Proper English Usage : a sociolinguistic investigation of attitudes towards usage problems in British English

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Appendices

Appendix A

Introductory Text to Proper English Usage Survey

Welcome to the Proper English Usage survey!

I would like to invite you to be part of my research project on the use of the English language. You should only agree to take part if you want to, it is entirely up to you. Your contribution will be much appreciated.

Please read the following information carefully before you decide to take part; this will tell you why the survey is being done and what you will be asked to do if you take part. If you have any questions, please contact me via Email (**c.ebner@hum.leidenuniv.nl** or **c.ebner@qmul.ac.uk**).

* * * * *

The survey consists of two parts. Part A contains 11 example sentences which you will be asked to mark as either acceptable or unacceptable. Part B deals with statements about language use, for which I would like you to indicate whether you agree or disagree with them. At the end you are asked to give some basic information about yourself (e.g. age, gender…). The survey will roughly take 10 minutes depending on how much you will have to say.

Since I would like to get your opinion on the current state of the English language in Britain, please answer the questions according to what you consider acceptable in your own language use. **Would you say or write these sentences? If so, in which contexts? If not, why not?**

Note that **this is NOT a test**! There are **no 'correct' answers**. I am just interested in what you think about these sentences. Additionally, please go through the questions **as quickly as possible**, as your initial opinion is what I am hoping to get. Remember, this is about **your attitude and your opinion**!

* * * * *

If you decide to take part in this survey, then please go to the next page. You are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Your participation in this test will entirely be anonymous, and the data will not be given to any third party.

Appendix B

Open-Guise Rating Sheet

Evaluation Sheet

Recording _____
Participant No: _____

How does the speaker come across to a public audience in the excerpts of this conversation?

Clever	1	2	3	4	5 unintelligent
Mean	1	2	3	4	5 friendly
Honest	1	2	3	4	5 untrustworthy
Hard-working 1	2	3	4	5 lazy
Arrogant	1	2	3	4	5 humble
Generous	1	2	3	4	5 selfish
Wealthy	1	2	3	4	5 not wealthy
Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5 pretty
Literate	1	2	3	4	5 illiterate
Fake	1	2	3	4	5 authentic
Sloppy	1	2	3	4	5 Orderly
Determined	1	2	3	4	5 Wavering

Any additional comments?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix C

Usage Judgment Test Letter

Usage Judgment Test

Please read this application letter and highlight anything you consider not appropriate/acceptable.

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Dear Mr Darcy,

I am writing to apply for the IT manager position advertised in *The Times*. As requested, I am enclosing my job application including all required certificates. Having worked as an IT administrator, the job seems to be the perfect match for my skills and experience.

My responsibilities included maintaining appliances and documentation, planning new acquisitions as well as helping and educating users. I worked close with IT management which allowed me to gain insights and experience in the field of IT management. Having worked in my previous company for four years, my aspiration after a new challenge has taken over and made me seek a job in IT management.

With my Master's degree in Computational Sciences I have obtained a solid understanding of programming and IT networks. Moreover, I am fully aware of the importance of keeping up-to-date with new technological developments. I know how to effectively set goals and achieve them. And furthermore, I have the ability to grow with a job and handle tasks responsible.

Working as an IT manager in your company is a very unique opportunity. And I believe that my previous work experience as well as my educational background will make me a suitable candidate for this position. I am confident that this job will impact my future career considerably.

Thank you for your consideration.

Faithfully,

〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰〰

Appendix D

Usage Rules

Usage rules

and/but
Many of us have been taught never to begin a sentence with AND or BUT. Generally speaking this is good advice. Both words are conjunctions and will therefore be busy joining words within the sentence …
(Burt, Angela. 2002. *The A to Z of Correct English*)

lie/lay/Iaid/lain
Lay is a transitive verb; it needs an object in order to complete its meaning. One must lay *something*; whether it be a table or – if one is a bird – an egg.
The past tense of this is *laid*:
> *I laid my cards on the table.*
The past participle is also *laid:*
> *the hen had not laid any eggs when I looked this morning*

