(Extra)Ordinary letters: A view from below on seventeenth-century Dutch

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Chapter 4. Forms of address[48]

4.1. In search of the larger story

Forms of address have been a topic of many linguistic studies. The bulk of studies on the Dutch forms of address published during the previous century tried to identify the origin of personal pronouns that arose between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, viz. *u* (2nd person singular and plural) in subject position, *jullie* (2nd person plural), and *jij* (2nd person singular).[49] However, there have also been studies of the sociolinguistic background of the forms. Daan (1982), for instance, examined how forms of address were used in letters written by several well-known seventeenth-century authors and members of the upper classes. More recently, Van Leuvensteijn (2000; 2002a; 2002b) has shown to share this interest in his study of forms of address in the correspondence of the seventeenth-century patrician Maria van Reigersberch (1589?-1653), in the correspondence of the eighteenth-century authors Betje Wolff (1738-1804) and Aagje Deken (1741-1804), and in Wolff and Deken's epistolary novel *Sara Burgerhart* (1782).

This type of research fits in with an international tradition of sociolinguistic investigation of address forms in letters (Taavitsainen & Jucker 2002: 9). Within this tradition, not only research on modern-day forms of address is popular, but also research from a diachronic or historical perspective.[50] Research of English forms of address is well represented by several publications, but forms of address in other languages have also been studied.[51]

However sound the sociolinguistic studies of seventeenth-century Dutch forms of address by Daan (1982) and Van Leuvensteijn (2002a) may be, they reveal only a part of the sociolinguistic history of seventeenth-century Dutch. This is due to the nature of the sources that have been used: they consist of correspondence of a few individuals - only members of the

[48] Part of the research reported on here is also presented in Nobels & Simons forthcoming.

[49] See for instance: Vor der Hake 1908; Kern 1911, 1927; Muller 1926a, 1926b; Heeroma 1934; De Vooys 1939, 1943; Kloeke 1941,1948a, 1948b; Verdenius 1946; Paardekooper 1948, 1950; Michels 1950, 1952, 1967; Mak 1967; Kuijper 1972; Van den Toorn 1977; Berteloot 2003; Aalberse 2004.

[50] For instance Hope 1994, Hunt 2002, Burnley 2002, Nevala 2004.

[51] For instance: Simon 2002 for German, Betsch 2002 for Czech, Bentivoglio 2002 for Spanish, Bishop & Michnowicz 2010 for Chilean Spanish, Sepännen 2002 for Finnish, and Hakanen & Koskinen 2009 for Swedish.

upper circles in society. The language use of the members of the lower and middle classes in society was thus inevitably obscured from Daan's and Van Leuvensteijn's views. In this chapter I want to extend Daan's (1982) and Van Leuvensteijn's research (2002a) by examining a large number of letters written by several seventeenth-century men and women of different social ranks, ages and regional backgrounds. The main purpose of this study is to refine our knowledge about how forms of address were used across the social ranks of the Dutch society in the second half of the seventeenth century. My second goal is to find out whether the *Letters as Loot* corpus can also show if and how the relationship between sender and addressee was linked to the use of certain forms of address in the seventeenth century.

The present study fits well into the research tradition described above, since it is of a sociolinguistic nature and involves a corpus of letters. At the same time, it will deviate from earlier approaches in that the social characteristics of the writers will be taken as the starting point rather than the relationship between writers and addressees. I certainly do not disagree with the idea that the relationship between writer and addressee influences a writer's preference for a certain form of address. However, I also believe that one can only fully understand why a writer chooses a particular form of address for a particular addressee if one knows which forms of address the writer has at his disposal to begin with. If this list of forms of address is not the same for every writer in a specific corpus, this can distort the results of an examination that only takes into account the writer-addressee relationship. In this chapter I will therefore first examine whether this list of forms of address a writer can choose from may depend on a writer's social background, before I turn to the writer-addressee relationship.

When examining the relationship between writer and addressee, I will not analyse my data in compliance with Brown and Gilman (1972), nor with the politeness theory devised by Brown and Levinson (1987). My main objections against using Brown and Gilman's concepts of power and solidarity are firstly that particular relationships cannot be interpreted easily in terms of either power or solidarity and secondly that the five different forms of address in seventeenth-century Dutch cannot easily be divided into T- and V- pronouns. What is more: it is not just a problem of applying the concepts, but also of questioning them. I refer to Taavitsainen and Jucker (2002: 11) who criticize Brown and Levinson's politeness theory for not leaving "any room for an unmarked middle ground, for utterances that are conventionally appropriate to the current speech situation, that do not adopt any politeness strategies in order to alleviate a potential or real face-threat and that are not rude or impolite either." Since letter-writing is a form of communication which is likely to be influenced by writing conventions, we

should thus leave ample room for forms of address that are not especially polite or impolite, but just conventional.

Before investigating the use of forms of address in §4.3 and §4.4, I will discuss in §4.2 the different forms of address that are known to have been present in seventeenth-century Dutch. I will focus on the pronouns *gij*, *u*, and *jij* and its inflected forms, and on two abbreviations of nominal forms of address which are used pronominally: *ul* and *UE*. I will give a short description of each form and its history based on the literature.

4.2. Forms of address in the seventeenth century

4.2.1. Epistolary forms: *ul* and *UE*

The forms *ul* and *UE*, both abbreviations of nominal forms of address, are typical of letters. *Ul* is the abbreviation of an old form *u liefde* or *uwe liefde* (literally translated 'your Love' or 'your Kindness' and resembling English 'my love' or 'my dear') according to the WNT (*Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal* 'The Dictionary of the Dutch Language', s.v. *liefde*), which can be used in the singular as well as in the plural. When *ul* is used to address more than one person, it can also be understood as the abbreviation of the form of address *ulieden* (literally translated as 'you people') which could be used as a form of address for the second person plural (WNT, s.v. *ul* and *ulieden*). *UE* is the abbreviation of *u edele* or *uwe edelheid* ('your Honour', 'your Worship') (WNT, s.v. *ue*). This form stems from the chancery and was adopted by the upper-middle classes in the sixteenth century (Van Leuvensteijn 2002a: 289-290).

As abbreviations of noun phrases, *ul* and *UE* were originally indirect ways to address a person. Instead of directly addressing someone with a second person singular pronoun, a noun (*liefde* 'love' or *edele*/*edelheid* 'nobility' or 'honour') was used to create distance, as if one was talking about a third person. The forms of *ul* and *UE* were therefore not only congruent with pronouns and verb forms of the second person singular, but also with pronouns and verb forms of the third person singular (Van Leuvensteijn 2002a: 290). Compare the following fictional examples:

1) ***Zie je*** *dat ik* ***jouw*** *boek niet heb?*
   '**Do you** see that I do not have **your** book?'
2) ***Ziet UE*** *dat ik* ***zijn/haar*** *boek niet heb?*
   '**Does Your Honour** see that I do not have **his**/**her** book?'

Both *ul* and *UE* occurred as personal and possessive pronouns (WNT, s.v. *liefde* and *ue*). Cf. some examples from the corpus:

3) *en wensche **u l** een geluck saligh niewe jaer*
'and I wish **you** a happy new year'
4) *heden 8 daghe was meijn lesten aen **VE***
'my last letter to **you** was eight days ago'
5) *en groet **ul** susters en mijn moeder oock*
'and greet **your** sisters and my mother as well'
6) *verhoope euenwel **VE** goede dispositie*
'I nevertheless hope for **your** good health'

UE did not remain a form reserved for written Dutch: it came to be used in spoken Dutch as well, pronounced as [yˈʊe] or [ˈyʊə] (Van den Toorn 1977: 524-525; Van der Sijs 2004: 474-475; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008: 267). In subject position, this form probably developed into the present-day Standard Dutch polite form of address for singular and plural: *u*.[52]

4.2.2. *Gij* and *u*

It is assumed that *gij* (restricted to subject position) and *u* (for all other positions) were pronouns of the second person plural (spelled differently, for instance as *ghi* or *gi*) before the Early Middle Dutch period. However, already in Early Middle Dutch texts dating back to the thirteenth century, *gij* and *u* were also used as (polite) forms of address for a single addressee (Van den Toorn 1977: 522; Berteloot 2003: 205).[53] It is often assumed that this usage became so popular that *gij* and *u* ousted *du* and its inflected forms as the standard pronouns for the second person singular. Aalberse (2004) claims that the disappearance of *du* was not only caused by competition with *gij*, but also by the loss of the second person singular verbal ending *–s* – which was strongly linked to the pronoun *du* – in favour of the ending *–t*. Whatever the cause may have been, in sixteenth-century texts from the south-western regions of the Dutch language area, *du* and its inflected forms were mostly reserved for utterances expressing strong emotions, such as anger and religious or worldly love (Muller 1926a: 82). Later *du* was felt to be old-fashioned or vulgar. The fate of *du* in written language was sealed in the seventeenth century, which is illustrated by the fact that *gij* and *u* were chosen as the pronouns for the second person singular in the Dutch authorized version of the Bible in 1618 (Van den Toorn 1977: 522-523; Van

[52] Van den Toorn 1977 gives an excellent overview of the different theories about the origin of *u* in subject position. Kern 1911, Muller 1926a, Kloeke 1941, 1948a, Paardekooper 1948, 1950 and Michels 1952 all somehow support the claim that the originally written form *UE* also became used in spoken language.

[53] Using the second person plural as a polite form of address is a well-known phenomenon. See Brown & Gilman 1972 and Brown & Levinson 1987.

der Sijs 2004: 468-469; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008: 266).[54] *Gij* and *u* were thus ambiguous forms that could be used for the singular and the plural at the same time (cf. English *you*). To stress the plural, the noun *lieden* ('people') could be added to *gij* or *u*, when addressing more than one person (Van Leuvensteijn 2002a: 289).

4.2.3. *U* in subject position

At the end of the sixteenth century, *u* started to appear in subject position. Various explanations for the rise of this usage have been given, as shown in Van den Toorn (1977). Van der Sijs (2004: 474-476) lists three types of explanations of which two are plausible.[55] As mentioned above, one explanation is that *u* in subject position stems from the form *UE*. This explanation also accounts for the occurrence of the subject *u* with both second person singular and third person singular finite verbs, since *UE* could occur with either of the conjugations, as explained in §4.2.1. A second explanation is that the subject *u* was merely an expansion of *u* in object positions (Van der Sijs 2004: 474-476). Similar expansions are not rare at all.[56] Of course, it is also possible that a combination of these two factors resulted in the first occurrences of *u* in subject position.

