapter, we are confronted with a problematical scarcity of linguistic data. For example, only four letters received by Horace Walpole from Horatio Walpole the elder, called in-letters according to Baker (1980: 123), have been preserved. And only three letters written by Horace Walpole to his nephew George Walpole, so-called out-letters, have been located and published (whereas, for example, at least ten in-letters and eight out-letters between George Walpole and Horatio Walpole are known to have existed; see HWC 36: xxxi). Even more problematically, the only extant letters from June 1751 are between Horatio Walpole the elder and Horace Walpole, so that the claims about network strength in that period cannot be tested with respect to any one of the correspondents except for these two men. Furthermore, as will become apparent from the linguistic analysis presented below, some of the samples are so small that there are no attestations of the constructions for which I have analysed the corpus at all.

Therefore, only tentative claims can be made and suggestions offered regarding influence on a macro- as well as on a micro-level.

Correspondent	No. of in-letters	Words	No. of out-letters	Words
Edward Walpole	20	4412	9	5201
Horatio Walpole the elder	4	1203	5	1758
George Walpole	3	828	3	1346
Maria Walpole	14	4287	15	7126
Horace Walpole (total)	n/a	n/a	32	15431

Table 5.2. The corpus of correspondence among the Walpole family

#### 5.4.2. Linguistic analysis

As a basis for the linguistic study of the Walpole Family Network, I have used features that are known to have been in the process of changing in the late modern English period, and which were commented on by contemporary grammarians. The first of these is mentioned in Beal (2004: 70): “the loss of *thee/thou* ... left English with no means of marking the singular/plural distinction when addressing one or more people”. Tiekens-Boon van Ostade (2002b) suggests that *you was* was a “bridge phenomenon” because it “appears to have arisen simultaneously with *you were*” as a singular form which facilitated the introduction of this singular construction (2002b: 100; see also 96–98, 100–101). Beal notes that Lowth in his grammar of 1762 condemned what in effect would have been the early eighteenth-century solution of using “*you was* for the singular and *you were* for the plural” (2004: 70). Tiekens-Boon van Ostade (2011: 111) notes in discussing *you was* that Lowth was “at his most critical” calling its use “an enormous solecism”.

In light of the question of the origin of the norms presented in the grammars of the period, it would be interesting to see whether the usage of

*you was* was already in decline within, for example, the Walpole family before the publication of Lowth's grammar, and how the network members vary in their usage individually. After all, the claim is made that Lowth would have been influenced by the language use of the aristocracy in setting his norm for linguistic correctness. The Walpole Family Network that I am focusing on in this chapter unfortunately gives no statistically relevant or even interpretable answers to this, since the raw figures are extremely low, as can be seen in Table 5.3. Horatio Walpole the elder simply does not use any instances of the second person singular, simple past form of *be* in the letters written by him that I have analysed here, and the normalised scores of the other correspondents give us hardly any clue as to the development of *you was/you were* in this network cluster.

Correspondents and constructions	In letters				Out letters			
	absolute no. of tokens		normalized frequency per 1000 words		absolute no. of tokens		normalized frequency per 1000 words	
	<i>you was</i>	<i>you were</i>	<i>you was</i>	<i>you were</i>	<i>you was</i>	<i>you were</i>	<i>you was</i>	<i>you were</i>
Edward Walpole	1	0	0.227	0	0	0	0	0
Horatio Walpole the Elder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
George Walpole	0	1	0	1.208	1	0	0.743	0
Maria Walpole	0	1	0	0.233	1	0	0.140	0
Horace Walpole	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	0	0.130	0

Table 5.3. Variation in the use of *you was/you were* by the members of the Walpole Family Network

A few tentative remarks can be made, though. In the Walpole Family Network cluster, usage of *you was* and *you were* is about equally divided (there are three occurrences of *you was* and two of *you were*). This is in line with the analysis of this feature as a bridge phenomenon in Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2002b). The occurrences of *you was* from the letters of Horace Walpole are the following:

1. We wish to leave your Lordship in as happy and respectable a situation as **you was** born to (Walpole to Lord Orford, 5 October 1778, HWC 36: 165).
2. As **you was** not set out, and give so good an account of yourself, Madam, I am far from thinking the journey will hurt you after an interval of repose (Walpole to the Duchess of Gloucester, 27 September 1777, HWC 36: 149).