Lie is intransitive, complete in itself. This is true whether one is lying to get oneself out of trouble or lying on one's bed. In the sense of telling an untruth, the past tense and past participle are both *lied*:
> *You lied to me!*
> *I can't believe he would have lied about something like that.*
In the sense of lying down, the past tense is *lay:*
> *I lay there for an hour but nobody came in.*
The past participle is *lain:*
> *I would not have lain on the grass if I had realised that it was damp.*
(Taggart, Caroline. 2010. Her Ladyship's Guide to the Queen's English)

slow, slowly *(advs.) Slow* is a Standard flat adverb: *Go slow. The traffic was slow-moving. My watch runs slow. Slowly* is acceptable in every situation where *slow* appears, plus a good many others where *slow* won't work, as in *He has only slowly won their approval.*
(Partridge, Eric. 1942. *Usage and Abusage*)

You must not split your infinitives
Splitting the infinitive means putting a word or phrase between 'to' and the verb word, as in:
> **The department wants to <u>more than</u> double its budget.**
> **The passengers were asked to <u>carefully</u> get down from the train.**
If you think a sentence will be more emphatic, clear or rhythmical, split your infinitive – there is no reason in logic or grammar for avoiding it. The examples above seem better split than not. Take care, though, lest the gap between 'to'

and the verb word becomes too great, as the reader could lose track of the meaning.
(Cutts, Martin. 1995. *The Plain English Guide*)

Hanging or unattached participles
The participle should normally have a proper 'subject of reference'. C. T. Onions said that 'a sentence like the following is incorrect because the word to which the participle refers grammatically is not that with which it is meant to be connected in sense':

> Born in 1850, a part of his education was received at Eton.
> (Correctly: Born in 1850, he received part of his education at Eton.)

(Partridge, Eric (1942). *Usage and Abusage*)

Literally
We have come to such a pass with this emphasizer that where the truth would require us to insert with a strong expression 'not literally, of course, but in a manner of speaking', we do not hesitate to insert the very word that we ought to be at pains to repudiate; cf. VERITABLE ; such false coin makes honest traffic in words impossible. *If the Home Rule Bill is passed, the 300,000 Unionists of the South & West of Ireland will be* literally *thrown to the wolves./The strong tete-de-pont fortifications were rushed by our troops, & a battalion crossed the bridge* literally *on the enemy's shoulders.* In both, *practically* or *virtually*, opposites of literally, would have stood.
(Fowler, H.W. 1926. *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*)

Impact
a noun, not a verb: say "affected" rather than the awful jargon phrase "impacted on". Only a tooth can be impacted
(*The Guardian and Observer's Style Guide*)

Unique
If something is *unique,* it is the only one of its kind. Consequently, there cannot be degrees of uniqueness: either something is unique, or it is not. Accordingly, locutions like *very unique* and *it most unique* are out of order. If you find it necessary to use a degree word like *very* or *most,* choose another adjective, such as *unusual* or *distinctive.* It is, however, proper to describe something as *unique in several respects.*
*(*Trask, R.L. 2001. *Mind the Gaffe: The Penguin Guide to Common Errors in English)*

Appendix E

Interview Question Topics

Interview Schedule
1) Demographics and Family Information
2) Work/Studies
3) School/First Language teaching in school
4) Language Insecurity and authority
5) Specific Usage problems

Module 1 – Demographics and Family Information
Where were you born?
For how long have you been living in ….?
Is your family originally from there as well?
Do you have any siblings?
What do your parents and family do for a living?

Module 2 – Work/Studies
What are you doing now specifically?
Do you study/work?
How do you like your studies?
Are you the first one in your family to go to university?
What are your plans for the future?/Do you like your studies/job?

Module 3 – School/First Language teaching in school
Where did you go to school?
Did you like going to school?
What was your favourite subject?
Did you learn any languages in school?
Can you remember how English was taught?
Have you ever received any explicit grammar rule teaching?

Module 4 – Language insecurity and authority
Do you think you got enough grammar teaching?
Do you think that English people know language rules? Do they follow them?
What do you think do native-speaker or non-native speakers know language rules better?
Have you ever been in a situation in which you felt insecure about your language use?
What do you do if you are not sure about your language use? E.g. if you write an essay/a job application?
Do you use books/check the internet/ask parents/friends?
Who do you think makes those language rules?
Do you think that those old rules are still valid today?
What do you think has caused the English language to change?

Module 5 – New media/standard language
Do you use any social media? E.g. Like twitter, Facebook?
Do you think you use language differently on those sites?
What about writing emails?
Do you think that people with official positions (e.g. politicians, journalists…) should use a specific type of English?
How would you define Standard English?
Who, do you think, speaks/uses it?
Do you think that language rules are necessary for a standard?