4.2.4. *Jij, jou(w)*, and *je*

Jij is a personal pronoun for the second person singular which first emerged in writing in the seventeenth century, replacing. *Jij* is the subject form of the personal pronoun, *jou* is its object form and *jou(w)* the possessive pronoun. *Je* is the weak form of *jij* and can be used as a personal pronoun in all positions, as a possessive pronoun, and as a general pronoun comparable to English 'one', meaning 'everyone, anyone in general'.[57]

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[54] The choice for *gij* in the Dutch authorized version of the Bible did not completely bring the matter to an end, however. Well into the seventeenth century the discussion about *gij* and *du* continued among grammarians and language lovers, as is illustrated by the fact that the Dutch grammarian Allard Kók still presented *du* as the only form of address for the second person singular in 1649 (Kók 1649: 19).

[55] The theory put forward in Paardekooper 1948 is less plausible, because it presupposes that *gij* and *u* did not exist in the northern Netherlands until the southern immigrants brought it along in the seventeenth century.

[56] There are many examples to be given, stemming from different periods and different languages. I restrict myself to a well-known example from Dutch. In contemporary Dutch substandard as it is spoken in the Netherlands, the object form of the personal pronoun of the third person plural, *hun*, also occurs in subject position, cf. Van Bree 2012:. *Hun hebben dat gedaan*. ('Them did it.' instead of 'They did it.')

[57] This latter meaning probably came into use in the first half of the eighteenth century (Van der Sijs 2004: 473).

There are two assumptions about the origin of *jij*. The first one is discussed extensively in Muller (1926b) and maintains that the pronoun has always been around in spoken language as a dialect form of *gij* in Holland and that it only showed up in writing in the seventeenth century. A second assumption was put forth by Verdenius (1924, 1930) and suggests that *jij* developed from an enclitic *–i* or a full form *ji,* even though such a form has not been found (Van den Toorn 1977: 523).

Van der Wal & Van Bree (2008: 266) state that *jij* and *gij* occur in seventeenth-century northern Dutch texts without any differences in use and that *jij* is therefore merely the spoken form of *gij*. *Gij* and *jij* eventually developed in such a way that *jij* came to be used in contexts of familiarity and *gij* in contexts of distance. However, this development is hard to pinpoint in time and probably occurred gradually, at different moments in time for different people (Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008: 267-271).

4.3. Sociolinguistic variation

4.3.1. The variables

In this section I will discuss the relationship between social variables and the distribution of the forms of address in seventeenth-century letters. Before zooming in on the social variation, however, I will first present a general overview of the frequency of the different forms of address in the entire corpus and in the sub-corpus of private autographs (see table 2.12 in §2.3.4 for the overview of the corpus) in table 4.1. There are 7781 forms of address in the entire seventeenth-century *Letters as Loot* corpus, of which there are 3289 occurrences that were found in private autographs.

	Entire corpus		***Private autographs***	
	N	*%*	N	*%*
ul	3862	*50*	1488	*45*
UE	827	*11*	468	*14*
gij	1290	*17*	560	*17*
u (non-subj)	1623	*21*	705	*21*
u (subj)	25	*0.3*	13	*0.4*
Jij	154	*2*	55	*2*
TOT	7781	*100*	3289	*100*

Table 4.1: The frequency of the different forms of address in the entire corpus and in the sub-corpus of private autographs

The variable social class appears to play a major role in the distribution of the different forms of address, as can be seen in table 4.2 below.[58] Since the variable gender proved to be important as well, I will focus mainly on the influence of the variables social class and gender and show how they affect the distribution of the different forms of address. Age and region did not yield insightful information and will not be treated in the remainder of this chapter.

	ul	***UE***	***jij***	***gij (subj)***	***u***	***N total***
LC	53%	0%	5%	23%	18%	150
LMC	46%	2%	5%	22%	26%	705
UMC	42%	22%	1%	14%	21%	1629
UC	30%	20%	0%	16%	34%	292

Table 4.2: the distribution of the forms of address in all positions possible per social class in the private autograph letters

Although this dissertation focuses on seventeenth-century Dutch in private letters, I decided to take the sub-corpus of autograph business letters into account as well in the discussions of the influence of social variables in §4.3.2 to §4.3.6. After all, forms of address are often linked to politeness, so the comparison of private letters with business letters could yield some very telling results. This comparison should be considered as an excursion, however.

4.3.2. A fossilized abbreviation: *ul*

The form of address *ul* is very common in the entire seventeenth-century *Letters as Loot* corpus. It occurs no fewer than 3862 times with 88% of the writers (390 writers out of 441).[59] In examining whether *ul* correlates with any social variables, I focus on the sub-corpus of private autograph letters (see table 2.12 in §2.3.4 for the overview of the corpus).[60] This sub-corpus clearly shows that considerably fewer upper-class writers in the corpus use the form than lower-class writers do. Table 4.3 below shows that only 41%

[58] The table shows the distribution of all the forms of *ul*, *UE*, *jij* and *u* occurring in all possible positions (subject, objcect, indirect object, reflexive, following a preposition). G*ij* can only occur in subject position.

[59] *Ul* is spelled in different ways in the corpus: with or without capitals, with or without punctuation marks, with *u* or *v* as the first grapheme, and with or without spacing. The most current spelling form (without capitals, punctuation marks and with *u* as the first grapheme) is used throughout the chapter to represent this form of address.

[60] See chapter 3, §3.1.2.

of the upper-class writers use *ul* at least once in their letters, while all of the lower-class writers, 83% of the lower-middle-class writers and 76% of the upper-middle-class writers do:

Writers using ul	***N***	***%***
LC	10	*100%*
LMC	30	*83%*
UMC	80	*76%*
UC	7	*41%*

Table 4.3: share of writers who use *ul* per social class in the sub-corpus of private autographs

The conclusion seems straightforward: *ul* is a popular form of address with the lower and middle classes, but it is used less often by members of the upper class. However, table 4.3 does not show *how often* writers from each class use this form of address. If the lower-class writers each use *ul* only once and the upper-class writers use it more frequently per writer, this would change our view of *ul*. I have therefore considered how often each social class uses *ul* compared to other available forms of address, cf. table 4.2. The results in figure 4.1 show the same decline as table 4.3 does: the higher up the social scale, the less *ul* is used proportionally. *Ul* has a share of 53% in the lower class which drops to a share of 46% and 42% in the lower-middle class and the upper-middle class respectively. *Ul* is used in only 30% of the cases in letters of upper-class writers.

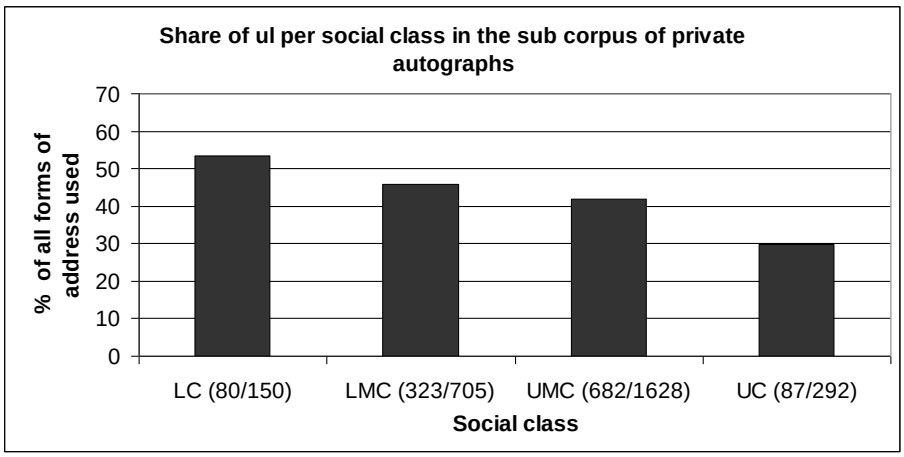

Figure 4.1

The number of writers using *ul* at least once also hints at a gender difference: 75% of the male writers use it compared to 83% of the women. Also the number of occurrences of *ul* used by men and women compared to the occurrences of other forms of address suggest that *ul* is favoured slightly more by women: *ul* occurs in 42% of the cases in private autograph letters written by men, while it occurs in 50% of the cases in private autograph letters written by women.

The distribution of *ul* is also dependent on the variable type of letter. A comparison between the proportion of *ul* in business autographs written by upper-middle-class men and the proportion of *ul* in the private autographs written by this same group shows that both groups use *ul* differently. There are relatively fewer upper-middle-class male writers of business autographs who use *ul* (63% of the letter writers) than upper-middle-class male writers of private letters who use it (76% of the letter writers). But if business writers use *ul*, they seem to use it more frequently than the writers of private letters: while the upper-middle-class men use *ul* in 49% of the cases in business letters, they use it in 40% of the cases when writing private letters.

Remarkably, the full form *u(we) liefde* does not occur: not even one instance was found in the entire seventeenth-century corpus. This result questions whether the familiar sixteenth-century form of address *uwe liefde* was still used in full in the seventeenth century. This does not necessarily mean that *ul* did not once originate from *u(we) liefde*, but it suggests that it was not felt to be the abbreviation of *u(we) liefde* any longer at the time when the letters in the corpus were written. Two other full forms that could be linked to the abbreviation *ul*, however, are present in the corpus, occurring 148 times in total: *u lieve* and *ulieden*. These two full forms will be examined in the following sections. I note here that the large number of occurrences of *ul* (3862) compared to the relatively small number of full forms (148) suggests that the abbreviation *ul* had become fossilised by the second half of the seventeenth century.

U lieve*: a form of address or a misleading adjectival phrase?*

There are only 38 instances of *u lieve* in the entire seventeenth-century corpus. *U lieve* is used consistently by only two writers: one middle-aged woman from the lower-middle class living in the province of North Holland and one unknown writer from Amsterdam. Together these two writers provide 21 tokens of the word of which two are presented here as examples:

7) *ick heb mar een brief van **u lijeue** gekregen en ick heb al twee nae **u lijeue** gestert*
'I only received one letter from **dear you** and I have already sent two letters to **dear you**'

8) *of ghy hel syeck mochte vorden daet daer gen aender met* ***v lyeven*** *goet der gaet*
‘… if you were to fall ill, that nobody would run off with the goods **of dear you**’

There are a few other writers who use *ulieve,* though less consistently: it appears 17 times in the letters of 11 other writers, most often in opening and closing formulae. However, these tokens should be handled with care, for all of the 17 occurrences are used ambiguously. They can be analysed as forms of address (FoA) on the one hand, but they can also be analysed as a possessive pronoun (Poss) *u(w)* in a noun phrase (NP) containing the adjective (A) *lieve* (‘sweet’ or ‘kind’):

9) *niet meer teschrijve als dat d heer valckenborgh* ***[u lieve]*** $_{FoA}$ *man noch gesont was…*
‘I have nothing more to write except that Mr. valckenborgh, **[*your*]** $_{\mathbf{FoA}}$ husband, was still in good health…’
10) *niet meer teschrijve als dat d heer valckenborgh* ***[u*** $_{Poss}$ ***lieve*** $_{A}$ ***man*** $_{N}$***]*** $_{NP}$ *noch gesont was…*
‘I have nothing more to write except that Mr. valckenborgh, **[*your*** $_{\mathbf{Poss}}$ ***kind*** $_{\mathbf{A}}$ **husband** $_{\mathbf{N}}$**]** $_{\mathbf{NP}}$, was still in good health…’

A plural out of place?
The form of address *ulieden* is commonly acknowledged to be a form reserved for the plural.[61] But in spite of the plural noun *lieden* (‘people’) being part of the form, *ulieden* occurs no fewer than 110 times in contexts in which only one person seems to be addressed.[62] Twenty-two different writers use it and the form cannot be linked to a certain gender or class. It is notable, however, that it does not occur in business letters. Some examples are given below:

[61] Forms of address spelt as *uld* and *ul den* were treated in the same way as the full forms of *ulieden*, since the presence of the letter *d* strongly suggests the full form *ulieden*. There were 27 of these occurences in total.
[62] It is of course not always possible to determine whether a token of *ulieden* is directed to one or several addressees at the same time. If a sender had meant his letter for his entire family, there is no reason why he could not use the form of address *ulieden*. However, some examples – such as example 10 – irrefutably show that *ulieden* was used in addressing one person. In deciding whether the tokens of *ulieden* were singular or plural, I looked for clues in the sentence or in the immediate context that could indicate how many persons were addressed at the same time. Questionable tokens were left out.