And (3) is the final example of the construction in a letter from his correspondent Edward Walpole:

3. I imagine **you was** alarmed with the nonappearance [sic] of our young ladies at 4 o'clock (Sir Edward Walpole to Walpole, 18 October 1777, HWC 36: 154).

It is interesting to note that the two correspondents who used the innovatory form *you were* are both from the younger generation and that one of them is a woman. This seems especially relevant in light of Labov's idea, as expressed by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, that "women adopt prestige forms at a higher rate than men" and that "women use higher frequencies of innovative forms than men do" (2003: 111, following Labov 1990: 213–15; 2001: 274, 292). However, the form used by the Duchess of Gloucester occurs in a subjunctive context, in which *were* is the required verb form,

4. if *you were* here and knew all that I have gone through you would not wonder that I (although with fear) catch at every gleam of hope (The Duchess of Gloucester to Walpole, 23 August 1777, HWC 36: 134).

Data concerning this construction cannot therefore be used in order to make claims about the role of gender, nor can any claims be made about the influence of the correspondents on each other or the influence of the grammatical tradition on the correspondents' use of the construction with such sparse information available.

Maria Walpole occupies an interesting place in relation to the second linguistic feature that I will analyse in this chapter. Following Rydén and Brorström (1987), I studied the variation in use of *be* and *have* in perfective constructions with a list of mutative intransitive verbs, such as *change*, *come* and *arrive* (Rydén and Brorström 1987: 234–65). In these contexts Present-Day English would require *have*, but in the eighteenth century, as Rydén and Brorström demonstrate, variation between *be* and *have* was quite common. The following examples illustrate constructions with these verbs from the Walpole Family Network correspondence:

5. I think I **am** more **changed** than H.R.H. and could Lord Dalrymple see me now, he would beg Madame du Deffand's pardon for the mistake he had made about my beauty (Duchess of Gloucester to Walpole, 10 August 1777, in HWC 36: 131).
6. That I had taken the best physical advice, Dr Jebbe's and Dr Monroe's, and that having taken advice, I **was come** to execute it, not to ask other advice (Horace Walpole to Sir Edward Walpole, 21 April 1777, in HWC 36: 118) .
7. The physicians **were** not **arrived** but were known to be not far off (Edward Walpole to Walpole, 26 July 1777, in HWC 36: 127).

Not all verbs on the list of mutative intransitives from Rydén and Brorström occurred in my corpus of the Walpole family correspondence. Table 5.4. below provides an overview of *be* and *have* variation in the verbs that did.

Overview of variation per correspondent	In-letters				Out-letters			
	Absolute tokens		%		Absolute tokens		%	
	<i>be</i>	<i>have</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>have</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>have</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>have</i>
Edward Walpole	7	0	100	0	4	1	80	20
Horatio Walpole the elder	0	2	0	100	2	0	100	0
George Walpole	0	1	0	100	x	x	x	x
Maria Walpole	10	4	71	29	3	0	100	0
Horace Walpole (total)	n/a-	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	1	90	10
Overview of variation per verb	Absolute tokens				%			
	<i>be</i>		<i>have</i>		<i>be</i>		<i>have</i>	
alter	2		0		100		0	
arrive	3		0		100		0	
change	1		0		100		0	
come	2		1		67		33	
enter	0		1		0		100	
flee/fly	1		0		100		0	
get 'come/go'	2		1		67		33	
go	8		2		80		20	
grow	2		0		100		0	
pass	3		3		50		50	
return	1		0		100		0	
Total	25		8		76		24	

Table 5.4. Variation in use of *be/have* in perfective constructions with mutative intransitive verbs in the Walpole Family Network<sup>5</sup>