Appendix F

Description of Sentence-Initial *And* and *Very Unique*

Sentence-initial *And*

The conjunction *and* is classified as a coordinator that connects syntactically similar elements (Biber et al., 1999, p. 79). Yet, it is argued that *and* fulfils different roles depending on the register (Biber et al., 1999, p. 81). Providing a more detailed insight into the roles of this feature, Schiffrin (1986, p. 63) discusses how sentence-initial *and* can not only function as a grammatical connector, but also as discourse coordinator. She states that "just as *and* coordinates clauses into compound sentences, so too does *and* coordinate ideas into text" (1986, p. 63). The comparison of different registers, such as fiction, news and academic writing, in Biber et al.'s *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (1999, pp. 83–84) showed that the coordinator *and*, appearing at the beginning of a sentence as well as connecting two clauses, was most frequently found in the register conversation. Sentence-initial *and*, however, is less frequent in academic writing (Biber et al., 1999, p. 84). These findings are also confirmed in a corpus search of the BNC, the results of which are presented in Table A.1 below.

Table A.1 Frequencies of sentence-initial *and* in BNC

BNC	Spoken	Fiction	Mag-azine	News-paper	Non-acad.	Acad.	Misc
Freq.	18,305	19,040	4,194	7,160	4,573	2,837	6,396
per mil	1,837.18	1,196.78	577.53	684.09	277.23	185.04	306.98

Sentence-initial *and* occurs most frequently in the spoken subsection of the BNC with a normalised frequency of 1,837 tokens per million words, followed by the subsection fiction, with 1,196 tokens per million words. As found by

Biber et al. (1999, p. 84), the academic subsection contains the least instances of sentence-initial *and*, with a normalised frequency of 185 tokens only.

The reason for these frequency differences is said to lie in the proscription against using sentence-initial *and*. The ban on starting sentences with conjunctions such as *and* or *but* was described by Fowler (1926, p. 586) as a superstition and a rule of thumb. It is argued that this usage feature represents a stylistic issue rather than a grammatical one (cf. Peters, 2004, p. 38). The first rule against sentence-initial *and*, according to the information provided in the HUGE database, is found in Moon's *The Bad English of Lindley Murray and Other Writers* (1868), in which this practice was labelled "not scholarly". Of the 39 British usage guides, fifteen publications deal with the issue. Applying a slightly modified version of Yáñez-Bouza's (2015) tripartite categorisation to the usage entries on sentence-initial and in HUGE, I was able to categorise this feature's treatment in the usage guides, a summary of which is provided in Table A.2 below. Firstly, examples of each category are also presented to provide a more detailed insight into the treatment.

Criticised	Upon this passage I remark that it is not scholarly to begin a sentence with the conjunction "and"; nor is it in good taste to use one word in two different senses in two consecutive lines, as Mr. S. does when he speaks of "reading his article ...... upon the proper use of the article". (Moon, 1868, p. 95)
Neutral	In general, avoid beginning a sentence with *and*: its use is justified only when a very effective addition is desired or when an arresting accumulation is to be concluded. (Partridge, 1942, p. 34)
Advocated	Despite widespread belief to the contrary, there is no reason why a sentence should not begin with *and*. Provided it is used with moderation, it can be stylistically very effective. (Bailie & Kitchin, 1988, p. 30)

Table A.2 Treatment of sentence-initial *and* ("criticised", "neutral" and "advocated") in British publications

criticised (1)	Moon1868
neutral (5)	Partridge1942(1947), Burchfield1996(2000), *PocketFowler*1999, *OxfordA-Z*2007, Lamb2010
advocated (9)	Wood1962(1970), Bailie&Kitchin1979(1988), Greenbaum&Whitcut1988, Howard1993, Cutts1995, Ayto1995(2002), Burt2000(2002), Trask2001, Peters2004
Total: 15	