11) *By myn steven Jorressen **ulijden** man*
'Written by me steven Jorressen **your** husband'
12) *seer waerde maen pitter cristeiaense ick laet **u lide** weten als dat ijaen gerlijsse noch nit ghekome en is*
'dear husband pitter cristeiaense I let **you** know that ijaen gerlijsse has not come by yet'
13) *waer uit verstaen dat **ulijeden** noch in goede gesontheijt was*
'from which I have gathered that ***you*** are still in good health'

As example 13 shows, *ulieden* is also used in subject position (by four writers), while the expected form for subject positions would be *gijlieden*. However, in the seventeenth century *u* started to be used in subject positions (see §4.2.1 and §4.2.3) and the use of *ulieden* in subject position could be related to this new use of *u*.

One could suggest, based on the study by Brown & Gilman (1972), that using *ulieden* to address one person was a new way of expressing politeness with a plural form of address. However, the letters containing *ulieden* do not seem to be overtly polite in other aspects and most of them are letters addressed to close members of the family. Therefore such a politeness strategy is less likely to be the reason behind these examples. The only conclusion can be that – at least for some writers – the plural meaning of *ulieden* had been lost by the second half of the seventeenth century, which made the originally plural form of address *ulieden* available for use when addressing a single person.

Conclusions

It is possible that in the second half of the seventeenth century the frequently occurring form of address *ul* was no longer understood as an abbreviation for *uwe liefde*, since this latter form of address could not be found in the corpus. Just a few writers seem to use *u lieve* instead of *ul* and some writers use *ulieden*. Through the loss of the plural meaning of the compound *lieden*, the latter form had become available for addressing a single person by 1664.

Since *ul* is a form of address typical of letters and thus a form not part of the spoken Dutch, one might expect that its use had to be learned (not necessarily only through formal teaching, but also through exposure to letters) and that people who were well trained in writing, i.e. writers from the upper classes and men in general, would use it more often than writers from the lower classes and women. However, the results show the opposite pattern. Apparently, the practice of using *ul* as a form of address in letters had spread through the entire society by the second half of the seventeenth century. Although *ul* was used most frequently by members of the lower classes, it does not seem to be a form of address that was frowned upon, however,

since it still occurred quite consistently in business letters. The fact that the upper classes in society use this epistolary term of address less often than the lower classes may be linked to the emergence of a new epistolary form of address: *UE*.

4.3.3. *UE*: reserved for the upper classes

The form of address *UE* occurs less often in the entire *Letters as Loot* corpus than *ul* does. There are 827 instances of *UE* in the letters of 24% of the writers (104 writers out of 441).[63] When examining the sub-corpus of private autograph letters, it becomes clear that *UE* is linked to particular groups of writers. As table 4.4 shows, more upper-middle-class and upper-class writers use this form of address than writers from the lower classes. The percentage of writers that use *UE* shows a steady increase from the lower to the upper classes. Lower-class writers do not use it while nearly half of the upper-class writers make use of this form of address.

Writers using UE	***N***	***%***
LC	0	*0%*
LMC	6	*17%*
UMC	42	*40%*
UC	8	*47%*

Table 4.4: share of writers who use *UE* per social class in the sub-corpus of private autographs

Comparing these data to the relative frequency of *UE* per social class, it is obvious that the presence of *UE* not simply increases higher up on the social ladder. Figure 4.2 shows that *UE* occurs as often in the letters of upper-middle-class writers as in the letters of the upper-class writers: *UE* has a share of 22% in the upper-middle class and a share of 20% in the upper class. But while *UE* occurs in about one fifth of the cases in the letters of the upper-middle and upper class, *UE* occurs almost never in the writings of the lower- and lower-middle-class writers. *UE* is clearly typical of the two upper classes.

[63] *UE* is spelled in different ways in the corpus: with or without capitals, with or without punctuation marks, with *u* or *v* as the first grapheme, and with or without spacing. The most current spelling form (with capitals, without punctuation marks and with *u* as the first grapheme) is used throughout the chapter to represent the form of address.

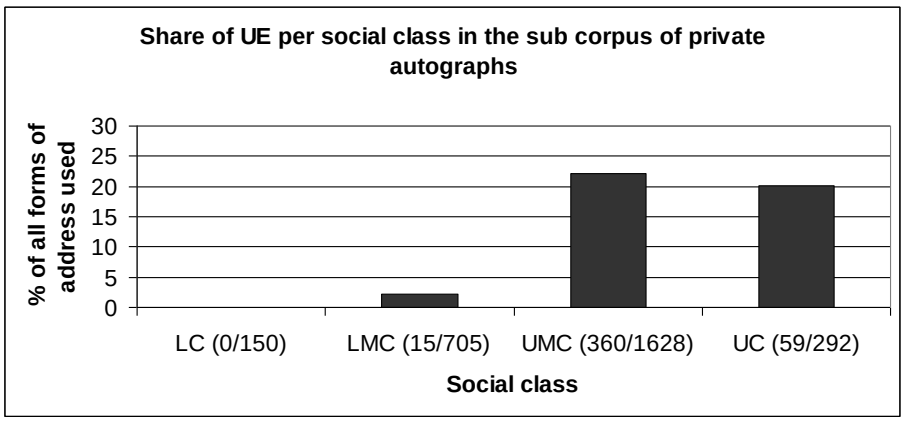

Figure 4.2

The writers of the upper and upper-middle class seem to have been among the first to use *UE*, which is most likely related to the fact that this form of address originated in the chancery – by which is meant the administrations of nobles, cities and public or private associations – and in official jargon, with which the upper-middle- and upper-class people were more likely to come into contact (Van Leuvensteijn 2002a: 289-290).

The fact that *UE* originated in these types of texts may also explain why *UE* occurs more often in business letters. Of the upper-middle-class men who write private autograph letters, 44% use *UE*, while more than half (60%) of the upper-middle-class men who write business autographs use *UE* at least once. *UE* takes up 27% of the forms of address used in these writers' private letters and it takes up 41% in their business letters.

Additionally, more men than women use *UE*: 36% of the male writers in the corpus of private autograph letters use *UE* at least once in their letters compared to 17% of the women. *UE* takes up a fifth of the forms of address in the private autograph letters written by men (21%), while it is good for only 4% of the forms of address used in private autograph letters written by women. It is interesting to point out that these figures are consistent with the findings of Daan (1982) and Van Leuvensteijn (2002a). These studies both noticed that Maria van Reigersberch's husband and brother used *UE* in their letters to Maria before Maria herself started to use *UE* in her letters to them (Daan 1982: 122-123; Van Leuvensteijn 2002a: 293). In accordance with my data, this finding suggests that men were indeed using *UE* earlier than women. This should not come as a surprise, since *UE* was first used in administration. The people employed in such administration and professional writing in the seventeenth century were mainly men.

No full forms of *u edele* or *uwe edelheid* are present in the entire seventeenth-century *Letters as Loot* corpus. *UE* was used so systematically instead of these full forms that it is no surprise that in time it became lexicalised: it started to appear in spoken language in the form of *Uwee* or *Uwe* ([yˈʊe] or [ˈyʊə]) (Van den Toorn 1977: 524). These forms are actually nothing more than the pronunciation of the two letters *U* and *E* one after the other and shows that *UE* had become an acronym.[64]

To conclude, contrary to *ul*, *UE* is a form of address linked most strongly to the upper classes of society and to men. The following form of address under investigation, *jij*, behaves completely differently.

4.3.4. Fit for the spoken language: *jij, je,* and *jou(w)*

The personal pronoun *jij* and its inflected forms and the possessive pronoun *jou(w)* are rather rare in the entire *Letters as Loot* corpus. They occur only 154 times in letters written by 31 different writers (7% of the total number of writers). When one looks at the sub-corpus of private autographs, it becomes clear that *jij* is more strongly related to the lower classes than to the upper classes: 10% of the lower-class writers and 17% of the lower-middle-class writers use them, compared to 4% of the upper-middle-class writers and no one from the upper-class writers.

Writers using jij	***N***	***%***
LC	1	*10%*
LMC	6	*17%*
UMC	4	*4%*
UC	0	*0%*

Table 4.5: share of writers who use *jij* per social class in the sub-corpus of private autographs

The number of times the form of address *jij* is actually used per social class also shows that *jij* is less popular with the upper classes than with the two lower classes, although the difference between the classes is rather limited due to overall low percentages. Figure 4.3 shows that *jij* and its inflected

[64] An example of one of these forms seems to be present in the corpus. Johannes Du Pire, a young upper-middle class man from Amsterdam, uses *uwe* in a letter to his cousin in 1664 (letter Vliet-45 in the corpus): *ende wij hebben […] verstaan u ghesontheyt welvaren en couragie op see, daarbij dat **uwe** ons huijsghesin met veel gheluck ende heijl syn groetende* 'and we have understood your health, well-being and courage at sea, and we have understood that **you** are greeting our family with a lot of wishes of goodluck and welfare.'

forms take up about 5% of the occurrences of all forms of address in the lower and lower-middle class letters respectively, while they take up no more than 1% and 0% of the forms of address respectively in upper-middle- and upper-class letters.