Rydén and Brorström describe a levelling development in the *be/have* paradigm for mutative intransitives during the Late Modern English period (1700–1900), which led to “an almost complete *have* dominance” in the

<sup>5</sup> x = no data/no results.



nineteenth century (1987: 197).<sup>6</sup> They note that “the *be/have* paradigm comparatively seldom elicits comments [from contemporary grammarians], at least in terms of variant distribution” (1987: 207), and that “the spread of *have* did not on the whole, it would seem, call forth the wrath of the prescriptivists” (1987: 209). Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2002c) looks at the usage of *be* and *have* in Lowth’s language, as well as at the comments on the construction in his grammar. She discovered that his use is conservative “in view of usage in the eighteenth century as a whole as documented by Rydén and Brorström” (2002c: 169). Lowth does not comment prescriptively on the use of *be* with mutative intransitive verbs in the main text of the grammar, neither in the first nor in the expanded second edition published a year later. He describes these verbs as

signify[ing] some sort of motion, or change of place or condition: as, *I am come; I was gone, I am grown; I was fallen*. The verb *am* in this case precisely defines the Time of the action or event, but does not change the nature of it (Lowth 1763: 47).

However, as Tieken-Boon van Ostade notes (2002c: 167), Lowth does comment on the use of *be* with some verbs in the footnotes to the second edition of his grammar (Lowth 1763: 47). She points out that Rydén and Brorström therefore “associate the beginnings of prescriptive comments relating to this construction with Lowth” (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2002c: 162–163). In actual fact, however, she writes that “Lowth’s usage of the *be/have* periphrasis combined with his unease with the use of certain verbs in the construction as expressed in a footnote in his grammar suggests that at this time the development was still in its early stages” (2002c: 169).

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<sup>6</sup> See also Brinton (1994) for an account of developments in perfective constructions to the background of which *be* was replaced with *have* in many contexts.

On the basis of the NSS presented in Table 5.1. one would expect Maria Walpole, Duchess of Gloucester, to be leading this incipient change within the Walpole Family Network because of her high network integration score. Though not statistically significant,<sup>7</sup> the variation as found in Maria Walpole's language (a usage of *have* in almost 30 per cent of cases) is indeed most innovative in this respect. Her usage is close to what Rydén and Brorström find for the genre of letters in the second half of the eighteenth century, namely 33.2 per cent (1987: 232), whereas the other correspondents they analysed are more conservative in their usage of *be*. Horatio Walpole the elder and George Walpole both have a categorical *have* preference (see Table 5.4.), but since for both of them the data for *have* are based on a single construction, this heavily skews the data. The instances from Horatio Walpole the elder may be found in (8) and (9):

8. As what **has passed** between Lord Orford and me relating to the mutual entail of our estates (Horatio Walpole Sr to Walpole, 13 April 1756, HWC 36: 29).
9. Sir I *have* communicated to Lord Orford your letter to me of yesterday, and am with his approbation to acquaint you, that you seem not to understand rightly, what **has passed** between his Lordship and me, relating to the mutual entail of our estates

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<sup>7</sup> In testing the statistical significance of the correspondents' usage of *have* versus *be* with mutative intransitives I have excluded Horatio Walpole the elder and George Walpole from the equation, since they skew the data. When testing the variation in usage between Edward Walpole, Maria Walpole and Horace Walpole there is no statistical significance: chi-square = 3.226. For significance at the .05 level, chi-square should be greater than or equal to 5.99. For the purpose of comparison: adding Horatio Walpole the elder's and George Walpole's very low token scores to the equation changes the chi-square to 13.119,  $p < 0.011$ , but the reliability of this figure is too low to take it into account.

(Horatio Walpole Sr to Walpole, 14 April 1756, HWC 36: 29).

The single instance from George Walpole contains the construction *would have come into*:

10. ... that it is a very prudent and justifiable agreement, and what, I am firmly persuaded, my grandfathers (if alive) **would have come into** (George Walpole to Walpole, 10 April 1756, HWC 36: 24).