As can be seen from the table above, the majority of usage guides, namely nine out of fifteen, advocate the use of sentence-initial *and*. Interestingly, the first proscription against this particular usage feature also seems to have been its last. This is also illustrated in the diachronic development of the treatment in Figure A.1 below, which shows that sentence-initial *and* has gradually become more advocated by usage guide authors.
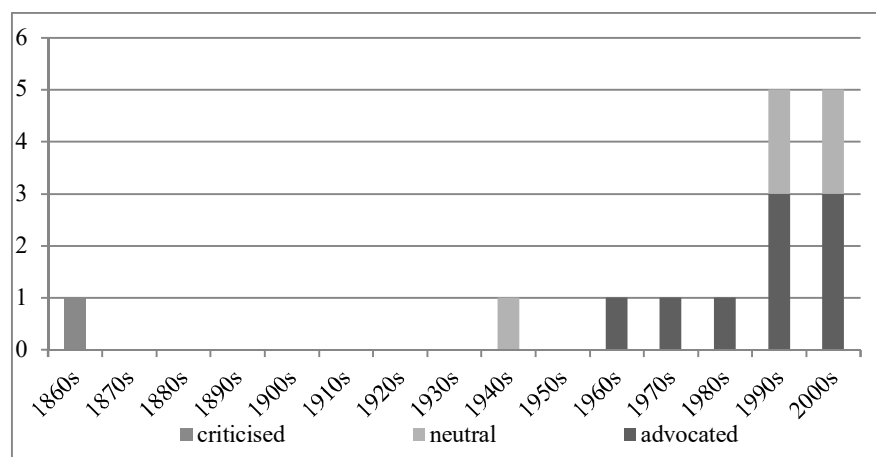

Figure A.1 Diachronic treatment of sentence-initial *and* in the British usage guides

The mythological status of sentence-initial *and* is often mentioned in the usage entries investigated. While Ayto (1995, p. 20) calls it "an old-fashioned

'rule'", Bailie and Kitchin (1988, p. 30) describe the existence of a "wide-spread belief" in the proscription. Yet, some usage guide authors, such as Trask (2001, p. 30) and Lamb (2010, p. 95.), provide cautionary advice to avoid overusing this particular feature. Lamb (2010, p. 95), in particular, emphasises how this feature is "a matter of style and choice", which could be the reason why sentence-initial *and* features in the usage debate in spite of a seemingly lenient treatment in usage guides.

Very unique

To complete my selection of usage problems to be investigated in this study, the use of *very unique* has been included in the usage judgment test. The issue with this feature is said to stem from the non-gradability of adjectives such as *perfect* and *unique* (Pullum & Huddleston, 2002, p. 531). Referring to these adjectives as so-called 'absolute' adjectives, Pullum and Huddleston (2002, p. 532) explain how, according to prescriptivists, these usage features are considered non-gradable and therefore cannot be used in "comparative constructions or degree modifiers such as *very*, *somewhat*, etc.". Hence, the use of *very unique* is considered nonstandard as uniqueness is argued not to be gradable. Referring to something as *very unique* is labelled illogical as something is said to be either unique or not unique. Yet, Pullum and Huddleston (2002, p. 532) discuss how the adjective has extended its original meaning to include the senses *exceptional* and *unusual*. According to this argument, constructions such as *very unique*, *rather unique* and *most unique* are said to be acceptable. Where the origin of this extension of meaning lies has, however, not been explained by Pullum and Huddleston. This development is also noted by the *OED*, which describes the use of gradable *unique* to mean "uncommon, unusual, [and] remarkable" (*OED*, s.v. *unique*).

Hence, it seems as if the conflict between the word's original meaning and its extended uses constitutes the problem with this particular usage feature.

To provide an insight into the actual use of *very unique* I conducted a corpus search of the BNC, which brought to light that *very unique* occurs only seven times in the corpus. Two instances of this usage feature can be found in the magazine subsection, while five of them fall into the miscellaneous category. With regard to the collocations of the word *unique*, I was able to identify the most frequent adverbs modifying the word by using the POS-tagger. The collocations *almost unique* and *quite unique* are the most frequent ones with 27 and 24 occurrences respectively. The low frequency rate of *very unique* could explain why this collocation does not appear in the list of collocations in the BNC.