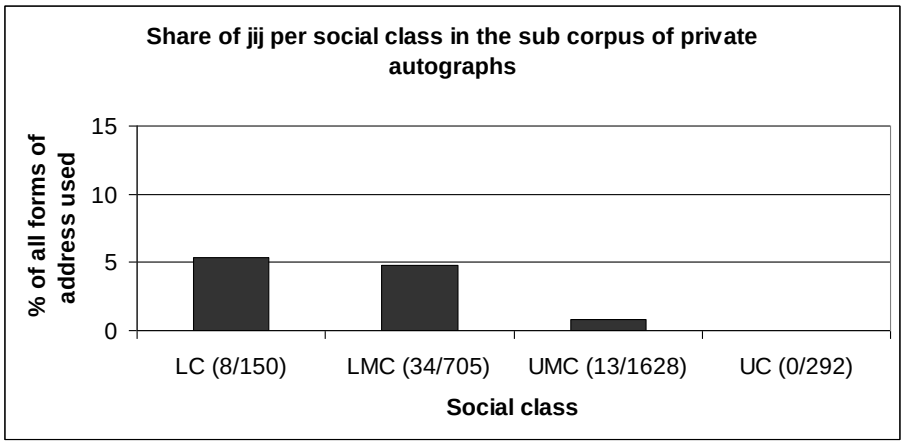

Figure 4.3

There is also a difference between the use of *jij* by men and women, albeit quite small. More women than men use *jij* (8% vs. 4%) and *jij* occurs more often (30 times, which is in 2% of the cases) in private letters written by women than in private letters written by men (25 times, which is less than 1% of the cases).

Jij occurs only once in business letters and 55 times in private letters, but it is impossible to say whether this is due to the low use of *jij* in the upper-middle class in general (almost all of the business letters have been written by upper-middle-class men) or by the influence of the type of letter. In any case, there is no clear difference between the presence of *jij* in business letters written by upper-middle-class men and its presence in private letters written by this same group.

In short, *jij* and its inflected forms do not occur often in the corpus of seventeenth-century letters. This coincides with the idea that in the seventeenth century, *jij* was a spoken form that was just beginning to emerge in writing. That lower-class writers and female writers seem to use it slightly more often than male writers and writers from the upper classes may be understood by taking their different writing experience and education into account. Lower-class writers and women usually had less experience in writing than upper-class people and men in general and can thus be assumed to be less familiar with particular conventions of written Dutch (Frijhoff & Spies 1999: 237-238).

4.3.5. A clear split down the middle of the social scale: *Gij*

Gij *for lower classes and women*
Gij as a form of address for the singular occurs 1290 times in the entire seventeenth-century corpus. It is used by 269 different writers, which is 61% of the total number of writers. In the sub-corpus of private autographs, *gij* shows a distribution across the social classes which suggests a split between the lower classes (lower and lower-middle) and the upper classes (upper-middle and upper) as shown in table 4.6.

Writers using gij	***N***	***%***
LC	9	*90%*
LMC	30	*83%*
UMC	48	*46%*
UC	10	*59%*

Table 4.6: share of writers who use *gij* per social class in the sub-corpus of private autographs

Almost all of the lower-class writers (90%) use *gij* at least once in their letter. This form of address in subject position is also quite popular with the lower-middle-class writers: 83% of them use it. The members of the upper-middle and of the upper class use it less often: for the upper-middle class 46% of the writers use *gij* and 59% of the upper-class writers use it. This suggests that the border between a large number of writers using *gij* and a smaller number of writers using *gij* runs down the middle of the social scale.

The relative frequency of *gij* per social class in the sub-corpus of private autographs shows the same picture, although the differences are less outspoken: figure 4.4 shows that the lower- and lower-middle-class writers use *gij* more often than the upper-middle- and upper-class writers do. *Gij* occurs in 23% and in 22% of the cases in the lower class and in the lower-middle class respectively, while it takes up 14% and 16% in the upper-middle class and in the upper class respectively.

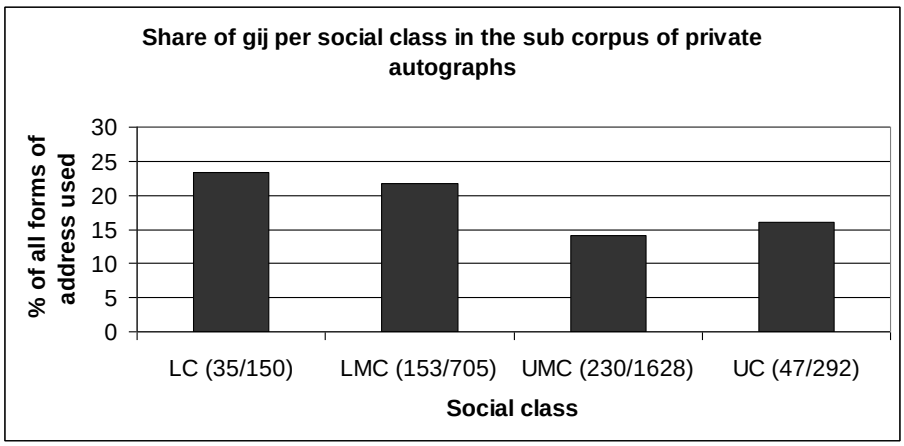

Figure 4.4

The members of the upper classes are thus less inclined to use *gij* as a form of address in their letters than members of the lower classes. Just as with *ul* and *UE*, gender is also a factor of importance. Half of the male writers of private autograph letters use *gij* compared to 73% of the female writers. Not only do more women use *gij* at least once in their letters, but women use *gij* more often as well: *gij* makes up 21% of the forms of address in letters written by women, while it makes up 15% of the forms of address in letters written by men.

And again, type of letter plays a role here as well. *Gij* was evidently deemed fitter for personal communication than for business letters. In the private autograph letters of upper-middle-class men, *gij* takes up 12% of all the forms of address, while it takes up 5% in the business autographs of this same group of writers. And while no more than 26% of the upper-middle-class men who write autograph business letters uses *gij*, 42% of the upper-middle-class men who write private letters use the form.

In conclusion, *gij* is a form of address used more often by lower classes than by upper classes and used more often by women than by men. These groups of writers were typically less educated, were not so much dependent on being able to read and write and were thus probably less familiar with the different norms for spoken and written language. This may be why they used the general form of address *gij* – which also occurred in spoken language – more often than the better educated and more experienced groups of writers did. Writers from the upper classes seemed to prefer epistolary forms of address, such as *ul* or *UE*, to the plainer *gij* in subject positions, as will be discussed in §4.3.7. It is thus no surprise that *gij* was used more often in private letters than in business letters, for writers were in

all likelihood even more concerned with writing conventions when writing to business partners than when writing to close friends or family members.

Gijlieden *as a form for the singular*
Apart from *gij* as a form of address for the plural, *gijlieden* – the explicitly plural form of address based on *gij* – is present as well in the seventeenth-century *Letters as Loot* corpus. So is *gijlieden*, the explicitly plural form of address based on *gij*. Seven writers use it to address several people at the same time. However, there are also six writers who seem to use *gijlieden* as a form of address for the singular, as shown in the following examples:

14) *en wy zien mijn zeer lieue soon alle uuren int gemoedt* ***gij lieden*** *zyt noch jongh en hebt noch vrij wat van doen*
'and we are always ready to welcome my dear son home. **You** are still young and need a lot of things…'
15) *en hij is heel verstoort dat* ***ghij l*** *hem noit en groote in v.l. breefe*
'and he is very upset about the fact that **you** never say hello to him in your letters'
16) *Bij mij u Lieden Huijsvrowwe Martijntje Jakops soo* ***gij lieden*** *niet schrijven en kont,*
'Written by me your wife Martijntje Jakops. If **you** cannot write, …'

Again we see how an originally plural form is used to address one single person. *Gijlieden* is used less frequently in this singular way than *ulieden* (possibly since it can only occur in subject position), but the same conclusion arises. For some writers, the form *lieden* must have lost its plural meaning. Sadly enough, the letters in which the special use of *gijlieden* occurs are all non-autographs, which makes it impossible to determine the age, gender or social class of the writers.

Two of the writers who use *gijlieden* also use *ulieden*. Both writers use the former form only in subject positions and the latter form only in non-subject positions. Apparently for them *ulieden* was not a full form for *ul* that could be used in all positions, but rather a combination of the pronoun *u* reserved for non-subject positions and *lieden*.

4.3.6. *U* in different positions

U *in subject position*
To describe the use of *u* properly, I must distinguish its use in subject position from its use in other positions. As mentioned above, *u* in subject position was a relatively new phenomenon in the second half of the

seventeenth century, which is reflected in the number of occurrences in the entire corpus: *u* as a subject can only be found 18 times in the private letters of eight different writers and 7 times in the business letters of two different writers. The use of the pronoun *u* as a subject seems to be typical of letters written by men from the upper-middle class (5 writers) and men from the upper class (one writer).[65] One of the upper-middle-class writers, a certain J.A. Weijers, a middle-aged man from the province of Zeeland, uses it quite frequently, namely fifteen times in three different letters. He uses *u* in subject position in both business and private letters, cf. the following examples:

17) *verhoop dat **u** hem niet qualyck neme suldt*
'I hope **you** won't blame him'
18) *wandt de ringh die **u** my gegeven hebdt daer oock bij js*
'Because the ring **you** have given to me is in that lot as well'

The fact that men from the upper-middle class seem to be the first (or among the first) to use *u* in subject position is interesting with respect to theories about the origin of the use of *u* in subject position. A widely supported theory about the origin of *u* in subject position is that it arose from the form of address *UE* (Van den Toorn 1977: 524-525; Van der Sijs 2004: 474-475; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008: 267). Given the results on *UE* listed above, upper-middle-class men can be seen as the most fervent users of *UE*. Since the group of writers most strongly linked to *UE* is also the group of writers who show the first examples of *u* used in subject position, this would support the theory that *u* in subject position evolved from *UE*. However, it must be noted that the data for *u* in subject position are too scarce to draw very strong conclusions.

U *in other positions*

U in non-subject positions occurs 1623 times in the letters of 252 different writers (57% of the writers) in the entire seventeenth-century *Letters as Loot* corpus. *U* occurs as direct object (19), as indirect object (20), as possessive pronoun (21), as reflexive pronoun (22) and following prepositions (23):

[65] The other writers are unknown encoders and a writer whose social class could not be determined.There is the possibility that *u* in subject position is mostly found in the letters of the upper-middle class men because this group of writers is overrepresented in the corpus of private autograph letters. Since *u* in subject position is a new phenomenon and therefore occurs quite rarely, it is possible that we cannot detect it in the groups of the lower and lower-middle class because there are simply fewer writers in these groups.

19) *begroete **u** duijsent mael wt gront van mijn herte*
'I greet **you** a thousand times from the bottom of my heart'
20) *en ick wensch **u** hondert duisent goede nachte*
'and I bid **you** one hundred thousand times good night'
21) *Seer waerde Neef Dirck Pijl Ik heb **u** brief ontfangen*
'Dear Cousin Dirck Pijl, I have received **your** letter'
22) *doch versuijm daer geen tijt prest **u** ende soeckt een korte reijs te maken*
'but do not waste any time there, hurry (**yourself**) and try to make a short journey'
23) *ick hoop in meij of in juny bij **u** te zyn*
' I hope to be with **you** in May or June'

Since social class has been shown to correlate with the distribution of forms of address, it is interesting to have a look at how *u* in non-subject positions is spread across the social scale in the sub-corpus of private autograph letters. The distribution of this feature vaguely resembles that of the form of address *gij*. Table 4.7 shows how the percentage of writers using *u* in non-subject positions steadily drops from the lower to the upper-middle class. The upper-class writers, however, seem to use this *u* more often than the members of the upper-middle class: 65% of them uses it in their letters.