It is interesting to see that Horace Walpole does use the verb *be* with the perfect of *pass*, as in example (11), contrary to his uncle, from whom he is indeed expected to dissociate linguistically:

11. Madam, for your answer to my letter, and for the permission of concealing what **is passed** from the two persons in question, who, I am sure, would suffer as much as I have done (Walpole to the Duchess of Gloucester, 27 October 1772, HWC 36: 83).

However, the instances are found in letters to Edward Walpole and to Maria Walpole from the 1770s (see example (11)). There is no attestation of a perfect form of *pass* in his letters to Horatio Walpole the elder, nor in any other letter from the period during which he was socially dissociating from his uncle, so no solid conclusion about linguistic dissociation can be drawn from this.

Horace Walpole is expected to converge linguistically with his niece Maria Walpole due to their symmetrically high network strength scores (see Table 5.1.). At first glance this may indeed seem to be the case: Horace Walpole is the only other correspondent who varies in his usage between *have* and *be*. The single construction concerned is *have entered upon*:

12. PS. If I **have entered upon** more points than your letter led me to, it was from my heart's being full

of resentment for a long series of your injustice to me (Walpole to Sir Edward Walpole, 16 May 1745, HWC 36: 20).

Rydén and Brorström note for this verb that “the latest ex[ample] of *be* with *enter* (in the whole corpus) is ... not later than 1769 (Boswell) ... a fact indirectly foreboding the exclusive use of *have*” in their nineteenth-century corpus (1987: 82). The example from Walpole’s language is an early instance of the use of *have* in this context, namely from 1745, in which case his usage may be deemed innovative, like that of his niece. However, this one instance was not found in a letter to Maria Walpole (who was only nine years old at that time and not, as far as we know, corresponding with her uncle) but in a letter to Maria’s father, Edward. We cannot say anything about linguistic convergence in this case, simply because there are no letters with similar instances from the same period between Horace Walpole and his niece in which variation in the use of *be* and *have* is found with any of the mutative intransitive verbs listed in Rydén and Brorström. Because of the larger number of occurrences of this particular linguistic feature than of the *you was/you were* dichotomy, we are able to glean at least some tentative insights into possible micro-level variation, and these seem to strengthen the idea that Maria Walpole, Duchess of Gloucester, may be an early adopter and linguistic leader in this network – though this remains a hesitant claim. I note furthermore that Rydén and Brorström (1987) mention a large number of syntactic and semantic contexts favouring either *be* or *have* for the verbs under discussion, a fact which will have to be looked into more closely in any future analysis of this feature of the language of the period.

As for the third feature I am analysing in this chapter, Table 5.5. shows parallel use of PRET and PP (or, more precisely, the use of PRET forms where

PP is expected according to the codified norm) in the language of Walpole and his family correspondents. See chapter 3 for a detailed description of this linguistic variable and its sociolinguistic background. Non-standard usage in the Walpole Family network is illustrated in (13) and (14):

13. for I might have **broke** my neck if I had not **broke** my fall (Sir Edward Walpole to Walpole, 18 October 1777, in HWC 36: 153).

14. It was **wrote** in low spirits from bad news at that time received, which has been followed by good and bad, good and bad, alternately (Duchess of Gloucester to Walpole, 4 September 1777, in HWC 36: 135.)

The figures between brackets in Table 5.5. indicate the number of occurrences including adjectival or elliptical use, e.g. ‘neither my brother Orford, nor I hope any man else thinks his interest in worse hands, when *given* at my suit, than at yours’ (HWC 36: 18, emphasis added). In the numbers without brackets these types of participles have been filtered out. The list of verbs was compiled by running a concordance of all forms of *be* and *have* that allow for a PP complement, and then comparing the list of combinations found with one list of irregular verbs described in Lowth (1763: 47–66), which produced a list of irregular verbs with distinct PRET and PP forms in the eighteenth century, all occurring in the Walpole Family Network correspondence corpus.