The use of *very unique* was first proscribed in the HUGE database in *The Vulgarities of Speech Corrected* published by an anonymous author in 1826. Being discussed in 29 of the 39 British usage guides included in HUGE, *very unique* seems to have developed into a regular feature in the usage guide tradition. By categorising these usage entries on the basis of their treatment, i.e. "advocated", "neutral" or "criticised", an overview of the development of this usage problem could be obtained, which is presented in Table A.3 below. Examples of these categories are the following:

Criticised   Unique means the only one. Something is either unique or it is not. It can't be 'almost unique', 'fairly unique', 'rather unique' or 'very unique'.
(Sayce, 2006, p. 93)

Neutral   In its original meaning, **unique** means that there's only one of something: *This vase is unique - there are no others like it.* When it's used in this way, there's no point in using words like *very* or *most* with it. Either there's only one of something or there isn't. *Most unique* suggests that there are others, which goes against the meaning of **unique**. And *very unique* makes it seem as though you can have different degrees of being one.

Some people think that you shouldn't use *any* adverbs with **unique**. But that's not so. It's perfectly natural in English to say things like *absolutely unique* and *totally unique*, which simply emphasize the unique quality of what you're talking about. And there's nothing wrong with *almost unique* or *nearly unique*, which mean 'extremely rare, if not quite unique'. **Unique** has also come to mean 'remarkable, amazing'. In this sense, there's no harm in putting *very* or *most* in front of it (*I think he's the most unique man I've ever met*), but the usage isn't completely accepted in standard English, so it's best to avoid it in serious writing. (Ayto, 1995, p. 298)

Advocated   There is a set of adjectives, including *unique*, *complete*, *equal*, *infinite*, and *perfect*, whose core meanings are absolute—in other words, they cannot be graded. Therefore, according to a traditional argument, they cannot be modified by adverbs such as *really*, *quite*, *almost*, or *very*. For example, since the core meaning of **unique** (from Latin 'one') is 'being only one of its kind', it is logically impossible, the argument goes, to modify it with an adverb: it either is 'unique' or it is not, and there are no in-between stages. In practice, however, these adjectives are so commonly modified by *quite*, *almost*, etc. that such uses go unnoticed by most people and must by now be considered standard English. (Butterfield, 2007, p. 162)

Table A.3 Treatment of graduable absolute adjectives (e.g. *very unique*) ("criticised", "neutral" and "advocated") in British publications

criticised (21)	Anon1826(1829), Moon1868, Fowler&Fowler1906(1922), Fowler1926, Treble&Vallins1936, Partridge1942(1947), Gowers1948, Vallins1951, Wood1962(1970), Gowers1965, Bailie&Kitchin1979(1988), Swan1980, Burchfield,Weiner&Hawkins1984, Blamires1994, Amis1997(1998), Burt2000(2002), Trask2001, Sayce2006, Lamb2010, Taggart2010, Heffer2010
neutral (6)	Weiner&Delahunty1983(1994), Greenbaum&Whitcut1988, Howard1993, Ayto1995(2002), Burchfield1996(2000), *PocketFowler*1999
advocated (2)	Peters2004, *OxfordA-Z*2007
Total: 29	

The table presented above shows how 21 of the 29 British usage guides criticise the gradability of absolute adjectives such as *very unique*. In contrast,

only two usage guides advocate the use of *very unique*, one of which was already quoted above. Butterfield's *Oxford A–Z of English Usage*, published in 2007, states how gradable absolute adjectives are commonly used and hence "must by new be considered standard English" (2007, p. 162). Some of the usage advice categorised as "neutral" distinguishes between the two uses of *unique*, as does Ayto (1995, p. 298) in the example quoted above. A diachronic overview of the treatment of gradable absolute adjectives brings to light that lenient attitudes towards usages such as *very unique* are a recent phenomenon, as can be seen in Figure A.2.
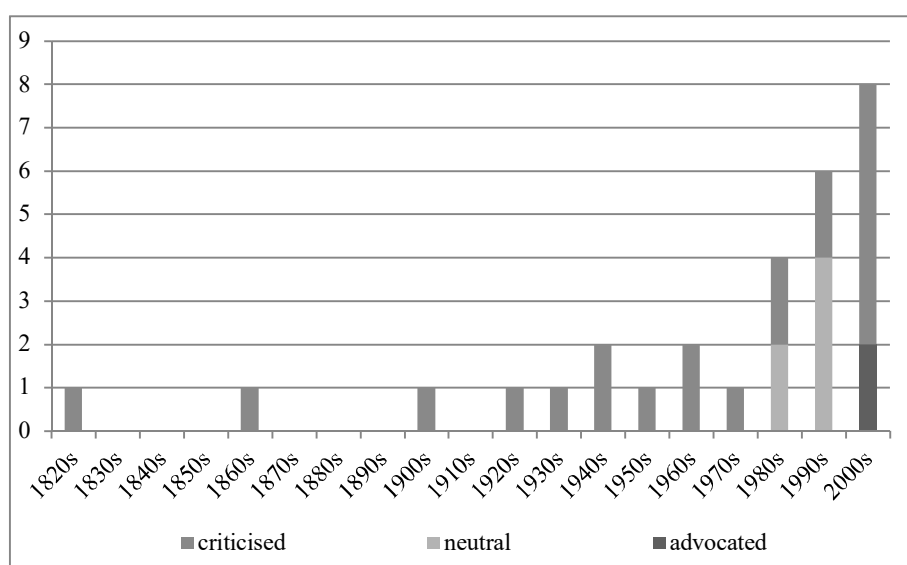
Figure A.2 Diachronic treatment of graduable absolute adjectives (e.g. *very unique*) in British publications