Writers using u in non-subject positions	***N***	***%***
LC	8	*80%*
LMC	24	*67%*
UMC	55	*52%*
UC	11	*65%*

Table 4.7: share of writers who use *u* in non-subject positions per social class in the sub-corpus of private autograph letters

If we take a look at the relative frequency of *u* in non-subject position in the sub-corpus of private autographs in figure 4.5, the picture drifts further away from that of *gij*. *U* in non-subject positions occurs in 18% of the cases in letters written by lower-class members. It occurs relatively more often in lower-middle-class letters: *u* in non-subject positions has a share of 26%. However, the share of this form of address drops again to 20% in the upper-middle class, while it is more popular again in letters written by upper-class writers, occurring in 34% of the cases.

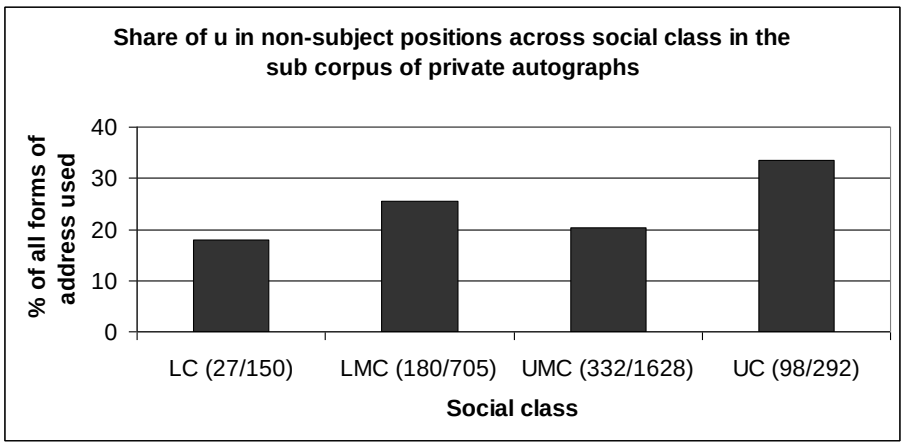

Figure 4.5

It is hard to explain this pattern of *u* in non-subject positions based on what is already known about the distribution of the forms of address in seventeenth-century letters. The occurrences of *ul*, *UE*, *jij* and *gij* all drop or increase steadily with each step higher up the social ladder and a common explanatory factor is difference in education and writing experience. But the occurrences of *u* in non-subject positions fluctuate with each step higher up in society and this is difficult to link to these two factors. Furthermore, it is difficult to come up with a new factor that can explain this fluctuating pattern. Therefore, I can only conclude that *u* in non-subject positions is only indirectly related to social class. The fluctuations in the pattern of *u* are likely caused by changes in the use of the other forms of address.

There is a small effect of gender on the use of *u* in object position. Relatively more women use *u* in non-subject position than men: 63% of the female letter writers of private letters use *u* in non-subject positions compared to 50% of the male letter writers of private letters. However, there is no difference in the share of *u* in non-subject positions between letters written by men and women: *u* in non-subject positions occurs in 21% and in 22% of the cases respectively. The women who use *u* in object position, seem to use it less frequently than their male peers.

There also seems to be a significant relation between the use of *u* in non-subject position and the type of letter: it is used by fewer writers and less often in the sub-corpus of business letters. While 50% of the male upper-middle-class writers who write private letters use *u* in non-subject positions, only 29% of the upper-middle-class writers of business letters use *u* once or more in the non-subject position. *U* in non-subject positions takes up 19% of the total forms of address used in private letters written by upper-

middle-class men, while it takes up only 5% of the total forms of address used in business letters written by upper-middle-class men.

However, since the puzzling results for social class suggest an indirect influence, I must consider the possibility that these effects of gender and letter type are caused indirectly as well. These data may be nothing more than the result of how *UE* and *ul* are distributed over private and business letters.

U *and* gij

As was indicated above, *u* is supposed to be the variant of *gij* fit for all non-subject positions. However, the data for *gij* and *u* suggest that these forms cannot be put on a par. A closer look at the patterning of *gij* in subject position and *u* in non-subject positions reveals that there is no such thing as a fixed relationship between these two forms of address and that it is wise to keep *gij* in subject position and *u* in non-subject positions apart.

That *gij* and *u* do not form a watertight system in the seventeenth-century corpus can be illustrated by two pieces of evidence. First, *gij* in subject position is not always complemented by *u* in non-subject positions in seventeenth-century letters. Very often *ul* and, to a lesser extent, *UE* show up as non-subject forms if *gij* is the only subject. To examine this, I focused on the private autograph letters and – for practical reasons – restricted myself to the letter writers that have written either only one letter, or more letters intended for the same addressee. The pie chart below shows that if *gij* occurs as the only subject in these letters (with 71 writers), it is certainly not exclusively accompanied by *u*.[66]

[66] It sometimes happens that *ul* or *UE* occurs exclusively in the signature of a letter while *u* is consistently used as a form of address in non-subject positions elsewhere. If this was the case, the form of address which occurred as the exception was ignored.

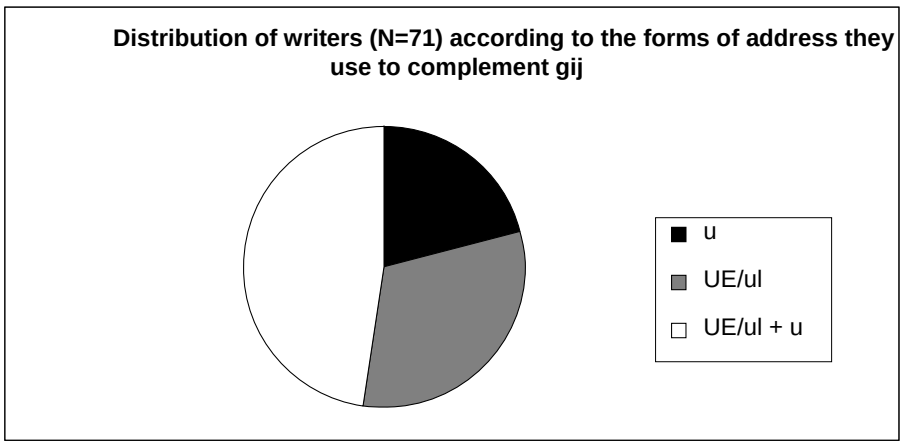

Figure 4.6

Fifteen out of the 71 writers (21%) who use *gij* as the only subject systematically complement it with *u* as a non-subject form. These writers treat *gij* and *u* as parts of the same system. However, more writers, 22 to be precise (31% of the writers), complement *gij* with *ul*, *UE*, or a combination of these two forms of address. And finally, almost half of the writers (48%) who only use *gij* as a subject form use *ul* or *UE* in other positions together with *u* seemingly without a difference. These last two groups of writers do not treat *gij* and *u* as inseparable elements, but allow for *ul* or *UE* to join in.

Interestingly, if this overview chart is broken down into four different charts (as in figure 4.7), one for each social class, a pattern emerges. The higher the social class, the larger the proportion of writers is who complement *gij* with *u* in non-subject position.[67] While about ten percent of the lower-class writers use only *u* as a form of address in non-subject positions when using solely *gij* as a form of address for the subject position, more than 40% of the upper-class writers complement *gij* with *u* and *u* alone. From lower to upper class the number of writers complementing *gij* with only *u* rises steadily while the number of writers using an epistolary form (*ul* or *UE*) or a combination of such a form and *u* drops from about 30% to 20% and from about 60% to 40% respectively. However, in each social class the share of writers who use both *u* and *ul* or *UE* to complement *gij*, remains very large (always more than 50%). In each social class, *gij* and *u* are thus not considered to be a fixed pair for the majority of writers.

[67] The charts contain data for the 60 letter writers (out of the previously mentioned 71 writers) whose social class was clear: 7 writers belong to the lower class, 20 writers belong to the lower-middle class, 28 writers belong to the upper-middle class, and 5 writers belong to the upper class.

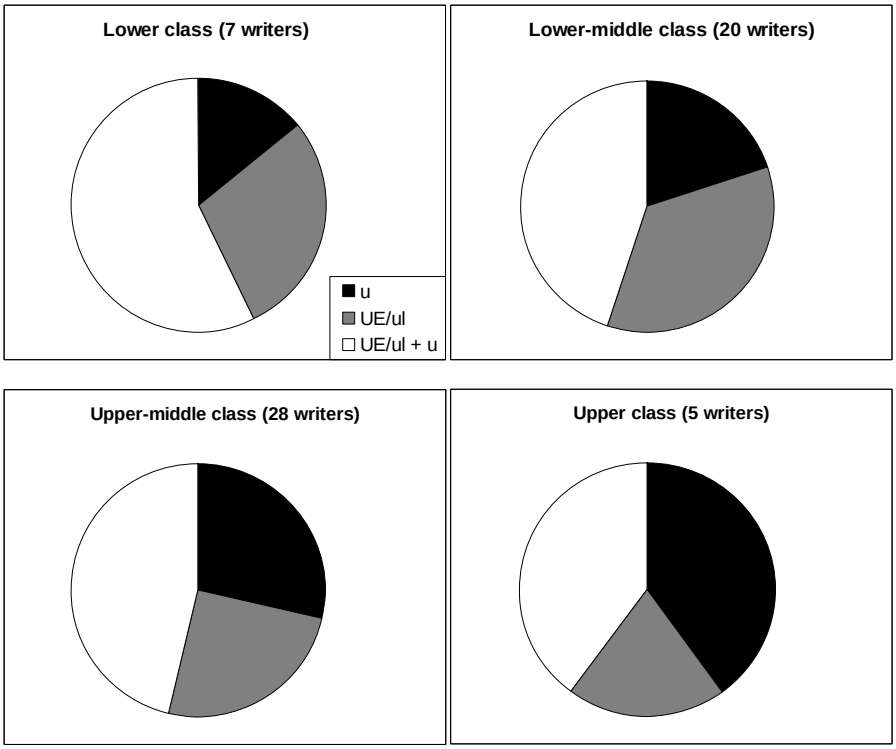

Figure 4.7: The distribution of a selection of the writers of private autograph letters per social class who use only *gij* as the form of address in subject position according to which form(s) of address they use in the non-subject positions.