Overview of variation per verb	Absolute tokens		%	
	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)
<i>break</i>	3	2 (3)	60 (50)	40 (50)
<i>choose</i>	2	0	100	0
<i>come</i>	0	5	0	100
<i>fall</i>	0	2	0	100
<i>forget</i>	2	0	100	0
<i>get</i>	9	0	100	0
<i>give</i>	0	14 (15)	0	100
<i>mistake</i>	0	2	0	100
<i>shake</i>	0	1	0	100
<i>show</i>	1	6	14	86
<i>sit</i>	1	0	100	0
<i>speak</i>	2	0	100	0
<i>strike</i>	1	0 (1)	100 (50)	100 (50)
<i>take</i>	0	14	0	100
<i>throw</i>	0	1	0	100
<i>write</i>	9 (10)	3 (4)	75 (71)	25 (29)
<i>see</i>	0	14	0	100
<b>total</b>	27 (29)	67 (70)	29 (29)	71 (71)

Variation per correspondent for the verb <i>break</i>	In-letters			
	Tokens		%	
	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)
Edward Walpole	x	x	x	x
Horatio Walpole the elder	x	x	x	x
George Walpole	x	x	x	x
Maria Walpole	1	1	50	50
Horace Walpole (total)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Variation per correspondent for the verb <i>break</i>	Out-Letters			
	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)
Edward Walpole	2	0	100	0
Horatio Walpole the elder	x	x	x	x
George Walpole	x	x	x	x
Maria Walpole	0	1 (2)	0	100
Horace Walpole	2	1 (2)	67 (50)	33 (50)
Walpole (total)				

Variation per correspondent for the verb <i>show</i>	In-letters			
	Tokens		%	
	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)
Edward Walpole	1	1	50	50
Horatio Walpole the elder	x	x	x	x
George Walpole	x	x	x	x
Maria Walpole	0	3	0	100
Horace Walpole	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Walpole (total)				
Variation per correspondent for the verb <i>show</i>	Out-Letters			
	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)
Edward Walpole	0	2	0	100
Horatio Walpole the elder	x	x	x	x
George Walpole	x	x	x	x
Maria Walpole	x	x	x	x
Horace Walpole	0	2	0	100
Walpole (total)				

Variation per correspondent for the verb <i>write</i>	In-letters			
	Tokens		%	
	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)
Edward Walpole	3(4)	0	100	0
Horatio Walpole the elder	x	x	x	x
George Walpole	1	0	100	0
Maria Walpole	5	0	100	0
Horace Walpole (total)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Variation per correspondent for the verb <i>write</i>	Out-Letters			
	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)
	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)	PRET (non-standard usage)	PP (standard usage)
Edward Walpole	0	2(3)	0	100
Horatio Walpole the elder	x	x	x	x
George Walpole	x	x	x	x
Maria Walpole	0	1	0	100
Horace Walpole (total)	0	3(4)	0	100

Table 5.5. Variation in the use of preterite forms (PRET) and past participle forms (PP) in perfective and passive constructions (PP context) in the irregular verb paradigm in the Walpole Family Network correspondence<sup>8</sup>

We can see from the overview of variation per verb in Table 5.5. that certain verbs, such as *come*, *fall*, and *take*, show categorical use of the PP, as in present-day English. Examples (15) and (16) illustrate this usage.

15. ... what **has fallen** from me was only as a common friend to promote that honourable design in which I

<sup>8</sup> x=no data/no results.



thought we were all agreed and to which I still wish well (Horatio Walpole the elder to Walpole, 21 June 1751, in HWC 14: 216).

16. You may be perfectly easy about Lady Laura: she has perfectly recovered her spirits and colour, though I own her grief **had taken** sole possession of her (Walpole to the Duchess of Gloucester, 27 September 1777, in HWC 36: 149).

Other verbs, such as *speak* and *choose*, have categorical use of the PRET form in PP context, as is illustrated by the following example (which is grammatically interesting for more than just the use of PRET for PP)<sup>9</sup> from Horace Walpole's language.