As mentioned above, the use of gradable absolute adjectives such as *very unique* was first criticised in the 1820s. Table A.3 shows an overwhelmingly negative treatment of this particular usage problem. Since the use of *very unique* has been criticised heavily in the advice literature, it does not come as a surprise to find so few occurrences of *very unique* in the BNC.

Mittins et al.'s study (1970, p. 51) investigated attitudes towards the use of *very unique* by including the stimulus sentence *The process is very unique* into their questionnaire. Obtaining an average acceptability rating of merely 11 per cent, *very unique* came in last of the 50 usage problems whose acceptability was not restricted in context choice (see § 4.2.3). The result obtained by Mittins and his colleagues led me to include *very unique* in my study. I incorporated the following stimulus sentence in the letter of application: *Working as an IT manager in your company is a very unique opportunity*. Investigating speakers' awareness towards this particular usage problem in context should provide a new perspective onto the issue.

Appendix G

Overview of Interview Session Informants' Ages

	Age group	
Full age	**young group**	**old group**
20	1	0
21	1	0
22	1	0
23	2	0
24	4	0
25	2	0
26	1	0
28	1	0
29	1	0
30	4	0
31	1	0
32	3	0
33	1	0
34	3	0
42	1	0
44	2	0
45	1	0
46	1	0
47	1	0
50	1	0
53	0	1
56	0	1
58	0	1
60	0	4
61	0	1
62	0	2
63	0	2
64	0	1
65	0	1
66	0	1
67	0	5
68	0	1
69	0	2
70	0	2
72	0	1
74	0	1
75	0	1
79	0	1
86	0	1
Total	**33**	**30**

Appendix H

Overview of Treatment of Usage Problems in HUGE

Decade	Year of publication	Usage guide	C	N	A	NM	Total
1770s	1770	Baker1770	3	1			4
	1779	Baker1779	2				2
1820s	1829	Anon1826(1829)	2				2
1860s	1864	Alford1864	1	1		1	3
	1868	Moon1868	2				2
1900s	1906	Fowler&Fowler1906(1922)	2	1		1	4
1920s	1926	Fowler1926	4	4		1	9
1930s	1936	Treble&Vallins1936	5	1			6
1940s	1942	Partridge1942(1947)	4	3			7
	1948	Gowers1948	1	1		1	3
1950s	1951	Vallins1951	3	2		1	6
	1953	Vallins1953(1960)	3	4		1	8
1960s	1962	Wood1962(1970)	4	3	1		8
	1965	Gowers1965	5	4			9
1970s	1979	Bailie&Kitchin1979(1988)	6	3			9
1980s	1980	Swan1980	1	5		1	7
	1981	Burchfield1981	6	1			7
	1981	*OxfordDictionary*1981(1984)			1	1	2
	1983	Weiner&Delahunty1983(1994)	4	5			9
	1984	Burchfield,Weiner&Hawkins1984	3	5			8
	1984	Crystal1984(2000)		3			3
	1986	Dear1986(1990)	3	4	1		8
	1988	Greenbaum&Whitcut1988	6	3			9
1990s	1992	Marriott&Farrell1992(1999)	5	1	1		7
	1993	Howard1993	3	4	1		8
	1994	Blamires1994	4			3	7
	1995	Ayto1995(2002)	5	2	2		9
	1995	Cutts1995		1			1
	1996	Burchfield1996(2000)	4	4	1		9
	1997	Amis1997(1998)	2	4			6
	1999	*PocketFowler*1999	3	4	2		9
2000s	2000	Burt2000(2002)	5		2	1	8
	2001	Trask2001	5	2	1	1	9
	2004	Peters2004		5	4		9
	2006	Sayce2006	3	1	1	1	6
	2007	*OxfordA-Z*2007	4	2	2	1	9
	2010	Taggart2010	7	1		1	9
	2010	Heffer2010	9				9
	2010	Lamb2010	4	3		1	8
Total			**133**	**87**	**21**	**17**	**258**