The second piece of evidence that shows that *gij* and *u* are not inextricably bound up is the fact that *u* as a non-subject form can also occur with forms other than *gij* in subject position. Even if *gij* is often the only subject when *u* is present as one of the object forms (with 48 writers), *u* as an object form can also occur when *ul* is the only subject form (with 10 writers), when *UE* is the only subject form (with 5 writers) and when there are several different subject forms (with 21 writers).

Conclusions

In this section, I have shown that *u* in subject position was indeed a new phenomenon in Dutch letters written in the second half of the seventeenth century for it occurs in the letters of only a few writers. These data suggest

that the upper-middle-class men were early users, or maybe even the innovators, of this form of address in subject position.

Not only the data for *u* in subject position, also the data for *u* in non-subject positions provide us with new information: *gij* in subject position and *u* in non-subject positions do not really form a solid system in the letters of the seventeenth-century writers from the corpus. There is a very large amount of variation: *gij* is often complemented with *ul* or *UE* and *u* in non-subject positions can also occur with *ul* or *UE* as subjects.

The distribution of *u* in non-subject positions across the social classes seems difficult to explain at first sight. However, this is not a problem if we assume that the correlation of *u* in non-subject positions with social class is indirect. *U* seems to be a default form of address for non-subject positions that was used more or less often depending on the presence of the other forms of address in the letters of different social groups.

4.3.7. The broader picture

By way of conclusion of section 4.3, I will show the distribution of the different forms of address for the variables social class and gender in the sub-corpus of private autographs. I will present each overview in two parts, one overview for forms of address in subject position and one overview for forms of address in non-subject positions.

Social class

Figure 4.8 shows the distribution of the different forms of address in non-subject positions across the four different social classes. The graph shows how the different forms of address are distributed proportionally per social class based on the number of occurrences of each form. For instance, in letters stemming from lower-class writers *ul* takes up almost 70% of the forms of address used in object position. *Jou* takes up less than 10% and *u* is good for 25%.

These data clearly show how the distribution of the different forms of address is related to social class. The form *UE* is clearly related to the upper classes, while the forms *jou* and *ul* occur less often in the upper class than in the other classes. The presence of *ul* diminishes higher up the social ladder as the form *UE* becomes more popular.

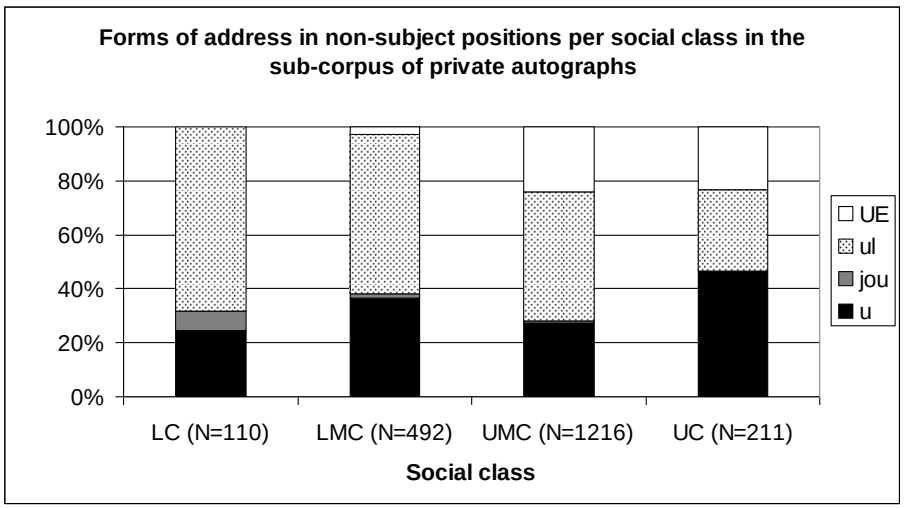

Figure 4.8

Based on figure 4.8, one could be tempted to conclude that *ul* is considered to be an old-fashioned form of address by the upper class. However, figure 4.9 – the overview for the forms of address in subject position per social class – proves this wrong. Contrary to the results for the forms of address in object position, *ul* in subject position occurs more often in the upper classes, rather than in the lower classes. This may be a consequence of upper-class writers preferring either one of the epistolary forms (*ul* and *UE*) over the more general form of address for the subject position *gij*. Again we see that *UE* definitely belongs to the language of the upper classes, while *jij* and its inflected forms are restricted to the lower-middle class. These two relatively young forms of address – that would become more popular in the future – originated at opposite sides of the social scale and would diffuse through social class in different directions: the introduction of *UE* in private letters can be seen as a change from above and the introduction of *jij* in private letters as a change from below. *U* in subject position is typical of the upper-middle class, as was shown earlier, and appears once as well in the upper class. *Gij* occurs quite often with writers from all social classes, but it is most popular in letters written by the lower classes.

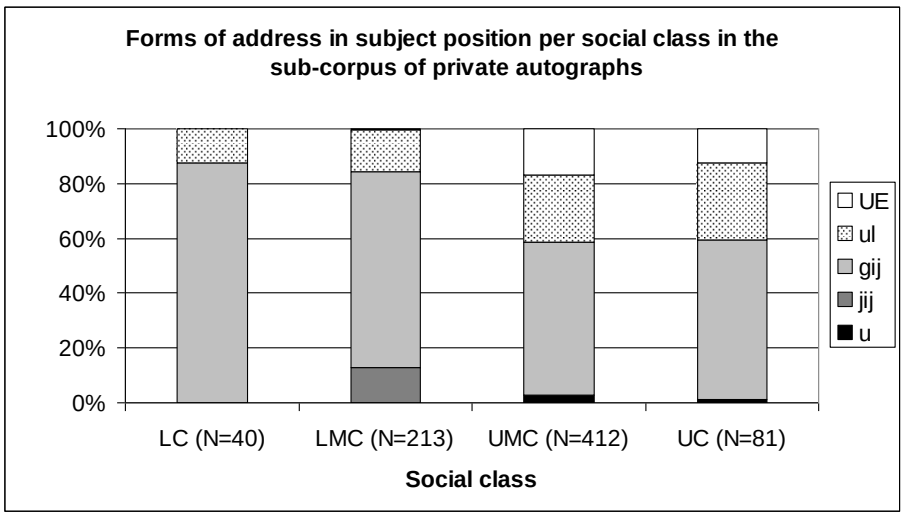

Figure 4.9

Gender

When looking at the distribution of the forms of address in non-subject positions for male and female writers, there is little or no difference in the distribution of epistolary forms (*ul* and *UE*) and forms that are not typical of letters in general: both men and women use the forms typical of letters, *ul* and *UE*, in about 70% of the cases. However, there is a clear difference between the genders regarding how *ul* and *UE* are used separately.

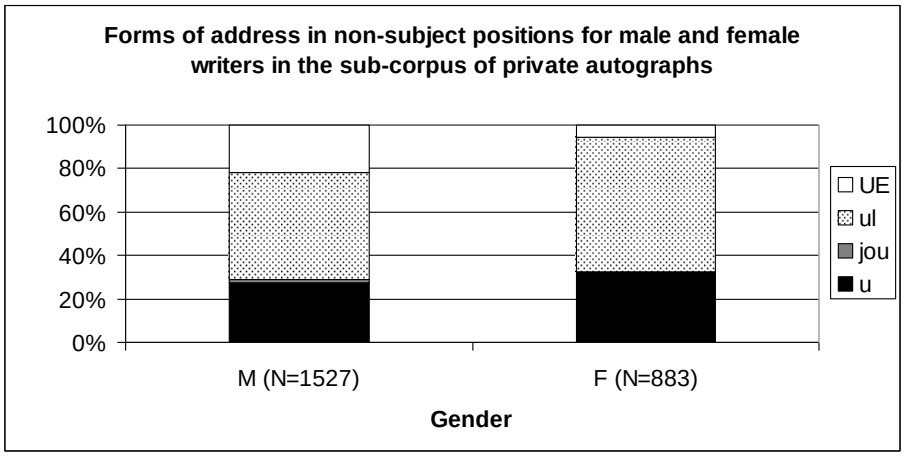

Figure 4.10

Women use *UE* less often than men do and use *ul* more often. We see this same difference in the presence of *UE* in the distribution of the forms of

address in subject position across gender presented in figure 4.11. This greater presence of *UE* in the letters of men may also explain the fact that *u* as a form of address for the subject only occurs with male writers, for it is probable that *u* developed from the form *UE*. Furthermore, women seem to use *gij* and *jij* slightly more often than men do.

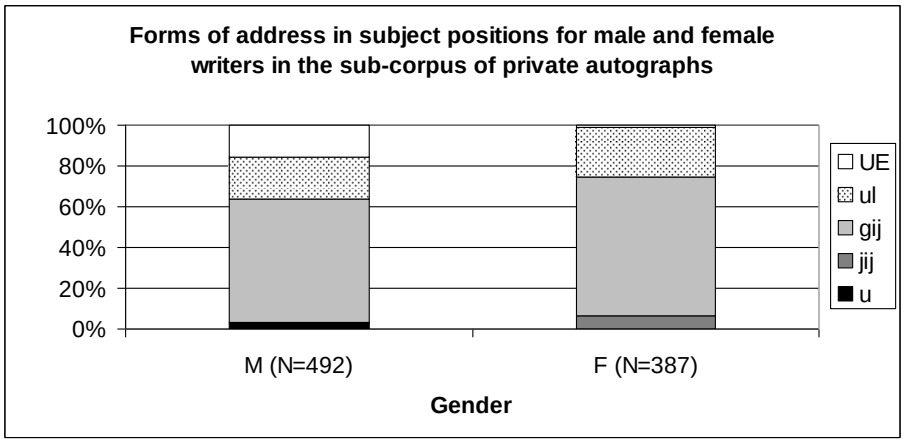

Figure 4.11

Gender and social class

As has been shown so far in this section, the distribution of the forms of address *ul*, *UE*, *gij* and *jij* in seventeenth-century letters is clearly linked to social class and gender. However, there is more to it, since a closer look at the language use of men and women and members of different social classes reveals a very interesting pattern: women and the lower social classes seem to behave similarly, just like men and the upper classes. This is illustrated by figure 4.12 below, which shows the distribution of the different forms of address (without a distinction between subject and non-subject position) across the lower social classes and women on the one hand and across the upper social classes and men on the other hand. The similarities are undeniable: when a certain form of address is used more by women than by men it is also used more by lower-class writers than by writers pertaining to the upper classes and the other way around.