17. you have treated me, who have always loved you, have always tried to please you, **have** always **spoke** of you with regard, and who will yet be, if you will let me, Your affectionate brother and humble servant (Walpole to Sir Edward Walpole, 17 May 1745 OS, in HWC 36: 21).

Verbs with a categorical use within the network of either PRET or PP in a PP context cannot be used for testing claims about social network influence, since the network members do not vary in their usage. As noted in chapter 3, they are interesting in a further analysis concerning the question which verbs lead the change towards the fully codified use of PP over PRET in perfective, passive and adjectival or elliptical constructions in the irregular verb paradigm in

<sup>9</sup> In this case Walpole does not only use the PRET for PP in *have ... spoke*, but also uses the plural form *have* to refer to the singular object *me* in the construction "you have treated **me**, who **have** always loved you, who **have** ..." (Walpole to Sir Edward Walpole, 17 May 1745 OS, in HWC 36: 21).

present-day English. In the present chapter, however, I concentrate on explaining variation within the Walpole Family Network, and will therefore discuss the three verbs in which use of PRET for PP is found in this correspondence. The instances are listed in Table 5.5.: the verbs *break*, *show*, and *write*. The verb *strike* has a variant form in one instance, namely in adjectival use, but as it occurs in a poem sent by Edward Walpole to Horace Walpole, “And bids the **stricken** deer go weep” (Sir Edward Walpole to Walpole, 18 September 1777, HWC 36: 146), it has not been taken into account in this analysis because poetic language is far removed from informal prosaic writing, let alone from vernacular language use.

Again, the number of tokens for the construction is very small and the variation between the correspondents found for the verbs *break* and *show* is not statistically significant.<sup>10</sup> For the verb *break* we see that Maria Walpole varied equally between *broke* and *broken*, whereas Horace Walpole used *broke* more often, but does show variation in his usage. One might suggest that this is due to accommodation to Maria Walpole: his only use of the codified PP form is in letters to her, while to her father he only used the non-standard PRET forms. However, we cannot compare the results conclusively, since there are no data for Edward Walpole. The verb *show* has a similar distribution, but this time it is Edward who varied his use equally between *showed* and *shown*, whereas Maria and Horace both showed a categorical preference for the PP form. No sensible claims about linguistic influence can be made about these sparse data.

The verb *write* shows a different picture: the distribution of variants in this case is significant, due to the usage of Horace Walpole, which is quite

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<sup>10</sup> *Break*: chi-square = 0.139. For significance at the .05 level, chi-square should be greater than or equal to 3.84. *Show*: Chi-square = 3.022. For significance at the .05 level, chi-square should be greater than or equal to 5.99.

different from that of all the other correspondents.<sup>11</sup> Whereas the correspondents show full preference for the form *wrote* in PP context, Walpole is consistent in his use of *written*. Compare the examples in (18), from George Walpole, and (19), from Horace Walpole:

18. I **have wrote** to the Duke of Devonshire to desire he would vacate your seat and Sir John Turner will settle the time of issuing out the writ for your re-election (George Walpole to Walpole, 7 February 1757, in HWC 36: 33).

19. I know Lord Cholmondeley **had written** to the Duke and in truth I did not care to tell foreign post offices, though no secret, the confusion we were in (Walpole to the Duchess of Gloucester, 13 March 1783, in HWC 36: 208).

Horace Walpole in this case can be considered to be an innovator in this network, setting the norm for use of the modern form which was prescribed in the normative grammars of the period. Oldireva-Gustafsson (2002a: 268–273, esp. 269) also shows this in her case study of the variant forms in the verb *write*, and her findings demonstrate that Walpole used the form *written* but also its contracted form *writ*, as was confirmed in my study of the language of Walpole and Mann in chapter 3. It is impossible, however, to say anything about the operation of any linguistic influence within the network, nor can anything conclusive be said about whether or not Walpole was an innovator or early adopter and norm-enforcer within the network.

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<sup>11</sup> *Write*: chi-square = 14. For significance and the .05 level, chi-square should be greater than or equal to 7.82, the distribution is therefore significant, and p is less than or equal to 0.01.