C= criticised, N = neutral, A = advocated, NM = not mentioned

Appendix I

Professions of Questionnaire Respondents

Account manager for a charity
Accountant (2)
Admin
Admin Manager
Administrative Manager in
University
Administrator (2)
Am retired, but am involved in
ongoing (unpaid) projects in my
discipline (art, architecture, design
history)
Analyst
Archaeologist
Artist
Civil Servant (3)
Consultant
Customer service
Customer services administrator
Editor (2)
education
Education adviser
Engineering
English teacher (4)
English Teacher (State Secondary -
Boys)
Finance professional
Graphic Designer
Housewife
Independent chartered engineer
Law
Lecturer
Leisurely indolence
Literacy & ESOL teacher in FE
Literacy Consultant
Manager in a museum
Media Lecturer
media sales director
N/A
None. At home raising children
Old Nuisance
Petrophysicist in oil company
PhD student (4)

Political analyst
Political Caseworker
Postdoctoral Associate
Postgraduate Student
Project analyst
Proof-reader
Publishing
Researcher
Retired (13)
Retired accounts clerk
Retired dental surgeon
Retired educational publisher
Retired Primary and EFL teacher
Retired schoolteacher
Retired scientist
Retired Social Worker
Retired solicitor
Retired teacher
Retired with enough time to fill in
surveys
Retired, private research
Retired
Retired. Was Arts Consultant
School teacher
Security consultant
Social Worker
Software engineer (3)
Specialist tutor for adult dyslexic
students
Student (9)
Teacher (6)
Town planner
University administrator
University lecturer
University lecturer in German
Writer/journalist
Youth worker

Appendix J

Themes Identified in Respondents' Comments

S1 *differently than* (*n* = 45)

Correction/Awareness of usage conundrum	21
Personal usage	17
Contextual preference/usage	11
Other	5
Uncertainty	1

S2 *data are* (*n* = 53)

Offering a correction /explanation for data is or data are	47
Personal usage	23
Contextual usage	8
Common usage	6
Unacceptability	6
Other	2

S3 *go slow* (*n* = 42)

Correction	24
Different issue mentioned (e.g. semi-colon)	11
Personal usage	10
Acceptability of go slow in specific contexts	8
Unacceptable in specific contexts	3

S4 *like* (*n* = 49)

Young users of *like*/usage of others	22
Contextual usage	17
Redundancy/approximative adverb	16
Unacceptability	11
Other	6

S5 *burglarize* (*n* = 59)

Correction/not a word	33
Americanism/not British	23
Unacceptability	19
Consequences of usage	13
Usage of others	1

S6 *less than* (*n* = 51)

Corrections	33
Acceptability of less than	24
Contextual usage	14
Other	7
Unacceptability	2

S7 double negative (*n* = 52)

Corrections/Awareness of double negative	35
Perception of speaker/users/feature	12
Personal usage	12
Widespread usage/dialectal usage	10
Unacceptability	7
Ambiguity of meaning	5

S8 dangling participle (*n* = 49)

Correction/identifying the problem	24
Ambiguity	11
Insecurity	11
Context and/or effect	10
Own usage/teaching received	9
Sloppiness	4

S9 *between you and I* (*n* = 43)

Corrections/awareness	28
Personal usage/usage of others	12
Common usage	9
Unacceptability	9
contextual information	6
Other	1

S10 split infinitive (*n* = 42)

Identifying the problem	30
Acceptability of split infinitives	20
Own usage/teaching received	16
Unacceptability of split infinitives	10
Context and/or effect	10
Being judged by others	7
Latin rule	6
Insecurity	4
Aesthetic effect	3
Historical justification	2

S11 *literally* (*n* = 49)

Unacceptability of *literally*	28
Ambiguity /meaning	16
Acceptability of *literally*/widespread use	14
Changing status of word	10
Contextual preference	9

428