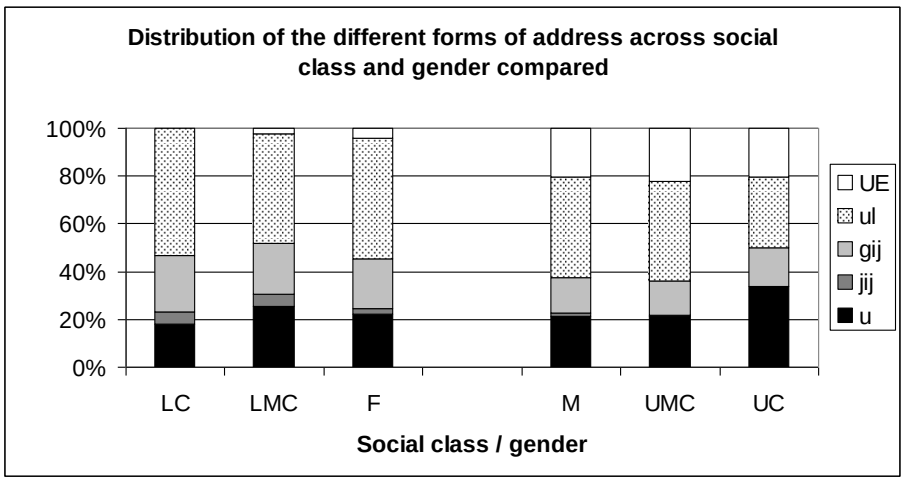

Figure 4.12

More information about the relation between gender and social class can be obtained if the results for social class are broken down into results for men and women. Figure 4.13 shows these results for the use of *gij*, *ul* and *UE*.[68] Again a clear pattern emerges from the results for the three different forms of address: in the lower social classes, the language use of men and women does not differ much when it comes to the use of certain forms of address, while in the upper social classes, men and women clearly differ in their use of *gij*, *ul* and *UE*. However, this difference between men and women in the upper classes is not caused because of the language use of men and women veering off into different directions. The language use of women from the lower social classes differs relatively little from the language use of women in the upper social classes, while the effect of social class is stronger on the language use of men for each form of address: lower-class men use forms of address very differently from upper-class men. How should we interpret this relation between gender and class?

[68] The data for *jij* and *u* in subject position were not included because of the low number of occurrences of these forms of address overall. The data for *u* in non-subject positions were not included given the fact that they do not seem to correlate with the variables gender and social class (see §4.3.6). LC+LMC men N=343, LC+LMC women N=512, UMC+UC men N=1392, UMC+UC women N=528.

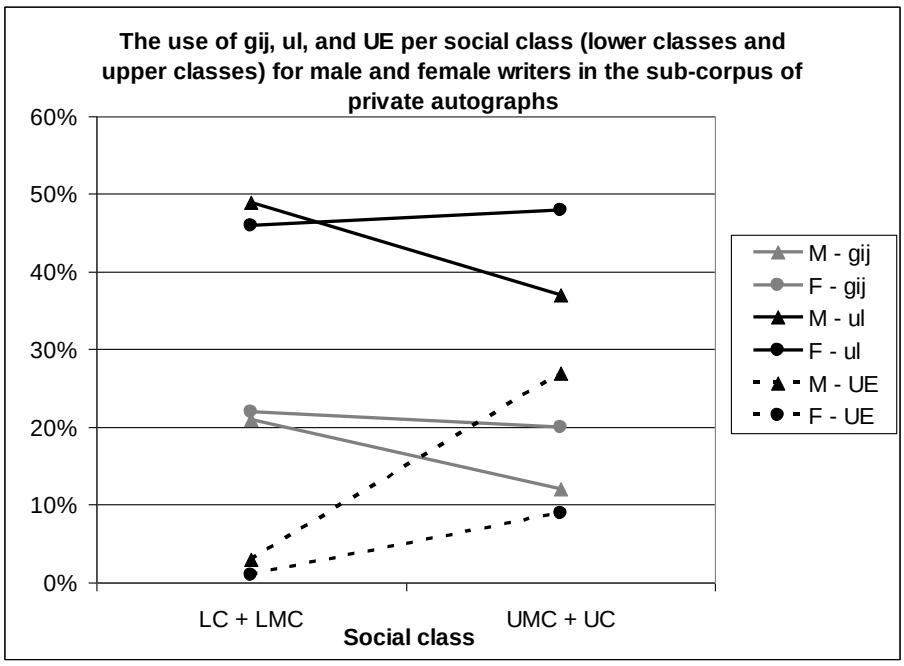

Figure 4.13

The two recurring patterns described above can be explained by the fact that women and lower-class writers on the one hand and men and upper-class writers on the other have something in common, viz. the level of education and writing experience. In the seventeenth century, women and members of the lower social classes typically received less education and they had fewer reasons to put pen to paper than men and members of the upper classes. Writers from the lower social classes and women in general could thus have used *gij* and *jij* – forms of address that were not restricted to epistolary use – less sparingly than their counterparts, because they were less familiar with the different norms and conventions of written Dutch. They were also slower to adopt the new form of address *UE*, which was introduced by the members of the upper-middle class, because they did not come into contact with professional writing and administration as often as members of the upper classes. Instead, they still used the form of address *ul*, which had become generally accepted as an element of letter writing by the second half of the seventeenth century. The effect of gender and social class on the use of the forms of address that was described above, could thus be traced back to an overall effect of writing experience and education.

Conclusion
All in all, this section has presented new and insightful data on the distribution of the forms of address used in seventeenth-century letters: *gij*, *jij*, and *ul* are used more often by lower-class writers and female writers, while *UE* is used more often by upper-class writers and men. The interesting pattern in the relationship between social class and gender shows that the use of the forms of address depended largely on the writing experience of a writer. Thus, the social variables gender and social class have proved to be very useful in examining forms of address in seventeenth-century Dutch. However, the picture of the use of the forms of address in these letters is not complete yet. In section 4.4, I will examine whether the relationship between sender and addressee also influences the use of the seventeenth-century Dutch forms of address.

4.4. The relationship between sender and addressee

So far, I have focused on the correlation between social variables and the use of the forms of address: an approach which has yielded very interesting results. However, I cannot refrain from examining the letters from a pragmatic perspective as well. In what follows I will examine if and how the relationship between sender and addressee is correlated to the distribution of the different forms of address in seventeenth-century Dutch letters. The data for business and private letters written by upper-middle-class men presented in §4.3 in any case suggest that *gij* is more typical of more intimate relationships (since it is clearly linked to private letters) and that *UE* is more typical of less intimate relationships (since it is clearly linked to business letters). The data for *ul*, *jij*, and *u* were less revealing in this respect. I will examine if the *Letters as Loot* corpus can reveal more about the link between certain forms of address and the writer-addressee relationship on the basis of a qualitative and a quantitative analysis. First I will concentrate on the 18 writers of private autograph letters who have written letters to several addressees: do they vary their use of the forms of address depending on the relationship they have with the addressee? Then I will examine a larger sub-corpus of private autograph letters and compare the forms of address used by different groups of sender-addressee pairs.

4.4.1. Individual writers writing to different addressees

There are 18 writers in the corpus who wrote private autograph letters to two or more different addressees. Since there are on average about 10 forms of address (for the singular) per letter, caution is called for when comparing

two or three letters to each other. Differences in the distribution of the forms of address may well be coincidental.

With regard to *gij* or *ul* as a form of address in subject position, the letters of two writers show some differences. Captain Pieter Tant wrote a letter to his wife and one to his brother.[69] In the letter to his wife he used *ul* as a form of address in subject position (twice), but in the letter to his brother he used *gij* (once). It seems that Pieter wrote differently to his wife than to his brother. However, we must take into account the special meaning of the sentence in which the example of *gij* was found. Pieter wrote to his brother:

> 24) *en bedanke ul van al u bryeuen die **gij** gheschreeuen heeft maer hut der hoch huet der art maer toenes huberechsen heeft noch hen mij ghe screeuen*
> 'And I thank you for all your letters that **you** have sent. But out of sight, out of mind. But Toenes Huberechsen has sent me a letter once (more).'

If the first sentence – the part in which *gij* was found – is considered in isolation, it will be interpreted as a word of thanks for the received letters. However, the following proverb and announcement suggest that the letter writer has actually *not* received any letters from his brother. This allows for a different interpretation of the first sentence: a cynical one. It opens up the possibility that Pieter Tant used *gij* to address his brother in this instance, because it fitted better with his emotional state of mind at the time of writing than *ul* did.

Captain Noe Pietersz similarly used different forms of address in subject position when writing to his wife on the one hand and to his friend on the other.[70] He addressed his wife with *gij* (twice) and his friend with *ul* (once). Did he want to strike a more personal tone in the letter to his wife (keeping in mind that *gij* is found more often in private letters than in business letters)?

Regarding the forms of address that were used in non-subject position, there are some differences in the use of *jij*, *ul* and *UE* with some writers. Cornelis Cornelisz Van de Stad for instance, uses two inflected forms of *jij* and uses *ul* 5 times in the letter to his wife, but sticks to *ul* in a letter to a friend or patron.[71] Maybe he felt more free to use *jij*, which was typical of the spoken language and thus more informal, in the letter to his

[69] Letters 06-01-2010 238-340 and 06-01-2010 252-253 in the corpus (HCA 30-644).
[70] Letters 3-1-2008 079-080, 3b-1-2008 197-198 and 3b-1-2008 195-196 in the corpus (HCA 30-647 and HCA 30-644).
[71] Letters 16-06-2009 001-002 and 16-06-2009 007 in the corpus (HCA 30-640-1).

wife – whom he calls *Eersame seer beminde Lieve huijs vrouw* 'my honourable very beloved dear wife' and whom he begs for letters – than in the letter he writes to the *Eersame Seer diskrete* 'honourable wise Sitie Jacobs' which he ends with *V L dienaer* 'your servant'. The latter letter is clearly meant to be more formal.

With regards to *UE*, it is clear that some letter writers use it when writing to people who did not belong to their closest family and do not use *UE* when writing to close members of the family. Pieter Barends for instance, uses *U* (four times) and *ul* (three times) when writing to his sister, but uses *ul* (three times) and *UE* (three times) when writing to his cousin. [72] The already mentioned Noe Pietersz uses *UE* once in a letter to his friend, while using *ul* for the seven remaining forms of address in object position, but he does not use *UE* in the letter to his wife (using *ul* 13 times instead).

But then there is Jan Leinsen, who writes letters to two different close relatives. He writes to his brother as well as to his father. [73] In the letter to his father, Jan uses predominantly *ul* as a form of address in non-subject positions (7 times *ul*, once *u*). However, when writing to his brother, Jan uses predominantly *u* (4 times *ul*, 12 times *u*). Jan uses *ul* more when writing to someone who could be seen as his superior (his father who has paternal authority and is older) than when writing to someone who could be seen as his equal (his brother who belongs to the same generation).