### 5.5. Concluding remarks

The rather unsatisfying results of my attempt at using an adapted NSS to try to explain linguistic influence within the Walpole Family Network can be ascribed to several factors. On the one hand, the problem of incomplete data has come up in several contexts in this chapter as a serious issue in trying to assess linguistic influence in the network: one cannot successfully interpret linguistic usage if there are not enough tokens to be studied in the language of many of the correspondents. The nature of the sources used plays a part in this: Horace Walpole's correspondence is likely to reveal much more about Horace Walpole's relationships with all his correspondents than about the relationships *between* the correspondents. Therefore, the Walpole Family Network is not easily studied for network-level phenomena such as the introduction of linguistic change. The use of a family network cluster, moreover, may not be the best choice for hypothesising about routes of linguistic influence: I have argued that the emotional relationships between family members are the deciding factor in their attitudes to language at the level of usage. However, these relationships are more difficult to describe than functional relationships. A network strength analysis that makes use of the full model as proposed by Bax (2000) is likely to find greater differences in scores and types of network tie, and will also be able to identify such ties. When analysing a family network, Fitzmaurice's (2000b) notion of coalition formation looks like a useful approach. This method can predict the direction of linguistic influence quite clearly, but can only do so for those directly involved. This is also what I found in the Walpole Family Network: those who are not involved in coalition formation are virtually impossible to provide with a network

strength score. In further research it would be interesting to further investigate dyadic ties by using CAT (Bax 2002).

Another factor which is not taken into account by the model as proposed by Bax (2000) is the fact that relationships may be asymmetrical not only in attitudinal factors but also because of factors such as age, generation, occupation and gender. This may be illustrated by the case of Horace Walpole, who cared very much for several of his younger relatives (see 5.4.1. above). If we characterise these ties as very close ones – or even if we characterise his relationship with these relatives in terms of Bax's (2000) model as that of a tie between friends – a possibility of reciprocal linguistic influence between Walpole and, for example, his niece Maria Walpole is implied. Alternatively, in the case of an asymmetrical tie, like the one between George Walpole and Horace Walpole, a linguistic influence of the younger nephew on Horace Walpole is expected. I propose, however, that it is likely that there is some form of hierarchy in the relationship between Horace and his nephews and nieces which cannot be expressed in terms of the current model, but which should effectively block linguistic influence from the child or youth to the adult, at least on a conscious level. The same holds for the factor gender, which I feel is underrepresented in the NSS as adapted from Milroy (1987) for the eighteenth century by Bax (2000). In any further study of social network strength as an influence on language use, components of generation and gender as hierarchical elements should also be taken into account, particularly when family members are dealt with.

However, the greatest complication in the analysis that has been conducted in this chapter has been the lack of linguistic data to prove or disprove hypothesised linguistic influence. Even when it was possible to fill gaps in the NSS with meta-linguistic information and background information

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about the lives and relationships of the correspondents taken from other primary and secondary sources, in some cases simply too little linguistic evidence could be obtained from the corpus of correspondence to make argued and informed claims about the language and influence from one member of the network on another. This does not mean, however, that the method of social network analysis is not applicable in a historical context. It rather means that not all types of clusters are suited to linguistic or network analysis. A larger and preferably more balanced corpus of texts could be the key to a viable analysis, though this is probably also the hardest criterion to meet. After all, the Walpole correspondence is at present one of the largest collections of letters that is available in published and manuscript form. The linguistic features surveyed in this chapter all promise to be useful indicators of linguistic evidence if only enough linguistic material would be available to test it on, and I shall proceed to do this in the next chapter for one feature for which it was indeed possible to obtain more data. In the present chapter I have in any case been able to demonstrate that there possibly was a certain amount of linguistic influence from Maria Walpole, as a central network contact and early adopter, on other network members even though she was a (young) woman at the time. I have also demonstrated that especially Maria Walpole and Horace Walpole seem to use innovative language features more often than their fellow network members, and perhaps even more so than their contemporaries.