These results suggest that seventeenth-century letter writers varied the forms of address according to their relationship with the addressee. Although some writers differ in their form of address for certain relationships (e.g. Captain Noe Pietersz uses *gij* to address his wife, while Captain Pieter Tant addresses his wife with *ul*), some general patterns are present. *Gij* and *jij* seem fit to be used in intimate relationships, and *UE* seems to be reserved more for relationships that cross the boundaries of the core family or for addressing someone who can be perceived as a superior to the letter writer. The relationship between a writer and an addressee could thus be a useful variable to explain the variation further. In the next section, I will examine this in a more quantitative way. I will try to determine which forms of address relate to which type of relationship, in order to find out if the findings based on this qualitative investigation are corroborated or not.

[72] Letters 3b-1-2008 155-156 and 3b-1-2008 157-158 in the corpus (HCA 30-642-1).
[73] Letters 06-01-2010 276-279 and 06-01-2010 231-233 in the corpus (HCA 30-644).

4.4.2. The relationship between sender and addressee and forms of address in private autograph letters

In order to examine how the relationship between the sender and addressee affects the distribution of the forms of address, I focused on the sub-corpus of private autograph letters. For practical reasons – the letters in the corpus are arranged per writer so that all the different letters of one single writer are grouped together irrespective of possible different addressees – only writers were included who wrote letters to one addressee, cf. the investigation of the relationship between *u* and *gij* in §4.3.6. So if a letter writer wrote to both his father and his sister, the data for this letter writer were not included in the following investigation. On the other hand, if a letter writer wrote one or more letters to only one addressee, all of this letter writer's letters were included. The writers were grouped according to their relationship with the addressee of their letter, which resulted in ten different groups: parent – child (13 writers N=362), child – parent (15 writers N=162), sibling – sibling (19 writers N=304), spouse – spouse (82 writers N=1416), cousin - cousin (7 writers N=100), brother-in-law – brother/sister-in-law (12 writers N=143), friend – friend (18 writers N=280), uncle – nephew (2 writers N=36), nephew – uncle/aunt (2 writers N=28), and father-in-law – son-in-law (2 writers N=91).[74] Figure 4.14 shows how the forms of address are distributed according to the pair of sender and addressee. Three groups were not included because of the low number of writers involved: the group of uncles writing to nephews, the group of nephews writing to uncles and aunts, and the group of fathers-in-law writing to their sons-in-law.

[74] The first member of each pair is the sender, the second member is the addressee.

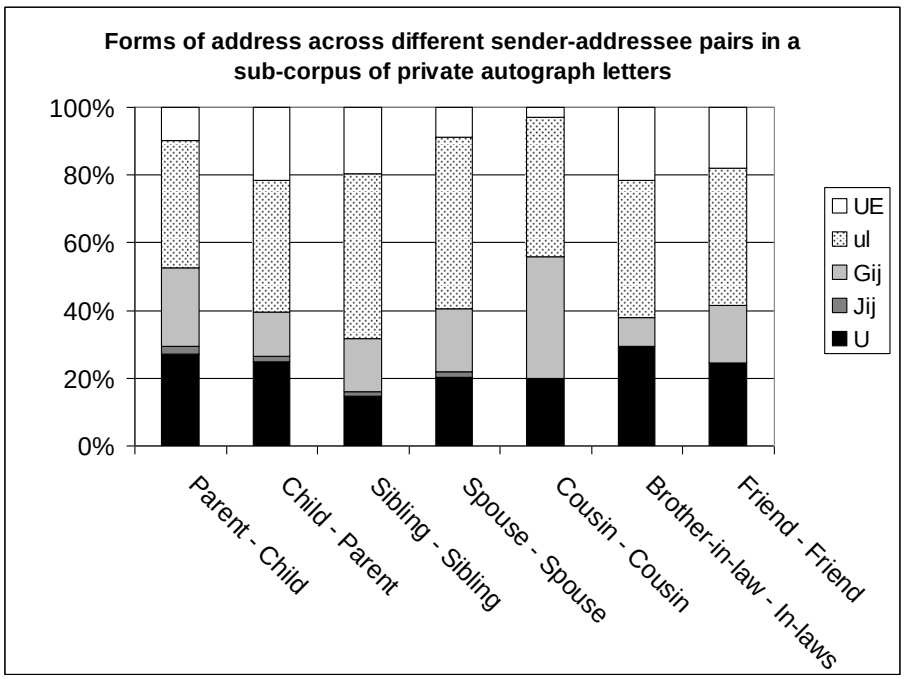

Figure 4.14

Figure 4.14 shows variation in the use of forms of address across different sender-addressee pairs. *Jij* is used only in letters sent to members of the sender's core family and *gij* likewise seems to be more popular for the more intimate relationships, given that it hardly occurs in letters between in-laws. A pattern for *UE*, however, is less clearly visible: children use *UE* quite often in their letters to their parents, which could be a sign of respect, and *UE* is rather popular in letters from brothers-in-law to brothers- or sisters-in-law. However, it is also used relatively often in letters between siblings and friends. The hypotheses formulated in §4.4.1 are thus corroborated to some extent by figure 4.14, but not completely.

However, since it has been demonstrated above that social class and gender are important variables, more accurate data might be obtained if these factors are kept stable. I therefore examined the sub-corpus of male letter writers belonging to the upper-middle class, since they are the largest sub-group of writers and that they were found in all of the sender-addressee groups that were examined above: father – child (4 writers N=134), son – parent(s) (7 writers N=91), brother – sibling (7 writers N=97), husband – wife (25 writers N=243), cousin – cousin (3 writers N=39), brother in law – brother/sister in law (7 writers N=64), and friend – friend (11 writers

N=142). The figure below shows how the forms of address are distributed for each pair of sender and addressee:

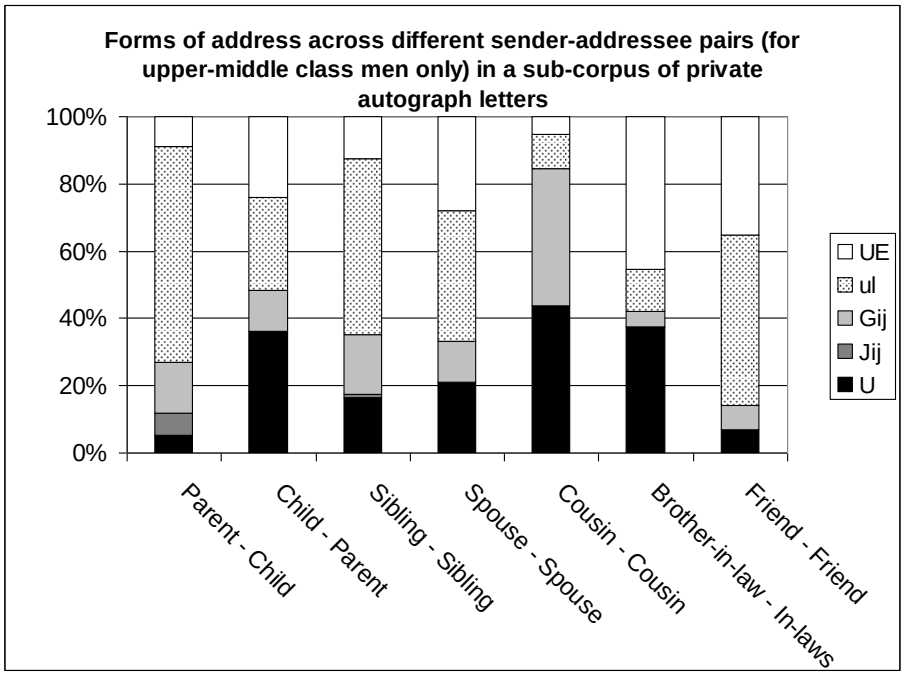

Figure 4.15

In figure 4.15, the variation identified in figure 4.14 seems to be magnified. The form of address typical of spoken Dutch, *jij*, is used only in letters written by fathers to their children and in letters between siblings.[75] This suggests that *jij* was deemed fit for use with intimates or maybe also to address people over whom one was superior (parents to children, for instance). *Gij*, too, seems to be used more often in the more intimate relationships, occurring regularly in letters between core family members (ranging from 12% in letters between spouses to 41% in letters between cousins) while occurring only occasionally in letters written between in-laws (5%) and friends (7%).[76] *UE* behaves as the opposite of *gij*, as it is more

[75] Since *jij* occurred only once in letters written between siblings, it cannot be spotted in the graph in figure 15.

[76] Although it may seem odd to consider the relationship between friends as not necessarily very intimate, one must keep in mind that the word *vriend* 'friend' was used differently in the seventeenth century than it is in present-day Dutch. The seventeenth-century concept of friendship had less to do with intimacy and more to do with securing one's place in society by granting favours and getting favours in

popular in letters for in-laws and friends than in other letters. Using this form of address may also show that the sender of the letter respects the addressee or feels the addressee to be his superior: sons writing to their parents use it in 24% of the cases, while fathers writing to their son or daughter use it in only 9% of the cases. *UE* is also popular in letters written by husbands to wives, which is more difficult to explain since the relationship between spouses is expected to be an intimate one. However, this is a twenty-first-century idea and one could wonder whether the relationship between husband and wife in the seventeenth century was generally less intimate than today. Or do husbands writing to their wives use *UE* often because of an epistolary convention or as a sign of respect?

The relationship between sender and addressee of a letter has been clearly shown to affect the distribution of the forms of address used. The variation could be found on the level of individual writers and on the level of groups of sender-addressee pairs. Although interpreting the nature of some seventeenth-century relationships is not very straightforward and may be dangerous, some general patterns seem to stand out. *Gij* and *jij* were likely forms of address typical of more intimate relationships and for addressing a person who is in some respect inferior. *UE* seems to have been a form of address typical of less intimate relationships and for addressing a person who is in some respect superior.

4.5. Conclusions

At the start of this chapter I set out two goals. The main goal was to refine our knowledge about the use of forms of address in seventeenth-century letters in relation to social variables. Although this analysis does not fit in with the traditional line of approach for analysing forms of address, it has yielded interesting results. It has given us an unprecedented view on the distribution of the different forms of address used in Dutch letters in the second half of the seventeenth century: I have shown that social class, gender, and type of letter all to some extent affected the distribution of the pronominal forms of address *ul*, *UE*, *jij*, and *gij*. The second objective has been reached as well: the relationship between sender and addressee has proved to influence the distribution of the forms of address. Both qualitative and quantitative research has shown that *jij*, *gij* and *UE* are more typical for particular sender-addressee relationships.

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return than the 21st-century concept of friendship. For an extensive discussion of friendship in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, see Kooijmans 1997.

Furthermore, the data under investigation have not only provided us with information about the distribution of forms of address in seventeenth-century letters. They have also hinted at the origin of *u* in subject position and they have exposed a false assumption about the relationship between *gij* and *u*. Lastly, what has been brought to attention as well is the incredible variation in the use of forms of address in seventeenth-century Dutch letters – the entire range of possible forms of address which is sometimes present in one single letter. This variation neatly illustrates how private letters are in between speech and writing, containing at the same time forms of address typical of letters as well as forms of address more typical of spoken Dutch.